



Annual Report of the Professional Development Planning Committee for FY2026

Submitted by Karen Viskupic, Committee Chair

Committee members:

Karen Viskupic (chair), Rory McFadden, Barbara Sobhani, Alix Davatzes, Brendan Hanger, Jen Wenner, Julie Ferguson, Megan Plenge, Mitchell Bender-Awalt, Cailin Huyck Orr, Anne Egger

Following the same model we piloted in 2025, we held an “all hands on deck” planning meeting on February 4, 2026. This meeting included an expanded list of NAGT PD leaders including: Angela Daneshmand, Jennifer Anderson, Katherine Ryker, Lisa Gilbert, Laura Rademacher, Monica Bruckner, Claire McLeod, Mike Phillips, Meghan Cook, Mea Cook, and Rachel Teasdale.

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 course design workshop

There were **393 participants** in NAGT professional development programs this year including in-person and virtual workshops, traveling workshops, and webinars. Highlights this year include: Successfully running the EER with a reduced budget and expanded planning committee with set responsibilities (although I don’t think we have the final budget numbers yet); Secured grant funding to help pay for the Early Career Workshop; Piloted a new model of activity review for the TTE website; and ran five Travelling Workshops. We also had a few challenges including lower than projected enrollment in the Virtual Course Design workshop, and only one externally funded webinar.

Summary of reports from individual programs

Workshop for Early Career Geoscience Faculty (Early Career Workshop; ECW):

The Early Career Workshop was held from June 21-25, 2026 at Macalester College in Saint Paul, MN. There were three workshop conveners (Gretchen Miller, Jennifer Anderson, Mea Cook) who organized the program and logistics and participated in leading workshop sessions, and eight additional workshop leaders who led workshop sessions. 58 individuals applied for the



workshop and **45 participated** (21 female, 24 male). The ECW received grant funding from the National Science Foundation which supported the workshop overall including participant travel stipends.

From the ECW report submitted by Mea Cook: “Given the continued uncertainty around federal grant funding, DEI, immigration, academic freedom, and how those issues affect higher education and tenure/promotion, we replaced the former DEI plenary and concurrent sessions with a plenary and concurrent sessions on Increasing Access. Topics for the new Increasing Access sessions included teaching in the field, Universal Design, graduate assessment, and supporting undergraduates beyond the classroom. We further coordinated the two teaching plenary sessions to create a better flow between the sessions and reduce additional redundancies. We also added a new session on AI and pedagogy, and removed the session on online teaching and open educational resources (but added a lot of those materials to other teaching sessions). As in 2025, to protect participants who may come from states or institutions that have anti-DEI laws or policies, we kept the participant list, detailed program, and workshop materials to the Participant Workspace, accessible only to workshop participants. Prior to 2025, NSF had provided an optional full day of sessions for participants led by Program Officers. NSF was unable to provide any sessions for our participants in 2025, but for 2026 we were able to hold a 1-hour Zoom session with NSF Program Officers, to which we invited the 2025 participants. NSF staff gave a presentation and did a live question and answer session.”

Preparing for an Academic Career Workshop (Career Prep):

Still waiting for a report from the Career Prep team.

The Career Prep workshop was held over 4 days (mornings) at the EER. There were **30 participants**.

Webinars:

During the 2025-2026 academic year, NAGT hosted 1 webinar (10 fewer than the previous year). The webinar highlighted opportunities for students and faculty mentors to gain experience at sea on research vessels. There were 149 registrants and **37 participants**. Two additional webinars were hosted by NESTA as part of the NAGT-NESTA K-12 Collaborative.

The small number of webinars this year was the result of fewer grant-funded education and outreach projects, and a new funding model for NAGT-hosted webinars. Webinars from this year and previous years are posted on the NAGT website for public viewing. While NAGT will continue to offer webinars in the future, the Webinar Planning Committee is on hiatus, and parties who would like to host webinars should instead contact the NAGT PD Committee or Executive Director directly.



Teach the Earth Website (TTE):

The TTE website committee revamped the activity review process so that it is ongoing rather than once a year. This process better aligns with the move to hold the EER every other year. They also developed a strategy for dealing with Online Educational Resources submission (new mini-collection), added COIs to activity pages, reviewed submissions to be included on TTE, and approved a fundraising popup donation campaign by the Finance Committee.

Earth Educators' Rendezvous (EER):

The Earth Educators' Rendezvous was held from July 20-23, 2026 at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC. There were **210 participants**.

From the EER report submitted by Barbara Sobhani: "Our goals for this meeting were to successfully execute a new four-day format for the Rendezvous and maintain the spirit of programming intent, appealing to a wide range of participants. The planning committee was restructured as a result of the large changes to the EER format. Each member of the committee had well-defined roles and a set timeline which kept committee members engaged throughout the extended two year planning process. This re-structure was successful and it is strongly recommended to continue, with only minor changes to some roles."

Traveling Workshop Program (TWP):

We made a big push to promote TWP at the 2025 GSA meeting in San Antonio, and a new management structure for the TWP program that we implemented in January of 2025 (separating roles of promoting the workshops, application and scheduling logistics, curation of workshop materials). These efforts were successful.

There were five traveling workshops held during the Winter-Spring of 2026: Two "Building Stronger Departments" workshops (University of Wisconsin- River Falls; University of Arkansas-Main Campus); One "Inclusive Mentoring" workshop (Pasadena City College); and Two "Transforming Your Introductory Course" workshop (Rutgers University- Newark; El Paso Community College). A low estimate of the total number of participants in these workshops is **57** (based on the number of end-of-workshop evaluations completed for each workshop).

We should ask the workshop leaders to report the number of participants in their Workshop Reports.

Virtual Course Design Workshop:

The format of the 2026 CDW was modified from the 2025 version based on end-of-workshop feedback: It was still offered as a synchronous virtual workshop over three weeks, but the number of meetings increased from 3 to 6 and length decreased from 2.5 hours to 1.5 hours each. This resulted in an extra 1.5 hours of meeting time which was designated as a working session for the last meeting: No new materials were introduced, but facilitators answered questions and created break-out rooms for independent and group work. There were **14**



workshop participants who were highly engaged throughout the workshop, except for the last meeting which was an optional work meeting. The last day was not well attended and resulted in fewer participants completing the end-of-workshop evaluation.

Goals for committee work and progress towards them

The goals from last year's annual report were to:

1. Host virtual workshops on a regular schedule that meet enrollment requirements to at least break even.
2. Continue to support planning for the 2026 EER at the University of South Carolina.
3. Help to revitalize the Traveling Workshop Program.
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.

With respect to these goals we:

1. Committed to hosting a Virtual Course Design workshop each spring. This workshop had only 14 participants (needed 20 to break even), but since the money was already spent in setting up the workshop we decided to run it anyway. We may want to reconsider this plan in future years.
2. We had a successful EER in terms of everything running well, lots of enthusiasm, positive workshop evaluations, etc. I don't think we have the final budget numbers yet, but we did put on a successful meeting with a reduced budget.
3. We had five Travelling Workshops. The promotion activities and distributed management/leadership model are working well.
4. Brendan Hanger will be the new PD Committee Chair.

Goals and planned committee work in the next year and beyond

I am sure that Brendan will have his own set of goals for NAGT PD programming. I would like to see us: Keep the momentum going from a successful EER and make an early start on planning for the 2028 EER; Continue to promote TWP and have a training/orientation meeting for all TWP leaders to review the new Google Drive workspace and revised materials; Fully implement the rolling review of TTE activities; Re-think our models for webinars and virtual workshops.

I look forward to continuing my engagement with NAGT PD programs as a TWP workshop leader and am happy to help in individual programs as needed. I also look forward to watching the PD programs thrive under a new leader. Thank you for the opportunity to work with so many amazing people. I have learned a lot and appreciate the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in NAGT's PD programs.