Minutes
Joint meeting of SAC-012 and NCA-15
February 16-17, 2008

Attending: Mark Ascerno (Minnesota), Art Appel (Alabama), Gary Brewer (Nebraska), Joe Culin (South Carolina), Ernest Delfosse (Michigan- incoming representative), James Harper (North Carolina), Dan Herms (Ohio- representing Susan Fisher), Rich Merritt (Michigan- outgoing representative), Tom Phillips (Kansas), Robert Sharp (Missouri), Leellen Solter (Illinois), Robert Wiedenmann (Arkansas), Steve Yaninek (Indiana), Thomas Payne (Administrative Advisor)

Administrative Advisor Report: Dr. Tom Payne

1. Review of Mandates NCAC-15

2. Overlapping projects: Looking for elimination of redundancies, but merging projects sometimes reduces the number of representatives that receive permission to attend the meeting. This was not the intention of mergers and should not happen. Merged projects should create synergies and representatives of both disciplines should be allowed to attend meetings.

3. North Central Project Categories: NCCC – funded projects with deliverables; NCERA- projects that bring together representatives in the region with common objectives but not funded; NRSP- special projects, funding off top of funding allocations- usually 3-5 years

4. Audits of projects are increasing, and there must be sufficient projects at institutions to account for the federal allocation. Often Hatch or other federal projects are paying part of faculty salaries, even if there is no funding for the research on projects.

5. NIMSS is a web-based tool used by experiment station directors to manage multi-state committees.. Administrators should become familiar with it. Chris Hamilton (Wisconsin) is the new website manager: NIMSS.umd.edu

6. CSREES budget reductions are expected: total may be $190 million- all areas cut (research $133 mil, extension cut $25 million, etc. There is still consideration of taking base funds to put into competitive funding. This would impact the current use of the funds for salaries. The outcome is not yet known. There are concerns that states may remove matching funding if the base allocations disappear. There is an attempt to make the case that these funds are used to leverage more funding, probably 5 to 10 times. There may be no Farm Bill this year. NRI is in for an increase to $256 million) but still within $190 million budgeted CSREES reduction.

7. Security for natural resources and agriculture needs to be emphasized in seeking funding and in deciding future funding directions.

8. Administrators have been trying to get Agriculture to request one budget line but haven't been successful in convincing the Ag community to do this. Entomology has funding from several lines.

Entomology grantsmanship has been focused on USDA but should diversify funding sources. Need to use expertise to create interdisciplinary research opportunities.

Comments: Bioenergy push may be directing funding into the wrong plants. Some plants also have the potential to become invasive. Some of these crops will fail to be cost-effective or produce less energy than the inputs required. Entomologists should be participants in the discussions about the entire bioenergy picture. Discussions have focused on the agronomic or engineering aspects, with no thought put into the costs or consequences of pest management. We need to insert ourselves into the discussions. Some land areas (e.g., CRP) that can't be used for food crops may be evaluated for biofuel, which will have consequences for the benefits of the set-aside land. Additionally, there may be issues concerning agricultural production vs. biofuel production: 1. There is potential that one crop may produce the pests that affect the other crop, and those costs are not considered. 2. Large plantings of grasslands can become monocultures, both reducing biodiversity and rendering CRP or other land as less beneficial. Our job it to make sure entomology is part of the equation. There will be funding opportunities, and we need to be part of the process so that problems are prevented and remediation isn't too little, too late.

The current push to increase acreage for biofuels may decrease. Banks are capping funding for processing plants and some ethanol plants will not come on line. Biomaterials will probably not include food grains but will include grasses. Where do entomologists play a role?

Presentation by Nancy Osler, Springfield Plantation Manager

The 190 acres comprising Springfield Plantation were donated to Clemson University in 1989 by John D. Archbold. A nonprofit institution has been established to facilitate use of the facility by university groups. Four 'pillars of growth' have been established- tourism, agriculture, youth development, and biodiversity. An NSF grant has been awarded to help develop the infrastructure. Universities can purchase memberships at $3,500 per year, which provide some special privileges such as input into governance, benefits for grad students, reduced rates, and reservation priorities. Several universities are members or considering memberships. To bring a class for field studies, research permits are needed from the Dominican Dept. of Forestry and other national offices. A group of 40 will fit comfortably; 70 uncomfortably, Housing is bunkrooms. Different common spaces are provided for different groups.

Some priorities for the Plantation include creating teaching collections of plants and insects along with contributing to the National Collections. Every area of operation must have a local component, for example the field station can be used to demystify science for Dominicans. Create welcoming place for visiting scientists and locals. There appears to be an increasing demand for service learning- nutrition, social services, etc. Springfield will be the national clearinghouse for natural sciences in Dominica, and there is an open door policy for Dominicans.

Organic agriculture for tropical crops: Springfield hopes to find a place in the Ag community, but there are no coops among farmers (many are squatters).

The Springfield staff has the ability to do the administrative tasks to set up courses, etc. Jan. to May- brings back-to-back groups of undergrads. Universities must supply professors or grad students for training. April has been empty but now high schools are coming in.

There are currently no quality keys and guides for Dominican flora and fauna.

Departmental Issues

1. Postdocs vs. Grads

Cost and effectiveness is better for postdocs.
Are numbers of graduate student positions declining?
Where does this leave grad programs? (PhD degrees are the only ones that count in the NRC ratings and, consequently, on some campuses…not MS)
Many universities are not supporting research with support positions; therefore postdocs are needed to produce research so that more grants can be written.

Issues:
Negatives of graduate student support: cost of tuition, no credit for cross-discipline grad advising, course taking,
How to convince faculty?

-Not tenure-able unless have PhD students.
-Look for balanced programs (for both for tenure and for full professor…)
Hard to be convincing if merit increases are only 2.5 – 3%.
-How about hiring grads as full time technicians? They can take one class free per semester. Avoid the tuition issue.
-Some depts. provide match for grad tuition (not postdoc matches). (But technicians cut.)
-Some- offer ½ tuition match to help with grant funding. Lengthens time for student support. But costs are continuing to rise.
-Grad student numbers are also going down, so defaulting to post docs. Institution should create culture of graduate education. This needs to be institutional, not just in depts.
-Interest in science declining. Does this impact promotions if not enough grads?
-Marketing? Are we training too many grads for the job market, making it less attractive to enter graduate school? Perhaps age demographics will increase positions, or will these positions be lost? More positions have been advertised recently. Basic sciences are still tight, but more applied positions are opening. Industry is begging.
-Leads to why we are short on students in agriculture and applied biosciences.
-Has the bar gotten too high for tenure?
-Insidious problem -- science education is abysmal- impacts on higher education.
-Are we failing in outreach? Why do we not have kids retain interest in science? (But entomology has been aggressive in outreach…more than other biosciences.)
-No Child Left Behind… teaching to this. There is nothing in the standards on 'insects'. Educators do not see the 'science' connection. How can we work to develop curricula?

2. Start-up Funding

Start-up costs are up and are very high on the life sciences side. Much is invested- $500,000 to $1 million in life sciences. Some Depts are having to cut back on hires because they incur debt to fund start-up. Each institution differed in how start-up costs are funded. For some, salary savings can accrue to pay start-up; at others, salary savings stay with administration

and the administration will pay a larger share. College reductions are occurring, e.g. technicians, and Ag takes the biggest hit. Savings goes into start up in non-Ag areas.

Retention issues follow with threats to leave for salary increases. This is becoming a larger problem for administration and departments. If we limit startups, we may lose the competition for good faculty. If we cannot afford to pay retention or start-up, is the result fewer faculty?

Spousal hires are becoming expectations at many schools. Depts. are giving up lines for targeted faculty hires, which can ruin strategic plans for depts., but it is becoming the norm for hiring and retention. Some universities are going to two-year fixed term salary for spousal hires, and then the spouses are on their own to fund positions with grants.

Core facilities help to overcome start-up needs of new faculty (DNA, proteomics, etc.)

Do we use the potential for funding to decide which positions to approve and how much to pay for start-up? Is the faculty member who brings in $1 million worth more than one who brings in $100,000 per year? Some positions will not generate a lot of money. This may vary for positions. If the position should be generating NIH or NSF funds, the administration may give more toward startup.

One group has shifted to extension from research and is losing teaching faculty (and research). Another group has lost extension, so is hiring non-tenured staff for extension.

How are funds split among teaching, extension and research? In some cases, the teaching side is going up and other sides down. So, can we throw all the funds together and design requirements for each faculty member? This is not typical for other university depts. Split lines must be function verified – because of sources of funds, the effort needs to approximate the funding.

Industry needs to realize that indirect costs are part of the bargain, because things have changed. This is cost of doing business. Industry needs independent research, but they need to recognize there are fixed costs, which are paid by indirect costs. State funding is reduced at all schools, yet the costs increase. Indirect costs are needed to make up that difference.

What about state funds being charged indirect costs? Missouri -- suggested about 20%, but not yet done. States are funding projects but no overhead is paid, yet some universities will tell the receiving dept. to handle departmental raises within budget.

Does the decision to fund a position depend on potential to bring in funding? This enters into conversations but does not determine the final decision. Missouri hired someone they thought they needed and that person couldn't attract funding in the research area, and left.

VPI reportedly requires generation of a minimum amount of grant funding for a standard raise. There seems to be no written document specifying the exact requirements for a standard raise, but the figure of $81,000 in grants (with or without overhead), direction of two PhD students and approximately 3 refereed pubs are expected for an average raise. A three year running average is used so that a 'trough' year and super year average out. If metrics fall below these levels, a 'does not meet expectations' ranking is given for a particular metric. The AC-12/NCAC-15 group believes that the dollar figure is not unreasonable for any appointment in most of our departments.

3. Fund Raising

This is an increasing emphasis for some chairs…they are held responsible for development and bringing in funding, including endowments. Development committees may be formed in depts. Some department heads are being called about alumni to ask them for donations. Development is an increasingly big part of resources. Direct contacts are important; many

alums would like to help. Why not invite them back? Purdue has an "expert in residence" program, to invite alumni back for short stays and to participate in the Department. Have them give a lecture take students to dinner. The Department doesn't ask for money – but 75% of those invited back have given funds.

There is concern about alumni awards being given based on whether the alum can give funds.

Purdue- development people do the groundwork for donors but chairs are included. Again, it is found that Purdue alums just have never been asked to help. Dept. newsletters work well. Raise visibility of dept. Purdue has raised $5 million in 7 years.

With the people who made their money in the 40's and 50's going out, who will replace? Develop relationship with people, may not have to ask for funding directly if the relationships are developed.

Is it a mistake to require chairs and faculty to get too closely involved? Is this is the dean's responsibility?

4. Issues concerning gift funds

If large amount of funds held, universities may hold off on start up and make depts. pay a larger share. Some charge 6-10% per year (on gift funds with no deliverables) to generate dept. funds. For some accounts, it's a judgment call- if the pool of funds is small or funds are being used for students, etc., charges may be waived.

It might be possible to put some funds in interest generating accounts (endowments), but some campuses don't allow this unless these funds are truly endowments. Other universities have thresholds.

Future meetings

Discussion was held about meeting in 2009 and whether to have both committees meet together again. Benefit of joint meetings was considered great – mutual issues that are discipline-specific, more so than region-specific. We would like to meet somewhere with some educational benefit (e.g., the Springfield Plantation). Venues discussed (in order of preference) included 1. CATIE (Costa Rica); 2. Zamorano (Honduras); and 3. Ecuador (Galapagos). The idea of meeting at the Darwin Research Station in the Galapagos was considered a tough sell to Directors (and faculty!) and likely too expensive. Tom Payne wondered about the benefits of merging SAC-12 and NCAC-15. A *tentative date of February 14-15, 2009* was discussed *for the 2009 meeting,* and will be presented to the membership.

Separate Committee meetings

NCAC-15

State reports were provided by all present. Electronic reports will be requested from members for distribution to all.

NC-1025 Midterm review was completed with Mark Ascerno as lead reviewer. The project progress was deemed to be acceptable. Mark or Lee Solter will submit to NIMSS.

Elections were held for 2008-2009. Lee Solter was elected chair. Tom Phillips was elected secretary/chair-elect.

SAC-12

State reports were submitted electronically and will be distributed to all chairs. Brief discussions were held about extant southern regional projects. Most are active and reporting results or meetings on NIMSS site. Only one project expires in 2008. One project was new in 2007.

Joe Culin was elected chair for 2008. Kevin Heinz was elected secretary for 2008, to become chair in 2009.

Discussions about meeting site for 2009 – either meet with Plant Pathologists or with NCAC-15 again.

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and

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February 23, 2008