

## USNC-URSI Business Meeting

Boulder, CO

Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024, 17:00 MST

### AGENDA

1. Welcome and thank you for everyone's service during the past triennium! (Simpson, 15:00, 5 min)
2. URSI
  - a. URSI Overview (Simpson, 15:05, 5 min.)
  - b. URSI Officer Introductions (Simpson, 15:10, 5 min.)
  - c. Report by the URSI Past President (Uslenghi, 15:15, 5 min.)
  - d. 2023 URSI GASS Report (Newkirk, 15:20, 5 min.)
3. USNC-URSI
  - a. USNC-URSI Overview (Simpson, 15:25, 5 min.)
  - b. BISO & NASEM Introductions (Simpson, 15:30, 5 min.)
  - c. Update from the BISO Director (Kosti, 15:35, 5 min.)
  - d. Update from the NASEM Representative (Ferrerias, 15:40, 5 min.)
  - e. USNC-URSI Chair Introductions (Jamesina, Mike, and Chris, 15:45, 5 min.)
  - f. Operating Manual (Simpson, 15:50, 5 min.)
4. Commission Chairs
  - a. Commission Chairs Introductions (Simpson, 15:55, 10 min.)
  - b. Commission Chair Slides and Activity (Simpson, 16:05, 20 min.)
  - c. Commission Operating Manuals (Simpson, 16:25, 5 min.)

### DINNER (16:30 – 17:00)

5. Society Representatives
  - a. Overview (from operating manual) (Simpson, 17:00, 5 min.)
  - b. Society Representative Introductions (Society Reps, 17:05, 5 min.)
  - c. Society Representative Presentations & Discussions (Society Reps, 17:10, 15 min.)
6. Government Representatives
  - a. Overview (from operating manual) (Simpson, 17:25, 5 min.)
  - b. Government Representative Introductions (Gov. reps, 17:30, 5 min.)
  - c. Government Representative Slides and Discussion (Gov. reps, 17:35, 5 min.)
7. 2024 NRSM Results (Simpson, 7:40, 5 min.)
8. USNC-URSI Chapters and Sub-Committees
  - a. Women in Radio Science Update (Popovic, 7:45, 5 min.)
  - b. Sponsors & Exhibitors Update (Noghianian, 7:50, 5 min.)
  - c. Workshops and Short Courses Update (Chisum, 7:55, 5 min.)

- d. Student Paper Competition Update (Topsakal and Kiourti, 8:00, 5 min.)
- 9. 2025 / 2026 NRSM plans (Simpson, 8:05, 5 min.)
- 10. Accounting Update (Brown, 8:10, 10 min.)
- 11. USNC-URSI Foundation Update (Newkirk, 8:20, 5 min.)
- 12. Membership Lists (Anderson, 8:25, 10 min.)
- 13. Website Plans (Simpson, 8:35, 5 min.)
- 14. Constitution Updates (Simpson, 8:40, 5 min.)
- 15. Members at Large
- 16. Discuss the forms for the commission business meetings (Anderson, 8:55, 5 min.)
- 17. Old Business (Simpson)
- 18. New Business (Simpson)
- 19. Adjournment (Simpson)

## **Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by USNC-URSI Chair Jamesina Simpson at 5:09pm MST.

Chair Simpson presented the agenda. Mike Newkirk moved to approve the agenda. Jon Chisum seconded. The agenda was approved by a show of hands.

Chair Simpson started the meeting by thanking all the people who had served over the past triennium. She then provided a brief overview of URSI as a refresher and orientation for new members.

Chair Simpson introduced URSI officers that were present at the NRSM.

### **URSI Past President Report: George Uslenghi**

URSI GAAS in Rome 2021 sustained on 4 legs: (1) Flagship conferences annually (GAAS and AT-RASC), (2) Publications (Radio Science and Radio Science Letters), (3) Student participation, (4) Women In Radio Science.

The recent GASS had approximately 1600 attendees from 50 countries. A text report was sent separately. AT-RASC 2024 is going to be held in Gran Canaria, in the Canary Islands, and the AT-RASC 2025 will be in Sydney Australia.

Radio Science was acquired by Wiley and has become more of a commercial operation. Radio Science Letters has been in operation for 5 years and we are waiting for full indexing by Clarivate. The Radio Science Bulletin has been closed. It ceased operations when Ross Stone passed away and was replaced with a quarterly Radio Science Newsletter.

USNC continues to support students and student paper competitions at all the URSI conferences.

Until approximately 10 years ago, URSI was heavily male dominated, and we have been pushing hard to incorporate more women into URSI and into leadership positions.

The new URSI Board members that were elected at the GASS in Sapporo were presented. Several U. S. members were elected to leadership positions in various URSI commissions.

With no questions from the members, the report was concluded.

### **URSI GASS 2023 Report: Mike Newkirk**

U. S. Submissions were second only to Japan (257 vs 394). USNC provided support to members and Commission chairs that chose to attend, including several Early Career Members. We continued to sponsor the URSI student paper competition.

USNC nominated John Volakis for URSI Vice-President, however he was not elected.

Each triennium URSI presents 5 Senior Awards and 2 Early Career Awards. Commission Chairs were asked to think about individuals who would be competitive for the 2026 nominations. The anticipated nomination date is August 2025.

### **USNC-URSI Overview: Jamesina Simpson**

URSI-USNC is one of 24 scientific unions that report to the Board of International Scientific Organizations (BISO) in the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).

URSI is the only U. S. organization that represents applied electromagnetics. We are one of the only conferences that promotes works in progress and supports student attendance at the conference.

The new USNC officers were introduced as well as an operating manual that was created and distributed to the members.

Commission Chairs were asked to provide a slide for their goals and plans for the triennium. The goal is to ensure that we are a relevant and active society for the ongoing future. A brief overview of the submitted slides was presented. Notable common themes were recruiting new members and improving our online presence. Tracking of membership was also brought up as a challenge for Commission officers.

Attendees at each table were given a few minutes to compile a short list of things we can do to accomplish these goals over the next triennium. A lively discussion was had among members and many good ideas were presented to the Chair.

Commissions were requested to create an operating manual lite. The “lite manual” would be a document that describes the leadership positions, how those are filled, and how new members are created.

The various Society Representatives were then introduced. These are individuals that are expected to ensure that their society interests are considered in the USNC-URSI. Our constitution says that we should have 6 society representatives that should rotate among national societies and groups in the U. S. Goal slides provided by several of the society representatives were presented.

The Government representatives were then introduced. Much of their role is similar to those of society reps, but they also help to promote visibility of USNC-URSI in the U.S. Government. We currently have two and are looking for suggestions for candidates for additional government reps. We are allowed by the constitution to have up to six. The value to the U.S. Government is helping to identify candidates for the next generation of scientists as well as identify good ideas in a nascent stage that could evolve into a proposals.

A member suggested that we try to find Government Representatives from “end users” and not just from funding agencies. The idea is to look for people who are “in the field” and users of the technologies, and not just program managers who are constantly bombarded by academic ideas.

Slides were sent to Commission Chairs that they can use as starters for their business meetings.

An overview of the 2024 NRSM and 50th anniversary celebration was then presented. USNC-URSI provided support for 80 students, 71 of which are outside of Colorado. We have two sponsors for the NRSM: Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab and URSI. Erdem Topsakal noted that all eligible students were supported.

In terms of attendance, we are slightly below where we were pre-pandemic (2019). We would like to increase these numbers.

The major contributors to the organization and operation of the 2024 NRSM were thanked by the officers and members.

**Dinner break was held from 6:25 – 7:14pm.**

### **IEEE APS Remarks: Branislav Notaros**

An overview of the IEEE AP-S Society, areas, scope, and overlap with URSI was presented. The signature components are the AP-S journals. The Impact Factor of the journal has grown over the years demonstrating the high quality of the journals and manuscripts therein.

The AP-S/URSI summer conference is a flagship conference. This conference now moves around the world. Commissions were encouraged to consider submitting manuscripts and participating in the joint summer meeting, to be held in Florence, Italy, in July 2024.

The AP-S collaboration with URSI is going very well through the joint meetings and conferences, and AP-S has significant collaborations with other URSI National Committees. The MOU between AP-S and USNC URSI was renewed in 2022; the income from the conferences is helping USNC support initiatives such as student travel and registration support. Both organizations are benefiting from this collaboration.

### **Chapters and Subcommittees: Jamesina Simpson**

**WIRS: Zoya Popovic.** The WIRS has a reception; tickets will be available at the WIRS business meeting. The focus for next year is a session on technical contributions from women in radio science.

**Sponsors and Exhibits: Sima Noghianian.** A discussion on sponsorship ensued. We have been inviting sponsors via mass emailing but have had limited responses. Issues encountered this year include: (i) timing (November is too late to begin sponsor requests), (ii) finances limit

organizations from attending/sponsoring conferences, (iii) lack of awareness or lack of understanding of benefit to the sponsor, and (iv) lack of statistics/information to pass along to sponsors (e.g., how many attendees from academics, industry, retired; what connections would they find within the conference, etc.).

The sponsorship committee created multiple sponsorship levels and benefits, but we did not receive enough responses to even explore the details of benefits for each sponsor level. The committee was not able to really provide a message of what makes the NRSM unique and valuable and differentiates us from other conferences or meetings. A key finding is that we need to start much earlier so that we have time to discuss and build relationships with sponsors early.

It was noted that we need to publish the CFP for the NRSM by June and state that we are looking for volunteers to serve on the Sponsors and Exhibits Committee. The search for sponsors should commence with or slightly before the release of the CFP.

A member asked whether a flyer would be useful in highlighting the benefits of the NRSM. It was agreed that would be a useful addition to our arsenal.

A member asked whether there had been a concentrated effort to reach out to local companies. The committee did not because we did not necessarily have points of contact with local organizations and had limited time. Once we can get an organization interested in the first year, they might be likely to continue to sponsor future conferences.

A member asked whether we could contact students who received student travel grants and are now in the professional world. The committee unfortunately did not have or maintain that list or at least it is not accessible to the committee.

A member commented that the NRSM does not attract a lot of industry attendance, so the NRSM is not very well known to industry. Our advantage is that we don't move around, so perhaps we could reach out to some of our former Ph.D. students that are still in applied electromagnetics. Industry wants to know what value they can get by attending or sponsoring this conference. The committee had a challenging time crafting the value message to potential industry sponsors.

A member asked how JHU APL became interested in being a sponsor. APL's value is that they are exposed to new ideas and students who are coming up through the ranks. They can use the conference to attract and hire people, and it works. The suggestion was to reach out to more FFRDC's and UARCs.

A member suggested looking for people in industry outside of Colorado who love Skiing.

**Workshops and Short Courses: Jon Chisum.** We had 3 short courses that were very well attended: Intelligent Surfaces, Phased Arrays, and Proposal Writing. One thing we have observed is that the attendance is improved in Commissions that have both special sessions and short courses. One goal for next year is to have more than three short courses. These could easily be offered again; however, we need more ideas to grow this aspect of the NRSM.

A member asked whether when we approach students, we assume the vast majority will go into academia. We are talking to them about how they become faculty members. However, we have a unique opportunity to instead address the industry side of the profession. Most students are not interested in or are not considering faculty positions.

It was observed by several members that this was a very good suggestion – short courses, especially hands-on, are a great way to develop skillsets and showcase new toolsets or software that would be valuable for both industry and conference attendees.

**Student Travel Program and Student Paper Competition: Erdem Topsakal.** We had 80 students qualify for support. Out of state students get \$750 in travel support, in-state (but outside Boulder) get \$250, while all get free registration. The student paper competition had 30 submissions, most likely due to the reduction in page length (2-page double-column vs 20-page double-spaced full papers in previous years). Three finalists were selected based on multiple review cycles. All the chairs need to attend the SPC to score the finalists.

Next year Asimina Kiourti will be taking over from Erdem and will be forming a committee to evaluate the papers (rather than utilizing the services of Commission Chairs).

A member commented that some of the papers they reviewed did not pass an initial screening. It was remarked that the conference paper management system should have screened for the proper paper format.

**Joint Meetings Committee: Jamesina Simpson.** Mahta Moghaddam is taking over as the USNC-URSI Meetings Coordinator, and is the lead USNC-URSI member of the JMC. We have two upcoming conferences that we are working with. JMC is working on creating a template to streamline proposals for the summer symposium.

### **BISO Update: Ana Ferreras and Rania Kosti**

The NAS Board of International Scientific Organizations (BISO) hosts 18 USNC's with URSI as one of the most active ones. An overview of BISO's mission and upcoming staff changes were presented. BISO is trying to streamline their processes and reduce the time it takes to get things turned around.

Several key staff departed BISO in late 2022 and 2023; BISO has hired a new director (Rania), as well as a new admin assistant and webmaster.

In terms of USNC-URSI Committee membership – everyone should have received an email from Pam Gamble asking for information as part of the nomination/membership package. This new package is used for demographic information to evaluate the diversity of BISO and to ensure NASEM membership lists are up-to-date. A mad scramble ensued as members frantically

searched for the email (it was sent out December 27, 2023, so it may have been overlooked if members were on vacation). Members should be receiving an appointment letter and need to respond by accepting that as soon as possible.

Core funding is provided by a 5-year consolidated grant shared among all USNCs. The current grant expires in August 2024; BISO is currently assembling the budget for the next 5-year grant. Ana highlighted the type of information they are gathering from the various USNCs as part of NSF grant writing. The key focus is on quantitative and qualitative impact of the USNC-URSI.

NASEM Compliance: Every time a new program is assembled, or activity is started, it has to go through an internal approval process. Before any announcement or flyer is created it must be submitted and approved through the NASEM and that approval process requires one month. Each USNC-URSI commission has \$3,000 per triennium to use; however, NASEM (via Ana) needs to be notified one month in advance to approve expenses.

Nominations for membership and letters or statements issued from USNC-URSI must be approved by NASEM in advance.

A member asked about the Pam Gamble email. The attachment has a confusing template, and many members did not respond. Pam should issue appointment letters and acceptance forms once the forms have been received. This new process replaces the old process that included conflict of interest and other forms that had to be signed off by NASEM.

### **2025/2026 NRSM Planning: Jamesina Simpson**

Historically we have not held an NRSM in the same year we have held a North American Radio Science Meeting (NARSM). The NARSM is being held in July 2025 in Ottawa.

A member asked whether we would decide on Friday or by email vote. We will decide on Friday based on Commission preferences. All Commissions will need to commit to participating if we hold a NRSM in 2025.

A member noted that we discussed this topic last year and left it unresolved. However, we must decide in the next two weeks whether we want to hold a 2025 meeting.

A member noted that the 2025 meeting does not overlap with the AAS meeting; this might be the one time we could get more people from Commission J in Boulder. AAS is typically always held the same week as the NRSM.

A member noted that if the 2025 NRSM meeting is not held, student support will be provided to attend the NARSM. A member asked how student support will be allocated between the two meetings, although this was unresolved. Options presented include: (i) supporting a given student to attend only one of the two meetings, (ii) supporting a given student to attend both meetings, (iii) supporting X students for NRSM and Y students for NARSM, and (iv) supporting all students that wish to attend NRSM and NARSM regardless of number.

A member asked if we could credibly assert that we were not undermining participation in the NARSM by holding the NRSM in the same year. Some discussion ensued, however, the question was unresolved.

A member asked whether we could look at the last few NARSM's and get a sense of how many students were attending/participating? We will have to look into that since the information was not readily available.

It was noted that regardless of the 2025/2026 deadline, the timeline for soliciting special sessions, reviews, decisions, and session assignments will be set shortly and Chairs should look for assistance in handling the review process.

A member asked whether we could make our Plenary session the first session of the conference and use that as a mechanism to kick off the week and let people know they can attend the business meetings. The idea was taken under advisement by the conference organizing team.

### **Accounting Update: Gary Brown**

Registration fees alone do not cover the cost of the NRSM. Funding comes from three sources: (i) NSF, (ii) Donations, Endowments, and Grants, and (iii) the NRSM and APS/URSI conference.

An overview of the status of the private account (what we can access for funding our needs) was presented. Our balance has grown to the point that we can consider spending it on things that we need to do to grow URSI-USNC.

A member asked if revenue from the 2023 APS/URSI meeting was included in the presented budget – it was not.

A member asked how we receive revenue from the APS/URSI meeting. Based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between IEEE AP-S and USNC-URSI (dated 28 July 2024), it is a fixed amount of \$66k per year when the meeting is held in the U. S. Starting in 2025, the amount will be adjusted to the average over the past 5 years of US-based meetings based on the proportion of URSI papers presented. When the APS-URSI meeting is held internationally, we split the revenue with the local country's national committee (if it exists) based on the proportion of URSI to AP-S papers presented.

A member asked how the account balance compared to previous years. The balance decreased slightly due to the costs of the hybrid meeting and remote meetings, but we received two good returns from the Singapore and Denver AP-S/URSI meetings.

An overview of the status of the endowment funds was presented. These funds are aimed at funding awards and supporting our plenary speakers.

At the moment, USNC is in good financial shape, although we may not have as much income as usual in 2024 due to the AP-S meeting being held in Italy. Increased membership will improve the financial health of the organization – the more members we have attending the NRSM, the more income we will have. We are the only dedicated Radio Science organization in the U. S., and we encourage papers on works in progress. We try to foster an exchange between people rather than focusing on presenting technical talks.

### **USNC-URSI Foundation Update: Mike Newkirk**

Ross Stone was working with an attorney to establish the USNC as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the state of California. The application is still in process. Once nonprofit status has been achieved we can assume responsibility for managing our private account funds as well as revenue from meetings.

A member asked why we do not just hire a lawyer rather than rely on pro bono work. The question is how to pick up the work that has been partially completed.

Considering the delays, a member suggested just converting the pro bono lawyer into a paid attorney.

A member asked why we were going through this process. Establishing USNC as a nonprofit is a way for us to take control of the private account and handle the interaction with the students. Additionally, it gives us the ability to setup our own web/cloud services. This was favored by us and the NASEM due to the administrative burden we place on NASEM by being a highly active USNC.

A member asked how we will handle expenses if we handle things ourselves – audits, processing reimbursements, etc. The question was unresolved.

A member noted that another organization they were part of needed to set aside funds to handle processing the financial transactions. It is generally more than a reasonable volunteer effort.

### **Membership Lists: Chris Anderson**

Commission Chairs should have received links to their Google Spreadsheet membership lists. They were requested to update old emails, membership statuses, etc. The Secretary is hoping to create a consolidated template instead of losing what remains of his hair managing ten different spreadsheets. The Secretary also hopes to create a Google Group mailing list to ease communication with Committee members.

## **Future Endeavors: Jamesina Simpson**

**Website Updates:** It was noted that the website needs an update and refreshing. We are attempting to find a web designer for hire.

**Constitution Update:** It was noted that we need to revisit and update the Constitution; the officers are looking for volunteers to help.

**Members at Large:** Our six Members at Large were introduced. The Chair hopes that members at large could identify some of the activities we need and get involved to help us out growing our membership and presence.

A member asked about what a member at large should be doing. A member at large should be assisting the leadership of the USNC-URSI accomplish its mission. Members at large are members of a commission but are not commission officers.

A member asked how members at large are selected. They are voted for by USNC members. The most that can be served is two consecutive terms.

It was noted that the maximum anyone should serve in an USNC-URSI Officer position is ~12 years (Commission Chair through USNC Immediate Past-Chair). In general, rather than serving more terms beyond 12 years in other roles on the USNC-URSI committee, we should encourage new people to get involved.

## **Old Business**

A member noted that we discussed at length last year about how we could involve an Early Career (EC) member in a leadership position to help with outreach and reinvigorate USNC. This issue was and still is unresolved.

A member suggested that the Chair can appoint anyone to the Executive Committee. That could be a starting point while we sort out how we formally include EC members.

A member suggested that we start involving more people in the mechanics of operating the organization (e.g., finances). We need to start thinking about a succession plan for key positions.

## **New Business**

None presented.

Zoya Popovic moved to adjourn, Chris Holloway seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by USNC-URSI Chair Jamesina Simpson at 9:14pm MST.