



Community Advisory Committee Charter

Version 1.0
April 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

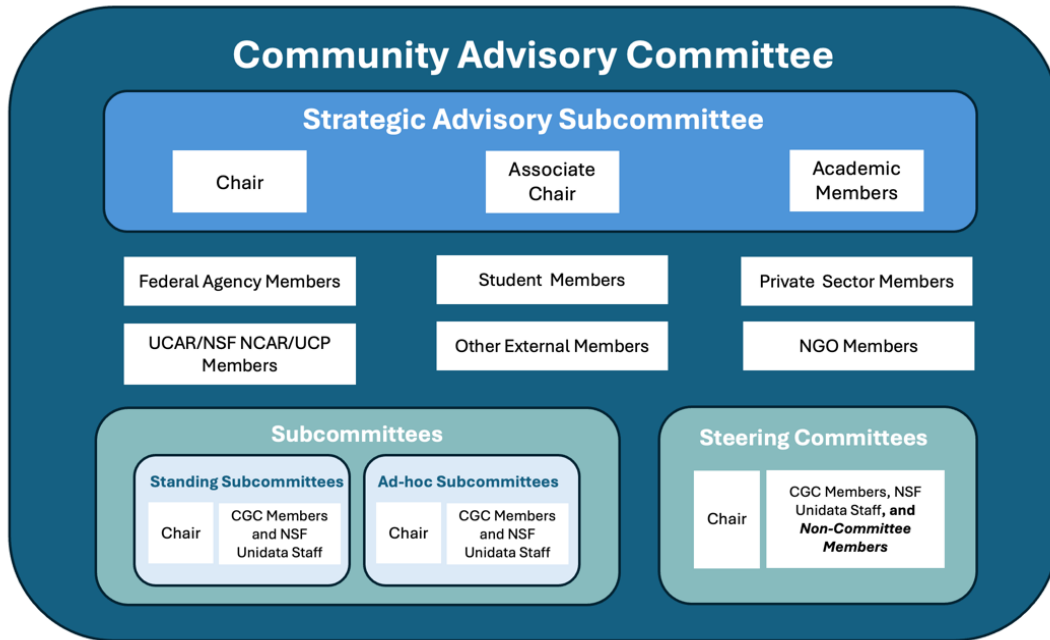
NSF Unidata is guided by the expertise, insights, and requirements of the community it serves. The Community Advisory Committee is tasked with providing strategic advice and guidance on matters related to NSF Unidata's projects, services, and activities. The Committee serves as a vital conduit for information on the needs and requirements of community members, helps advise on future directions for the NSF Unidata Program, and establishes standards of involvement for the community.

The Committee serves as a key link between NSF Unidata staff and users of NSF Unidata technologies and services to facilitate the exchange of ideas, potential program enhancements, and in understanding the data and technology trends within the broader Earth System Sciences (ESS) community. The Committee's recommendations help ensure that NSF Unidata's efforts align with the needs and priorities of the scientific and academic community, and that NSF Unidata can continue to successfully provide solutions and cyberinfrastructure leadership.

1.1. Community Advisory Committee Overview

- 1.1.1. The Community Advisory Committee consists of broad membership, defined in Section 2, with the primary responsibility to provide user feedback on NSF Unidata products and services and ensure NSF Unidata remains valuable to the community.

- 1.1.2. The Strategic Advisory Subcommittee, defined in Section 3, consists of a subset of the Community Advisory Committee. Members of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee represent academic institutions engaged in ESS education and research; they are primarily responsible for providing strategic advice to the NSF Unidata Director and staff. The committee's focus is on trends in scientific research, education, and technology that are relevant to NSF Unidata Program's efforts to meet the needs of the ESS community and to achieving NSF Unidata's high-level vision.
- 1.1.3. Steering Committees and Subcommittees, defined in Section 4, have more targeted responsibilities and can include members from outside of the Community Advisory Committee and NSF Unidata staff, when appropriate. These smaller committees are designed to foster collaborative relationships and facilitate the exchange of ideas, collect focused feedback on specific aspects of the NSF Unidata portfolio or other areas of the program, and/or to work on actionable tasks on behalf of the larger Community Advisory Committee.
- 1.1.4. The community advisory model outlined in this Charter is designed as a tiered system to maximize community engagement and minimize redundancy. Ideas, feedback, and suggested actions that originate within the Steering Committees and Subcommittees are intended to inform the discussions within the full Community Advisory Committee; the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee is then charged with working closely with the NSF Unidata Director and Program leadership to synthesize ideas from all levels of the committee structure into suggestions that advance the short- and long-term priorities of the NSF Unidata Program.
 - 1.1.4.1. The NSF Unidata Director retains the authority to remove any member of the committee(s) in consultation with the Chair(s) for violation of terms of the agreement between member and NSF Unidata, for lack of consistent participation, and for behavior potentially damaging to the interests of the NSF Unidata program, its staff, and community.



2. Community Advisory Committee

2.1. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1.1. The Community Advisory Committee is an advisory body to NSF Unidata, serving as a formal link between the community and the NSF Unidata Program Center.

2.1.1.1. Community Advisory Committee members serve as non-voting members, except when serving as members of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee.

2.1.2. The Community Advisory Committee is responsible for:

2.1.2.1. Gauging community attitudes about and soliciting user feedback on NSF Unidata products and services,

- 2.1.2.2. Gathering input on community needs beyond the current portfolio including, but not limited to, data streams, visualization tools, data services, computational needs, emerging technologies, and other software.
- 2.1.2.3. Advocating for and promoting NSF Unidata in the community
- 2.1.2.4. Serving on at least one Subcommittee or Steering Committee (see Section 4).
 - 2.1.2.4.0. Members are responsible for reporting on the work and actions of the Steering Committees and Subcommittees upon which they serve.
- 2.1.2.5. Student member roles and activities will vary based on individual member experience, expertise, perspectives, and opportunities for leadership development.
- 2.1.2.6. Agency and UCAR/NSF NCAR/UCP representatives' roles vary and are determined by their leadership.
 - 2.1.2.6.0. Representatives listed above are encouraged to participate in the activities of the Committee, providing, as appropriate technical and agency perspectives, consistent with the responsibilities and authority defined in this Charter.
- 2.1.2.7. Recommendations for approving and terminating Steering Committees and Subcommittees will be approved by majority vote of the Community Advisory Committee in consultation with the NSF Unidata Senior Leadership and Community Services Manager. The NSF Unidata Director will make final decisions about Subcommittee/Steering committee changes.

2.2. Composition

- 2.2.1. The Community Advisory Committee consists of all members of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee (Section 2), along with additional members from academic institutions, government agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UCAR/NSF NCAR, and other external partners. Additionally, the committee will include a minimum of one Graduate Student member.
 - 2.2.1.1. The Community Advisory Committee consists of no fewer than 15 and no more than 20 members.
 - 2.2.1.2. The Community Advisory Committee includes at least one Graduate Student Representative. Graduate Student Representatives serve a single two-year term.
 - 2.2.1.3. Composition of private sector and NGO members should not exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total Community Advisory Committee member size unless the NSF Unidata Director identifies a program need for additional expertise.
- 2.2.2. Generally, members of the Community Advisory Committee serve a term of three years. Student members will serve a two-year term. New members can be nominated by any means, including self-nomination.
 - 2.2.2.1. Nominations open in spring but are accepted at any time throughout the year but appointments are made once a year. Members typically begin their term in fall.
 - 2.2.2.2. The NSF Unidata Director appoints members to three-year terms on the Community Advisory Committee.
 - 2.2.2.2.0. As part of the committee appointment process, NSF Unidata Senior Leadership and the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee chairs, provide the NSF Unidata Directory with a prioritized list of nominees for each vacant position on the Committee.

- 2.2.2.2.1. Committee members' three-year terms may be renewed once based on the needs of NSF Unidata. Term renewal will be at the discretion of the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with NSF Unidata Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee Chair(s). To ensure diversity of perspectives, no member shall serve more than two consecutive terms except for agency members and UCAR/NSF NCAR/UCP representatives.
- 2.2.2.2.2. Agency and UCAR/NSF NCAR/UCP representatives' terms vary and are determined by their leadership.

2.3. Leadership

- 2.3.1. The Strategic Advisory Subcommittee Chair and Associate Chair (see section 3.3) are responsible for leading the Community Advisory Committee. The Chairs work with the NSF Unidata Community Services Manager and NSF Unidata Senior Leadership to develop agendas, conduct meetings, and generate any other materials or reports, and action items.
- 2.3.2. NSF Unidata will provide logistical support for the committees in terms of creating and distributing materials, arranging virtual and in-person meetings, making travel arrangements, and supporting preparation, coordination, facilitation, notetaking, documentation, and publications.

3. Strategic Advisory Subcommittee

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1.1. The Strategic Advisory Subcommittee is an advisory body to NSF Unidata.

- 3.1.1.1. Members of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee serve as voting members with authority to issue formal recommendations to the NSF Unidata Program Director.
- 3.1.2. The Strategic Advisory Subcommittee provides:
 - 3.1.2.1. Strategic advice related to the scientific research, education, and technical aspects and trends relevant to NSF Unidata;
 - 3.1.2.2. Strategic guidance on the actionable strategy, implementation, and community engagement plans for NSF Unidata;
 - 3.1.2.3. Strategic planning is spearheaded by the NSF Unidata Community Services Manager and directed by NSF Unidata Senior Leadership and in collaboration with the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee and NSF Unidata staff.
 - 3.1.2.4. Strategic plans are recognized as living documents, subject to regular review and adaptation at a cadence determined by NSF Unidata Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee to reflect evolving program needs, landscape shifts, and feedback.
 - 3.1.2.5. Any other key advice requested by NSF Unidata Director to support NSF Unidata's high-level vision.
- 3.1.3. The Strategic Advisory Subcommittee meets for an additional day before or after the NSF Unidata Advisory Committee Annual Meeting in Boulder, CO. The Committee also meets virtually at least one more time during each calendar year, or more as needed. See additional information about meetings in Section 5.

3.2. Composition

- 3.2.1. The Strategic Advisory Subcommittee consists of a minimum of 7 and maximum of 10 faculty/staff members from academic institutions engaged in ESS education and research.

- 3.2.1.1. Membership should represent a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, career stages, and geographic and institutional types to the extent that is practicable. Members should have a credible scientific reputation in their discipline, understand the data and technology needs and trends within the broader ESS community, and understand the mission of NSF Unidata.
- 3.2.2. Each member serves a term of three years. New members can be nominated by any means, including self-nomination.
- 3.2.3. Nominations open in spring but are accepted at any time throughout the year but appointments are made once a year. Members typically begin their term in fall.
- 3.2.4. The NSF Unidata Director appoints members to three-year terms on the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee. Members are typically selected in the summer and new appointments begin in the fall.
 - 3.2.4.1. As part of the committee appointment process, NSF Unidata Senior Leadership and the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee chairs, provide the NSF Unidata Directory with a prioritized list of nominees for each vacant position on the Committee.
 - 3.2.4.2. Three-year terms may be renewed once based on the needs of NSF Unidata. Term renewal will be at the discretion of the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership and Community Services Manager and the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee Chair(s). To ensure diversity of perspectives, no member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

3.3. Leadership

- 3.3.1. The Chair and Associate Chair of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee serve two-year terms, with one renewal possible.

- 3.3.1.1. The Chair and Associate Chair need to have served on the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee for at least one year prior to being selected.
- 3.3.1.2. The Chair and Co-chair may delegate their authority for specific duties or periods of time to other members of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee. Such delegations shall be communicated in writing to all active members and to NSF Unidata leadership and Community Services Manager for transparency and clarity.
- 3.3.2. The Chair and Associate Chair of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee are voted upon by the current members of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee, in consultation with NSF Unidata Senior Leadership and Community Services Manager, for recommendation to the NSF Unidata Director for final decision and approval.
 - 3.3.2.1. The Chair and Associate Chair should not be elected in the same cycle so there is continuous overlap in leadership. However, the Associate Chair can be elected as the Chair mid-term.
- 3.3.3. The Chair and Associate Chair serve as the points of contact for the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee. They work with the NSF Unidata Community Services Manager and NSF Unidata leadership to develop agendas for meetings, run those meetings, and draft any materials, reports, or consensus statements that represent the ideas, recommendations, and findings of the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee for communication with NSF Unidata and other stakeholders or entities.
- 3.3.4. NSF Unidata will provide logistical support for the committees in terms of creating and distributing materials, arranging electronic meetings and in-person meetings, making travel arrangements, and supporting preparation, coordination, facilitation, notetaking, documentation, and publications.

4. Subcommittees and Steering Committees

4.1. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1.1. Subcommittees take responsibility for recurring business or activities of the Community Advisory Committee. *Ad Hoc* Subcommittees take responsibility for temporary or limited-scope business or activities. Steering Committees focus on gathering user feedback and providing guidance for particular activities of the NSF Unidata Program.
- 4.1.2. Subcommittees (including *ad hoc* subcommittees) and Steering Committees are created by recommendation of the Community Advisory Committee at the discretion of the NSF Unidata Director.
- 4.1.3. Subcommittees (including *ad hoc* subcommittees) and Steering Committees can be dissolved by the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and a majority vote from the Community Advisory Committee.
- 4.1.4. Subcommittee and Steering Committee chair(s) will report on activities and actions to the NSF Unidata Leadership and the Community Advisory Committee annually, or at frequency determined by the NSF Unidata Director and Committee Chair.

4.2. Composition

- 4.2.1. Subcommittees consist of members of the Community Advisory Committee and NSF Unidata staff. Subcommittee membership is approved by the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and the Community Advisory Committee, unless anonymous member participation is required.

- 4.2.2. Steering Committees consist of members of the Community Advisory Committee, NSF Unidata staff, and Non-Committee members. Steering Committee membership is approved by the NSF Unidata Director or a member of NSF Unidata Senior Leadership in consultation with the Community Services Manager, the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee Chairs, and Steering Committee chair(s).
- 4.2.3. Subcommittee and Steering Committee size and membership terms will vary based on the needs of the NSF Unidata Program, the scope of the committee, and the Subcommittee or Steering Committee purpose.

4.3. Leadership

- 4.3.1. Chairs and co-chairs of the Subcommittees and Steering Committees are approved by the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and the Community Advisory Committee.
 - 4.3.1.1. Chairs and Co-chairs may delegate their authority for specific duties or periods of time to other members of the Subcommittee or Steering Committee. Such delegations shall be communicated in writing to all active members for clarity.
 - 4.3.1.2. Chair and Co-chair positions can be held by a student member at the discretion of the NSF Unidata Director.
 - 4.3.1.3. Chair and Co-chair positions can be held by private sector members at the discretion of the NSF Unidata Director.
- 4.3.2. NSF Unidata will provide logistical support for the committees for creating and distributing materials, arranging electronic meetings and in-person meetings, making travel arrangements, and supporting preparation, coordination, facilitation, notetaking, documentation, and publications.

4.4. Subcommittees

- 4.4.1. Standing Subcommittees are tasked with managing recurring business or activities of the Community Advisory Committee.
- 4.4.2. Awards Subcommittee
 - 4.4.2.1. Review of Processes: The Awards Subcommittee is responsible for reviewing nominations, solicitation, and review process for the NSF Unidata Russell L. DeSouza Award and NSF Unidata Community Equipment Awards. The process recommendations from the Subcommittee are approved by the Community Advisory Committee on a majority vote and brought to the NSF Unidata Director for final approval.
 - 4.4.2.2. Selection of Awardees: The Awards Subcommittee is responsible for supporting the review of nominations and recommending awardees for the NSF Unidata Russell L. DeSouza Award and NSF Unidata Community Equipment Award.
 - 4.4.2.2.0. Final approval is at the discretion of the NSF Unidata Director.
 - 4.4.2.2.1. Membership for the NSF Unidata Community Equipment Awards Selection Subcommittee is anonymous and changes annually to reduce workload and enable diverse perspectives.
 - 4.4.2.2.2. Recommendations for membership for the NSF Unidata Community Equipment Awards Selection Subcommittee is brought forward by the NSF Unidata Community Services Manager to the NSF Unidata Director for final approval.
 - 4.4.2.3. Preparation and facilitation of the awards process is led by the Community Services Manager and supported by communications from the Community Services Team as well as other program/UCAR staff as needed.

4.4.3. Community Assessment Subcommittee

- 4.4.3.1. The Community Assessment Subcommittee is responsible for supporting the assessment of the ESS community's needs, interests, and challenges to ensure alignment with NSF Unidata's portfolio of products, tools, services, and support.
- 4.4.3.2. In-depth NSF Unidata Community Assessments are conducted a minimum of once every five years.
- 4.4.3.3. NSF Unidata Community Assessments are led by the Community Services Manager and supported by other key NSF Unidata staff. The scope of participation and roles and responsibilities of non-NSF Unidata staff members will be determined by the NSF Unidata Community Services Manager and NSF Unidata Director.
- 4.4.3.4. Additional Subcommittees can be empaneled by approval from the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and a majority vote from the Community Advisory Committee.

4.5. **Ad Hoc Subcommittees**

- 4.5.1. *Ad Hoc* Subcommittees are tasked with managing temporary or more limited-scope business or activities of the Community Advisory Committee.
- 4.5.2. *Ad Hoc* Subcommittees can be empaneled by approval from the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and a majority vote from the Community Advisory Committee.

- 4.5.3. *Ad Hoc* Subcommittees can be dissolved by the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and a majority vote from the Community Advisory Committee.

4.6. Steering Committees

- 4.6.1. Steering Committees focus on user feedback on specific products and services within the NSF Unidata portfolio as well as other areas of the program such as marketing, business development, innovation, and other identified program needs.
- 4.6.2. Steering Committees can be empaneled by approval from the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and a majority vote from the Community Advisory Committee.
 - 4.6.2.1. Key NSF Unidata staff that lead specific projects or services related to a Steering Committee will be encouraged to participate as a member on the respective Steering Committee.
- 4.6.3. Steering Committees can be dissolved by the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and a majority vote from the Community Advisory Committee.

5. Meetings and Operations

5.1. Meetings

- 5.1.1. The Community Advisory Committee will meet at least once per year, with an opportunity to meet jointly with the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee. Additional meetings will be scheduled as necessary.

- 5.1.2. The Strategic Advisory Subcommittee will meet at least two times per year, with additional meetings scheduled as necessary. One meeting per year should be in-person where feasible, with an opportunity to meet jointly with the Community Advisory Committee. Additional meetings may be scheduled virtually or in-person in consultation with NSF Unidata leadership and Community Services Manager and the Committee Chairs.
- 5.1.3. Subcommittees (including *ad hoc* subcommittees) meet as needed (with a minimum of one meeting per year) to act on recurring business or activities of the Community Advisory Committee.
- 5.1.4. Steering Committees and Subcommittees will meet at a cadence determined by their membership.
- 5.1.5. Meetings for the Community Advisory Committee and any Steering Committees and Subcommittees will be held virtually or in-person, depending on logistical and community needs.
- 5.1.6. The agenda for each meeting will be developed by NSF Unidata Senior Leadership, the Community Services Manager, and key members identified for each committee and available to all members at least one week prior to each meeting.

5.2. Communication

- 5.2.1. For administrative matters, scheduling and agenda coordination, the point of contact for the committees is the NSF Unidata Community Services Manager, or a designated representative.
- 5.2.2. The agenda will be posted to the NSF Unidata website a minimum of five working days prior to the scheduled meeting or conference call and the meeting notes will be published within three weeks of the meeting.

5.3. Feedback Process and Guidelines

- 5.3.1. This feedback process and guidelines are designed to help the various advisory committees offer thoughtful feedback to the NSF Unidata Program Center.

- 5.3.2. Informal Advisory Feedback to NSF Unidata Program Center
 - 5.3.2.1. The organization of the Community Advisory Committee and all its associated subcommittees is intended to encourage frequent, candid feedback from community members to the NSF Unidata Program. Informal advisory feedback can be offered during meetings (in-person and/or virtual), via shared documents, or by e-mail.

 - 5.3.2.2. Sharing of Informal Advisory Feedback
 - 5.3.2.2.0. Informal feedback is meant to give insight, but should not be shared outside of NSF Unidata Leadership or the Committee(s), unless agreed upon by the Committee and NSF Unidata, and/or the feedback is part of standard shared communications from meeting notes (excluding Executive Sessions), outcomes reports, etc.

 - 5.3.2.2.1. If NSF Unidata Senior Leadership would like to share a summary of the informal feedback, the respective committee will have a chance to review the feedback to ensure it aligns with the collective memory of the conversation(s).

- 5.3.3. Formal Advisory Feedback to NSF Unidata Program Center
 - 5.3.3.1. Formal advisory feedback can be provided in response to a specific request for formal advisory feedback from NSF Unidata on one or more topics, or in the event that the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee wishes to offer explicit formal feedback to the NSF Unidata Program on one or more topics.

- 5.3.3.1.0. Formal feedback will be written, reviewed for alignment, and submitted to NSF Unidata in the agreed upon timeframe.
- 5.3.3.1.1. If a formal feedback opinion is not agreed to by at least half of the committee members involved, any opinions or feedback that emerges can only be communicated as individual opinions.
- 5.3.3.1.2. The NSF Unidata Director or delegate will strive to respond to formal feedback or recommendations and if warranted address any next steps or actions in a timely manner based on the complexity of the formal feedback received.

5.3.3.2. Sharing of Formal Advisory Feedback

- 5.3.3.2.0. Due to the formal nature of the feedback, once it has been provided, NSF Unidata may share that feedback with relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

Sharing only portions of the feedback is acceptable as long as all of the feedback on a single topic is given in the event that multiple topics were covered.

5.3.3.3. Substantial Change Communication to the NSF Unidata Users Community

- 5.3.3.3.0. Major program changes are at the discretion of the NSF Unidata Director, and where applicable, mandated by UCAR and/or the funding sponsor.
- 5.3.3.3.1. The Strategic Advisory Committee may advise on how such changes are communicated to the broader community.

5.3.3.3.2. Where formal feedback is mentioned as a contributing factor or in the decision of the resultant Substantial Change Communication, the communication will be shared with the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee before it is released to the wider community.

5.3.3.3.2.0. Decisions made by the NSF Director, UCAR, or funding Sponsor may not be in alignment with the formal feedback provided, and dissenting views may be noted.

5.3.4. Code of Conduct

5.3.4.1. This Code of Conduct establishes the professional, ethical, and operating standards expected of members serving on NSF Unidata committees.

5.3.4.1.0. Committee members shall act in the best interest of NSF Unidata and Earth System Sciences community being served.

5.3.4.1.1. Committee members shall safeguard and maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive organizational information, as determined and clearly identified by NSF Unidata staff.

5.3.4.1.2. Committee members shall disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest related to committee matters. When conflicts arise, members must recuse themselves from discussions or decisions where impartiality could be compromised.

5.3.4.1.3. Committee members shall act as community advocates for NSF Unidata products and services.

5.3.4.1.4. Committee members shall engage in respectful, inclusive, and constructive dialogue. All interactions should reflect professionalism and collegiality.

- 5.3.4.2. Failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct may result in review and appropriate action, to include removal from committee(s), as determined jointly by the NSF Unidata Director and Community Advisory Committee Chair.

6. Charter Review and Amendment

6.1. This Charter should be regularly reviewed by the Community Advisory Committee and NSF Unidata Leadership to ensure the Charter's relevance, clarity, and effectiveness in guiding the Committee's operations, structure, and decision-making processes.

6.1.1. Amendments or changes to this Charter can be brought forward by any member of NSF Unidata Leadership or the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee.

6.1.2. If amendments are needed, the proposed amendments must be presented in writing to the Community Advisory Committee at least seven days prior to the next meeting, and the proposed amendments must be formally placed on the agenda.

6.1.3. If the proposed amendments are recommended by at least a two-thirds majority vote, the proposed change goes to the NSF Unidata Director in consultation with the Strategic Advisory Subcommittee Chair for final review, approval, and adoption.

7. Version Information

Version	Created	Authors	Notes
1.0	April 2026	Unidata Strategic Advisory Committee, Unidata Users Committee, Unidata Program Center Staff	Initial published draft