

## NCAC 15 Meeting 2021

2 July 2021 (Zoom)

### **Attendees:**

Brian McCornack – Kansas State University (chair)

John Ruberson – University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Sujaya Rao –University of Minnesota

Marty Draper –Kansas State University (incoming NCAC-15 Administrative Advisor)

Thomas Payne — University of Missouri (outgoing NCAC-15 Administrative Advisor)

1. Welcome at 3:00PM (CST)
  - a. No meeting in 2020, no minutes to present/accept
2. NRCA, introduction by Draper
  - a. Discussion of the multi-state mechanisms, state to state differences in use of Hatch funds, and overall NCAC-15 responsibilities
  - b. Discussion of project review processes and importance in sustaining regional projects and coordination of efforts across multiple states
  - c. Reviews no longer conducted by USDA-AFRI, decided that land grant universities will take control of project review.
  - d. Goal is to demonstrate that we as a committee have appropriately evaluated what are proposing and reporting and that the research and/or extension contributions are meaningful to the region. Can have national reach, but it is organized within the NC region.
  - e. Responsible for those with an NC, we will manage this so NIFA will not and we can maintain the control.
  - f. Suggestion to meet again in early January via Zoom to discuss assigned proposals, which requires input from this committee. Should take less than an hour.
  - g. List of projects include but not limited to (based on participation from our states):
    - i. [NCERA222](#)
    - ii. [NCERA224](#)
    - iii. [NC1173](#)
    - iv. [NC246](#)
    - v. [S1073](#) (optional)
    - vi. [S1080](#) (optional)
    - vii. [S1076](#) (optional)
  - h. This group was assigned a NC1173 midterm AA review that needs to be completed and submitted NIMSS by early January 2022; suggest having a Zoom meeting to discuss progress.

- i. Suggested that we keep track of the above list so we as administrators know what our faculty are doing and how work is being contributed and reported across states and regions.
  - j. Draper also discussed the difference between this group and [CEDA](#), which focuses on opportunities to discuss issues of mutual interest and to promote the science of entomology across all of ESA. The main purpose of this group is to provide reviews for committees tied to Hatch Multi-State funds and that collaboration is occurring across multiple organizations.
3. Department reports

### **The Ohio State University**

- Head (year appointed): Jamie Strange (2019)
- New Positions: Specialty Crop Entomologist- Dr. Ashley Leach has accepted and will be at our Wooster Campus in January 2022; Anticipated: Just approved by the College: Forest Entomologist- search beginning in December 2021; Turfgrass Health (joint appoint w/ plant path)- search beginning in Jan/Feb 2022
- Student enrollment trend: Undergrads: 13; Grads: 26
- Spring 2021: Masks required and social distancing mandatory for in-person classes, most classes remained remote or hybrid in delivery mode.
- Fall 2021: Masks required and social distancing mandatory for in-person classes, many classes remained remote or hybrid in delivery mode. All university personnel including students were required to report their positive vaccination status as of 10/15/21 or submit an exemption form. Students not in compliance will not be allowed to attend in person classes or be on campus for any reason. Faculty and staff will face disciplinary action including termination if they do not comply. University is currently reporting a 90.5% vaccination rate and is processing exemptions so that rate is likely to go up. Our department faculty and staff are in full compliance as of last Thursday, but we do not yet have a report on students in our department.
- Spring 2022: We will be fully back to pre-pandemic course scheduling. Masks will be optional (everyone will be vaccinated).

### **Michigan State University**

- Head (year appointed): Bill Ravlin, 2014
- New Positions: Tree fruit entomology (replacement, not new) since November 2020; anticipated and/or Search In Progress: Tree fruit entomology search in progress. Hoping for 1-2 positions in the next year.
- Graduate student enrollment trend: Level. We've hovered around 40 students for several years.
- Stable with good extramural grant support. Morale is quite good considering the disruptions of 2020. University funding levels have been level with the exception of our annual 1% reduction (we're used it). However, the annual reduction looks like it will finally be eliminated (paused?) next year. In general, positions are hard to come by with limited dollars in the college lines. RCM on the horizon.

- Spring moved all courses to remote. We survived, but it was tough (not good) to teach intro ENT courses remotely. For Fall, MSU has vaccination and indoor mask mandates. This was welcomed by most (not all) faculty and staff, but some staff elected to resign and not become vaccinated - none in ENT. Campus-wide, a few faculty were exempt due to health or religious reasons. Spring seminars were all given via Zoom and Fall we've gone to a hybrid with both live and Zoom presentations and a mix of live and Zoom audience. However, most of the audience has stayed with Zoom. Good attendance overall.

### **Kansas State University**

- Head (year appointed): Brian McCornack (2018)
- New positions: none since 2020; new or anticipated: 2 targeted hires of research assistant/associate professors into 2 new, tenure track positions (fall 2021).
- Student enrollment trends: overall, 15% increase over last year with 14 MS and 18 PhD; minors currently at 44.
- State of the department is good. Flat budget this fiscal year, but survived the 8.4% budget cut that included furloughs and moving 7, full-time RA positions off of state funds. Department operations are fully supported by indirect costs, minus the salaries of front office support staff. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has established a new Foreign Arthropod-Borne Animal Diseases Research Unit (FABADRU). We recently completed space use agreements with FABADRU to bring scientists from this new unit into departmental labs, thus expanding on our core strengths in animal health and vector biology. Entomology is down to 12 faculty, two of which are non-tenure track faculty. We received approval to move both faculty into tenure track positions this fall. Although it does not add new positions or FTEs to the department, this does help shore up loose ends after losing a faculty position unexpectedly.
- All classrooms were at COVID capacity (~25% of normal) in Fall 2020, which meant students were masked and maintained a 6' social distance; those who could effectively teach online were encouraged to do so. Research labs were not at full capacity until July of 2021, which is when all social distance requirements were lifted but masks continue to be mandated in all university spaces; there are no restrictions for outdoors when on university property. Several of our students work in USDA labs, and federal regulations have altered research timelines. Another challenge, especially for Extension personnel, was operating under different county restrictions. More rural counties had little to no restrictions (i.e., masks in public venues), yet K-State employees had more restrictive guidelines that was backed by science. Unfortunately, those in satellite stations were caught in the middle. This fall, all classrooms moved to normal capacity and all faculty were strongly encouraged to teach in person or had to provide adequate justification as to why an in-person class would be taught online. However, faculty were also expected to provide remote options for students needing to isolate due to COVID-19 exposure. There has been steady encouragement to get vaccinated, but last week that turned into a mandate by the K-State president and Provost with a deadline of December 12, 2021. The main reasoning behind this move, aside from hopefully the obvious, was the number of federal contracts held by K-State. When asked about a vaccine mandate in spring 2021, the answer was "no" because of the existing state legislation. Because of contractual obligations and the financial support it provides our state, the situation has changed. It will be interesting to see

how this all plays out over the coming weeks, as an individual needs to be fully vaccinated by the deadline.

### **University of Nebraska**

- Head (year appointed): John Ruberson (2019)
- New Positions: none anticipated near-term; added one non-TT faculty in 2020.
- Graduate student enrollment trend:
  - Resident: Declined from 33 in 2019 to 25 in 2021
  - Online MS: Increased from 68 in 2019 to 82 in 2021
  - Graduations: 2020 - 5 resident MS, 16 online MS, 3 PhD  
2021 - 3 resident MS, 7 online MS, 3 PhD (to date)
- General “state of department” comments:
- Overall good. Morale has been generally good throughout the pandemic. Strong year for extramural funding and publications (related to working from home). Five of our 23 faculty will be retiring within the next three years, which will put a strain on the department. Our department is fairly bimodal in age distribution, and we are feeling the effects of that now, as retiring faculty are no longer accepting students, contributing to the decline in our graduate student numbers.
- We experienced a 7% permanent budget reduction that will be amortized over three years. Three percent of that reduction will be returned to units in the form of competitive assistantships and fellowships, and incentive grants; and 2% was permanently allocated to salary adjustments for faculty with sub-competitive salaries. State budget is looking good, and things appear stable for FY2023.
- Tuition offsets for GTAs were repealed by the university last year, so that all graduate tuition is the responsibility of the major professor or student regardless of the form of their assistantship. Further, efforts to eliminate the out-of-state designation (and tuition differential) for graduate students failed, continuing the additional financial burden for out-of-state/international students.
- Undergraduate Insect Science major is growing: From 12 in 2019 to 25 in 2021 (and another 17 dual majors). Have graduated 17 majors since August, 2019.
- University was fully online in fall 2020 and was in-person spring and fall of 2021. Masks must be worn by everyone indoors. Classroom spacing of students was mandatory in spring 2021, but is not the case now. All university personnel are required to have a recent negative COVID test or be vaccinated (and entered into the university vaccination registry) in order to access buildings. We use the hideously clunky “Safer Community” app to verify compliance at building entrances.

### **University of Minnesota**

- Head (year appointed): Sujaya Rao (2017)
- New Positions: 1-2 anticipated in the next several years.
- Graduate student enrollment trend: Currently, we have 25 students, about equal numbers of MS and PhD students.

- Changes in the past year: 5% reduction in budget this fiscal year; 1 faculty member (Len Ferrington) passed away suddenly, 4 faculty retirements next year; college considering reorganization.
- Undergraduate course enrollment is higher than it has been; undergraduate minor enrollment increased from 10 in 2017 to 25 in 2021.
- Spring courses largely remote; fall courses in person with indoor mask and vaccination mandate. University increasing flexibility in instruction mode for Spring 2022 courses. Campus opened to all in early August but most are still working remotely at least some days in the week. Most meetings via zoom. Seminars were presented via zoom in Spring, and via zoom and in-person in fall with more attendance via zoom.

### **Purdue University**

- Head (year appointed): Stephen Cameron 2016
- New Positions: Forensic Entomology (Dr. Krystal Hans) since 2020; anticipated and/or Search In Progress: None at this time.
- Graduate student enrollment trend: Small decline from previous years due to 1) recently hired faculty all have full labs, and 2) COVID impacts on general recruitment events. Anticipate rebounding in 2022.
- 5-yr external review in early 2021 (thanks to Universities of Nebraska, Wisconsin, Florida, Idaho and Ohio State for donating faculty to our review team). Significant retirement trends continue (5 retirements in the 2020-21 academic year), balance with great team of new assistant professors (7 new hires in last 5 years). Undergraduate enrollments at the highest levels since 1970's.
- Return to complete in-person instruction without classroom de-densification in Fall 2021. Vast majority of on-line classes have reverted to in person, with very few online elements being retained. Student satisfaction greatly improved as a consequence. Non-majors enrollments very high and putting pressure on lab section sizes.

### **University of Wisconsin**

- Chair: (Year appointed 2020) Russell L. Groves
- New Positions: Diversified Agricultural Ecologist (Dr. James Crall: <https://entomology.wisc.edu/directory/james-crall/>); Anticipated and/or Search In Progress: Asst/Assoc Prof, Vector Biology/Ecology (<https://jobs.hr.wisc.edu/en-us/job/509678/assistant-or-associate-professor-vector-biology-or-ecology>); Asst Prof, Precision Pest Ecologist (<https://jobs.hr.wisc.edu/en-us/job/510660/precision-pest-ecologist-field-crops-entomologist>); Asst Prof, Global Change Biology (anticipated 2022).
- Graduate/undergraduate enrollment trend: Stable enrollment for graduate students. Currently 32 graduate research assistants (22 PhD, 10 MS). Approximately 9 students administered in other academic programs. Undergraduate enrollment in Entomology currently at 21 and growing slowly. New undergraduate major (Global Health-GH) initiated in 2020 and administered in Entomology, current enrollment 285. Enrollment projections for GH positive.

- Positive overall. UW-Madison remains a small unit with 11 on faculty roster, and 4 affiliate faculty. We serve as departmental home for one USDA ARS scientist, an insect diagnostician and curator for the Wisconsin Insect Research Collection. Five FTE have retired within the past 3-4 years and FY20 & 21 base reductions contribute to our small size. Ongoing and anticipated searches will increase ranks.
- Spring coursework exclusively remote. Fall courses are back to in-person formats. Larger enrollment courses blended with virtual and in-person elements. No vaccine mandate, but with weekly mandatory testing for unvaccinated. Nearly 95% vaccine compliance and campus mask mandates in place. No density control in laboratory spaces any longer.

### **Iowa State University**

- Head (year appointed): Steven Harris, 2021
- New Positions: None since November 2020; anticipated: two upcoming
- Graduate student enrollment trend: Current enrollment is 13. Trend is stable
- The Department will be merging with the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology. Current plan is for the merger to take effect on July 1st, 2022. The merged Department will have an initial total of 27 faculty (10 from Entomology), with plans to complete two hires following the merger. Will be exploring possible new research directions and teaching programs in merged Department.
- Return to full in-person instruction for fall 2021 semester. Masks and vaccines encouraged but not required. Awaiting new guidance from administration on distance learning.

### **University of Kentucky**

- Head (year appointed): S. Reddy Palli (2014)
- New Positions: None since November 2020; Anticipated and/or Search In Progress: Two Assistant professor positions approved (Sustainable Pest Management, Insect Genomics), Search in progress.
- Graduate student enrollment trend: About 50 graduate students currently enrolled in Entomology graduate program. Enrollment is at a steady rate.
- Great support from the college and UK. The department finances are in good shape. New hires are doing well and progressing towards tenure and promotion.
- Hybrid instruction format was used in Spring semester. Fall Semester is mostly in-person. UK did a great job in testing, tracing and promoting vaccination. Vaccination is mandatory for all new hires. Current employees who are not vaccinated need to get tested weekly.

### **North Dakota State University**

- Director Frank Casey (2010), Associate Director Jason Harmon (2019)
- New Positions: Climate Smart Approaches in Agriculture (Hiring Now); Climate Smart Approaches in Native Systems – Applied Ecologist (Hiring Now)
- Graduate student enrollment trend: Graduate student numbers for both Entomology and all School of Natural Resource Science graduate programs (combined) have been relatively steady the last four years, but are lower than long-term averages.

- As with many other departments, we are facing numerous retirements and other faculty departures. We have two current openings that we are targeting broadly to fit anywhere across SNRS' disciplines, including entomology.
  - Spring courses were primarily "hyflex" so that students could attend courses in person or online, making that choice on a daily basis. Campus reopened for the Fall with all staff returning and classes expected to be primarily in person.
4. Election of new chair and secretary will be completed by electronic nomination and vote
  5. Meeting Adjourned at 4:00PM (CST)