

Gemini Observatory Science and Technology Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

Updated June 4, 2020

The Gemini Science and Technology Advisory Committee (STAC) is established as an advisory committee under the responsibility of the Gemini Board (hereafter, the Board) and reporting to the Board. The STAC shall:

1. Advise the Board on policy matters of long-range scientific and technical importance related to the planning and operation of the Gemini Observatory.
2. Advise the Board on scientific priorities for projects and programs, instrumentation and other major equipment, maintenance, upgrades, and operations of Gemini facilities as requested by the Board, the Gemini Director, or on its own initiative.
3. Keep the Board informed of the long-term scientific plans and priorities of the astronomical communities represented within the Gemini partnership
4. Assist the Board and the Gemini Director, through the National Gemini Offices, in keeping partner communities well informed as to the status, background and motivation for the Gemini Observatory's scientific and technical planning.
5. Assist the Gemini Observatory in planning and executing specific scientific programs by collaborating with the Gemini Director in appointing specialist Instrument Science Teams who will monitor and report on progress to the STAC. The role and composition of such instrument teams is detailed further below.
6. Propose to the Board and Gemini Director the creation of ad-hoc subcommittees for specific topics as required by the Gemini planning process.

Structure and Membership:

1. The STAC composition will reflect the Participants' shares, in the same proportion used for the Board:
 - 6 members appointed by NSF to represent the US
 - 2 members appointed by NRC to represent Canada
 - 1 member appointed by MCTI to represent Argentina
 - 1 member appointed by MCTIP to represent Brazil
 - 1 member appointed by KASI to represent Korea
 - 1 member appointed by ANID to represent Chile as a host
 - 1 member appointed by UH to represent Hawai'i as a host

Participants with one member may designate an alternate. The Designated Board members representing each Participant/host are responsible for keeping track of the terms of their STAC representatives, and for identifying and contacting new STAC member(s) when the term of the current member(s) expires. Each Designated Board member will inform the Board of their choice of new STAC member(s) at the Board meeting preceding the last meeting of the outgoing STAC member.

2. The term of membership on the STAC shall be three years, renewable to a second term. Terms should be staggered to ensure continuity and avoid having a large fraction of the STAC rotating off at the same time.
3. The STAC membership should ensure a good coverage of relevant astronomical disciplines and techniques. In appointing STAC members, the Participants/host should strive to achieve a diverse and inclusive composition that should be representative of the astronomy community as a whole.

STAC Chair and Deputy Chair:

1. The STAC Chair does not represent any specific Participant and is not to be counted against the numerical STAC representation given above.
2. The STAC chair is appointed annually by the Board for a period of no more than three consecutive years, according to the following procedure:
 - a. No later than one month prior to the Board meeting preceding the end of the term of the current STAC Chair, Board members, in consultation with the STAC, shall forward nominations for the next Chair to the Board Executive Secretary, who will collect them and then distribute them to the Board. The Executive Secretary will remind the Board of this procedure two months ahead of the relevant Board meeting.
 - b. The nominations will be discussed by the Board at the following meeting, at which time a new Chair will be appointed, or the term of the current Chair renewed, by majority vote.
3. If the STAC Chair is selected from a STAC member in their second term, his/her term of membership can be extended to allow for a possible three year term as Chair.
4. The STAC will elect from its members a Deputy Chair. The Deputy will assist the Chair in discharging their duties, and replace the Chair when the latter is unavailable or unable to carry out their tasks (e.g. preside over a meeting or coordinate the STAC). The Deputy Chair does represent a Participant and is counted towards the numerical STAC representation given above.

Functioning:

1. The STAC will normally meet twice a year, or more frequently at the request of the Board or as called by the STAC Chair.
2. The STAC is convened by its Chair who sets the Draft Agenda in consultation with the Gemini Director and the Board Chair.
3. The Gemini Director and members of the Management Team will attend all STAC meetings and provide reports and input as required.
4. Following STAC meetings, draft recommendations to the Board will be finalized via discussions between the STAC Chair and the Gemini Director.
5. The STAC provides recommendations and conclusions to the Board through the STAC Chair and, where required by legal agreements, through the Gemini Director.
6. The STAC can set up standing or ad-hoc subcommittees in consultation and agreement with the Gemini Director and the Board Chair. These subcommittees will contain a core

STAC member and external experts as required. These committees will be chaired by a STAC member and could involve members of the Gemini Directorate (or delegates) as required.

Instrument Science Teams:

An Instrument Science Team (IST) should be formed for each new facility instrument project to ensure there is a good connection between the desires of the Gemini user community for a given instrument and the performance of the delivered instrument. ISTs could also be constituted, in consultation with the instrument team, in the case of Transitional Instruments. The IST will consist of at least one STAC member and invited members from the user community. The IST will work with the Observatory to define and confirm the science requirements for the instrument in its design phase. The IST will follow the development of the instrument via receiving regular reports on progress as part of the normal STAC reporting process. The IST will also define a science verification program designed to demonstrate the capabilities of the instrument. This program will be executed (in coordination with the Observatory) after commissioning and before the instrument is offered for regular operations, and the data will be made public immediately following the completion of the program and appropriate reductions by the IST. The IST will report on the outcomes of the science verification program at the next regularly scheduled STAC meeting and, at that point, would formally conclude its work.