

USNC-URSI Executive Council Meeting

Boulder, CO

Friday, Jan. 12, 2024, 06:15 MST – 08:00 MST

AGENDA

- Call to Order (Simpson)
- Discussion and approval of the agenda (Simpson)
- 2024 NRSM: Statistics, Comments, and Suggestions (Simpson)
- Commission Business Reports (Anderson)
- Student Program Plans (Topsakal / Kiourti)
- 2025 / 2026 NRSM Planning, Plenary, and Special Sessions (Simpson)
- Other Items for Discussion (All)
- Adjournment

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by USNC-URSI Chair Jamesina Simpson at 6:31am MST.

Chair Simpson presented the agenda, Gary Brown moved to approve the agenda, Dev Palmer seconded. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

2024 NRSM Update: Jamesina Simpson

Chair Simpson presented the final attendance numbers and noted that attendance at the 2024 NRSM increased over 2023 but was still below our peak in 2019.

A member noted that more than half of the attendees were students.

A member asked why more sessions were required in the 2024 NRSM if we had lower attendance and fewer submissions. Chair Simpson explained that we had a lot of over-filled sessions this year (6 paper half-sessions instead of 5; 11-paper full-sessions instead of 10).

Commission Business Meeting Results: Chris Anderson

USNC-URSI Secretary/Chair-Elect Anderson presented the results from the Commission Business Meetings. The key points of discussion are presented below.

2025 NRSM in Boulder

On the question of whether to hold the 2025 NRSM in Boulder in the same year as the North American Radio Science Meeting (NARSM): From the feedback of the commission meetings, 4 Commissions were in Favor, 2 were Against, 2 were Undecided.

After presenting the results, a lively discussion ensued. Historically USNC did not hold the NRSM in the same year as NARSM due to USNC's desire to support the Canadian National Committee (CNC-URSI). It was noted by a member that the CNC was in a much healthier position in terms of finances and membership now than in the past and may not need our guaranteed attendance support.

Several members noted that some international students, depending on visa status, may not be able to leave the U.S. to attend the NARSM. A member provided more information on their experience with how the various visa statuses work, where students can get in a bind, and how the approval process could get delayed.

A member noted that the historical precedent was that all commissions are required to participate in the NARSM. However, it is currently unknown as to whether participation is a codified requirement or has simply been established precedence over the years.

Commission A noted their Commission was split, but generally was in favor of keeping momentum and consistency in holding the NRSM. Commission J was strongly in favor of holding the NRSM because finally the AAS does not overlap with the NRSM in 2025.

Commission B noted that USNC has limited student travel support and likely would not have sufficient funding to support student attendance at both NRSM and NARSM. If USNC supports the typical 80 students to NRSM then USNC would not have enough funding to support student travel to NARSM. A member noted that the current \$750 maximum travel support is small relative to international travel costs. Even then, however, USNC has limited funds and may not be able to support student attendance at both events.

A member noted that we successfully managed our finances during the pandemic and are financially healthy. USNC has been good stewards of our funding and should have enough to support students – maybe not every student wishing to attend NARSM, but perhaps some subset.

The member's point precipitated a discussion about the revenue USNC should expect from the AP-S conference in Italy. The MOU between AP-S and USNC calls for revenue from AP-S conferences held outside North America to be split between AP-S and USNC according to the ratio of papers accepted to AP-S and URSI topics, respectively. In 2025, the host country's national committee is a co-sponsor for the first time, and USNC has already agreed to split the URSI share of the surplus equally between the two NCs. With the current AP-S conference being the 75th anniversary, several lavish celebrations were being planned, thus the overall conference revenue may be reduced. A member suggested that, for planning purposes, USNC budget \$0 in distributions and be pleasantly surprised if a positive surplus is received. Another member noted that adding more sponsors to the NRSM would alleviate these financial concerns. Some discussion ensued about getting members to serve on the sponsorship committee and reaching out to potential sponsors. It was suggested that perhaps NASEM could help us create a flyer that we could use to advertise the value of NRSM to potential sponsors.

Returning to the discussion on the NARSM, a member asked how many students USNC would be able to support traveling to Canada. USNC tries to support all students, especially those that are first-time attendees. Although USNC has never established a cap, notionally we budget to support 100 students per year.

A member noted that maintaining post-pandemic momentum in the NRSM is a very compelling reason to hold the meeting in 2025. A short discussion ensued revisiting the topic of attracting more sponsors.

Jon Chisum moved to hold the meeting in 2025, Tom Gaussiran seconded. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Workshops and Short Courses

Secretary Anderson reviewed workshop and short course ideas from the Commissions and noted that several good ideas were presented. He also noted that for the 2024 NRSM, we had an open

call for workshops and short courses, which alleviated some of the pressure from Commission chairs to poll their commission for ideas and submissions.

A member suggested that Commission chairs consider being proactive in asking members that might create interesting and valuable tutorials rather than simply waiting for them to volunteer.

A member noted that some short courses require a significant time investment to create and asked whether some form of compensation could be offered by USNC to the organizers. A discussion ensued about a reasonable offer, with the consensus being a discounted or free registration. The Executive Committee took as an action item to discuss further and determine an appropriate amount.

A brief discussion ensued about the cost of registration and the conference banquet. Chair Simpson noted that registration costs were higher this year because of the banquet, which was a significant component of the overall conference cost. A vibrant discussion ensued about whether to continue holding a conference banquet or revert to the reception, and the Executive Committee took an action item to discuss for planning the 2025 NRSM.

Plenary Session Ideas

Secretary Anderson reviewed plenary session ideas from the Commissions and noted that the emphasis was on spectrum and interference issues. A member suggested trying to find dynamic speakers and perhaps creating a panel session with contrasting opinions on spectrum from active and passive communities.

Another member noted that it might be good to start the NRSM with a plenary speaker, similar to a keynote address. That would also allow us to have a general welcome address and opportunity to provide last-minute conference announcements.

Commission Meetings

A member asked about scheduling Commission business meetings, which started a discussion about timing and overlap of business meetings. A member suggested that having a time gap between the end of the conference and the start of a Commission business meeting was not ideal. It was noted that Commission meetings are staggered so that members of multiple Commissions have an opportunity to attend more than one business meeting.

A member noted that having a presentation template from the USNC Chair was extremely useful in organizing their business meetings. Another member noted that Commission sizes vary significantly, with some being very small and others very large and active. The smaller Commissions thrive on special sessions to get people interested; the larger Commissions have several ancillary leadership positions to help manage large volume of paper reviews.

Social Media

Secretary Anderson noted that only one volunteer was provided from among all the Commission reports. All Commissions agreed that social media outreach was important.

A member noted that social media outreach in 2024 is almost a part-time job, noting that none of the student or early career members in their Commission were interested or willing to serve. Several Commissions noted that it takes a dedicated person to manage the Social Media interactions. A member noted that social media should really be orchestrated at a higher level, possibly as a paid position within NASEM.

A member noted that a key issue USNC is facing is that the NRSM website is archaic and is not regularly updated. Thus, no content is being generated for a social media person to post, repost, or blog about. The member noted that a first start would be making the website more attractive, informative, and interactive. It was also noted that the current website is not mobile-compatible.

A further discussion ensued regarding the use of conference apps. Many members noted that conference apps can be buggy and crash and cost additional funds. It was noted that the CU Boulder Conference Management team wants to suggest an integrated conference management system that we could use going forward that would help address some of these issues.

Other Feedback

In reviewing Commission feedback, the group noted a recurring theme that the value proposition and message of attending the NRSM was being inadequately communicated to our members. As noted in the Business Meeting, NRSM offers a smaller, more focused environment where attendees can interact with other researchers that are passionate about their work. NRSM also offers an environment where works in progress are encouraged, allowing researchers to receive feedback at an early stage.

It was noted by several members that USNC needs to capture that value proposition and ensure that message is being communicated to members, potential members, and conference attendees.

Commission Descriptions

Chair Simpson requested that Commission officers review and update their Commission descriptions.

A discussion ensued about new membership additions and applications. It was noted that more than one membership form and submission process exists, depending on whether people go directly to the (correct) form or simply Google it, which leads to an outdated (incorrect) form. Secretary Anderson took an action item to attempt to remove the incorrect form.

It was noted that the membership application process is to download the (correct) membership application form and email it to the Commission chair and Secretary Anderson. The Commission Chair can take email votes or vote in person to admit the new member to Commission. Chairs can then add the person to their membership list and notify Secretary Anderson. Secretary Anderson will email NASEM so they can process the new members and send them a welcome packet.

Tom Gaussiran motioned to adjourn, Alyson Ford seconded, the motion was passed with unanimous consent. Chair Simpson adjourned at 7:51am MST.