

OBO Community Townhall Agenda.

More detailed information about each point can be found in the document below this agenda.

1. OBO Operations Committee: 2022 update

2. What and who is the OBO Governance Task Team?

- a. Any questions to the Governance Task Team?
- b. How does the OBO GTT relate to the OBO Foundry?

3. How do we build a community?

a. Inclusive community

- i. How can we get more volunteers involved to contribute to OBO? (as a reviewer, as a voter,...)
- ii. How can we ensure that everybody's voices are heard?
- iii. How do we reach out to other people to promote and get them involved in OBO?
 - e.g. should we have quarterly or bi-yearly or yearly OBO membership meetings?
- iv. How do we keep track of the OBO members, and how do we reach out to them?

b. Structure of the OBO Foundry:

- i. Should the obo foundry organizational structure be evolved?
- ii. How often should the organization structure be reviewed/updated? What makes sense to ensure that OBO remains modern, both socially and technically?
- iii. How many people should be on each committee? Should there be a term limit?
- iv. How should committee roles and responsibilities be defined?

4. Voting process:

- a. How can we improve the voting process?
- b. Who can vote? The whole community or a specific committee?
- c. How should the voting take place (what is practical)?
- d. How do we get current members to vote?
 - i. How do we know who the community members are?
- e. How should committee members be voted in?

5. Review of the editorial process

- a. How can we find more reviewers?
- b. How can we incentivize reviewers to ensure timely reviews?

- c. Is the review process meeting community needs? If not, how might it be evolved?
- d. How should OBO reviews relate to manuscript review processes? Can we create partnerships with favorite journals, such as JBMS, Database, etc.?

6. Action items review

Information related to the Town Hall agenda items.

1- What and who is the OBO Governance Task Team?

The Governance Task Team was created out of a need to:

- 1) Review the current OBO processes (ontology review, voting process, conflict resolution, etc.), existing documentation, and propose new documents, policies, and processes where needed.
- 2) Advance the OBO community by creating an inclusive, more participatory community.
- 3) Review the current OBO organizational structure, which was created over 10 years ago and may need restructuring based on how the OBO Foundry has evolved and to meet new needs and goals of the community.
- 4) Increase transparency by improving sharing of documentation and improving voting and vetting processes. It should also be noted that such documentation and related by-laws will be required for the OBO to become a non-profit standards organization and this work is preparatory to that.

The Governance Task Team's roles and responsibilities are:

- Review documentation and make recommendations for new documentation needed or changes to existing documentation and processes (e.g. SOP for ontology review, code of conduct, etc.)
- Spearhead and suggest changes in existing and new processes (e.g. community voting process)
- Suggest organizational changes based on community feedback and gaps identified

Current Composition of the Governance Task Team:

- Sabrina Toro (University of Colorado, Anschutz)
- Melissa Haendel (University of Colorado, Anschutz)
- Hande McGinty (Kansas State University)
- Diane Alexander (Knowledge Enablement Partner Resources; external to OBO Foundry)
- Robert Rovetto (Independent researcher, Ontologist, & IAOA committees member)

Future of the Governance Task Team:

The OBO community should consider whether to vote on whether this transiently formed Governance task team should become a formal OBO Committee.

2- Building a community:

Inclusive community

The majority of the people deeply involved in OBO are overstretched. Some members have reported feeling unwelcome, and having their opinions shut down. Many potentially active members have yet to find their way towards contribution. New members of the OBO community are unclear about where discussions take place, how to participate in these discussions, and how they can get information about the decision made. A sustainable and productive community will require investment on all of our part, but it is still not all that clear who the OBO community is and how to communicate with it.

Discussion points:

- *How can we get more volunteers involved to contribute to OBO? (as a reviewer, as a voter,...)*
- *How can we ensure that everybody's voices are heard?*
- *How do we reach out to other people to promote and get them involved in OBO?*
- *e.g. should we have quarterly or bi-yearly or yearly OBO membership meetings?*
- *How do we keep track of the OBO members, and how do we reach out to them?*

OBO Foundry structure:

The current organizational structure of the OBO foundry was created more than 10 years ago. Since then, many technical and social aspects have changed, new members joined the OBO Foundry, others have left. It might be time to review the current obo foundry organizational structure, and determine whether it should be modified to reflect the current community and the current work.

Discussion points:

- *Should the obo foundry organizational structure be evolved?*
- *How often should the organization structure be reviewed/updated? What makes sense to ensure that OBO remains modern socially and technically?*
- *How many people should be on each committee? Should there be a term limit?*
- *How should committee roles and responsibilities be defined?*

Voting process:

Currently, most of the decisions appear to be made in a closed setting: many obo community members (especially new ones) are unaware of what decisions are made, when voting is taking place, and how they can voice their opinions. The voting process should become more transparent and include the whole obo community; communication about decisions should be improved.

Discussion points:

- *How can we improve the voting process?*
- *Who can vote? The whole community or a specific committee?*
- *How should the voting take place (what is practical)?*
- *How do we get current members to vote?*
 - *How do we know who the community members are?*
- *How should committee members be voted in?*

Review of the editorial process.

The editorial process has been evolving over these past years, and documentation is currently being written. When progress is being made, a few issues remain: reviewers are difficult to find, and the review process take a long time.

Discussion points:

- *How can we find more reviewers?*
- *How can we incentivize reviewers to ensure timely reviews?*
- *Is the review process meeting community needs? If not, how might it be evolved?*
- *How should OBO reviews relate to manuscript review processes? Can we create partnerships with favorite journals, such as JBMS, Database, etc.?*
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Additional topics

There will not be time to discuss the following topics at the OBO community townhall; however, these have been reported to be topics to be of interest:

- **Launching OBO as a non-profit organization**

OBO foundry becoming a non-profit organization would have many advantages, such as:

- Being an official Standards Organization (SO) would improve adoption and contribution
- Mechanism to receive philanthropy and bid for contracts
- xSDO coordination, such as with OHDSI, GA4GH, etc.
- Mechanism to increase common resourcing to address OBO priorities
- Improved workflows and community support

OBO community members had mixed opinions about the OBO foundry becoming a non-profit organization. Some reported the financial benefits, however many were concerned by the substantial administrative overhead, especially since the obo foundry is already suffering from the current lack of resources (most active contributors are already overstretched), as well as ethical and other concerns.

- **Expectations for new ontologies versus “old” ontologies**

The expectations and standards for new ontologies are much higher than for the ontologies that have already been accepted in the obo foundry. How can we motivate accepted obo ontologies to keep or reach high standards after their acceptance into obo? Should the acceptance of an ontology in the obo foundry be reviewed periodically? If so, what would the process be?

- **What documentation is missing or out of date?**