**Minutes of the 1st annual W4001 Meeting, September 21-22, 2018, Madison, WI**

List of Participants

Berry, Eddy – Utah State University

Brown, David – Cornell University

Cromartie, John – Economic Research Service, USDA

Curtis, Katherine – University of Wisconsin

Egan-Robertson, David – University of Wisconsin

Glasgow, Nina – Cornell University

Goulding, Shawn – Kenyon College

Green, John – University of Mississippi

Jensen, Leif – Pennsylvania State University

Johnson, Ken – University of New Hampshire

Kuenning, Mary Arends – University of Illinois

Molnar, Joe – Auburn University

Monnat, Shannon – Pennsylvania State University

Rothwell, David – Oregon State University

Slack, Tim - Louisiana State University

Swanson, Lou – Colorado State University

Veroff, Dan – University of Wisconsin

Winkler, Richelle – Michigan Technical University

Ziebarth, Ann – University of Minnesota

**Friday, September 21**

Chair Katherine Curtis called the meeting to order at 9:00. She thanked Dan Veroff for his work organizing all aspects of the meeting including the panel sessions and field trips. She also announced that costs for the meeting were being covered by the University. Associate Dean Phil Barker and Jim Raymo of the Center for Demography and Ecology welcomed the group. Phil stressed the importance of the land grant system for Wisconsin from the beginning. The state was well positioned to take advantage of the Hatch Act. The $48 billion dairy industry developed directly out of Hatch. Rural Wisconsin is hurting from growing inequality. Small farms that have held up rural Wisconsin are closing up. Jim stressed the importance of interdisciplinary work. The Center has 70 faculty affiliates from 15 different departments. The Center specializes in demography of inequality, families, and life course. They are building two new areas: biodemography, and environmental and spatial demography.

Dan welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda and logistics, and introduced the first panel.

Panel 1: Value of research (see agenda below for list of panelists)

Extension embodies the Wisconsin idea: the boundary of the University is the boundary of the state. Research should be applied. Extension specialists have many types of appointments. They usually work in a specific program area (like rural development) and are motivated to engage innovators and anticipate future questions. It’s important to think about the whole process of learning and applying those lessons in extension, to measure the learning environment as part of extension programs. Step back and think about who is the audience. The Applied Population Lab thinks about who they are involving in the generation of knowledge.

Extension is a trusted source of information. Applied research seeks root causes, often using placed-based, demographic spatial data (like ERS classifications). Spatial data helps confirm findings and find meaningful places to study to better understand root causes. A participatory model is crucial: involve ultimate customers from the beginning to set research agenda. Customers help decide what questions should be pursued.

David B. commented that Wisconsin is the Cadillac of community development/extension systems. Community development is not pushed in NY or lots of other states. NY does not have the social infrastructure to do this kind of formal extension set-up, NY punts on out-reach because extension is not on board. It’s much harder to do translational research in that context. Tim said LSU rural development is also not connected with extension at all. It’s all about rice and sugar instead. John G. said community development was completely gutted out of extension in Mississippi. Joe said the situation is the same at Auburn. How do you build on the Wisconsin model in places where the infrastructure is not in place?

Extension in WI being merged with WI campus after being its own entity with its own chancellor. This is mostly a good thing according to Lou S. There’s more opportunity to work with non-extension faculty. It changes the basic vs. translational research balance. Re-integration with the university may broaden the research-to-practice partnership, get more researchers out in the community.

Panel 2: From research to application within extension (see agenda below for list of panelists)

Latino Wisconsin using a report summarizing recent trends as a tool to have conversations across the state. People want to learn about the demographic shifts going on across WI. Difficult conversations aided by numbers that help bridge the divide. What does it mean to have a growing Hispanic population? Research findings used to help engage a difficult topic.

As part of outreach to Hmong and Spanish-speaking communities, APL was asked to provide detailed population data to highlight areas with higher rates of poverty in county with Hmong and Hispanics. This effort evolved into an annual workshop on poverty and ethnincity called the Expanding Access Mapping Workshop. It adds local knowledge to demographic data to help seek solutions to challenges. Two-way conversations become important in building relationships between leaders, service providers, and left-out groups.

Extension in Dane Co. uses a lot of APL resources to address issues of racial inequity and poverty. It really drives their agenda in terms of community development, ag, family, housing. Insightful to share issues and data between these areas. Demographic data was fed into a survey sponsored by Chamber of Commerce and Extension about supporting/expanding rural businesses. Communinties are starting to address housing issues based on extension housing data.

Extension specialists bring content expertise, combined with access to campus resources. They combine global and local knowledge. For example, a project on poverty led to pulling together data from a variety of sources into a single easy-to-use website sponsored by extension.

Extension-sponsored, evidence-based research and information helps to counteract bias and politically-slanted agendas on topics such as Hispanic population growth. The dairy industry survives only because of undocumented workers. The participatory research model is important for the Hispanic Wisconsin project. At the county level, one of the key impacts of extension research is capacity-building, such as in increasing inclusivity of excluded groups.

Administrative advisor

Lou reported that there are extensive discussions throughout the land-grant system on the topics covered in the panel sessions. Wisconsin moving extension back to the University is a good move, one of nine states with this combined structure. Lou is retiring this year. The new administrative advisor will be from an ag background. APLU is interested in finding time for us to come to DC and make a presentation. The Board of Ag Assemblies is also interested. We are still on their radar. We are also eligible to be the West’s nominee for a national project award. We need to put together a package in January for the nomination, which will be announced in April.

David B. praised Lou’s guidance. Lou has done a phenomenal job keeping us on track. He has attended meetings and engaged substantively on the issues. His knowledge of the larger land-grant infrastructure has made him an invaluable mentor, especially to newcomers to the land-grant system.

NIA R24 research grant on rural aging

Rural aging is a new strategic priority areas for NIA. Shannon led the group in a discussion of plans to submit a proposal for an NIA R24 research grant meant to provide infrastructural support to advance a rural aging research agenda. Funding would be used to build an interdisciplianary network to support development of research, extension, and dissemination. The research would broadly address factors that affect the health and well being of older rural people. Funding would support meetings, pilot projects, educational activities, seminars on methods, and other similar activities. The group needs to identify 3-4 PIs who would actually get very little of the support. W4001 would be an excellent resource to leverage.

LUNCH

The group spent the afternoon in a workshop on Translational Research with Guided Practice (see agenda below for a list of workshop leaders). The group received training on “public-facing” research output, in the form of infographics, press releases, interviews, briefs. It’s essential to be able to translate academic work for a lay audience, to create data-rich reports for the people, to use popular news-media formats.

The group learned about content created for WisCONTEXT, an online magazine that has developed and an explanatory journalistic style to cover issues that affect the state. They try and cover long-term changes, not the daily news, and broad issues like the 2012 drought. They inventory extension research output, then work with faculty to come up with story ideas. It’s a data-oriented, empirically-oriented online media organization. They work closely with APL. It’s a way of getting APL’s work out to a broader audience.

Richelle commented that most other universities don’t have these resources. They are limited to one university-wide communications office.

The workshop leaders led the group in exercises highlighting best practices for clear, convincing communication (see Best Practices handout below).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30

**Saturday, September 21**

Katherine called the meeting to order at 9:05.

John C. provided a review of USDA’s proposed changes to ERS, including realignment under the Office of the Chief Economist and physical move out of the DC region. The proposals are having a significant impact on morale.

Brief series: The group agreed the series should continue under a new title, excluding ‘post-recession’. Members agreed to spin off briefs from published journal articles. Richelle will write about dying hunters and anglers. David B. will submit on services in aging places. David R. will submit a brief on rural poverty and inequality. John G. will submit on access to care for high-need infants. On the website, links to other brief series will be added, such as Carsey and ERS.

The group continued its discussion of the R46 NIA network grant proposal. Potential PIs were identified. Several members will participate as network affiliates. The proposal is due February 1. The group agreed to have a 1st draft done by December 31.

John C. described the new format for annual reporting, including impacts and teaching accomplishments. Those who have not submitted their reports need to do so by the end of next week.

Current officers will serve for one more year: Katherine as Chair, Shannon as Vice-Chair, John C. as Secretary, Joe as Publications Manager, and Eddy as Listserv Manager.

David B. and Katherine have a plan for a DC meeting and briefing for APLU leadership that was postponed last year. They will follow up with Lou about re-scheduling the same meeting for next year. Other members are exploring similar policy-meeting venues such as meeting with USDA Rural Development State Directors.

If the DC meeting does not work out, the group agreed to meet in Traverse City, MI, with September 27-28 as 1st choice for dates. John C. agreed to coordinate local arrangements.

Katherine adjourned meeting at 12:00

Several members spent Saturday afternoon and evening on a field trip to Green County, WI, meeting with farm operators and extension officials to learn about issues related to rural demographics and agriculture in a rapidly-changing dairy sector (see Field Trip agenda below).

Respectfully submitted,

John Cromartie

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