



Annual Report of the Professional Development Planning Committee for FY2025

Submitted by Karen Viskupic, Committee Chair

Committee members: *Karen Viskupic (chair), Rory McFadden, Barbara Sobhani, Alix Davatzes, Brendan Hanger, Jen Wenner, Beth Pratt-Sitaula, Julie Ferguson, Megan Plenge, Mitchell Bender-Awalt, Cailin Huyck Orr, Walt Robinson, Anne Egger*

Starting in January 2025, an expanded list of people was invited to participate in Professional Development planning meetings to include the voices representing NAGT professional development programs. The expanded committee membership included: Lynsey LeMay, Katherine Ryker, Jennifer Anderson, Lisa Gilbert, Martin Wong, Aida Awad, Cheryl Manning, Holly Kelchner, Monica Bruckner, Mea Cook, Michael Hubenthal, Nancy Chen

Executive summary

The NAGT Professional Development Planning Committee (PD Committee) oversees all NAGT professional development programs including:

1. Webinar Series
2. Workshop for Early Career Faculty (ECW)
3. Earth Educators' Rendezvous (EER)
4. Preparing for an Academic Career Workshop (Career Prep)
5. Traveling Workshops Program (TWP)
6. Teach the Earth website (TTE)
7. Virtual workshops

There were 576 participants in NAGT professional development programs this year including in-person and virtual workshops, traveling workshops, and webinars. There was a significant increase in the number of webinar participants this year (436 participants, an increase of 63% from the previous year). The Career Prep workshop successfully ran in an online format after several years of running at the EER. This workshop will continue to be offered virtually and at the EER in alternate years. The ECW also ran successfully despite having their grant funding cancelled by the National Science Foundation. NAGT committed to covering all remaining costs and launched a highly successful fundraising campaign to ensure the workshop ran as planned.

During the 2024-2025 academic year we reimagined the configuration and functioning of the Professional Development Planning Committee to promote connections among programs, expand the reach of PD programs, identify needs and challenges, and provide greater clarity on budget guidelines to PD program leaders. We instituted a yearly PD committee planning and meeting cycle in January, 2025 that includes three meetings of all PD Committee members and PD program leads:



- January: Leaders from all PD programs meet to share ideas and start planning for the following fiscal/academic year
- Late Spring (after the NAGT Executive Committee has approved the budget for the following fiscal year): Budget decisions that impact PD programs are shared with the PD committee; planning and promotion for upcoming programs/ discussion/modification of next year's programming plans
- August: PD Committee and program leads share progress and plans and look for opportunities to connect and cross-promote.

This revised structure and schedule has been successful so far, with better communication among program leaders and greater attention to budget guidelines and expectations.

Detailed report

Summary of reports from individual PD programs

Workshop for Early Career Geoscience Faculty (Early Career Workshop; ECW): This workshop was held in person from June 22-26 at Macalester College in Saint Paul, MN. The lead workshop conveners were Martin Wong from Colgate University, Gretchen Miller from Wake Tech Community College, and Mea Cook from Williams College, with seven additional leaders of workshop sessions (Christy Till, Arizona State University; Anna Pfeiffer-Herbert, Stockton University; Clara Chan, University of Delaware; Wendi Flynn, University of Northern Colorado; Rory McFadden, SERC; Jeremy Shakun, Boston College; Myrium Telus, UC Santa Cruz).

There were 68 workshop applicants and **53 participants**. Most participants (32) were from R1 universities, and were in tenure-track positions (49 participants). Twenty-five participants applied for travel stipends to attend the meeting, with an average request of \$1490. As reported by ECW leaders: "The end-of-workshop survey was completed by 98% of the participants, which is consistent with the completion rate for previous in-person workshops. The mean satisfaction rating for the workshop as a whole was 9.4/10, with 44 out of the 52 participants that completed the survey selecting a rating of 9 or 10 (10 = very satisfied). In addition, over 95% of participants indicated that their confidence in their ability to succeed in an academic career increased somewhat or dramatically as a result of the workshop."

Significantly, grant funding from the National Science Foundation to support this workshop was canceled on May 9, 2025 as workshop participants were getting ready to make travel plans. NAGT ExCom approved a budget modification to cover costs that would have been covered by the grant, and launched fundraising efforts that fully met those costs including participant stipends. The contributions to the fundraising efforts by many past workshop participants and leaders further highlights the value of this program to the geosciences community.

Preparing for an Academic Career Workshop (Career Prep): The Career Prep workshop was held virtually from August 4-8, 2025 (will continue to be held virtually in years with no EER and in-person at the EER in alternate years). **Twenty-four participants** registered for the workshop, with approximately 20 participating each day. Fourteen participants (58%) were graduate students, most of whom will be graduating in 2026. One participant was in the first year of a



Masters program. One participant was pursuing a PhD after spending 12 years in the oil and gas industry. Nine (38%) participants were completing post-doctoral programs. One participant (4%) had completed a post-doc and was seeking a permanent position in academia.

The leadership team expanded to eight leaders (Lisa Gilbert, Cabrillo College; Mintesinot Jiru, Coppin State University; Rebecca Beadling, Temple University; Sue Ebanks, Savannah State University; Claire McKinley, Bellevue Community College; Christy Visaggi, Georgia State University; Claire McLeod, Miami University - Oxford; Lynsey LeMay, Virginia Peninsula Community College) with two first-time leaders (Claire McLeod and Claire McKinley).

The workshop schedule was expanded to five days to accommodate lunch time discussions and application material review sessions that were held outside of the specified workshop time when the workshop was hosted at the EER.

Of the 24 workshop participants, 13 completed the end of workshop evaluation and rated their overall satisfaction with the workshop as 9.5 out of 10. Many participants noted that they found it valuable to have less structured discussion in the break-out rooms, while a couple of participants shared that they would have liked a bit more structure, desiring to have more visuals to provide guidance. A couple of participants also noted that they would have liked to have a bit more time for some of the sessions, and more structured and one-on-one coaching.

Webinars: During the 2024-2025 academic year, NAGT offered 11 webinars highlighting new curriculum materials and teaching approaches, as well as ideas for developing geoscience skills such as mathematical reasoning, working with big data, and field skills. We also aim to work with other NAGT committees or divisions, for example hosting a Share-a-thon by recent NAGT Outstanding Earth Science Teacher Awardees. A particularly popular webinar this year informed students about student internships and fellowships with EarthScope Consortium and Cascadia Region Earthquake Science Center.

The total number of registrants for webinars this year was 1839 (an increase of 73% over the previous year) and the **total number of participants in webinars was 438** (an increase of 60%). Webinars are recorded and posted on the NAGT website for public viewing and are now also posted on the NAGT Youtube channel. The total number of views for the 2024-2025 webinars is >3000, showing the scale of the additional audience reached after the live webinar.

Teach the Earth Website (TTE): The TTE committee updated their vision and mission, “To aid NAGT in offering PD opportunities and creating/soliciting web resources that are needed and/or desirable to maintain and grow Teach the Earth (TTE) as the portal for geoscience education resources.” The committee continues to work on strategizing use of the Community Contribution Tools, working with PD facilitators and proposers to develop materials, promoting TTE and the submission of education resources, and reviewing requests to be featured on TTE.

Earth Educators’ Rendezvous (EER): The EER moved from an annual event to a biennial event, and with this change came the opportunity for a revised planning schedule and greater



responsibilities for planning committee members. Each planning committee member has a specific role: Local host lead and co-chair, contributed program chair and co-chair, workshop lead, exhibits lead, sponsorships and fundraising lead, share-a-thon lead, contributed program support, and NAGT section liaison. The EER schedule was revised to a four-day meeting instead of five, while maintaining the core EER features of multi-day morning workshops, afternoon min-workshops, field trips, share-a-thon, and a contributed program.

Traveling Workshop Program (TWP): There was one traveling workshop held at Brigham Young University in January, 2025 that focused on Building Stronger Geoscience and Environmental Science Departments and Programs (**14 participants**). In March of 2025 there were two virtual meetings of TWP leaders to generate ideas for marketing and strengthening traveling workshop programs.

Virtual Workshops: We held three virtual workshops during the 2024-2025 academic year: Group work led by Sasha Seroy and Dana Thomas (January 2025; **10 participants**); Mentoring led by Stefany Sit and Laura Rademacher (May 2025; **10 participants**); and Course Design led by Megan Plenge and Kyle Fredrick (June 2025; **27 participants**). Workshop evaluations were overall positive. Workshop leaders report that many participants are looking for ways to collaborate with each other after the workshop; this could take the form of optional “office hours” a short time after the workshop.

Goals for committee work and progress towards them

The goals from last year’s annual report were to 1) Better coordinate across PD programs, and 2) Develop processes and guidelines for offering virtual workshops, webinars, and EER programs.

The new planning cycle and meeting schedule for the PD Committee have helped with cross-program awareness and coordination. Whether or not that will impact enrollment in PD programs is not clear.

At the PD Committee budget discussion meeting in May, 2025 we set guidelines and goals for all programs that were the result of the budget approved by the Executive Committee. This included expectations for the number of webinars that would be funded by NAGT (i.e., no external funds provided by webinar hosts) and the number of webinars paid for by external sources (i.e., the webinar hosts). The webinar committee chairs expressed some concerns about the expected number of funded webinars and the expected payment amount.

Significant effort was made to revise and articulate the planning process for the Earth Educators’ Rendezvous with the goal of relying less on SERC staff to manage (and complete) some of the planning process in an effort to reduce the EER budget. Changes included:

- Developing assigned roles with defined duties for EER planning committee members, and creating a timeline with assigned roles for a two-year EER planning cycle.
- Revising the EER workshop proposal form that 1) the content of the application could be used to populate the web page for selected workshops, and 2) proposers need to



articulate how the workshop would meet the design principles for On the Cutting Edge programs (part of the proposal evaluation criteria).

Goals and planned committee work in the next year and beyond

Over the next year, I would like to work toward the following goals:

1. Host virtual workshops on a regular schedule that meet enrollment requirements to at least break even. We are in the process of identifying leaders and dates for these workshops so that they can be advertised well in advance. We have the following virtual workshops planned for Spring 2026 (note that the Preparing for an Academic Career Workshop will take place in-person at the 2026 EEER):
 - a. Mentoring Workshop led by Laura Rademacher and Stefany Sit in late winter/early spring
 - b. Course Design Workshop led by Kyle Fredric and another unidentified leader in late spring
2. Continue to support planning for the 2026 EER at the University of South Carolina. The planning process is going well, however, I do not know if SERC spending has remained within the approved budget at this point in the planning process. We will need to make sure that we do not exceed budgeted expenses if we want the EER to remain a viable part of NAGT's PD offerings.
3. Help to revitalize the Traveling Workshop Program. Megan Plenge, Anne Egger, and Karen Viskupic have been designing survey and interview questions to gather data from past TWP participants and department/program chairs to better understand current community needs and how the TWP might help meet them. We are also thinking about new ways to partner with funded projects for dissemination and training purposes (e.g., TIDeS-funded workshops on transforming introductory courses; possibility of developing a new workshop strand focused on quantitative skills)
4. Identify the next chair of the PD Committee and integrate them into the next planning cycle so that Karen can step down as chair in Fall of 2026. Karen has been the chair of the committee since 2021 and a member of the committee since 2018 and hopes to continue involvement in NAGT PD programs while making space for a new leader with new visions.