

Minutes of GISCorps Core Committee Retreat in Vancouver, BC at the World Urban Forum from June 18 to 23rd 2006

Present: Juna Papajorgji, Mark Salling, Frank Chang, Shoreh Elhami

GISCorps Model:

1. Discussed the idea of changing GC's model from 1. the existing format (no limitations on number of projects or deployments per year) to 2. putting an annual cap on number of projects. The conclusion was that at least for now, we should stay with model 1.
2. Discussed calling for volunteers within a certain period of time during the year (only) to make our job easier (from all aspect and especially for recruitment). After a lengthy discussion, the conclusion was that both projects and volunteers could and have been coming to us at various times during the year and that we don't have control over that. However, for projects such as GSDI that operate in that fashion, we can call for volunteers for their projects within the same time period. Other than that no other changes seemed necessary.
3. Discussed having various sub committees formed for different tasks such as outreach, partnership, recruitment, and grant/fundraising. Mark will draw up the details.
4. Discussed the issue of possible recruitment models and changes that need to be reflected on the new web site to make it possible.
 - a) The first model: an email goes to all the volunteers and FOGs (after investigating and approving partner agencies' request) to seek volunteers. We will ask that they post their interest at a new interface and submit or update their resume at the same time if necessary.
 - b) The second model: CC's recruitment sub committee will use the new Multi Variable Query (MVQ) tool to look for qualified candidates and will contact them for their availability. This model is especially effective for emergency response recruitment.

Web Site related:

Juna and Frank explained that the new enhancements to the web site will require frequent shut down of the server and therefore, the site should be moved to URISA's server after all the tests are complete. Therefore, Frank will look for an ISP and will move the site to that ISP's server by July 31st. Frank's estimate is that with all that we need for our web site the monthly fee will not exceed \$20. He also estimates that it would take +/-6 months to test all the new enhancements on the pilot site. All agreed that the majority of the enhancements shall be outsourced.

Vote needed here: Pay up to \$20 a month for web services to establish a pilot web site for approximately 6 month.

Emergency Response (ER) vs. Non Emergency Response (NER) missions:

It was the consensus of the group that emergency response missions should be distinguished from non emergency missions and that the web site must be designed to accommodate each type of mission. We should also add a question to the volunteer application form that asks if the volunteer is only interested in serving in ER situations.

Shoreh will form a sub committee to address the following:

1. work with the outreach/web site committee to determine the required revisions
2. develop cook books for volunteers who will go on ER missions, both domestically and internationally
3. design a 2-3 hour workshop (online and regular) to cover volunteers' needs for all types of missions (ER and non-ER missions); make taking the online course a requirement for all selected volunteers

Side topic 1: discussion on placing a cap on the number of times that a volunteer can go on a mission. Twice a year was suggested but we didn't discuss which document this verbiage should go.

Side topic 2: A call for volunteers for joining ER and web site sub committees should go to all the vols and FOG and even to the entire URISA membership.

Donations:

After reconciling all donation records, include every donors' names and organization name (when applicable) on the web site. No dollar amount need to be mentioned but donations should be organized by the year each donation was sent.

Vote needed here:

Conflict of Interest:

1. Conflict of Interest related to volunteers: discussed if a volunteer could take a position with the partner agency that they have worked with?

It was the consensus of the committee that we have no control over what a volunteer may choose to do after their mission is finalized. However, in order to emphasize that they should fulfill their agreement with the partner agency in the time period agreed by both parties, the first paragraph of the "Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability" should be changed as follows:

This is a Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability (this "Release") executed on this date, _____, by _____ (the "Volunteer"), in favor of GISCorps, operating under Urban and Regional Information System Association (URISA), a non profit corporation, its Core Committee members, and agents (collectively know as "GISCorps"). **Volunteers are expected to fulfill the terms of their mission to the best of their abilities.**

Vote needed: change to Release Form

2. Conflict of interest related to CC members: add the following to section 3.2 of the policies and renumber the subsequent sections:

3.2.2 Core Committee members shall not take unfair advantage of their membership on the committee or their association in GISCorps (Unfair advantage includes seeking to establish business opportunity with existing or prospective partner agencies).

Vote needed: change to Policy document

Side topic: discussion on having partner agencies sign a form (new form) to acknowledge that the background check for the volunteers is the responsibility of the partner agencies, and that the partner agencies clear GISCorps from negative outcomes of volunteers' actions during their missions.

Competition with private sector:

After a lengthy discussion regarding the issue of "competition", all members present concluded that short term services of GC volunteers stimulates further development of GIS in a community and therefore, will generate opportunities for private sector rather than competing with them. Therefore, it was decided that the last sentence in section 4.2.4 of the policy document is unnecessary and needs to be deleted. The deleted sentence is:

"...GISCorps shall not offer assistance that competes with or subsidizes the private sector, or that contradicts established public programs."

Vote needed: change to Policy document

Side topic 1: it was suggested that we should perhaps conduct a survey of private sector to find out if they think that GC volunteers create competition for them.

Side topic 2: suggested to replace "US and Canada" in section 4.2.6 to "developed communities" to read as follows:

4.2.6. Although assistance may be offered in **developed communities**, the focus is on communities in developing countries.

Vote needed: change to Policy document

Financial related issues:

Section 6.3 in policy document need to be revised as follows:

6.3 GISCorps Finances. All GISCorps finances shall be **administered** by URISA headquarters staff. Donations to GISCorps shall be held in restricted URISA accounts. **Funds brought in from donations and grants shall be expended with the approval of the majority of Core Committee members and in accordance with URISA's constitution, by-laws, or other policies.**

Vote needed: change to Policy document

Add the following to the policy document (which section it should go was not discussed)

As part of the Strategic Plan, the Core Committee shall submit a budget on an annual basis and at the URISA annual conference.