

Department of
Earth and Planetary Sciences

August 3, 2022

EarthScope Board of Directors: Nomination Statement by Michael Wyession

It would be an honor and privilege for me to serve the EarthScope community on its board of directors, especially during this exciting period of the completion of the IRIS/UNAVCO merger. This is a time of remarkable opportunity for us.

I realize that I also said this the other three times that I was involved with IRIS leadership (Executive Committee; Board of Director; and Chair of E&O). However, mergers have always been very good for our communities. Whether it was the merger of the GSN and PASSCAL communities to form IRIS or the merger of USArray/PBO/SAFOD to form the first EarthScope, these mergers were huge step-functions for us. Scientists stepped out of their comfort zones to learn new fields, methods, instruments, datatypes, and communities. New collaborations formed, bold research initiatives were started, and spectacular new discoveries were made.

The current rebirth of EarthScope provides yet another remarkable opportunity for growth. Integrating geodetic, geomagnetic, seismic, and other data will allow us to look with new eyes (or “hear” with new “ears”) at many identified important Grand Challenges such as the process of faulting, the generation of magma and eruption of volcanos, the non-rigidity (horizontally and vertically) of the lithosphere, and the hazards that all these pose to humanity. We will also be able to nimbly respond to the many needs and opportunities of cutting edge Critical Zone geoscience through our abilities to continuously monitor storms, ice flow, ground water, and rivers in powerful and unique ways.

However, being on the Board is not all exciting big-picture scientific discoveries. It is mostly particulars, patience, details, phone calls, staff meetings, budgets, by-laws, reports, and, of course, writing the next NSF 5-year proposal. My administrative experience will help greatly, such as previous IRIS board work (including helping to write three past IRIS proposals) and currently being Editor-in-Chief of AGU’s “Perspectives” journal and Director of my university’s Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), where I manage a 17-person staff and annual \$6M budget.

Directing the CTL, where my responsibilities include managing university programming on diversity, equity, and inclusion, has also helped reinforce two other important aspects of Board work. First, EarthScope must make diversity and inclusion a part of everything we do. We cannot solve the problems of tomorrow with only a fraction of the population involved. Everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, or geography, needs to be welcomed into EarthScope and provided opportunities to participate and engage with our science.

Second, however good our science is, we won’t succeed if we cannot communicate it well to people at all levels, inside and out of EarthScope. The IRIS/UNAVCO Engagement programs have long been models of excellence within NSF, and EarthScope Engagement must continue to innovate and develop cutting edge programs and products that educate and inspire people at all levels.

Sincerely,
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