Capital Science Communicators Organizational Charter

Ratified:
July 1, 2020
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Reorganization Planning Team:
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CapSciComm Established:
April 12, 2013

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Mission and Vision

Our Mission: To connect science communicators in the Capital Region with resources and networks for professional development.

Our Vision: To sustain science literacy across communities in the Capital Region through the support of science communication professionals.

Membership

Professional Membership
- Eligibility Criteria: Non-student professional in good standing.
- Terms: Annual (calendar year - Jan-Dec)
- Benefits:
    - Access to members-only Slack.
    - Subscription to Community Listserv.
    - Free or reduced rates for CapSciComm events with fees.
    - Invitations to member-only events, programs, and resources.
    - Eligibility to run in Executive Board elections.
    - Eligibility to volunteer for Committees.
    - Subscription to Community Listserv.
- Dues: $10

Student Membership
- Eligibility Criteria: Community college or university student in good standing.
- Terms: Annual (calendar year - Jan-Dec)
- Benefits:
    - All privileges of Professional Membership.
    - Access to student-only programs.
- Dues: $5

Community Membership
- Eligibility Criteria: None
- Terms: None
- Benefits:
    - Subscription to Community Listserv (receive-only).
- Dues: None

Committees

Charge

Committees are formed around topics and functions relevant to the CapSciComm mission and vision. Philosophically, committees provide a vehicle for members to volunteer and contribute to the organization, and function as a leadership pipeline for the Executive Board. Activities include: taking the pulse of trends in their topic or function; creating, organizing, and implementing programming and events; reporting to the Executive Board on emerging needs from the membership and the community at large.

Each Committee must organize at least one (1) event or program per calendar year (either members-only or public). Committees may collaborate together on a single event or program.

Formation and Recruitment

- Committees can be created or sunsetted by Executive Board vote.
- Each committee shall comprise a **minimum of three (3)** members, and a **maximum of six (6)** members.
- Committee members must be **current, due-paying Professional or Student Members.**
- One (1) member on each committee shall serve as **committee chair**.

Committee Chair: The Committee Chair shall be selected by the Executive Board, and serves at the will of the Executive Board (Exception: The chair of the **Communications Committee** will always be the **Communications Officer**, an elected Board position.) The Committee Chair is charged with recruiting members to serve on the Committee, organizing Committee meetings, leading the Committee's business, and liaises with the Executive Board via the **Vice President.**

Committee Member: Any current Professional or Student Member can volunteer for a committee.

Committees and Responsibilities

1. **Journalism**
2. **Science Policy**
3. **Public Science**
4. **Mentorship**
5. **PIO**
6. **Communications**
7. **National Outreach**

Journalism Committee: Liaises with our local community of staff and freelance journalists and editors in print, radio, digital, TV, and other media.

Science Policy Committee: Liaises with our State Capitol community across Executive, Legislative, "Third House", and other associations. As well as members of CCST, California Sea Grant, AAAS, and Capitol Fellows programs.

Public Science Committee: Liaises with our local community of museum leaders, educators, and other public outreach specialists. Specifically tasked with ensuring the quality production of science cafés. Attends science cafés and convenes annual science café leaders retreat to facilitate the sharing of best practices and promote quality science café experiences in the region.

Mentorship Committee: Works with local students and early-career professionals to ensure access to career mentoring from others. Designs and implements Mentorship Program and other professional development opportunities. Responds to requests for participation in local career fairs.

PIO Committee: Liaises with our local community of PIOs, public relations, marketing, and advertising specialists.

Communications Committee: Manages, develops, and creates content for all CapSciComm digital properties, including website, member newsletter, and Twitter, Facebook, and other accounts.

National Outreach Committee: Liaises with national organizations such as the Congress of Regional Science Writers Groups (SciWriCongress), NASW, SEJ, AHCJ, AAAS, etc. Attends conference calls and annual meetings. Communicates local issues with nationwide communities while bringing back learned resources to the Executive Board and Committees. Submit regional reports to ScienceWriters magazine.

Committee Operations and Tasks

Term of Service: One (1) year or synchronized with Executive Board terms. Committee members will be invited to return and/or new members will be recruited at commencement of each Executive Board term (typically whenever a new Executive Board election has been held and finalized). Committee members, including chairs, may step down at any time, and the Committee Chair and Executive Board can recruit new members to fill open committee spots at any time. Committee members can also be removed by the Executive Board at any time, in coordination with the Committee Chair.

Coordination: The **Committee Chair** has authority to lead, manage, and delegate all committee activities, programs, and announcements, but must do so in close coordination with the **Vice President.**

Documentation: Each committee must keep a log of meeting notes and actions, to be archived and accessible on the CapSciComm cloud drive.

Final Authority: The **Executive Board** has final authority to recommend, refine, redirect, or rescind any committee decisions and actions, when necessary.

Executive Board

Charge

The Executive Board manages the organization in fulfillment of its mission and vision. Board Officers are charged with taking stewardship of the organization's long-term sustainability, its service to members, and its role within the local, national, and global community. Activities include: interfacing with potential partners and members, and special visitors; staying alert to potential opportunities benefiting CapSciComm community; and exploring collaborations with other organizations on the landscape.

Positions and Responsibilities

The Executive Board shall be comprised of six (6) elected officers:

1. **President**
2. **Vice President**
3. **Secretary**
4. **Treasurer**
5. **Membership Officer**
6. **Communications Officer**

President: Sets the annual agenda for implementing CapSciComm's mission and vision pursuit, and represents the organization in dialogue with other entities and institutions.

Vice President: Manages committees, and takes stewardship of organizational institutional knowledge. Activities include: Coordinating committee chairs and setting regular meetings. Working with the Secretary in maintaining cloud drive archives. Substitutes for the Secretary or President as needed.

Secretary: Manages the operations of the Executive Board. Activities include: organizing board meetings; taking and logging minutes; calling and recording votes; organizing and implementing elections for Executive Board officers; working with the Vice President in updating and maintaining cloud drive archives and internal Board calendar. Primary manager/switchboard of admin@capsciomm.org email; redirecting received emails to relevant Board Officers and Committee Chairs.

Treasurer: Manages and reports organization finances. Activities include: processing and verifying membership dues; reconciling and issuing payments for services and reimbursements; keeping ongoing accounting of the treasury. Working with the Membership Officer to verify member dues payments.

Membership Officer: Recruits and manages the membership community and encourages membership participation, interest, growth, and satisfaction. Activities include: Processing membership applications in coordination with Treasurer; analyzing member demographics and needs; organizing membership drives; assessing member benefits; managing member access to listservs, Slack, emails, and newsletters.

Communications Officer: Manages external outreach, technologies, and properties, such as the website, listserv, newsletter, social media, print collateral, and event promotions. Activities include: managing and sharing relevant news and resources via Twitter and Facebook; aggregating and publishing website content and email newsletter; answering external questions on organization activities and events; stewardship of branding, graphic files, and "swag" items.

Executive Board Elections

Eligibility and Search Criteria

Number: There shall be six members to fill the Executive Board.

Terms of Service: Each Board member shall serve a term of one (1) year upon election. There are no term limits — Board members may run for re-election.

Qualifications: Qualifications to run for a seat on the Board include:

- Being a CapSciComm Professional or Student member in good standing.
- Demonstrated interest in science writing or science communication.
- One nomination by a CapSciComm Professional or Student Member (can be self nomination).

Desired Attributes:

- **Diversity:** Does this person bring a diverse perspective to our Board? In other words, would their addition make the board more well-rounded, in terms of individual backgrounds and type of scicomm careers and career stages represented?
- **Enthusiasm:** Has this person expressed an interest in CapSciComm or CapSciComm-type activities in the past? How much time and energy will they likely have to fulfill their board member duties and be proactive in creating new opportunities to grow the organization?
- **Assets:** What unique skills or connections does this person bring to CapSciComm that could help fill a gap in our organizational structure, and/or more productively pursue our organizational mission?

Ineligibility: The **Executive Board** holds full authority to reject a nomination on the basis of conflicts with the Community Code of Conduct.

Election Process

Announcement: Call for elections, call for candidates, and election date must be announced at least one (1) month prior to election date.

Candidate Filing: Candidates must submit their interest and proof of nominations to the **Secretary** by at least three (3) weeks prior to the election date. All candidates who are approved and invited to run for the election will be alerted by the Secretary, and given three (3) business days to confirm. All invited candidates must submit a 250-word candidate statement and portrait photo for public posting.

Declaration: The full field of candidates must be announced at least two (2) weeks prior to the election date. The field of candidates must be posted on the CapSciComm website in some manner, and announced by email to current Professional and Student Members.

Election: The **Secretary** shall design an online voting form which records the **name** and **email** of each voter. The voting link must be emailed to current Professional and Student Members at least two (2) weeks prior to the Election date. Ballots received by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time of election day shall be counted.

Verification: The **Secretary** shall verify the member status of all voters. For any duplicate or suspicious ballots, the Secretary shall verify the intended ballot selections with the Professional or Student Member in question. The Secretary will then present the election results to the Executive Board.

Certification: The **Executive Board** shall certify the results by a majority vote. The **Secretary** shall contact the election winners in writing by email.

Onboarding

All departing Board members are asked to hold at least one (1) one-on-one meeting, in-person or virtually, with the incoming person filling their Board position.

Suggested Timeline:

- July 1: Announce election date (including nomination process and Board expectations)
- Late July: Collect nominations, send out reminders
- July 31: Nominations deadline
- Early August: Announce the nominees and ballot link via member email, with reminder for meet and greet
- Mid August: Meet-the-Candidates networking social
- Final Tuesday in August: Election day/voting closes
- Late August: Secretary and Executive Board verifies and certifies election results. Announce election results to membership
- Early September: New Board members have onboarding meetings with predecessors.
- Mid September: First meeting of new Executive Board.

Executive Board Operations

Meetings: The Executive Board shall meet at least five (5) times each calendar year. The **Secretary** shall set meeting dates times for when all Board members are available. Additional special meetings may be scheduled as required. The **President** shall set the agenda, with input from other Board members.

Attendance: Board meetings shall comprise the full Board (i.e. a quorum comprises the full Board, no less). Committee chairs, other CapSciComm members, and other guests may be invited to attend. Meetings can be held virtually, but must accommodate all required and invited participants.

Meeting Rules: The Secretary must record all meeting notes for archive on the CapSciComm cloud drive. The Secretary shall call and record all votes on the CapSciComm cloud drive.

Suggested Order of Meeting:

- Secretary calls meeting to order
- Treasurer provides current status treasury and expenses
- President presides over agenda
- Hold and record votes as necessary
- Announce next Board meeting date

Votes: All Board votes must pass with a simple majority vote (more than 50%), with the exception of sanctions, which require two-thirds vote.

Decisions Outside of Board Meetings: Many Board decisions can be decided outside of Board meetings. Any Board member can raise a question and ask for a decision using the following procedure:

1. Write an email to Board colleagues with a clear question and clear YES or NO options.
2. Give three (3) business days for Board colleagues to respond with comments and opinions.
3. If a simple majority of Board members vote in the negative, the result shall be recorded as such.
4. If none or not enough Board members respond, the decision is considered approved by consent. (This rule shall not be exploited if any number of Board members are known to be out of contact during the days when responses are sought. Board members may give proxy to other Board members if they are expected to be away on significant absences.)
5. The Secretary shall record all questions and decisions on the CapSciComm cloud drive.

Community Code of Conduct

Full Text of Code of Conduct

Capital Science Communicators is committed to providing a professional environment at all of our events and digital platforms. We expect our events to be a respectful, harassment-free environment for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, nationality, age, socioeconomic status, and belief.

In pursuit of those goals, members and guests at CapSciComm events agree to the following ideals:

1. Treat everyone with respect and consideration.
2. Be respectful in discussing and debating ideas.
3. Follow the rules and policies of the venue and event host.

CapSciComm members and guests will desist from, condemn, and report instances of:

- Harassment and intimidation, including any verbal, written (including via texts or on social media), or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, humiliate, or coerce another participant.

- Discrimination or other actions based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, nationality, age, socioeconomic status, or belief.

- Stalking or unwelcome or surreptitious photography or recording.

- Physical or verbal abuse or intimidation of any participant.

- Sustained or disrespectful disruption of presentations or events.

- Unwelcome sexual attention, including but not limited to sexualized comments or jokes, displaying sexually explicit material, inappropriate touching, groping, or sexual advances.

Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to comply immediately. The CapSciComm Executive Board reserves all rights to sanction or revoke members and guests who do not commit to community ideals. For any questions about this policy, or to report violations, please contact admin@capscicomm.org

Sanctions

Sanctions, including revocation of CapSciComm membership and/or ban from events, can be held against current CapSciComm members as well as general members of the community. The purpose of sanctions is a final resort to protect our members and events, and to uphold our **Community Code of Conduct.**

Process: Any member of the community, regardless of their CapSciComm membership status (hereafter termed "complaint reporter"), can file a complaint regarding an individual with any member of the Executive Board they feel safe making the complaint to. If the person named in the complaint is another Executive Board member, the Board member hearing the complaint is authorized to notify the remaining Board members without knowledge of the individual named in the complaint.

Authority: The **Executive Board** has full authority to collect and review evidence, discuss, and decide to permanently revoke a membership, or designate a member of the community to be in poor standing and therefore ineligible for membership and/or attendance of public events. Reviews must be made by the full Executive Board, except where a member of the Executive Board has been named in complaint. Decisions must be heard by a meeting of the full Executive Board, and be of two-thirds majority vote.

Complainant Notice and Response: The **Executive Board** must announce the decision and rationale for sanction in writing to the individual named in the complaint (email is sufficient). The complainant may file a former protest in writing, to be kept in Board files permanently.

Enforcement: The Executive Board has full discretion whether to publicly announce any formal sanctions against an individual, although it is not required to. The Executive Board is authorized to alert Committee Chairs and any event or program organizer to assist in the enforcement of sanctioned individuals.

Addenda

Community Advisory Board

The Executive Board shall at some future time consider the idea of forming a Community Advisory Board.

Five Year Road Map 2020

The following timeline is for deliberation purposes only, and are not mandated actions.

2019
- Develop and finalize Organizational Revamp

2020
- Implement and Recruit Membership
- Implement Board Elections
- New Board Elected Under New Structure

2021
- Organize CapSciComm Local Conference (Proof of Concept for ScienceWriters)

2022
- Begin assessing possibility for bidding and hosting a NASW ScienceWriters conference

2023
- CapSciComm 10th Anniversary

Concise History

- **CapSciComm Established:** April 12, 2013 (Ben Young Landis, Becky Oskin, Lisa Auchincloss)
- **First Event Hosted:** June 20, 2013 (Bistro Michel, Sacramento)
- **Original Board Convened:** July 13, 2015 (de Vere's Irish Pub, Davis)
- **Original Board:**
  - Ben Young Landis, Executive Chair
  - Andrea Graffis, Managing Chair
  - Becky Oskin, Professional Membership Chair
  - Don Gibson, Student Membership Chair
  - Candace Spier Bever, Professional Development Chair
  - Nick Gray, Public Science Chair
  - Dharia McGrew, Capitol Chair