

**NOAA Research Council
Unified Modeling Committee
Terms of Reference**
August 1, 2017

1. Purpose and Scope

In May 2016 the NOAA Research Council (RC) established the Unified Modeling Task Force (UMTF) to document Unified Modeling benefits and issues within NOAA, and to provide actionable recommendations to the RC within 12 months. The UMTF published a whitepaper on Unified Modeling (UMTF, 2017), containing six recommendations for further action for the RC, and provided brief white papers on these recommendations. In June 2017, the UMTF was transformed into the Unified Modeling Committee (UMC).

Within the scope of responsibilities of the RC, the UMC will implement and expand upon the recommendations of UMTF (2017), in order to plan, monitor, evaluate, and improve Unified Modeling within NOAA, and in a community effort with external partners.

2. Committee Membership

The UMC will consist of a core committee and organize itself into sub-committees to manage and execute sub-projects, following the approach as used by the UMTF. Core members of the UMC will form the core committee, and associate members will serve in addition to core members on sub-committees.

Core members:

The core membership of the UMC will consist of at least two representatives of National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Weather Service (NWS), and Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), and additional representatives from the Office of Performance, Risk, and Social Science (PRSS), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Technology Partnerships Office (TPO), and Office of General Counsel (OGC). The core members are proposed by the Line Offices (LOs) through their representatives in the RC.

Co-chairs:

Two co-chairs are elected by the core membership of the UMC, and are approved by the RC. The co-chairs cannot be from the same LO. Selection of the co-chairs occurs annually concurrent with the review of the core membership. The co-chairs will serve in two year staggered terms, and there will be no term limits for co-chairs.

Subcommittee chairs:

One or two core members of the UMC will act as (co-) chairs of each sub-committee. Chairs of subcommittees are proposed by the sub-committees and approved by the core membership of the UMC.

Associate members:

Core-members of the UMC will propose associate members to serve on subcommittees. Associate members are subject matter experts (SMEs), and can include early career professionals. Associate members are approved by the core membership of the UMC.

Executive Secretariat:

The Executive Secretariat(s) will support the co-chairs, coordinate the Committee, manage meetings, and facilitate tasks. The Executive Secretariat(s) will be appointed by the co-chairs in consultation with Research Council Leadership.

Membership review:

All memberships and chairs of the UMC and its Subcommittees will be reviewed annually as defined above.

3. Duties and Authorities

Specific duties for the UMC members include, but are not limited to:

- Participating in regular Committee meetings;
- Managing Committee data calls within their respective Line Offices;
- Implementing and expanding upon the recommendations of the Unified Modeling Task Force to plan, monitor, evaluate, and improve unified modeling;
- Providing knowledgeable subject matter expertise to the Committee from their Line Office to influence the strategic planning, associated analyses, and implementation of NOAA's unified modeling activities;
- Providing data and informed analysis of NOAA modeling and data assimilation activities to determine NOAA's effectiveness in achieving a unified modeling approach;
- Ensuring ongoing communication of unified modeling best practices, priorities and activities across Line Offices and external partners, as well as within the UMC itself;

The UMC will report on its activities to the RC as needed.

4. Meetings and Coordination

The UMC and its sub-committees normally meet once per month, or at the direction of their (co-) chairs. Committee meetings are open to NOAA employees and contractors.

As unified modeling is both a research and operational issue, the UMC will regularly coordinate with the following groups in addition to the Research Council in order to ensure the effective implementation of a unified modeling strategy for the Agency:

- NOAA Observing Systems Council (NOSC)
- Line Office Transition Management Committee (LOTMC)
- NOAA HPC Board
- NOAA HPC User Group
- Council of NOAA Fellows

5. Internal Decision Making Process

The RC is the final decision-making body for all UMC activities. Internal UMC and subcommittee decisions will be made through informed consensus. When the UMC presents decisional items to the Research Council for approval, it will provide either a consensus recommendation, with adequate information about the basis for reaching its consensus, or (when there is not a consensus), a set of options with pros and cons.

6. Terms of Reference Approval and Revision Process

The UMC will review this document annually, or at the request of the RC, to assure continued accuracy and utility. Based on the recommendations of the core membership of the UMC, the Executive Secretariat will make revisions to the document as appropriate. The RC will approve the final Terms of Reference and modifications as recommended in the annual reviews.

7. References

UMTF 2017, [High-level NOAA Unified Modeling Overview](#)