

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

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MINUTES

Executive Committee Conference Call

Friday, January 9, 2015, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. EST.

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

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Robert Taylor

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

Others Present: Bill Hoffman, Chief of Staff, NIFA; Rich Derksen, Program Coordinator, OCS; Steve Schlientz, Forest Service; Damon Thompson, REE, Director of Communications; Suzanne Thornsby, Senior Advisor, OCS

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 and asked the committee did anyone have any changes or additions to the minutes that were sent out. He then motioned for the Fall Minutes to go final to the full Board. He then turned the meeting over back over the Michele Esch to report on the updates for REE.

III. **Comments from the REE Office of the Under Secretary**

Michele Esch welcomed everyone on the call and passed Dr. Woteki's regrets for not being able to attend. Michele provided the updates from REE.

- Congress passed the Omnibus in December providing funding for the Federal Government for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- The House Oversight Committee has formed a new Interior Subcommittee to oversee the Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, and Department of Agriculture. No activity has come out of the committee yet.
- The National Academies of Science has/will released two reports: 1) "Critical Role in

Animal Science Research in Food Security and Sustainability” and 2) on January 13th the Food and Nutrition Board will release the report “Framework for Assessing the Food System.” Both of these reports are impactful to REE.

- The Riley Foundation, with support for Iowa State University, released a presentation and a report on *“Pursuing a Unifying Message: Elevating Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Research as a National Priority* on December 5, 2014. The report is a call to action to bring together a broad coalition within agricultural research to think carefully and decisively and work together on a common agenda.

Dr. Milo Shult stated that Wendy Williams is the lead and also did the presentation.

IV. USDA Open Access Data Plan

Dr. Milo Shult stated that the board is pleased to see a copy of the USDA plan and would like to spend some time reading the report.

Damon Thompson, Director of Communications in REE, provided an update on the USDA Open Access Data Plan. In early December, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) approved a plan for increasing public access to publications and data derived from research funded by USDA. This plan was authored by USDA's Scientific Data Management Committee, and approved by the USDA Science Council. Among other things, this plan calls for a phased implementation approach that includes a transparent, stakeholder-informed process to develop policy to implement it. This plan has not yet been made public, and OSTP has asked USDA to develop a strategy for rolling it out. A small team of people in REE have developed some recommendations for such a rollout. One of these recommendations is to coordinate the rollout with the NAREEE Advisory Board. The REE team wants to ensure that USDA carries out this phased approach in a way that allows maximum outreach to, and participation by, the many stakeholders who stand to be affected by this new policy. The team wants the Board to advise on issues that may arise once the plan is made public and hopes that the Board will help identify decisions, proposals, or guiding principles that are currently incorporated into the rollout plan.

The other recommendations include:

- Establishing co-chairs for the USDA Science Output Access Policy (SOAP Council).
- Making the plan public by posting it on the USDA website, through regular press and stakeholder channels, and through a webcast with stakeholders to promote discussion and awareness. That webcast would include participation by NAREEE and SOAP Council officials.
- Once the plan is made public, USDA would announce initial opportunities for stakeholder input. The NAREEEAB meeting in early-to mid-Spring would provide an early opportunity for this, and the SOAP Council could announce a general plan to receive public input that could include public meetings or other tactics.

Mr. Bill Hoffman, NIFA Chief of Staff, stated that USDA submitted the plan within six months of the initial request and it took two years for approval. USDA/REE needs to develop the following for implementation and rollout:

- Policy decisions

- Business processes
- Information systems
- Outreach, education, and training (internally and externally; with National Science Foundation coordination)

USDA did hold a stakeholder meeting in March 2014 but they identify the need for more stakeholder engagement. Bill emphasized several areas where the NAREEE Board could be helpful:

- Feedback on additional stakeholder input from NAREEE and other scientific societies;
- Advice on how to make the plan more effective as we rollout the plan and start implementation;
- Pre-emptively identify issues or needs looking forward.

Dr. Shult stated that the Board has a high interest in the plan and appreciated REE's interest in engaging with the Board. Michele Esch stated that the report from the Data Management Working Group had been approved (17 people approved).

Dr. Daley-Laursen thanked Damon and stated that the Data Management Group looks forward to meeting and working with him and Bill Hoffman. Dr. Daley-Laursen suggested that we need to develop a process for providing feedback. The Executive Committee determined that the Data Management Working Group would meet then provide some comments to the REE team. This topic will also be included on the agenda at the spring NAREEE Board meeting.

Damon Thompson reviewed the potential timeline for the release of the USDA Open Access plan but stated that a solid date had not been made yet. It is expected to be released in February/March timeframe.

Dr. McLellan stated that he has reviewed the document and stated that it appears to be "a plan to make a plan." He stated that he was concerned that a big release could be seen negatively and that USDA/REE should look at it as a "launch." He also stated that USDA has not made as much progress as some other federal agencies.

Dr. McLellan asked about the status of requiring data management plans in NIFA funded RFAs/grants. Mr. Hoffman stated that NIFA will soon be releasing some pilot programs to require data management plans.

Mr. Thompson state that he agreed that they should roll out as a launch and gather stakeholder input. He stated that he would like to get the plan out as soon as possible before beginning any conversation outside USDA.

Dr. Shult asked if the EXECOMM was comfortable giving comments. He also stated that we will continue to discuss this topic at the next meeting and will place it high on the agenda. He stated the Board looks forward to working with the REE team.

V. Agricultural Safety Practices and Awareness

Michele Esch stated that at the last EXECOMM Conference Call, we had a very good conversation about safety. Ms. Esch introduced Steve Schlientz from the Forest Service. Dr. Schlientz is the Director of the Office of Safety and Occupational Health. He has been instrumental in improving safety within the Forest Service.

Dr. McClellan reminded the EXECOMM that this was brought up to increase the awareness and safety at agricultural research facilities. There is a real risk level with safety and best practices and hopes to talk about the possibilities in promoting safety and training. He indicated that the forestry research folks are far ahead of the agricultural research infrastructure in this regard and that they need help from USDA and NIFA to help bring this about. It was also discussed that while the Cooperative Extension system has a long history of encouraging safety in the agricultural industry, they typically do not drive agricultural research action on campus.

Steve Schlientz, stated that the Forest Service has had a very successful record in promoting and using safety practices. He stated that the accident rate of safety has been reduced from 7 to 1.5. He has had a 28% reduction in compensation claims. There has also been a reduction in fatality rates from 7.4 to 2.4. He stated that the Forest Service has made two changes: 1.) changes to the safety plan and 2.) changes in the leadership focus area.

Bill Hoffman stated that he attended Penn State and was in the Extension pesticide program there and was very interested in following up with some ideas and wanted to know what role NIFA could play. Dr. McLellan stated that a main source of funding in this safety issue is NIFA and asked if there is a more pro-active measure they could take in safety. They agreed to continue the discussion.

Michele Esch stated that it would also be good to engage ARS in this safety issue since they employ a large number of university students in their facilities. It would be important to ensure that policies and procedures were consistent.

Through conversation amongst the members, it was determined that more information was needed and we should arrange for some briefings at our next face to face meeting. Dr. McLellan, Dr. Brannon, Dr. Castille, Leo Holt, and Steve Schlientz will identify some groups to brief the full NAREEE Board and identify how the NAREEE Board could be the most effective.

VI. Discussion to Finalize Spring Meeting Location

The Executive Committee agreed to hold the next meeting in Washington, DC in late April/early May. Michele Esch will send out a doodle poll to identify the best dates.

The Executive Committee thought that the topics discussed on the call need more attention and information. The Committee assigned leads to each topic:

- New House Oversight committee: Dr. Shult and Dr. Laursen
- National Academies of Science Reports (Animal Science and Food Nutrition report) : Dr. Brannon
- Riley Foundation: Dr. Shult (with support from Michele)

VII. Citrus Disease Subcommittee Meeting Update

Dr. McLellan provided an overview of the recent meeting of the Citrus Disease Subcommittee (CDS). There were three major perspectives with the spreading of citrus disease: 1) Florida is inundated and is operating at half the production from before HLB was discovered 2) the Gulf Coast area is rapidly reducing its production and 3) California has had very limited exposure but it is only a matter of time before the disease is more widespread.

The meeting had much more collaboration and it is apparent that they are working better together. The committee identified priorities for FY 2015 and will soon be submitting a letter to REE and NIFA. This will need to be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee and Board. The committee reiterated their interest in increased coordination and communication amongst USDA agencies and the citrus research foundations.

Dr. Shult thanked Dr. McLellan for all his hard work.

VIII. Board Responses on the Agricultural Experiment Station Report and the Data Management Report

Michele Esch stated that the Agricultural Experiment Station report was approved with 17 affirmative votes and 1 nay. As stated earlier, the Data Management report was approved with 17 affirmative votes.

IX. Other Business

The next Executive Committee teleconference is scheduled for Friday, February 6, 2015.

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