



AMS Advisory Board Update

March 24th, 2021

For the first time in a few years, the AMS has held consistent meetings of its Advisory Board structure with relative success. This past year, we've had a number of discussions that have touched on the following topics:

- COVID-19 Responses
- Adapting Businesses to the Pandemic
- HR Recruitment and Hiring Practices
- Discussion on Updates to the AMS Budget
- AMS Fees and Funds
- Creating Better Formatted Budgets Moving Forward
- Governance and Strategy

Most meetings this year have followed a different structure and format than what is outlined in AMS Code as the group felt that there were more efficient ways of conducting business that would also have greater impact. Last meeting, we had a discussion to reflect on the past year and here were some of the pieces of feedback that were outlined by the AMS Executive:

- The Advisory Board has been helpful for providing informal advice.
- Quarterly meetings are too infrequent.
- Executives not involved with internal finances (External, AUA) unsure of how to contribute to meetings discussing business operations.
- Hoping to get more feedback from the Advisory Board on advocacy related topics.
- Discussions with the Advisory Board around preliminary decisions (ex. Finance, budgeting) has been helpful, but timing of infrequent meetings does not always align with when these decisions need to be made.

Based on what we've learned from the past year, as well as considering feedback from all Advisory Board members, the President has compiled this list of recommendations/action items.

Recommendations

More Frequent Meetings

The current quarterly meeting schedule presents challenges in a number of areas:

- Relevance of agenda topics.
- Building relationships between Executives and Advisory Board members.
- Difficult for AMS Council to refer items to the Advisory Board if the next meeting isn't for another 8-12 weeks.

Based on these challenges, we are going to look at moving to a more frequent meeting schedule, perhaps on a every 4 to 8 week basis.

Code Changes to move to Extraordinary Committee Model

The current terms of reference for the Advisory Board in AMS Code are not entirely relevant to how the body has functioned this year. There are a lot of prescriptive elements that take away from the value that members have seen in the informality of meetings.

To create a model that is simple, sustainable, and clear in its objectives, we are hoping to explore making code changes that adopt a model similar to AMS Extraordinary Committees. This model will also allow the Advisory Board to have a more defined role in the scope of the Society's governance structure. Additionally, since there has been success with the Advisory Board being chaired by the President, we will need to re-look at what reporting to AMS Council might look like.

The goal is to bring proposed Code changes to AMS Council before the end of April.

Advisory Board Newsletter

Members of the Advisory Board pointed out that it would be helpful to stay up to date with the activities of the Society by receiving frequent updates outside of the meeting setting. Members noted that they had experience with similar practices in other organizations.

The Advisory Board will endeavour to see how to most effectively set this up within the other reporting demands of AMS Executives and staff. There may be the possibility of including this as part of a larger overall reporting overhaul.

Fostering Informal Executive/Member Relationships

The Advisory Board has frequently discussed the value in Executives being able to utilize members outside of a meeting setting for advice and guidance on a variety of issues.

Some of the following ideas were discussed at the most recent meeting of the Advisory Board:

Transitional meetings with new Executives

- Break out into smaller groups or breakout rooms (if on Zoom). Have an executive lead each room and discuss topics like finance, advocacy and get to know each AB member on a deeper level, rather than giving brief introductions.

Initial interview/poll of Advisory Board specialities

- Survey the AB on their areas of expertise and topics they would be comfortable advising on

- Execs can access this information to decide who to connect with individually on certain issues

Seeking Help in Decision-Making

Looking to create habits of consulting with Advisory Board members on major decisions on an ad-hoc basis.

The following was an example of what could be done, suggested by members of the Advisory Board.

- When exec is in the process of making a decision, send out a survey with 3 questions:
 - The decision they are looking to make
 - Have board members rate the decision on a scale of -10 to 10
 - Provide context for answer in comment/feedback section
- Comments can prompt a new way of thinking or a new perspective for the Exec.
- Execs can connect with certain members on an individual level if they want to further the discussion.