

**UMass Extension Board of Public Overseers
UMass Collaborative Service Center**

**Meeting notes
March 18, 2011**

Present

Members: Ed Bourgeois, Jack Angley, Art Eve, Ted Wales, Marla Michel, Rena Prendergast, Heidi Ricci, Lynn Griesemer via phone, Ed Davidian, Mike Leuders.

Guests: Stephen Herbert, Robert Schrader, Scott Jackson, Mary Jane Bacon, Joseph Shoenfeld

1. Welcome – Jack Angley

Jack called the meeting to order at 9:10.

2. Approval of January 21, 2011 Meeting Notes – Jack Angley

Rena Prendergast made a motion to accept the notes. Seconded by Art Eve. Notes were approved unanimously.

3. Center of Agriculture Update – Stephen Herbert

• **Council on Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching meeting in Washington DC**

Stephen reported he was in Washington with MA CARET representative Ken Nicewicz in early March. While there he visited each member of the MA delegation, with exception of Edward Markey. Stephen circulated a folder of materials provided to each congressman. Principal topic of discussion was effect of FY11 budgetary continuing resolution and potential impact of large (10%) disproportionate cut to Extension and the AFRI competitive grants program. For UMass Extension, proposed FY11 reduction would be \$250,000. Stephen reported that the Experiment Station would increase a small amount. Stephen reported a positive meeting with congressman McGovern and that the congressman expressed an interest in visiting UMass in early summer for a tour of MA agriculture. Ed Davidian noted congressman McGovern holds office hours each year at the Davidian farm stand.

• **New Stockbridge School Unit**

Stockbridge School currently offers a 2-year Associate's degree with six programs. The Department of Plant and Soil Sciences (PSIS) provides much of the teaching for Stockbridge courses and is the home

department for many faculty conducting applied agricultural research and teaching. Currently, PSIS leadership is most interested in basic sciences, not agricultural applied research. Dean Goodwin initiated a proposal to create an applied agricultural department within the Stockbridge School. To date, 13 PSIS faculty have indicated an interest in moving to the Stockbridge School. Some faculty from Veterinary and Animal Sciences may also move to the department, creating an integrated agricultural unit. The Stockbridge School would also have 4-year and graduate degree programs offered. Stephen noted he sees this proposal as very positive for agriculture at UMass.

- **Waltham Facility**

Stephen reported on an internal group working on a plan for Waltham, describing a process of listening for the next stage of planning on Waltham. Stephen noted listening will happen through discussion within BOPO and via one on one and small group meetings this spring. Stephen also described work on the Agricultural Learning Center in Amherst noting that Waltham may be a complimentary eastern location.

Feedback from the Board was positive:

- Heidi Ricci suggested contacting Roger Wrubel at Mass Audubon as the proposed Western Greenway network passes by the Waltham property.
- Michael Leuders noted there are large numbers of workers within Rt495 in the green industries who can't take time to come to Winter School but would be interested in abbreviated and night programs, as well as a more accessible Stockbridge School.
- Ted Wales felt there are opportunities for home gardening education. He also noted development of Waltham with a focus on suburban sustainability can be a positive initiative to discuss with MA legislature.
- Marla Michel stated the US Economic Development Administration provides infrastructure funding for green building.
- Lynn Griesemer noted studies on agricultural workforce development needs were conducted by the Donahue Institute study ten years ago and needed to be updated. Marla observed that data is needed to show where the potential lies.

Rena Prendergast mentioned the possibility of collaboration with other UMass campuses as well. Jack Angley discussed how Cranberry Station worked with Dartmouth and Amherst, noting interest from Dartmouth wasn't sustained. Marla noted UMass Research Affairs conducted a survey on clean energy work on all UM campuses and that something similar could be done on agricultural systems so that faculty get to know what each other is doing.

4. UMass Extension Update – Bob Schrader

- **Federal Budget for FY 11 & FY 12**

Bob stated FY11 federal funding is currently provided based on a continuing resolution. The House has proposed a 10% reduction in Smith Lever funds. Lynn Griesemer asked about reauthorization of Farm Bill. In response Bob reported all discussion is dominated by current FY11 budget discussions at this time.

- **State Budget**

Bob noted UMass is anticipating a 10% reduction in public funds. Extension has not been notified of any reduction in funding. In response to a question from Bob regarding state funding, Lynn stated there has

been no decision communicated within UMass. Lynn noted the large projected state deficit and indicated effort is underway to increase university funding above the budget proposed by Governor Patrick.

- **Soils Lab Director Faculty Position**

Bob reported interviews are being conducted with a hiring decision anticipated for mid to late April. Members discussed the potential for more soil testing business if reporting formats were adjusted.

- **Water and Climate Change Position**

Bob reported a search had begun for a new position within the NREC program. Interviews will begin in early April. Bob noted funding comes from within the existing program budget.

- **FY10 Federal Report and FY12 Plan of Work**

Bob stated both are due to USDA on April 1st. He encouraged members to review documents on the Extension website.

5. Ag Day April 7 – Joe Shoenfeld

- **Farm Bureau White Paper**

Ed Davidian distributed a draft of farm bureau white paper. Ed discussed newly added issue around change of minimum farm size from five to two acres. Ed suggested conversation with legislators should focus on what agriculture means to the local economy, noting economic impact isn't stressed enough.

- **Extension Talking Points**

Joe Shoenfeld referred to copies of the "folder" developed for use earlier this month with CARET and noted the folder would be available for use at Ag Day. Joe suggested a focus of talking points on how Extension and agricultural research adds benefit to the Commonwealth.

Ideas for talking points suggested by the Board:

- Impressive impact on the economy – green industry study by Univ. of Vermont
- Employment, jobs provided
- Land use. Keep land in open space
- Community character
- Local sustainability
- Worcester County ranks 5th in nation in direct sales to consumer
- Natural resource conservation

6. Natural Resources & Environmental Conservation Program Update – Scott Jackson

Scott introduced himself, noting he has been Director for 16 years. Scott noted NREC Extension Specialists work closely with faculty and seek to develop integrated research and extension programs whenever possible. NREC leverages faculty expertise in several departments by looking for opportunities for collaboration with UMass faculty.

NREC has received approximately \$6M for research and \$2.5M for extension over his tenure. Income comes from grants, contracts and legislative earmarks. NREC's model is to collaborate with other organizations for providing direct service, such as Mass Audubon. The perception created is that the University has benefitted the community, not so much individual NREC identity. Scott noted this approach strengthens university departments.

Scott reviewed individual programs: forest conservation; fish, wildlife, biodiversity conservation; land protection and community preservation; building energy conservation. He distributed detailed printed information to the members.

Focuses of the programs include:

- Impact of generational turnover on land ownership and opportunity to protect land for air quality, water quality and other benefits from land in undeveloped state. He noted the pattern in MA is many small landowners making outreach to landowners challenging
- Impact of development on ecosystems quality
- Energy and building energy conservation. An issue where faculty have capacity and NREC has added recent Extension position
- Water in face of climate change. Noting water becomes more important as we deal with uncertainties around climate change. There is a need to downscale climate sciences to local and regional levels.

7. Letters from Board to Dean Goodwin: RE Waltham & FY 12 State Budget

Joe distributed drafts of two letters for Board to send Dean Goodwin, one on Waltham, one supporting Extension budget. Asked Board to provide input to him and Jack Angley within next few weeks.

Meeting Adjourned 11:50 A.M

2011 meeting dates:

June 17 and November 18

Robert Schrader
Associate director
March 29, 2011