



MINUTES
Executive Committee Conference Call
Friday, October 4, 2019, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EDT

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. David Baltensperger, Chair, Dr. Edmund Buckner, Vice Chair, Ms. Robin Beck, Dr. John Coupland, Mr. Richard De los Santos, Dr. Sarah Francis, Ms. Liz Hobart, Dr. Jayson Lusk, and Dr. Mike Oltrogge

Executive Committee Members Absent: None

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

Ex-Officio(s): Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young (ARS), Administrator, Dr. Scott Angle (NIFA) Administrator

Others Present: Ms. Courtney Knupp (REE), and Tara Weaver (Communications), and

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

Ms. Michele Esch welcomed everyone on the call and provided a couple of updates.

Blueprint

- Ms. Esch submitted the responses/edits to the USDA Blueprints from the Board. Dr. Hutchins sent a response letter which Ms. Esch forwarded to the Board along with the agenda for the meeting.
- The USDA Blueprint is going through the Agency/Department for clearance.

FY2020 Budget

- Last week Congress passed a continuing resolution keeping the Federal Government open until November 21st.

Welcome from the Chair

- Dr. Baltensperger told Board members to make sure they submit their ideas and topics for the agenda ahead of time.

II. Agency Conference Attendance

- Dr. Baltensperger requested that we discuss the Agency conference approvals over concerns on scientist attendance and also how the conference approval process works.
- Dr. Jacobs-Young joined the call and provided information on the ARS process and approach.

- Dr. Jacobs-Young stated that the level of scrutiny the Agency receives on the conference approval level and we are spending tax payer dollars, so we need to be accountable for the monies and how we spend those dollars.
- There are a lot of questions and anything over 7,000 or over 10 people must have a conference package and requires approval though several levels all the way to the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Dr. Jacobs-Young stated that Tri Societies and PAG are the two largest conferences. ARS scientist will participate in over 300 conferences this year. Tri Societies will have over 200 people attend with a cost of over \$500K. The Office of the Secretary will have to approve the package and then go to OMB since the cost will be over 500K.
- Dr Jacobs-Young stated that scientist have been provided information on what can be done ahead of the package being approved, flights, abstracts, etc.
- Dr. Buckner asked Dr. Jacobs-Young what the Board can do to help with the process. Dr. Jacobs-Young stated that good documentation is crucial.

III. ERS/NIFA Relocation Update

- Ms. Esch stated that she had spent much of the week in Kansas City helping NIFA and ERS settle in. Monday, September 30th was the official start date for employees in Kansas City.
- GSA is continuing to work on establishing a lease for the permanent location. We are hoping to know before the end of the month
- As of Monday, there has been a relocation of about 50 employees, but we lost about 75% of permanent employees and it's been a challenge.
- Dr. Angle comments/priorities
 - Get the money out the door for funds obligated this past year.
 - Panels need to be completed on time
 - Farm bill programs need to be implemented
 - We need to hire! We have about 130 positions in process the there are about 130 jobs available.
- He stated that NAREEE should have a formal review opportunity for what the future NIFA looks like.
- Dr. Baltensperger inquired what is the hiring timeframe. He also asked if it will be back to 75% by Feb 1st.
- Dr. Angle stated that some people can move faster than others, ie., professors, etc. may take a little longer to bring up.
- Over 600 applications were received for over a dozen positions
- Ms. Esch will sit down with Dr Scott Hutchins and see how the NAREEE can help.

ERS Update

- Dr. Ephraim will be departing next week, and Marcia is taking on the acting administrator role effective Oct 14.
- ERS has 130-140 staff total onboard and it will be critical in hiring people. They will be working over the next year and beyond to bring people onboard.

IV. Finalize Location of the Next NAREEE Meeting, January 28-30, 2020

- Ms. Esch met with Dr. Hutchinson this week to discuss the topics and focus of our upcoming meeting. He wants us to focus on the priority themes (as we discussed at our last meeting) – **Ag Climate Adaption**. Ms. Esch will be working with the Office of the Chief Scientist and the agencies to develop materials.
- The question is, are the topics still relevant?
 - Location top choices: Maricopa, Las Cruces, El Reno, and College Station
- Ms. Esch will work with the Agencies to get feedback on which location meets the needs of the Board. The questions need to be relayed to the R&A subcommittee for comment. The spreadsheet approach is the best way to go.
- Ms. Esch met with Dr. Hutchinson this week to discuss the topics and focus of our upcoming meeting. He wants us to focus on the priority themes (as we discussed at our last meeting) – **Ag Climate Adaption**. Ms. Esch will be working with the Office of the Chief Scientist and the agencies to develop materials.

V. Subcommittee Updates

- Ms. Esch is working on finalizing the membership appointments for each of the subcommittees. We expect the Citrus Disease Subcommittee to be completed first. They need to provide consultation to the NIFA on the CDRE grant program for the RFA to be released. NIFA aims to do that around the beginning of the year. NGRAC and the SCC have less immediate need although they are anxious to get back to work.

VI. Other Business: None

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Next meeting will be Friday, November 1, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. EDT

Dr. David Baltensperger
Chair

Dr. Edmund Buckner
Vice Chair

Michele Esch
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials following Advisory Board Approval