

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL MINUTES

Friday, August 2, 2013
11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., EDT

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Milo Shult (Co-Chair), Dr. Charles Boyer, Dr. Mark McLellan, and Professor Agnes Mojica

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Steve Hamburg, Dr. Steven Daley-Laursen, Dr. Carrie Castille, Dr. Robert Taylor, and Mr. Leo Holt

Others Present: Dr. Anne Bartuska (Deputy Under Secretary, REE, USDA), Caren Wilcox (Special Assistant to the Under Secretary, REE, USDA), Dr. Charles Onwulata (Director, Office of the Chief Scientist), Ven Neralla (Director of Congressional Affairs, REE & NIFA)

- 1. Roll Call of the Executive Committee Members and Meeting Attendees**
 - Ven Neralla conducted a roll call of the Executive Committee once members signed on to the conference call.

- 2. Welcome from the Co-Chair (3mins)**
 - Dr. Milo Shult welcomed the committee and moved for approval of the minutes from the July 2013 Executive Committee conference call. The minutes were approved without change and without dissent.

- 3. Discussion of Spring 2014 Meeting Plans (10mins)**
 - Dr. Nancy Cox discussed an invitation from ESCOP to hold the NAREEEAB Spring 2014 meeting at the University of Georgia College of Agriculture. The current proposed windows for the day-and-a-half meeting are 4/14/14 through 4/18/14 or 4/28/14 through 5/2/14. Dr. Cox observed that hosting the meeting here would allow the University of Georgia to highlight food safety, plant breeding, and outreach. Dr. Bartuska mentioned that holding the meeting at a location like this would help underscore the importance of science infrastructure. Dr. Shult proposed to raise this invitation for approval at the full NAREEEAB in September. Dr. Cox will help with the presentation to the Board.

 - Additionally, Dr. Shult pointed out that while a new Executive Director for the Board is currently being sought, the work of the Board may be in limbo if Congress does not pass a new Farm Bill or extend the 2008 Farm Bill by the end of September. If Congress fails to act then much like last year, the NAREEEAB will not be able to hold meetings and will go on hiatus until it is reauthorized.

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4. **Discussion with the Director of the Office of the Chief Scientist (10mins)**
 - The new Director of the Office of Chief Scientist, Dr. Charles Onwulata, was appointed on June 30. He provided a brief overview of his background in agricultural engineering and food technology at ARS along with some thoughts about the goals and direction that he wishes the office to pursue. He described the aim of the Office as being one that ensures that all USDA policy undergirded by sound science. He also observed that this approach extends to budget deliberations and has already been contributing to the FY15 process. He sees the function of the Director as helping facilitate coordination and collaboration across USDA's agencies and mission areas as well as ensuring that the Chief Scientist has the best possible understanding of all of USDA Science's research endeavors. He is working on setting up a series of on-going consultations with NPLs and both departmental and external stakeholders and will provide periodic updates.
 - Dr. Shult welcomed Dr. Onwulata to the role. Prof. Mojica echoed Dr. Shult's sentiments and observed the value-add of OCS's efforts to USDA Science's partners.
5. **Update from PCAST Science Advisory Committee Working Group (10mins)**
 - Dr. Boyer led the discussion on the current draft of the Working Group's report on the PCAST recommendations for an Advisory Committee. He has shared the current draft with members of the Board. The edits thus far have focused on which sectors members for the Advisory Committee will come from and what the terms of the members will be. Dr. Boyer will incorporate USDA's edits when he receives them.
6. **Update from Innovation Institutes Working Group (10mins)**
 - Dr. Shult pointed out that while there have been several conversations on the Innovation Institutes idea, nothing has really been committed to paper. He will follow up with the co-chairs of this Working Group to request a briefing note.
 - Dr. Shult reiterated Under Secretary Woteki's charge which was to have NAREEEAB provide a document that discusses the challenges to agriculture that are amenable to R&D and recommend a process for prioritizing these challenges but the Board does not need to provide any structural recommendations; simply identify and prioritize the substance.
 - Dr. Mojica recalled that there might be a list of some examples of existing institutes around the country.
 - Dr. Bartuska cautioned against forgetting that the aim of the Under Secretary's request was to provide a process for prioritizing topics not the selection of themes. Also, she suggested that Board members keep in mind not only brick and mortar solutions but also the development virtual ones.
 - Discussion also focused on the need to keep private sector needs in mind and to solicit this input early in the process.

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- Dr. McClellan suggested the need for the process to have some capacities like IR4. As these Institutes identify emerging needs and prospects for public-private sector partnerships, to do so in a vacuum without a real private sector need would be in vain.
- Dr. Shult made note that the timeline for providing input as the FY15 budget is being developed may be tight. Dr. Bartuska acknowledged this and observed that in FY15 budget discussions, REE leadership has been mindful that ideas would be forthcoming from the Board. Dr. Shult suggested that the Board develop a statement that will remind USDA that NAREEAB is also going to provide input into this process. He conclude by offering to raise this issue at the next Southeastern (?) CARET members.

7. **September Meeting Agenda (10mins)**

- Dr. Shult listed items he thought should be added to the September meeting agenda. These are:
 - A presentation by Barbara Schaal and Dan Schrag will be invited to address the NAREEEAB at the September meeting regarding the PCAST report.
 - A discussion of next spring's meeting at UGA;
 - A report by PCAST Science Advisory Committee Working Group
 - An update on innovations institutes

Dr. Boyer added to the potential agenda a discussion on the OSTP Federal mandate regarding data storage and public access to scientific data. Dr. Bartuska offered to help identify someone from OSTP to address the group.

While complete details will be forthcoming, the September meeting will be held at the Beacon hotel in DuPont Circle on September 11, 12, and 13.

Prof. Mojica suggested that next Executive Committee meeting be moved from September 6 (just five days before the next full NAREEEAB meeting) to August 30 to allow a few extra days to prepare and make decisions regarding the Fall Meeting. Dr. Shult said that David Kelly will propose this date change to the Executive Committee.

8. **Other business**

- Caren Wilcox reported that the search for a permanent NAREEEAB Executive Director is moving along. She will be chairing the review committee which has received 150 applications for the position. She hopes that the review will be completed by the end of August.
- Dr. McClellan and Dr. Boyer wanted to be certain that they did not miss any Executive Committee emails and shared their addresses: Mark.mclellan@usu.edu and cboyer@csufresno.edu.
- Dr. McClellan announced that he was appointed by the Chairwoman of FDA science

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subcommittee of the FDA board starting this fall. He is looking forward to leveraging the synergies between it and the NAREEEAB.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Executive Committee Conference Calls –
First Friday of Every Month
11 a.m. Eastern Time Zone

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Milo Shult
Co-Chair

Dr. Milo Shult
Co-Chair

David Kelly
Acting Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD:

Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director