



Strategic Plan

2025–2030

Authored by MPOWIR Leadership Team, Steering Committee and MPOWIR Community
Mona Behl (University of Georgia), Colleen Mouw (University of Rhode Island), Sarah
Clem (University of Rhode Island), Lily Dove (Georgia Institute of Technology), Kris
Karnauskas (University of Colorado Boulder), Kim Martini (TiniScientific), Helen
Pillar (University of Texas, Austin), and Dave Sutherland (University of Oregon).
Caitlyn Gibson (University of Georgia) supported this effort in notetaking and
synthesis.

MPOWIR is entering its 20th year, evolving from a small group of visionary leaders to a national program, supporting hundreds of women through tenuous transitions in their career path. Volunteer leaders have committed thousands of hours to this initiative, building a community that not only supports women scientists, but sustains itself by entraining the next generation of outstanding mentors and leaders.

In 2022, the proposed scope of work funded by NSF (National Science Foundation) included leading the program through a strategic planning process to identify the evolving mentoring needs of the physical oceanography community, establish priorities, set goals and objectives, and determine evaluation metrics and measures for the coming years. The planning process will also be used to identify resource needs and additional funding mechanisms to meet those needs.

MPOWIR officially embarked on strategic planning at a Town Hall meeting hosted at the Ocean Sciences Meeting, February, 2024 in New Orleans, LA. While gathered in community, MPOWIR collected input from those in attendance around what MPOWIR is doing well, what could be improved, and where MPOWIR could focus future energy. Town hall attendees heard from a panel of leaders and participants from a variety of career paths and career stages, about their experiences with MPOWIR. Using mixed methods, attendees responded to survey questions, shared open-ended anonymous suggestions via Padlet, and engaged in thoughtful conversation.

Following this meeting, MPOWIR co-chairs, in collaboration with the Steering Committee, drafted and circulated an overview plan. Two listening sessions offered opportunities for participants and leaders to vocalize their viewpoints about the future of MPOWIR. In each session, participants were asked to consider MPOWIR's future work through these key questions:

- *What does support for early career physical oceanographers through mentorship and professional development opportunities look like?*
- *How does MPOWIR best support participants and leaders in being effective mentors throughout their career path?*
- *How can MPOWIR provide a community platform to support institutional and cultural change?*

Through this process, it became clear that MPOWIR's work is far from complete, and that mentorship by the community and for the community remains not just relevant, but critical for career development and wellbeing. Included here are the resulting plans to work toward MPOWIR's overall vision for improving gender equity in Physical Oceanography and, in turn, science in general.

MPOWIR Mission – MPOWIR is committed to making high-quality mentoring opportunities for early career physical oceanographers universally available by expanding the reach of mentoring opportunities beyond individual home institutions. The aim is to reduce the barriers to career development for all early scientists in the field, with a particular focus on improving the retention of early career women.

Career Growth and Progression

Support early career physical oceanographers through mentorship and professional development opportunities.

Strategies:

- Provide mentorship, through [Mentor Groups](#), to early career physical oceanographers (annual)
 - Metric: Annual survey to assess impact, aiming for 70% response rate
- Provide early career physical oceanographers with professional development and peer mentoring opportunities (Virtual and [Pattullo](#) conference and [webinars](#)) (annual)
 - Metric: Annual Survey for feedback
- Expand exposure to career pathways beyond academia through facilitated sessions and resources that help translate academic skills into industry-ready competencies. Including, demonstrating how academic skills (such as modeling, data analysis, writing, and communication) can be emphasized and utilized in professional careers. (annual)
 - Metric: Survey feedback to assess expanded knowledge
- Expand networking opportunities
 - Metric: Attendance of biannual networking opportunity
- Provide exposure to industry careers through sponsored visits to partnering organizations (annual)
 - Metric: Feedback through anecdotal and quantitative surveys
- Engage early career scientists in a manuscript documenting their experiences.
 - Metric: Peer reviewed published paper
- Engage early career scientists in standing up an initiative to support physical oceanography master's degree students, initially for individuals considering enrolling in a PhD program.
 - Metric: Newly formed mentor groups

Mentorship Education and Leadership Development

Supporting MPOWIR participants in being effective mentors

Strategies:

- Mentorship education for MPOWIR participants and leaders (annual)
 - Metric: Follow up surveys indicating that participants are learning new skills
- Speaker series and participation in MPOWIR conferences (annual)
 - Metric: Feedback through anecdotal and quantitative surveys
- Nomination for recognition (Virtual Conference naming, nominating folks for various awards) (ongoing)
 - Metric: track number of awards applications submitted

- Give back model of MPOWIR mentorship; mentees become mentors (ongoing)
 - Metric: Continue to track the percentage of mentees who become MPOWIR mentors
- MPOWIR mid-career fellow which would fund up to \$5,000 to collaborate with MPOWIR on a new initiative
 - Metric: Number of applications and quality of projects, and number of physical oceanographers affected by each project
- MPOWIR Award for recognition of Mentorship excellence
 - Metric: Number of qualified applicants and awards presented

Strengthening the Community through Improving Culture

Providing the community a platform to support institutional change

Strategies:

- Track demographics and career progression to improve quantity and quality of data (annual)
 - Metric: Bi-annual report based on collected data
- Host townhalls/sessions to draw attention to concerns of women in physical oceanography (annual)
 - Metric: Annual presentation at a national or international conference
- Highlight MPOWIR colleagues' presentations at National meetings (AGU, OSM)
 - Metric: increased visibility evident by increased MPOWIR page visitation
- Expand exposure to career paths, highlighting dissertation work and pathways to current roles.
 - Metric: expanded directory with career profiles and increased visibility evident by increased page visitation
- Expand opportunities to share MPOWIR's impact through a "community-building" campaign that invites alumni and mentors to share how MPOWIR has impacted their careers.
 - Metric: Published blog series
- Publications with evidence of impact (annual)
 - Metric: Annual report to community, Peer reviewed published papers bi-annually.
- Develop and distribute MPOWIR presentation slides for community use for broader recognition and engagement with what MPOWIR offers (one slide and short presentation)
 - Metric: Downloads of slides and self-reported presentations
- Community led letters on emergent concerns of the community- (eg. Covid-19 Impact statement, as need be)
 - Metric: Library of letters hosted on website
- Develop stronger partnerships with professional societies potentially by providing the ongoing mentorship activities following society trainings and opportunities.
 - Metric: Number of partnerships made, number of collaborative professional development opportunities hosted
- Enhance existing and build new partnerships (NOAA, NASA, industry, NGOs, professional societies) (ongoing, need for collaboration)
 - Metric: Number and amount of federal grants received
- Diversify funding sources (ongoing)
 - Metrics: Amount of funding and number of sponsors