**Minutes of the 5th annual W3001 Meeting, September 15-16, 2017, Fort Collins, CO**

List of Participants

Alford, Katrina – University of Mississippi

Berry, Eddy – Utah State University

Brown, David – Cornell University

Cromartie, John – Economic Research Service, USDA

Curtis, Katherine – University of Wisconsin

Eloundou-Enyegue, Parfait – Cornell University

Glasgow, Nina – Cornell University

Jablonski, Becca – Colorado State University

Johnson, Ken – University of New Hampshire

Kulcsár, László – Pennsylvania State University

Mandal, Bidisha – Washington State University

Molnar, Joe – Auburn University

Monnat, Shannon – Pennsylvania State University

Nelson, Peter – Middlebury College

Poston, Dudley – Texas A&M University

Qin, Hua – University of Missouri

Rothwell, David – Oregon State University

Sanderson, Matthew – Kansas State University

Singelmann, Joachim – University of Texas at San Antonio

Swanson, Lou – Colorado State University

Veroff, Dan – University of Wisconsin

Ziebarth, Ann – University of Minnesota

**Friday, September 15**

László J. Kulcsár (chair) opened the meeting at 9:10. Lou Swanson welcomed the committee to Ft. Collins. The morning was taken up with a discussion and a workshop on impact statements.

David Brown commented that it is hard for social scientists to measure impacts. Demonstrating that what we produced had a demonstrable outcome is nearly impossible. A lot of what we do has to do with ‘process’; enhancing discourse; a more informed policy process;

Measuring impacts is easier for biologists. Increasing awareness can change practice: Shannon Monnat’s work brought ‘demography of despair’ to social consciousness. Dan Veroff commented that it’s important to show how we put information into the hands of people who need it. Joachim Singelmann noted that policy is not up to us. Lou described the importance of our work in the context of the delegitimization of science in the public sphere. Our work with elected officials is to provide what is really happening.

Nina described a process of surveying participants in educational events: how do you plan to use the information you just learned? Or follow-up after some time has elapsed. Most evaluations follow a value chain. Our value chain is providing better information to the policy process.

László commented that impacts happen over a long period of time. It’s possible to link back to accomplishments of previous projects if that work is still having an impact.

Sarah Lupis, Assistant Director of WAAESD and Program Director of the Multistate Research Impact Communications Program, led a workshop on writing impact statements for the project’s annual reports. Reporting is a requirement and a good report is going to put a project in the spotlight.

An impact needs to answer: So what? Who cares? An impact describes change: adopting new technology; producing new knowledge; preparing students. Impact statements provide context to make findings meaningful.

Issue🡪action🡪output/results🡪impact

Action is the smallest part of most impact statements. Outputs are stepping stones to impacts. Outputs are not impacts. Impacts show how outputs resulted in change.

Outline of an impact statement

1. Issue: what problem are we trying to solve? Why is it important? Issue statements connect to relevant topics.
2. Action: briefly tell audience what was done—research design, carrying out research; what are our basic research questions; not technical; BRIEF; describe nature of collaboration; who’s involved; acknowledge funding.
3. Results/outputs—only need to report those that lead to the impacts that are being reported.
4. Impacts: behavior, conditions, knowledge. Where did the impacts take place?

OK to talk about potential impacts. How will our work influence change in the future? “Playing an important role…” “May result in…” expectations are ok. Who is going to use our information and new knowledge? How did we advance the field? Look back to earlier projects to see impacts.

Generating interest is an impact. More people may be requesting information or asking you to speak to their group. Raising awareness is an impact. Lou: Shannon’s raising opioid crisis awareness is a major impact. Always start with what the issue is. Relevant and timely information will get attention and support advancement of important topics.

LUNCH

Members discussed upcoming opportunities to present research and be involved in policy discussions: Members are organizing sessions at PAA; RUPRI is hosting a poverty conference in DC in the Spring. Paper sessions at European conferences are being organized.

Katherine Curtis led a discussion of the project’s policy briefs series and encouraged members to contribute. More contributions are needed to maintain this series as one of the group’s primary outputs. Ken Johnson said it is quite easy to write a policy brief from a peer reviewed journal article. It allows researchers to reach a different audience. Dan Veroff commented that analytics of the web traffic indicate a big response from extension.

Members discussed the need for a new title for the series. Currently it is “Population Trends in Post-Recession Rural America.” The Recession is less relevant now. Members discussed how to publicize the series through state extension networks and other listservs.

Katrina Alford described her research proposal looking at place and poverty, specifically analyzing the impact of place characteristics on median income and earnings. She is incorporating a community capital framework into her county-level model. Members provided ideas on causal links to explore, relevant literature, and control variables.

John Cromartie described two recent ERS projects featuring rural demographic findings. John co-wrote the opening chapter of the initial report of the President’s Agriculture and Rural Prosperity Task Force, headed by USDA Secretary Perdue. The chapter summarizes the current state of the rural economy and includes demographic findings from W3001-related projects. John was the lead author on this year’s *Rural America at a Glance,* which also features W3001-related findings on continued rural population loss, increased mortality among working-age adults, and persistent poverty.

László is now the editor of *Rural Sociology.* He encouraged members to consider submitting articles to the journal and then writing W3001 policy briefs based on the article.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent on writing impact statements for the final W3001 report. Members divided into groups based on the project’s three objectives and each group came up with one or more impact statements. The statements were emailed to László and additional impact statements are due to him by October 6.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30

**Saturday, September 16**

The meeting opened at 9:00. László thanked everyone for their work on the W4001 proposal. According to Lou, it was the best proposal received in years.

Katherine Curtis took over as chair and led a discussion of the new project. Accomplishments will come from a series of collaborations based on areas of common interest.

Members began discussing the idea of a policy-related conference as a first step for the new project, possibly in DC next April. The theme could be the Demographic State of Rural America. Peter suggested tailoring a presentation or set of presentations for each W4001 objective. Lou recommended teaming with Ken White at APLU. The board could help with developing this type of format engagement with policymakers, as an education event. It would be a great way to show people who we are. This would be combined with our annual meeting. David and Katherine agreed to write up a two page proposal and John agreed to handle local arrangements for the annual meeting.

During the final session, minutes from last year’s meeting were approved. People were encouraged to contribute to the brief series: Once you get an article accepted, check with the publisher to see if it’s ok to have a brief published prior to publication of article.

Elections were held. Katherine will serve as chair through September 2019; Shannon is vice-chair for 2 years; John will continue to serve as secretary; the committee amended the bylaws to add a new position of publications reporting manager and Joe Molnar agreed to serve in the position.

After members recognized the work of Lou in hosting the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

Respectfully submitted,

John Cromartie