

NSDL Working Structure

Adopted by the Assembly on March 20, 2003

1. Purpose

The organizational structure defined here provides a means to capture and coordinate the interests of the entire National Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Digital Library (NSDL) across its many areas of expertise and responsibility. The purpose is to provide an operational environment in which to consolidate actions and inform and reach group decisions whenever possible to assure efficient use of our combined resources. This document with any possible future amendments serves that purpose until such time that the NSDL becomes an incorporated entity– with trustees, bylaws, or other legally binding governance mechanisms. The model reflects a vision of NSDL as a community-based endeavor, built through the cooperative efforts by many players, while simultaneously recognizing the special roles of both the National Science Foundation (NSF) as the primary source of NSDL funding and the Core Integration team as responsible for integration of the NSDL projects. The governance model articulated herein is designed to ensure that NSDL is of value across the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education community and to:

- create a public sphere of influence that promotes partnering and a shared vision,
- establish a framework for accountability,
- foster communications among stakeholders, including end-user feedback,
- balance differing interests, with sensitivity to minority perspectives,
- provide checks and balances in formulating policy and decision making for the NSDL, and
- reflect the special roles and commitments of NSF-NSDL funded projects.

2. Levels of Advice and Decisions

To achieve its purpose, the NSDL governance model is built around standing committees, subcommittees, taskforces, and interest groups that provide several domains of guidance. In decreasing order of authority (and formality), the advisory entities in this model are:

- The Assembly
- The Policy Committee
- Standing Committees
- Subcommittees and Taskforces
- Interest Groups

The advice, policies and decisions generated by these groups will reflect those of the NSDL and its members, and can be acted on by the NSF and the many organizations and teams that are collaborating to build the NSDL. Of particular significance in the model is the role of these groups in communicating with the Core Integration (CI) team, which has been assigned responsibility by NSF for helping create a coherent, operational, and effective library in collaboration with other NSDL awardees and contributors. The NSF chartered National Visiting Committee will provide accountability and high level feedback on the Core Integration project and its relationship to the NSDL program as a whole. The following table summarizes the key

elements of the governance model, organized by the types of guidance and membership composition.

Entity	Area of Decision Making and Guidance	Composition
National Visiting Committee	Accountability and top level strategy and feedback (to NSF, the CI team, and the NSDL program as a whole)	NSF appointed advisory group; input from the Core Integration team
The Assembly	Highest authority; adopts the governance model, elects the Policy Committee, and responds to polls when appropriate	One representative from each project or organization member (Principle Investigator or designee)
Policy Committee	Acts on behalf of the Assembly, articulating policies, strategies, and priorities; coordinates actions and integrates work of the Standing Committees	Elected by the Assembly from a slate prepared by a Nominating Committee
Standing Committees	Chartered by the Policy Committee, acts on behalf of the Assembly in each topical area.	Composed of individuals within and beyond the NSDL projects.
Subcommittees and Taskforces	These groups may be chartered to address specialized needs of the NSDL such as a long-term governance, incorporation, and communications. Each reports to a specified committee	Defined by Policy or Standing Committee
Interest Groups	Address ad hoc common interests from individual project members	Composed of individuals within and beyond the NSDL projects

3.0 Structure

The nature of the components and their relationship to one another as a part of the governance model are described below.

3.1. National Visiting Committee

Charter: Set by the National Science Foundation.

Authority: Advise the NSF on top-level decisions and strategies pertaining primarily to the CI team. Advocates NSDL interests to the larger community. Reviews CI and NSDL community governance relationships.

Members: Appointed by NSF in consultation with the CI team.

3.2. The Assembly

Charter: Adopted by NSDL community at the December 2001 NSF-NSDL All Projects meeting.

Authority: The Assembly is the highest authority in the community governance structure for the NSDL. It elects the Policy Committee by majority vote and responds to polls when appropriate.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy Committee also serve these roles for the Assembly. Any project Representative can ask for a poll to determine a sense of the Assembly on a particular issue by obtaining a petition signed by 15 other Representatives and presenting it to the Policy Committee.

Membership: One Representative from each project (normally the PI). Projects include those selected by NSF for NSDL funding and other projects admitted by vote of the Assembly. Each member project shall have one voting member (normally the Principle Investigator or Project Director). The vote to include new members, which are not NSF-NSDL funded projects, is normally held each year after the NSF-NSDL All Projects Meeting.

3.3. Policy Committee

Charter: Set by the Assembly on December 4, 2001.

Authority: Advise the CI team, other NSF-NSDL grantees, and the NSF on operational strategies, policies and implementation priorities related to the NSDL. Among these policies are those that define the NSDL community and determine any constraints on NSDL usage and contents, which are necessary to ensure that its mission is fulfilled. The Policy Committee acts on behalf of the Assembly to work with NSF and the CI team in coordinating the activities of the Standing Committees, Subcommittees, Taskforces, etc., and individual projects.

Membership: Membership is designed to represent the NSDL community as a whole, with a combination of voting and non-voting members, as follows

- (Voting) Eleven (except during the transition phase) includes the Chair and Vice Chair.
- (Non-voting) The lead PI from the CI team.
- (Non-voting) The NSF-NSDL Program Officer

Term of Office: Policy Committee members serve a three-year term on a rotating basis.

Nomination and Selection: The Assembly has the responsibility for selecting Policy Committee members. The Policy Committee coordinates the nomination and selection process as described below.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for coordinating the nominating process, setting the guidelines and process for elections, and presenting a slate of nominees to the Assembly. The Nominating Committee consists of: the Chair of the current NSDL Policy Committee, the lead Principle Investigator on the Core Integration team, three representatives from the Standing Committees and two additional community members selected by the Policy Committee. The Nominating Committee is charged with selecting a slate that represents the broad constituency of the NSDL including: content or discipline, project type and size, geographic distribution, institution or audience type, gender and ethnic background, and new or established projects. The Nominating Committee process must include a method by which members may be nominated by the Assembly.

Selection

The Nominating Committee shall put forth a slate of nominees to the Assembly for election no later than eight weeks after the annual NSF-NSDL All Projects Meeting. Nominations must be received by the Nominating Committee and communicated to the Assembly at least three weeks prior to the election.

Transition to Eleven Member Policy Committee

Prior to this document (the *NSDL Working Structure*) the Policy Committee consisted of ten members as described in the *NSDL Interim Governance Document*. This document, the *NSDL Working Structure*, sets the membership of the Policy Committee at eleven members. In order to accomplish a stable and systematic transition of old members off of the board and new members on, three new members will be added to the Committee for 2003 (total board membership during this year, and this year only, will be thirteen). With this election all new members will begin serving three-year terms. In 2003, a transition plan will be developed by the Policy Committee to move to the three-year structure such that no elected representative serves more than a three-year term.

Resignations and Replacements

In the event that a Policy Committee member resigns mid-term, that individual's term will be replaced at the next year's regular election through the nominating and voting procedures described above. Special elections are not required unless the total number of PC members falls below seven.

3.4. Standing Committees

Charter: Set by the Policy Committee.

Authority: The Policy Committee has chartered five Standing Committees from which community input is sought and reviewed. Standing Committees may propose NSDL policies and/or be assigned policies for review by the Policy Committee as described in PC-1, *Policy on Governance and Standing Committees*. Standing Committees may establish permanent or temporary sub-committees as forums for particular topics. The five Standing Committees are:

1. Community Services
2. Content
3. Technology
4. Educational Impact and Evaluation
5. Sustainability

Membership: Any individual may participate in a Standing Committee and vote in matters related to policies and nominations.

Nomination and Selection of Officers, and Term of Office: The Standing Committee members shall elect a Standing Committee Chair and Vice Chair. Other officers may be elected as

designated by the Standing Committee. The Term of Office shall be for two years. Starting in 2003, nominations will be accepted and elections held at the annual Standing Committee meeting held during the annual NSF-NSDL All Projects meeting.

3.5. Subcommittees and Taskforces

Charter: Standing Committees and the Policy Committee may commission Subcommittees and Task Forces. The body that has commissioned the Subcommittee or Task Force shall determine its title and charter. The Chair shall be selected by the Subcommittee or Taskforce members.

Authority: To develop recommendations in a particular task area and advise the Committees. Seek input and enhance communication when tasks and policies have potential impact in other areas.

Membership: Any member of the NSDL community may be a member or officer.

3.6. Interest Groups

Charter: Set by a community member who initiates a listserv available at the NSDL community site, <http://comm.nsdlib.org/>, in a specified area of interest.

Authority: To conduct dialogue pertinent to the specified area of interest and to seek Policy Committee action on well-debated recommendations that emerge, including the creation of new, formally chartered Committees, Subcommittees, or Taskforces.

Membership: Any member of the NSDL community may be a member.

4.0 Meetings

4.1 The Assembly

The Assembly shall conduct one face-to-face business meeting annually at the NSF sponsored NSDL All Projects Meeting. Meetings may also be held via tele-conferences or digital communications. A special meeting of the Assembly may be called by one third (1/3) of the members of the Assembly.

4.1 The Policy Committee

The Policy Committee shall meet on a regularly scheduled basis; all meetings will be announced via the NSDL communications website and NSDL listserves. Minutes from these meetings shall be made public and posted to the Policy Committee website. Special meetings of the Policy Committee can be called by the Chair or Vice Chair, or by one third (1/3) of the voting members of the Policy Committee.

4.2 Standing Committees

Each Standing Committee shall meet in person once per year during the NSF-NSDL All Projects Meeting. Other in-person meetings may be determined through a procedure defined by each Standing Committee and published at its site in the NSDL communications website.

4.3 Sub-Committees and Task Forces

Standing Committee and Task Force meetings shall be determined through a procedure defined by each Sub-Committee and Task Force and published at its site in the NSDL communications website.

5.0 Changes to the Governance Model

Changes to this document will follow the procedures for policy described in PC-1, *Policy on Governance and Standing Committees*. Action to initiate change may occur at any level of the NSDL community.

Adopted 12/4/2001, A. A., H. B., D. F.

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