

October 29, 2021, GEM Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
(Virtual meeting, conducted via Webex)

Attendance - Vania Jordanova (Chair), Adam Kellerman (Vice Chair), Alex Glocer, Allison Jaynes, Brian Walsh, Chia-Lin Huang, Elizabeth Vandegriff, Chih-Ping Wang, Chris Mouikis, Howard Singer, Ian Cohen, Jesse Woodroffe, John Lyon, Lisa Winter, Lynn Kistler, Mei-Yun Lin, Raluca Ilie, Seth Claudepierre, Shin Ohtani, Steve Petrinec, Yihua Zheng

1. Welcome/Agenda (Vania Jordanova)

The SC welcomes Elizabeth Vandegriff to the position of student representative.

2. VGEM 2021 Recap (Vania, Allison, Mei-Yun, Elizabeth, Adam, Chia-Lin, Chris)

General: There were 63 responses to the VGEM 2021 survey, with majority of students and early career researchers responding. Gather.Town was a favorite part of the meeting, as it allowed emulation of a real poster session. Several participants commented positively regarding the format and ease of use. Most people found the VGEM website easy to navigate, and found the GEM Slack channels useful, though difficult to navigate since there were many channels. Unfortunately, many people reported missing the Gather.Town social events. For those that did attend, the SBCCI talks/events were found to be very helpful by about 50% of participants. One comment stated that we need to work more on solutions, now that we have raised awareness of mental health issues in GEM, and academia as a whole. The Steering Committee (SC) will consider how to best act on this advice. People expressed a desire for more communication leading up to the meeting, and that an in-person meeting will be better overall.

Focus Group (FG) Report Format: Raluca and Seth created a Google Form for use by the FG leaders, which is available on the GEM Wiki. The form was used by one FG leader during the last round of reports, who provided some feedback on how the form can be improved. There are several limitations with the Google Form, such as no facility to use bullet points and other formatting etc. It was suggested that a Word Document template would be better, and could be attached during the request for reports. In addition, the template could be sent out directly from the Chair, rather than going through the Research Area Coordinators (RACs) for the dissemination to reduce confusion. The completed reports should still be sent to the RACs for approval before publication in the GEMstone.

Student Report: Mei-Yun and Elizabeth reported on the student survey, which indicated approximately 50% first-time attendees. Around 30% of students reported that they were able to attend only due to the virtual aspect of the meeting. There were also 30% of students who attended internationally, though no analysis as to whether this was the same cohort. Students reported that posters at Gather.Town were easy to setup and easy to interact with, however, many of the students that participated in the survey reported that the timing was an issue. These statistics were based on a response percentage of 40%.

GEMEE Program: Tabled until the next meeting.

GEM Wiki: The tutorial talks have been posted on the wiki. Session recordings are available on the VGEM website, and Gather.Town is available for participants to view the GEM photo slide show. The GEM logo has been sent to a graphic designer, and will be finalized soon. Chia-Lin expressed the idea that the logo should not have a fixed color, and could be varied depending on the use. A standard logo would be of a fixed color, for use on the GEM wiki and the meeting website.

3. Call for New Focus Groups (Vania)

A call will be sent out in the GEM Messenger to solicit proposals for new Focus Group topics, the tentative due date is December 1.

4. Mini-GEM 2021 (Chia-Lin and Chris)

This year AGU runs in a hybrid mode and it is possible that we can do the same with mini-GEM. Although running a hybrid mini-GEM entails a higher logistical effort from everybody involved, we are considering the hybrid format to be the standard for future GEM meetings (certainly for next year's Summer meeting) and therefore this is a great opportunity to learn the ropes. The SC discussed experience on running hybrid meetings, with concerns regarding how the meeting experience would differ for folks attending in person or remotely. The Owl products were suggested for the hybrid experience. The Meeting Organizers (MOs) Chris and Chia-Lin had already conducted some preliminary research, and found that there may be limitations for larger rooms, so this kind of technology would be most appropriate for splinter sessions. The SC will investigate whether such devices can be purchased to support the hybrid format going forward.

The SC then moved on to vote on the upcoming mini-GEM meeting. Chia-Lin and Chris suggested three potential options for the annual mini-GEM meeting, with options including combinations of simultaneous and asynchronous "virtual only" and "hybrid" formats. These could be held on the Sunday before AGU, and/or in January. The committee discussed that a hybrid-virtual meeting on the Sunday before AGU was best to align discussions/efforts, though it comes with a significant organizational burden for the MOs, and potential connectivity issues. The biggest hurdle for holding a hybrid-only meeting is that it is difficult to find a venue that can provide the full bandwidth to support the required connectivity. Hence, the venue would be chosen to support only the hybrid FG sessions; for the virtual only sessions the FG chairs would need to organize their own connectivity. The steering committee held a rank-choice style vote, with a tie (8-8) for virtual only and hybrid-virtual broken by the Chair. The decision was to hold a hybrid-virtual mini-GEM workshop on the Sunday prior to AGU, offering the option to FG chairs to have either hybrid or virtual only sessions as explained above.

5. NSF updates (Lisa) - Postponed to next meeting

6. GEM RAC Selection (Vania) - Postponed to next meeting

7. Meeting adjourned