

National Sea Grant Advisory Board Meeting
March 9-10, 2020
Meeting Minutes

The Watergate Hotel
2650 Virginia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Monday, March 9, 2020

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 9:00am – 5:00pm

9:00am - 9:15am - Welcome, Roll Call, New Leadership – (Elizabeth Rohring – Designated Federal Officer (DFO), National Sea Grant Office (NSGO))

Ms. Rohring (DFO) read an official federal statement explaining her role to the group and took the roll. She introduced Dr. Brian Helmuth as the new Board Chair.

Roll Call

Members of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Board):

Dale Baker (virtual), Peter Betzer (virtual), Paulinus Chigbu, Carole Engle, Rosanne Fortner, Gordon Grau, Judith Gray, Brian Helmuth, Letise LaFeir, Amber Mace, Jim Murray, Kris Norosz (virtual), Deborah Stirling (virtual)

Jonathan Pennock – (*ex officio*) Director of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP), Fredrika Moser – (*ex officio*), President, Sea Grant Association (SGA) and Director, Maryland Sea Grant
Elizabeth Rohring – Designated Federal Officer (DFO), National Sea Grant Office (NSGO), Susan Holmes (alternate DFO), Donna Brown – Executive Assistant, NSGO

Others in attendance: Nikola Garber – Deputy Director, NSGCP and Jonathan Eigen – Assistant Director For Operations (NSGO)

9:15am - Call to order – Brian Helmuth (Board Chair)

Dr. Helmuth called the meeting to order. He reviewed the agenda and asked for a motion to approve it.

Motion to approve the March 9-10, 2020 agenda:

Dr. Engle

2nd Dr. Murray

Vote: All in favor

Dr. Helmuth asked for a motion to approve the November 2019 meeting minutes.

November 2019 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 11-12, 2019 Board meeting:

Ms. Gray

2nd Dr. Mace

Vote: All in favor

9:30-10:30 – NSGO Updates – (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, NSGCP Director)

Dr. Pennock gave an overview of the activities of the NSGO and thanked Dr. Mace for her work as Board Chair the past two years.

Administrative Updates

Dr. Pennock provided updates on the hiring status of the Education Lead and Fellowship position, as well as the Programs lead. The NSGO is hoping to fill these positions soon and working to retain the regional approach to program officer roles.

SRT Update

The results of the quadrennial site reviews have been reviewed by the Board Evaluation Committee. They will finalize their reports and recommendations shortly and share with the NSGO. At that point, Dr. Pennock will make a final determination and share the results with the Directors sometime in late June or July.

Economic Evaluation

The NSGO has been working with a contracting company to develop economic metric guidance. There are currently a number of methodology guides on the NSGO website and several more are in development. Alison Krepp is the lead on this effort.

Network Engagement and Annual Reporting

Susan Holmes is the NSGO lead on annual reporting and will play more of a role for the review teams. There are no significant changes to the 2019 reporting guidance.

NEPA

The NSGO is working to streamline guidance for NEPA, and is working with NOAA General Counsel to lessen the burden on both the NSGO and Sea Grant programs. Rebecca Briggs is the office lead for NEPA.

Network Visioning Implementation

Network visioning is still moving forward and the NSGO is looking for ways to continue supporting the Sea Grant program's vision implementation efforts.

Leadership Discussion

Budget

The NSGCP budget for FY20 is \$87 million – \$74 for the Sea Grant core, \$13m for Aquaculture. The budget includes some congressionally-directed as are a number of items in the core including: American lobster (at least \$2m), Amberjack (at least 5m) Base increase to programs (at least \$2m).

FY20 funding opportunities

Open or soon to be closing NSGO funding opportunities include: Sea Grant Fellowships (NMFS partnership), Marine Debris (NOS partnership), Sea Grant Academy, Support for Workshops & Conferences; Undergraduate Workshop for Populations Dynamics, American Lobster, Knauss Fellowships 2021, and Aquaculture: Economic and Market Needs.

Base Increase Opportunity

Retaining base continues to be a high priority and the NSGO hopes to use \$3.4 million as an increase to all programs' base funding.

10:30 - 11:00 - Break

11:00 - 11:30 - Sea Grant Association (SGA) – (Fredrika Moser – President, SGA)

Dr. Moser provided an update on SGA activities.

Dr. Sherry Larkin was selected as the new director of Florida Sea Grant.

The SGA developed a panel on sexual harassment and safe meetings. i

SGA has been working with Congress to ensure that Sea Grant is known, funded, and growing.

Aquaculture

In aquaculture, the SGA has been working to engage industry and the aquaculture liaison position has been valuable for reporting on aquaculture work and tracking return on investment in aquaculture..

Network Visioning

The programs have been transitioning from visioning to implementation. All of the vision plans have a focus on resilience.

Other Priorities

- Reporting is important. While frequently time consuming the SGA realizes the value of it. There is interest in professional development or training to help programs successfully submit proposals and PIER information.
- Expanding education - the SGA would like to do more Integration of education across programs and activities – including K-12, undergraduate, graduate, fellowships,

Congressional Updates

The SGA ask for FY21 is \$97.9 million (\$82.9m core, \$15m aquaculture). SGA committees have met with colleagues on the Hill.

Meeting Evolution

The SGA is working to make our meetings more inclusive, safe and productive. The “Gordon-lite” sessions during the Fall 2019 meeting were an example of moving in that direction. The threat of the coronavirus will force everyone to work remotely - and that helps to reduce carbon footprint.

Discussion

Dr. Mace asked why their leadership was not included in the Sea Grant leadership meeting about resilience. Dr. Moser stated that it was not a leadership meeting, but a chance to look at Sea Grant’s past and future in the resilience arena.

11:30 - 12:00 - Strategic Planning – (Joshua Brown, NSGO)

Dr. Brown provided an update on the change in the Sea Grant strategic planning cycle. The national strategic plan will be extended for an additional two years, with minor changes.

Extended Program Plans

The state Sea Grant strategic plans are being extended to 2023, therefore programs only need to update targets and dates. Programs may make more extensive changes if they choose. Plan approval will follow established policies and revisions are due in September 2020. Consequences – 2022 Omnibus will be 2 years long instead of 4, merit funding will be awarded in 2022. Site reviews will cover 2018-2023.

Discussion

Dr. Murray asked if this will become the new schedule or if this was only for this cycle. Dr. Brown said that it is currently only planned for this cycle.

12:00 - 1:00 – Lunch Break

1:00-1:15 - Biennial Report Update – (Judy Gray - Board Biennial Report Committee Chair)

Ms. Gray gave an overview of the drafting of the Biennial Report to Congress. The report is the same structure we’ve been using for the past three years. The report is going back to the format it was in 2016, but including a section with three highlights from each of the programs. The theme of the report is that Sea Grant is at the fore-front of actionable science, and the nexus of science and community. The 2018 recommendations included following through on the network visioning, increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion through the NSGCP, have an evaluation of the entire NSGCP including the NSGO, building awareness of Sea Grant’s role in emergency preparedness, and expand NSGCP capacity in Aquaculture.

2020 Recommendations

- The National Sea Grant College Program should continue to support the implementation of the Network Vision Plans.
- The National Sea Grant College Program should continue to actively seek opportunities and collaborations to leverage Sea Grant’s unique strengths in building coastal community resilience.

- The National Sea Grant College Program should make improvements based on the findings and recommendations of the Independent Review Panel and Board Evaluation Committee.

Discussion

Dr. Murray asked about the timing of the report. Ms. Gray said that the draft would be shared with the Board in June during a public meeting and that the final product will be distributed after the 2020 election.

Dr. Murray said that this timing allowed for the Evaluation Committee to share results of their work.

1:15-1:30 - Public Comment Period – (Elizabeth Rohring)

Ms. Rohring said that she received one public comment and shared it for the record in the briefing book. No one was in person to make any additional public comments.

Dr. Murray asked if the NSGO replied to those who provided written public comments. Ms. Rohring said that the NSGO did not respond, but ensured that the Board was made aware. Dr. Murray suggested that all members of the public who submit comments receive an acknowledgement. Ms. Rohring said that she would follow up with the other NOAA DFOs to determine a best practice for the Board.

1:30-2:00 - Economic Valuation Update – (Alison Krepp, National Sea Grant Office, Charles Goodhue, ERG)

Ms. Krepp provided an update on the economic valuation methodology project. She said that they are now moving into phase two of this project. The team produced a Methodology Guide Primer, Methodology Guide Decision Tree, and Methodology Guides on Community Rating Systems, Ecosystems, General Revenue and Cost Savings, Jobs and Business, Workshops and Trainings, Aquaculture Revenue and Cost Savings, Workforce Development: Fellowships.

Project Objectives : the objective to provide a methodology that helps Sea Grant programs provide reliable and consistent data on economic benefits.

Path Forward

Working on helping the programs understand when to use economic value versus when a narrative is better. The team with help from the programs will build a roadmap to determine which is needed, and what type of data programs might collect for economic evaluation.

Project Timeline

- Pilot testing sometime in mid April/May
- August to finalize the project

Discussion

Dr. Helmuth stated that this was a very impressive and valuable tool and wanted to know how this could be shared and with whom. Ms. Krepp said that they have been sharing with the network, some NOAA

colleagues and presented it at the Social Coast conference. Dr. Helmuth said that this project and tools created will provide opportunities to report in a way that they did not have prior to this.

2:00 -3:00 - Site Review Evaluation Committee Report – (James Murray (Board Evaluation Committee Chair)

Dr. Murray presented on the work of the Evaluation Committee.

Committee Members

Jim Murray, Gordon Grau, Judith Gray, Deb Stirling and Anders Andren

Site Review Process and Recommendations

The Evaluation Committee (EC) just completed a meeting to review the 34 site review reports and the program directors' response to the reports. The objective was to verify that each program was held to the same standards (equity and fairness). So we're focusing on the reports for where they're reasonable and fair.

Products

The EC has completed two reports for the Board: a Site Visit fairness and equity report and a Site Visit Process Report.

Materials and Information Reviewed – The EC reviewed 34 site visit reports. 32 out of 34 met the standards of excellence, 548 findings, 298 suggestions, and 60 recommendations.

EC Findings

Equity and Fairness Findings – The EC found that the site review process is working well, very consistent, numerical scores were well defended and only 4 programs expressed concerns about their scores.

The EC recommends that the Board approves the findings in the Equity and Fairness report and forward to the NSGCP Director to accept these reports and finalize them.

Site Visit Process Findings - The EC is making recommendations that the NSGO work to ensure consistency in the rating system, guidance, and training of site visit teams. Exit interview script should be provided for the opening part of the report-out, including description of the categories of Standards of Excellence, as well as the ratings and the supporting language around ratings.

Motion that the Board accept the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee and transmit to the Director of the NSGCP

Ms. Gray

2nd Dr. LaFeir

Discussion

Dr. LaFeir asked if the EC saw any correlation between the programs that scored well that could be used to help programs that did not score as well. Dr. Murray said that they ran several analyses to look for correlations or biases however there were no significant findings.

Dr. Moser asked if the EC had thoughts on the Sea Grant Director as part of the site visit team. Dr. Murray said that they discussed it and decided that a director should be included and that the scoring is a consensus vote. Dr. Moser said that she felt that it was a conflict for the directors to make a decision on the rating since it was tied to merit funding.

Dr. Murray said that they will revisit this when they draft the final report on recommendations and that the Board would have the opportunity to discuss it at the June public meeting.

Dr. Helmuth called for a vote on the motion

Motion that the Board accept the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee and transmit to the Director of the NSGCP

Vote: All in favor

3:00-3:30 – Break

3:30-4:00 - Independent Review Panel Update – (James Murray)

Dr. Murray said that the Board was also charged to create an independent review panel to evaluate the NSGCP in its entirety. This is the first time since 2002 that there's been an evaluation of the whole program.

Progress To-Date - IRP members were nominated by the Advisory Board and the SGA. Dr. Pennock reviewed and selected the members.

IRP Members - Nancy Targett (IRP Chair, University of Delaware), Amber Mace (IRP Co-Chair), Jon Cortinas (Director, NOAA AOML), Mary Erikson (Deputy Director NWS), Jim Hurley (SGA), Don Kent (Industry/NGO partner), and Jim Murray (EC chair).

Next Steps - The IRP committee will have several calls for introductions, review of the change and process, review list of background and review materials, review outline of briefing book, review outline of on-site agenda, and committee assignments. The IRP meeting is planned for April 27-29, Silver Spring. The report of the IRP will be available for discussion at the June Board meeting.

Draft outline of IRP Report – Purpose, Goals, NSGO organization, NSGO/NSGCP interactions, NSGCP/NSGO Collaboration and Engagement with Stakeholders. That's all we have right now but wanted you to know that it's being well thought out and we're looking forward to you being engaged.

Dr. Helmuth asked if there were any topics that needed to be discussed further. None were suggested and Dr. Helmuth recessed the meeting.

Public Meeting recessed until 9:30 am, Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Dr. Helmuth called the meeting to order.

9:30 - 10:00 - Decade of the Ocean and Sustainable Development Goals - (Brian Helmuth)

Dr. Helmuth gave an overview of the potential for Sea Grant to be involved in the Decade of Ocean Science and the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. These are a platform to highlight the efforts of Sea Grant and show the value of the Sea Grant network. It will also provide a model for other programs to emulate Sea Grant in other countries. We are connecting these topics to the Biennial Report. We want to share this opportunity with the SGA to get their coordination and support in highlighting Sea Grant.

Discussion

Ms. Norosz asked what kind of international efforts Sea Grant has done in the past. Dr. Garber said that there was a lot of interest in sharing the Sea Grant model internationally, including in South Korea, Japan, Indonesia and recently in Nicaragua and Cuba.

Dr. Mace asked what the downside of involvement could be since it seemed like a wonderful opportunity for Sea Grant and perhaps there could be a committee of the Board to work with the SGA on this. Dr. Moser said that the SGA might be very interested in participation if there were any type of negotiation connected to the Decade of the Ocean. She said that the SGA might want to be at the table and provide a briefing.

Dr. Pennock said that the NSGCP is not allowed to spend funding on international activities in the waters of foreign countries. We can share our best management practices with foreign countries, but we need to be cautious. Several of our programs have partnerships with other countries for issues that cross-borders.

Dr. Engle said that while this is an exciting idea the Board should think about the tradeoffs and other priorities. Dr. Murray agreed and said that this could take away from the mandated efforts of Sea Grant.

Dr. Pennock said that this could be an opportunity to develop a communication product, but we need the support of the SGA before we decide on an approach.

10:00 - 10:30 – Break

10:30 - 12:00 - Strategic Directions for Sea Grant – (Brian Helmuth and Jonathan Pennock)

Drs. Pennock and Helmuth led a discussion about strategic directions for the NSGCP. They are looking for thoughts and plans for resilience and education.

Resilience

For resilience, we have some traction with the SGA and our partners, but we have not had any dedicated funding for it.

Dr. Moser said that community-based resilience has been a mainstay of Sea Grant's work since its inception. The SGA meeting in December started plans on how Sea Grant should move forward.

Dr. Murray said that we need to show that we are already in a strong position to impact community resilience.

Dr. Helmuth said that we need to focus on sharing stories of Sea Grant successes in this area. Dr. Grau said that Sea Grant has the ability to engage with the communities and therefore people know what Sea Grant does.

Education

Dr. Fortner said that philosophically, we need a good answer to “what is education in Sea Grant”. For us it includes not only K-12, graduate and undergraduate support, but also environmental literacy across the board. All of this also relates to resilience. We rely on each program to understand the educational and literacy needs, but we need to find a way to pull them all together - to see how all of this fits into one whole.

Dr. Pennock asked if the Sea Grant education network had thoughts on the best way forward. Dr. Helmuth said that the advantage of the Sea Grant network is that we have 34 programs serving their communities, but we all work together strategically and to build resilience on the national level.

Dr. Fortner said that she was planning on meeting with the education network to discuss what they might do to build greater cohesion.

Dr. Pennock said that the NSGO is hoping to have a vision implementation funding opportunity, and that this would be a good way for the educators to move their vision plan forward.

Ms. Gray suggested that the idea of defining Sea Grant’s niche in education is a good step forward.

12:00 - 1:00 – Lunch break

1:00-3:00 - Aquaculture Panel and Discussion - (LaDon Swann, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Director, and National Aquaculture Liaison)

Dr. Swann introduced the panelists:

Michael Freeze, Keo Fish Farms and former President of the National Aquaculture Association

Doug Vogler, Harrietta Hills Trout Farm, President of the Michigan Aquaculture Association

Robert Rheault, Executive Director of the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association

Margaret Pilaro, Executive Director of the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association

Each panelist was given 15 minutes to provide the members of the Board a deeper understanding of Sea Grant aquaculture investments, the needs of the aquaculture industry, and where Sea Grant future opportunities may be. The panel members represented various sectors of the aquaculture industry and discussed their views on research and engagement needs, obstacles and opportunities, and their current involvement with Sea Grant.

A recording of the panel and the Q&A is available here:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/3498850914214125832>

Dr. Pennock thanked the panel members and said that their participation helps the Board to provide guidance to the NSGO on aquaculture.

3:00 - 3:30 – Discussion and Next Steps – (Brian Helmuth)

Dr. Helmuth gave an overview of the discussions of the Board meeting and asked if there were any follow-up questions before the meeting adjourned. None were suggested and Dr. Helmuth adjourned the meeting.

3:23pm - Meeting adjourned