

MEETING OF THE NHERI USER FORUM COMMITTEE
February 7, 2022, 12:00pm Central

MINUTES

In Attendance: Mohammad, Stephanie Pilkington, Stephanie Paal, Liesel, Wei, Antonio, Maggie, Claudia, David, Yazen

1. Approval of meeting minutes from the Jan 12, 2022 meeting

Mohammad made a motion to approve the minutes: Wei seconds; no objections.

2. Report from User Satisfaction Survey committee

Maggie: Made progress on aggregating the User Satisfaction Module Data. Six facilities have submitted data to be included in the quantitative responses and two additional facilities (UCSD—did not have any users in the past year due to site upgrade and designsafe—in the process of doing their annual survey and will have data gathered by July) are still in the process of gathering their results. There are only 25 responses which is not high but consistent with past practice and observations. This implies that our next data gathering/aggregating activities will be critical in giving insights on how well the overall results will be. A high level of satisfaction is shown across the survey results for both quantitative and qualitative responses.

Antonio suggests changing the color so that red may raise a negative perception and green for positive.

Mohammad: NCO is asking if there is any site that has not responded yet and we can follow up through NCO requesting for further assistance.

3. Report from Technology Transfer representatives

Shane reached out to the TTC chair and included Yazen on the email list. The next meeting is scheduled for Feb 24. TTC was working on the interview process regarding the NSF recent grantees on their tech transfer abilities and needs. In this new calendar year, two subcommittees will be kicked off: one is to work alongside the PIs during the project development, and the other is going to develop a web-based tool to help with this collaboration. These are the topics to be discussed in the meeting for Feb 24.

Yazen confirmed that he has received the email message about the meeting.

4. Report from NCO representatives

Mohammad: The Science Plan Conference will take place in Virginia, on June 16-17, 2022. Is this conference by invitation only or will any UF members be attending this conference?

Antonio: This conference may be by invitation only as how it was done in the past. We can ask if UF members can be invited to attend the conference. The support of travel funds will also be a question. The agenda for the science plan conference is not finalized yet. It would be wise to include the UF member as one of the thrusts from NHERI to attract young researchers to navigate through the Science Plan and help with their future research development.

Mohammad: NCO will host two special sessions in The 14th Americas Conference on Wind Engineering, for NHERI REU alumni and NHERI graduate student council members to talk about NHERI REU programs.

Mohammad will work with Claudia on providing a written justification to support international travel for Claudia to attend the summer institute.

5. Report from ECO representatives

Stephanie Paal: ECO did not have a meeting.

Mohammad: The NEHRI REU program has a deadline of Feb 11 and please encourage students to apply. The graduate student council identified officers and leadership team and will have a run-off in February. Also, please circulate the words about summer institute among your colleagues.

6. Report from Facilities Scheduling representatives

Claudia: Only had a short meeting in facility committee. Share feedback and discuss the physical setups that people may be interested to see in the future in the conferences.

7. Updates on Communication and Outreach subcommittee

Stephanie Pilkington: provided a quick update that the subcommittee will meet this Thursday and will have more updates in our next meeting.

8. Action Item: Open discussion on ideas to improve UF

Item 1: outreach to young researchers and industry

Claudia: About having younger researchers share their experiences and help them to navigate through their independent research adventures. Suggest organizing regular sessions for young professionals to share their research experience and offer insights on their research developments (e.g., writing proposals).

Mohammad: Part of the objective that the science plan workshop tries to achieve is to pave the path for researchers to succeed in developing research proposals/plans that are of interest by funding agencies like NSF. But we can also talk to Stephanie and the communication and outreach subcommittee as an action item to organize bi-monthly or quarterly meetings on that topic.

Antonio: Also, one of the items in the summer institute is to invite recent NSF CAREER awardees to share their experience and success stories. We can suggest posting their presentations or podcasts on UF websites or through the communication and outreach subcommittee.

Claudia: Maybe we can even also share the links with industry to reach out to broader communities, and try to bridge the gap between academic and industry.

Mohammad: The gap between industry and academia, especially for newly graduated students, is large. It would be beneficial to explore this idea.

Antonio: Technology Transfer Committee helps to address this gap as well. Just keep in mind that these activities and ideas may take extra effort and step out of the scope of NHERI.

David: Something similar has been done in the past is to have senior researchers host office hours and junior faculty members can sign up and talk to them one-on-one to get their perspectives. That also is something that can be more easily organized.

Mohammad: We can ask Julio in an NCO meeting if we can ask the facility representatives to host bi-monthly or quarterly based office hours to answer questions from young researchers or researchers of interest and help with their proposal development. From the industry perspective, we can talk to Tech Transfer Committee, and ask if they organize

something similar—to have a practitioner host office hours to answer questions from young faculty members and senior graduate students, about needs in the industry and suggestions on their training directions.

Item 2: outreach to the general public with regular update

Wei: Another idea is that UF is in a unique position in NHERI as it includes members from all other NHERI committees. Therefore, UF is informed of all the important activities across NHERI. Is it possible for UF to compile a list of top-three or top-five important items (maybe quarterly) to inform potential NHERI users? This may help to address the issues discussed earlier better reach to junior faculty members and researchers to showcase what NHERI is working on. We can do this effort through the communication and outreach subcommittee. This may help UF to serve as a liaison between NHERI and the regular users.

Mohammad: NHERI does keep sending the latest information regularly through email and they have podcasts as well. One thing we can do is to inform users about these. NHERI has already done something similar and the important question is how we can help to improve them. Twitter and social media can help to the dissemination of such information because they can provide information succinctly. I like the idea related to the survey. I think we should be able to do more than just inform people that the survey is completed. We may be able to connect to the users more effectively about the survey and encourage their responses.

Antonio: The key here is not to repeat the work that has been done within NHERI, such as the newsletter and podcasts, because trying to do something independent may be redundant. But we can highlight some of the items of interest on the UF website. The survey is an interesting topic because the question is how we can engage the users better. My feeling is that there are lots of interests in i) how to develop a successful proposal and ii) how to effectively use NHERI data. Try to outreach to people and gauge their interests and highlight what has been developed in NHERI. UF can discuss more on if the communication and outreach subcommittee can take on some or all the items here.

Mohammad: The communication and outreach subcommittee can discuss possible options/items here. One is to have a podcast on UF activities and ask NCO to develop the

podcasts with UF members as one of the hosts and post them on UF website. Just keep in mind not to duplicate the existing effort from NHERI.

Item 3: A meeting with facility managers to inform survey results

Liesel: In addition to just sharing the report, suggest having a meeting with facility managers to provide an update on the survey results and get their buy-ins and feedback, maybe after the survey data is all consolidated and analyzed this July.

Mohammad: We can schedule such a meeting in one of the NCO meetings, or even in the summer institute where we usually present the survey results to facilities.

Antonio: I also suggest having a presentation during the summer institute for the council where all the facility PIs and Joy will be present.

Liesel: My suggestion is to provide the survey results directly to the facility managers, who directly collect the data, and to get their buy-in and support.

Antonio: Then we can bring this suggestion to the council and seek approval before we do that.

9. Others

Mohammad: I will reach out to Claudia to prepare the justification for the travel support to attend the summer institute.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm CT.