

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL MINUTES

Friday, June 7, 2013
11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., EDT

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Milo Shult (Co-Chair), Dr. Charles Boyer, Dr. Carrie Castille, Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen, Dr. Mark McLellan, Professor Agnes Mojica, and Dr. Robert Taylor

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Steve Hamburg and Leo Holt

NAREEE Board Staff: David Kelly (Acting Executive Director), Michelle Radice (Outgoing Acting Executive Director) and Shirley Morgan-Jordan (Program Support Coordinator).

Others Present: Caren Wilcox (Special Assistant to the Under Secretary, Research Education and Economics and Chief Scientist, USDA)

1. Roll Call of the Executive Committee Members and Meeting Attendees

- Michelle Radice conducted a roll call of the Executive Committee once members signed on to the conference call.

2. Welcome from the Co-Chair

- Dr. Milo Shult welcomed the newly elected and returning members of the executive committee.
- Dr. Shult explained that the major objective of the meeting was to discuss the request set forth by the white papers submitted by Dr. Woteki's at the May 28-30, 2013 annual NAREEE board meeting. Dr. Shult understood that the issue regarding balance of research investment in agricultural commodities was more of a long-term topic, and discussion surrounding the Board making future recommendations concerning the process would best be facilitated if someone from PCAST talked to the NAREEE Board at the September 2013 meeting. The second PCAST recommendation requests federal investment to create six innovation institutes, leveraging public and private partnerships, to improve the lab bench to marketplace technology transfer. NAREEE has been asked to provide advice the Under Secretary regarding an evidence-based process for planning and funding decisions for these institutes. This request is on a much tighter time frame as the information is needed for planning and consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 budget. The third request from Dr. Woteki was to provide advice and counsel on the PCAST recommendation that USDA create a permanent and

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

independent science advisory committee which would advise the Chief Scientist of USDA. Dr. Woteki suggested that the best place to establish this new council was as a subcommittee of the NAREEE Board. The Under Secretary's Office needed to consult with the USDA Office of General Council and the USDA Office of Ethics to discuss charter and membership issues and concerns and report back to the NAREEE Board.

- Dr. Shult suggested that the Executive Committee function as the Ad Hoc committees for recommending proposals for the creation of the six institutes and the new Science Advisory committee. This suggestion met no opposition.

3. **Comments from the Office of the Under Secretary of USDA REE**

- Caren Wilcox, Special Assistant to Dr. Woteki, agreed with Dr. Shult's discussion of Dr. Woteki's requests of the NAREEE Board concerning the three white papers from May 28, 2013.
- Caren also discussed two major rollouts at USDA during the week: The Food Waste Challenge and the Secretary's Vision for Agricultural Solutions to Environmental Challenges. The Food Waste Challenge is a public-private venture that educates consumers and producers about negative effects from tons of food in landfills such as methane gas creation, misuse of human and capital resources used to produce and consume the food, and the disconnect with those that are food insecure. Secretary Vilsack's climate change mitigation strategy includes the establishment of seven regional climate hubs, new research tools, and uniform policy guidelines to help producers adapt in the future. The hubs will serve as a source of regional data and information for hazard and adaptation planning in the agriculture and forest sectors and will be located in a USDA facility within the seven regions. There were some questions about the physical spaces to be used for the hubs. Caren reported that because of the physical parameters, not all the hubs will be USDA properties, and some will even be virtual hubs. There was activity reported by members that were putting together collaborative proposals to meet the July 30, 2013 deadline.
- The Farm Bill is up for Senate vote during the week of June 10, 2013. The House is expected to have their version of the bill by mid-June.
- The House Ag Appropriations subcommittee shows USDA at about \$2.8 billion whereas the President's budget proposed USDA at \$3.05 billion. The House budget still has to go the full committee and then to the floor, and a lot can still happen. There is no word yet on the Senate version of the budget for USDA.
- Caren offered some clarifications to the PCAST recommendations and the subsequent requests to the NAREEE Board from Dr. Woteki. There was some discussion by the Executive Committee on points of concern or issues that needed clarification.

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

- The Science Advisory Board will offer advice to the President, not to USDA, though it is possible that the President will consult with USDA and NAREEE on recommendations. OGC and the Office of Ethics will be heavily involved in the formulating and planning of the membership structure and charter creation. NAREEE, as an advisory arm, will have to review any recommendations from the Science Advisory Board. This Science Advisory Board will be responsible for making sure USDA is on the cutting edge of scientific inquiries, and that new developments effectively become the new USDA science. Two Executive Board members did make the suggestion that once the Science Advisory Board members are selected, the liaison member of the NAREEE Board should be experienced and able to have input on committee matters. Caren restated that those of the front line of this new committee can make recommendations and suggestions but the committee will not have policy or regulatory authority.
- PCAST made six recommendations that directly and indirectly impact USDA, but Dr. John Holdren, PCAST Co-Chair, and Dr. Woteki remain in close conversation. Some of the recommendations can only come to fruition through White House appropriations. There may be a direct correlation between President's budget which reflects increases for Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) versus the PCAST wish list. Caren wanted to make sure that there was no confusion in that the NIFA centers and these institutes were two separate entities. The Office of the Chief Scientist would be heavily involved in the creation and maintenance of these institutes. Dr. Woteki's original idea is that the institutes would be perhaps housed in ARS facilities and administered and overseen by NIFA in a collaborative and cooperative effort. The PCAST recommendation requires a five-year fiscal and human resource commitment and the question remains as to how USDA stands up these institutes for that time frame. The answer seems to be that these institutes become more of a public/private partnership. There were questions as to whether there was a private investment component that was driving the proposed foundation of these institutes in order to direct public monies. There was also discussion that these institutes were proposed to advance the scientific development to delivery process.
- Caren concurred that the long-term commodity balance issue is best served by having someone who works closely with PCAST talk to the Board at the September meeting. She will discuss this further with Dr. Woteki to make sure the Board hears from someone of very closely related to PCAST. She suggested Dr. Amber Shultz as a good candidate to give the briefing to the full NAREEE Board.
- Caren also stated that the ad hoc committees that will be working on first the proposal outlining the creation of the six institutes and secondly on the proposal for the creation

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

of the Science Advisory Committee will be expected to have very short turn around.

- Because the Board is now organized to have two chairmen, the suggestion was made that Dr. Shult be lead for the innovation institutes ad hoc committee and Dr. Steve Hamburg function as lead for the Science Advisory Committee ad hoc committee. The leads will stay in close contact and keep the Executive Committee apprised of progress.
- Smaller working groups were formed for each ad hoc committee:
 - The Innovation Centers Initiative will be lead by Dr. Carrie Castille, with Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen and Leo Holt as members. Dr. Shult will serve as a resource as well as point man and liaison with the co-chair, and be responsible for data sharing with the rest of the committee. The Ad Hoc committee will work towards deciding the process to form these new institutes, propose what areas of concentration the centers should focus, and suggest elements for a charter for the institutes.
 - The Science Advisory Committee Initiative will be lead by Dr. Charles Boyer, with Dr. Mark McLellan and Dr. Robert Taylor as members. Dr. Steve Hamburg will serve as a resource as well as point man and liaison with the co-chair, and be responsible for data sharing with the rest of the committee. The Ad Hoc committee will work towards deciding the process to form this new committee, propose what the role of the committee should be, and suggest elements for a charter.
 - The Ad Hoc committees will get together straw man recommendations and then elicit input from Executive Committee members..
- Caren reported that REE staff are reaching out and recruiting in order to expeditiously fill the vacant Executive Director of the NAREEE Board position. David Kelly will let the full committee know once the position has been posted to USAJobs.

4. **Updates on Report Status Matrix**

- Michelle Radice and Shirley Morgan-Jordan will update the Report Matrix prepared by Rob Burk. As requested by the Executive Committee, the committee assignments will be loaded to the matrix. This document, along with documents contained in the notebooks used during the full board meeting in May will be loaded to Google Docs. David and Michelle will have this done by mid-June.
- The Relevancy and Adequacy Committee report is complete but there was some confusion as to the status of the cover letter that accompanies the report when it is sent to the Secretary and Under Secretary. David Kelly will follow up with Dr. Castille, Dr. Daley-Laursen, and Shirley Morgan-Jordan to finalize this report and move it to the next phase of clearance.

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board

5. Future Meetings

- David Kelly will send out a poll with possible dates during August or September to hold the next NAREEE Advisory Board meeting to all the members. The poll should go out during the week of June 10-14, 2013.

6. Acting Executive Director's Report

- David Kelly will work with the co-chairs to have electronic signatures on file to add to official NAREEE Board correspondences.

7. Other Business - None

Meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for
Friday, July 12, 2013 at 11:00 EDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Milo Shult
Co-Chair

David Kelly
Acting Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director