

**Earth and Environmental Systems Institute**  
**Personnel Rights and Responsibilities**  
*Revised 7-02-2020*

Introduction

The Earth and Environmental Systems Institute (EESI) is the environmental institute in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences and one of the Penn State Institutes of Energy and the Environment (IEE). EESI's focus bridges from fundamental science to applied topics and its motto is "*Science informing solutions*". EESI supports a vision aimed at advancing fundamental Earth system science to inform solutions for environmental challenges.

EESI's mission is:

1. To encourage examination of the links between Earth's chemical, physical, geological, biological, and social processes from atomic to global scales by supporting faculty and student research investigating human and natural systems;
2. To disseminate research findings through publications, presentations, web pages, workshops, videos, seminars, testimony to public institutions, laboratory assistance, field trips, and advice to public and private organizations;
3. To provide insights for the public, the broader scientific community, government, and community organizations to benefit stakeholders ranging from Penn State to the world.

EESI was founded in the mid-1980s (initially as the Earth System Science Center--with initial Director Eric Barron) and today embraces faculty and staff members throughout EMS as well as affiliates outside the College. As the number of EESI participants has expanded, so has the scope of the research emphasized by EESI Associates. This Rights and Responsibilities document is periodically updated to ensure that EESI is positioned to achieve its Vision.

The first version of this document was written in the fall of 2006 by a committee led by James Kasting and made up of EESI faculty. They were charged with examining the role of the EESI Associate and providing recommendations regarding the rights and responsibilities that this role entails. The information covered in this document is based on those recommendations. The recommendations were updated by S. L. Brantley, T. Bernier, and R. Nicholas during April 2020, in coordination with EESI's steering committee.

EESI Affiliation

*EESI Associates* are defined as faculty with salary all or partially handled through EESI or who have the capacity to return overhead to EESI via their association with IEE or other approved arrangements.

*EESI Affiliates* are defined as personnel who are not Associates and not Participants (see below) but who choose to affiliate with EESI so that they are automatically invited to participate in activities. (Note that almost all EESI activities are run as open meetings but they are not all advertised broadly.)

*EESI Participants* include wage-payroll employees, short-term employees, staff, and students (including postdoctoral students) who associate with EESI. Students of Associates are generally not considered participants unless they request to be listed as "Participants." In that case, they are generally invited to EESI activities.

EESI Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee is constituted to provide advice and input to the Director of EESI on running the

Institute. The committee is chosen by the Director and by voting as per below. The vote is held before all the other members are chosen by the Director. Term of office for members on the committee are as shown. If possible, the Director maintains some representation across rank, gender, department, discipline, and under-represented groups. Terms are staggered where possible. The committee votes its own chair.

- 1) A tenure-line EESI Associate (3 yrs)\*
- 2) A non-tenure line EESI Associate (3 yrs)\*
- 3) One EESI affiliate (3 yrs)\*
- 4) EESI Associate voted at large (3 yrs)

\* Appointed by the EESI Director. Every attempt will be made to ensure that a Center Director is included on the committee. This person may also double as either the 2) tenure-line or 3) non-tenure line Associate mentioned above.

### EESI Steering Committee

A steering committee is comprised of department heads from the departments of Geosciences, Meteorology and Atmospheric Science, Geography, and Energy and Mineral Engineering. The committee meets with the EESI director once or twice a year to discuss EESI activities. It is also an opportunity for all parties to discuss strategic planning and to exchange ideas in all aspects of EESI governance.

### Term limits for Tenure-line EESI Associates

While it is natural that the scholarly interests of EESI faculty may change over time, it is not beneficial to the Institute to have funds tied to researchers who are pursuing work that is not aligned with the Institute's mission. This is especially true for associates who do not pursue interdisciplinary projects and do not participate in or initiate EESI activities. Term limits provide the Institute the opportunity to change who remains as an associate. Such limits can dynamically influence EESI's ability to hire faculty and can thus help EESI influence EMS's hiring priorities. The Director of EESI will work with EMS departments and the Dean of EMS to allocate Associates among departments to expand into new areas of research. Term limits, evaluation, and reappointment shall be treated as follows:

- EESI will hire and provide salary support for new tenure-line Associates until their tenure year
- Each Associate will receive feedback about their contribution to EESI each year based on their Faculty Activity Summary (see below)
- Each EESI Associate will be evaluated every five years (or in their tenure year--see above) to determine whether they remain an Associate
- Before spring each year when EESI Associates are evaluated, nominations from department heads for new Associates will be solicited. If faculty members wish to be considered for this, they should discuss the possibility of a nomination with their department head and the EESI Director. Nominations will consist of a brief email describing why there is interest on the part of a candidate and should include a CV. Of course, only a few candidates will be made associate over many years; therefore, nominees (and department heads) must not expect quick incorporation as an EESI associate. To make it more likely that a candidate eventually becomes an associate after nomination, faculty should first become EESI affiliates and should participate in activities for a few years before potential acceptance as an associate
- The review to determine retention as an Associate will be conducted by the Director and Advisory Committee, and the timing will coincide with an Associate's tenure or post-tenure review (the latter occurs every five years)
- Faculty maintaining appropriate ties with EESI will retain their salary line through the Institute
- At the point of achieving tenure or the five-year review for any EESI Associate who is

not maintaining sufficient interactions, EESI could buy out their salary funds or swap the funds for another associate

- Occasionally, an EMS faculty member may be invited to become an associate without a prior nomination (but this will only happen after approval by the Department Head and Dean)
- Co-hire funds that are released by changing an Associate will generally be swapped within the department of the departing faculty member; movement of funds in or out of a department will only occur with consultation between the Director and the Dean.
- For any EESI Associate who does not stay with the University or College, or who retires, salary funds return to EESI for commitment to a new hire in an area of strategic interest to EESI, at the discretion of the Dean of EMS. Funds do not necessarily return to the department

#### Support for non-tenure line fixed-term EESI Associates

The financial resources of the Institute are a prime benefit for EESI Associates; however, it is important that these resources be strategically used to advance EESI's mission within EMS. With respect to non-tenure line fixed-term EESI Associates, the following guidelines apply:

- Support for fixed-term non-tenure line EESI Associates can include space, tuition waivers, salary, and other funds at the discretion of the Director
- Salary support from General Funds for fixed-term non-tenure line Associates will be limited to activities that can advance the greater EMS community at the discretion of the Director

#### Responsibilities of EESI Associates

The privileges accorded to EESI Associates are accompanied by expectations for meaningful participation in and initiation of activities of the Institute. For example, all EESI Associates are expected to indicate their affiliation with EESI in publications, *e.g.*, Department of Geosciences and Earth and Environmental Systems Institute, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802. Other examples of how an Associate may contribute include the following (no Associate is expected to do all activities):

- Direction of, or participation in, an institute-related research, education, or outreach initiative
- Promotion of relevant teaching activities
- Promotion of relevant research activities
- Promotion of relevant outreach activities
- Participation in Strategic Planning
- Participation in occasional committees for hiring, for EESI governance, or for EMS governance, at the request of the Director or as an elected committee member
- Direction of, or participation in, a Center
- Leadership or participation in seminars, most notably, EESI's Monday series, "EarthTalks"
- Provision of updated information for the EESI website
- Provision of updated annual information about sabbaticals, awards, grants, etc.
- Supervision of graduate students in relevant cross-disciplinary research
- Interaction with EESI's Environmental Scholars
- Occasionally represent EESI to the PS Institutes of Energy and the Environment (IEE)

#### Evaluation of EESI Associates

An Associate who has made meaningful contributions to the mission and goals of EESI will be considered for continued funding following their tenure year or five-year review. The EESI Director (and Advisory Committee) will evaluate and determine if the activities of an Associate have advanced EESI's mission and goals. Associates will be evaluated annually by submitting a copy of their Faculty Activity Summary to EESI. This FAS should include a narrative and/or bulleted list (no longer than one page) on how they are meeting their responsibilities as an EESI Associate. For the five-year review,

EESI Associates will submit a copy of their post-tenure dossier, which is prepared every five years by EMS tenure-track faculty. The five- (or tenure year) year review is simply used to decide whether an Associate will remain an Associate; it is not a decision about promotion (or tenure). The document should make clear what contributions the Associate has made to EESI.

#### *Rights of EESI Associates (and Affiliates at the discretion of the Director)*

The benefits that may be accorded by the Director to EESI Associates include the following:

- Tuition and/or research or stipend support for undergraduate or graduate students, or postdoctoral fellows, depending upon availability (also available to Affiliates at Directors' discretion)
- Eligibility to submit nominations to the Environmental Scholars Program (top-up funds to recruit incoming graduate students)
- Access to EESI staff services, *e.g.*, proposal preparation and grant management
- Access to the services of EESI's science writer/communications specialist and outreach personnel
- Space in EES Building for offices, workspace, etc., when available
- Priority in teaching classes in 117 EES Building
- Priority in registering for and utilizing EESI space
- Facilities and staff assistance for workshops or other initiatives
- Priority for participation in EESI pizza lunches, seminars, and other activities
- Participation in Strategic Planning
- Eligibility to work with EESI staff on large interdisciplinary environmental proposal submissions
- Eligibility to vote for representatives to and to serve on the Advisory Committee
- Eligibility to seek tuition support on grants where the granting agency provides no tuition
- Access to EESI-supported high-performance computing resources for EESI-relevant research
- Eligibility to propose and lead Centers
- Eligibility to use EESI's allocation of 20 standard memory cores through ICS (which can burst to 80 cores for short periods) and 10 TB storage on ACI to test systems and debug workflows before committing to larger allocations using extramural funds
- Eligibility to propose and run EarthTalks (and use EESI funds for visitors)

#### *Responsibilities of the Assistant Director*

The Assistant Director is an EESI Associate, chosen by the Director, who receives a portion of their salary from Institute funds and supports the work of the Director in managing and operating the Institute.

Responsibilities of the Assistant Director include the following in addition to those of all other Associates:

- Attend executive-level meetings in the Director's absence and report back to the Director and/or Associates as appropriate
- Serve as a sounding board and source of ideas for management and direction of EESI
- Participate in Strategic Planning and external review activities
- Attend EESI Advisory and/or Steering Committee meetings and assist with Center proposal competitions
- Coordinate and promote research-focused IT services and functions
- Supervise EESI website content
- Supervise the Environmental Scholars competition: initiation, continuation of EESI Environmental Scholars' activities
- Bring RFPs to the attention of appropriate Associates
- Work with the Director to support recognition of EESI Associates through appropriate awards
- Assist the Director and EESI staff with other administrative functions