

COSMOS

CONSORTIUM OF ORGANIZATIONS FOR STRONG-MOTION OBSERVATION SYSTEMS

BOARD MEETING

14 November 2003

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

**Earthquake Engineering Research Center
Richmond, California**

President Davis called the meeting to order at 3:10 PM.

The following directors were present:

President James F. Davis

Vice President William Savage

Secretary John Anderson

Treasurer Maurice Power

Norman Abrahamson

Bruce Bolt (left early)

Donald Yule

Farzad Naeim

Jerry Wright

Others Present

Executive Director Carl Stepp

Claire M. Johnson, Administrative Assistant and Editor, COSMOS newsletter

The following directors were absent:

Wilfred Iwan

1. MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING ON 6 FEBRUARY 2003

Moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that the minutes of the 6 February 2003 Board of Director's meeting be adopted.

2. FILLING THE SENIOR ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIRMANSHIP

President Davis advised the Board that Allin Cornell would not be able to continue to serve as Chair of Senior Advisory Council. President Davis moved and Vice President Savage seconded that Farzad Naeim be named Chair of Senior Advisory Council. Approved unanimously.

3. REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

President Davis referred to the remarks made at General Membership Meeting this morning. Discussion focused on his proposed COSMOS Business Plan. As printed in the November 2003 COSMOS Newsletter, the elements of the plan are as follows:

1. COSMOS provides advocacy for the strong-motion community;
2. COSMOS provides a forum for the strong-motion community to consider issues and to develop policies and strategies to accomplish the COSMOS mission; and
3. COSMOS develops, coordinates, and facilitates other services to the strong-motion community such as the Virtual Data Center.

Director Bolt questioned whether the appropriate title for this is “COSMOS Business Plan.” Some directors thought that a business plan normally includes more explicit reference to how money is raised. President Davis believes that it is a business plan in that it is a practical explanation of how we implement our mission. The Board did not want to spend time debating a label for the statements. The Board identified alternatives such as “Vision,” “Business Plan Elements,” and COSMOS business activities. If there is a consensus, it is that an appropriate description is “COSMOS Business Activities,” which is how it will be referred to in the future.

President Davis reiterated his remarks from the General Membership Meeting that the COSMOS Business Activities identifies the benefits of membership. He proposed that provisionally this Board consider Items 1, 2, and 3 to be our business plan activities. There was a consensus that this is a good plan. He suggested that the next step is to develop a brochure that concisely describes these objectives and that we work towards seeing that the entire COSMOS membership understands and supports the plan.

Discussion turned to the topic of short courses, as an element of Activity 3 that also may have the potential to both improve engineering practice and to provide COSMOS with a revenue stream. Director Naeim pointed out that before short courses are offered, careful planning is needed to determine what we will offer, what we want to achieve, and the financial arrangements. A fundamental requirement is that the activity must help, not hurt, the overall COSMOS finances. Director Bolt pointed out that quality short courses will incur costs for presenters, who cannot be asked to be involved on good will only, and for COSMOS. Director Naeim recommended that the courses be professionally recorded and edited for later distribution. Director Abrahamson recommended very careful selection of topics, to avoid “competition” with other professional organizations. They should keep a close connection with strong motion and high relevance for the engineering community.

Director Naeim suggested that before offering short courses, COSMOS should get people used to the idea of COSMOS tackling technical issues by incorporating short discussions in the newsletter, and distributing widely the newsletter in pdf form via email. Potential distribution

lists could include EERI, SEAOC, and other professional societies. It is essential that these short discussions be interesting and “turn people on, not turn them off” to COSMOS.

The Board decided to form an ad-hoc “Outreach Committee” to address these issues. Members will include Farzad Naeim (chair), Eduardo Miranda, Norm Abrahamson, Jim Davis, and Carl Stepp (facilitator). President Davis requested that this committee consider all necessary details to develop these activities: develop a list of workshop topics, a strategy to get them started, a time frame, a financial proposal (costs, discounts for COSMOS members, etc.), a way to use them to increase COSMOS membership, other sources of funds that may help underwrite costs (e.g., FEMA, USGS, etc.), legacy documents (tapes, notes, internet distribution, etc.). Initially, the committee will meet by telephone weekly, Monday at 7:00 AM Pacific time for one hour. It is anticipated that the committee will have a progress report at the February 2004 Board of Directors meeting. They are requested to keep the entire board informed of their activities by including all board members with copies of email. The committee should start with prior inputs (including the February 2003 Senior Advisory Council (SAC) meeting) and an email exchange that was included in the package distributed to the directors at this meeting.

Director Naeim will provide the facility for the conference call next week: 7:00 AM Monday.

REMARKS BY TREASURER

Treasurer Power commented that on an annual basis, COSMOS operating expenditures leave little or no surplus compared to revenues. Our funds in the bank, about \$130,000, are needed for some upcoming projects. He requested a more precise forecast of COSMOS commitments. Carl Stepp stated that the record-processing workshop is the main commitment. He will gather this information and distribute it to the board.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Director Stepp emphasized the importance of implementing ideas for COSMOS that are developed by the SAC and the Strong Motion Program Board (SMPB). If implemented, they advance strong-motion community significantly. If they are ignored, COSMOS will have an image problem. Carl Stepp does not enough time to implement them. He asked the Board to think about how we can engage others and set priorities.

REMARKS BY SECRETARY

Anderson suggested the Board consider the issue, raised at the Membership Meeting, that the Annual Meeting program be developed to increase interest and attendance. The goal would be to make the Annual Meeting something people locally can't afford to miss. The idea would be to use it as a forum for presenting and debating technical developments, such as the latest results in the PEER Next Generation of Attenuation Relations (NGA) project. People who come should not be disappointed in the quality or scope of the presentations, but would be given the opportunity to give reactions to developing research.

Possible changes to the Annual Meeting include charging attendees for lunch, charging non-members. Naeim noted that we should be sure that Annual General Membership Meetings

include all of the legally required elements and advanced notice, but at the same time avoid making those requirements long or tedious, maximizing time devoted to offering information that the membership will be eager to learn. It may be better to move the time of the Annual Meeting a couple of weeks earlier in the year, in deference to competing deadlines (NSF proposals, SCEC proposals) that may have reduced attendance at this meeting. A meeting with an exciting agenda might require a different meeting room. Norm Abrahamson volunteered to organize the next technical meeting. He will give a progress report in February. He says this is the only time he will offer to do it, though. The Board graciously thanks him for this generous offer.

REMARKS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT

Woody Savage asked Executive Director Stepp if he has plans to leave position of Executive Director? Carl Stepp responded that he would like to stay until we find an appropriate replacement and work out a phasing process. President Davis asked the Board for ideas of who might be approached as a replacement. Savage also noted that this was the first meeting that Bill Leith has attended. Leith is the new leader of the Advanced National Seismic System (ANSS) at the USGS following John Filson's retirement.

REMARKS BY DIRECTOR WRIGHT

Director Wright remarked that the workshops are a good idea and that taking them to the Bureau of Reclamation staff would benefit that program.

REMARKS BY DIRECTOR YULE

Director Yule noted that the next Executive Director may not be as generous as Carl Stepp in being willing to serve without pay. He also suggested that workshop topics may need to start with some things that seem elementary, but are still not widely understood in the community.

OTHER TOPICS

The location of the COSMOS offices at the Richmond Field Station benefit from considerable good will. We need to consider ways, such as operating our short courses in conjunction with the U.C. Extension, that will maintain the rationale for keeping them here. An appropriate contact for discussions on the office status is Professor Nick Sitar, Director of the Earthquake Research Center.

REMARKS BY CLAIRE JOHNSON

Claire Johnson noted that her job is half time (2.5 days per week). She feels that her time is filled with the basic "maintenance" of COSMOS administrative needs. She suggested that COSMOS grows, her role should be revisited by the Board, and that a full time position may be needed in the future. COSMOS infrastructure is thus needed on the agenda for the next meeting.

ADJOURNED AT 5:09 PM