**Meeting Minutes**

**SCC80 (Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee, PBCC) Annual Business Meeting**

**Date:** May 20, 2025

**Time:** 1:30-3:00 PM HST

**Location:** Kona, Hawaii (in conjunction with the 2025 NAPB Annual Meeting)

**Facilitator:** Jenny Koebernick, PBCC Chair

**Attendance**

A total of 35 people attended the in-person meeting, with six additional people attending via Zoom (Appendix A).

## **Meeting Objectives**

## As outlined in the meeting agenda (Appendix B) and presentation slides (Appendix C), the primary goals for the 2025 PBCC business meeting were to:

1. Provide updates on committee activities since the last business meeting (held in July 2024)
2. Launch a new PBCC initiative: the development of a tool for promotion and tenure evaluation of breeding activities

## **Opening remarks and SCC80 Renewal update**

## PBCC chair Jenny Koebernick opened the meeting with an update on the successful submission of the SCC80 renewal proposal. The updated objectives for the SCC80 project include:

1. Resource Analysis
2. Best Practices
3. Education
4. Communication

## **Administrative announcements and reminders**

* Jenna Hershberger was announced as the newly elected PBCC secretary.
* The PBCC holds four state representative meetings via Zoom each year between annual business meetings. The next two meetings will be held on August 18, 2025, and November 17, 2025. Zoom links were shared with representatives in early April, so representatives should contact the PBCC leadership team if they did not receive a calendar invitation.
* State representatives contributed to updating PBCC lists of public plant breeders, administrators, and Agricultural Experiment Station directors in their states. Participants were asked to notify PBCC leadership of new plant breeding hires or upcoming retirements at their institutions.
* All state representatives will be required to re-enroll in NIMSS for the renewed SCC80 project. A reminder will be sent once the new project becomes available.
* The PBCC is still seeking state representatives from Tennessee, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Puerto Rico. Interested individuals or nominations are welcome.

**Ongoing and future PBCC initiatives**

Attendees were reminded that rather than organizing the committee by objective-specific subcommittees, the PBCC will now focus on cross-cutting initiatives that address multiple objectives. Ongoing initiatives include:

* Breeding program and germplasm transitions
  + The PBCC-hosted workshop on this topic last summer resulted in a white paper that was recently accepted in Crop Science.
* Plant breeding capacity survey
* Success story comics
  + Two new success story comics were announced, with paper copies available during the NAPB meeting at the NPGS booth.
* Core concepts in plant breeding
  + A workshop to continue to define core concepts in plant breeding was announced to take place on May 21, 2025 at the NAPB meeting.

Dr. Koebernick proposed two new concepts for future initiatives:

* A comparative analysis of royalty structures across U.S. institutions
* The development of a tool to support fair and informed evaluation of breeding activities in the promotion and tenure process

Dr. Koebernick introduced a proposed three-year cycle structure for managing future PBCC initiatives based on last year’s successful workshop and white paper on breeding program and germplasm transitions:

* Year 1 (2025): Propose and scope the initiative
* Year 2 (2026): Develop a grant proposal and host a small working meeting at NAPB
* Year 3 (2027): Publish a white paper by the next NAPB meeting

Funding for working meetings would be modeled after the ~$15,000 USDA conference grant that supported the 2024 transitions workshop. These meetings would emphasize case studies, group discussion, and stakeholder input, with modest budgets covering food and venue costs.

**Small group discussions on evaluating breeding efforts during tenure and promotion**

Attendees broke into small groups to discuss the main initiative for 2025: developing a framework or tool to improve the evaluation of plant breeding activities in academic tenure and promotion processes. Groups were then asked to report on their discussions. Key points shared during the large group discussion included:

1. **Proposed deliverables**
   * **White paper** describing critical evaluation points in the plant breeding process. Many participants expressed strong support for developing this deliverable through a workshop.
   * O**ne-page visual diagram** showing key milestones and outputs in a breeding program to share with university leadership
   * Guidance document for junior faculty on effectively communicating impact
2. **Strategies for tenure and promotion success**

**Participants shared advice and examples that highlighted common challenges and successful strategies for junior faculty navigating the tenure and promotion process.**

* + Clarify and frame your impact
    - Tailor your dossier and narrative so that all levels of review (department, college, and provost) can understand the value of your work. Include a strong context statement and a program timeline.
    - Emphasize impact through stakeholder outcomes (e.g., new sources of resistance, improved germplasm with tangible benefits.
    - Use annotations and statements to note the importance or context of achievements (e.g*.*, Crop Science is a flagship journal of our field, even though this may not be reflected in the impact factor).
    - Faculty were encouraged to frame expectations around "germplasm improvement" rather than "variety development" to allow broader recognition of contributions.
  + Letters and advocacy
    - The department **chair’s letter** is critical; input from stakeholders should inform these letters.
    - Junior faculty were encouraged to seek **external dossier reviews** from experienced plant breeders before formal letters are requested. Multiple senior faculty expressed that they are willing to informally review dossiers for junior faculty.
    - External letters are particularly important at institutions without many plant breeding programs.
  + **Educate department leadership**
    - Some junior faculty experience a **lack of support for breeding activities** (e.g., attending field days, spending time in the field in general) due to leadership being unfamiliarity with breeding. In response, senior faculty recommended that junior faculty take care to educate administrators on what they do and why it is important.
    - **Consider giving annual update seminars to your department if this is not already part of your department’s expectations.**

1. **Additional considerations**
   * **UW-Madison recently developed a guide** for evaluating extension work during promotion reviews that could be a useful resource both for individuals who have extension appointments but also as a guide for the PBCC as we make our own toolkit.
   * It was noted that **very few plant breeders are denied tenure**, but this may mask underlying attrition due to a lack of support prior to the tenure process.
   * Questions were raised about **how to evaluate industry-to-academia transitions** in faculty reviews, especially when new faculty coming from industry have no ongoing publishable work when they start.
2. **Next Steps and Vision:**
   * Participants expressed interest indrafting a **white paper or toolkit** not only describing how breeding efforts are currently evaluated but also **proposing how they** should **be evaluated** toprotect early-career faculty time and efforts.
   * There was consensus that the PBCC should pursue this as a major **initiative for the coming year**.

## **Adjournment**

## The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM HST.

# **Appendices**

# Appendix A. List of Meeting Attendees

# Appendix B. Meeting Agenda

# Appendix C. Meeting Slides

**Appendix A: List of Meeting Attendees**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Affiliation | State | Notes |
| 1 | Neil Anderson | University of Minnesota | MN | Online attendee |
| 2 | Mario Andrade | University of Maine | ME | Online attendee |
| 3 | David Baltensberger | Texas A&M University | TX |  |
| 4 | Derek Barchenger | World Vegetable Center |  |  |
| 5 | Martin Bohn | University of Illinois | IL |  |
| 6 | Caio Canella Vieira | University of Arkansas | AR |  |
| 7 | Kelly Chapman | Viscon Group |  |  |
| 8 | Peng Chee | University of Georgia | GA |  |
| 9 | Charles Chen | Auburn University | AL |  |
| 10 | Donn Cummings | Monsanto (Retired) |  |  |
| 11 | Julie Dawson | University of Wisconsin-Madison | WI |  |
| 12 | Kate Evans | Washington State University | WA |  |
| 13 | Ksenija Gasic | Clemson University | SC | Online attendee |
| 14 | Michael Gore | Cornell University | NY |  |
| 15 | Iago Hale | University of New Hampshire | NH | Online attendee |
| 16 | Donna Harris | University of Wyoming | WY |  |
| 17 | Jakir Hasan | University of Alaska Fairbanks | AK |  |
| 18 | Jenna Hershberger | Clemson University | SC |  |
| 19 | Rich Horsley | North Dakota State University | ND |  |
| 20 | Valerio Hoyos-Villegas | Michigan State Univ. | MI |  |
| 21 | Amir Ibrahim | Texas A&M University | TX |  |
| 22 | Diego Jarquin | University of Florida | FL |  |
| 23 | Don Jones | Cotton Incorporated |  |  |
| 24 | Mikey Kantar | University of Hawaii Manoa | HI |  |
| 25 | Jenny Koebernick | Auburn University | AL |  |
| 26 | Neha Kothari | USDA |  |  |
| 27 | Margaret Krause | Oregon State University | OR |  |
| 28 | Thomas Lübberstedt | Iowa State University | IA |  |
| 29 | Cameron Matthews | North Dakota State University | ND |  |
| 30 | Jim McFerson | National Genetic Resources Advisory Council |  |  |
| 31 | Sepehr Naraghi | North Dakota State University | ND |  |
| 32 | Rich Pratt | New Mexico State University | NM |  |
| 33 | Naveen Puppala | New Mexico State University | NM | Online attendee |
| 34 | Marcio Resende | University of Florida | FL |  |
| 35 | Trevor Rife | Clemson University | SC |  |
| 36 | Sarah Ruth | The Ohio State University | OH | Graduate student |
| 37 | Kevin Smith | University of Minnesota | MN |  |
| 38 | Soon Li Teh | University of Minnesota | MN |  |
| 39 | Addie Thompson | Michigan State University | MI |  |
| 40 | Barry Tillman | University of Florida | FL | Online attendee |
| 41 | Allen Van Deynze | University of California Davis | CA |  |
| 42 | Guorong Zhang | Kansas State University | KS |  |

**Appendix B: Meeting Agenda**

1. Welcome and Updates on PBCC (~15 min)
   1. News related to Renewal, white paper and incoming secretary
   2. Purpose and proposed yearly format
   3. Initiative ideas
   4. Charge for small group discussions
2. Small groups discussions (~20 min)
3. Feedback from the groups and general discussion (30 min)
4. Any additional business
5. Passing the torch

**Appendix C: Meeting Slides**