

Meetings Committee Zoom Meeting
September 29, 2022, 11 am Eastern

Able to Participate

Lincoln Lauhon, MTGC Chair
Stan Chou, MASC Chair
Ken Haenen, PDSC Chair
Eileen Kiley, MRS
Gopal Rao, MRS

Unable to Participate

Clemens Heske, NMSC Chair

MTGC Subcommittee Roster Recruitment

PDSC Chair Ken Haenen is working on recruitment for 5 new members; US membership needs to be built up. Cengiz Ozkan (UC Riverside) has expressed interest in the Meetings Committee and could be a possibility. Also Sabrina Sartori needs to be replaced since she is now vice president. He hasn't gotten a response from candidates in Asia.

Attendance at every PDSC meeting is not required; time zones make this a challenge for international PDSC members. Ken explained that the PDSC members generally phone in on calls requiring their area of expertise, or they provide input by email. He'll check the roster to see what members in what areas of expertise are rolling off.

Lincoln suggested that Deep Jariwala (Penn) of MASC would be good for PDSC; Gopal noted that Deep is currently busy finalizing his tenure application now.

Action Item: Share list of members leaving PDSC, their expertise and affiliation, and prospective candidates (Ken).

Ken doesn't hold separate PDSC meetings for Spring/Fall/IMRC as was done in the past. Given the emphasis on differentiation, he feels it's better if PDSC as a whole is engaged in both Spring and Fall.

Lincoln suggested that having a member migrate from MASC to PDSC is one way to facilitate integration of MTGC activities. Ken suggested having a member of one Subcommittee serve as a liaison to the other SC. Comment from Lincoln: MRS has used liaisons in the past. One challenge is that it effectively requires someone to serve on two committees.

If MASC Chair Stan Chou is interested in another area of MTGC or MASC when his term is done, he and Lincoln can discuss this separately.

Loucas Tsakalakos, former MASC Chair, will take over as MTGC Chair after Lincoln leaves.

Stan reported that Neville Moody's term ends after 12/31/22; Shayandev Sinha, Yaakov Idell, and Mrinmoy De are new members who are very engaged in the SC work. Lincoln suggests recruiting new members whose materials science backgrounds include proficiency with the relevant tools including data analysis.

Data Visualization

Lincoln observed that representation from members with knowledge of data visualization tools would

be helpful for analysis and communication with MASC stakeholders. This committee member would be in a position to guide relevant aspects of IT support. Gopal Rao suggested that members of the AI staging group might be MASC candidates.

Action Item: Recruit new member(s) to MASC with some expertise in data mining and visualization to guide relevant aspects of IT support for MASC. Review participants in AI staging group or other MRS events for potential candidates for MASC (Stan)

Sunsetting Hot Topics

We need to determine when the unsolicited proposal process is sufficient to maintain critical mass in a topic without guided solicitation by the Topical Staging Subcommittee and others. One definition of topical staging success is when we receive proposals that represent the frontier of an area and PDSC has appropriate representation.

Have Quantum and Bioelectronics matured to this point?

Suggestion for further discussion: One or two members could rotate to PDSC. Does PDSC have representation in the vibrant areas?

Clusters

PDSC asks how many symposia are needed to make a cluster? If you have 2 clusters with two symposium proposals, should they merge?

But some, such as quantum, AI or machine learning, are well populated. If it comes naturally out of its community, the Meeting Chairs should be made aware.

TCS suggested added a missing topic, metals, to the list. Having someone with that kind of expertise would be good at a meeting with the Meeting Chairs.

Lincoln would like to provide a simple explanation of how MRS brings new topics and communities into meetings, and how we are strategic about retaining important communities. Unsolicited proposals for PDSC have served MRS well. But communities have been lost and there is the perception that we lack agility.

Topical Staging provides representation in emerging areas. Topical Curation provides retention. There are both solicited proposals and guided efforts. It's successful when a cluster becomes self-sustaining.

Ken's view was that the TCS conversation helped the Meeting Chairs in identifying gaps in topics; addressing the matter of too many proposals comes later in the process. PDSC meets when proposals are more or less finalized. If PDSC addresses whether something is missing, it means going back to the Meeting Chairs. Should PDSC have the list of proposals earlier? Based just on titles, could they detect that something is missing?

Action Item: Decide whether PDSC should see the list of proposals early on, before the Chairs review the proposals (Ken/Gopal)

Lincoln recalled during his time on PDSC that topical curation retention was done live in the meeting with the expectation that PDSC expertise could manage it.

Topical Staging sees many proposals in an area. Maybe a transition needs to be defined to manage this more efficiently, when a staging group sunsets. The sunsetting is not being addressed.

HQ has to support the topical staging groups, which adds to the staffing burden. We need to begin sunsetting so that this issue is not left for Loucas to resolve.

Eileen Kiley confirmed that some of the groups were given extensions, partly due to COVID, but it's time now to make sunsetting decisions.

Who should be involved in this conversation? -Add TSS and TCS chairs to this group discussion, broaden Ken, Gopal and Lincoln; Eileen can be briefed.

Which area is ready for sunsetting? Quantum is on solid footing at the Meetings; they're now a separate cluster. Some bio areas, particularly bioelectronics, are also likely candidates.

If someone from that Staging Group goes to PDSC for a one-year transition, what other guidance would be needed to carry on?

Topical Staging will lead the discussion on sunsetting topical staging groups along with TSS Chair Babu Chalamala

Ken noted that PDSC has brought up the matter of how many clusters should there be at MRS Meetings? PDSC doesn't want the names of clusters to be frozen, but input is needed. For instance, characterization is important as a cluster. He has put this to the Meeting Chairs: If you have a cluster with 2 proposals, maybe there should be a merger. Do we want a cluster with so few proposals? Does a cluster need three proposals to be viable? Ken suggests that if there are only two proposals, the Meeting Chairs need to hunt for a third proposal.

Lincoln questioned whether Topical Curation regards having a Characterization Cluster as mandatory. We do believe that MRS should be a home for researchers working at the frontier of methods in materials science. Characterization can be looked at more broadly as a methodology, and is similar to AI and Computational materials science. The intent, if communicated effectively, is to provide a home.

Gopal supports revisiting how clusters are named and titled to see if there's a better way since this comes up often in discussions with Meeting Chairs.

We also discussed having PDSC exert more authority over the optimal number of clusters.

Differentiation and Clusters

Beth Stadler and Terry Aselage thought permanent clusters would be helpful in tracking differentiation. Is this the next MTGC conversation and who needs to be invited? Gopal recommends representation from the Society Agility Council, PDSC, and TCS: Julia, Bryan Huey, Ken, Lincoln. Al Hurd will be replacing Julia on TCS, so he needs to be invited.

This group needs to also discuss how PDSC relates to and is supported by TCS and TSS. Eileen recommended adding Beth Stadler, who is now on TCS, to the discussion.

Ken recalled this subject recurring when Beth chaired PDSC: Should we have well-defined clusters or should there be a limited number of clusters. Now it's up to the Meeting Chairs to define, with PDSC making suggestions.

This group needs to determine what is in the best interest of MRS given the charges to the Subcommittees. What are the boundary conditions in setting up the clusters? Can this be sensitive to giving the Meeting Chairs flexibility? Some boundaries are a little loose; the use of named clusters provides a framework for MRS.

Lincoln would like to put data visualization for a representation of what a successful cluster looks like over time for a longitudinal view.

Ken believes that there should be more joint sessions within a cluster. Is that data available? Which clusters have the most joint sessions? There are tools that would answer that question. This is more on the HQ side.

Action Item: Schedule meeting with Julia Phillips, Bryan Huey, Ken Haenen, Al Hurd, Beth Stadler to discuss clusters. The goal is to update guidance to Meeting Chairs on clusters and affirm PDSC's role in the process. Consider the cluster rationale, reasonable number, benefits of evolving rather than changing names, and what a successful cluster looks like. Consider Methods cluster calling out characterization, computation, simulation, and AI. (Gopal, HQ)

Meetings Assessment Subcommittee

MASC Chair Stan Chou reported on what's going well, what needs attention. One of the issues is how to approach differentiation in the surveys. MASC is gradually getting to the methodology with the questions that will deliver the answer.

MASC members are scrutinizing topics. It's not clear how attendee perceptions mesh with the topics.

The way that differentiation leans depends on topical perspective. MASC is set up to have a greater understanding of how Spring and Fall are differentiated in terms of the attendees. When we interview the Meeting Chairs, it's clear that they are not aware of the MRS strategy to develop differentiation. They tell us that the topics that are accepted are based on individual strength and Meeting Chair predilection. How do these strategic initiatives translate to these structures?

Now is a good time to understand what our key strategy and initiatives are and how to assess them.

The biggest gap is feedback to the Meeting Chairs; a bridge to PDSC might be an artificial way to influence this.

Lincoln asks if success with differentiation is possible even if the Meeting Chairs don't remember that this was a topic of conversation early in their process? He feels they'll accept this because they're overwhelmed at the beginning, so understanding this as an established way of doing things will be accepted. Some of this depends on the messaging.

Does differentiation need to be the term used? We might be successful by educating the Meeting Chairs on the way we think about it. There are biases in the process that don't require them to make what we call "correct decisions". They would retain the freedom with differentiation set up within the framework that we want.

Stan sees a need for guidance on topics that slant toward differentiation. The Chairs pick topics based on what's hot and where their personal research areas slant toward.

Ken said that PDSC tells them at the start that MRS wants diversification. We can't tell them to look at only one aspect of MXene, for example, but it's difficult to divide sometimes to differentiate between applied and fundamental.

The survey reviewed by the consultant was mainly perceptual, with perceptions established when the Spring Meeting was held in San Francisco.

Lincoln feels that, if after MASC analysis, it's regarded as 80% perceptual and 20% reality, there's a marketing problem, which is easier to address. This may get mixed up in 2023 with the Spring Meeting back in San Francisco. Will microelectronics and the Bay Area be a factor, as has historically been the case?

Another topic for MASC is the artificial classification of fundamental vs applied for Symposium Organizers who are not necessarily aware of the differentiation background. This may also be a marketing issue, or it may need nudging to force it in a specific direction.

Gopal finds it interesting that the Meeting Chairs aren't paying attention to differentiation; he attributes this to information overload.

Stan has noticed that the Symposium Organizers aren't aware of differentiation either. How can we make them aware of it? We know the Meeting Chairs aren't selected according to a fundamental or applied basis.

Topics for the next meeting:

Support for data analysis; Lincoln and Gopal will talk about this.

Subcommittee interaction

TCS and TSS giving input to PDSC and the Meeting Chairs

Are good decisions made? This is where the Meetings Assessment Subcommittee enters. Part of this is explaining how they can achieve broader goals.

MTGC members are asked to let Lincoln know if there are other emerging strategic areas to discuss.

Ideas for following up on PDSC/TCS/TSS leaders working out the question of when to transition topical staging and when topical curation is called upon.

Revisiting cluster names:

What purpose do they serve and what is the right number of clusters?

What does a good cluster look like from a data perspective?

What is a hot topic?

If not for direct solicitation, would it be represented?

Transition when there is representation without direction

Can we look at Quantum and parts of Bio?

What data do we need to look at?

Number of symposia

Number of abstracts

Attendance

Solicited versus unsolicited proposals over time

Having a data perspective is important for this kind of discussion.

Lincoln hasn't heard updates on progress on this area. He's doubtful that he can offer delivery on the charges and whether they worked. What's the state of the conversation?

Gopal reported that he's been involved in discussions regarding data analysis with the MRS IT Department and the vendor that provides support. There are two aspects: 1) budgetary ones at Eileen's level; 2) MRS is looking to replace our IT vendor in 2023. A different group might be needed for providing support.

Lincoln asked what is the fraction of the IT effort that would be part of his requesting? Gopal very roughly estimates 10% but this would need to be verified. Lincoln doesn't see a need to be involved with the choice of vendor, but he'd like to weigh in in terms of writing the requirements for writing the contract.

Lincoln referred to Tableau as an interface that enables nonexpert users to interact with data in a useful way. Committee members could view data and interact with it rather than having static charts.

Gopal said that the present IT support group has offered a solution but it's not something that can be tested. Gopal will send the information to Lincoln, along with updates on several other things. He reported that there's a plan for reusing past tutorials—S21 tutorial on Piezoelectronics and one on Self-Assembly Methods and Microscopy Techniques—as webinars for MRS members to view.

Lincoln is interested in how these projects are being scheduled and marketed in terms of broadening participation in Africa and other places. What does MRS expect regarding outcomes?