

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

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DRAFT MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Thursday, August 14, 2008, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST.

Executive Committee Members Present: Dr. Martin Massengale, Chair; Dr. Walt Armbruster; Dr. Martin Apple, Mrs. Marianne Smith-Edge, Mrs. Carol Keiser-Long, Dr. David Thomassen, Dr. Mary Wagner, Assistant to the Undersecretary Dr. Joe Dunn for Dr. Gale Buchanan, REE Undersecretary.

Executive Committee Members Absent: Dr. Daryl Lund, Dr. Edward Runge

NAREEE Board Staff: Mrs. Karen Hunter, Executive Director, Mrs. Shirley Morgan Jordan Program Support Coordinator



I. Roll Call of Members and Invitees

Karen Hunter, Executive Director called roll of the Executive Committee members.

II. Comments and Welcome

Martin Massengale welcomed everyone on the conference call. Dr. Massengale stated that he and Karen Hunter had worked on finalizing the Relevancy and Adequacy of Funding Report. Also, Dr. Massengale and Dr. Armbruster met with Dr. Buchanan to discuss the November Board meeting. It was decided to have four small work groups to discuss stakeholder needs. Each group will prepare a short paper to be presented before the meeting so that agency heads can develop a short response and be prepared to facilitate a better discussion at the November meeting. The four topics are divided into two broad and two narrow subject matter areas. They are: invasive species (plants and animals), renewable energy, poultry, and commodity crops (excluding specialty crops). Each work group can adjust their specific topics within the assigned subject area.

Joe Dunn provided some comments on behalf of Dr. Buchanan. He mentioned that the REE office was finishing up several administrative projects. He also shared that Dr. Merle Pierson has retired as deputy Undersecretary and that Joe will serve as interim until someone is appointed to the position. Dr. Buchanan is planning on attending the Specialty Crop Listening Session in Canandaigua on September 4. Dr. Massengale reiterated that the Executive Committee members had been invited to attend a listening session, but that it was not mandatory.

III. Update on Committee Activities

Educating the Future Work Force for Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Areas Report

Marianne reported that a draft of the report -- described as a combination outline and executive summary -- had been forwarded to Karen Hunter. She indicated that she wasn't sure how much historical background was appropriate or prudent to include. She noted that the issue of branding was the most critical point brought forward in the report due to the impact on attracting potential students and early career employees to the agricultural workforce. The concept of branding is important, but isn't necessarily something new. It needs to be addressed diplomatically. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that agriculture encompasses food science and food safety. Dr. Massengale questioned what the Department can do in terms of addressing the branding concept. Marianne stated that it was important to establish a more contemporary definition of agriculture, not just plants and animals, to current issues, such as sustainability and renewable fuels. The effort needs to start internally, and include land grant colleges and university campuses, high schools, and even elementary and middle schools. Dr. Massengale noted that coincidentally, this year's Farm Bill is actually titled "Food, Conservation, and Energy Act" which reflects the influence of agriculture on much more than just production. Carol Keiser also reiterated that the draft should reference branding in terms of connecting everything that takes place around humankind is related to agriculture, rather than the other way around.

Relevancy and Adequacy of Funds Report

Karen Hunter reported that the 2008 Relevancy and Adequacy of Funding report had been sent to the Secretary and to Congress on Monday, August 11, 2008.

Specialty Crop Committee Activities

Walt Armbruster reported that a lot of communication has been taking place with the NAREEE office and potential speakers in preparation for the upcoming listening sessions in Washington and New York states. Speakers have been invited to make statements for 10-15 minutes. The plan is to have four or five speakers for each session. A few participants have indicated that they would like to make brief (less than five minutes) statements as well. Walk-in attendance, as always, is uncertain at this point in time. Currently, four NAREE members (combination of Specialty Crop subcommittee and Executive Committee people) will be in attendance at each listening session. Dr. Armbruster made a few contacts with the associated Land Grant Universities in each location and provided them with

information to forward to interested parties. Joe Dunn suggested contacting Steve Isaacs at the Geneva experiment station in NY and indicated that he would provide the contact information to Karen. Dr. Armbruster stated that he will call Mr. Isaacs, and Karen agreed to send him an invitation to speak at the NY session as well as general information that he could forward on to anyone interested. Dr. Armbruster also stated that he would send Karen his notes from the 2007 listening session in Modesto, CA with notes on how to organize a draft. Dr. Apple expressed some concern that potential attendees might not fully understand the purpose of the listening sessions. Dr. Armbruster reassured him that detailed information and the committee charge was included in the invitational email.

Protocol Committee Activities

John Cunningham was unable to report on the Protocol Committee's recent activities. Karen will follow up with him before the September conference call for a status update and plans for any future activities.

Peer Review Committee Activities

Marty Apple reported that the Peer Review Committee has identified a well-developed set of objectives and processes. Some members of the committee were able to attend a listening session to learn about the pros and cons of peer review. The session was a chance to observe, anticipate, and learn. There was a knowledgeable team of outsiders looking at the evaluation process. Dr. Apple noted that in his opinion, the peer review process should be high quality and challenges thinking and proposal-writing, which in turn should encourage solid project rationale and eventual impact. Dr. Apple also stated that the necessary push for scientific rigor is beginning to also limit risk-taking within intramural proposals and curtail scientific creativity.

IV. Board Nominations

Karen Hunter reported that the deadline for NAREEE Board nominations is August 25, 2008. To date, approximately 15 complete applications have been received at the NAREEE office. Dr. Massengale encouraged committee members to spread the word with their various peers and colleagues.

V. Planning for the Fall Meeting

Karen Hunter confirmed meeting dates of November 12-14, 2008. Workgroup chairs have been recommended for the following four areas:

- Renewable Energy – Carol Keiser
- Poultry – George Watts
- Commodity Crops – Jean-Mari Peltier
- Invasive Species – Tom Rosol

VII. Renewable Energy Committee

Dr. Massengale made some comments on the progress of the nominations for the new NAREEE Renewable Energy Committee that was mandated by Congress. He indicated that there had been a number of outside nominees in addition to some Board members. Carol Keiser has agreed to chair the committee and David Thomassen has agreed to serve as vice-chair (as a Board member until the end of September and then as an outside member after the beginning of October). Other Board members who have agreed to serve are Jim Clark and Joe Layton. Approximately half of the committee members will be from the Board and half will be from outside organizations. Appointing other members from the Board will be postponed until after the new Board members are appointed. It is hoped that some of the nominees for open Board positions will have some background in energy and be able to contribute to the new committee. Dr. Massengale commented that Fred Vogel, a statistician, has agreed to serve on the committee. Other outside nominees include Bill Horan, David Terry, Georg Andre, Floyd Harwig, Charles Kubert, Carl Muska, Wallace Tyner, and J. Alan Weber. Dr. Massengale asked the Executive Committee if anyone had any insight or previous knowledge of the list of outside nominees. Dr. Armbruster indicated that he knew Wallace Tyner and felt he was a strong candidate. Dr. Massengale suggested that with the Executive Committee's approval, the Board members listed (Keiser, Clark, and Layton) and non-Board member Fred Vogel be appointed to the Renewable Energy Committee. The initial appointments are to be followed up with other appointments from within and outside the Board after a more comprehensive search is performed.

Dr. Apple pointed out that the Renewable Energy Committee should remember to include other sources of energy—wind, geothermal, solar, etc.—in their research and evaluation, as these technologies are capable of providing significant energy, yet tend to be overlooked in lieu of ethanol and biofuel production. He further suggested searching for someone with a background in alternative fuels to serve on the Renewable Energy Committee.

Dr. Massengale asked if anyone had any objections to limiting the committee to 8-12 individuals, with an approximately equal split of Board and non-Board members. There were no objections from the Executive Committee.

Dr. Apple moved to appoint the initial Renewable Energy Committee members as detailed. Marianne Smith-Edge seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

VII. Formal Appointment of Workgroups for November Meeting

The work groups for the November full Board meeting were approved. Groups were filled out as follows:

Invasive Species—Tom Rosol (chair), Randy McMillan, Steven Quarles, Ricardo Chavez Rel

Poultry—George Watts (chair), Nancy Cox, Robin Douthitt, Alton Thompson

Commodity Crops—Jean-Mari Peltier (chair), Charles Coley, J. William Hudon, John Salois

Renewable Energy—Carol Keiser-Long (chair), James Clark, Joseph Layton, Jr., David Thomassen

The workgroups will have 10-12 minutes of presentation per topic. It is expected that the chair of each work group will prepare an executive summary of their findings and/or priorities for the agency administrators prior to the November meeting.

Dr. Apple suggested that the poultry workgroup consider an avian flu update from around the world as part of their discussion at the meeting. This suggestion will be passed along to George Watts, chair of the Poultry Work Group.

Dr. Massengale stated that he would invite and try to confirm participation in the meeting by a member of the Congressional staff to provide perspective on how the Farm Bill was created and assembled. He also noted that Fred Cholick has accepted the invitation to speak and provide some input from that National Association of State Land Grant Colleges and Universities (NASULGC).

VIII. Other

Shirley Morgan asked if the Board were going to continue to use the National Agricultural Library's services as web hosts. The need to do a cost comparison with a different provider was discussed. It was not certain if the Department could compete with an outside provider, nor was it clear if using an outside source to maintain the website was permissible. Joe Dunn indicated that the annual contract for web services was \$12,000-\$15,000 per year, for part time technical support. He feels that Sherry Panzer (the contact at NAL) is performing well. Karen Hunter indicated that she will set up bi-weekly meetings with Sherry and Shirley to help facilitate the web update process. Dr. Massengale suggested setting up a meeting soon to discuss expectations, number of hours, etc.

Dr. Armbruster pointed out that the food retailing and marketing position was not advertised for in the recent nomination Federal Register notice. That position needs to be filled. Shirley Morgan stated that based on FACA, a vacant position can be filled at any time prior to the term expiration. She will provide a list of the people who were initially nominated and vetted for the position last year and provide the information to Karen Hunter.

The next Executive Committee Conference Call will be September 18, 2008 at 11:00 a.m., Eastern Standard Time.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15p.m.

MARTIN MASSENGALE
Chair

Karen Hunter
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: _____
Date

Initials
Chair

Initials
Executive Director