GEM Steering Committee Meeting July 16, 2026

Present: Christine Gabrielse (Chair), Allison Jaynes (Vice Chair, Scribe), Reiner Friedel, Tori Wilder, Wen Li, Kevin Pham, Daniel Welling, David Hartley, Sadie Elliot, Vincent Ledvina (incoming student rep), Maria Smirnova (student rep), Erika Hathaway (outgoing student rep), Lynn Wilson, Howard Singer, Xiangning Chu, Kareem Sorathia, Mike Shumko, Kat Davidson, Jiang Liu

Agenda:

- Welcome New Student Representative
- Steering Committee Applications
- Student Support Selection Process
- Resource Groups
- GEM-CEDAR back-to-back?
- SBCCI GEM Survey Update

Welcoming Remarks

The GEM Steering Committee met from 5:30-7:30pm on July 16 at the conference hotel. Christine kicked off the meeting by going over the agenda and welcoming the newly elected student representative, Vincent Ledvina.

Steering Committee Applications

Immediately after, the committee discussed the five open steering committee positions:

- GSM
- IMAG
- SWMI
- Member at Large
- Vice Chair

Excluding Vice Chair, there were a total of 6 applicants for the 4 roles; some applicants applied to multiple positions. Each position had 2-3 applicants and required a majority vote. Each applicant was discussed before voting began.

The committee voted to postpone the Vice Chair decision because the two Vice Chair applications had been submitted that day and not everyone on the committee had time to read the applications before the meeting. The committee expressed extreme gratitude that two highly qualified individuals were willing to step up and volunteer for the role. After voting to delay, the committee voted whether to open the position to any other interested candidates or to keep it to the original applicants who submitted prior to the meeting. The majority decision was to keep it to the two who had submitted prior to the meeting.

For the remaining roles, after discussion the committee voted anonymously via an online app. 15 voting members participated, which met quorum requirements. The chair only voted as a tie-breaker. The results were:

- GSM: Grant Stephens
- IMAG: Adam Michael
- SWMI: Yi Qi
- Member at Large: Harry Arnold
- Vice Chair: TBD

Student Support Selection Process

This was the first year in quite some time that the NSF grant could not fully cover all student support applicants. As such, the meeting organizers and the chairs received a request for the steering committee to discuss the process and to ensure visibility into the process.

The meeting organizers summarized the process, which has been published on relevant websites and repeats previous years' process:

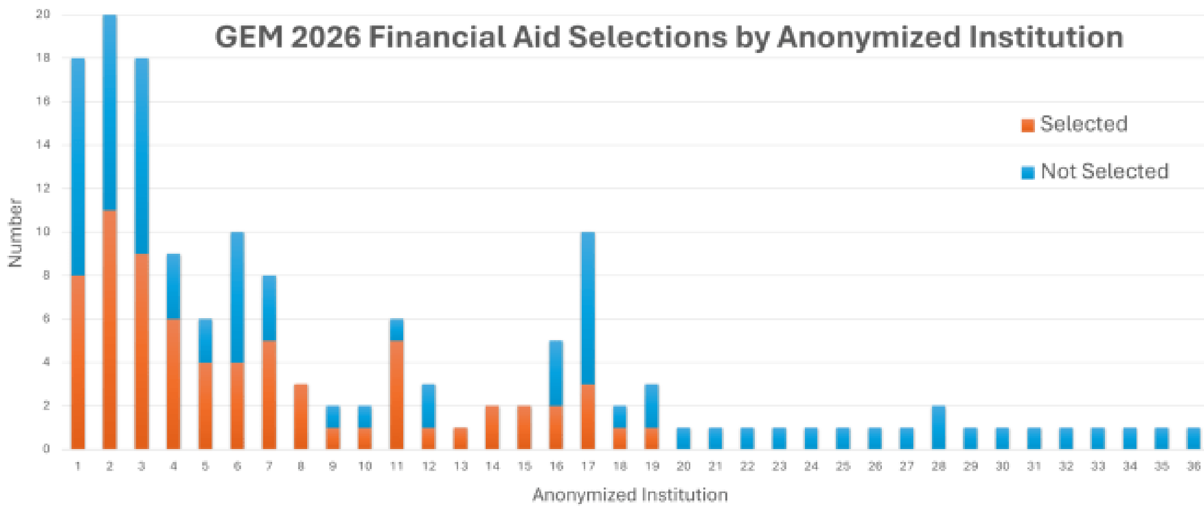
Eligibility The following selection criteria are considered when selecting who receives support:

1. Applicants must be enrolled in a university as a graduate student or undergraduate student, or be a postdoc / early career scientist (graduate from PhD in the past 3 years), on the date the financial support application closes.
2. Students receiving financial support must participate during the Student Day activities.
3. Recipients of financial support must present a poster during the main workshop poster sessions.
4. Recipients of financial support are required to attend the workshop for the whole week. If for legitimate reasons, the applicant can only attend part of the workshop, they will have lower priority in getting selected.

Selection Process

1. Student representatives and Student tutorial speakers will be funded.
2. A student applicant's advisor must submit a letter of acknowledgement.
3. Lottery: Of the remaining funds, students will be selected via a lottery system. 1st time attendees will be weighted heavier in the randomized selection to ensure they are prioritized (this does not guarantee funding). There will be a box to check on the application to note if this is the student's first time attending GEM.

The organizers explained that this process was laid out in the GEM proposal to NSF, therefore it was peer reviewed and deemed acceptable. It would also be more challenging to change than simply making an executive decision, as it would require going to NSF and requesting the change. The organizers had put together a graphic in response to the inquiry, but included all applicants in the distribution including those who were disqualified for ineligibility reasons. This likely led to some of the confusion, so the committee suggested updating the graphic. (For example, there were many institutions which had only one applicant, but that applicant was disqualified which explained why so few single applicants were selected). It was also pointed out that because student representatives and student tutorial speakers are guaranteed funding, and because first time attendees are weighted more heavily, that the distribution of selected applicants across institutions cannot be and is not expected to be entirely reflective of the overall selection rate.



After discussing all this, a vote was put forth:

1. The steering committee should request that the meeting organizers amend the selection process.
2. The steering committee should not request that the meeting organizers amend the selection process.

The vote was anonymous via an online app, and it was voted that the steering committee **would not** request the meeting organizers to amend the selection process.

<u>Resource Groups</u>

After two years of dwindling participation from the Modeling Methods and Validation (MMV) Resource Group, a discussion was added to the agenda to contemplate at what point a Resource Group should be concluded. It was decided that objective criteria should be added to the GEM bylaws to help the Steering Committee objectively decide when to conclude a Resource Group. It was also decided that a committee would be formed to determine these criteria. Some points of discussion for the future committee include: Should a Resource Group be required to submit an annual report to the GEMStone and if they fail to do so, their existence is revoked? When should the leadership be switched, how often should the charter be revisited, should leadership be solicited from the greater community?

Current RG by-laws are here:
https://gem.epss.ucla.edu/mediawiki/index.php/GEM_Bylaws#Resource_Group_By-laws

The only subjective bylaw on their conclusion states: “Duration: Resource Groups have no set duration. With input from Resource Group leaders, the Steering Committee does have the ability to assess a RG’s progress and utility and, if deemed no longer necessary, vote to conclude it with a majority vote.”

GEM-CEDAR back-to-back?

Time ran out to discuss whether there was interest in a back-to-back meeting between GEM and CEDAR, but the topic was brought up to ask the Steering Committee to consider. CEDAR is no longer bound to Des Moine, so they are free to go to a different location to match where GEM is meeting in 2027. This interest should be discussed soon, as meeting organizers need to plan next year’s location.

SBCCI GEM Survey Update

An annual survey of GEM attendees was performed last year. Although the details are not published, the overall positive trend was shared.