

ARCSS Committee Message to the Community
Update on ARCSS Program Planning and Upcoming Community Events
ARCSS Note #4

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to update you on recent ARCSS Program activities and discussions. As you may know from previous communications from the ARCSS Committee (<http://www.arcus.org/ARCSS/message.html>), the ARCSS Program structure is changing to facilitate a focus on system-level research and to continue fostering strong interdisciplinary collaboration. We actively seek your input and have planned a series of activities to encourage community involvement.

Since the 31 January message from the ARCSS Committee, two important planning activities have taken place. The first, an ARCSS community webconference (<http://www.arcus.org/ARCSS/webseminars/index.html>), was held on 4 March via an Internet-based conferencing platform, which made possible a widely accessible open forum for discussion of ARCSS research priorities and plans for community input. Forty-seven people participated in this electronic meeting, with productive group discussion that provided valuable input and suggestions regarding the ongoing ARCSS community development.

The second recent ARCSS planning activity was the ARCSS Committee meeting (http://www.arcus.org/ARCSS/2005_DC/index.html) held in Arlington, VA, 8-10 March. During the first morning of the meeting, several representatives from the arctic research community presented information on existing or proposed system-focused research activities. During the remainder of the meeting, the ARCSS Committee sketched out many of the details of the community planning and science management structure and the process through which ARCSS science priorities will be developed. Community input was incorporated into these discussions through the ARCSS online surveys, the 4 March webconference, and through representatives at the meeting.

The science planning process now being implemented will begin with the formation of "Communities of Practice," groups of researchers (legacy, disciplinary, or interdisciplinary) who organize around a set of arctic system science questions. Communities of Practice (COP) could be conceived as existing groups of researchers already working together on scientific issues. For example, a COP might focus on carbon flux, the impact of rapid change on various sub-systems or, from an ARCSS Program perspective, be similar to the interdisciplinary groups that worked together on SHEBA or GISP2 themes; any group coalescing around an arctic-system relevant science question could be considered a COP. The ARCSS Committee and ARCUS (through the ARCSS Science Management Office) will work with these Communities of Practice and the broader research community to develop, review, and refine COP-generated science questions that align with and advance ARCSS Program goals. The ARCSS Committee will then recommend a set of COP-developed science questions to NSF as ARCSS science priorities.

A draft diagram and description of the ARCSS Program science planning process as envisioned is available on the ARCSS website at: <http://www.arcus.org/arcss/communityplanning.html> We

invite you to review this information, and bring your ideas and suggestions on further refinements to one of the upcoming April webconferences - now called eTown Meetings - scheduled for Friday, 22 April and Tuesday, 26 April 2005. The April eTown Meetings are being hosted by the ARCSS Committee to get your input; register now to participate: http://www.arcus.org/ARCSS/etm/April_05/.

For those unable to attend either of the April eTown Meetings, an online survey is available at http://www.arcus.org/ARCSS/survey_feedback.html for comments, ideas, and concerns regarding the ARCSS Program activities. We also welcome comments via email or phone. Additional details about the eTown Meetings and the related online survey will be distributed through the ARCSS listserv and website.

Although some of the ARCSS Program activities are driven by budget realities and emerging national and international priorities, we are excited about the scientific opportunities inherent in the move toward a more integrative science of the Arctic. We want to hear your ideas and concerns, and look forward to working with all of you to ensure an engaged community of researchers and a vigorous research program working towards a better understanding of the arctic system.

ARCSS Committee:

Jonathan Overpeck, AC chair jto@u.arizona.edu
Jennifer Francis, francis@imcs.rutgers.edu
Marika Holland, mholland@cgd.ucar.edu
Glen MacDonald, macdonal@geog.ucla.edu
Craig Nicolson, craign@forwild.umass.edu
Don Perovich, donald.k.perovich@erdc.usace.army.mil
Mark Serreze, serreze@kryos.colorado.edu
Matthew Sturm, msturm@crrel.usace.army.mil
Charlie Vörösmarty, charles.vorosmarty@unh.edu
John Weatherly, John.W.Weatherly@erdc.usace.army.mil