

**National Sea Grant Advisory Board Meeting  
February 26-27, 2023  
Meeting Minutes  
The Watergate Hotel  
Washington, D.C.**

**Sunday, February 26, 2023**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 9:00 am – 5:00 pm ET

Ms. Deborah Stirling (Board Chair) welcomed everyone and officially called the meeting to order. She then turned the meeting over to Ms. Holmes (Designated Federal Officer (DFO)) for a DFO briefing and Roll Call.

Ms. Holmes read an official statement explaining her role to the group and took the roll call of the members of the Board. She then turned the meeting over to Ms. Stirling (Board Chair), who went over the agenda for the meeting and then called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call**

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

Dr. Peter Betzer; Dr. Deidre Gibson; Ms. Judith Gray; Dr. Jim Murray (Vice Chair); Ms. Kristine Norosz; Dr. Larry Robinson; Ms. Deborah Stirling (Board Chair); Dr. Nancy Targett.

*Board Ex Officio Members:*

Dr. Jonathan Pennock – Director of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP), and Dr. Darren Lerner, President of the Sea Grant Association (SGA).

*National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) staff in attendance:*

Ms. Susan Holmes – Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Board, National Sea Grant Office, Ms. Donna Brown – Project Administrator, National Sea Grant Office; and Dr. Nikola Garber – Deputy Director (NSGCP).

**9:30 am - 9:40 am: Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

*Agenda*

Ms. Stirling gave an overview of the agenda and requested a motion to approve it.

Motion to approve the February 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 agenda: Ms. Judith Gray

2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Kris Norosz and Dr. Nancy Targett

Vote: All in Favor

*September 2022 Meeting Minutes*

Ms. Stirling asked for a motion to approve the September 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes from the September 11-12, 2022 Board Meeting subject to the changes suggested by Kris and Deidre (**page 15 reference to “John” Young should be “Don”**

**Young and page 3, Dr. Ben “Shucker” should be “Cuker”**): Ms. Judith Gray

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dr. Peter Betzer and Dr. Jim Murray

Vote: All in favor

**9:10am: Public Comments (Ms. Susan Holmes, Designated Federal Officer (DFO))**

There were no public comments.

**9:10am – 9:15am – Welcome New Board Member (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

We would now like to welcome Dr. Larry Robinson as a new member of the Board, we're going to ask him to give us a brief background and once he's done that we're going to go around the table and give a brief background of ourselves so that he can have a better understanding of who we are and many of the activities of the Board.

Dr. Larry Robinson – It's an honor to be on the Advisory Board with so many outstanding individuals. He then gave a brief background on himself and his accomplishments.

Ms. Stirling then asked the Board members and the National Sea Grant Office to give a brief introduction and some background on themselves. She then thanked everyone and moved to the next topic on the agenda Resilience and Social Justice Subcommittee Report.

**9:15 am – 10:15 am: Resilience and Social Justice Subcommittee Report (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

I'm going to run through the findings of our Resilience and Social Justice Subcommittee Report. The report is in your briefing books and I truly hope that everyone have had a chance to read it. We had an outstanding subcommittee membership. There were three of us from the Board including myself, Dr. Gordon Grau and Dr. Brian Helmuth. Summer Morlock and Brooke Carney (NSGO Representatives) were indefatigable in working with us and providing material and input. We had SGA representatives Dr. Susan Lovelace (SCSG) and Dr. Fredrika Moser (MDSG) who were extraordinarily plugged in and helpful and more than carried their weight. We had network representatives Dr. Sam Chan (ORSG) and Linda Chilton (USCSG) and they were fantastic in terms of their input and we had a number of external experts Dr. Dionne Hoskins-Brown (NMFS), Dr. Paulinus Chigbu (UM Eastern Shore) who was our previous subcommittee chair and cycled off the board but we talked him into staying with the subcommittee and he's made a tremendous contribution to the report, and Dr. Joan Fitzgerald (Northeastern University) who is really quite an interesting expert in finding ways to measure and evaluate progress in the resilience and environmental justice environment. So, that was our group and we worked for about two years and I'm surprised we didn't wear Susan Holmes (NSGO support) out who was involved as we asked her to and still is.

So this is our charge. I'm not going to read it all and assuming that all of you have read it. We did make one change along the way, we started out talking about social justice and changed that to environmental justice. We adopted the EPA's description of that term because we felt that it was more focused on the coastal environment and hazardous events and the relationship with the community members to those events in the resilience and environmental justice space. So, we adopted that and we also adopted a description which you saw in the footnotes of code development which is a critically important concept because if you don't engage the communities, you're not going to create the capacities that are going to be necessary and the lasting change that will enable people to be resilient, adapt and mitigate as they go. So, again this is the charge and it's important that you pay attention to this change because at the end we're going to be asking you to tell us whether or not we completed our charge. This is really critical, and as you will see, things changed a little bit as we went along and

became more enlightened as we learned about what was practical, what was not practical and where the state programs were. Some of them were very far down the road and some were not. So, we were open to what are best practices, what are ways that we can be most helpful and what kinds of recommendations are going to be practical. We met twice a month for a couple of years, and as you can see we deliberated on strategies for ensuring that environmental justice is included in resilience efforts. We went through best practices, we went through lots of literature and case studies. And we began the process of creating performance measures and metrics. And this is really important on the performance measurement metrics. One of the reasons we started the subcommittee was because there's that call for environmental justice and a call for metrics to be developed to be able to measure that progress, rather than have those things come down from the top. We felt certain that a number of practices, approaches and methodologies had already been worked out on the ground in Sea Grant. And we wanted to be able to understand what those were, highlight them, and see if we could get them introduced into the discussion of what constitutes a metric, so that we weren't getting talked down quantitatively, how many hires, you have a person doing the steps.

So here's what we found since 2017, the National Sea Grant Office funded the Network Visioning to increase the capacity of Sea Grant programs to work and plan together on priority topics. And that background has been very, very important. They show diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and access networks, so it really has covered some spectacular ground in terms of understanding of problems and how to approach them. We spent a lot of time learning from the DEIJA community of practice, it was extremely valuable. And just to mention, the DEIJA community of practice is a little broader than what we were looking at. We were looking at environmental justice and its relationship with resilience and how to marry the two among other things. In the fall, we had preliminary recommendations. And these four recommendations you need to pay attention to because we basically ended up carrying them forward and expanding and elaborating. When we came up with these preliminary recommendations it was to formalize the Sea Grant DEIJA committee and make sure their guidance is incorporated into all levels, our Board, National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and the Sea Grant network. You've seen our programs give clear direction and resources to assess where they are and where they need to make shifts in their programs and align resilience efforts with social justice, provide guidance on metrics and how they might be applied to the specific work and require annual or biannual reporting on progress made towards integrating DEIJA in resiliency efforts. We also at the Fall Sea Grant meeting hosted a working group that was really exceptional and got a tremendous amount of information from that and the kinds of things that are happening at the ground level both metric based, qualitatively based approaches and methodologies and it was across the board. We encapsulated many of those if not most of those in appendix A which is associated with this report.

We had nine report findings, and these are the findings:

- Sea Grant has a long record of working with communities and partners to enhance the ability of coastal populations to live and thrive within the capacity of their habitats and ecosystems.
- A trusted, ongoing, and on-the-ground presence is critical for combining the local knowledge that coastal communities have and require, with the resources of the federal government and partners, to ensure that people in their natural environment are prepared for and resilient to severe events.
- Sea Grant brings a strong synergistic capacity to advance these issues by combining engagement, outreach, education, and communications with scientific, technical, and legal

research expertise of universities, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and our partners.

- Integrating natural and social sciences and legal approaches with architecture, engineering, community design, and the financial and economic resources of the private sector and local and federal governments, provides the path for preparedness and resilience.
- This effort must simultaneously seek to strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and the communities that they support.
- This must occur at all levels for adaptive capacity and access to resources in the face of both acute events and the sustained impacts of climate change.
- And there's a necessity to continue learning, implementing and evaluating practices that integrate across environmental justice and resilience.
- And lastly, State Sea Grant programs are at very different stages of the process, with some very advanced and some not, and this has an important bearing on our final recommendations, especially at this stage, the focus should be on progress rather than on static metrics of success because these are very different starting points.

So here are our recommendations:

#1 - While the subcommittee was explicitly formed to explore the intersections of resilience and environmental justice, it builds on broader efforts within Sea Grant to integrate DEIJA as well as Traditional and Local Knowledge (TLK) was something we learned a great deal about in the course of this effort and how valuable it is. To be accountable, the process to advance the collaboration is as follows and these actions we're recommending:

- Develop an MOU
- Incorporate guidance from the DEIJA and Traditional Local Knowledge Communities of Practice into planning and activities
- Continue to support national liaison or coordinator
- Establish a resilience and environmental justice committee and add to the DEIJA Vision and Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Explore partnerships to amplify and address challenges to the resilience of populations, both financially secure and challenged, and both traditionally included and historically underserved. Likewise, programs should be encouraged to seek funding from local governments and other sources.

#2 - Our second recommendation is to provide the state Sea Grant program with resources and clear direction to assess their current capacity and to adjust their programs to align resilience efforts with environmental justice:

- Make training resources available and support the work of the DEIJA CoP in promoting the integration of DEIJA principles into all Sea Grant resilience activities;
- Further integrate environmental justice in resilience endeavors, including planning and assessment, policies, and guidance for funding;
- To work more effectively with historically marginalized communities, funding opportunities should allow sufficient time for partnering, project planning and development (this is an approach that we also call COVID);

- Work with the state Sea Grant programs and Communities of Practice to: Support further incorporation of DEIJA into functions and organizational structure related to resilience; In addition to Sea Grant’s strengths in the natural and social sciences and law, continue to support disciplines such as architecture, engineering, hydrology, coastal geology, land use, finance and community design all of which contribute to equitable resilience, and advance career pathways as well as for community members to develop their own capacities to incorporate resilience and local governments to build resilience.

#3 – Third recommendation: Require annual or biannual reporting on the progress made towards integrating DEIJA in resilience efforts:

- Within the current Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (PIE) cycle, the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) should include annual reporting updates on resilience and environmental justice work through impacts and accomplishments with the next crisis. The Sea Grant office should require careful attention to allowing programs to build into new activities and test new approaches that may need multiple interactions to achieve goals success. As an aside, here we have quite a spirited decision about the value of failure. It's okay to try things and if they don't work out, you can do a course correction. You can moderate it, you can alter it, and it's not a killer, or any of those sorts of things. This is a learning process.
- The Sea Grant office should consider what mechanisms are appropriate for Sea Grant to document work and achievements in areas categorized as vulnerable to coastal hazards.

#4 - Consider, in coordination with the state Sea Grant programs and Communities of Practice (CoPs), guidance on metrics not hard and fast, but guidance on efforts to assess the integration of DEIJA into resilience projects and activities as defined by strategies, methods, outcomes, and accomplishments.

- Continue to work closely with and help coordinate efforts among the DEIJA community and Cops subcommittee, state Sea Grant Programs resilience specialists, the Sea Grant Association Resilience working group, and other NOAA colleagues to consider and test possible measures and metrics for documenting DEIJA and resilience;
- The Board, with the input from the communities of practice and the state Sea Grant programs, may continue to oversee and support the National Sea Grant Office in the development of measures and metrics, with pilot implementation planned for the 2024-27 omnibus;
- The Board should keep the need for broader DEIJA reporting and accountability and specific environmental justice and resilience reporting and accountability in mind as conversations continue and decisions are made.

That's where we are after two years of debate, study, interaction and discussion; and pushing and pulling on what seemed to make the most sense.

Ms. Stirling then asked for *a motion to accept the report, which will enable us to send it to the National Office.*

***Motion to accept the report as submitted by the Resilience and Social Justice Subcommittee, and upon acceptance, send the report to the national office:*** Dr. Peter Betzer

2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Judith Gray

Vote: All in favor

Ms. Norosz – I really appreciated the amount of work that went into this. I was impressed with what we went through at our last meeting and the thing that struck me the most was under recommendation three, to allow programs to build new activities and try new approaches. And, I totally agree with you that there's a lot of value and things learned when something fails because we're never going to have that innovation without giving people that safe space, so I was particularly pleased to see that as part of the recommendation.

Dr. Lerner - You've said a number of things that I really appreciate the group's directionality of recognizing that for our network to move in these approaches around diversity, diversity needs flexibility, and I really appreciate that. You've already mentioned the challenges of diverse programs, how they were able to work within the state, and the communities they serve. It's such a key point there and the flexibility around any kinds of metrics. I love the comments about failure because that's how we learn, right? One thing that popped out to me is that we have a number of people that are doing work in this area in various ways, but it dawned on us at a certain point. We have no one who wakes up each and every day with only this. There are a number of us doing 100 different things, and then I need to make sure I think about this or what about that in this context. But no one wakes up every single day, to then help shepherd the program and all of the other individuals who are thinking if there is a pathway within this guidance that moves the programs in that direction? We can't look at programs and say you must have this position in your program...but is there guidance? Is there something here that helps the programs move in that way? Is there something here that helps programs who may have challenges around that? Maybe sitting down with their university presidents and saying we need to move in this direction because this network is moving in this direction, and this federal program is moving in this direction and we're going to be measured about whether we move in this direction. Whatever that argument needs to be, they might also be able to leverage what you're doing here with their own universities. And I say that broadly. I know a few programs aren't necessarily a home-based university.

Ms. Stirling – There are a couple of things in our recommendations, our resources and direction among other things which we think are critical. And it may be in a pending state, but somewhere in our report, we have information about creating career paths for exactly this level of knowledge. Every program is going to be different. But I think the intent coming from the board is very clear.

Ms. Gray – I really liked what Darren said about having someone to pay attention. And, as an example of that, as the person who has written the biennial report for so many years, I'm always tuning into what we need to include in that report. So having that person paying attention to those action items around it really makes a difference. For example, whoever ends up with the report (I'm sure I'll be involved with it), I recommend that we feature environmental justice and resilience as an outgrowth of this subcommittee, but also that as a board, and one of the things that we need to do this time is to start really thinking about what recommendations we're going to formulate for the 2024 report. And we should certainly have a recommendation that encapsulates what the committee has done, I think those are really important things. As a federal employee, for most of my career, I wasn't allowed to look at (especially as a manager), what somebody's race, age, whatever protected group they were a member of...I wasn't even allowed to consider that or talk about it and would have been fired if I had. The other thing that we don't have any ability to do is to put out a federal survey which is very difficult to do. So it's such a mind shift for me, after 40 years of training, to think about these things in a different way. This is just a small minor example of waking up and having someone to pay attention and actually allowed to look at how I can help this protected group.

Ms. Carney – Over the last three plus years, several policies, a few executive orders, and some other government employees have opened the doors so that we can work together to allow us to have a better understanding of who you're serving. Some of that is through executive order basic direction to figure it out. And then do better. There are policies around the governance, how to survey the public, and the processes associated with that have been good. And there are actually realistic pathways by which we can put surveys out to the public, including our own secret network. It's far from perfect, but there's also now an improved set of demographic questions that the federal government can ask the public which is a next step in the right direction, so we've come a long way so the door is now open. I will say within the federal government in terms of both hiring practices in granting practices, there have been several legal views that clarified how we actually can begin learning more about the demographic makeup of individuals and communities, so that while it's not a factor in merit based selection, it is information that allows people to take those big steps in the right direction.

Dr. Brown – Getting at some of these target tools and the ability to help us understand where we're working. NOAA has entered into a partnership with the Census to develop specific demographic tools. Ms. Holmes, Ms. Kennedy, and I are targeted at the generational funding opportunities around the Infrastructure and Inflation Reduction Act with the intent to build a public-facing tool that is looking at parameters that are relevant to NOAA and Sea Grant so that we can understand where our funding is going and help our programs that are targeting their work. It's in the early stages, but it is partly based on a partnership between the Economic Development Administration and the Census to develop a similar tool. So we're working to inform that and use census-derived information at the level below the Census tract. I've been eating up this report, thinking about how these align with what we've already put in and what we're asking for. It's perhaps not shocking, that Sea Grant and the things that Sea Grant is interested in are a little confusing for the rest of NOAA, we're looking at people and their needs. This is an exciting effort, and when we have something to share, I'll make sure that you all are aware of it.

#### **10:15 am – 10:35 am Morning Break**

#### **10:35 am – 10:50 am: Board's Resilience and Social Justice Subcommittee Next Steps and Membership (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

The Board created the charge to create a subcommittee to discuss and explore the critical but often neglected role of environmental justice in developing and implementing resilience strategies. Therefore, the Board should decide if the charge has been met.

- The 2020 State of Sea Grant Report to Congress recommendation was to have the National Sea Grant College Program move beyond DEIJA being a separate priority/practice and be integrated into all other priorities.
- The subcommittee has deliberated on strategies for ensuring that environmental justice is included in resilience efforts, reviewed best practices, literature, and case studies, and has begun the process of creating performance measures and metrics that explicitly include aspects of environmental justice as a key part of resilience.
- Report with recommendations provided to the Board to vote to send to the National Sea Grant College Program Director.

Has the charge been met and was the recommendation in the 2020 State of Sea Grant, Report to Congress addressed. There is always work to be done in this space, but is it time to turn that over to the network, or is there more the Board subcommittee can do in advising the national office?

So let's take a few minutes to vote on this.

Ms. Gray – As a member of the committee, do you feel like you're done? As an observer on the outside, I'm happy to declare you finished, but what is your gut instinct?

Dr. Robinson – What kinds of messages are we sending? Do we disband the committee altogether with no follow-up or engagement?

Dr. Murray - Yes, I think we have standing committees and various liaisons to the Chair in this room who are often engaged in the efforts in the DEIJA community of practice and have traditional knowledge to keep the committee in place, there's going to be more issues so it's not going away.

Dr. Targett – I agree with Jim, I think the committee will force and want to see the importance of having someone to focus on various programs on this and how we can do that as a Board.

Ms. Stirling - This is an area that is extremely complex and will continue to unfold and will be with us for the rest of our lives. Whatever tools we use we'll have to stay engaged. Once a month Gordon can be tasked with attending, and it can be a voluntary thing, and respond to issues as they arise and need to be out in the light and dealt with. So there are a number of options. Now, the question then becomes what tool do we use? Is it to stand up this committee, permanent committee, or subcommittee? It doesn't have to meet once a month. We may also consider whether there are others on the Board who may want to be on this committee or those who want to stay on it, so there's that prospect as well.

Dr. Lerner – From an SGA perspective, I think it's great that you are considering doing this. One thing that jumped into my head is because you all rotate off the Board, if you make it permanent, it would have to be some sort of succession.

Ms. Carney – I think the charge to the Subcommittee was an important topic for our program. In particular for the Advisory Board. How do you all think about creating the same topics? Creating a standard committee – you might think of the specific focus around connectivity as opposed to a broader DEIJA and what those committees look like. Over the duration of the subcommittee's work, there's so much to address in the data space, and so much that our program is working on across the country that sometimes we struggle to continue the environmental justice intersection. Maybe you should consider expanding that option a bit broader.

Ms. Stirling – I agree with you, Brooke, that it's important, so the question for the Board is what tool we want to put in place to continue engaging in this area.

Ms. Gray – I think it makes quite a statement if we have a standing committee. Whether it's DEIJA, Environmental Justice and Resilience, whichever we decide, I think it makes a really strong statement to the network and to ourselves and to NOAA and beyond we have a standing committee on this.

Ms. Stirling – What I'm hearing from everyone is that we're going to stand up a committee, subcommittee?

Ms. Gray – Subcommittee.



Ms. Holmes – To add clarity to this discussion, the subcommittee already exists under the Board’s Education and Outreach Committee. If the charge has been met, it is up to the Board to create the next charge for the subcommittee and bring it to a Board public meeting for a vote of acceptance. At that time, continuing members and new membership can be included in the vote. If the current charge hasn’t been met, then this subcommittee can continue without having to do a motion or anything and just go back to the subcommittee to figure out what their next steps are and any other advice that you provide from this discussion.

Ms. Stirling - We maintain the subcommittee as it is – I think we might want to consider the broader aspect of DEIJA – and carved out a subpart of that – We don’t have to decide that today, we can simply decide to maintain the subcommittee, and carve that out at our next meeting before we vote on it. We can talk about memberships and ask people to step up and members from all the elements that are represented on the subcommittee. Is that what I’m hearing everyone wants to do?

**All in favor.**

Ms. Stirling - We will not sunset the subcommittee, but we did meet the charge, and we took care of the recommendations from the 2020 report and will revisit that at the next subcommittee meeting whether this subcommittee (and who is going to sit on it, which may very well be me). We will need to talk about the makeup of the subcommittee and its functions.

Ms. Gray – I really like the idea of Board members continuing engagement with communities of practice and network groups and we’ve been doing it very informally, but it wouldn’t be a terrible thing to formalize that a little bit in addition to being assigned to a committee or subcommittee, but also as a liaison to the community.

**10:50 am – 11:50 am: Site Visit Review Discussion (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))**

The site review visits will be the major part of this discussion, but I wanted to set the perspective for those of you who may be new to the Board. I want to say thank you for the committee's work on social justice, DEIJA, and resilience...that was terrific. That is an example of one of the things that the Board does. This was one where it was the Advisory Board that picked that up and went with it, and that is exciting, and it's great. By the next meeting, I think what we want to do is be able to make sure we can lay out where there are opportunities and where there are needs for participation from Board members because this is a time of change. We've got a number of new members on, a few folks who will be rolling off, and we'll get some new members in another year. In a short period of time I've been here, there's no absolute rhythm to it. We have times where things are sort of safe where the Board is there; it's not a ton of turnover right now. We've got multiple people reaching their term limit, and we're bringing in others, so it's time to revisit all of those things. We have opportunities to work with the network more broadly and our office. We have charges that we'll talk about this afternoon, or a couple actually did come from me. There could be a charge from the Secretary. I don't think we've had a secretarial charge in quite a while for our Board. And then there is the work that is actually in legislation and one of the big tasks and everybody who's been through that before knows it's in our evaluation process, which is typically every four years. It just happens right now we're going to be ending a six-year cycle. We can explain the reasons for that later. That is an anomaly that we took advantage of for both the programs and our own workload. It's not going to make the review any more difficult. But we have a review

coming up, and I would say most people would say the biggest effort, I wouldn't say it's necessarily the most important, but it's one of the biggest efforts of the Board. So the purpose of this today is there's no assigning people to anything. It's just to bring everybody now who's around the table sort of up to speed on what is coming at us, and it's over the horizon, but it's starting to show over the next year, year and a half until we really dig into it. And so we'll move forward through that, and that's what I want to try to go over today.

This is really to give you all a brief review of where we are with our Site Review Teams (SRT) visits. This is the review we did the last time and one that we will model this time. SRT visits are the third major way in which we have done evaluations, they used to be called program assessment teams (PATs). There were challenges with that. Now we're going to just have external panels look at different national focus areas and against the program's own strategic plans. There were still some slight reviews, but it took away that it was more like a standard review that you would get from EPA or someone else that I think everybody agreed and the network agreed. The SRT visit focuses on getting an external team with a lot of knowledge and capacity to really look at what each of our programs has done and to try to do that in the most consistent way possible. We stood up an Evaluation Committee/Subcommittee in the last round of SRT visits. Our goal today is not to decide how we are going to do this next cycle. It's just to give you a sense of where we are now as we enter that space. The site reviews are critical. They're part of what we call our high-level planning, implementation, and evaluation (PIE) cycle. It's the evaluation side of that. Ms. Holmes oversees that in our office, and we work closely together.

I'm going to try and get through this pretty quickly. These are quadrennial program reviews, except for this year because we are in a six-year cycle. The Sea Grant legislation that drives the evaluation. Congress has said that these reviews need to be done, and the Board has a role in helping to lead that evaluation. It's the only in-person review conducted at the Sea Grant programs. It results in a recertification of the programs, which I'll talk about in a second. As I mentioned, the Evaluation Committee is responsible for leading that, so we will ultimately be looking for a Chair and members of that Evaluation Committee from the Board, and all Board members participate in the site reviews. It doesn't mean that the Evaluation Committee does all the work, but some specific things need to be done, such as making sure that the 34 reviews are done and done in an equitable and consistent manner.

The independent review panel (IRP) we did the last time is a review of the national office and overall National Sea Grant College Program component of the evaluation, which happens after the rest of the cycle ends. The IRP was the first external review we've had in a long time. Ms. Targett chaired without being on the Board along with a Board member co-Chair, so we have a lot of experience in the room. The Evaluation Committee has a role in evaluating the process that occurred the last time and how we might change things.

What we're trying to do now is set up this site review, and this is just an example from the last site review:

## In the 2014-2017 Review (carried out in 2018-2019)

Site Review Report Results	Totals
Number of Programs who met the Standards of Excellence	32 out of 34
Total Number of Findings	548
Total Number of Suggestions	298
Total Number of Recommendations	60
Programs who have recommendations	21
Programs who don't have recommendations	13
Total Number of Best Management Practices (BMPs)	104
Programs who have BMPs	31
Programs who don't have BMPs	3

## In the 2014-2017 Review (carried out in 2018-2019)

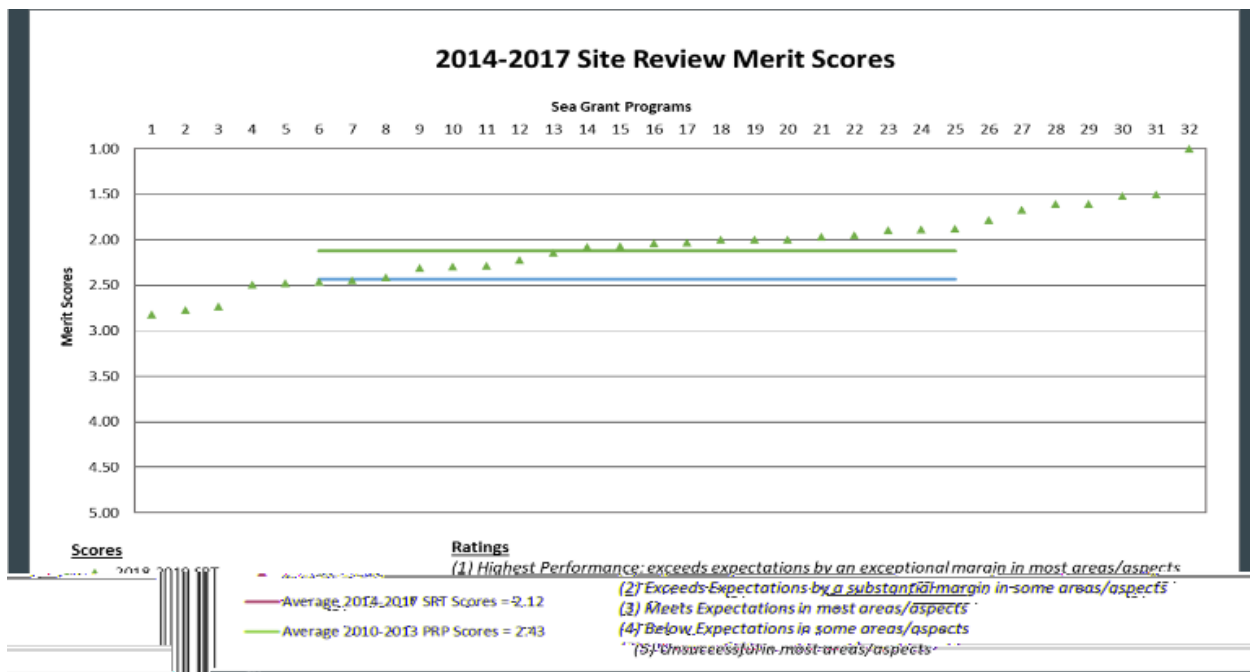
National Focus Area Rating Scale	HCE	SFA	RCE	ELWD
Number of Programs that ranked 1: Highest Performance exceeds expectations by an exceptional margin in most areas/aspects	4	4	8	8
Number of Programs that ranked 2: Exceeds Expectations by a substantial margin in some areas/aspects	13	18	16	19
Number of Programs that ranked 3: Meets Expectations in most areas/aspects	17	9	10	7
Number of Programs that ranked 4: Below Expectations in some areas/aspects	0	0	0	0
Number of Programs that ranked 5: Unsuccessful in most areas/aspects	0	0	0	0

It was for the four year period from 2014-2017 which seems like an eternity ago, and it was carried out in 2018 and 2019. It was impacted by the government shutdown, so the 35 days of that shutdown blew our process up by about seven months. Here are the kinds of things that were looked at by the Evaluation Committee. When we got to the end of that cycle, of the 34 programs, 32 of those met the Standards of Excellence. The national office looked at the other two closely, in the interim time of the shut-down, one program addressed the SRT's recommendation and was recertified. The other was put on probation and the national office worked closely with the program in addressing the recommendations. They had work to do, that was on the administrative side of things. In both of those cases the program's were continuing to do excellent work, serving their constituencies. But there were problems in the administration that the review teams came up with. In fact, we in the national office knew of a couple of those problems going into the SRT review, and in the end the administrative issues were addressed and both programs were recertified.

There were almost 550 suggestions and recommendations and out of 300 of those, there were 60 recommendations among those 34 reviews to 21 programs and recommendations are something that there is an expectation that the programs respond to those before the next cycle. They're getting a lot of positive constructive feedback from the evaluation of the site review team. There were 60 recommendations the last time, and almost two-thirds of our programs got a recommendation in one way or another.

The only thing I would say that I hope we can do this time is that all 34 programs should have at least one best management practice (BMP) because every program is doing something exceptional, and it pains me when I look at the three that didn't get that. Most of the evaluation is how the programs do relative to their strategic plans. Their strategic plans are set up around the four national focus areas - Healthy Coastal Ecosystems, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, Resilient Communities and Economies, and Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development. We don't mandate that they work in all four national focus areas so those numbers may not add up to 34.

The programs either exceeded expectations or ranked in the highest performance categories in their overall scores. There was no program that was below expectations or wasn't meeting expectations relative to what they were doing in those focus areas. But the work being done was at least meeting *Standards of Excellence* and went above that in many cases. So here are the metrics scores:



A 1.00 at the top is the highest possible rating, and a 5.00 would be the worst possible rating. That blue line that goes across was the average for the previous review which was a Program Review Panel (PRP). The green line was the average from the SRT visits. They aren't the same so they're not directly comparable, there are some differences in the reviews. Again, pretty high getting up to exceeding expectations. Overall, last time that number went up, but most of the review teams would say they felt that the quality was really good. I think what most programs are trying to convey is that there are a number of things that go into this, and it's also how you organize your review and how you present the materials to the team so they can understand it.

The end result is that these reviews are mandated by Congress. It goes through this process; in essence, it's done in two solid days of work and a half day of writing in the field and debriefing with the program management team, University/College President, the provost, or whoever. It's almost a week-long effort for everyone to travel, do the two and a half days of reviews. There's a Board member on each one of those 34 site review teams.

Ms. Gray - The other thing that Mrs. Holmes, Ms. Rhoring, and the whole office worked really hard last time was to create guidance for each team so that you didn't have a team that was a bunch of hard graders and a bunch of easy graders so the easy graders got the best scores. They worked really hard to get some equity across the teams and how we did our scoring.

Dr. Pennock - And that's the challenge that was for me when I was a Sea Grant program director was for me to think my reviewers seem tougher than the reviewers that conducted another Sea Grant program, because the directors always talk. We try as best we can at the national office to level that out. It's just like any panel, we've all served on NSF, EPA or NOAA panels. And people view things differently and grade a little differently. There is no perfect way of doing it, but we try to make it as good as we can.

Dr. Betzer – I thought that people from the National Office who were co-chairs were fabulous. And every reviewer that was plucked from the outside world had expertise that was relevant in making a major contribution.

Dr. Pennock - That's always good to hear. We still know that there's a little bit more upfront training which was one of the recommendations that we can do. We want to do that in a way that's as efficient as possible for everybody involved, and we'll work on that. Built into the process, is making sure the directors are able to respond to the program reviews and scoring data as well. The Evaluation Committee under Dr. Murray's leadership looked at all 34 SRT reports and the director's responses. The Evaluation Committee surveyed feedback that included comments on the process from SRT external members, program directors, Advisory Board members, and program officers and brought all of that data to bear on how we are doing and in creating two reports. One was a fairness and equity report (are we being fair and equitable amongst the programs during the review and how the review was conducted) and a process report (how was the process, what might we improve, and what really worked well). So those are two reports that were generated by the Board's Evaluation Committee after the last SRT visits and if we look at the two reports the background is there. The overall observation is that the evaluation processes are working well. There are little things, but overall, we don't have to completely go in and retool the process that we did last year.

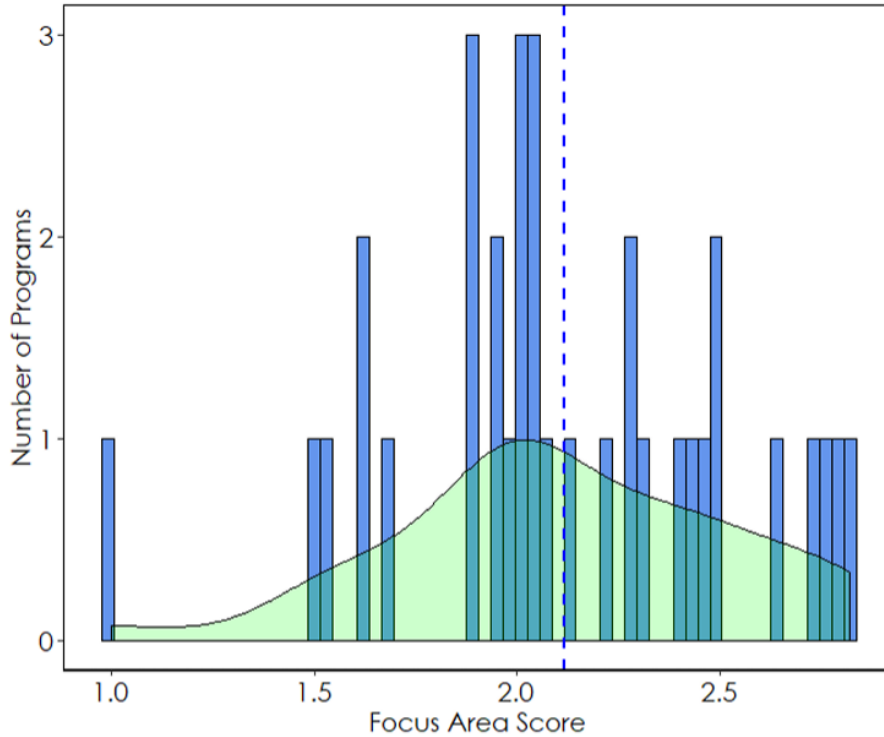
Dr. Murray – Historically, that statement has not been true. We've come a long way and are close to getting the process down.

Dr. Pennock – Thanks Jim. I appreciate that. But overall, when you take all of it and the input from across the broad spectrum of folks who were involved, it was very positive. There weren't very many negative comments. Were the reports consistent in the scoring, or did the words match up with the score – The answer was basically yes. Of the four national focus areas, there were a limited number of the best of the best for any one national focus area. It was pretty much a bell curve. And as I said, none

of the programs were seen as falling short of what they said they would do in their strategic plans, their own goals and objectives.

*Program distribution of total focus area scores for 34 Sea Grant programs.*

The role of our job is to ensure the best Sea Grant we can to the individual programs, and we're in a pretty good place. We need to continue to be aware of what individual programs are facing and the equity and fairness, so the Evaluation Committee finds the process useful as do our programs. It's not that there's a better way to do this. It's important to be there on the ground, giving a critical look to the



program, interacting with leadership at the university, with the stakeholders, with the staff at those programs. And that is really the more important part of the process than the merit. We want to be able to justify how we do merit because Congress has said 'Sea Grant you have to have merit'. You can't just give it out as base, merit has to be a part of the review of the programs. Currently merit I think was 7.4% in 2014. I think we've moved a little bit higher, but the base has increased too, but the target is about 10% of our funds should be in merit and we're still short of that. One thing about merit is that you really have to change or indicate that a change is going to happen as we move into the full four year cycle so that the programs can decide how they are going to budget relative to that merit in their program's activities. So that's where we are on fairness and equity. I think overall, it's fair to say we're doing the process pretty well.

Dr. Murray - And you do remember the past process, enormous complaints about the time, energy, and money that's put into that. And, I think it begins with the PIE System. I argue that it is the best system in the United States in terms of program management accountability, national plan, and implementation plan. There's no other program that does it well. I think the network understands the need for this subset and appreciates it.

Dr. Pennock - There's always been a longtime concern. How might we be able to evaluate more efficiently and that's a legitimate question that we want to make sure our office feels that way when it comes down to these cycles is a tremendous effort for the national office. It's a tremendous effort for advisory board members. It's certainly a tremendous effort for the programs. We just need to be aware of where we need to be and not try to do things that make it even more difficult moving forward. The site review process is where a lot of different findings are found. We're in the midst of churning through those now as we are going to generate the guidance for the next site review. It's based on all of the input and the evaluation of the committee. We're not going to go back out to the directors and ask what you think about the last cycle - they've already done that. But we will have to have a conversation so that everybody understands where we're going, that we're in the right place, and we do that in a time and in a way that we're still having our ears open and are listening, just to make sure there's not something that crops up or at least that we talked that through. So, on the process, we have a pretty good feeling about where it is at this point, and some recommendations are made for the process. But we have to be absolutely sure that we are doing the best we can in training the members of the SRT team so that when they're out at a different location we're as consistent as we possibly can be. We are providing a little more guidance on what the briefing book and the agenda would look like. But we know that when a team walks into a program, programs need to be able to do things the way they want, but there are cases where programs get frustrated. And, I would say, it's because they don't put the material together in as organized a way as they can. We will try to continue to bring out best management practices. We focus on pure data, and we create data. It's almost a separate data set from what is being put into the briefing book, and there's no cross reference. A challenge during the last round was on competitive research. We've already had the Board look into this and create a report with their recommendations to address it, we've gotten to the 30 to 50%. That will, I believe, improve the issues that we had where a few teams were saying, you know, sort of almost penalizing programs for being below 40%, and that was just a confused space, and that's why I turned to the Board a couple of years ago. We had a recommendation from the Board that was adopted in that report that was adopted by the national office.

Dr. Murray – At the end of the site review visit, there is a very critical meeting when the SRT is sitting with the Sea Grant director and his or her staff and the senior university officials, and when you say “meets expectations” and they got three rating in a national focus areas – that sounds bad when really they did a great job (in that middle ranking). They demonstrated a high standard of excellence – so it's really about the impression we're sending to the program bosses in the language that is used in the ratings.

Ms. Gray – The discussion I remember having was that this is the highest merit – like Nobel Prize stuff and that's why there are so few numbers in that top category in the early graph you showed. There are so few that were of merit in terms of the total numbers, and that's why we really try to stress that if you gave somebody a one, you're spectacular you couldn't possibly ignore it.

Dr. Pennock - We were talking about the makeup of the team, and I think we've decided that we do want to have directors be there as part of the review team because they bring a unique perspective, but we don't want to put them in a position to be a voting member because that is perceived as a conflict of interest. So I think having directors present is an important thing. But again, I don't want to diminish the importance of the work the evaluation committee did, but I think right now isn't necessarily the time to go over each one of those little details. I'm just trying to give a broad perspective. So, in the end, the

Evaluation Committee conducted a review of the process. Again, it was positive, beneficial, useful, and informative. There was a pretty serious effort made, and there is a serious evaluation of that effort by the Evaluation Committee. Is everything perfect...no. There's always room for improvement, but we're in a pretty good place, and that's the SRT process. Now, why did we bring it up at the meeting? Because this is something that's good for everybody to know, and the fact that the next one is just over the horizon. We're finishing up going through the recommendations and getting our guidance out for the program. This summer, there will be a charge to stand up the Evaluation Committee during the fall meeting, and this is a place where we will be looking for who's willing to help. We'll be doing our work in the national office, teeing things up for the SRT visits themselves. Our goal is to have them happen between the fall of 2024 starting October and going into the spring. That's a tight schedule, but the last time we got forced to drag it out another seven months because of a government shutdown. And it just gets too long from the first program being reviewed to the last one. Then with that finishing in the spring of 2025, fall 2025 would be the Evaluation Committee putting together, assessing and making sure that there's comfort in the recommendations from each of the Committee members' reviews. There are horrendous outliers for the wrong reasons. If there's an outlier, it would be a real outlier. The committee will then present its findings or recommendations. Following all of that, there is an independent review panel of the National Sea Grant College Program/National Sea Grant Office. So it's both looking at the administrative part of what we do and what we can do better, as well as Sea Grant being impactful. And that ultimately, the timing is intended to be able to inform a report to Congress, and we hope that we're in a good place on that. So that's what's coming up. And it's really just a heads up that when we get to the fall meeting, there'll be some stuff in the preparatory materials that will be around standing up the Evaluation Committee and this SRT visits and we just felt that it was important to take a little time for this discussion. Does anyone have any questions?

Dr. Lerner - As the only Sea Grant Association (SGA) representative, I want to make sure we're chiming in a little bit. Thank you, Dr. Pennock. This is really great. And thanks for the work you did looking at the past information and utilizing that to inform the future. It really took me back because what it prompts me is how we all collectively work together to set the motivation – we don't have that, which is really surprising. In particular, how do we set that motivation so that all programs are not only demonstrating the highest level of excellence possible but see this as an opportunity to do so for their communities, for their universities? This certainly is what we do in our program, and I know many others take it as an opportunity to show everybody how we shine. We make it a big deal.

Dr. Pennock – I think that's an opportunity at the SGA level with us too. Your voice and other directors who actually do take it seriously. With all the new directors, to say to them that this isn't just an evaluation but there's a real benefit to us.

Dr. Lerner - The entire program, including the National Sea Grant office. I really believe that we are only as good as our lowest common denominator. If we have one or two programs that are failing. We really are as a network only as good as that, despite the fact that others rate the higher rankings and the lesson because I know we're short on time is I do have to go back to the measures that you're using, I always wonder whether we're actually using a tool that has that level of accuracy. That has that level of resolution. You've got three levels that are great, even better and super awesome. And I wonder with review teams that aren't the same people on them, and with the variation that comes from those teams, no matter the best we do, do we really have the level of resolution to be able to say that we can go to that decimal point, if you will.



Ms. Gray – As a member of a gazillion of these site reviews, I think it was pretty clear in the teams that there is a difference between three and two and one.

Dr. Lerner – I always come back to the problem, if everybody is exceeding the merit, that takes away from some of the motivations for those who are motivated by higher levels.

Dr. Pennock - We've moved in that direction, but completely balling it up into everybody's doing a great job doesn't really meet congressional expectations.

Dr. Robinson – I hope, and perhaps you are planning on incorporating the discussion we just had about DEIJA in these discussions.

Dr. Pennock – Yes, we are trying to do that. The thing with DEIJA and why I think the report is so important now is because there are opportunities for our programs. I wish it was \$2 million a program, it's not that much, but to move forward, if we're going to have DEIJA be a part of the evaluation, we need to have programs know that as they're developing their strategic plans.

Dr. Murray – During the last round we had four members of the Advisory Board Evaluation Committee and one Sea Grant director who's retired and was respected, we did that intentionally. Because this was sort of a new process and we wanted to make sure that the Evaluation Committee someone the SGA respected and someone who knew Sea Grant from a director standpoint. I thought that worked very well. The committee of five was about right. I would suggest that we think about that over the next few weeks. Also, perhaps an outside person with Sea Grant experience. So I would suggest as a Board as we think about a new committee that the Chair might be someone that's no university system.

#### **11:50 am – 1:20 pm: Lunch Break**

Ms. Stirling – We're going to turn to Dr. Pennock, and he is going to explain the allocation policy. The Advisory Board is going to be receiving a charge for that and what you need to think about since this is such a central aspect to Sea Grant funding – I would need a chair and two Board members. It's going to move pretty quickly because I think we'll have it wrapped up by fall 2023.

#### **1:20 pm – 2:50 pm – New Charges to the Board – Allocation Policy (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program)**

Dr. Pennock - The allocation policy is for the National Office to implement because it's how we distribute our money. It's a document that we go to when monies come through from Congress on the omnibus and other things. That allocation policy has to basically go with any of the documents that say here's how we're going to invest our 60 plus million dollars in our programs, and each Sea Grant program is going to get this or that and that goes with the allocation policy. The allocation policy for us really has to do with what might we do with new money primarily, because that's what it speaks to. But the last time we did an update to the allocation policy was 2013-2014.

I'll go into a little bit of the history of how we got there and it has important ramifications to our programs to what we do moving forward. So, when we say we want to invest in DEIJA, where does that fit within that policy? It shapes what we do. It's important to all of us within the network and the college programs, and I want to make sure that we can be transparent in that policy...we want it to support Sea Grant being as impactful.

Dr. Targett – You stated that the allocation policy doesn't change what baselining is now and what it does is change things for new funding coming in. Is that correct?

Dr. Pennock - It's in the priorities from the committee that recommended that to Dr. Cammon at the time, but it is because of what's in the policy. It's forward looking more than it is backward looking. The current policy was developed through multiple efforts. Dr. Garger and Mr. Eigen are the ones in our office who remember that better than I do. It took almost five years to get to where there was the new allocation policy. Dr. Sylvain from Connecticut and I were on the last one and it was the most divisive committee I've ever been on within Sea Grant. I was a program Director at the time (New Hampshire). The core principles are as valid now as they were then and I think there was a lot of great work done. I sometimes ask why don't I just sit on that policy until I retire and let somebody else do this. But there are reasons why I think we need to revisit and update that policy.

The charge I sent to Deb a few weeks ago was to establish a subcommittee of the Board, to review the policy for the allocation of funds. What I think would be appropriate would be up to three Board members who can provide advice to me and go out and interact with the directors to find 3 Sea Grant Association to work with on the subcommittee. I will provide a draft based on the last version of the policy that the subcommittee can then tear apart. Because if we go back to a base starting point of nothing, it's going to be really contentious and it's going to be a waste of our time.

Ms. Gray - I feel very strongly that rather than letting the board or some part of the board try and figure this out, that we start with a draft. I really appreciate you taking the initiative.

Dr. Pennock - The idea would be I provide some additional information, sitting down with the subcommittee. The advisory board members would work with Dr. Lerner and whoever but to have a few members from the Sea Grant Association. Timeline of April to August 2023. And then between April and our meeting in September hopefully be able to turn on that to get to the point where we've got a policy that could be adopted, that then becomes the policy that I can use next fiscal year and that's what I would like to be able to do in October. So that's a fast timeline for the way we usually do things but I think it's achievable.

Ms. Stirling – **We will now need a motion to establish the Allocation Subcommittee with membership to include Dr. Targett, Ms. Gray and Ms. Norosz and three SGA members:** Dr. Larry Robinson

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dr. Deidre Gibson

Vote: All in Favor

**Possible Charges to the Board - Fellowships Discussion (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program and Dr. Joshua Brown, National Sea Grant Office)**

Ms. Stirling - We are next going to hear from Dr. Brown on the fellowships. This is a really important part of the overall strategy to expand the program. We're all really looking forward to hearing from you on this Joshua.

Dr. Brown - Thank you Ms. Stirling and thank you all. This is a precursor conversation to a charge we hope to bring later in the year. We had intended to have a charge for you today, but we decided that discussion and additional research was the better part of valor. Ms. Samek who is a member of the National Sea Grant Office staff is on a detail as an Assistant Director for Partnerships. And as part of that

detail, she's going to be doing a preliminary analysis of some of the questions that we are looking into with relation to fellowships before drafting a charge to present to the Board.

Today we would like to collect questions and ideas from the Board on how we should go about analyzing our fellowships as a National Sea Grant College Program broadly. As the National Sea Grant College Program, inclusive of the national office, and the individual Sea Grant programs, we have a range of fellowships that are codified in statute. The primary one is the Knauss fellowship, it's written that we must do that. It is a marine science policy fellowship that brings graduate students either in their last year or they'd have just graduated to Washington, D.C. to work either in Congress or in the federal government, on marine science policy issues. That fellowship has grown by leaps and bounds. This year will be one of the largest classes ever with 80 or so fellows.

The second set of national fellowships is partnership driven, these are really based on needs identified by a partner organization that we are helping them meet. The one that has the most involvement at the national level is the NMFS/Sea Grant fellowships, and there are two of those - one looking at Population and Ecosystem Dynamics, the other at Marine Resource Economics. In the past, the National Marine Fisheries Service has provided a liaison to the National Sea Grant Office that helped oversee that fellowship. That position no longer exists or is vacant. It is jointly funded by our office and the Fisheries Service. And the intent is to provide funding for PhD students working on topics of interest to the National Marine Fisheries Service in conjunction with a fisheries mentor. And that's a much smaller group, usually in any given year we select four to seven fellows between those two fellowships. The Marine Resource Economics one is very small. Some years we get no applications, some years we get a very few. The population dynamics one is a bit larger - 20 applications normally this year, I think we got 30 some odd maybe 40, it's really for four to six positions. Similar on the national scale, there are the Coastal Zone Management fellowships. These are run by the National Ocean Service. They are intended to bring scientists interested in coastal zone management to work with state coastal zone programs. The National Sea Grant Office has almost no involvement with this, but individual Sea Grant programs provide the recruiting and application venue. There is no remuneration or connection to Sea Grant after those fellows are selected. And in fact, there's very little communication to Sea Grant programs at any point other than an expectation that our programs provide application assistance. So those are sort of national scale fellowships.

Additionally, many but not all Sea Grant programs have fellowships, internships, scholarships or other student opportunities with a variety of models and goals. Some very similarly mirror the Knauss fellowship, where they're policy oriented, putting people in state legislatures or agencies, others are more traditional research oriented, and some have uniquely specific goals.

We have a team underneath in the Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development space that manages our fellowships. That's Ms. Kennedy, who is our Student Opportunities Manager and then Ms. Lawrence, who is the Coordinator and she is specifically working on Sea Grant-NMFS fellowships but helping with Knauss. Both of them have described the fellowship process as basically living on a hamster wheel where there are no breaks, there are no pauses, everything rolls and you're dealing with multiple cohorts at a time. The incoming, the current and outgoing and so there's some challenges there. Again, we've been making strides, and I think Dr. Pennock has really made it a priority to help with that. But it has left little room for our national team to look and synthesize the program run fellowships to get the full picture of the value of that entire landscape and this is where the Board may come in.

We hoped to have a Charge, but we think it's really valuable to look at and get your insights on the questions that we have been thinking of putting in that Charge. The first one was really what types of fellowships are offered by Sea Grant. So, the first question to the Board is, is it useful to collect and analyze all these opportunities or in a Charge should we ask you to focus only on the national ones and those would really be the Knauss, the NMFS Sea Grant, the coastal management and then there's a new one that we are providing additional support which are our Community Engaged Internships, they're not quite fellowships. And we've been doing that about three years now and just made some additional investments to support that. So, would it be useful in a Charge to ask you to only focus on the national ones or does the Board feel there's value in looking at the whole landscape of Sea Grant associated fellowships and student opportunities?

Ms. Stirling - I think ignoring the local opportunities from the Sea Grant programs themselves is an oversight. There's so much value in the interaction enough to say training, workforce development and all that sort of thing all adds up. And it's all part of the value of the program.

Ms. Norosz – When I think about DEI we need to keep that pipeline expanded.

Dr. Lerner - Following on that same train. I think it will be a much heavier lift. In fact, you could be looking at having to explore, at least basically understand 30 or 40 or more types of fellowships and opportunities that are ongoing, but to me, you mentioned Dr. Murray workforce development. There's no question that that's what these are about, but I would offer that they're more fundamentally about building affinity and affiliation for Sea Grant. You're not only building a workforce, but you're building a workforce of people who end up in positions all over the planet who ideally then say I'm here because I was supported by Sea Grant and end up in positions where they can then return that support. I think it's just absolutely fundamental. I also think the other reason for reaching out to the programs is do you really want to run it all? Doing a gap analysis and having a better understanding holistically of what we're doing. Let's go back to the conversations we're having about Sea Grant. What are we doing collectively and then better understanding that as a big picture to really say where the national office could fill a gap, but the programs aren't covering here. I'm glad it's not getting into the actual fellowships, this conversation about a bigger picture thing.

Ms. Stirling – When you were talking about the new Sea Grant fellowships you mentioned something about marine fellowships, and you got some fellowships some years ago.

Dr. Brown – There's two fellowships that we offer, Population and Ecosystem Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics. These are workforce needs that the Fisheries Service has that are not being filled and these fellowships are targeting these to identify gaps. However long it's been since those were refreshed, there are other needs and how should we go about it.

Ms. Gray - These came out of those teams that had representatives from all of NOAA that got together and they were around the teams. And over and over again, it came up from fisheries about this gap. They weren't able to replace their aging population dynamics workforce. And then the marine resource economics is a very small field compared to the rest of the ones that we usually deal with. And Sea Grant...Dr. Cammon got together with the head of the Fisheries Service and they said what can we buy? We have this educational mission. Can we help you? And that's how those happened. For background, it wasn't that they came out of any kind of assessment.

Dr. Murray - That's sort of a really great way to use Sea Grant. Where we could partner and provide the next generation, and I think there's tremendous opportunities here.

Dr. Brown - So that goes to the second question that we're looking at and my question to you all is what value do the specific fellowships bring, whether national or local, what responsibilities do they bring, and what costs and my question for you is are those the right elements to focus on? I think they probably are. But if there's a better way to frame it, because fellowships definitely bring value, but they also bring costs and responsibilities.

Dr. Betzer - It also brings a tremendous opportunity. I think Dr. Murray brought it up earlier and Ms. Stirling has been talking about it and we've considered hurricanes. A lot of people in Florida and other states raised some money recently and put it into endowments for fellowships that support students that are working on these problems. If a Sea Grant program could say to a donor look, you support the fellow and we'll reinvest the earnings then you've just increased the chance that you're going to get a private gift about a huge amount. This is a great way to collaborate and magnify both sides. And could you get an advocate on one side saying Sea Grant is doing great stuff because you're addressing important problems, you're getting economic development, and you're getting an endowment that can help you write up the ups and downs of federal budgets and state budgets.

Ms. Stirling - I can also see where you could take Dr. Murray's idea of coastal resilience and connect it to DEIJA to help establish a pipeline to help establish capacity building in underserved communities. I think it's a really versatile tool for being able to get the groundwork laid for bringing people into the decision-making process.

Dr. Lerner - I'm happy to hear you're putting this forward. I think one of the things that comes to mind as you're talking about this, again, going back to that kind of getting that broader understanding, I think is an important piece but also and I'm sure this is already where you're thinking and maybe it's in there too, but also thinking about the existing as to where are they going, what are the roadmaps for them? Where are they going and why? And I'll give an example, my time in Sea Grant, we've gone from 50 Knauss fellows to 80-85. I don't know if that's been a strategic plan behind that or if it's because there's a lot of executive offices because we're great. And the fellows are great that you got a ton of executive offices clamoring for more and so you're feeding that beast. But, in my opinion, quantity isn't always quality. We know when we're dealing with human beings, that there's some percent of human to human interactions that can be troublesome. And that percent as an absolute number just goes up when we have more. Let's face it Knauss is an extremely prestigious fellowship and I know we move away from using that word for good reasons, but to try to communicate my thoughts to you that gets diminished. If we're just growing for growth. So again, I'm using that as an example of, is there a really good understanding and plan? Maybe there's some great reasons and I'll take it away from Knauss for any of these to continue to grow, perhaps without bounds that I don't realize.

Dr. Brown - I don't have an answer to that question so I'll just thank you for it. I think maybe we move sort of what you're getting at and the opportunities that you raise, Dr. Betzer, the question we're thinking for the Charge of how do we balance value with costs, just to that return on investment. It gets to the cost to our staff or program staff. I know, some states have been growing their fellowships and are now struggling with the care and feeding of their fellows. Because once you get to a certain number, it becomes exponentially harder. So, the question for the Board is, is their expertise and interest on the Board at doing the sort of work of balancing value and costs in particular with regard to student

opportunities, or should we be including in the Charge a request to identify external team members as well? Is this a thing that the Board should do by itself or should we bring in smaller large additional teams?

Dr. Murray – I think it's generally always a good idea to add outside experts on the Board and would be very beneficial.

Dr. Brown - The first three questions are focused on all of our fellowships, or whatever university we wanted to define. If we narrow the scope a little (say a second half of the Charge) to look at these partner driven fellowships like coastal zone, NMFS and some that may exist at the local program level. There are some questions that we thought might be useful, and I put them up there but there really are other questions or are these the right questions? Who's setting the priority? Who's doing the work? How are the values, responsibilities, and cost a portion? What else should we be looking at in a Charge around partner driven fellowships if anything? What are other questions we should ask that I didn't put up here? What are the things that you're looking at or I completely forgot this one very obvious thing?

Ms. Gray – One of the things that we've perpetually struggled with and you do very well with Knauss is what happens when the people leave the fellowships, and who does the tracking of that? That's a whole other level of engagement that takes time and energy and it's so important. How many people in this room were Knauss fellows and that's a huge metric. But like I said, you guys are pretty good at keeping up with the Knauss fellows.

Dr. Robinson – I'm curious, is there any particular reason that there are no corporate mobile foundation partners aside from the universities?

Dr. Brown – Some of the local programs do and at the national level almost 20 years ago there was an industry Sea Grant fellowship for a time and then during one of the many economic contractions, it was seafood industry and they just didn't have the resources anymore to support them and we haven't gone out on a national level.

Dr. Pennock – That's an excellent question. What I'd love to see is if we can get through this analysis and get that type of thing there and as part of where we need to go and also trying to answer the question of what do we need to make that happen? Because part of the challenge with partnerships in general is there's some shared responsibility. And our ability to really bring significant dollars to bear on that just doesn't exist. We can reprogram and there are things that we can do, but I think we sort of need that model that's incumbent on Sea Grant to look into this and here's what it would take to do that. That would be helpful.

Dr. Lerner – I'm struggling a little bit on the kind of equating cost and value. I understand there's only so much funding and cost has to be considered at some point but I don't feel that they're of equal importance or of consideration. They need to be prioritized.

Dr. Brown – Are you thinking cost in dollars because in my mind it was cost in human lives, so cost versus benefit.

Dr. Lerner – It's the dichotomy that's kind of bothering me a little. I think you go for like pie in the sky, you go for the biggest and best thing possible in my opinion, if you're asking a group to focus on what would be the ultimate and then you can bring that in and kind of scale back and maybe start doing these

cost benefits analysis in terms of like really hitting both the dollars and the human aspects of those things. I think the bigger question you want to go back to is the value piece and the long-term value of workforce development and building. I use the phrase affinity and affiliation, you know, building this forever cadre of people that help continue building Sea Grant over time. And it seems like there's just different layers there. And if you go for that big picture, then you have a huge menu of things that you can then choose from that cost benefit then say okay, sure, we'd love to do that. And maybe when we're a \$300 million program, we'll do that but we can't do that right now. We want to do this. I know that's only the money thing.

Dr. Brown – The reason I framed them that way specifically and I appreciate the feedback is that I personally am willing to bend over backwards to do things for students. I actually think the value of almost any fellowship is intimate. We are helping somebody get skills and move in a direction in their career that they may not have ever had an opportunity to. You almost can't measure that. There are ways to measure pieces of it but what I think many of us not just in the national office, but in the programs would benefit from well is that \$5,000 really worth the work. Where are the thresholds that we say, okay, we don't have the resources right now to engage but the value is so high if we reprogrammed \$250,000 which is not nothing but is potentially doable. If we could get somebody to match that, that's a half million-dollar fellowship that could fund a couple of fellows and is that worth it? That's where those terms and ideas came from, but also the responsibility to separate those because we struggle. If a fellow or somebody who's wearing our hat finds themselves in a toxic environment reaching the end of their year or three years, what responsibilities do we have to them at the end, so that's where my thinking is, and I really appreciate you challenging that. So the question maybe the higher level question on all of these is, how prescriptive should our charge to the board be? Or should we say, hey, we really like you to look at the value and other attendant things associated with all the fellowships that Sea Grant does and can you pay particular attention to the partner driven ones because we need to make decisions.

Ms. Stirling - But in terms of determining value don't we have a knowledge gap here because if you're not tracking, you don't know where all Fellowships are, and you're not tracking where they go over time. How do you assess the value? That's a related question, but it kind of goes to the heart of your issue about costs and getting 40 hours for \$5,000. In a private sector world that wouldn't compute. But in a private sector world, you're producing widgets or something like that, whatever. This is different. We're back to Jim's comment about workforce development and also about where did these kids end up and what kind of tracking devices do we have both at the national level and at the state level? Because there are so many internships that are available in the various Sea Grant programs and I have no clue if that information even exists, but it would be nice to gather it up and know where these kids end up over time and track them for 20 years.

Dr. Robinson – You can take some of that cost off of your books by making it a requirement for institutions that they're coming from in the first place.

Dr. Murray – I want to know or maybe the Office of Education to know what houses what other partner driven fellowships in NOAA and who's funding them? Can you expand on that a little further? And what other agencies in the beltway are funding marine type fellowships that might be an NSF or whoever. That helps frame the Sea Grant niche if we know the playing field.

Ms. Gray – I would suggest that we make it part of the Charge to the Knauss fellows, they keep in touch or any of these fellowships that they get back to us and just create a culture around reporting that and you'll get more than you have now by stating we want to hear back from you.

Dr. Lerner - I agree, but I think it has to be both. I think it has to be active on our side and on theirs. I think we need to encourage them to do exactly what you said and make a really strong pitch for that. I'm always trying to balance because I know I'm supposed to be SGA in the room and not Hawaii Sea Grant but we have an alumni tracking and we're active and I think we're doing okay, and even with both of those things, it's challenging. And then when you go 45 years and 16-17 hundred fellows it's got its challenges and I think we all recognize that.

Dr. Brown – As part of this alumni network analysis, we reached out to the programs to identify good practices and I can make sure that work is part of the materials to the Board so you know where we are or where we've been. But only a few programs even get to the level of why you know Darren is telling you how hard it is. Most programs don't even get that far.

Dr. Gibson – I'm curious as to how the fellowship programs are growing and impacting – you mentioned something about the management one.

Dr. Brown - Our national fellowships appeal to different people at different stages of their career. The NMFS Sea Grant one is for PhD students, usually in their first year, and it provides up to three years of funding. The Knauss Fellow is primarily targeted at folks who are just finishing or finished. So, it's different groups. If you were to compare ours with some of the others in NOAA, there are some similarities. Where we do see some competition is if a program has a Knauss like opportunity. We have had students who apply to both their state one and the national one, and then decide where they want to go based on a range of factors. I've been working for three years with the Office of Education and we're slowly building a full landscape of student opportunities through NOAA to show that if you go to a Sea Grant summer camp, you can then travel in the classroom and then go to high school opportunities and then you can get an undergraduate scholarship from Hollings and then you can really show that whole landscape so that however and whenever you finally touch that web of no opportunities, you're brought in and you travel along as long as you would like to and then you go out wherever you would like, but you maintain and I love that phrasing...affinity and affiliation. Because right now, if you're a student who goes to a Sea Grant summer camp in middle school, that may be your only connection. You may never hear of Knauss fellows or anything. I found out about the Knauss fellowships a couple of months before the deadline because of an email my graduate advisor sent and said "don't bother with this" and I said "wait this sounds absolutely amazing I can do this". And, fortunately it was. It must have been a slow year because I got in and it was a life changing experience. So, that's the real pie in the sky, which is way beyond what this Charge is? But that analysis that we've been trying to do, our fellowship landscapes is something that I think needs more expertise and capacity than we have. And so that's the first step in coming to you with this idea. And then specifically, these partner driven ones have some challenges.

Ms. Stirling – Does anyone have any closing thoughts or do we have other comments? There were lots of interesting points around the table.

Dr. Murray - I was going to pick up on this last point and actually suggest this to the Advisory Board activity in the strategic planning section and it deals with communicating with not just our Knauss



alumni but all Sea Grant alumni. I heard from several people about a month ago stating that once they rolled off the Advisory Board and received their lapel pin and retired after spending 30 years working with Sea Grant I never heard from them again. One of the reasons why universities have alumni associations is to get money but also to keep the support going through that university. I would suggest an Advisory Board activity is a committee that puts together and I know this costs money and would rely on input from the programs -- but developing something simple like a periodic newsletter that goes out to Sea Grant alumni like you get from your university. seek out like a gift from your university. But I think the important thing to do, particularly now that we're in our 57 year and there's a lot of former Sea Grant retired people out there that lose connections.

Ms. Stirling – Let's wrap this up...thanks Dr. Brown for a very interesting discussion.

### **2:50pm – 3:10pm: Afternoon Break**

### **3:10 pm – 4:50 pm: Strategic Discussion of the National Sea Grant College Program (Informational) – (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair and Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program)**

Ms. Stirling - We've gone through a lot of really interesting discussion points today. Any one of which we could take off on and they're all really of value in terms of the long-term health of the program. Dr. Pennock has some thoughts about the kinds of things he sees that are important. So, he's going to start by framing those thoughts and then we'll see how that unfolds from there.

Dr. Pennock - We're having probably more than normal opportunities to present things that Dr. Brown just talked about partnerships and other things. There's one thing I ultimately would like to get some input from the Board that Ms. Stirling and I just talked about, given where we are. Let me throw a few things out there. And if we started a discussion now that would be great. I think we can follow up a little tomorrow. This is more long-term, there's not going to be an answer right now. But just a few examples. One of the things that is in our most recent authorization which is never ever is that the role of the Director is to support our programs for growth and it does also to grow new programs when applicable. What are we doing well, and what do we need to do better? And what do we need to look at in a different way to grow our ability to support the equity we're talking about? Ms. Norosz and I have talked about the tribal side of things and whatnot. I look at that space and say we absolutely need to move forward. We have great examples of where over the years such as Hawaii has been a leader. Many years ago, they said we do some extension work in American Samoa or Marshall Islands and we've contributed to that. I don't think I would say I don't feel like I've connected with HBCUs and MSIs and CSCs the way we could, what should our approach be to try to get better. It's often is to take generally our one university that is the host university for a Sea Grant program and say what can you do to help us in that space and we make some progress, but the one thing that we generally are doing is, is reaching out to our tribes and saying here we are and we're not going to say we're here to save you, but that's a problem with federal government. We're not necessarily empowering those entities via tribal colleges and others. So, what should be our approach -- where are we missing? What's the most effective way that we can make a dent in that space? When Dr. Betzer and I went out to celebrate Guam's new institutional program. I took a day and was over in the Northern Marianas Islands and they were very interested. They talked to Dr. Sheldon and they talked to Dr. Lerner, we had a great meeting. I came away from their thinking here's the college in the Northern Marianas it is their college, right? You go through and look at aquaculture work they're doing and other things they're doing are Sea Grant related

in an area of the world that we know climate change is really going to be and it already is challenging to engage. They want to be a Sea Grant Program. So, how do we do that on the home front? What I need help with is knowing Sea Grant the way you do knowing our budget the way it is, where can we make a difference and how do we go about doing this and adding programs? We've talked about community colleges and tribal colleges being the windows into some of the populations that we're trying to serve. It feels like at times we're diminishing their value by saying you need to be under one of our existing programs. Is there a way to do that, put your arm around them and help them to a point that has a path forward? I think for the things we're talking about, I need help and we need to try to sort out how best to do that. What are we missing? We're missing everything with the CSC right? I mean, can Sea Grant connect with the CSC in a way that would be more effective for you to work and for seeking to accomplish the goals that we have which overlap considerably with Florida A&M and Hampton's goals and Eastern Shore, University Maryland, Eastern Shore. I'm throwing it all out there, but all of these things come together. And I think we need to be able to develop a better plan and strategy for how we can do that in a way that serves the populations that we want to serve. That is consistent with the programming that we already provided and are doing a really good job of and I'm just looking for ideas. I guess I'm going to leave it at that and this isn't a one off. If you can throw ideas out it'd be great. But I need a continuing conversation in this area and try to see where we might be able to go and I'm looking to you guys to see if you can help with that moving forward.

Dr. Lerner - I really appreciate the perspective and I guess what I'm about to say might seem like I'm a little crazy, because I'm going to go in both directions. But you know, on the one hand, you know, I really do believe like, One Planet, One Ocean, and here we have 34 Sea Grant programs that are doing some really great things. And I think maybe the perspective from being out there on a small piece of land in the middle of nowhere in Hawaii is like okay, we can keep doing this. But if others aren't, then we're kind of spinning our wheels to an extent, right. I mean, we're mowing the lawn, as they say. A number of us from our programs have been involved with Korea Sea Grant programs and thinking about developing Japan Sea Grant and by no way, or by any means, do I mean, or tend that should be under one umbrella. It's about helping them see these programs, how they work and the need for them and then they create their own thing. Obviously, we bring it back to the US and what you've put on the table in terms of the Pacific and things and Guam's not and R1 either but they're moving up. So, I just said yeah, we should support all of this. But then on the other side, what are the guardrails? The guidelines? Is it that R1 is part of the definition of excellence for Sea Grant? I think Guam shows us no, you don't have to be but there are limitations to like we'll see. I'll say this with Dr. Sheldon in the room. Don't get me wrong. We'll see. How will they do with their competitive research program? They're going to have limitations. Can they reach out to Hawaii researchers? Absolutely. Can they reach out to California researchers? I would hope so. But it's a small community. Right. And so, and he and I have had this conversation too, but does he make up for that in outreach and community engagement and all those other things make up for that? Does he balance in terms of that financial and otherwise portfolio and how he's engaging in Sea Grant? I mean, yeah, clearly, Peter was there when I gave a talk and in Guam and the Fieldhouse and had to follow our former Congressman, I mean, there's no doubt that I have the highest respect for the program and what they're doing, but there are limitations. So now you go to Saipan, it is a four year program and they do give bachelor science Bachelor of Arts out of that four year.

We have community colleges across the Pacific, largely two-year degrees. They're an extension of high school. If you're going to compare that to the community college and make it up Virginia somewhere or

anywhere across the US. I mean, that as well understood, and it becomes challenging then to build that bridge from that community college to the University of Hawaii at Manoa, for instance, for a four-year degree, because you bring them in low and you can see the gaps. Right. So, when we think about this, how do we provide capacity that changes that equation for those places and to be honest, and I just had this conversation with Landisang Kotaro, who was coming in as our keynote speaker for Wednesday night. She's the Chief of Staff for the President of Palau. And we're talking and I'm talking about the role that Hawaii plays in the Pacific and I'm like, Yep, we're still colonizing. I mean, we've spent 10 years 12 years 28 Whatever that 2002. When we first got into American Samoa, they didn't have a program there. We're still putting people in American Samoa now. It so happens we have someone who's been living there now for like 12 years and is so part of that community. But that's not the point. Like when we think about on the one hand, yeah, I think Sea Grant should be everywhere. We need that for the work that we're doing. On the other hand, how do we build the capacity that they need to do that for themselves? And to support themselves - how do we do it?

Ms. Stirling – We will pick up this discussion again tomorrow and then we'll see where it takes us. For us who are on the Board, it's our business meeting, where the ethics training and the public meeting will be starting at 8:30am. Any other questions or thoughts? She then thanks everyone for their attendance.

5:00 pm – Meeting Adjourned.

## **Monday, February 27, 2023**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 8:30 am – 3:00 pm ET

### **8:30 am – 8:40 am – Welcome New Board Member (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

Ms. Stirling (Board Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and officially called the meeting to order. Ms. Stirling reviewed the agenda and then turned the meeting over to Ms. Holmes (Designated Federal Officer (DFO)) for a DFO briefing and Roll Call.

Ms. Holmes read an official statement explaining her role to the group and took roll call of the members of the Board. She then turned the meeting over to Ms. Stirling (Board Chair) who went over the agenda for the meeting and then called the meeting to order.

### **Roll Call**

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

Dr. Peter Betzer; Dr. Deidre Gibson; Ms. Judith Gray; Dr. Jim Murray (Vice Chair); Ms. Kristine Norosz; Dr. Larry Robinson; Ms. Deborah Stirling (Board Chair); Dr. Nancy Targett.

*Board Ex Officio Members:*

Dr. Jonathan Pennock – Director of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP), Dr. Darren Lerner, President of the Sea Grant Association (SGA).

*National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) staff in attendance:*

Ms. Susan Holmes – Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Board, National Sea Grant Office.

### **8:40 am – 9:20 am – National Sea Grant Office Update (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))**

There's a lot of great stuff going on in the network as we're coming out of COVID, and the last three years have been tough on our programs, particularly with the engagement, the face-to-face work that we do during COVID has been challenging. And there's a lot of plasticity and the educators and extension folks who learn how to work with their constituents in different ways. And now we're moving back in a little bit more of a hybrid and in-person environment. There's still been amazing stuff going on, and the metrics continue to astound me. Some of the things that have happened recently are resilience awards. Some of those have been through partnerships. A number of fellows are now being hired into NOAA and into federal service through the new direct hire authorities. We had the graduation ceremony for the 2022 class, and I think it was one day later we had the welcome orientation for the 2023 class.

Our staff feel the Board's support and engagement with them and their opportunities again at this meeting, and please, if you don't know some folks, Introduce yourself it means a lot to our staff. And it's a window into what we do in the national office. This has been a constantly changing graphic. We're now, I think, about 22 federal employees, our fellows, and two contractors in our office, so we're just around 25 or so people, we have had some departures as well. There's been a lot of change going on with staffing because some have taken advantage of professional development opportunities such as details to other NOAA offices or who also are interested in doing some other work such as opportunities to supervise. So, we've tried to make those opportunities available.

We're still operating pretty much business as usual with being able to backfill some of these positions. So, I want to celebrate the staff and everything they have done. In addition to the challenges, there are opportunities from the Sea Grant network to join the national office with IPAs, and the leadership that they'll be able to provide. We are working on other replacement hires as well.

We are in the midst of trying to respond to the IRP of which an organizational assessment and our organization will structure. We're analyzing that and we're working through that and trying to balance out our need to bring people in, we would ideally have all of that figured out completely and we'd be knowing exactly what we're hiring towards. But a lot of these changes have happened before we got to the end of the assessment and really trying to roll out what that new structure is going to be. It's really important to us that we have work life balance issues. I think our staff love Sea Grant for the most part and that's the feedback that we get to various surveys. We continue to work on that we're looking at efficiencies, we're looking at clarity, and we're looking at work life balance for our staff. So that's sort of a story on staffing. Does anyone have any questions?

Ms. Gray - I really want to honor your commitment to the development of your staff. A lot of people don't want to be there and work hard and don't have a life. And I really think it's important. I think that we're a better organization for it - for all the experiences that these people bring back into the Sea Grant program, but also, even the ones that leave because of their experience. They're taking the Sea Grant message out and I think it's wonderful, and I really honor your position on that. I wish everybody thought that way.

Dr. Pennock - Thank you. That means a lot from someone who was a supervisor and you dealt with that within NOAA and it is a balancing act and trying to make sure we get the trains on the track but also provide those opportunities. I appreciate that.

Okay, a few recent activities. We're working hard on the allocation of the FY23 appropriations. I'll talk specifically about that in just a minute. We're working on BIL (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) and the Inflation Reduction Act opportunities, the marine debris that was codified in the law that Sea Grant would receive \$50 million, \$10 million a year to work on marine debris. The inflation Reduction Act did not actually call out many entities within NOAA. Those decisions have been made at the secretary level and at Dr. Spinrad's level and so we've spent a lot of time working to create opportunities. The lead in resilience is in NOS. So that is a challenge as we work through that and we work as one NOAA in that space.

We're working hard on onboarding and training materials both for our own office but also for the network. The way in which somebody who comes into Sea Grant can bring themselves up to speed along with working with our colleagues. There's so many new hires and many changes in the network.

There has been a strong trajectory of funding since FY19, where we're \$12 million greater in our base and our core funding, and we're a couple of million more in the aquaculture funding if we went back another five years there was a big growth in the aquaculture funding before that, so we're now a \$94 million a year program. There are directed monies from Congress that sit within the base, the core lobster is an example of that. Contaminants of emerging concern, and then there's aquaculture that sort of sits in it as an actual line in the federal budget for aquaculture and aligned for Sea Grant base core which is where our programs and all of our board activities or office activities are within that \$80 million. And again, we're with marine debris, and it was noted in the appropriation that Sea Grant got

\$10 million a year in marine debris funds. That's obviously also directed funding, but that moves us well above \$100 million total.

We often have a little bit of carryover funds, and this last year was a little bit greater. There are expenses that we have to pay for small business innovation research (SBIR) and for Hollings Scholarships and those are congressionally mandated. We have fees that we pay for our office space and other things. That totals \$1.4 million. The 5.5% cap of funds for the national office of that is \$4.9 million that comes off for us to run our office and do things within the administrative side of what we do. In FY 22 and FY 23 we're right at around \$60 million for our program base and merit. So that's 75% of what we get in that area that is already going out to the programs in base plus merit. As we'll talk about in just a minute, there's another \$6.75 million that we're actually adding midway through FY 23. Now that we finally have the budget and we are committed to our programs to continue, that'll raise that number to \$66 plus million dollars going to both base and merit. We spend a small amount on Knauss fellowships in the education program. We have the direct investments this year, it's about \$4 million for three different elements that Congress included in the omnibus appropriations package. We continue to support while we're doing more with IPAs, our liaisons conferences, there's things that we do that come out of that budget, in this case for 23 that resulted in about \$7.3 million that left at the bottom of all the things if we take the \$80 million and the carryover we started with and we rolled through all of those things. There was \$7.3 million. That's what I'll talk about. I do want to draw attention to the \$1.3 million and carry over that was a significant number for us, and we can't budget on that total. We have to recognize that we may not have that type of carryover in subsequent fiscal years so that's a little bit of a play that way and I need to work with for that \$7.3 million here the decisions that we made just yesterday, sent the final guidance out to each of the programs individually as to what they can write a proposal for. Congress has specific language not specific for \$4.25 million, but specific language that for resilience and some of the new money we got is to go to resilience. We have decided and worked on this together, that'd be \$125,000 per program. That's \$4.25 million. We got a \$4 million increase last year to the base budget, but we had some sort of buffer that accumulates through the year so we're making that commitment. Then there's an additional \$2.5 million that we are using the allocation policy to address. The one thing we haven't done is been able to increase the merit up to the 10%. That was a goal of the other allocation policy. The bottom line is that their \$6.75 million going to the program this year and we are providing that as guidance for the next omnibus for the four years of that omnibus obviously depends on appropriations, at least staying stable. That's where we are on the budget decisions.

For Marine Debris, we have two competitions that are done. It's just short of \$20 million the first two years we competed. We'll have another competition for two years that will be released later this year with some time to work on that.

Again, I'm running out of time, so I'm not going to spend more time here. I would just like to thank the Board for the efforts on the charges. What's now the 30 to 50% research policy that came out of the 40% charge, obviously getting Guam up to institutional status, and the liaison efforts that we've made. Ms. Gray - I'm very interested in the podcasts. Is there a list of all those Sea Grant podcasts somewhere? I looked around the website and I couldn't find it? And I am a podcast shower. I'm always looking for something educational and I would love to listen to Sea Grant podcasts.

**9:20 am – 10:00am – Sea Grant Association Update (Dr. Darren Lerner, Sea Grant Association President)**

**9:20 am – 10:00am – Sea Grant Association Update (Dr. Darren Lerner, Sea Grant Association President)**

#### Introduction

My name is Dr. Darren Lerner. I serve as the Director for our program at the University of Hawaii Sea Grant Program. I also serve on the campus as the Associate Dean for Research, that's a one-year interim term, and I'm in my 380th day of that and a year as the SGA President, so I get to serve in that role this year and next.

We will talk about change being the only constant and update you on some of the things we discussed in the leadership transition retreat in December, which was here in DC. Talk briefly about a new initiative around carbon footprint and future meetings.

#### Personnel Updates

Dr. Lerner: In addition to when you are SGA President, you're a president-elect for two years. You're president for two years and past president for two years. I will remind Dr. White tomorrow that she isn't off the hook yet. But you usually do a lot of things leading up to that. So, you'll see that Dr. White was at large, and she was ERC (External Relations Committee) vice chair, and then she was chair, and then she spent quite some time in a leadership role for the SGA and that's all volunteer. We want to thank Ms. Barrow for her continued service. She's our secret association fiscal manager. If you don't know Ms. Barrow, she's with the North Carolina Sea Grant. And welcome Ms. Daris if you haven't seen her yet. She's here at the meeting. She's now officially the SGA events coordinator and has been helping us tremendously with hotel logistics.

We've had some retirements. Congratulations to Dr. Chilton from USC, Dr. Bowden from Lake Champlain, and Dr. Johengen in Michigan, who have recently retired.

#### SGA Focus & One Sea Grant Efforts

Over the next couple of years, we're focusing our attention on one Sea Grant, focusing our agenda and the work we're doing on developing relationships. We have a roomful of directors, some of whom just don't know each other that well, and a lot of what we do as a network depends on those relationships. We're bottom-heavy in terms of zero to four years, and five to eight years. We have a few now popping up in the 17 to 20.

Dr. Pennock – I would just note in the zero to four, three of those years we Covid, so actually more challenging than it would be if they were all normal years or normal meetings and normal opportunities. So, it's incumbent on all of us.

Dr. Lerner – You've heard me say that it's a concern, allocation policy, and the discussion of it has had some challenges in the past. We're now bringing it into the room with a group of people who don't necessarily have well-formed relationships, get it and understand it. We're going to work on that.

#### SGA Demographics

The other thing I looked at was digging into the history from the beginning, which is where we are in terms of men and women who serve as directors. I do have a non-binary piece up there, and I will tell you, I don't have that information. And so, as I tell you, but especially as I tell the directors or our entire audience on Tuesday tomorrow, if I don't have this data, correct, let me know. Because I might not, but this is what I do think that I know, we're in a very positive upward trend. Around 2010, we really started to pitch forward and upward in terms of this ratio between men and women who served as Sea Grant directors. We will kick off women's month, March 1, with 17-17 for the first time, which is awesome. But we still have more work to do. That's the history. We've had 156 men serve as directors, and we've had 35 women. We should celebrate and keep going. In addition, a number of you in this room know Dr. Davidson. She served as South Carolina Sea Grant director from 83 to 96. She was the fourth woman to serve as a Sea Grant director. She is the first woman to serve as Sea Grant Association President. The woman on the right is Fredrika Moser. I understand she'll be with us tomorrow. She was the 15th woman to serve as Sea Grant director. She serves as Maryland Sea Grant director, and she was the second woman to serve as SGA president. Following Fredrika was Susan White. So, I think we're on a course to do better. I've been informed by Michigan Sea Grant that Sylvia Newell will be serving as the Michigan Sea Grant Director. She starts in June. This very same year, for the first time ever we have 18 women and 16 men in 2023.

#### Recent SGA Activities

We have a leadership transition retreat for those who do not know when the presidency and the SGA change over. We also changed the Board. We get that outgoing Board and the incoming Board together with leadership from the National Sea Grant Office and leadership from the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, and we talk about what the future could look like. In this particular conversation, and if you stick with us for the next couple of days, you will hear more as we continue to focus on these themes of One Sea Grant.

You've heard Dr. Pennock mention this on partnerships on DEIJA, which we heard quite a bit about and had a lot of success in this meeting yesterday and moving forward with the work that the National Sea Grant Advisory Board has been doing. And we also had our first meet and greet, although it ended up being with OAR. Ms. Menashes was able to join us in person. We met again with Dr. Thur via zoom with all the directors and a few others in January and then scheduled to join the SGA on Wednesday.

Speaking of One Sea Grant and building affinity and affiliation. At some point before COVID, we said maybe we should get together with the Knauss legislative fellows and then, shortly after coming in for their years as Knauss Fellows, have a conversation to help them better understand what SGA is. We know there's Sea Grant, but what is the SGA? And why and how does that interrelate with Sea Grant, and how does that relate with the national office, and the advisor, and these other things.

Our federal science partners helped us gather at a really nice place quite close to the Hill and had some food and beverages. We did a few slides on what SGA is and all the things I just talked about. We had a lot of great conversations. And I think it was nice going back to building affinity and affiliation. It's not to say that all the Knauss fellows won't lead to really great things. But we know that the legislative fellows are in positions in which they are going to be engaged, perhaps even directly, in things like reauthorization, and we are going to be starting those down the road and reauthorization, and it expires in 2025, and my senator's office told me the other day that we have to start now. I thought I'd be doing it now.



### Appropriations

Appropriations: it's a lot of the same stuff we already shared with you. We're going to get more details when the ERC speaks to the General Assembly of folks tomorrow, but you see, for FY 24, we are putting in a request for a total for the entire enterprise of \$147,325 that's million and \$18 million as a request – that's a big number.

### Carbon Footprint Considerations

The other thing we did was informally set up a little bit of a subcommittee. It's just four of us to look at our carbon footprint and think about how to deal with it. Clearly, COVID and everybody moving to Zoom and the successes that we have had working together with Zoom, but I would also offer that the failures really kind of helped motivate me to think about this. I think it's clear that we mustn't decide that we will never get together in person. It's clear that the way relationships develop depends on some amount of in-person engagement. So, if we're going to do that, can we take a look at what we're doing in the skies in particular, as we get it on airplanes, and can we deal with it in some way that makes sense? So, in looking at this, there are two steps: you have to determine the total amount of carbon you're producing when you're doing that as an enterprise and how you're going to deal with it. In a very general sense, and we have yet to do much research. I'm sure there are mistakes. There's a lot of naivete that other people may know more, and if you do, please join the subcommittee and tell us more about it. It boils down to whether you can pay to play, or you might think about developing projects that are based and focused on restoration and reforestation, sequestration, etc. That would do things on the ground to offset that, and there are tools online that you can use to determine the total amount of carbon you're producing by moving around.

This tool allows you to put in where you're coming from and where you're going. And even though this is from one end of the continent to the other end of the continent, which does not represent all the flying that an SGA meeting is, some of us come from Maine to DC. Some of us come from Florida, and others from Hawaii, etc. For example, you get 42 ½ metric tons, making that round-trip flight for 75 people. We have 94 registered for the speed, so it's not the right number. But hey, let's go to Guam. I bet it changes numbers. Numbers about tripled to 130 metric tons. You can do some other things too. You can add more than just looking at your flights. You can look at lodging. You can look at other types of transportation. This is San Francisco to DCA, and it bumps it up from 42 ½ to 55.1. When you start throwing in, again, round numbers and things, there's nothing that's hugely and strictly accurate in fact, hopefully it's a little bit bigger than what we're actually doing because I've gone cross country and assumed for everybody, and then you can use that number to determine your offset plan. Now if you just want them to pay for it, there's a lot of caveats about that. If I go on to the United right now, if I go on to most airlines right now, boom, boom, boom, get to the end. Hey, do you want to offset that? Give us eight more dollars. Where is it going? We have no idea. What are they doing? We have no idea. This place some of our folks do a little bit of research on it seems to be pretty meaningful, and if you give them money they're going to take 80% of it and plant seagrass, and then they're going to do these other things, pay some administrative costs, etc. And they say if you're going to go to San Francisco, if 75 People are going to do a round trip from San Francisco to DC and back and you want to offset that amount, just give them \$1,100 bucks. Now part of why that seems so cheap, of course, is because they're planting the seagrass, and then they're making some assumptions about how it will grow, thrive,

and survive over decades. And if that will work, then then it works right. What about when we do bigger Guam numbers? If you remember, it was about 130 tons, jumps up to 165 when you add some hotel stuff and driving around on the island. What does that look like? Again? It triples, but still not a lot of money for an organization of 75 people making a round trip right. \$3,000. That seems like a simple solution. But there are lots of caveats and lots of unknowns.

Okay, so what if you wanted to go with a project-based plan? Well, there are calculators for that too, and I'm sure some are better than others. And in any good model, they make assumptions and things so okay. But you want to pick one of these, you want to go in, you want to do a project, and then I know you can't see any of this. But you can put numbers in boxes. You can tell it how much carbon you just determined you're going to use or release. And then, you can start plugging that in and getting numbers related to different types. of projects. And you can push the buttons to get an answer. I'm simplifying things a lot. But on the other side, you get answers like how many trees you should plant to offset that much carbon if that's a good number, or how many miles of stream to restore or how many acres to put back.

If we're going with the pay-to-play route, you need to have a way to assess the credibility of the organization you're dealing with. Right? You've got to take that time to dig in and see where we are going for giving this organization money, and you need to raise those funds. Maybe you could argue \$1,000 or \$3,000 to go to Guam round trip. 75 people can raise that. Now if you want to go project based. What we're thinking and what we're proposing, if you will I had a brief conversation with Dr. Pennock about this the other day, is maybe we establish a competitive program. Maybe it's volunteer work, maybe it's some combination of awarding funds to a Sea Grant College Program to implement a project on the ground where they live for their communities. It can include stream restoration, reforestation, building renewable energy solutions, carbon-storing for agricultural practices, or waste and landfill management. I could probably fill two more slides and possible projects. I'm proposing that we would have cost sharing between the National Sea Grant Office, the SGA, and the recipient program. Initial estimates we've taken some more time and data I haven't shown you to get to dig into that a little bit more. It's looking at around \$15 to 25k a project. We do assume that when you do that project, it's not just about that day that you finished the project. It is about the legacy of that project. So, there is an assumption built in. Otherwise, you're talking about okay, we need a million dollars, or we need whatever it is. In this case, you're seeding that, and you're making assumptions about the success of it over the future. Again, it doesn't mean you need to raise funds. How are we going to do that?

Maybe SGA can talk about increasing member views. We recently did that. I bet we have a little bit of a revolt on that. We can speak of conference registration fees; we've been increasing those for all sorts of reasons. And I still need those solutions for you. These are all just throwing these out here for consideration. But I will say we can do both. Because it really is three-grand to fly 75 people round trip, throw the three-grand in the pot further 20 to 25 grand in the pot. And you know, again in the scenario where we're looking to have a meeting in the fall in Guam. And it really is a triple bottom line if we're doing projects on the ground in particular.

If you're going to ask me today, should we just pay and play? It's easy; we forget about it. I'd say no way. There's too much that needs to be clarified and we don't get this triple bottom line. Sea Grant reduces institutional environmental travel footprint. We might be the first in NOAA to do that. We might be able

to stand up and say we're doing this as an enterprise. The direct and local impacts we grow over time for Sea Grant constituents should have been bullet first; they really needed to be prioritized.

And then the continued growth and the strength and effectiveness of our programs. You know, in 30 years, we've got 30 projects, one or 34 years I should say we've got 34 projects, one in every single place so that's that SGA meetings game. We're planning the fall SGA meeting September 11-15<sup>th</sup>. We don't have exact dates plugged in yet. We're on the cusp of a contract with the Hyatt Regency. It's a great hotel. Guam has got to be one of the most amazing hosts programs and I hope everybody can make it because they have incredible hosts. It's going to be a really great meeting. That's the fall this year. The spring next year is March 4 – 8, we do have a contract with the hotel called Yours Truly. It's across the street from my favorite restaurant in the whole world, Northwest on New Hampshire. And then Sea Grant week 2024 is in Savannah, Georgia. I'm not going to spill the beans or steal Mark Reese's thunder. And it also gets you to stay through our whole entire meeting because he's the last thing on the agenda. I can take questions.

Dr. Pennock - We've had these conversations before for all the right reasons. Do we have full support, probably with the directors, and then it's the mechanics of making it happen? I thought we'd had a few conversations about this at the OAR level. I mean, NOAA is the US climate agency, right? So when you were talking here, I had time to think it's like, well, maybe one thing we do is go over to Spinrad and say, for all of the travel that's going on within NOAA as the US climate agency. Why don't we expand that and Sea Grant can be the way in which we do some of that? That's not the world but it's bigger than just our 75.

Ms. Gray – I like that approach, and it's just the opposite, this is the direction Sea Grant is going and why don't you just start with him personally and as an avenue to thinking about it for NOAA overall.

#### **10:00 am – 10:20 am – Morning Break**

#### **10:20 am – 10:50 am – Introduction and Discussion with NOAA OAR Assistant Administrator (Dr. Steven Thur, Assistant Administrator, OAR)**

Good morning and thank you guys for having me. I was excited when I talked to Jon about the opportunity to engage with you to get your thoughts not only about future directions of Sea Grant but about future direction of research. So, I've got a few slides to roll through kind of where I'm headed in the next few months with OAR. And then I've got a couple of discussion questions. I hope we can have some time to get to your thoughts. So, I came in four months ago into OAR, and I took a look at the organizational chart. And then I read 17 strategic plans, one for OAR and one for every one program and lab in OAR. And so, one of the things that amazed me was the breadth of research within OAR related to oceans coast, Great Lakes, climate and weather. A really broad swath of research which is what honestly attracted me to the role to begin with. But I found it challenging to try to articulate the story of OAR. With that breadth of research. When I first read the 17 strategic plans, it was really hard for me to understand why, why we exist. A lot of them delve directly into the research without any substantive preface about the end goals. We're a federal organization with research, communications, extension, etc. What are our targets? And we didn't have a good articulation I will say at the OAR level,

our strategic goals are to explore the marine environment, observe the Earth system, make forecasts better and innovate. Those are all good things, but they don't tell me why.

And so, I've created a group to help us articulate a handful of societal challenges, and I'd love feedback from the Board on this. And the charge I gave was that 30 years from now, literally a generation out our country will be a better place. Because of the research we started and funded now. And what are those challenges? A really simple one for me, is that I'd love for us to be able to say our research led to a decline in deaths due to an environmental phenomenon by 90%. Despite a 20% increase in population, what do we need to do? What's the research that has to be done to achieve that societal? Another one, is having enough water for our large towns or small villages and the agricultural breadbasket that is the collective American West, are we gonna have enough water? More access to drinking? And that given my background, that's the one I'm most passionate about, and that's why I'm choosing to speak the least when I give presentations about this, about that. So, we're currently working on some challenges. We've discussed just a couple of weeks internally with some of our program lab directors. I intend to come out to the Sea Grant network writ large with the association and the Board, asking for input on those probably in a couple of months.

So, the second strategic initiative is how we make fiscal decisions. And for Sea Grant, this is more or less straightforward. The funding is going to go out the door and it's going to go to our state's Sea Grant programs. How do the decisions that are made with that money interact with other decisions that OAR is making on programmatic areas where we have more discretion on how we spend the money? How do we take into account what the Sea Grant associations are spending their money on and how do we complement that? And right now, to be honest with you, there's not much connection. Here's the money for Sea Grant. We've got some national priorities from Sea Grant; state associations go about their business. They do good stuff, our labs, and any other programs do it the same way. What I would like to see is a greater emphasis in understanding how the funding that flows within OAR -- this year's \$760 million complements inform hope, rather than just view it as money that goes out the door. So, we have a team working on our fiscal structure and decision making. Very internally focused, but the impacts will flow through to all those that we find externally – Sea Grant and cooperative institutes and many others that are an individual grant.

The third of four strategic initiatives looks at social behavioral and economic sciences. So, I have undergraduate degrees in biology and economics, went to Delaware for marine policy, combined them into lifelong passion looking at how we finance marine conservation. Basically, that's where the join is for me. NOAA as a whole is an agency full of biophysical scientists. We primarily fund biophysical sciences. I was one of 134 people among 12,000 federal employees about a decade ago, counted as a social scientist, raised my hand and I said, I'm a bureaucrat, I deal with budgets and personnel, and politics. I don't do science and they said, well, you got a degree in economics you can, you're one of the 134. Since then, NOAA's investment in social sciences has increased – OAR as a whole has as well. But it isn't at the level that I think it needs to be to be able to address those societal challenges. We can't stop at the biophysical sciences and expect to be able to solve those big societal challenges without involving a greater social science capability. Sea Grant I think is a really strong example that we can do this. And I think we need to up our game elsewhere within the agency, and we've set up a group to talk about what we need to do in that regard. And then the fourth and final one is about our research infrastructure. And it's probably not a surprise that NOAA struggles with this. We have an aging fleet of ships and aircraft or facilities generally do not have dedicated stable funding for refurbishment, and we don't have specific

dedicated lines to recapitalize or research infrastructure. And so, we have to figure out how we can go about doing this. And it might be that we don't have the money to recapitalize our research infrastructure, and that would drive us out of a particular area of research. It may be that we can't afford it ourselves and we need to partner with others. Universities, other federal entities that have the infrastructure and find a different mechanism to get that same research. This team is not coming up with a list of what we need. They're looking at the approach that we have to recapitalizing infrastructure and making a determination or recommendation to me as to whether we can continue certain lines of research and what those fiscal requirements would be. We've got a couple of great examples right now. Lines of research most clear is the future of the nation's weather radar, the runway we run right now was created in 1980. We're looking at the next generation to buy one thing to study that will cost me \$94 million. That's one thing. You can't buy 80% on one thing. If we're going to go down that route, how are we going to get resources? That's relatively straightforward, because most folks recognize having weather radar 50 years from now. We need something that is implemented. So, we have to do the research. What talking about all of the other research elements that we have to be able to rely upon to get the work done is lost. It's not generally new, it's rather mundane, and yet without replacing HVAC systems. Right now, our lab in Miami is mostly empty, because we have a mold problem because the HVAC system is using 1970s transformers and we can't buy them anymore. We have a federal lab with like two people in it because we can't blow air through the building. Their elevator also has gone out but we fixed the elevator because we found a part in another building. How does Sea Grant fit into all this, so I read through and gave Dr. Pennock a handful of what I hoped were useful comments about the next strategic plan for Sea Grant. I had no substantive comments about the goals, the strategic direction, how we can leverage the breadth of the network to achieve nationally relevant objects. I've got a couple of questions up here: two of the three of these I gave to the SGA directors when we met in January. How should OAR better incorporate the senior program into our portfolio? In many respects, there isn't a lot of connection between what happens at the individual Sea Grant program and what happens in the rest of OAR and would love input from the Board on how to better connect. And then the next two are the ones I posed to the SGA. How can we use the network to distribute what we're doing in other Sea Grant programs and labs so as a communication from the federal level out, and the third question is how can we funnel information needs from the association back into OAR to influence our research funding decision making? So, the Sea Grant programs have a level of presence in the community that is impossible to replicate from the Federal laboratory? Your associations, the network, excuse me, here's things that we do not. Are we capturing that information in a way that can influence how other programs have redirected resources to be able to address more holistically awareness? That is the last slide and I will leave it open for discussion questions.

Dr. Targett - I'm going to preface this by saying to my colleagues, I'm new to the Board. But I do have some history with Sea Grant. I'm excited to see the questions that you have put up here, and I'm going to offer my perspective on this and invite my colleagues to agree or disagree with me, if you don't think what I'm saying is correct. I do not think that OAR utilizes Sea Grant to the extent that it could in terms of getting the information out to the community that there's so much more that Sea Grant could do. If we weren't considered sort of this outlier that doesn't quite fit into the network of things that they just don't know quite what to do with it, or how to use it. And so, I think if there was some additional information and awareness raised within the OAR network writ large, I think that Sea Grant could plug into and be even more of a benefit to OAR writ large and that it would certainly go both ways. But that would be an observation that I have and I think that particularly for bullet number two, but also for

number three, because of the tension network that Sea Grant has in the way it is that there's that loop between what the community needs, what the research is done and how that feedback loop works here that could really contribute to some of that.

Dr. Thur – I appreciate that.

Dr. Gray - I'm the former Deputy at NOAA Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML). I live in a small community on a small island that can't afford it. We don't have the infrastructure to implement coastal resilience technologies. We don't have the personnel in the town to do the grants that are required to try and bring the money in to restore whatever our problems are. And we're not alone. I know what's going on in Rhode Island because I live there but I know this is a problem across the United States. And so, I reached out to Rhode Island Sea Grant for assistance in information about what other communities are doing. So I can see the Sea Grant role from the community side in that regard. I'm reaching out to Sea Grant as my avenue to get access to stuff in NOS and OAR, not a lot on the research side because mostly what people need is stuff that's already been done, you know, tools that are then created from the research. So, I think that one of the roles that Sea Grant plays is to sort of translate that research so that someone who's sitting at a meeting in a small room in Block Island can figure out what they're saying. How is that relevant to me? And I think that's part of Sea Grant's role and I'd like to continue to keep that connection with the communities because what comes out of OAR is nonsense to anybody who isn't an oceanographer or atmospheric researcher. A couple of other things is that the liaison program in Sea Grant is an outstanding opportunity. I was the person who started it with Peter Ortner with the University of Miami and Florida Sea Grant, because we had a need -- a very specific need. And we felt that partnering with Sea Grant was the way to make that happen. And that was for the ecosystem restoration project in South Florida. But those liaisons now have been standardized. It's not that they used to be sort of one off but now we've got a standardized process. And having that person from Sea Grant sitting in the lab or having someone from the lab come in representing Sea Grant is an outstanding way to get that sort of cross communication happening.

Dr. Thur – My former office co-funded a liaison for aquaculture planning tools, so I've got firsthand experience with understanding the value of that as a way to get federally developed spatial planning tools more widely known and that was at NOAA National Ocean Service (NOS).

Dr. Targett – So how do we take all this really complicated science? Make it translated into something that can be absorbed by the people who are sitting at this huge roundtable, overseeing the ecosystem restoration and directly in the education and communications part of our portfolio and Sea Grant and the lab started using this person for that purpose. And that was a revelation to them. That socio economics is important because it's so narrowly focused. The last thing is that we do have in our portfolio at Sea Grant, an internship or fellowship program on natural resources, economics that we share with Fisheries. Why wouldn't we consider doing a natural kind of economics with the physics side, maybe even an internship. It doesn't have to be a fellowship, whatever, but to sort of explore the idea that we also have a whole physical realm that we're studying that has societal impacts, and economic impacts, and you're creating some synergy around that maybe with the university. It's just an idea, but I feel like we have a lot of building blocks in place right now that we're not taking maximum advantage of. And it's mostly because it's all about money. And the last thing I'll say is that Sea Grant's model of bringing people together with \$5 from here and \$5 from there and making something that costs a

million dollars happen in the end is just amazing. And when you're struggling, you should reach out to us.

Dr. Lerner – I have a different perspective but I think I'm in the same place and a lot of the things that you just heard in response. Coming from a program director's perspective and hearing this from a national office perspective, or an advisory board perspective, but you know, I hear your first question, and I had heard it before too, but you may recall on the webinar in January, I wasn't able to. I was in listening mode. You know, the first thing comes to mind is students and fellowships on bullet one. We at the Sea Grant programs are university based and, and we take everything we're doing, and really do dovetail and enjoy weaving with students and student's success. You're running research labs – it's perfect. I think there's something that could be really good there. We can talk about fellowships as well that might be providing and placing people into these locations and into these labs. A lot of the conversation Dr. Targett started and Ms. Gray followed up on, goes back to development of research products and services. And I will say and I hope you take it as kindly as I mean it. We've had this conversation a couple of times and I think I use the Sea Grant network -- I know how it's intended, but it maybe isn't received 100% well by everybody. It has a one-way directionality to it and I think the conversation we'd love to dig into with you is what is that two-way and you've already been hearing that – what is that partnership and how do we cope, develop and produce things? And I think at the heart of that is how do we devalue – you asked how do we do it? I think first place is we have to develop relationships and start looking at where it makes sense to develop the relationships between those labs and enterprises, institutions and our programs. And are there places again, from the programmatic point of view where we're home based largely if I know it's not 100%, but largely at universities. We can start thinking about MOU's and things between universities and labs to make those paths for students and fellowships and co-production of stuff easier and more streamlined.

Dr. Murray - I used to work in Sea Grant as the Deputy Director, so I know Sea Grant fairly well. And Ms. Gray really covered what I was going to say, when I was there we started this liaison program and we had four of them with different labs within OAR. It was mostly driven by Sea Grant. And it was sort of pushing the extension capabilities to OAR. What I would suggest and it really relates to all three questions, is I think you're in a position to do this is to sort of embrace that concept, organizationally as OAR. And what I mean by that as an example, I think there's opportunities. I could see an extension agent in Boulder, dealing with sort of the grain climate information that OAR produces. Sea Grant is really jetting up programs related to climate and that connection through Sea Grant with your lab science, I think there's all sorts of possibilities there. I can see perhaps a small committee dealing with this issue more organizationally and systematically figuring out a blueprint for how we're going to match these two resources that you have. And I mean, there's something there and it needs a lot more work. The culture, I think, within OAR probably needs to change and they're doing their science and not necessarily thinking this. But I think with your background, I think you bring a great opportunity to marry Sea Grant and OAR's research capabilities.

Dr. Thur – Thank you for that. Dr. Pennock, I'd love to follow up with you on whether those particular liaisons still exist. It's something you said that sparked me. My experience has been liaisons between a federal laboratory within Sea Grant, but there may be needs to connect the other OAR programs...ocean exploration, ocean monitoring particularly with Sea Gant, and there may be a liaison role that isn't a lab, but a program connection to the Sea Grant Program.

Dr. Murray – The NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) for example was mentioned when you spoke to us in December and Dave Evans said this extension thing sounds interesting. If you go out to NSSL, talk to Jeff (the director at the time) who understands and see if you can work something out with them, you can make that work if you can convince them. So, we put together this project sort of coupling their hurricane modeling – a new system and that project lasted 7-9 years and eventually phased out. The point I'm trying to make is that it was sort of a one-off project-based not corporate approach.

Ms. Stirling - Two quick things. One is, we just filed a major report on environmental justice and resilience. And I would recommend that you and the folks in your office read that report. Because there are concepts and approaches in that report that we feel very strongly should be driven through the agency. And I'm sure OAR is doing a lot of things, Dr. Helmuth our past Chair and I attended all the briefings and have been very attentive to what's been going on. And we think that more can be done. I recommend that more can be done. Secondly, I love these two questions that you're asking. They are the right questions and I side with Dr. Targett in terms of given the unusual and beneficial characteristics that Sea Grant has for the agency, that it should occupy a more prominent place in the superstructure. And my last point is, remember that all of this will take support and in terms of dollars, as well as additional personnel.

Dr. Gibson - I don't know that much about the liaison program but maybe think about your role as a technical monitor and think about how that might help you with these connections. I mean, the technical monitoring person is a person. Cisco Werner is ours and mainly talks to the director, but still there's a lot of collaboration there and information flowing.

Dr. Thur – One of the things that is reality is that each of the technical monitors approaches their role in a very different way. And I think we've attempted to internally communicate about those roles more effectively. One of the reasons I proposed to Louisa Koch, who is the Director of the Office of Education to have a co-technical monitor for all four is because I saw the benefits of that with the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers. And beyond the two-line office point of engagement, it brought in a diversifying perspective because my co-technical monitor from OAR brought a very different approach to his role in it. And I think that there's the opportunity for co-technical monitors to complement one another about how we choose to engage the forward science centers. Most of that has been how we facilitate the research produced and one of the things we've talked about for many years is how to better utilize the collaborative science centers for the production of specific bytes of research, in addition to the production of the next generation of scientists in our respective fields. And that has been I think, a bit of a struggle, but I've got some ideas. Hopefully they've made it out to you and the other directors about how we can do that with some of the one-time funding we received from the IRA.

Ms. Stirling – Next, we're going to turn to Dr. Pennock and Ms. Krepp who are going to talk about partnerships which are very important.

**10:50 am – 11:50 am – Partnership Discussion (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program and Alison Krepp, National Sea Grant Office)**

#### Background



Dr. Pennock - We're going to talk a little bit about partnerships. I will lead off with a little background, and then Ms. Krepp will follow. We never really put an org chart out – our org chart changes, and we're in this flux period, as we discussed earlier this morning. Our organization is one where Dr. Pennockathan Eigen is the Assistant Director for the fiscal side of the house. Summer Morlock is our Assistant Director for our programs. As we'll talk about, partnerships are very important to us; we have not been able to fill that position. It means Dr. Garber doubled down as the Acting Assistant Director of Partnerships for a number of years and has done an amazing job in keeping things running. Dr. Garber went off to her next detail that we talked about earlier. We had Ms. Sims-Parker who came in from LCDP and served as Acting Deputy.

We then filled three people for the partnership side. They're different parts – our aquaculture program sits within partnerships, which Ms. Krepp and I will talk about. Try to distinguish those, but we've had folks who've moved that forward. Ms. Carney was part of that. Ms. Krepp is part of that and Ms. Samek who's not here, is part of that. So, it is a space where Ms. Krepp has just started not too long ago, and she'll pull it together, and Ms. Krepp will be someone who helps shepherd that through with Ms. Samek and with Ms. Carney in the coming months. So that's sort of the background for where we are. What I wanted to do is just talk a little bit about the history and background before I turn it over to Ms. Krepp, as you know for everybody who has been out on our site review teams as we do the evaluations we talked about yesterday. Our programs report an immense amount of information. One of those things we ask is who are your partners, and that condition of the level of feeling engaged partner and a partner that is maybe less engaged but still important. We know there are differences, but we have a year-over-year and who's in that change. We've got nearly 3,000 partners at any one time that our programs report that they are working within the States. We have some federal partners that we also work with, and all of those are important. What I'm going to focus on now, though, is what we're trying to do in the national office, in how we support how we focus on partnerships moving forward and there are so many asks that it quickly can go like this, and become for a small office difficult to deal with. And what we're looking to do is focus on what is really important to us. How do we work within the network? In the most effective ways?

#### Sea Grant Office and Partnerships

For our focus today and what the Sea Grant office does, three bullets are here for the partnership framework. One is we want to make sure that we can support our program in their engagement with other programs when Dr. Lerner or any other director comes forward and says hey, I got an opportunity to work with FEMA or EPA or the list of federal agencies, they develop one on one partnerships from a program or regional partnership. The easiest way to do that is for that other agency to move money through an interagency agreement to our office, and then we can run that out to our programs because of our standing cooperative agreements. And that isn't the whole network necessarily some of those evolve into important focus areas for the network. But many of those are one on one, it's important to Hawaii, it's important to Maine and you've got to go all around. So, we want to ensure that we do that in a way that is sustainable for us. There's work involved at every level. But we try to respond positively to almost all of those opportunities because they're important. It's hard when you get down into we never get to the hundreds of dollars for the small 1,000s of dollars. The cost of doing that is significant, but we still try to do that because it's important. The second bullet is either initiating or responding to other offices and agencies around the federal government. More and more, the agencies are coming to us and we noticed we're working maybe a previous partnership with an individual program, but they want to

have a conversation about how we need to help them and vice versa. And we try to bring that down and narrow into things that are important to us. We are trying very seldom to just do a partnership, because if an agency wants it, we tend to be less positive if it's not central to our strategic goals. Some of those Federal staff only, and sometimes another agency will come in and say we've been trying to do this. We've never been able to get the money. We have some money this year. It's usually later in the year and then going, we would really like to establish a relationship, but we need to do this on the down low just talking with you about how we can make that happen. We cannot reach out to our programs and go hey, you know we might have this opportunity it does not work that way. That sometimes creates a little challenge. Because we have to decide at the national office level what we try to tee up and really the first time the program sees it. We try to give hints along the way – the programs rightfully don't really like that. But some things have to go that way. And we have to call what are our priorities, what are our guidelines for moving forward? And then finally, it's important to us and part of the analysis Ms. Krepp and Ms. Samek, and Ms. Carney will be working on for us is we internally need to make sure we have clarity of workflow that we have workloads that we're not overloaded because partnerships can become 80% of what everybody does.

We have a lot when it comes to fisheries. We don't necessarily perceive that and partnerships and fisheries. We established, in 1719 period, a partnership framework. That is still what we're working from but it needs some updating. We had the IRP that we discussed our external review that Nancy led and the team. And they really dug into partnerships. And the bottom line was, it was like wow, there's a lot of good stuff there. But we know the challenges with the network and how do we improve the process? How do we improve our focus on that? So that's where we've led into sustaining, building a few priority partnerships since then, and now we're trying to dig in and make sure that our framework and the rest of that is really well defined. So that's sort of where we are putting a significant amount of effort into that. So, this is just data that goes back to 2014. These are all internal primarily to NOAA, NOS and the National Weather Service. And this is when we started intentional efforts to really focus on partnerships and there's been, I would argue, pretty strong evidence that we've made an increase. We've gone from a little less than \$4 million-\$5 million to the first three years of other people's money that was brought into Sea Grant and generally go out to our programs to support priorities that are important to Sea Grant. That number has leveled off over the last three years and has gotten up to the \$16-\$17 million range, there is more support that will be there. I thought we were going to be here this year but it's because of the things that were happening. It's partial funding this year. That will continue to go up but we really find where we're going to be in there. Our base budget outside of aquaculture remember even this year, we've got a significant increase of \$80 million. We're just short of \$20 million. So, we're moving up into an additional 20 to 25% in resources that we can bring to bear through partnerships and that's a place we can do even better on moving forward. That's the data. We're not just working within NOAA but we're working broadly and have been doing that for years. We have significant outreach and connections. Some of these connections come in through Sea Grant fellows who end up moving to higher level positions in agencies that know Sea Grant and will reach out to us. So that's where some of those connections are coming from – the word gets out. That's the background and I'll turn it over to Ms. Krepp to talk about where we are right now.

#### Partnership Strategies

Ms. Krepp – Thanks Dr. Pennock, and for the record, I'm now serving as Assistant Director for Partnerships in an acting capacity. So, I will talk about some of the larger points that Dr. Pennock made.

I also hope to emphasize that we recognize topical importance and the need to be topically strategic when it comes to our partnerships also the very, very real need for us also to be administratively and organizationally strategic when it comes to our approach to partnerships within the national office in particular. So, this is how things look like as Dr. Pennock said, we have really three individuals that are serving in Business Assistant directors for Partnerships role, and this is efficient and creative in my view because it's long been known that part is more than any one single person can do. We have multiple needs and dimensions of thinking that need to happen in this space. So, what we've decided to do, dating back to August of this past year, is to break those out across several people in the national office with a focus on different aspects of what we need to pay attention to in order to do partnerships, well, probably administratively and organizationally. So, Ms. Carney Carney has been working in this space on how we are working together to do partnerships. I'm really focusing on administrative aspects. Ms. Samek Samek is taking a look at those types of leads and who are we partnering with and what are we partnering on? I'm looking at doing what is called Organizational Excellence, which is how the national office organizes itself to be able to sustain our work in this space. And this will be our focus. It has been our focus, but hats off to Becky Briggs and Ms. Carney Carney who started this work in August, and Ms. Samek, myself and we'll continue progressing. So, these are the guiding elements that really take us through how we look at partnerships and Dr. Pennock touched on some of these, and we've heard some over the last two days together, right, our partnerships come as thrivers and as opportunities. Some of those we have a lot of ability to craft others collaboratively arrive and you need to respond to them. When those things we then use as Dr. Pennock talked about our partnership framework, we're updating and looking at what it means for us now and how to more effectively use it. What it's done historically for us is help us understand is this going to advance work that we're interested in? Does it align with our plan, and does it add value? It also helps us keep up with that and consider workload because we have some partnerships where we're engaging, we're talking with others, we're that's a heavier lift. We're talking about collaborative effort, competitions and things of that nature. So that's how we use our partnership framework to date. So, things arrive, they go into the framework, and then we decide, okay, we've given it the green light. What do we do now? Well, if you're Sea Grant and have some options, as Dr. Pennock mentioned, a lot of these look like internal transfers of money. That we call BOP's within the agency, or they look like interagency agreements, when we're working with people outside is about that multicolored graph that Dr. Pennock just presented. So, once we've determined what is a path that we can use to operationalize the partnership, how are we going to get the money out to do the work? We need to figure out how we are going to select the work that gets done. And this is to Dr. Pennock's point a little bit of where whether we do that competitively institutionally or a non-competitive process introduces different dynamics with hop in terms of how we work with our programs, because if there's a competition, we're much more limited to how we can engage with our Sea Grant programs to determine what this competition like there's a little bit of a fox in the henhouse, right kind of approach. We can't have that. But we also have ways of looking at these institutionally and non-competitively which gives us a higher degree of collaboration. Because we're working on enhancing an existing priority, something that already exists within our programs. Often match requirements which can be a limit for our program. So, when we think about accessibility of our partners, don't often come into play with partnerships. Sometimes they do that, often they don't. And then as you talked about this bottom bullet more goes back to the drivers. How does that show up? But this is largely the path that we put in place when we think about moving forward with a partnership.

Partnerships is a Sea Grant success. It's a very visible thing about what we do. It goes into the biennial report that you all produce, goes on our web pages, and it gets the front page building as it should, or challenges down. So, I wanted to put these up first to talk about how we are bringing all of this work forward. What are the things that we have to address? The only way that we can be successful with partnerships is if we address these challenges. And so, Dr. Pennock talked about the fact that over the last five or six years, you are in consistent capacity. The fact is we are a small office, and we need to learn how to leverage that to do the work optimally. It's part of the organizational excellence, definitely working on also having changing staff roles. Many of us in that group are pretty capable generalists. When we have a gap in the office we can adapt and fill that gap. But it also means we've had less time to institutionalize the practices that we need to be more efficient and more effective with our partners who only have a little time to do that. We also need a roadmap for prioritizing partnership activities. And that may surprise you because we didn't just say it was a framework. The truth of the matter is that framework is helpful for us to determine relevance, should we do it. It's helpful for us to think about workload, but because of those increasing demands, more people are coming. We have more good to great opportunities. How do you make choices among many vertebrate opportunities? It's easy to vote on irrelevant half the island but when you have to make a choice on many good to great things. You still need to get a great tool to help us do that. And that gets up that bottom line. Right now everyone wants to work with us, which is great. But it is also a challenge because in a small office, we can only say yes to some. You outgrow our capacity to absorb that will help popularity. Let's talk about the successes briefly because it gets front building. You all know what our successes look like. These are just a few of the typical things that you would see as partnerships that the National Sea Grant Office and the Sea Grant network have engaged in the marine debris program that stands out, started off with \$300, first competition was four years ago.

Smaller efforts are often foundational, that lead to future larger partnerships. If you bake bread, you have to prove right and that is a lot of times what are originating partnership efforts are figuring out where what has room to grow, but hasn't liked us. So, it's funny that we're talking about renewable energy earlier. Because this is a case study I want to spend this a little bit of time on. So renewable energy, offshore wind. This is a relevant and timely topic that's been moving fast. This is designed to show you how Sea Grant has been engaging and growing this partnership initiative. So, I will go over this just briefly. And let me also say, I'm looking at you in the room particularly. We had more work in the wind portfolio than just the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program. But when you think about the visual equivalent to this would be a drop of water in a pocket right drop of water goes in the circles move out. Our drinking water here was the leadership of the renowned Sea Grant program gave in helping to support the siting and the community engagement and research behind the siting of the Block Island wooden bar that was about 2016ish, if you will, next spring and 2020 in that region, Sea Grant programs that are there recognize a research gap in the bottom of the socio-economic needs around the siting of offshore renewable energy so they got together at the program level and said we would like to support a mutual research competition. We feel Sea Grant is called to do this work, we see a gap and we want to fill it. So, in 2020, they gather those partners and we have six research projects now going on in the region that then lead to your opportunities, such as research gaps, and communities need support. They need support to participate in these complex processes. Well, in the Northeast region, that is the Fisheries Science Center to come to us and say let us help you. We have funding that you have passion for. Again, that's like repairing. So, we created the seven extension programs now in the Northeast that have a focus on wind. The accumulation of this work ultimately resulted in a successful application for

the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program that resulted in a federal liaison position with the Department of Energy bringing that work to a national scale. And even further still the outermost ring we currently have a call out for renewable energy work. It's focusing on the non-contiguous United States now left the northeast regions. So we're looking at Alaska and Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Guam with some additional opportunities in development on the West Coast and this is the growth of a partnership over the last four to five years. So, keep that in your head. Same graphic, but a different perspective. And each one of these and I want you to think about the Sea Grant programs and the National Sea Grant Office as I go through this. You have the same circles of water, but what I put in here is how we do it. It is the how that is very important when we think about are we being strategic illustratively and are we being strategic organization so it talks about the different structures that make partnerships happen for what I'm seeing and in the early days it was in its own business. It was part of its regular extension work. It's day to day work and helping communities. They're on board with that. As we move forward you can see these processes become competitive. They evolved in interagency agreements and the awards that get the work done. You have six, we have eight there's likely to be six or so awards in the most recent competition. And this portfolio grows in terms of significance and in terms of impact which is phenomenal but we also need to think about how do we steward the work as a small office, because in the making of these awards? Yes, there's work that the national office does, but there's also work that the Sea Grant programs do as well and oversight awards, and in making sure that strategic value grows beyond what we're doing. This again becomes an administrative view.

In terms of why we are focusing here, Dr. Pennock mentioned our strategic focus for 2020 to 23. And our strategic focus, in many ways, is internal. It's taking a look at this partnership, how this partnership-based policy, the past few policies of how we actually move money, and then how do we implement that? We're looking at our partnership framework to say okay, how can that still be evolved, help us make choices among the many good to great opportunities that come our way is looking at how we the national office are organized and to assure that we can appropriately steward the work and that we are creating not only productive environment for working together in partnerships among both the Sea Grant programs as well as ourselves.

Dr. Murray – Do you apply a 5 ½ percent administrative fee to these partnership monies that come in?

Dr. Pennock – Not consistently. Over the years, in fact, a partner often comes in and says I want to do this and they want it to go to the program or that effort. We are now ramping that up and we've worked with OAR's CFO, David Holst, to add in what necessarily would be the 5 ½ percent. It might be something less than that. I think it will probably end up being some flexibility and we're trying to make it more uniform.

Ms. Carney - We're honing in on 4% for our partners, but we have written into our updated policy, that kind of caveats. And ways to get creative. I'm talking about things already done. So, the USGCRP initiative, recently had a 4% administrative fee, tacked on to it. This DOE work that Ms. Krepp was just describing. We haven't collected that money. Instead, we've been relying on the work capacity of the fellow who stayed on it. Department of Energy is sort of that exchange of personnel and sharing of resources. But we're trying to get more and more uniform in the application process.

Ms. Krepp – Another thing that I'm interested in your thoughts and I think we can use some assistance potentially is in educating folks about what Sea Grant can do and how to work with some of them. We do have some partners that come in, they lack awareness as to Sea Grant's role, the what we are able to

do and not able to do, and as we look to balance this part, how we engage with partners and in steward the partners that we have in sustainable ways. We also I think, will benefit from work, educating others in terms of is this a good fit or is it not a good fit? And to the point of changing staff roles and small capacities, that's something we haven't had as much time to do. And I feel like it is something that will be supportive to us moving forward to helping people that want to work with us understand how to work with us, not just what we work on, but actually the how we work and that may also may be to some of your interests in terms of how can OAR labs and programs partner with Sea Grant in more effective ways.

Dr. Pennock – It really comes down to mechanics. I feel as though what we need is transparent communications at the level I think personally and tell me if I'm wrong, much of that has to be upfront where we can say here are the kinds of things we don't actually know all of the opportunities. Still, here is what we're it's really important. I think that's been positioning we still lead into that a little bit. The challenge, there is a challenge when partners actually come to us, the SGA cannot respond quickly enough. We have to respond. We generally are responding in days to weeks. They might not even have a board meeting for grading and we can't just put out a call to all the directors and what do you think about this? So, we have to figure out how we best communicate as we go so that there's trust in the system? I think when the IRP met, we were still sort of trying to figure out some of these things and the IRP heard back things that we're trying to address now. How do you know, we the directors need to know more and we're trying as best we can to extend the time available for things but it doesn't always work out that way. So, it's the broad space, timelines, and other things. I'm not trying to throw things in the way. But we have been told to members, two of the people who are going to be competing and they're part of the 34 programs. They're going to be two directors on this call who are also SGA so that's where we had to be very careful about -- then do Darren and have Eric I guess now sit on those. They do have a pre-heads up and then they're reaching out to the Board? Well, the Board is like seven or eight of the programs, not 34. So those are the mechanical challenges of fairness that we are responsible for, you know that the timing is really challenging. I would use the USGCRP coastal research program has a unique example of something that is another - it's not just the priorities. Still, what happened there is we over the years the extension essentially you're well aware, get really frustrated with NOAA and other entities to try to recreate Sea Grant like why don't use Sea Grant? To be honest USGCRP said, we know Sea Grant can do this. Do you think you can gauge the network and for our needs? They're spending 10's of millions every year and they got a lot of results coming in? Part of that is if you really can't do it we're gonna stand up extension. So, as we reacted, one of the things we're reacting to is do we want USGCRP to stand up their own separate extension to give Sea Grant a chance. And that's back in the broad discussions of what's important to Sea Grant. When couldn't we share that with SGA leadership. I would say we got pretty negative initial responses about the USGCRP effort, we got 40 Plus proposals from our network showing the interest they had in responding so the SGA Board isn't necessarily able to fully represent what the network thinks at the end of the day. I think we're going to have a really successful partnership that is helping a number of our programs build their extension capacity in areas that are important to them. And following through with full engagement and all the rest is fraught with challenges along the way so there's no perfect answer.

Ms. Gray – two things struck me. I'll start with the process, I guess, that you're using in these partnerships, and I heard you said something else and that struck me or made me think about how they end and I think I've had a lot of conversations recently, Joshua and I had one recently on how do you

end something with grace and dignity. And I think that the most important thing is establishing expectations. And so, it's really important in any partnership discussions that you've established that ending expectation, even if it's open, that right now it's going you can expect that it can but you can hope for more or whatever. But I think that's really important and going back to including people upfront, I have been saying this like a broken record since I started giving away our 19 blah, blah. That is why we didn't include them. In my case it was the weather service. Why aren't we including the Weather Service in our discussions at the lab level or visioning at the lab level of where we're going and why aren't we including Sea Grant in our visioning. There's not that many labs, you know, why aren't we including the lab in Miami? Why isn't it including the Florida Sea Grant Program, and it's visioning what, just to have an avenue into Sea Grant. Because what those people say in those meetings are different from what we've typically heard. And I think it would be a really good learning experience for everybody. So, I think that that's a possible suggestion for the future.

Dr. Targett – To that point, and you don't have to agree with me, but I think it's a visibility issue within OAR. People just don't know the capacity that's in there sometimes or they know that they have a certain way that they're looking at it. And if you include it in the visioning and maybe if people see it perhaps in a different way or a way that's really impactful for their own work and useful. So, it's just a way of getting more integrated, vertically integrated.

Ms. Stirling – I just want to stick my two cents in here. We were talking yesterday with Jeff about fellowships and internships and the issue of whether or not we should be tracking that and the value that may come to the program from tracking. And I'd say this is another instance. We should be tracking these partnerships. Just as we should be tracking, I understand the immensity of this but we should be tracking what's happening at a local level with our Sea Grant programs and internships and fellowships, particularly as we talked about, the need for capacity building and resilience in the coastal areas with you know, disastrous events mounting, which are going to continue to do and all that knowing where these people are, knowing where they go not only gives us information about the value that we've given, but if in the long run, it actually may become very, very important which is another field that I've had my foot in for many, many years. Getting to these communities and making them understand what viewers engage with, what's involved with some of these events that are facing them in the ensuing years in particular it's going to be daunting. And Sea Grant's there already in Sea Grant standards role in that regard. And one thing we do know and this comes from what the National Weather Service some of the research has already done on their emergency notifications is that culturally it has to differ. You can't just put one thing out and expect everybody to understand right? It has to be pegged to the area that the community is in to that area and sometimes there's gonna have to be more separation in terms of, you know, communities within the coastal area. That's just life on the coasts. So, I'm not saying Sea Grant should carry the entire load or anything else. But I think there's a role there for Sea Grant. And one of the things I think really can be very important, particularly as we get to more capacity building among these communities, is understanding who's there who was there two years ago, who was there five years ago, and who is there now, and where did these people go and can we reengage them when it's necessary. Anyway, that's my two cents worth. I understand the burden that that puts on the program, but nonetheless, we're going to be facing more burdens like that whether we like it or not.

Ms. Gray – Advisory Board's, labs have advisory boards. We have an advisory board. I'm a lab representative on your Advisory Board. I brought a lot of my experience that the Sea Grant Office wanted to bring into the Board and that's why they asked me to join it. Look at others, they can be

active directors even if they don't have to be, you know, a retiree like me. And likewise. So that's that Advisory Boards, but why aren't there Sea Grant folks on their Advisory Boards and we should talk less about that. I know you meet with them in the SRC (Senior Research Council) and places.

Dr. Lerner – I'm not aware that our labs have advisory boards. We only have limited FACA committees. I think having advisory committees can be illegal!

Ms. Stirling – I think this may be a good stopping point. We're going to have lunch and be back here at 1:20pm.

#### **11:50 am – 1:20 pm – Lunch Break**

#### **1:20 pm – 2:50 pm – Strategic Discussion for National Sea Grant College Program (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair and Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))**

Ms. Stirling – Welcome back. How would anyone like to begin? This is an open forum.

Dr. Pennock – This is just to try and have an open discussion about partnerships and to also discuss Dr. Thur's question about OAR and Sea Grant. I think it's something especially valuable. The follow up on the discussion we had yesterday about partnerships and moving forward in diversifying programs in areas that we served by being broad, so how to we better work with HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions), and CSCs (Cooperative Science Centers) which we discussed yesterday. And anything the Board would like to bring up.

Ms. Stirling – I agree with you Dr. Pennock, while Dr. Thur is here. I think that anyone who has additional thoughts on how Sea Grant can become more integrated in and benefit OAR as well as receiving benefits from OAR. Maybe we should go after that first.

Dr. Betzer - I think the partners mostly focused on those between the federal sector and it seems to me that there's an opportunity to expand in a way that could help both Sea Grant and OAR. For instance, Ms. Stirling you brought up what South Carolina had done with regard to resilience, justice, marginalized communities and it seems to be an ideal opportunity for all OAR and Sea Grant to combine with, say, a group that is basically doing something really right about challenges that are going to confront much of the country. And so, if you hook yourself up to something like this, it could have easily become a model but something that both of the partners can basically highlight, talk about in use as a basis for further expansion.

Ms. Stirling – I think that's very interesting and I've thought about that myself many times within the confines of our state and realized it's not as small as Rhode Island, but nonetheless there are some unique characteristics in Sea Grant that could be utilized to a much greater extent by NOAA, to get the message out there. To get a flow of information going which are all the things Dr. Thur had in his slides. I've never really understood why NOAA didn't just be all over that. I've never understood the silos that were in NOAA and maybe this is an opportunity to finally break them down and bring everybody together. Dr. Thur?

Dr. Thur - I appreciate that.



Dr. Murray – Back in my days of doing extension work it used to annoy me when a researcher at the University would say I've got this great research going and what I found to be most effective was getting extension built in the beginning. Some of the things I would suggest you to think about seeing is as new research programs are being developed, that ultimately, you're going to have applications, try to get the appropriate people in the extension community built into the project from the get go that way they've got you know, some ownership of the results. And it's their results and they're going to know what's going on and they're going to go out of their way to extend it. And that's a strategy we use within Sea Grant at the universities to kind of get statues built in at the beginning. I think so much of what we're talking about here is our personal relationships and if there were ways to get OAR where researchers and Sea Grant folks together, beginning talking to each other, knowing each other and then possible, building that into programs. I think that's one of the how's you might start with.

Ms. Stirling – Right back to what Dr. Murray said, you have to build the relationships first and then I think you can build a structure that might work. If they see the benefits of associating with some of the elements in building or in the country that deliver the goods in effect, which includes their goods, and also gives them feedback as to what would be valuable, then it makes their research more valuable. And presumably, better arguments can be made to the Hill and more money can flow.

Dr. Murray – One of the ways we did that Dr. Thur was basically at the pre-proposal stage. At that point the management team would look for ways to inject and make the personal connection between the appropriate extension agent and the researcher and often that improved or maybe tweaked that a little bit the research program by having that discussion upfront with the extension agent.

Dr. Targett – One could say that it's great to have these relationships, but you have to have something that sort of forces them at the beginning. Then once folks understand that, then it sort of becomes enculturated and it becomes the norm. But if you have something like the metrics of a pre-proposal RFP that say you have to have this, it can't just be a token. It has to be these people as partners in figuring it out. And you're gonna be judged on that. And when you get through that funnel is going to determine how well you do that, that helps to set the stage and to change the culture in my experience.

Ms. Gray – Dr. Murray, I was completely blown away by what you said about appropriate people, that is the biggest challenge. You're sitting in a lab. Great. Well, who am I supposed to call? You're sitting in the Sea Grant office. Who are those appropriate people? And how do we make enough connections so that this person knows who the appropriate person is to go forward? And I think that's our job as a Board. I think it's NSGOs job. And I was really struck by that. This is appropriate because I believe one of the big roles here is getting the right people together. The idea that you mentioned to have about feeling the benefits or you know, understanding the benefits are very difficult at the beginning, however, at the pre-proposal phase, you mentioned that that's really a chance, but you can't do it unless you have a person at the table. So, as I say, it just goes back to those appropriate people. And I've had incredible success. We've heard it around the stable over and again on the last day, but also for me for the last eight years. It's the Knauss fellows that are making these connections. It's the students that are making these connections and why aren't we doing more to work together. For example, with OAR to jointly sponsor for bringing in the DEIJA community and why aren't we sponsoring engagement internships. Why aren't we working together on these internship programs? So, there's a lot there and the last thing I want to say is Dr. Betzer was foundational at the University of South Florida in bringing private money into that university. And Dr. Betzer did this in particular with students of color, students from

disadvantaged backgrounds and what he did to bring these students to the University of South Florida and then go out and spread the word is remarkable. You have opportunities here with our private or with our nonprofit foundations that are associated with our universities to provide funding for some of these things if we just build them up, and I think there's a real opportunity with foundations and with students and the foundations that we have, Dr. Thur, we can work with you. OAR in general has not taken advantage of the nonprofit sector to the level that they could, and maybe this is a chance.

Dr. Pennock – Dr. Thur, anything from you that we've been talking about that you would like a little more focus on any particular area that would help you?

Dr. Thur – I didn't come in with a specific set of objectives in mind. So, I think the answer to your question, Dr. Pennock is no. I've wanted to convey my desire to make sure that Sea Grant is integrated more effectively in all of what OAR does and that what the rest of OAR does is messaged appropriately through Sea Grant. So, I'd say no at the moment, there are lots of things that are firing for me that I shared over lunch. Some of my comments about my distaste for bureaucratic inefficiency. That's the economist in me, so Sea Grant isn't any more efficient as a mechanism to access the people or resources to find ways to use them for that reason alone. In addition to many other really valid reasons.

Ms. Gray - To build that capacity instead of mimicking it someplace else. It's not enough to say, well, that's what Sea Grant already does. You shouldn't replace us but then just don't assign it to us. You have to give us the resources to hire enough people to be able to do enough grants or whatever it is, to do the extension.

Ms. Carney – There has been some scoping and thinking around an alumni association. Now defining the word alumni is up for question. Do we mean Knauss or everyone who's ever been connected with Sea Grant, so there's two ends to the spectrum. There's some foundational work that's been done and I think there have to be some choices made about what are the priorities in terms of limited capacity all around at the national office level. I think that a lot of us have thought about these kinds of things. As a person who thinks about communications a lot or one of the people who think about communications a lot in the national office. We would absolutely love to engage everyone who is connected with Sea Grant, and then be able to connect them deeper with some sort of nonprofit entity or separate entity that could then supplement funding ideas. I also want to make a comment to all the Board members. I know that you are all here to be the formal advisory group for the national office and we have really formal ways in which you work on something, package it for us and then hand it over to the national office. But just maybe it's because I'm feeling inspired after listening to all of you for a couple of days. But I want you to know the unofficial impact you have to all of us who hear you and just listen to you. Sharing ideas and sharing your wisdom, because in little ways and in ways that we interpreted - like I can do something with that. We incorporate them in small and big ways into our work. So thank you!

Ms. Gray - I have something for Dr. Thur, as a lab person when we were looking for students, we looked at the cooperative institutes and we looked at the National Research Council. Those are the main ways that we got students. When EPP (Educational Partnership Program) was created and Hollings was created we played in all of those realms. I wonder if there's a secret room that can be created around that were student opportunities for the laboratories and Sea Grant that don't look anything like NRC, don't look anything like the cooperative Institute's but look a lot like some other Sea Grant types of opportunities and not every lab is going to resonate. But there's a lot of marine labs and they're always

looking for a way to bring in an extra body and half the cost is covered or if it comes with it, whatever. That those are the kinds of opportunities that the labs are looking for.

Dr. Thur – The intent is awesome...the implementation?

Ms. Kennedy - I talk a lot with the EPP Hollings team at the federal level. And one of the big challenges that I feel like we feel also that there's very limited resources to connect at the high school level. And how do we get out that message because like you're saying with Hollings, the timing is rough. You have to know about it as a freshman or early sophomore year to get into those programs. That timing is really rough for students because it's giving them you have to learn about an opportunity when your whole life is changing. And one of the things that we're really struggling with and trying to come up with creative ideas is getting out in middle school and high school age groups. We're first starting off with the NOAA Ambassadors Program, which is a really cool program that is just starting but I think that there's a space for Sea Grant to play in these fellowships, internships, student opportunities at that high school level to try and break down that barrier of failure known about NOAA going into undergrad and how do we play in that space to try and maybe set up EPP and Hollings better so that their timing isn't quite as off.

Ms. Gray – Once again in the 1980's and I'm sure research has changed since then. I worked for the expanding your horizons program. And it was about getting high school girls into STEM and getting them interested in STEM. The research showed that at that time, I'm sure it's different now, but at that time, by fourth grade, kids had already decided whether they were going to go into art or science or writing or whatever and by fourth grade kids had already made their decisions whether they realized that or not, but through their behavior and through their selections in elementary school, it was shown that they had already identified themselves with that particular path. And so that's something for us to think about. Also, if you're wanting to impact people, then Elementary School is where you have to start and that's really scary.

Dr. Gibson – And that's just not one time that you go in. It's a prolonged experience because you won't change their minds by bringing them to the aquarium.

Ms. Kennedy - I know we're talking about STEM but NOAA is so much larger than just STEM. We need engineers, we need resource management, we need lawyers. And the other thing that we're also talking about and some other groups is how do we connect with people on those topics just beyond STEM, we need people who are really good at video gaming to come drive our submersibles and all that stuff. So it's not just talking about STEM but it's getting NOAA out there as a possibility for employment and I think we're missing the boat. I think we could do a better job of taking what is available at NOAA and incorporating that into the educator's portfolio so that my teaching students, you like this, here's your next step. These are some opportunities and how do we make those connections.

Dr. Betzer - I was stupid enough to suggest to some teachers that we bring in eighth grade girls, or graduate women students, and they said that's too late. And I said when isn't it too late? They said eighth grade. So, we have for 31 years, brought in 8th grade girls from Pinellas County for three weeks of camps free. They go on a new ship, they remote sensing. They do molecular science. And the trajectory of these kids, the courses, they take a high school, or they end up in college and graduate school. It's unbelievable. We've got a track record from the staff so it really works. The letters you get from the parents are that our daughter arrives home dirty, sweaty and tired, but she's never been happier. I don't get it!

Dr. Brown - One of the real challenges when we talk about eighth-grade, or younger second graders, is that in Sea Grant, the group that most engages with those ages, is our education network. And the percentage of funding that goes to education out of the omnibus is very small, and the amount of support most not all educators feel from their programs is equally small. The support to raise almost all their own money and for programming and often for salaries. I'm going to put on my Dr. Roseanne Fortner hat for a moment. We just had a board committee that looked at the allocation of research, and we set a number. We never have had any sort of conversation about how much you go to education. And I'm not saying we need to, but we've sent a very, very clear message to the network about what we value and what we value as research.

Ms. Gray – Dr. Brown, you're right, but I think that's just our past – that's the legacy. So how do we overcome that?

Dr. Brown - This is really a challenge to address the systemic inequities. It's not enough to do it at postgraduate levels. It's not enough to do undergraduate. We've got to start as early as possible. And Sea Grant is uniquely positioned in NOAA with our community-based people to potentially make those impacts...bonds. And I would love to see something where we reach out with the EPP, and maybe we have a special fellowship that's bringing EPP students to Sea Grant running summer camps to a range of opportunities. We want people from their communities or adjacent communities, helping kids and with Sea Grant.

**2:50 pm – 3:00 pm – Wrap Up & Adjourn (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

Wrapped up and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. Announced that the next meeting will be held in Guam on September 10-11, 2023.

**3:00 pm – Meeting Adjourned**