National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

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MINUTES
Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, September 2, 2011 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 (Noon) EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Jean-Mari Peltier (Chair), Dr. Mary Wagner (Vice Chair), Dr. Carrie Castille, Dr. Nancy Childs, Dennis Heldman, Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen, Leo Holt, and Terry Wolf.

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Nancy Cox

NAREEE Board Staff: Robert Burk (Executive Director) and Shirley Morgan-Jordan (Program Support Coordinator).

Others Present: Walter Armbruster, Jill Auburn, Carol Keiser-Long,

I. Roll Call of Executive Committee Members and Other Attendees

- Rob Burk conducted a roll call of the Executive Committee as members signed on to the conference call.

II. Comments and Welcome from Chair and Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Jean-Mari Peltier welcomed the group and the group approved the August meeting minutes of the Executive Committee by unanimous consent.

III. Comments from the Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics

- Dr. Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary was unable to attend the Executive Committee Conference Call but Dr. Jill Auburn spoke in her place. Dr. Auburn stated that she was

pleased to be on the phone call. She also thanked the group for the comments on the white papers. The papers are currently undergoing scientific review.

- Dr. Auburn stated that Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young is the Acting Director of NIFA and that Dr. Auburn would be serving as the Acting Director for the Office of the Chief Scientist until someone is selected to serve as the Director of NIFA.
- Dr. Catherine Woteki and Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young are working hard to respond to a speech by the President early in his term that focused on scientific integrity.
- The policy on Scientific Integrity Review Memo has been posted on the USDA website. The USDA was the first to respond to the message by the Office on Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and comment on the science conducted by the USDA. USDA is currently trying to re-enforce and at the same time gain the publics' trust.
- USDA is currently trying to develop a Departmental Regulation on Integrity. The Secretary wants to give clear guidance on the role the various agencies and divisions play. USDA will also implement a training manual on that guidance. USDA will solicit the public and other agencies input on the policy. The REE Office will keep everyone informed and posted on the guidance as it comes available.
- There is an interest in STEM (Science Technology Environmental Mathematics) Education. NIFA has done a great job on putting the STEM Activities in the Department.
- Total investment from USDA on STEM is at about 92 million which puts USDA on the map.
- Dr. Catherine Woteki appreciates the time that the Board has put in on commenting on the Scientific Review as a Committee working together.
- What is the agency doing – across the Federal Government.
- Dr. Catherine Woteki and Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young are Co-Chairs of a subcommittee that is working on the scientific integrity. The President has directed OSTP to organize Federal Guidelines.
- The guidelines will allow everyone to understand their role on what to do and not do. It also makes it clear to the scientist not to get too far in policy and stick to what they know.
- Jean-Mari Peltier expressed that there are concerns about the budget and the way the next Farm Bill is going to be written. The Board wants to make sure the Research Title is still there. The Board would appreciate some guidance on how REE is positioning themselves so we can help with the role of the Farm Bill.
- Rob Burk noted that Dr. Catherine Woteki mentioned this concern and related questions on the timeline of the Farm Bill at a recent REE staff meeting. She has asked for her congressional relations staff to follow up on the timeline questions.
- Rob Burk stated that after a thorough budget audit was conducted by the NAREEE staff, there were several miscalculations noted. These budget adjustments have allowed for funds to cover the working group of the Executive Committee to come to meet in the Washington, DC in the current fiscal year as per their request.
- Dr. Steve Daley-Laursen stated that he has been working with APLU concerning STEM and how it students can feed into the workplace.
- A question was posed on whether this effort was something new or if it was simply identifying work that has been done related to STEM?
    - Answer: It is something new, but it starts with an inventory of current REE activities related to STEM.

- Dr. Mary Wagner asked if there was a possibility for an alliance with the industry, i.e. a chance for collaboration.
    - Answer: I believe so. We can discuss how our industry partners can fit in.
- Dr. Wagner stated that Jill Auburn may want to reach out to other groups. Dr. Mary Wager stated that she was working with at least one group involved in enhancing agricultural involvement with STEM.
- Dr. Mary Wagner stated that she would follow up with Dr. Jill Auburn after the conference call.
- Rob Burk stated that he would like to see both memos on the Scientific Integrity to share with the Committee.

Scientific Integrity Working Group: Steve Hamburg, Nancy Childs

Dr. Mary Wagner will chair the Scientific Integrity Working Group.

- Rob Burk, Jean-Mari Peltier, and Dr. Mary Wagner will discuss members that could serve on the working group.
- Dr. Mary Wagner will send information out about STEM. Dr. Mary Wagner would like an overview of the STEM.
- Rob Burk noted that Dr. Ann Bartuska, as well as Dr. Woteki, have been heavily involved in the STEM discussions.
- A question was asked on "How STEM fits into the REE Road Map."

IV. Updates on Committee Activities and/or Reports

Renewable Energy Committee (REC)

- Carol Keiser-Long thanked the committee and stated that Jill Auburn's comments were very interesting. The REC has drafted an initial draft of their report and chose not to re-write the REE White Paper but to add depth to the strategic approach needed.

- The REC met on July 14, 2011 in Washington, DC with the Administrators and National Program Leaders. The REC discussed challenges and advancements with Bio Energy. The REC would like the EXECOM to respond and approve the Dr. Childs questioned whether it was standard practice for the affiliations of the members of the report committee to be listed. Someone stated that it would be good to be identified in reports at a minimum. Additionally, Dr. Childs questioned if the report adequately addressed concerns of duplication of efforts across agencies. This is particularly important as the Government is trying to find places to cut money. Carol Keiser stated that as far as duplication, she noted that the agencies are trying to make sure there's limited duplication.
- Dr. Carrie Castille commented on ARS Centers and the role of DOE and USDA. She stated that DOE is excellent at promoting its Bio Energy agenda. We need to make sure ARS and USDA has a major role on Bio Energy and is equally successful at promoting its agenda.

Specialty Crop Committee (SCC)

- Dr. Walter Armbruster thanked everyone on the SCC that attended the meeting in Michigan. He stated that there was valuable participation from the industry and farmers in Michigan at both meeting (East Lansing and Grand Rapids). Major issues and concerns were covered at the meeting with the industry and farmers. Rob Burk prepared draft minutes from the meeting and will send those to the committee members.

- Dr. Walter Armbruster stated that he would like the minutes posted on the NAREEE website. There were ongoing concerns about invasive pests at both listening sessions. Research needs to be done and funding needs to made available. Dr. Walter Armbruster stated the funds can't come out of the SCC money as it could be depleted by the continuous study of the "pest of the month."

- Dr. Armbruster reported that Dr. Tom Bewick spoke at the meeting. Dr. Walter Armbruster will distribute the "SCC Competitive Grant Program Panel Review Report" to the committee.

- There was discussion regarding the fact that identifying good projects was not the problem, but funding the projects was the main issue. This gap should be expressed during the Farm Bill discussions.

- The Specialty Crop Committee was asked to have a meeting in Washington, DC, but due to budget restraints, it was not deemed feasible

V. Updates from Work Groups/Subcommittee

Competitive Grants

- Jean-Mari Peltier, and Rob Burk are working with the committee to edit a draft letter for Dr. Woteki regarding the competitive grants programs of REE

Spring 2011 Meeting Report Status

- The Spring Report comments have been made and summarized. Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen stated that the he wanted to wait until a conversation was held with the Under Secretary and others concerning the Farm Bill before sending out a draft report for review. The committee is interested in identifying ways that the agencies and industry could work together. .

- Dr. Carrie Castille stated that she didn't know if the Committee was ready for recommendations yet. She felt the Committee needed to look at more private partnerships and determine if there are any novel funding mechanisms not yet identified. It was suggested that Board could look at the report and discuss it a little more.

Fall 2011 Meeting Review

- Rob Burk will be submitting a Federal Register Notice next week concerning the Fall Meeting.

- The subject for the Federal Register will be: NASS Reports and Their Impact on Grain Market Volatility & the Roadmap to the Farm Bill. Terry Wolf and Rob Burk will be working on bringing in panelists for the statistics panel. Jean-Mari Peltier will work to identify speakers for the Farm Bill session.

Fall 2011 Meeting Review

- The Board discussed identifying a clean message on the Farm Bill discussion.

VI. Executive Director's Report

Budget

- The budget for the fiscal year is almost final. We are clearing up all travel and reimbursements in the NAREEEAB Office.
- For the available member positions on the Board, the solicitation for nominations was closed in July, the candidates have been vetted, and the nomination books have been sent to the Under Secretary's Office for review. Rob Burk will schedule to sit down with the Under Secretary's Office and discuss the candidates in the next week. We hope to have the Board members appointed in mid or late September by the Secretary.

Future Meetings

►The next Executive Committee conference call will be Friday, October 7, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. EDT.

►NAREEE Advisory Board Fall Meeting, November 7-9-2011

The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Morgan-Jordan

Jean-Mari Peltier
Chair

Rob Burk
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____
Date

_____ _____
Initials Initials
Chair Executive Director