Minutes for 2024-06-23 GEM Steering Committee Meeting. In-person in Fort Collins, CO.

Present: Christine Gabrielse, Kevin Genestreti, Ian Cohen, Chris Mouikis, Yihua Zheng, Jing Liao, Austin Smith, Hsinju Chen, Sarah Vines, Howard Singer, Chia-Lin Huang, Brian Walsh, Patrick Koehn, Bashi Ferdousi, Umbe Oliveira-Cantu, Mike Shumko, Lutz Rastaetter, Xiangning Chu, John Lyon, Joe Borovsky, Jiang Liu, Tai-Yin Huang, Josh Rigler, Shawn Young, Lunjin Chen, Fraz Bashir

Agenda

1. Update on the GEM-CEDAR Joint Meeting Planning (Christine)
2. Vote for new Steering Committee members (Christine)
    a. Vice Chair
    b. SWMI
    c. GSM
3. Poster Session Timing Discussion: Should we end the science program earlier in the day? (Solene)
4. Student Registration Fees: Should we create a separate registration fee? (Christine, Hsinju, Austin)
5. Hybrid component: Do we require a virtual component in every FG session? (Chris)
6. Community request regarding GEM locations (Christine)
7. Walk-on topics

Summary of voted issues:

1. New Steering Committee Members: Allison Jaynes, Kareem Sorathia, Lynn Wilson
2. Student registration fees will be lowered moving forward (as compared to Ph.D. registration fees)
3. A virtual component of the Focus Group sessions will be highly encouraged, but not required.
4. Poster session timing was discussed but will be voted on in the future. Next year is the joint GEM-CEDAR meeting, which may have a daytime poster session due to CEDAR's typical meeting structure.
5. The GEM SC voted to commit itself to advocate for workshop locations which are inclusive to all GEM participants.

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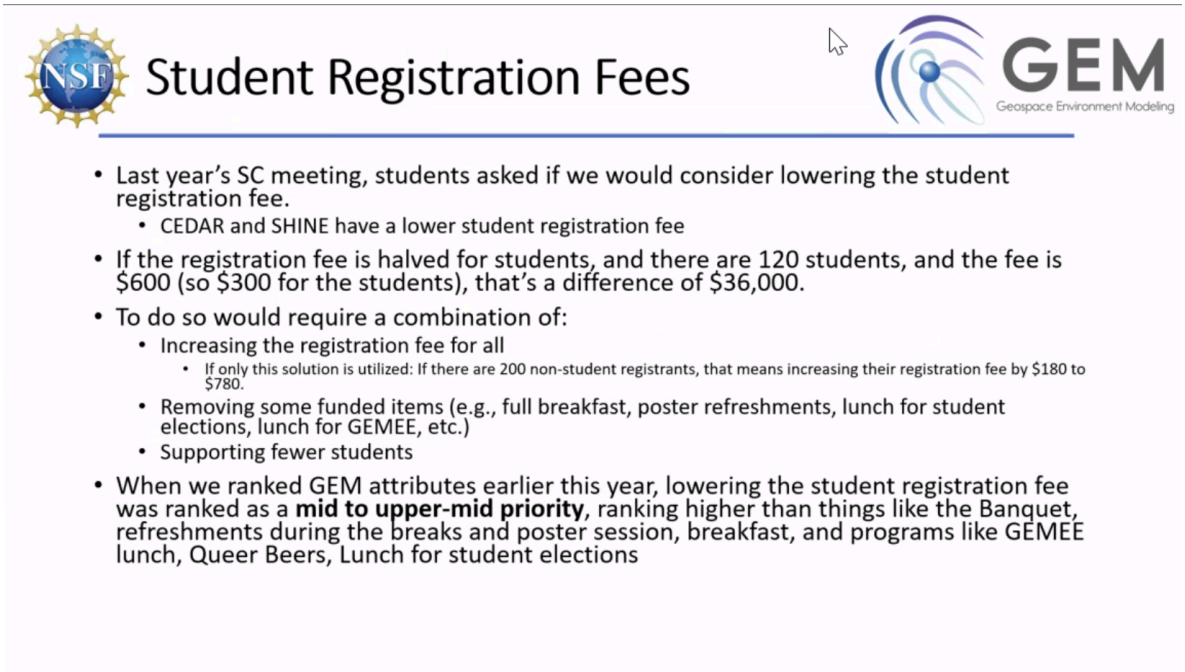
1. GEM-CEDAR Planning Committee update

- A GEM-CEDAR planning committee was formed in May and has met a few times.
- We are targeting June 22-27 (week after Juneteenth/before July 4th), but if nothing is available we will next look at the week before Juneteenth and the week after July 4th.
- Looking at Anchorage, AK; Des Moines, IA; Pasadena, CA

2. New Steering Committee Members

- New voting members of the steering committee were voted in:
  - Vice Chair: Allison Jaynes, U Iowa
  - GSM RAC: Kareem Sorathia, APL
  - SWMI RAC: Lynn Wilson, GSFC
- All applicants were contacted by Christine immediately after the SC ended to let them know the results.

3. Lowering Student Registration Fees



Hsinju and Austin led the discussion about lowering student registration fees based on the points above. The following discussion points were made:

- Point against lowering student registration fees: A $600 registration fee for students shouldn't be that big of an issue for PIs/faculty of U.S. students, when NSF is already paying $2-3k for the travel of their students; maybe we can lower/waive registration for international students who have a larger burden?
  - Not the case for smaller schools without research grants
- Students receiving travel funds from NSF get half of their registration paid by NSF; those without travel funding pay full registration fee.
- Point for lowering student registration fees: Registration fees are not the bulk of the cost for travel, so raising fees by ~$150 for non-students shouldn't be that big of a deal.
- Other, less prioritized features of GEM could be cut to save on costs.
- Motion was made and seconded to vote on recommending lowering student registration fees: **11 in favor**, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (2 not present)

4. Hybrid Component… Do we require it for every FG session?

Thus far, the virtual component of the Focus Group sessions has been informal and was accelerated by Covid. The question was raised, "Do we want to make it required in order to

reflect our value of an inclusive community, since a virtual option allows those who cannot afford to travel to GEM to attend?"

The following discussion points were made:

- Keeping it an option (vs. required) is a good idea
- AV support is getting easier and easier.
    - Sometimes the hotel takes over the AV. In 2023 Tony Rodgers handled the AV, but this year the hotel will do it
    - GEM has purchased AV equipment that has become an investment
    - Cheaper to buy & throw away equipment than to borrow
- 3 students online during student day today. 1 from Pakistan and 1 from Nigeria
- 66 remote participants registered for 2024 GEM
- It costs more to run a virtual session.
    - We can charge an online registration fee to offset the AV fees
    - We could use the fees for GEM organizers to provide unique Zoom links for each FG
    - Even asking a small reg fee (e.g., $150) may be prohibitive for participants from some countries. We can make exceptions
    - Registration fee for online participants was not voted on, but the sentiment in the room was that it was not supportive for the international participants.
- Could require that each FG schedules at least one hybrid session
- Motion made to vote
- One SC member mentioned that he runs a seminar and he encounters arguments about what programs to use (zoom, Teams, Webex, etc.).
- Motion made to vote and seconded.
- Three voting options: require all sessions to be hybrid (3 in favor), require at least one hybrid session (5 in favor), or make the virtual component completely optional but highly encouraged (5 in favor)
- Chair tie-breaker: all sessions optional but encouraged
- Result: **highly-encouraged but optional**

5. Poster Session Timing

- Proposal was made to host the plenary poster sessions during the day (e.g., 3:30-5pm) instead of at night from 6:30-8:30. This would replace two of the concurrent oral sessions.

Poster Session Timing Discussic

- **Premise: Posters are too late in the afternoon.**
  - Tuesday and Thursdays are basically 12+ hour days with a plenary that starts at 8, and posters that officially end at 8:30 pm.
  - Personal anecdotes:
    - I had no time to have dinner because I wasn't there when the snacks were available
      - I was at my poster and nothing was left when I finally had time for a break), and then, it was late (9pm), and I was exhausted
    - One of my colleagues (to whom I wanted to show my poster) could not stop by because she was busy taking care of her daug
      - Hard to have childcare after typical working hours
  - **To me, all the elements highlighted are in a striking contrast with GEM's objective of fostering a supportive / balanced work environment.**
  - I don't think I'll present a poster again under these circumstances, and will opt for a talk instead, which would help GEM's schedule (and will take time away from presentations by early careers).
  - I have been told that GEM's posters are always late in the afternoon, but I think starting at 3/3:30 pm (during/after the afternoon coffee break like it used to be??) rather than at the end of the workday would make a huge positive difference.
  - CEDAR can do it (https://cedarscience.org/2024workshopagenda), so I think GEM could do it too!
    - CEDAR runs in 2-hour session blocks, so posters have run from 4 and 3:30 6:30pm in the past.
    - CEDAR has 3-4 concurrent sessions, whereas GEM as 3.

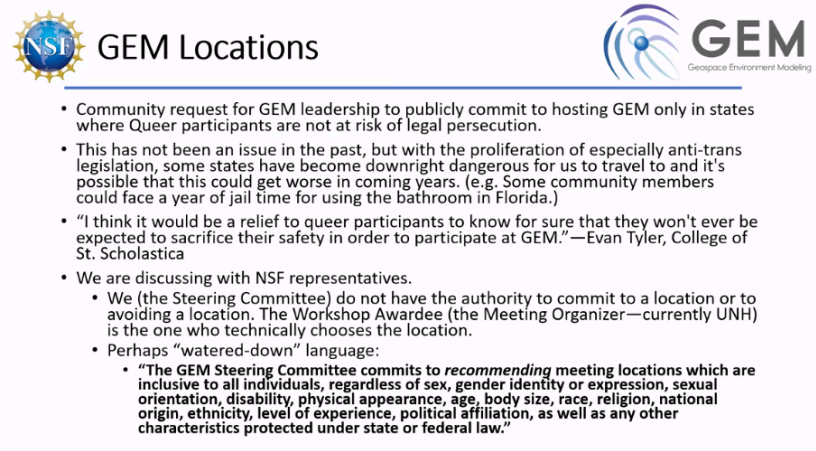
I would like to invite the steering committee to look into how the poster sessions go this year with these comments in mind, and see if they'd agree.

- Motivation:
  - This avoids the 12+ hour days on Tuesday and Thursday
  - Childcare typically ends early in the evening which makes it challenging for caregivers to attend
  - No time to eat dinner (snacks provided during poster session are not enough for dinner, and can run out)
- Points against:
  - The silent majority may be ok with the current schedule. Maybe switching it will upset them
  - Having posters sessions concurrent to oral sessions may reduce the number of speakers in both the FG and poster sessions
- Can leave the posters up all week so people can have informal discussions through the week
- When busy, poster sessions are loud and it can be hard to hear for some attendees
- GEM organizers have invested a lot in the posters: 1) selected the largest room possible and 2) kept all posters up all week, and 3) upload posters to the GEM website
- Use next year's CEDAR-GEM meeting as an opportunity to modify the poster session. CEDAR does posters during the day, so GEM could see how it goes and decide from there.
- This year we can change the poster session end time to 8:00 pm (from 8:30 pm)
- Notify judges if we make this change
- The logistics to end at 8:00 pm should be done by the GEM organizers
- **Postpone vote until we see how the poster sessions go this week.**
  - The overall sentiment in the room was in support of the proposal to move the posters to the day. Because next year is joint with CEDAR, a formal decision is delayed.

6. GEM locations with regards to LGBTQ+ member safety

A community member approached us to request that the GEM Steering Committee commit to meeting locations that are safe for the LGBTQ+ community.

- Motivation:
    - Some states have become dangerous for attendees. For example, using the bathroom could result in a year of imprisonment in Florida.
- The SC does not have the authority to commit to a location or to avoid a location. The Workshop Awardee (now UNH) makes that decision.
- We can add a statement to the website that states that the SC will *recommend* meeting locations that are inclusive to all individuals



- Some of these locations are hot anyway, so may be good to avoid
- Some wordsmithing was done:
    - Change "recommend" -> "advocate for"
    - "Although the SC has no authority to choose location, SC is committed to advocate for locations which are inclusive…"
- Is the SC allowed to speak on the behalf of the GEM attendees?
- Motion to vote on adding the bolded statement with the discussed edits
- Result: **13 in favor**, 0 against, 0 abstain

7. Open topics

- The SC may need to engage more with the GEM community. Senior scientists feel that GEM is leaving them out in-lieu of early career scientists.
- Years ago, the SC voted down to reduce fees for GEM attendees who are retired and can't use grant funds to attend. Bring this up again.
- There is a need to migrate away from the GEM wiki to have a nicer website (see CEDAR for example)
- Focus Group Reports: Allison has been handling this as the GEMStone editor. This year we are moving back to a 6-week deadline. The RACs (or Allison) will collect the reports via email (plain text, not pdf)
    - The FG leaders have been notified on the reporting expectations

Tabled topics:

- Limit the number of sessions that each FG can schedule during the workshop
- Reduce fees for retirees who can’t use grant funds to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm. On time!