

The 2006 inter-sessional Science Board and Governing Council meeting: A note from the Chairman

By Vera Alexander

At the invitation of the U.S. Delegate, Dr. Samuel Pooley, the 4th inter-sessional joint meeting of the PICES Science Board and Governing Council was convened at the Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu, U.S.A., on April 17–18, 2006. It was followed, on the afternoon of April 18, by a short meeting of the Governing Council. The dates and location of the meetings were chosen to allow participants the option to attend the PICES/GLOBEC Symposium on “*Climate variability and ecosystem impacts on the North Pacific*”, also held at the Ala Moana Hotel on April 19–21. The tradition of holding inter-sessional meetings is fairly new, but now has become an integral part of PICES management. Today, PICES is involved in a daunting array of activities, such that it is usually not practical for the governing entities to meet only once each year at the Annual Meeting. The plan is to continue these inter-sessional meetings as needed.

The first order of business for the joint meeting was a systematic update on the activities of the various scientific entities. Chairmen of the Committees and the CCCC Program presented reports; each Committee had also been asked to provide an Action Plan, pursuant to the adoption of a Strategic Plan by the Governing Council at the 2004 Annual Meeting. The primary issue for the meeting, however, was the development of the Future Integrative Scientific Program for the Organization. The CCCC

Program has been a centerpiece of PICES activities over the past decade. Its close juxtaposition with GLOBEC has enhanced its effectiveness. The challenge now is to develop a follow-up program that, while building on the CCCC’s accomplishments to date, will further advance PICES scientific contributions, as well as the applicability of the information.

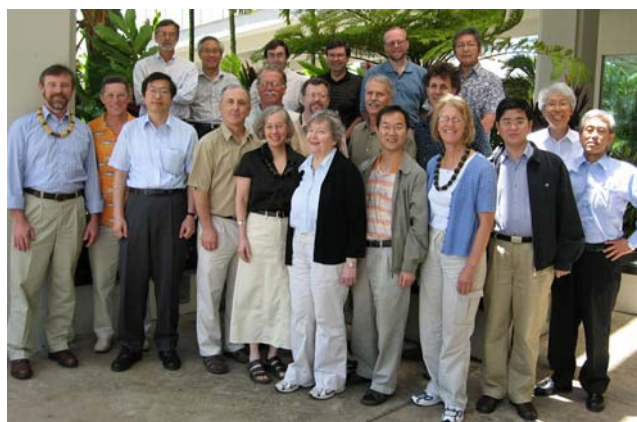
The development of the Future Integrative Scientific Program (FISP) for PICES was first discussed at the 2003 inter-sessional meeting in Victoria, Canada. Subsequently, the Governing Council established a Study Group on FISP at the 2005 inter-sessional meeting. This group was to develop ideas for one or more new integrative scientific programs to be undertaken by the Organization. Six proposals for study areas resulted from their activities, and these were discussed and presented at PICES XIV in Vladivostok. The intent at the 2006 inter-sessional meeting was to further refine the topic areas, possibly by combining or reorganizing them. In this regard, a lot of work was done while in Honolulu by members of Science Board collectively and individually, and input has been received by the Study Group from Governing Council members, as well as the broader PICES community. The Study Group will continue to work on refining the topics. Progress has been made, and we expect to address a proposed central theme for the new program at the next Annual Meeting.

Much of the remainder of the joint meeting was devoted to reviewing upcoming PICES-sponsored activities, proposed publications and symposia, and discussing arrangements for PICES XV in Yokohama. The Governing Council also took up these issues, but the main order of its business was the adoption of the updated Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations (RPFR). A Study Group on RPFR was established by the Governing Council at PICES XIII. The intent was to ensure that the rules and regulations agreed with the current practice of the Organization, and to eliminate problematic areas of ambiguity. Discussion of the revisions began at the 2005 inter-sessional meeting, continued at PICES XIV, and the revised documents were finally adopted at this inter-sessional meeting.

The other matter discussed by the Governing Council involved the guidelines for operating the Trust Fund. This fund, established in 1994 and supported primarily by voluntary contributions from the Contracting Parties, has been a useful mechanism for facilitating involvement in PICES activities by young scientists, and for providing funds for the PICES Intern Program as needed. Since the guidelines had not been updated in more than a decade, at PICES XIV the Finance and Administration Committee determined that a review was warranted. Again, our aim was to bring the current practice and the guidelines into accord, and to improve transparency of the decisions. Canadian Delegate, Mr. Serge Labonté, worked with the Secretariat in updating the procedures, which were then adopted at this inter-sessional meeting.

A bonus following a very fruitful meeting was provided by our host, Dr. Samuel Pooley, who arranged for an enjoyable and instructive very early morning outing to the fish auction operated by the United Fishing Agency, Ltd. The manager, Brooks H. Takenaka, presented us a wealth of information about the operation of the market and the fish for sale. The visit was followed by a breakfast reception *al fresco* near the dock.

PICES has achieved a substantial reputation over its early years, and has recently reached important new milestones. The completion of the first report on marine ecosystems of the North Pacific, the successful execution of the first large integrative research activity (the CCCC Program), and the first formal response to a request for advice by a Contracting Party (the Report of the Study Group on the Fisheries and Ecosystem Responses to Recent Regime Shifts, PICES Scientific Report No. 28) all point to the



Governing Council and Science Board representatives. Front row: Skip McKinnell, Igor Shevchenko, Tokio Wada, John Stein, Laura Richards, Vera Alexander, Suam Kim, Patricia Livingston, Fengkui Liang and Yukimasa Ishida; middle row: George Boehlert, Harold Batchelder, Michael Foreman, Samuel Pooley and, Ig-Chan Pang; back row: Michael Dagg, Kuh Kim, Alex Bychkov, Serge Labonté, Gordon Kruse and Sei-Ichi Saitoh. Absent: Lev Bocharov.



Science Board and Governing Council representatives at the United Fishing Agency, Ltd. fish auction in Honolulu.

direction in which PICES must forge. Coordinating and synthesizing marine research in the North Pacific region is, in and of itself, a very worthy and defensible ambition. But PICES, in developing the new integrative research activity, must also continue to enhance its ability to provide knowledge applicable to the important management and policy decisions faced by the Contracting Parties. This means that PICES must walk the fine line between supplying information and recommending policy. PICES will not advocate policy, but must provide the critical understanding needed by the Contracting Parties to do so. This is especially important, as we face a changing oceanic environment.



Dr. Vera Alexander is currently serving the last year of her second term as PICES Chairman. She has been involved in PICES since the first planning activities in the early 1980s, and served as one of the two national U.S. delegates during the first PICES decade. Her scientific background is in biological oceanography. Recently stepping down as Dean and Professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, she is now devoting her time to national and international marine science affairs. In addition to her work with PICES, she is serving as President of the Arctic Research Consortium of the United States and is on the Scientific Steering Committee and the U.S. National Committee for the Census of Marine Life.