

Ecological Forecasting Initiative Student Association (EFISA)
Operating Principles and Procedures V.1
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Introduction and Mission Statement

The EFI Student Association (EFISA) was founded after the first annual Ecological Forecasting Initiative meeting in May of 2019.

As ecological forecasting is a developing and interdisciplinary field, we aim for the Student Association to provide a community of students who have expertise in a diverse array of fields, but who all share a common interest of improving and contributing to the development and application of ecological forecasts. Due to its novelty, we also recognize that many potential members may not be familiar with ecological forecasting, or certain about how it intersects with their research interests. As a result, knowledge exchange and community-building are two of our foremost goals. Along with these aims, the EFISA strives to serve the student community by developing technical and professional development skills, providing peer support, and advancing career aims.

We recognize that our community brings diverse expertise and experience towards these aspirational elements. We see such diversity as a benefit, and necessary to the development of an inclusive community of interest and practice. Thus, we welcome all participants, and encourage patience and tolerance among all, holding curiosity and respect as the cornerstones of personal and professional growth. We intentionally prescribe no formal definition of a student, and intend for our group to be inclusive of those enrolled in accredited academic institutions and also those who are not. Our student body is therefore unified not by title but by curiosity to learn more about ecological forecasting.

Mission Statement: The EFI Student Association was founded **by students and for students** as a platform for **sharing resources, bolstering community, and fostering collaboration** within the diverse field of ecological forecasting.

1. Membership

- 1.1. Any person who self-identifies as a student and is interested in the practice of ecological forecasting is welcome to join, however they are encouraged to first join the Ecological Forecasting Initiative, which entails joining the [EFI member directory](#) (instructions within) and agreeing to the [EFI Shared Values and Principles](#). New EFISA membership is initiated by filling out [the Welcome Form](#) to agree to the Code of Conduct and Diversity Statement. The EFISA was founded

with the intention to provide little barrier to entry or exit, as students refine their interests and involvements as their careers progress.

1.2. Terms and conditions of membership

- 1.2.1. Members are encouraged to attend and participate in monthly meetings as possible. Members are also encouraged to attend annual EFI meetings, and to participate in EFI Working Groups that are of interest. Further, students are encouraged to develop projects through collaborations with other students through the EFISA network.
- 1.2.2. Members are encouraged to join the EFI Slack, as well as the #students channel as this is where a majority of communication is housed.
- 1.2.3. Members are expected to engage not just for individual gain, but for the mutual benefit of other EFISA members, to form an interdependent and cohesive group.
- 1.2.4. Members are required to adhere to Code of Conduct set by the Ecological Forecast Initiative ([link here](#)) for respectful interaction and communication

2. Leadership within the EFISA

- 2.1. Number of chairs: The EFISA will be chaired by two co-chairs, each of which is responsible for ensuring the EFISA co-chair responsibilities are completed.
- 2.2. Term length
 - 2.2.1. A co-chair will remain in their position for a total of two years. Elections and rotation of co-chair tenures will be staggered, so that new co-chairs will overlap with a previous co-chair for one year.
 - 2.2.2. The incoming chair will rotate into their term in the spring, approximately 1 month before the annual EFI meeting.
 - 2.2.3. The outgoing chair will rotate off of their position immediately after the annual EFI meeting, pending any responsibilities that need to be fulfilled post-meeting.
 - 2.2.4. Any student who takes on the role of co-chair that will finish their degree before the two-year term is up, is expected to continue to fulfill their responsibilities as co-chair through their two-year term, even after their graduation.
 - 2.2.5. If a co-chair decides to withdraw from her/his/their role prior to the end of their tenure, a new co-chair will be elected as soon as possible with a special election, which will function in the same manner as regular elections.
- 2.3. Eligibility for leadership
 - 2.3.1. Any person who has been a member of the EFISA for at least two months and has attended at least two meetings/events/activities is eligible to become a Co-chair. Co-chairs should be considered based on the following criteria:

1. Their demonstrated motivation to commit time and care to EFISA functions
 2. Their contribution to the diversity (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, geographical, or intellectual diversity) and spirit of inclusivity of the EFISA
 3. Their abilities to lead by example and communication with the EFISA effectively
- 2.4. Nomination and selection process
- 2.4.1. Potential candidates must be nominated, either by another EFISA member or a self-nomination. Nominees must submit a short (~1 page) statement of interest, and a justification for why they believe they would be a good fit as co-chair. Nominees are then contacted by the current co-chairs to confirm their intent to enter an election.
 - 2.4.2. Nominations must be submitted by the end of March, and the election takes place in early April. This is intended to allow for the incoming co-chair to be onboarded before the annual in-person EFI meeting (typically May of each year), and the outgoing chair will rotate off immediately after the in-person meeting.
 - 2.4.3. Nominee's applications will be sent to all EFISA members, who are given a two-week period to submit their vote. All EFISA members have equal voting power. During each election cycle one new co-chair is selected to replace the outgoing co-chair.
- 2.5. Responsibilities of co-chairs
- 2.5.1. *Stratification of Responsibilities:* Each set of co-chairs may choose whether they prefer to delegate specific tasks to each co-chair, or share responsibilities jointly. However, overlap in responsibilities is encouraged, so that no co-chair is solely responsible for a predominant part of EFISA functions.
 - 2.5.2. *Role of EFISA on EFI Steering Committee:* One student co-chair will serve as a voting member on the EFI Steering Committee for one year. This person will be the primary liaison to communicate EFISA ongoings to the Steering Committee. Other Steering Committees related to EFI may also require a student representative. The EFISA has the responsibility to fill this position, but retains the flexibility to choose a different student representative within the EFISA co-chairs or to delegate this responsibility to another member of the EFISA.
 - 2.5.3. *Lead monthly EFISA meetings:* co-chairs will schedule, arrange, and lead monthly EFISA meetings, which act as a primary channel for interaction between EFISA members. Co-chairs will ensure that monthly meetings offer a productive, welcoming space for both consistent attendees and new faces.
 - 2.5.4. *Serve as a mentor to other EFISA members*

- 2.5.5. *Provide oversight and guidance to EFISA sub-committees and working groups*
- 2.5.6. *Relay communications across EFI channels:* Co-chairs will provide content to EFI administrators and web developers for EFI-wide and public communications and web materials
- 2.5.7. *Plan and develop workshops:* Because of the inherently remote nature of long-distance collaboration, in-person meetings and workshops are central to fostering growth of EFISA. The EFISA co-chairs will run workshops that coincide with larger EFI conferences, to promote networking, knowledge exchange, and socialization of EFISA to strengthen the student community with EFI. Workshops will typically be held the day before the start of annual EFI-wide meetings.
- 2.5.8. *Ensure that all members follow terms and community guidelines*

3. EFISA Faculty Advisor

- 3.1. The EFISA advisor provides input and oversight on the activities of the EFISA and directly to the co-chairs, and acts as a point of contact between the EFISA and the EFI Steering Committee. Decisions by co-chairs or EFISA members do not need to be vetted or approved by the EFISA Advisor, but should be made in consultation with the EFISA Advisor as possible and when relevant.
- 3.2. The EFISA Faculty Advisor must be a current member of the EFI Steering Committee, and chosen by the co-chairs, with the approval of the Chair of the EFI Steering Committee. The individual can then choose to accept or refuse the position.
- 3.3. The EFISA Advisor holds this role for a minimum of one year and a maximum of two consecutive years.

4. EFISA monthly meetings

- 4.1. The EFISA will hold a meeting once a month with the following purposes:
 - 4.1.1. To provide EFISA members with general communications and updates
 - 4.1.2. To build community through sharing research updates and ideas
 - 4.1.3. To encourage project development
 - 4.1.4. To engage with current literature in the ecological forecasting field
- 4.2. Examples of monthly meeting activities include:
 - 4.2.1. Flash talks provided by members for a brief overview of their research program
 - 4.2.2. Invited speakers, who provide insight into the methods and applications of forecasting across a wide disciplinary breadth
 - 4.2.3. Journal club and paper exchange, in which members share and discuss relevant breaking papers (either focused on a single paper/topic or “popcorn” style with many contributions)
 - 4.2.4. Problem solving sessions, in which one member brings an issue to the table for group troubleshooting

5. EFISA-related activities

5.1. Workshops

- 5.1.1. The EFISA will hold a student workshop at least once annually, focused on education or product generation. If funds are available, this workshop will be held in person at a central location, and be chosen to coincide with another national meeting (e.g. EFI, Ecological Society of America, American Geophysical Union, etc.) to maximize participation of EFISA members traveling from different regions. However activities should always be planned with a virtual format in mind, as to foster inclusivity virtual attendance will always be an option.

6. EFISA Sub-committees

- 6.1.1. The EFISA may have focused groups of a subset of EFISA members that are tasked with organizing a particular activity or event that is EFISA-focused or interfaces with [EFI Working Groups](#). These committees may be temporary or ongoing in nature. The formation of a sub-committee is facilitated by the Co-chairs, but may be proposed by any EFISA member. Sub-committee leaders are self-nominating and are chosen organically to best fit the needs of the sub-committee.

6.1.2. Examples of Sub-Committees

- 6.1.2.1. *Technical/Analytical Tools*: interface with the Methods and Cyberinfrastructure Working Groups to develop and maintain portable and modular tools for forecasting, set goals for EFISA hackathon events, compile relevant data streams and prepare community data assimilation workflows
- 6.1.2.2. *Education and Outreach*: prepare forecasting primers for new members, working with the Education and Diversity Working Group
- 6.1.2.3. *Communications*: development of blog posts for the EFI website, updating the EFISA webpage, production of forecasting communication blog posts on other venues

7. OPP Revisions and Ratification

- 7.1. The EFISA Operating Principles And Procedures (OPP) is a living document that changes in accordance with the knowledge, experience, and interests of its members. EFI itself is an experiment, which will only be successful if we try new things and learn based on the evidence and experience. To allow this document to evolve we will be seeking input from the membership of the whole once a year. All suggestions for additions, deletions, or modifications should be submitted in writing to the EFISA co-chairs by January 15. These proposals will be discussed at the following EFISA monthly meeting after that date and, if the suggestion was not anonymous, responded to promptly (ideally within two weeks of the meeting).

- 7.2. Proposed changes to the OPP will be circulated in writing to EFISA membership, which will be given two weeks to provide written feedback. The EFISA co-chairs have the prerogative to choose to adopt, amend, or reject proposed OPP changes.
- 7.3. The co-chairs, after aforementioned solicitation of EFISA membership, will then decide whether to ratify changes to the OPP.