

State Board of Agricultural Research and Education
November 3, 2016
Minutes

The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education met at the Johnsrud Education Center at the North Dakota 4-H Camp in Washburn, ND on November 3, 2016. Board members in attendance were Mike Beltz, Mark Birdsall, Chris Boerboom, Larry Hoffmann, Jerry Klein, Brian Leier, Keith Peltier, JoAnn Rodenbiker, Lyle Warner, Dean Wehri, and Tom Bodine representing Doug Goehring. Connected by phone: Dean Bresciani, Ken Grafton and Dick Roland. Members absent were Tracy Boe and Lance Gulleason.

Chairman Beltz called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. He welcomed members and guests to make introductions. He shared that reports were presented to the SBHE as well as the Budget Section this summer. Recent legislative visits have been positive and a reflection of a cautious outlook going forward. November 16 will be the next SBHE meeting, in Minot.

North Dakota 4-H Camp Tour

Brad Cogdill, Director for the Center for 4-H Youth Development, welcomed the Board to the new and renovated camp facilities, which are operated by the North Dakota 4-H Foundation. It is the only remaining 4-H camp left in North Dakota where a group 4-H camp experience can be conducted for youth. The Center for 4-H Youth Development guides camp programming. Recent upgrades added year-round capabilities for three of the main buildings, which make them usable for many types of events and rentals beyond the summer camping season. The Board toured the newly renovated facilities, including updated cabins for campers and counselors, the dining hall, and the Johnsrud Education Center. Cabins now contain new sleeping bunks, mattresses, and upgraded restroom and heat/air features. Outdoor commons areas for recreation and group activities were viewed.

4-H Youth Development Programs and Achievements

Cogdill shared an update on the North Dakota 4-H Camp at Washburn, along with information on how they handle facility rentals. Attendance has expanded each year since 2010. Online enrollment is helpful in achieving growth goals, and enables the center to monitor statistics for yearly reporting. 4-H Youth Development programs rely substantially on volunteer support in their programs and this data is also collected and reported. Noteworthy findings from a longitudinal study indicate that youth who are in 4-H are twice as likely to choose to participate in science, make healthier choices, be civically active, and four times as likely to make contributions in their community. Additional speakers included Michelle Effertz, McLean County Family & Consumer Sciences agent; Dena Kemmet, Mercer County Family & Consumer Sciences agent; and Shawn Gierke from the Lucky Valley 4-H Club.

Administrative Updates

President Dean Bresciani stated that NDSU is off to another strong year and enrollment is on a strong trajectory. The role, significance and impact of NDSU is increasingly being recognized more widely and he is looking forward to a good year.

Dr. Ken Grafton, Dean, Director and Vice President for Agricultural Affairs, noted that work continues to address the 6.55% allotment and plan for the Governor's budget guidelines of a 90% budget. Dr. Kevin Sedivec was appointed as Interim Director of the Central Grasslands Research Extension Center (CGREC) effective Oct. 1. He is a range science professor in the School of Natural Resource Sciences. Dr. Neil Dyer will be stepping down as director of the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab; a search will be under way soon for an Interim Director, but the position will not be filled permanently at this time. A board member inquired about the open flax and pulse breeding positions and the possibility of refilling them. Dr. Grafton said that due to budget cuts and a hiring freeze, these positions cannot be filled at this time.

The board was informed that an outside party had expressed interest in purchasing or making a trade for Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) land parcels in Cass County by NDSU near the 19th avenue north and I-29 interchange. Discussion followed and members noted it would be beneficial for the AES to clarify the land use and look at impacts of various options and changes. Keith Peltier made a motion to authorize the AES to work with NDSU to undertake a study to develop a long-term plan regarding the use of parcels along the interstate owned by the AES or the University, to include consideration of potential impacts related to relocation to another parcel and identifying potential outcomes of the various options. The motion was seconded by Lyle Warner. Motion carried.

Dr. Chris Boerboom, NDSU Extension Service Director, reported that the 2015 Community Forums netted good data on state needs, identifying three critical areas of focus. Programs are addressing many of those needs, and data was shared regarding the delivery of various programs in the counties. Staffing updates include the resignations of Fara Brummer, the Livestock specialist at Central Grasslands Research Extension Center, and Meredith Gilroy, Executive Director of the 4-H Foundation. The Foundation will meet soon to discuss their plans going forward. Kim Rulliffson started as the new Northeast District Director in August. The Extension Service was able to accept five applications for the voluntary separation incentive program (VSIP), and thus far three persons have signed to accept the buyout offer and two more are pending. Extension currently has several vacancies including specialists, agents, and agent-in-training positions. They are trying to refill county positions, which cost share 50-50 on salary between the county and Extension.

Other Discussion

During the last legislative session, a bill was passed seeking greater policy consistencies across institutions of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). Currently sick leave accrual for faculty is one of the policies under review and various NDUS institutions differ on their policies. The SBHE is considering a system-wide policy adjustment which removes sick leave accrual for 12-month faculty, and a task force was formed by the Chancellor to review proposed revisions. Changes would especially affect AES and Extension faculty and eliminate a significant benefit and recruiting tool. Interpretation of what constitutes a 'contracted employee' is a factor in these considerations. NDSU has a large number of 12-month full time faculty in comparison to other NDUS entities, and most other large land-grant institutions carry leave accrual policies similar to NDSU. Chairman Beltz stated that SBARE would not be supportive of the changes being proposed.

Extension Review Process

Chairman Beltz announced that a comprehensive review is being considered for the NDSU Extension Service and that if a review is undertaken it would be authorized and carried out by SBARE. The procedure would include forming an external Review Committee of approximately 12 persons, completing a comprehensive input process, and making recommendations to the NDSU Extension Service based on the findings. Committee makeup would include SBARE members along with representatives from the agriculture sector, NDSU, 4-H volunteers, communities, state agencies, media and other diverse populations. It could be facilitated by an external professional with support from the Extension Director's office.

Chairman Beltz proposed a tentative plan and asked for feedback from the board. Discussion followed on the scope, required resources, Extension's role in the state, and potential benefits of a thorough review. Members noted several differences between the structure of the ND Extension Service versus various hybrid models that exist in neighboring states' Extension systems. There was agreement that core functions and mandated missions must be retained and any proposed changes must continue to uphold these. A review could strengthen and affirm existing positives, aid in identifying weaknesses, and deepen engagement with stakeholders. This process could potentially take about six months or longer. Members asked if input from the community forums already presented to SBARE would be part of this process, and Dr. Boerboom affirmed this data would be utilized.

Keith Peltier made a motion that SBARE requests the NDSU Extension Service to hire a facilitator to explore this review, form a Review Committee, and conduct a comprehensive review process of the NDSU Extension Service. The motion was seconded by Lyle Warner. Motion carried. Dean Wehri made a motion that members of the committee include SBARE members Mike Beltz as the Chair, Keith Peltier, JoAnn Rodenbiker and Lyle Warner, with all findings to be reported to SBARE. The motion was seconded by Mark Birdsall. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Beltz at 4:27 PM.

Minutes submitted by Lorie Herbel.