

# National HAB Committee Bylaws

## I. Purpose

The National HAB Committee (NHC) has been established for the purpose of providing a collective voice of the academic, management and stakeholder communities interested in national HAB issues. The need for such a committee was identified in HARRNESS (*Harmful Algal Research and Response: A National Environmental Science Strategy* (2005)) - the U.S. National Program for HABs.

## II. Composition of the Committee

The committee shall be composed of 15 regular (voting) members, as well as up to 25 ex officio members representing organizations with a demonstrated interest in harmful algal bloom issues, including federal, state, and local government agencies as well as non-profit organizations. The Ex officio membership shall also include a postdoctoral investigator involved in HAB research. Membership is limited to those affiliated with a US institution and who work in support of HAB issues in the US. Federal employees who do not have significant control over the allocation of external research funding may be elected and serve as regular, voting members. Federal agency representatives may also serve as ex officio members of the committee (full voice, but without vote). Regular members of the committee shall, collectively, represent the various disciplinary interests of the HAB community, including, but not limited to, bloom ecology and dynamics, food webs and fisheries, toxins and their effects, public health, and socioeconomic impacts. Regular members of the committee shall, furthermore, represent the range of geographic regions impacted by HABs. Regular members of the committee are to represent the HAB community as a whole and not just their particular geographic area or research discipline. Administrative support from the National HAB Office shall be provided, and this representative shall be ex officio (non voting) to the committee. The Director of the National HAB Office shall also be ex officio to the committee.

HARRNESS identifies the following desirable characteristics of the NHC as a whole: (1) community based; (2) recognizable to the agencies; (3) knowledgeable about organizational issues; and (4) scientifically and technically credible.

## III. Elections and terms of office

Regular members shall serve for a term of three (3) years, with approximately one-third (1/3) of the committee rotating every year. Regular members may be re-elected but may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. After a regular member's term(s) has ended, they are ineligible for nomination to the NHC for a period of one [1] year).

Elections shall be undertaken by the National HAB Office, initiated by a call for nominations, posted on the website and via a broadly-based HAB community e-mail list beginning **1 May**

every year. The standing committee shall provide some guidance as to priority needs and gaps in representation due to membership rotation. NHC Chairs cannot nominate individuals to serve on the Committee. A nomination form shall be submitted including candidate's name, institution or affiliation, general interest areas, and a statement of willingness to serve. Self-nominations are welcome. Nominations will close on **1 June**. The list of nominees will subsequently be forwarded to all standing committee members, including those rotating off, and each regular member (not *ex officio*) will cast votes totaling the number of new members to be elected. Elections for new members shall be by secret ballot. All terms shall be from **1 July**. Should a member resign before their term has expired, that position may remain open until the next annual call for nominees.

*Ex officio* members serve as representatives of organizations with a demonstrated interest in harmful algal bloom issues, including federal, state, and local government agencies as well as non-profit organizations. This non-voting group will communicate information about organization-specific programs, priorities, interests, capacities, and future foci relevant to harmful algae to the NHC. In turn, the *Ex Officio* members will relay pertinent NHC discussions, recommendations, and community-identified priorities to their organizations to encourage within-organization considerations of harmful algal bloom issues in planning and organization-community dialog, initiative formulation, workshops, forums, and conferences. *Ex Officio* members can assist in identifying other organization staff with appropriate expertise/familiarity to periodically provide input on organization-specific topics of interest to the NHC.

*Ex officio* members are invited to serve two-year renewable terms, with the exception of the post-doctoral researcher, who will serve a one-year renewable term. The NHC co-chairs will review annually the *ex officio* membership and make appropriate recommendations for rotations. Nominations from governmental and non-profit organizations will be considered on an as-needed basis, and elected by vote of the regular members. Nominations for a postdoctoral researcher to serve in *ex officio* member will be solicited every two years during the election of regular members.

All *Ex Officio* members will be invited to attend NHC meetings to insure familiarity with national community issues and assure organization-community communication. Further, members will be expected to read all electronic correspondence relative to each NHC teleconference call or meeting and participate as often as possible.

A Chair of the committee shall be elected by vote of the regular members. The current chair or their designee will seek nominations and conduct the election. Elections for Committee Chair shall take place one (1) year in advance of term of office. The timing of the election will immediately follow election of new members (**1 July**). The Chair shall serve a term of three (3) years, and may be elected for a second term. The committee may choose to elect co-chairs. After a (co)Chair's term(s) has ended, they will serve in an *ex officio* capacity during the newly-elected (co)Chair's term(s). After each election for new (co)Chair(s), the (co)Chair(s) in *ex officio* will rotate off the committee and will not be eligible for re-election to the NHC as a regular member for a period of one (1) year.

If a co-Chair steps down or is unable to fulfill the term of service, the other co-Chair will serve as sole NHC Chair for the term duration. If a sole Committee Chair steps down or is unable to serve, an ad hoc election will be held to appoint a new Chair or co-Chairs. Interim leadership will be provided from one of the former Chairs while the ad hoc election is taking place. This interim Chair will be selected by the Executive Committee, and will serve as Acting Chair until the election is complete. Advice and support will be provided to the sole Chair or co-Chairs as-needed by the Executive Committee for the term duration.

The current Chair (or co-chairs) serves on the NHC Executive Committee. Additional members include the immediate past Chair (or co-Chairs) who shall serve for a period of two years, until a new Chair-Elect (or co-Chairs-Elect) are designated. If the term(s) of the past Chair (or co-Chairs) have expired, they shall be appointed to an *ex officio* capacity for this duration. Thus, these individuals will not limit additional members from joining the Committee, but will still be able to provide advice. When a new Chair (or co-Chair) is elected, this individual (s) shall also serve on the Executive Committee. In the event that co-Chairs are reelected, a member of the Committee will be selected to serve on the Executive Committee as a member at large until a new Chair elect is on board. This will avoid the potential problem of the Executive Committee becoming too large.

## **Functioning of the Committee and Terms of Reference**

The committee will perform its responsibilities through meetings, conference calls and/or electronic correspondence.

Committee members must be present (either at an in-person meeting or at a conference call) to vote. A quorum is required for a vote to be valid - herein defined as more than 50% of the regular membership. Votes will be decided by simple majority. Only regular and *ex officio* members may attend regular meetings.

Ad hoc sub committees may be formed, the composition of which may include members not on the NHC. All ad hoc sub committees shall include at least one member of the NHC whose responsibility shall be to report back to the NHC. The objectives and composition of subcommittees will be reviewed every two years. Subcommittee chairs will provide updates at regular meetings and conference calls.

No NHC member may represent the NHC on any issue unless it has been discussed in advance by the committee and a position agreed upon by the committee.

The NHC will:

- Facilitate implementation of HARRNESS and garner support among all stakeholders;
- Interface with the Interagency HAB Task Force, described in the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act 1998,2004, or any body designated to act as the Interagency HAB Task Force;

- Foster communication among all components of the HAB community and communicate these activities through the National HAB Office, through oral reports at the biennial National HAB Symposium, and through listserves and websites as appropriate;
- Establish and promote interactions with related national and international programs by interfacing with related national and international initiatives, such as GEOHAB, IOOS, GOOS, CUAHSI, CLEANER, NEON, and ORION;
- Respond to requests from Congress or federal and state entities for information or guidance on HAB issues;
- Respond to other stakeholders as appropriate
- Lead development of future National HAB Plans as needed
- Form ad hoc technical advisory committees as needed to address issues or requests; and
- Raise the visibility and understanding of HAB issues nationally

## **V. Revision of this document**

Revisions to this document will require 2/3 vote of the regular membership of the NHC. HAB community comments are encouraged and will be accepted at any time for consideration at subsequent NHC meetings. The NHC will make all reasonable efforts to solicit comments on proposed revisions from the broader HAB community prior to a vote on revisions to this document.

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*The above document approved by the National HAB committee, October, 2013, and revised October, 2021.*