

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

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MINUTES

Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, December 5, 2014, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Milo Shult (Chair), Dr. Charles Boyer, Dr. Carrie Castille, Leo Holt, Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen (Vice Chair), Dr. Mark McLellan, and Dr. Robert Taylor

Executive Committee Members Absent: Patsy Brannon, Julia Sabin

NAREEE Board Staff: Michele Esch, Executive Director; Shirley Morgan-Jordan, Program Support Coordinator

Others Present: Dr. Ann Bartuska, REE, Deputy Under Secretary and Bill Hoffman

I. Welcome and Roll Call of the Executive Committee Members and Other Attendees

Michele Esch conducted a roll call of the Executive Committee once members signed on to the conference call.

II. Welcome from the Chair

Dr. Shult welcomed everyone on the call. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Bartuska.

III. Comments from the REE Office of the Under Secretary

Dr. Bartuska welcomed everyone on the call and provided several updates.

- Dr. Bartuska stated that all Agencies have received the FY2016 Budget pass back and that REE is generally happy with the direction of the FY2016 Budget. Additional details will be available in February when the President releases the FY2016 budget.
- Dr. Bartuska stated that the Pollinator Action Plan is due December 20, 2014, to the White House. USDA is co-chairing the Pollinator Health Initiative. Dr. Bartuska stated that the Research Action Plan is coming together. NASS has a BEE Survey that they have put out and the survey has been getting a lot of good input. USDA will be holding listening sessions on the Pollinator Health Action Plan.

- OSTP has approved the USDA public access plan for big and open data. We will be working with the NAREEE Board to assist in the rollout of the plan.
- USDA released the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) action plan last week. It is available on the USDA website.

Dr. McLellan stated that agriculture safety and laboratory safety has become a big issue. He stated that a lot of agricultural schools are struggling with safety. There have been several incidents including a student recently losing her fingers.

Dr. Bartuska stated that mentioning safety was a really good comment and should be discussed a little more. The Federal Government recently participated in a Safety Stand down due to incidents with the Centers for Disease Control. The Safety Stand down emphasized an evaluation of current laboratory materials and an awareness of lab safety. She also stated that the Forest Service is paying special attention to safety and can be used as an example for good lab practices. Dr. McLellan stated that the information shared with the extramural partners was not clear.

Dr. Bartuska mentioned that we should have laboratory training. This should be a very direct response at the Agency level. She also stated the Association of Public Land Grant Universities (APLU) has issued a contract for a facility review in safety. She stated that she would love the idea of having a conversation with the Forest Service and have the NAREEE Advisory Board be part of that discussion. She also stated that she would like the Forest Service Agency to lead the discussion.

Dr. Shult asked if we should continue the discussion at the Spring meeting. Dr. Shult asked Dr. McLellan and Dr. Bartuska to put together some bullets on how the NAREEE Board can help with the safety issue that was discussed. Leo Holt stated that the ports are 2nd to the agriculture industry in accidents. Dr. Shult asked Leo Holt to be a part of the safety team.

The safety plan/bullets will be discussed at the next Executive Committee Conference Call.

IV. Recommendations from the Data Management Working Group

Dr. Daley-Laursen discussed the report and recommendations developed from the Data Management Working Group. The recommendations have certainly piqued the interest in a continuing dialogue and communications with REE and USDA. Dr. Daley-Laursen thanked the working group for their unique experiences which have resulted in an expansion of the data issue and the resulting recommendations.

Dr. Daley-Laursen stated that several items have motivated the Data Management Working Group:

1. Technology has made it easy to produce more data

2. It is a data intensive era
3. Government awareness and initiatives, including the OSTP initiatives on Big Data and Open Data

Dr. Daley-Laursen reviewed the recommendations in the report. He stated that the recommendations are meant to be supportive and to encourage continued partnership with USDA.

Dr. Bartuska thinks it is valuable for the NAREEE Advisory Board to be looking at this topic and providing advice and input. She also stated that there were a lot of recommendations so REE will need to use careful consideration to identify what is the most important or has the highest priority.

Bill Hoffman, NIFA Chief of Staff, stated that he thinks the document is very useful and very timely considering the recent approval of the Open Data Access Plan. The NAREEE Board's input will be very useful in the rollout of the Open Access Data Plan.

Dr. Shult, in response to Dr. Bartuska's comment regarding the number of recommendations, stated that he looked at the five headings as the recommendations and the twelve bullets as a deeper explanation of the recommendations.

Dr. Shult proposed a motion to approve the Data Management report and recommendations for full Board approval but notes that this will be a continuing discussion. Dr. Castille approved and Dr. Boyer seconded the motion.

The Data Management Report and Recommendations will be submitted to the full Board for approval.

V. FY2015 Relevancy and Adequacy Report Update

Dr. Castille provided an update on the status of the relevancy and adequacy process. At the Fall Board meeting, it was proposed to have a cross-cutting review of a specific program area across all REE agencies on an annual schedule. For example, the Relevancy and Adequacy Committee would review the Human Nutrition program and activities across all agencies.

Dr. Castille met with Dr. Woteki and Michele Esch on the proposed process and they are working with the Office of the Chief Scientist to provide an outline. For FY2015, the Relevancy and Adequacy report will be an overview of this new process which will allow for further refinement and synthesis within USDA and Congress.

Dr. Castille stated that she plans to meet with the Relevancy and Adequacy committee. Once the proposed process for the review is final, the R&A committee will share it with the Executive Committee for review.

Dr. Shult stated that the overall mandate of the process is an overwhelming task therefore; using this process will allow the NAREEE Board to dive deeper in the specific issues at hand and ultimately provide more useful and relevant advice. This also provides consistency for the Board for future reviews.

Dr. Bartuska stated her concurrence with the proposed process and added that the REE Administrators were pleased as well.

Dr. Shult asked the Executive Committee if they had any questions or comments on the minutes from the last Executive Committee call and the minutes from the Fall NAREEE Advisory Board meeting. Dr. Daley-Laursen moved for acceptance. The full minutes were approved to be sent to the full Board for comment.

VI. Discussion on Spring 2015 Meeting

The Executive Committee held a discussion on the location of the next meeting. Dr. Shult stated that we could hold the next meeting in Washington, DC or look for a location outside Washington, DC. Meeting in DC allows for more REE leadership to participate in the meetings. He also stated that while we can travel other places, we should have a bona fide reason.

Michele Esch stated that with the proposed Relevancy and Adequacy process, the Board could use the Fall meeting for information collection and the Spring meeting for a site visit to a corresponding location. For example, if reviewing Human Nutrition, the Board would visit one of the Human Nutrition Research Centers.

VII. Other Business

The next Executive Committee teleconference is scheduled for January 2nd. Michele Esch stated that members will likely still be on holiday break and proposed to move the meeting to Friday, January 9, 2015. There was discussion about availability. Ms. Esch indicated that she would send out a doodle poll to ensure the broadest participation.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Dr. Milo Shult
Chair

Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen
Vice Chair

Michele Esch
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials following Advisory Board Approval