Over the past four years, the Next Generation Lunar Scientists and Engineers (NGLSE) group has held annual workshops peripheral to the Lunar Science Forum (LSF). The NGLSE, which is funded through SMD’s Opportunities in Education and Public Outreach for Earth and Space Science (EPOESS) program, was established as a means to satisfy the needs of the increasing number of early career lunar scientists and engineers. In particular, the NGLSE focuses on professional development opportunities to better equip members to contribute to the success of the lunar program, now and in the future.

In the past, the topic for each workshop has been based on a needs-assessment survey given to NGLSE members, which highlighted themes that the community wanted to explore. As such, previous workshops have featured methods for better preparation for education and public outreach (EPO) events, media training, and navigating the job market.

This year, the annual workshop focused on proposal-writing and served as an introduction into the intricacies of proposal-writing and the subsequent evaluation process. Drs. Curt Niebur and Michael New lead the discussions, using their past experience in hosting “in-person” workshops. Mirroring the virtual nature of the 2013 LSF, this year’s NGLSE workshop was held remotely, which may allow more participants, as travel will no longer be a constraint. Ultimately we had over 150 registrants with 121 log-in participants (with many “hubs” with more than one person, Figure 1).

In addition to the themes featured in previous workshops, an overarching goal of the NGLSE is to provide opportunities for members to network with each other as well as with established members of the community. This has been achieved by holding informal gatherings as well as inviting scientists to speak to the group regarding their past experiences and to provide advice (Figure 2). While the virtual aspect of this year’s workshop and LSF present challenges to face-to-face networking, we held a “social hour” the evening of the virtual workshop. Attendance to the social hour was sparse, reflecting the realities of attracting relative to the distractions of home.

Figure 1. Screengrab taken during NGLSE proposal writing workshop. Participants used the chat feature to ask questions and interact with each other during the workshop.

Figure 2. A hallmark of past NGLSE events has been the opportunity for interaction and networking, between members (top) and established members of the community (bottom).

Workshop Evaluation (highlights):
- 1/3 of the attendees were grad students, 1/3 postdocs and/or <5 years out from PhD, 1/3 “Other”
- 78% identified as “Scientist”
- All survey respondents said they would attend another virtual workshop

As the group evolves, a new set of leaders of the NGLSE has emerged. Given the evolution of NLSI into SSERVI, the target audience of the NGLSE will grow. Fortunately, many of the needs of NGLSE members are ubiquitous to the broader community. Because the NGLSE focuses primarily on professional development and networking, we are confident that we will easily adapt to the expanded scope of SSERVI.