

**National Sea Grant Advisory Board Meeting  
September 10-11, 2023  
Meeting Minutes**

**The Hyatt Regency Hotel  
Tamuning, Guam**

**Sunday, September 10, 2023**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 8:30 am – 5:30 pm Guam Time Zone (Chamorro Time Zone)

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. Carole Engle; Dr. Deidre Gibson; Ms. Judith Gray; Dr. Brian Helmuth; Dr. Jim Murray (Vice Chair); Ms. Kristine Norosz; Dr. Larry Robinson; Ms. Deborah Stirling (Board Chair); Dr. Nancy Targett.

*Nominees for the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Board):*

Dr. Dijanna Figueroa; Dr. Meghan Marrero; Dr. Jack Payne

*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, Dr. Nikola Garber – Deputy Director, National Sea Grant Office and Dr. Rebecca Briggs – Regional Program Officer and National Research Lead (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 September 10-11, 2023 agenda: Dr. Peter Betzer

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

Vote: All in Favor

*February 2023 Meeting Minutes*

Ms. Stirling asked for a motion to approve the February 2023 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes from the February 26-27, 2023 Board Meeting subject to corrections: Dr. Nancy Targett

2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Kris Norosz

Vote: All in Favor

**8:40 am: Public Comments (Ms. Susan Holmes, Designated Federal Officer (DFO))**

There were no public comments.

**8:40 am – 9:40 am: Member and Nominee Introductions (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))**

We have four incoming members, three of whom are here today. I'm going to hand the microphone over so that they can introduce themselves. I will then go around the room and ask the Board to give a quick synopsis of who you are and your areas of expertise. Meghan Marrero, Dijanna Figueroa and Jack Payne then introduced themselves and gave a little background on themselves. Dr. Pennock and Dr. Betzer then gave some background on Martin Tadlock, our fourth Board nominee. The current NSGAB members then introduced themselves and their areas of expertise. Dr. Pennock then gave a brief introduction and some background on Gordon Grau, our current Board member who was not present.

Dr. Lerner – Thanked everyone for attending the Board and SGA meetings and gave a brief introduction of his background and work history.

Dr. Pennock then asked the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) staff to briefly introduce themselves (Susan Holmes, Rebecca Briggs and Nikola Garber). Dr. Pennock then gave a brief introduction on himself and some background on his work history.

**9:40 am – 10:10 am: Appreciation for Outgoing Board Members (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))**

Ms. Stirling – Thanks Jon. We now want to talk a little about the contributions that Brian Helmuth, Judith Gray and Gordon Grau have made to this committee and program. Jon is going to start off talking about one of them and then I'm going to chime in. We would then like to hear comments from the Advisory Board. Ms. Stirling then spoke about Dr. Helmuth's career with the NSGAB and the various roles he played and the strong relationships he's built throughout his time on the Board.

Dr. Pennock – Thanked Brian for his time on the Board. He then spoke about Gordon Grau (outgoing Board member who was not present) and gave some history of his time spent on the Board.

Ms. Stirling – Thanked Gordon for his great contributions and then spoke about Judith Gray and her incredible service and long-time history with the Board.

Dr. Pennock – Thanked Ms. Gray for her positive attitude and energy she displayed while on the Advisory Board.

Carole Engle, Rebecca Briggs, Jim Murray, Peter Betzer and Darren Lerner spoke about the outgoing Board members' enthusiasm, commitment and excitement they brought to the Board and the hard work they displayed in getting the job done.

Dr. Pennock then thanked everyone and handed the meeting back over to Ms. Stirling.

**10:10 am – 10:40 am – Morning Break**

**10:40 am – 11:10 am – National Sea Grant Office Update (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))**

Dr. Pennock welcomed everyone and talked about the work that Sea Grant did through the pandemic, coming out of the pandemic and where Sea Grant is now. One of those is aquaculture, which is a big part of Sea Grant. One of the things that we're very proud of is the hubs, the collaborative network was set up with a number of tribal communities in Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii. And Darren can talk more specificity on it, but we're really down with the communities with historically lesser served communities really making a difference to them. And it's one example of many, many things that we're doing and really, it's their science staff, but a lot of it is the cultural engagement. Looking at the history is one of the things that's really exciting to see and I'm sure this is one of the things that Dr. Austin Shelton is focused on. One of those is a program "Navigating Home" and it addresses things that are important to Guam and particularly, Island communities of Puerto Rico would be the same way but a lot of the small coastal communities we serve as we get folks interested in at a young age in marine science, it's in the public service side in developing businesses. A lot of that talent tends to migrate away, and that's certainly the case for Guam. And one of the things that they've been able to do is start with Sea Grant support with a program called "Navigating Home" and it was really trying to show these younger students what is available to develop the job market for folks who were born and grew up in Guam to come back to Guam. They have been able to get a seven and a half million-dollar NSF grant we pride ourselves as a network and leveraging - Sea Grant can only do so much with the monies that we have, but this is a kind of example. There are many, many other things that came in early June for last year that were well through the process of coming up with the metrics that we use. As an example, we looked at what the impact of this would be from last year for our \$90 million federal investment. And Sea Grant always has a high return on investment if we were to use that term. The jobs that are created, the impacts that we've had. These are two examples of hundreds of impacts that have been reported. So, there's a lot of terrific stuff going on within the network and within Sea Grant writ large. I'm not going to talk about a lot of those we tend to go over and look at the challenges we have and where we can use help in making sure we can continue to deliver these impacts and services to our communities. So, what's going on in the National Sea Grant office? There is a new place Inside Sea Grant that has all the competitions. It has all the policy documents that are important. Becky led an effort for our competition policy, competitive research policy. The omnibus guidance which is now out for the better part of the year for the programs for this omnibus what needs to be done as systems have changed. The guidance document was just released on the site visit reviews. The bipartisan infrastructure law that was passed almost a year and a half ago and the Inflation Reduction Act, there are monies that have come through to NOAA under the bipartisan infrastructure law \$50 million came to Sea Grant led emerging debris research effort. There's marine debris funds for removal that we've been tasked by Congress.

**Decisional Topics:** Biennial Report Committee, Allocation Committee Report and the Evaluation Committee.

**Recent Sea Grant Highlights:** Indigenous Aquaculture Collaborative Network: (1) 2023 Salish Summit, (2) 4-day partner hosted event; and (3) Learning, celebration of culture, and construction of a traditional clam garden.

**Guam Sea Grant Navigating Home:** (1) Early-Career Fellowship Program, (2) Stem brain drain and its impact on the island's growth, and (3) \$7.5M NSF-supported.

**NSGO Doings:**

The launch of the new NSGO website "Science Serving America's Coasts".

The new Inside Sea Grant Webpage (open access data portal for the Sea Grant network) and the Sea Grant Administrative Calendar as well as training resources for Sea Grant employees.

**Other Significant Efforts:**

FY22 Competition Policy; Competitive Research Policy, FY23 Omnibus Guidance; SRT Guidance, DOC/NOAA Grant and Budget System Overhauls and BIL & IRA Charges from Congress & DOC.

**NSGO Staffing:**

Working to settle back in after a year of change/flux as a result of departures & staff details. We welcomed IPAs Dr. Chris Petrone (Extension), several in the final stages of approval (Coastal Inundation) and DEJA to be determined; and the NSGO organizational assessment.

**Recent Job Opportunities:**

This search is aimed at replacing our database/IAA and competition management positions plus addressing BIL/IRA specific support needs. We continue to adhere to the 5.5% admin cap for appropriated funds and also to leverage opportunities to better support Sea Grant beyond.

**Strategic Discussions:**

- (1) Partnerships and ways to ensure Sea Grant engagement & capacity limitations.
- (2) How to best develop deeper Sea Grant partnerships with MSI and HBCU institutions.
- (3) Developing initial Sea Grant projects with new partners.

Dr. Pennock then opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Payne – This is probably not the best time to bring this up but there's an incredible coincidence happening this week. There are three former colleagues meeting here on the University of Guam campus. I think it is how they want to increase the training of natural resource students from civic islands in the Caribbean, mainly so they're better competitive jobs in the field. Why isn't Sea Grant for this – Pacific Islanders in the Caribbean? This is the type of partnership I think we need to explore and make sure that people are writing these grants.

Dr. Pennock – I totally agree. Maybe that's something we should discuss during some of that opening time. I couldn't agree more with you. I would be shocked knowing how Sea Grant is connected into Guam, that they are actually not connected in one way to that discussion. If it's at the PR level. I'm happy to hand this over to Darren who will give us an update on the Sea Grant Association (SGA).

11:10 am – 11:50 am - **Sea Grant Association Update (Dr. Darren Lerner, Sea Grant Association President)**


Welcome everyone to the meeting. He then gave an overview of the new employees – Lisa Medeiros (Program Management Specialist), Kristin Pada (Program Management Specialist), Maya Walton (Assistant Director for Research and Fellowships) and Beth Lenz (Assistant Director of Diversity and Community Engagement). He welcomed Silvia Newell (Michigan) and Kate Litle (Washington). Thanked and congratulated Pamela Plotkin (Texas Sea Grant Director) for 12 years of service (2011-2023) and Jim Hurley (Wisconsin Sea Grant Director) for 11 great years (2012-2023).

**This Week in Guam:**

**Section 7.3 External Relations Committee.** The External Relations Committee shall advise and assist the President regarding issues and activities associated with government relations and relations with foundations, industry groups, and nongovernmental organizations.

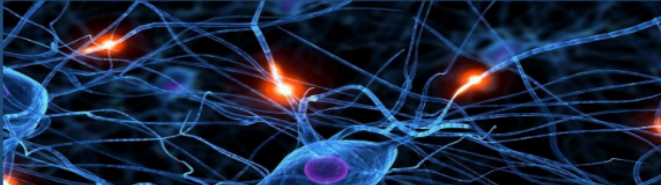
**Section 7.2 Program Mission Committee.** The Program Mission Committee shall develop ideas, documents, policies, and procedures, which are then referred to the Board and the membership for consideration.

- **Meeting and Discussion:** Tuesday 1:45p – 2:45p  
*Resilient Coasts White Paper Refresh; Professional Development; Oceanography Special Issue; DEIJA Coordination*



**Section 7.4 The Networks Advisory Council.** The Networks Advisory Council (“the Council”) shall develop ideas, documents, and recommendations through exchanges with the Networks of the National Sea Grant Program that are then referred by the Council’s leadership to the Board and the Corporation’s members for adoption and action.

- **Meeting and Discussion:** Tuesday 2:45p – 3:45p  
*Updates from Extension, Research, Education, Communications, Legal, and Fiscal networks*



**Section 7.6. Ethics Committee.** The Ethics Committee shall advise and assist the Board in overseeing implementation and enforcement of the Corporation’s Events Code of Conduct including as follows:

**Meeting and Discussion:** Tuesday 4:00p – 4:30p

*Draft Third Party Assessment of the SGA Code of Ethics and Member Conduct*

*Procedures for Reviewing Reported Violations of the Code of Ethics and Member Conduct*



**Additional Topics:**

One Sea Grant – All for one and one for all; building relationships and cooperation between and across the network.

Centering DEIJA – Continuing to build understanding and create change.

Pacific Islands – Colonialism as a weapon: Paints a picture of vulnerability, scarcity, and victimhood to justify the taking of resources and culture across this region.

Climate Change can also push toward feelings of vulnerability, scarcity, and victimhood.

What are the solutions: Empowering the Pacific Islands: Unveiling Abundance, Fostering Resilience, and Celebrating Agency.

Upcoming Spring meeting will be held at Yours Truly Hotel in Washington, DC on March 4-8, 2024 and Sea Grant Week 2024 will be held in Savannah, GA dates to be determined.

Dr. Lerner then opened the floor for questions.

Dr. Engle – I have two to three questions. The first is what percent of the land for Guam is still owned by the US Navy and or other US federal agencies? And the second one is what percent of the food in Guam is imported, and the third one is to what extent there was discussion about food security along with all the other issues that you brought up and are they related?

Dr. Lerner – I don't know the numbers on those, I'm sure if Austin was standing here, he would say this percentage for the military – it's very significant. And in fact, I would offer it to you that the focus on Guam and the preparedness for something like the last typhoon is to an extent that it is much more significantly greater and I'm going to say it out loud, criminally so than what you see in Puerto Rico. And there's reasons for that and part of it is the very significant strategic positioning of the military. So, 30% is military owned territory and 90% is food which is a lot. All across the Pacific it's one of the biggest key pieces to resilience and security and self-determination is how do we as islands move that needle from 90% to 10%.

**11:50 am – 12:00 pm – Board Executive Committee Membership Determination (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

We're going to move on to the next item which is the Executive Committee membership. This is a decisional action and we're going to try to get through this pretty quickly. So, the Executive Committee membership includes a current Chair, Past Chair, Vice Chair and two Members-at-Large. What we want to fill today is the current Chair, Past Chair, Vice Chair and one Member-at-Large for a two-year term commitment starting on January 1, 2024. This committee is the business arm of the Board, so there's a fair amount to do but it's very organized. The way this usually works is the current Chair which has volunteered to become the Past Chair and roll out into the current Vice Chair, which is Jim would volunteer to roll into the chairmanship and then we would encourage someone to step up to become the new Vice Chair who has had some experience on the Board and has participated on with committees. And in this instance, that's going to be Nancy Targett. Nancy has offered to fill the Vice Chair position. Carole is retiring from the Executive Committee so that's another Member-at-Large opening. Deidre has expressed serving on the Executive Committee and one of the Member-at-Large positions, and Peter has expressed interest and if there are others who have an interest we would like to hear it now. There will obviously be other opportunities to plug into later on as well. So, if I may have a motion to accept the nominees for the Executive Board.

*Ms. Stirling asked for a motion to accept the nominees for the Executive Board.*

**Motion to accept the nominees for the Executive Board:** Dr. Deidre Gibson

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dr. Peter Betzer

Vote: All in Favor

*Ms. Stirling then asked for a motion for establishing this as the Executive Committee.*

**Motion to establish the Executive Committee:** Dr. Larry Robinson

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dr. Brian Helmuth

Vote: All in Favor

***Dr. Peter Betzer abstained from voting for himself because of a conflict of interest.***

Ms. Norosz – As I recall from our Executive Committee discussion on this that Jim only has one year left in his term and I think people need to understand that I'm not objecting to him being Chair by any means but to understand that our two-year this is getting disrupted and how we might handle that.

Ms. Stirling – Thanks for that question Kris. Yes, Jim has only one year before he rolls off which is one of the reasons why we needed to get Nancy or someone who had long experience with Sea Grant in the Vice Chair position so that when Jim does roll off, Nancy is in a position to step into that position. We really didn't want to let Jim go without having a shot with the Chair of the Board because of his vast knowledge and experience. Any other questions?

**12:00 pm – 1:30 pm – Lunch Break**

**1:30 pm – 2:00 pm – Standing Up the Board Biennial “State of Sea Grant” Report to Congress (Ms. Judith Gray, Board Member)**

I'm here to talk to you today about the book referred to as the Biannual Report. But after our last three authorizations have become the Quadrennial Report, we write a full report every four years. We're going to start at this meeting with the Quadrennial Report and then at the 2-year point, there's a smaller interim report. I'm going to go through a bunch of slides today with you to try and describe it. But I

wanted to say first, that I'm very happy to see so many new people here. Because not only have a lot of directors changed here but you saw earlier this morning, how many directors have changed in the Sea Grant association for programs. And so, I think there's a real opportunity here. Dr. Roseanne Fortner and I negotiated the format, the tone, the breadth, the depth of material that's presented in this report to Congress. And I think there's an opportunity now with all these new faces, for you to read and negotiate that, that you create your own report. And if you want to follow our format, that's great. We know how to do that. But I really think it's time for somebody else to take a look across programs and see if there's a new approach.

The biannual reports historically have had widely varying formats. But the one that we have now is what Congress is used to seeing since 2016 when I started with Dr. Roseanne Fortner. And what we've learned from feedback from the Congress is that they really like to see their state Sea Grant program mentioned in the report and so we make a real effort to mention every program and what each of the 34 programs accomplished.

I hope that the previous reports have set a standard of an expectation of quality and addressing the questions of the time, and now it's your time to create the next report to congress. But I really feel strongly that this needs to be more of your report. I can be advisory but I really want this report to be yours. In 2018, we had a 16-page report, and then had little individual sheets for each of the programs that were not appreciated as much as the previous reports. And so, in 2020, we went back to a full report of all the accomplishments of the program and we ended up with a 36-page report. The largest section of that report is the six pages of impacts by the 34 programs. Each program has three major accomplishments or impacts in the report.

Every report includes recommendations to the National Sea Grant College Program. So, we start in our first section of the report responding to the previous report's recommendations. Then we describe the Sea Grant model, the three-legged stool, so to speak, research, extension and education. I think we should reorder that - education, research and extension. We need to keep pushing on getting that education leg of the stool longer so that it matches the other two. We have four national focus areas, we totally follow the Sea Grant organization for these focus areas. This last report we did a centerfold of "Sea Grant by the Numbers" showing the impact overall of the network and how it responded to the COVID crisis. The feature issues are decided with the Board, what features are the most important things that we need to talk about in this report? We always do a session on organizational excellence which has enabled us to talk about how the program is organized and enables us to talk about the fellowship programs, the legal program, some of the stuff that doesn't fit naturally into seafood or fisheries or healthy coastal ecosystems or resilient coastal economy - things that don't fit naturally into the focus areas. Then we tell the Congress what our new recommendations are. Emerging opportunities is a new section that we added in the last couple of reports are things that we really think are important to pay attention to for the future. And that's where we end. We start, we recommend it, we describe ourselves and then we make recommendations for the future and say, even further into the future, you know, what are the things that we need to be paying attention beyond what we're doing right now?

The Board action items besides just determining the board committee who will write this report. We need to respond to the 2020 recommendations. We need to decide whether to have featured issues and what are they going to be and the Board needs to create the 2024 recommendations, and then also the side on emerging opportunities. It's not just the writing team (Board Committee). It's the whole Board



that has input into what these are. These are the 2020 recommendations that the National Sea Grant College Program (all Sea Grant programs) should continue to support the implementation of in their network vision plans for those who have not seen those it's probably a good thing to go and look at that.

The National Sea Grant College Program should continue and amplify best efforts in DEIJA. Continue to actively seek opportunities for collaborations to leverage Sea Grant's unique strengths and to make adjustments based on the findings of the Independent Review Panel and the Board Evaluation Committee. So, these are the recommendations from 2020. The Board will have to come up with what the recommendations are for 2024. This is a list of featured issues that we've done in the past:

2016	2018	2020	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Snapper</li> <li>Hurricane Sandy Response</li> <li>Ocean Acidification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sea Grant Fellowships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue Economy</li> <li>Weather Ready Nation</li> <li>Climate Adaptation and Mitigation: Protecting and Responding to Climate Impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>?</li> </ul>

**What do we want to feature in 2024?**

You can see in 2016 red snapper, hurricane response and ocean acidification were featured issues. In the 2018 report we focused on fellowships, and in 2020 we had once again three feature issues: the blue economy, Weather Ready Nation and climate adaptation and mitigation.

So, what are we going to focus on in 2024? What do we want to feature? These are the 2020 emerging opportunities that we identified responding to unanticipated challenges that came straight out of the pandemic. Educating the next generation, in our effort to focus more on the education component of the program. And linking to International goals and initiatives. There was so much going on at that time. That sort of a World Ocean View, and we thought it was very important that Sea Grant get plugged in so that the people who are participating in these programs are not trying to duplicate what Sea Grant is already doing - what they were talking about. I mean, they're extensions that are outreach and education, things that Sea Grant does so well. We were sort of jealous in guarding that, making sure that people are aware of what we already do so that they don't duplicate it in their designs. So, what are the emerging opportunities and 2024 requests? The timeline for this report starts now. Whatever committee we pulled together, we'll start designing and working on it. At the spring meeting in Washington, D.C. we will make a presentation to the Board. We will finally negotiate the 2024 recommendations and the responses to the 2020 recommendations and we'll also have collected from the Sea Grant office a lot of

the data Sea Grant by the number's supplemental materials, so you can see that we're writing in the winter.

And then in June 2024, all of the data comes in from the previous year. So, in July, we get all the program information about what their accomplishments were in the previous fiscal year. We wait until July to write the highlights impacts or programs. We start then weaving those accomplishments back into some of the stuff that we've written already. Things may emerge from the data that comes in July that would inform that we improve the report. Because our fall Board meeting which is often in late October or November this year is going to be in August and that's even worse. There is no way that will be done in August and begin most of that data in July. Everyone goes on vacation in the summer, most of our writing is done in the summer. And we're pulling a whole record together and so we will not be ready by the Savannah, GA Sea Grant Week. So, I formally ask that we have a special virtual Board meeting in October so that we can finalize this report with the Board. And typically, with that it's usually a roll out if you will have heard if you're not on the committee, we will report it out at the spring meeting. We'll report it out at the August meeting. So those who need the time to finish the writing because it then goes to the printer which takes up to a couple of months sometimes. And the whole point is to have it in our hands for the new Congress that sits in January 2025.

Ms. Norosz – So it's January-February in Spring 2025?

Ms. Gray – Yes, sorry about that we don't go from December 2024 – January 2024. It's the 2024 report that is handed to the new Congress in 2025.

I'm not discouraged by getting no response at first, because it is a project as you can see, it does involve writing, but I would maybe have Dr. Jim Hurley get up and say a few words about it because I think he's participated in at least two. And what I want to say is that when you go in with sacred duty, you do a deep dive into that program. What the biennial report allows you to do is look across all the programs, you're looking at the impacts of all the programs and organizing them into these. The report is usually a few inches deep but it's really wide and it's fascinating to get a very good idea of what Sea Grant does for a living and it's different in every state. And it's powerful in every state and that's the message that we're trying to get across to the Congress. So, this was the biennial report team in 2020:

## 2020 Biennial Report Team

Judy Gray (NSGAB, team lead)

Roseanne Fortner (NSGAB)

Gordon Grau (NSGAB)

Brian Helmuth (NSGAB)

Letise LaFeir (NSGAB)

Jim Hurley (SGA)

LaDon Swann (SGA)

Robert Twilley (SGA)

Kola Garber, Mark Rath, & Charles Weirich (NSGO)

Alison Krepp & Susan Holmes (NSGO)

Alicia Cheripka & Brooke Carney (NSGO)

Elizabeth Rohring (NSGO)

Ruben Stemple (Contractor)



**MANY OF US ARE STILL AROUND TO ASSIST!**



There's a lot of retirees on this list, but a lot of us are still around. And we're here to help and I have, as you know, committed to being as involved as you guys want me to be. So, if you have any questions about it, and of course, ask any of us. The other person who's been involved a lot is Dr. LaDon Swann. LaDon coordinates agriculture across Sea Grant. So, I wouldn't ask anyone else to write the aquaculture section except for him. He's done a great job for a couple of years now. So, in the process of writing a report, one of the things that we tried to do was create themes that were repeated throughout the report. So, these were the 2020 themes in our last report, that Sea Grant is at the forefront of actionable science, that we're at the nexus of science and community, that we're a trusted source of data and information. We also decided as a team that we needed core values that we were going to try and convey in the report and those were scientific integrity, social and environmental justice and visioning. So now it's your turn. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. I have been part of this since 2016, 2018 and 2020 and the end of 2022, and I'll be involved in 2024. So, if it was a crappy job, trust me, I wouldn't have been in it for so long. It's fun and you'll learn a lot.

Ms. Stirling - Thank you Judy. That was a great job. And she has really been the heart and soul of this enterprise from the get go. And we're delighted that she's going to continue to work with us. I would just add, briefly, that this is our face to the Congress. This report is really of critical importance in terms of demonstrating the value of this program and why it should continue. So, it is not to be taken lightly, and it is a great opportunity for people to learn. So, with that, I would like to open a call for nominations now. We have some interest that's already been expressed by various Board members and by some new Board members who are not quite yet Board members, but soon to be Board members. Jack Payne has expressed an interest, Kris has expressed an interest and she has a history of lobbying with her legislature, and Carole has expressed an interest and we have a number of expressions of interest from the folks who are going to be joining the Board committee. So, who other than the people I've mentioned, who else has an interest?

Dr. Briggs – There were three that I heard you mention. Jack, Kris and Carole.

Ms. Stirling – Yes, thank you. So far, we have expressions of interest from all of the new potential Board members. I'm looking to see if anybody else is interested in joining the group.

Ms. Gray – Meghan just mentioned that she has an interest. I really appreciate that because as we spoke earlier about the importance of the education piece. I think it's really important to have somebody who's focused on that.

Dr. Murray – Let me mention that the last reauthorization, previously it was the Biennial Report part of that and was a heck of a lot of work for the Board. And with the latest congressional reauthorization we were able to get that changed. So now it's the Quadrennial Report, but there is a two-year what's called an Interim Report, and basically asked the Advisory Board to report to Congress, quote significant changes to Sea Grant over the past two years. So, there's a small committee that Kris, Carole and myself were on, so there's another opportunity two years from now, and that's kind of like a mini report.

Ms. Gray – A mini report has a similar administrative structure though we still involve the SGA and the Sea Grant office. I think we have lots of interest and I really appreciate all of you. I'll work with you in setting up a meeting so that we can start organizing ourselves.

Ms. Holmes – I would recommend that you approve during this meeting the membership of the Board to this committee. Follow up with Darren and seek out those SGA and network representatives who will also contribute, and Ms. Patricia Razafindrambinina of the national office. There will be other national office members who can assist in contributing content as well, but they won't be officially part of the membership of the committee. They'll be contributors to the efforts but those are not the things to vote on today. We have enough people that we can stand up this committee with these members.

Ms. Stirling – Thank you Susan. So, we have Jack, Kris, Carole, Meghan, Dijanna and Martin. And the nominees will be subject to your clearance by HR. And, Jack has expressed an interest in Chairing in the Board committee so he would be Chair subject to clearance of course. So, can I have a motion to establish this as the Report to Congress committee.

***Motion to establish the report to Congress Committee:*** Dr. Nancy Targett

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

Vote: All in favor

**2:00 pm – 2:40 pm – Board Participation on Sea Grant Network Groups (Dr. James Murray, Board Vice Chair)**

Good afternoon everyone. I'm going to begin with a premise that the Board is going to be more effective if we know what's going on within the Sea Grant network. And one of the ways we've done that in the past is add Sea Grant Board representatives to the various network groups.

A short history - for many years the Board has had what we call liaisons or representatives to the various network groups and there's four in particular functional groups that I'm thinking of: the Sea Grant communicators, the assembly of Sea Grant extension leaders, the legal community and the education community. And historically, there's been someone on the Board that's been the liaison to those four groups. And their job was to attend the meetings, make typical presentations about Board activities and report back to the Board on the issues of importance to those network communities. So, over the past several years it's sort of waned, and I happen to be the representative to the assembly of Sea Grant

extension leaders and once chaired the assembly. So, I've had a relationship with them and that seems to be working fine, but we've gotten away from it. Dr. Rosanne Fortner, which some of you may know was in the education community. Rosanne was on the Board for eight or nine years and did a great job of representing the education community to the Board and letting us know about their issues. She loved the education community and knew about what the Board was considering. She was a real advocate for the education community. Rosanne left the committee maybe two years ago, so that sort of waned, that whole relationship between the Board and the education community. Dr. Gordon Grau was the liaison to the communications group. And Dr. Grau's term is ending and I'm not sure how active he was. Deb has been the liaison to the legal community and she attends their webinars and that kind of thing. And one of the things we've missed, in my opinion, is for example, the assembly has an annual meeting. One is usually during Sea Grant week, and then there's separate events and I was asked to present and the question was, are we still kind of actively trying to maintain this relationship with network groups and if so, what's our role? I mean, do I just attend the meeting? And sort of forget about it, or in my opinion, if I'm attending that meeting, representing the Board, and I'm learning something, and I'd be bringing that back to the Board. So, I think the Executive Committee needs to bring that up again and have some guidelines on what our responsibilities are for these relationships with the network's. It's not just the directors. It's those four functional groups that are really where the rubber meets the road within Sea Grant. And they each have their own issues. They have their own priorities. And I think it's important for us to know about those.

So, as I mentioned I do believe that as we move forward in my opinion, we need to continue and strengthen these relationships, but we need some guidelines as to what that means. These are four groups, and there's more groups than this within Sea Grant. For example, there's a fiscal officer's group, and there's a research coordinator's group. This does not preclude us from participating in other committees. But these groups are sort of standing groups that have been around for many, many years. And what I'm calling these are the functional groups as opposed to administrative groups, which is what the fiscal officers call them. In my opinion, there's not a lot that the Board could contribute to the fiscal officers, especially giving high level advice on big issues.

So, obviously, this is a two-way street. It requires network buy in. We have endorsement from Sea Grant leadership and Sea Grant Association leadership. This is also a two-way street, we need endorsement and buy-in from those four network groups, which I don't think will be an issue but obviously those discussions need to take place.

Dr. Lerner – I think it should be five, because research coordinators, which really cover not only the competitive research approach, but mostly not in every program, many programs also combine that with fellowships so I would consider adding that fifth group.

Dr. Briggs – As the liaison for the research coordinators group at the NSGO, there was a long conversation about whether or not a functional group for fellowship should be created and they decided to kind of bring it into the research coordinator. So, a lot of the discussions of the research coordinators group now also revolved around DEIJA, education, workforce development, the fellowships programs, how that integrates with research. So, it has kind of morphed probably from the time that you spent with the research coordinators group. So, it might be worthwhile for you guys to consider that.

Dr. Murray - This is one of service and minimum responsibilities, participating in network activities and what that means that typically these networks have meetings on an annual basis and so you will be

expected to attend and participate in the annual meetings and might have, you know, video, Zoom meetings and so on and so forth. And that would be at your discretion, and this is one of the things I think we've gotten away from. One of the responsibilities if you were to take on this role, we need to set aside at least half an hour an hour, one meeting a year of one Board meeting a year to report back on what's going on within these four or five networks. And similarly, I think this is important also to let these networks know the important activities of the Board. In many cases too often we're out of sight out of mind and it's kind of our responsibility to not be out of sight out of mind. So, what are we talking about here in terms of procedures if you buy what I'm saying? We'll solicit volunteers for these five groups over the next few months asking for volunteers. We're looking at two-year terms for an opportunity for reappointment, decisions would be made on who these liaisons are by next spring's meeting and we would hope that those who are interested would have some expertise in that area. For example, I was pleased to hear that we got some new folks that came from the education community. So, hopefully you might take an interest in filling that role that Rosanne Fortner had and being the liaison for the educators. This was intended to sort of lay out some guidelines and hopefully you endorse what I'm saying is that we need to beef up our relationship with the service network groups. And this is one way to do so. And I like the Resource Coordinators idea of adding a fifth group.

Ms. Stirling – This is not decisional – this is just informational.

Dr. Pennock – I strongly support this. Board members who are interested in articulating some of the value from the SGA side. So, I think we do need to have some clarity. I don't know whether SGA and the Board wants to get involved with these network groups or how that works. But obviously the one Sea Grant effort and in the discussions we've had within the SGA is to ensure that all three legs of Sea Grant are walking in the same direction but there has been some inconsistency and if you have any thoughts on that I'd like to hear them.

Dr. Lerner - I think we're probably all familiar enough with the general idea that you ask the opinion of 30 people and you get 34 answers. There'll be some number of people that grumble or aren't happy about this and most of this Jon has already said, there's been some grumbling about participation from the national office in those groups that said we collectively have a good number of us who have been working on these feeds right into one Sea Grant. That's what it means. One idea that pops to mind in that session, for all intents and purposes, with Gayle and Erica taking the lead, I'd like to have a conversation with them and see if they can bring this a little bit more forward and direct into that conversation and put that out on the table to say look, if we're serious about being one Sea Grant, in the Sea Grant Association the bylaws stipulated as I mentioned earlier, the network advisory council that advisory council has members that represent these network groups. In addition, there are director liaisons that then go sit in those network groups, no different from what you've just said. Right. So, I think that's the push we need to make. Absolutely. There's going to be some number of people that squirm and get uncomfortable that we don't want the national office to hear. But I think if we're serious about one Sea Grant and we push and we get people on board.

Ms. Stirling – Thank you Darren – other thoughts?

Ms. Gray – I have found my participation in these groups very rewarding. It's a great way to meet the directors and staff at these meetings because the people that are on these committees are research coordinators who don't necessarily attend Board/SGA meetings. It's the educator coordinators that

aren't necessarily at these meetings and it's a great way to see Sea Grant in a different way. So, I highly encourage you to pick a committee and stick with it – it's fun.

Ms. Norosz – Jim, I heard you say that maybe we allow an hour for a report once a year. I would suggest that whoever the liaisons are that they prepare a short-written report, so that we can read that prior to the Board meeting and we use those 10-12 minutes that each person's going to get for discussion.

Dr. Murray – Good point.

Dr. Robinson – I do think it's important. Having a noble cause – the one Sea Grant that needs to be an understanding as to why this is being done, who has the authority in a sense or even go back and undo a sentence for example. So, it needs to be explained to those various groups why this is important. And then, what about the lack of principles that allows this to happen? It's not like a major thing but you can avoid this group and can have some consistency there that they can fully appreciate.

Dr. Briggs - The one thing I'll say is that as Jon mentioned, the National Sea Grant office puts a liaison to each of the SGA committees as well and I think committee's handle it slightly differently across them. So, this might be something the SGA wants to talk about. But I believe that for instance, in the Research Coordinators bylaws, my role (as the National Office representative) is written into there, what it is and what my role is. And that was set by the SGA because it's their committee. So, I would assume that we'd want to look at something similar for the Board as well and whether it be something that sits in the SGA's bylaws or something that we put forth to them. That's something for you guys, I think is where it sits in the individual committee bylaws.

Dr. Lerner - The follow up if it isn't clear, the SGA doesn't manage, run or otherwise control these network groups, right. So, the SGA has bylaws for the SGA which is made up of the directors. And these networks are really self-formed and then self-led within them. And as you know, this thought triggered because of Becky saying you know that some or even maybe only one has maybe incorporated into their group or I lost but others may have not and I think I can socialize this with the directors at the beginning of this meeting, although we've had some conversations prior. It probably comes down to pulling together the current leads. So, each one of those network groups have a similar conversation and then have them socialize it with their membership and see if we can move the ball that way.

Mr. Payne - I come from an experience and laboring system where strength is in numbers. So, I'm really surprised when I was told about the one Sea Grant, there's activities where we don't want the National Sea Grant office involved. I just can't get my head around that and this might sound naïve but there's many times within the budgets and we need everybody's cooperation and help in order to have a unified front. And if we have an organization of Sea Grant with little territories, it's work. So, I'm really surprised to hear that.

Dr. Lerner – Overall, it's obvious that I completely agree with you. The one example where it can get challenging, where I think it makes sense sometimes to not have a national office in the room, is when we are talking about the work of our external relations committee and working with federal partners. There are some conversations we're having, that we're talking about activities that federal employees cannot engage in. So that would be in my mind, that's the only exception I can readily think about where we might say, you know, and we do have for those that aren't familiar when we meet like this, like this week, we have a couple of sessions that are closed sessions in which it's only the directors and their

alternates, usually their deputy director or something like that, but the person who would sit for them if they weren't there has a long history of being okay, what are we going to complain about the national office? And I think part of that is driven frankly, as I mentioned this earlier a little bit we are in the relationship where they are the regulatory body, right? There are individuals that are part of the national office that are our program officers. They are the regulatory folks you can tell like I've tried to stay really far from my programs. They have to be watching for funds and business and things so it does create a little bit of sensitivity at times, right? All in all, though, I think the one Sea Grant approach people who are involved with that and frankly I would say across the board without getting into some of the details we're all like yes one Sea Grant and how do we do this. It's about Sea Grant as a whole if we know from history Kola, Jim and others in the room. Before there was an Advisory Board, there was a review panel. And they had some regulatory teeth and stuff and things got ugly, and Sea Grant as a whole suffered because of that, because we weren't on the same page. And the biggest issue is that we ended up having separate conversations with people in Congress even saying different things. So, we're in a much better place now and what we're trying to do is keep heading in that direction. Sorry if that was a lot but I was just sharing the kinds of different places that we've been in conversations we've been having. I think there's a lot of folks and directors in particular in this room that would say this all sounds good but what are the details?

Dr. Garber – In an effort of inclusion, and knowing that many of you have a lot of great business acumen, I would also suggest you reach out to the fiscal officers, because they're the only functional team that's not up there. And they bring a lot to the Sea Grant network and so for them to understand how the world works as well as you all to maybe give some insight into how your university is doing something that then maybe help them write their own device or do indirect cost rates. No one here may want to step up for that. So just throwing that out there.

Dr. Targett – I just want to echo that I applaud Darren and everybody who's been working on the one Sea Grant issue. I think it's long overdue, and I think that under Jon's leadership, there's been a real push to have more transparency and to bring and build trust, and it's time for people to get on that page. And I realize as people have said here, unless we're not all together we're not going to be successful, so I totally agree. I'm glad you raised that because I think it's been an elephant in the room for a long time.

Dr. Murray – This is not decisional, so this was an informational discussion. I got some good ideas from the one Sea Grant. So, my sense is that Susan and I could do a little guidelines piece I wrote up, tweak that and add the substance of the comments from this discussion, and then we vote on it next time. And, in the interim, ask for volunteers so that hopefully at the spring meeting we can vote on these guidelines.

Ms. Holmes – You don't need to vote on the guidelines but the Board may want to start to engage the network to see if they have interest in having Board members and can then move forward from there. And then if you want to bring it to the March meeting so that everyone knows who's participating then we can do that.

Dr. Murray – So I will make the modifications that we've talked about here today, get the guidelines paper redistributed in the interim. And this would be a good time to touch base with the Chairs of those various groups, many of them might be here and begin that process of making sure they're onboard and willing to do this. And then we can vote on members based on volunteers if you're interested in this.



Maybe we can get those to Susan prior to the March meeting and send a call to remind everyone that you can volunteer and make some decisions in March.

**2:40 pm – 5:00 pm – Strategic Discussion of the National Sea Grant College Program (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program and Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

Ms. Stirling – This is a free period if you will and any of you can raise issues that you would like to have discussed. Jon usually has a few things that he would like to give some feedback on. We do have one subject area that we need to address and Carole is going to frame that for us and we'll see where that goes. So, before we do that, I'm just wondering if any of the rest of you have any thoughts, issues or questions you'd like to put on the table?

Dr. Gibson – I figured I'd say something today. I was curious early on in the meeting. Someone mentioned something about building collaboration with HBCUs, that came up last time and I don't really know where that is. So, I'm hoping to know a little bit about what we're thinking about, but I don't know what that is. Because obviously I'm curious about that and can maybe do something to help.

Dr. Pennock – Let's have some of these other discussions first and then between today and tomorrow afternoon I would like to have a good discussion about that.

Ms. Norosz – I think there's a lot of value in looking at the minutes about our discussions and not just what we agreed to. And I think we had a lot of good discussions at our last meeting, but I'm afraid it's just that I'm not sure where things stand. One of the things is that we had a lengthy discussion with Steve Thur about how Sea Grant can play a more prominent role and how we can work with the labs to get information back out to the community in a way that's useful to them. So, I'm curious if there's any further discussion with him on that. And the other thing was an issue that Darren brought up about the amount of carbon that we use getting to these meetings and being that we're flying for NOAA wondering if we should pay attention to that and figure out how we mitigate through that.

Dr. Murray – The last meeting there was sort of the beginning of discussions about this in Guam. Guam Sea Grant is now a new institutional program. And there are some other entities out there that I think would sort of make it clear that they would like to become a Sea Grant affiliate in some way in the future. And it strikes me that in looking at our legislation it seems to me is required to entertain ideas from eligible Sea Grant programs and seems to me that's likely going to happen in some way in the future. Also, it was made clear that the geo political importance of these islands is sort of a big deal to the United States government given the ships of China and so on, and so it strikes me that that's high-level policy stuff that needs to be thought through. I'm sure the State Department has some interest in a larger footprint. I see Sea Grant as a potential way of doing that. I throw that out again without really knowing what I'm saying – I see an opportunity for the Board and for Sea Grant. I just want to throw that out for discussion that some high-level advice may be needed on this one and it might be something that the Board can contribute to.

Ms. Stirling – So we have four items so far, so Carole why don't you frame yours and let's get it on the list and then we'll discuss.

Host Institutions and SRT Visits

Dr. Engle - This morning I was chatting with a couple of directors. They brought to my attention something they would like the Board to look at and what it is, if I can explain it. I've heard it from them, but it sort of resonated with me because of another project I'm involved in where we're hearing the same thing. So, the issue has to do with historical inconsistent support from the host institutions to Sea Grant programs. And the directors that spoke with me said that one of them use the example or the phrase that higher energies in crisis right now and I know where they're coming from, why the universities are looking at declining enrollment from populations and groups that are coming along that don't have as many people aren't as many college age young people coming in. So, they're struggling with enrollment, they have rising costs. There are more and more reports coming out of universities having three times as many administrators as faculty and universities aren't, so there are things going on in universities that I think are financial, as much as anything that I think we've all heard about. But basically, what's happening in hearing from these directors who spoke with me this morning, is that their host institutions are pulling back on support for Sea Grant. They're starting to pull back research associates, are starting to pull back on things and are talking about reducing office space. They said that one of them uses the analogy of one of the directors that their host institutions are looking in the hood and taking a hard look underneath it, hiring consultants to come in and look at I think it's not just Sea Grant. I think it's federal programs in general, but starting to cut back in format.

And so, one or two of the directors that said they've been looking to see what kind of documentation is there historically about expectations for the support from the host institutions? They couldn't find anything. And this is something that they would like to bring to the attention of the Board. Part of what's going on too is that higher ed has a lot of turnover in terms of higher administration and upper administration. We've already seen that there's a fair amount of turnover and Sea Grant directors and new directors coming in. And so, there's a breakdown of those relationships between the directors and upper administrators at universities. That's never a good thing either. And so, all of these factors seem to be contributing to this and there's concern at least among the directors who spoke with me, and I said, well, how widespread is this? And they told me that it's quite widespread. I don't know how far or how widespread it is, but that's their view of it. And starting to talk about whether the Board would look into this for and whether the Board would consider drafting advice in terms of realistic expectations for host institutions, unless this already exists somewhere, but to consider what's going on and try to see what advice we would make to the national office about this growing issue.

The reason why it resonated with me is that totally unrelated to Sea Grant, I'm serving on a review team for USDA that says reviewing the regional aquaculture center program are five of them. They have a host institution and we wrapped up the interviews across the two years now we've been working on this and host institution support is something that has emerged as an issue and our review team is drafting a list of expectations for host institutions of the Senate and we're going to finalize that and get this report out. So, it resonated with me because we've been hearing this as a totally unrelated program to Sea Grant but similar kind of issue.

So that's the issue and that I thought we should at least discuss and talk about this. It's not clear to me how many programs are affected by this and may be a first step if we wanted to put up a standing committee or something to at least try to look at it. What are the historical documents in terms of expectation, this was a fairly new director that actually first brought it up and whether there's any documentation there now look to see how widespread it is, and then sort of go from there. But it seemed to me that there was enough concern on the part of these directors that we should at least

discuss it here at this board meeting. So, I believe that's the issue and anybody else who heard any of this discussion, please chime in. But that's my understanding of it.

Dr. Helmuth – In listening to you, my first impression is what happens if an institution doesn't meet expectations, does that mean that they're at risk of losing the program? Or what's the next step? What's the step to go along with this list and so I wonder if looking at how expected expectations were met during the site reviews for institutional support and then assembling a list or at least a set of criteria from those site reviews might be a place to start.

Ms. Gray - So I believe that the last site review, one of our programs has been on probation and status because of the reduction in their budget by the institution associated, the state Sea Grant Advisory Board and silently reading multiple letters and putting pressure on the university administration really didn't get anywhere until Sea Grant stepped in and said look, you know you've got to comply or you're going to lose this and then was able to raise it. Rather than leaving it, the Dean of Fisheries and Oceans, they go to the provost, and that has completely changed things, but that wouldn't have happened without pressure from the Sea Grant office and to have that conversation though the site visit review that was done. So, this happened a few years ago. And I do know, I have no reason to believe that it's not happening in other places. But you know, one person from the University was able to siphon off a lot of funds and as people left their jobs previous to the program is suffering.

Dr. Pennock - This is a really important discussion Carole, I would say, this is not new. But it certainly seems to be accelerated for whatever reason. We have folks around the table here who, not too many years ago, you could see the pressures on universities and other things. So, I think we could have a vibrant discussion of this. I'm not sure that we have when programs were completed or even just developed and made it happen in different ways. A lot of this was 50 plus years ago, whether there was a two pager, basically said, congratulations, you know, you're being rewarded. As the host, representing or supporting the Sea Grant in your state. And here are the expectations. We certainly know what the expectations are that the state needs to meet the cost share. And I think what we're seeing in a lot of these places was universities pulling back from what they view as being over cost share. But that's to the directors that is absolutely real. So, we need to assess that.

Dr. Garber – What I was thinking and Jim you may remember more, but as I was coming into the national office in 2000, with the old evaluation system, there was always take on that they're wanting every program to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU's) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA's) because the directors we're just starting to transition. A number of our programs did not do well in that first year and in those first eight, a lot of the directors changed over and there was a lot of change. And I'm wondering if it's cyclical to as you were just saying earlier, those people have now changed, and so I know there was a push by every path that I was on every site visit but the old name to really figure out what those documents were. And I don't know if we've done that as much as we talk about administrative excellence but whether or not we ask them to show us some of these MOU's and MOA's that they used to go into that next site.

Mr. Payne – What Carole is talking about is complicated. And sometimes it's a federal issue and sometimes it's an individual thing granted state of having word for filing and grants my short answer is that presidents today are hiring presidents today and they team up with their vice presidents of research, and the emphasis is on creating and research dollars and even in Florida the second president working under Ken Fox, he made me take out money every year he gave a raise of all the faculty,

including extension specialists through tenured faculty. He would make me use Smith Lever funds for their race. So, he didn't give money to more people and the church and the program. So, in a way you're robbing the federal dollars for the wrong reasons. And then we will go into Congress every year to lobby for pension funds. It was always easier to divide the hedge funds and is sustainable. And there's congressional people now that don't believe that they should see the researchers making money by writing your contract and they see extension as given, but they'll see the need to complete lack of association with the idea of being prepared for an agricultural disaster, and having people on the ground. You know it's a multiple problem. And so, I mentioned it earlier about using people that have benefited from Sea Grant programs to lobby for the programs because Congress doesn't listen to the recipients of the program, they listen to the people delivering it. And they can be really effective. The problem I saw is that over time, these kept the same pair of delegates for years and the reason they were chosen in the first place was his or her connection to a congressional member who may have been dead for 10 years and that person is still there, but with no contact. So, you have to be really proactive, to be more effective, because they can pick up often and compete on that as well. And it's hard because Congress changes so much and it's a constant education process. You have to be willing to put in the time, but I know that the host institution distributes that money among other universities in the state of programs. And, if you tell us a University is acting that way, I would still look for one of the presidents and senators.

Dr. Betzer - Use of public health programs. You see this incredible contrast versus support. That's absolutely incredible. Like Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Guam and the others that have for years. And while you're right Jack about the research dollars, they pull it into university, but what I've seen that's been consistently powerful is if the Sea Grant programs can get the business community on their side, and the people that they're serving and they go in and they make the argument to the university and their legislators that this is a really important program without that you're just another hired gun. Going in and asking for what everybody else is asking for. You're going to have to pull out that calcite lever to make it work. I don't think it's that simple.

Dr. Briggs - Jim mentioned how to lead the most recent status team, I can tell you that right now within the Sea Grant authorization, it does have this wordage as Jon mentioned, towards support but we as the team when we looked at what support meant, it wasn't financial that we were necessarily looking at because the financial component is the grant component. That's that 50% requirement that sits in the grant. So, what we were looking for was do they have the support from the university that can be everything from a building, to staff, to resources, to the Office of Sponsored Programs Office and the ability for the granting office to actually move the dollars. So, I think that when we consider this we are going to have to look at the language in the Sea Grant authorization language that actually talks about what is supported by the host university or Institute. Some of them actually have state-based support. That's in the state legislature. That's different from having University support. And that's also different from having other kinds of support, like some of our other programs, because some of our programs aren't even based at state universities. They're based in private or they're standalone. So, there's a lot of nuances in this and in this discussion as well as we think about what it might look like how things have changed over those years.

Dr. Murray - I want to pick up on something that Brian brought up and that is, we've got 34 site visits. In each of those site visits the teams are asked to review and assess the institutional support that is provided to a Sea Grant Program. Often a Sea Grant director will find you at break and say they're trying to move our hybrid party to a slightly lower floor person, maybe you might see fit to have it in your

report -- don't do that. So, some of that is done, but I would submit that it's pretty loose. What institutional support means number one, and number two, there's no enforcement mechanisms. And so maybe what we ought to be doing prior to this next round of site visits, is looking at that institutional support criteria and making it tighter and more specific and also thinking about ratings and whatnot in repercussions in institutional support criteria that are not met.

Ms. Stirling – The first term that I was on the Board, I ended up doing a pretty good number of site reviews. Out of that group, there were three instances where I took the director aside and said, you know what your issues are that are interfering with being able to do your job, so that we can help to highlight those things and get them on the table with your university administration. And so, we would then take that under consideration. So that when we did our final report, and gave the output not just to the director, but to the senior vice president for research or the provost or the chancellor or all of the above in terms of who was in there for the administration. Their mass was questionable every year they had to fight like hell for it and they were doing a tremendous amount of work. I mean, they brought their stakeholders in and it was just typical of a really good program. And so, we laid that out and basically said to the university, you're not doing your part because you're not dealing with these individuals who are producing this huge benefit for the university in the state. You're not doing your part in terms of providing the necessary support. This is what you need to take under consideration and fix and we laid it out. We did that in each instance and everything got fixed, not being aware whether or not there was any enforcement behind that other than our unhappiness with the way the program was administered at the university but nonetheless it worked.

Dr. Helmuth – We certainly can't come up with new tests with the programs for the sake of these meetings, but we can provide new guidance. Even in each situation, there's still going to be those idiosyncrasies where we need to take the director aside and find out what pressure needs to be applied. There are commonalities that we need to watch out for, so if you can maybe formalize the guidance for the site visit which can then help the program because this is what it's all about. It's not penalizing programs, but it's about asking where to start looking into putting certain pressure on the administration.

Dr. Garber – I was just thinking about how we work with our program officers and having these conversations with their programs so they don't worry about scores, merit and everything else in the site visit. Because we have so many new directors that may have never been through a site visit and may be worried about saying something to us so that they don't feel like they're going to get penalized.

Ms. Stirling – I think we've laid out a lot of aspects of this. How would the Board like to proceed at this point? What are your thoughts? Should we stand up a subcommittee on this or a committee? It could be a subset of the Evaluation Committee because we're going to stand up the Evaluation Committee tomorrow.

Ms. Holmes – I think it depends where you want to go with this? If you're looking into what that criteria is for administering the site visits, I'd point to the Evaluation Committee, who is currently charged with reflecting on the site visit guidance and process, and considering whether changes are needed for future site visits.

Dr. Targett – Should we have a committee that is just focused on this or are there some other issues that are going to emerge from a discussion tomorrow, that might all be wrapped up into something that

could be addressed by a single committee? So, I wonder if we should table this for now until after we hear more tomorrow? And picking up on our strategic discussion tomorrow. And maybe when we get to tomorrow, we decided to just go with this single issue. But I think that there are going to be some things that are going to emerge from tomorrow's discussion that could be rolled into all this that would be a much more efficient use of the committee's time. It will deserve the committee's attention, but could be more substantive.

Dr. Helmuth – Does it have to rise to the level of the subcommittee or can we just start with a questionnaire and a listening session? It seems like the first step here is just to start listening to the SGA and start accumulating stories to learn more about what Carole's been told. And then that might inform whether it goes into a single committee or something else. We just start with a listening session.

Dr. Lerner - There's been at least one that seems like it hasn't been mentioned, but it was pretty well known that the individual director was out over email looking for help and assistance and guidance and all of these kinds of things and it looks like the day was won if you will, or at least nearly so and in a major way. To the point I'm getting at, you know how widespread it's grown to five programs in the two hours I've been standing here so it's interesting. And from a conversation I had earlier I have on my list for our first closed meeting, to engage in this to put it on the table and say look, and in that room, we can talk about states and put it on the table and say okay, we know this or know that, none of us hide this among us. We reach out to each other for help and guidance. But that said, I think some are not recognizing, how to frame that? I think some are seeing it as kind of business as usual. They've been in those programs long enough. And they're like, oh, that's rearing its head again, I gotta deal with it. And they're not saying something literally. I found out about one of those today, too. So, to your point and for everybody in terms of as you think about how you might want to approach this, I think it will be quite informative that we bring this to our closed meeting and put it on the table and say okay, where are we now show of hands who was having a struggle that they're on their own home base, and to get some more information about what there's a diversity behind that too, right? There are differences in these struggles, whether they're political or they're financial or a combination of things. So maybe trying to get a better handle on that.

Ms. Gray – I just want to mention that whatever we do, we need to accommodate programs who struggle in the future. There are programs right now that are doing fine, we want to be able to invite new states into it and I just want to make sure that whatever we do we accommodate what could be happening to progress in the future.

HBCUs

Ms. Stirling - Why don't we let the sleeping dog lie until tomorrow afternoon in our strategic session like Nancy suggested and let everybody think about it for now, what Darren and Jon are suggesting will take us away from any action per se that we might want to take in this particular Board meeting but it's obviously open for action in the future, if that is needed, but we certainly have a lot of information at this point, and we certainly need to know more. So, if everybody is comfortable with that approach, we'll just pick it up again tomorrow afternoon to see if anybody else has any other thoughts on this. And we'll go on to the next subject.

We have several other topics to discuss. HBCUs I think Jon wanted to raise that tomorrow afternoon in our strategic session, and so we're going to put that down on the list to do probably start on that first.

Another topic is a program's eligibility for Sea Grant membership, particularly in Micronesia. Steve Thur's effort to try to expand the role of Sea Grant with other program officers and NOAA which has come to silo to NOAA to no avail. At least that I'm aware of, and maybe I'm wrong about that. But I haven't seen anything coming out of that and I suspect that Steve has probably been captured by the system to some degree in terms of getting his arms around OAR and the other initiatives of which there are many.

Ms. Gray – So, the site reviews are coming up and why wouldn't we invite lab directors to be members of those site reviews? One of the things we talked about last time was having Sea Grant represent the lab reviews and this is the reciprocal. Get to know us a little bit better.

Dr. Targett - One of the tensions that I felt in the Allocation Committee was tensions from programs writ large in the network, that were wondering how we were going to build their base, because none of the programs have enough funding versus the mandate we have in the legislation to consider expanding and bringing in new programs. So, the idea is that even if new programs are separately funded by Congress or added into a still impact merit pool has more people in the denominator. So, I do think that is an issue that has to be addressed and there has to be something that comes forward.

I also wanted to say that I don't disagree with the idea that we need to build capacity and that we'd love to see this network expand beyond where we are now. But I just think that we also have the reality of what the appropriations are and how we balance all of that. And this is an issue. It's an issue for the National Director, and whether or not there's any advice we could help him with in that regard. I just think that's a consideration. So, I think we would all agree that the capacity is an important factor in building that capacity now, it's how to do it without eroding the integrity of the rest of the capital. And I think that's the issue.

Dr. Helmuth - I wanted to offer a different perspective on this, I think there are multiple ways you can expand capacity, you could do it by looking at every state and looking at connectivity amongst seven ecosystems. We could look at it from a geopolitical perspective, but the other one feeds into its discussion of emphasizing HBCUs as well. And so, I would push back against the idea that we only want to expand in our institutions would be shooting yourself in the foot because of all this knowledge and perspective that you can get otherwise. I think starting in the small island states is a great place to start building capacity. Because of all the creative solutions to climate change to food productivity, and also expanding into bringing in MSI's and job organizations and HBCUs as well for the same reasons. And so, I do respect the other models, but I think the old way that the Sea Grant was formed around R1 in each institution I don't think it's going to work in the future. I think we use the power of the network of R1's and then bring in the other forms of knowledge and capacity and wisdom within each network, and I think this is a good place to start.

Ms. Stirling – We have another session tomorrow afternoon where we're going to revisit at least two of these subjects. We'll also hear from Nancy on allocation that is going to be a really good discussion on her report and we're going to stand up the evaluation committee. So that may raise some of the issues that we've talked about today. So, we look forward to seeing you tomorrow at 8:45am.

**5:00 pm – Meeting Adjourned**

## **Monday, September 11, 2023**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Guam Time Zone (Chamorro Time Zone)

### **9:00 am – 9:10 am – Welcome, DFO Brief and Roll Call**

Ms. Deborah Stirling (Board Chair) welcomed everyone 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 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. Carole Engle; Dr. Deidre Gibson; Ms. Judith Gray; Dr. Brian Helmuth; Dr. Jim Murray (Vice Chair); Ms. Kristine Norosz; Dr. Larry Robinson; Ms. Deborah Stirling (Board Chair); Dr. Nancy Targett.

*Nominees for the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Board):*

Dijanna Figueroa; Meghan Marrero; Jack Payne

*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; Dr. Nikola Garber – Deputy Director, National Sea Grant Office and Dr. Rebecca Briggs, Regional Program Officer and National Research Lead (NSGCP).

### **9:10 am – 9:40 am – Allocation Policy Subcommittee Report (Dr. Nancy Targett, Subcommittee Chair)**

I'm delighted to be here today, as you know Sea Grant is required to have an allocation policy, the last one was adopted in 2014. At the spring meeting this year in Washington, D.C., Jon indicated that he was drafting an updated policy and he asked the Board if we would take a look at that updated policy. The Board voted to do that and convened a committee that was a subcommittee of the planning, implementation and evaluation committee. So, our Allocation Committee is a subcommittee of that committee. And we began our work in late March, early April and we finished it in August. We had nine meetings during that period of time.

And I guess at the outset, the first thing I want to do is thank the people that I worked with on this committee. It was a delight to work with Judy Gray and Kris Norosz, who are my Advisory Board colleagues. It was wonderful to work with the folks at the SGA appointed to this committee John Downing, Shauna Oh, and Rebecca Shufford. You know, when we came to this, we were not on the same page. I guess that's not surprising because we all come with different experiences that we brought to the table. So, throughout the course of this we had some very difficult and kind of intense discussions during our deliberations. I'm very proud that we worked through all those discussions, and ultimately came to a unanimous decision on the recommendation that we're going to have at the end of today, that I'm going



to make to the group, so thank you to my committee members. I'll ask for input a little bit later. In addition to that, I want to thank our DFO Susan Holmes, and the support that we got from the national office around this we had a lot of questions that we asked. We asked them to dig deeply on different documents that we needed to have, and they really accommodated that. Kola was our point person. But Jon, thank you for your help, and to Joshua and some of the others that gave us help on that. And finally, I want to thank the SGA members that did participate in this through their point people who were on the committee. I know many of you talk to them, I know you funneled documents to them. And all of that was brought to our group meetings and we considered all of it as we were moving forward.

The Charge stated to establish a subcommittee and to review the updated draft of the policy that we were told we can make any changes to just consider this that it would go forward. And the idea with the August deadline was to try to get it done so that it could be implemented if adopted for the FY 24 year. This was sort of an outline of the report. It has our report at the very top with the recommendation and that's pretty short. Any of you who have looked at the document, it's about a page and a half long. And then the recommended policy is outlined here.

The important thing I think that was in our report was the fact that we came to a consensus around some things that we thought were sort of guardrails that we had to pay attention to for this allocation policy.

The first one was the strength of the network. You've got a lot of very good programs as we know from our SRT visits that come together and communities of practice in different at the local state and national level and elevate the impact and visibility of Sea Grant and the integrity of that network. We as a committee agreed it was very important.

The other thing that we recognize was that our appropriations come from Congress and congressional support is really critical to what we do and what we can do through demonstrating the impacts in our programs both at the state and national level was very important as well. So, recognizing that we need that congressional support to move forward.

The third thing that we recognize is there's not enough money. There would be no director that would stand up and say I get enough money to do the work that I know I can do. So that was another thing that we thought about.

And the final thing that we really thought about is there's such a diversity within the network. In terms of program size, program location, the state mandates what you're dealing with your constituents, that there's no perfect allocation policy, because all of you look through the allocation policy through different lenses. So, what we tried to do then is to figure that the best we could do would be a compromise that would be to sustain excellence across all of these diverse programs. And, to still allow for program growth as we see appropriations change.

So that was sort of the report and the overarching considerations that we had. When we started into this study, the recommended policy, there was the purpose, there was the history, and we actually put in a lot of history. Jon in his draft had put in a lot of history because he thought it gave the nuance and complexity of how we started back in the day at Sea Grant and had a very circuitous and evolved path to get to where we are today. But it really does help to explain some things. Jon at the time when he gave us the draft said look, you can get rid of this, you can keep it, you can do whatever you want. When we

read through it, we decided that that context was really important to understand how we got to that. So, we not only kept it but we put more information than Jon originally did so that all of you could appreciate sort of how we got to where we are today.

The legislative direction is the legislative direction. And then of course the goals. The goals that are in that document are pretty high-level goals. There's sort of mom and pop and apple pie kinds of goals. It supports the Sea Grant mandate, it supports the NOAA mission, it's driving excellence in the program's nobody would ever disagree with that.

Where the rubber hits the road is in the next couple of sections. So not surprisingly, those four sections we didn't spend a whole lot of time on those we amplified, clarified, enhanced as we needed to but really spent the bulk of our time in discussions and otherwise within the allocation of funds to Sea Grant program elements and the distribution of funds among the program. And so that's where I'm going to spend the time today to talk with you and walk you through some of this. Sea Grant directors are of course going to notice inside out because this is what you live every day. Some of our other Board members may not know it quite as well. But since many of you will be voting on this, I want to make sure that we walk everybody through it and we're all at the same place with us.

So, sort of start with the allocation of funds to the program elements and you know that the Sea Grant funding comes from two program project and activity lines, the PPA lines, there's the Sea Grant PPA, and there's the Sea Grant aquaculture PPA. We're going to set that Sea Grant aquaculture PPA aside because that has different rules for allocating those funds. It has to be competitive or the merit base is congressionally directed, it's different.

What we're going to focus on is the Sea Grant PPA. That's the \$80 million one at this particular point in time and that's the one where most of those funds go to the programs. So, what we have here is the Sea Grant core funding that core funding its base plus merit, and at least 75% of that Sea Grant PPA is directed to core funding. That's what's in the allocation policy. It supports our infrastructure and capacity building funds and in the Sea Grant app. It says that that 65% base funding that you get in the programs is really meant for long term sustenance and stability of Sea Grant. So, in a sense, they're somewhat locked in. The other part of that is merit. There's again 65% goes to base funding, about 10% that's the goal anyway, to give out for merit. And in this policy, the recommendation is in FY 2024 would be the funding baseline. Now you'll see under some of these I put FAP, does anybody want to guess what FAP stands for? It's my little abbreviation "federal appropriations permitting" so it's the disclaimer that you always have to have it because in case the appropriations go down, so you need to have that. 25% of the funding goes to national and regional funding, again this is funding that is authorized by Sea Grant and in the regulations so it supports things like new programs, national and regional programming, the Knauss fellowships, NOAA-wide activities, and of course, the administration, the national office, the five and a half percent cap that's in that 25%, too. And then any other special provisions that might be in there. And in fact, in the document itself, those special provisions are actually outlined what they might be. So, given the 75/25 split, in that 75/25 split in terms of the principles that we are recommending that be used.

The first one up here, the baseline for programs is FY 2024 like I said that before, the funding is 'do no harm', so there's not going to be a lot of reallocation. We're not going to take funding from program A and give it to Program B, etc. The idea is that the programs will grow as appropriations grow, and one can allocate to those programs. And you've seen some of that happening now. But there's not going to be

any big reallocation of funding. And, in a way that's consistent with the Sea Grant acts mandate to provide stable funding over a lengthier period of time.

The second thing is the program minimum funding, it's \$1.2 million currently in federal funds, FAP (Federal Appropriations Permitting). That \$1.2 million is not meant to say that that's sufficient. We know it's not sufficient. It's not meant to say that we think that that's what it should be. We don't have that opinion at all. All we're saying is that's what it is right now. I do know that there was a document in 2003 and the minimum was set at \$1.2 million. That was aspirational. That was never achieved. In fact, it wasn't achieved until just very recently, so 20 years on and so we achieved that \$1.2 shouldn't have happened faster, of course, but that's the reality for the funding. So, the program minimum is \$1.2 million. This time is also codified and is the idea that you can make inflation adjustments. That's never been explicitly stated in the policy before. And so, we thought that it was important to put that in there so that inflation adjustments can be made.

And then, as you all know, the 2014 committee did a lot of work in which they wanted to define some metrics that would recognize some differences like size and etc. length of coastline, other differences in programs. That committee looked at a lot of metrics. And what they ended up coming up with was a coastal population and shoreline metric that they felt could be benchmarked against some numbers that people could find out their coastal shoreline and populations. And that would give an opportunity then to recognize that some of the programs have needs around populations and shoreline that could be considered in some of this funding. So, this was put into place in FY 14, but it wasn't really able to be implemented again because all of these things get implemented when there are appropriation increases, and those appropriation increases didn't happen until relatively recently. And so, we did implement this modestly recently, but it hasn't really been given a chance to see how this would actually play out.

So that goes into the 65% that would go to the base funding. The program merit funding, again, is assigned based on program evaluations so they have their program evaluations and it modifies that. So that's adjusted every four years, but overall in total, that amount is squished out all the time, to the programs. So now what I'm going to do is go to the distribution aspect of it. And just say again, using FY 23 as an example, you got your \$80 million Sea Grant PPA, \$14 million Sea Grant aquaculture PPA. Again, you've got your program funding, and I think it's really important to note that that program funding is at least 75%. It's not going to be lower than 75% that's going to be pushed out to the programs. And in fact, I think it's higher now -- it's at 83% I think is what you said, but it's going to be at least 75%. And then the funding for the national and regional activities is not going to be more than 25%. The other thing that is in the distribution is three other elements. It talks about when the distributions are made right after the appropriations are made in the fiscal year. So, it gives guidance to the national director on that. It talks about how they're made, you're not cannibalizing anybody and it's only up to their additional appropriations to go in there and set the time for when the policy should be reviewed. So, whenever the Sea Grant Program is reauthorized, the national policy states that the National Sea Grant office should revisit this policy to see if there should be changes in it. And it doesn't just say when it should be reviewed and that's the minimum, you can review it more frequently if you want. It doesn't just say when it should be reviewed. It says who should participate in that review. And of course, it's the Board and the Sea Grant directors that would participate in that review going forward. The whole premise of this has been based on long term growth of appropriations, but we all know that appropriations don't always grow. Some years grow less. And so, there is guidance here for Jon as the Director about when appropriations decrease and this is a quote so I took it right from the document.

The first priority is the maintenance of the network, and the maintenance of base and merit funding levels...that's priority one. And then during appropriations increases, its primary consideration will be given to program core funding, and it's based on the principles of minimum base, inflation adjustment, program specific metrics of coastal population and shoreline that we went through before in terms of the allocation principles. We put a lot of information in the appendices that talked about (a) coastal shoreline and population of Sea Grant states and how that is done, (b) is a tabular form of the history of changes to the program allocation guidelines, (c) lays out the new program policies how you start from a project and you move to a coherent area program and then an institutional program and college program. And then typically if you start from a project it takes 10 years to happen. I think "d" is really interesting because it talks about the Sea Grant timeline, and then takes Sea Grant back to the days of 1963. So again, just more information to understand how we got to where we are today. And then the last appendices give you the information that tells you what all your programs currently have as your FY 24 funding base.

The last slide is the recommendation that we have. But I'd like to ask my fellow committee members here Kris and Judy, and John, Shauna and Becky, if I left out anything or if they had anything that you'd like to add at this point in time, and then I'll go forward with our recommendation.

Ms. Norosz – As a committee member, I felt pretty pressed for time to get this done. I think the committee worked diligently. I can't even remember how many times I went to drafts after drafts, trying to make the language as simple as possible, as clear as possible. And I guess that's the beauty of having six people on a committee and staff to help because we all read things a little differently. I think the policy is really simple to understand language wise, I think the frustration was, we all come from different states and backgrounds and realize the difficulties that the programs are facing, and we realize the diversity of the programs and of our space. We have such varying amounts of coastline and varying amounts of population. I think where I felt really constrained is that you didn't have the time really to investigate. Are there other metrics that may be available to us now that weren't the last time that this policy was examined? And to that end, as a committee member and Board member of the Advisory Board I would suggest that we explore that in the near future? And I don't know if it would be the purview of this committee or another one that we would set up. But I think enough time has elapsed that it would do us all a great service to examine. Are there other metrics we can use that can be applied to everybody? And that might get us someplace where we're feeling a little more comfortable? So, I hope that we can have some discussion on that.

Ms. Gray - As a participant in this process, I thought that it was incredibly rewarding. Everybody who participated in this process brought their best selves. They all took their own hat off, and we're thinking about Sea Grant as a whole. We had representatives from the SGA side from small programs, medium sized programs and large programs, and each and they all had very different experiences. And could speak to that. But when it came time for negotiating the language or what the policy would be, everyone took their hat off. And we all thought about what's the best thing for Sea Grant as a whole. As a woman I thought that was really powerful, and it's a lot to do with the leadership of the committee. And so, I really commend that. And no matter how many targets get painted on our backs as a result of this, everybody really puts their best foot forward in this process.

Dr. Downing - I'd like to thank Nancy for your excellent leadership. My gosh, amazing. And I just like to say that I really fully support this proposal. I think we all approach the task with the idea that we have a

policy that works for all programs. And I agree with what, Judy had said, that we all tried to think about network as a whole and what would work best and what would work best for national to be able to allocate funds and so on and this is particularly difficult for me since I have the smallest allocation for a program in the entire network, except for Guam who is slightly lower than ours. So, it was a little hard to take that hat off because I'm deeply aware that we could spend a lot more into a lot more for people. But the idea here is there's no really perfect way to allocate funds. And because programs have longer and shorter histories, and each service different groups have different needs and demands and limitations and so I see this policy as the best compromise we can make in sustaining excellence across all the programs and diverse programs, allowing for equitable adjustments and funding as appropriations change. Of course, I'm hoping they're going in a positive direction. I think, as a Sea Grant director in this committee, I felt that my voice was respected. And I think we created this policy proposal, through frank and inclusive discussions among advisory board members for directors and knowledgeable assistants' advantage to staffing. I feel really strongly that it was a team effort and we all had tried to do the best for the premium policy for that would do the best for the program. And I think just reiterating what Nancy said a little, we'd like to see all these programs grow in funding, right, and there's so much more that we can do. Acknowledging that, you know, smaller programs make great use of lots more funds as could large programs but having the idea of taking away from larger programs to give to smaller programs to flatten things out. That doesn't work that – it pits us against each other and that's not the Sea Grant way. So, I guess I'd like to, again say that I fully support this proposed policy, and I feel like it gives the national office more latitude and when more funds become available from Congress it will ease our lift a bit and I thank you for the opportunity to have been involved in the center.

Dr. Shuford - I think my colleagues have said everything really well. Thank you, Nancy, very much for your leadership on this and for some very hard discussions. I think we got to a good place and I want to thank the rest of the committee as well for being open and respectful and letting each other share their perspectives in hearing each other as well. I also just wanted to restate what Kris stated earlier about maybe trying to figure out some committees or others to address some of the more challenging aspects of figuring out what resources you really need to be whether it's metrics or I think that's an important thing that we should do going forward. I think the allocation policy is where it needs to be for right now. But there's some underpinning elements that really need to be addressed. And that can ultimately inform the next version of the allocation policy but there were some things outside the purview of the committee, but I do think they need to be addressed. So, I just wanted to support what Kris mentioned as well and hope that the Board can discuss that and what something like that might look like going forward but again, thank you to all the committee members I really appreciated working with you.

Dr. Oh – I just want to echo Judy, it was a great experience – I really didn't want to do it. I've witnessed the outcomes of these discussions, so I went into it with a little bit of trepidation. Maybe we were successful because the policy makes no one happy and it was challenging. So, I do want to re-emphasize how everyone puts in the health of the network first. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

Dr. Targett - I'd like to say that the group unanimously recommends that it accepts the report on this update to the Sea Grant allocation policy, but folks didn't bring up this idea that maybe there are other metrics that should be considered. Maybe there are some other issues around some of this that should be considered and that we should think about in a less time constrained way and be able to look at this more thoroughly. So, with that folks said, Yes, we're unanimous on this now, but we think that there are some other issues that could be brought to bear so that would be for the future, and not too distant

future. It could be a committee that couldn't be stood up sooner rather than later. Let me make one other comment. And then I'll turn this back to you madam chair at that point, but remember the process here, we're making this recommendation to the Board, the Board can accept or not. If the Board accepts, then that is forwarded to the National Director. And the National Director will take that into consideration along with all of the other discussions as he tries to figure out how he's going to implement all of this stuff. So, that's kind of the process going forward. And so, we're at step one of this, which is the recommendation and we'll see how we go from there.

Ms. Stirling – Thank you Nancy, that was a yeoman's job that you and the committee carried out and we're grateful for your hard work especially in such a short period of time. We're going to take a short break now for about 30 min. And when we come back from this morning's break, we're going to have an open discussion on this allocation policy, which will include the directors in the room if you have questions or comments or observations or thoughts that you feel need to be taken into consideration.

#### **9:40 am -10:10 am – Morning Break**

#### **10:10 am – 11:00 am – Discussion Continues for Allocation Policy Subcommittee Report Out (Dr. Nancy Targett, Subcommittee Chair)**

Ms. Stirling – What we would like to do now is hear from the Board in response to Nancy's presentation and then we're going to open it up to a more general discussion with the rest of the folks in the room. And I think at that point we were done getting any observations or interactions with the Board. I'd like to ask Nancy and Jon to moderate the general discussion. So, Board members, what are your thoughts on what you've heard about this allocation policy?

Dr. Gibson – I have a question about the metrics and events since you didn't have enough time to talk about it. Were there other metrics that were discussed that could help with allocation?

Dr. Targett - There's a paragraph at the top of the appendix that talks about the 2013-2014 Allocation Committee and the metrics that they considered and there's a whole list of metrics that were considered. And we then interviewed or had Joshua who was the staff person for this, come and talk to us and we kind of grilled him on what those metrics are and why ultimately the selection was shoreline and population. And he said that, of all of the metrics (e.g. working waterfronts, ports and harbors, the size of the maritime economy, number of fishing vessels, size of watersheds, and number of coastal tourists and other population sizes, it just goes on and on), he said that when they looked at those, and looked at those metrics, many of them, not all, many of them correlated with there was good fidelity with shoreline and population. And so, we left it at that.

Dr. Murray - I'll just say that my first read of the report was right before I got on the airplane and my sort of immediate assessment of the job, really well done, from the standpoint that the policy is now clear. Is not radically different, which I don't think we want to put a one Sea Grant we're going to tear the network apart by doing something totally different. But it's now clear and the job as the director has some discretion within the guidelines that were presented for allocation, which is, I think, important for the director of the National Office set to have some discretion within the bounds which were clearly outlined in the report. So, my assessment was I was really pleased with it. I would also like to compliment the committee on all the information that's in the appendices. I think that's great historic information. Sometime in the future, there's going to be another Allocation Committee and there are

going to be arguments made or against the different policies. But we now think we have a clear sort of historical perspective on how we got to where we're at. So that information to me was very important.

Dr. Targett - There is a specific quote up there and it said that the first priority was to preserve the integrity of the network and to preserve core funding and base that is based on merit funding for the programs. So that is the extent of the guidance that's in there right now. We were not more prescriptive than that, other than to say that it is to preserve the funding for the programs in the event of a reduction. The other piece I want to come to is that 25% isn't something that the national office just starts doing. It's supporting things that are in the authorization that are required to develop new programs, the idea to support the fellowships and all that stuff. All of that is in that 25%. It's not just doing things that Jon or the national office dreams up. I mean, I think there are things that are in there that are really important. And so that 25% can't just go away. I mean, the Knauss fellowships and the National Fishery Service ones that we partner with and the other ones are all part of that too.

Dr. Pennock - I would just add that was the Board recommending that for Sea Grant writ large, that there's a balance between the program's clearly the core elements. That's where most all of our work gets done, but that there are things that the national and regional in the language that's in the authorization that are in our policies - that's where the Board came down and making recommendations that was an important thing for us to have the flexibility to do that, as Nancy said. It's interesting right now, because in a world in which we didn't have an aquaculture line that was directed by Congress and we didn't have some of the other direction. Absolutely something to your point was, well, then there's more and that's where we would go to if that wasn't the case, and it would still be at that 75% that's just not the reality. I think what we did before was to try to move as much as we could towards the programs while still allowing us to do the other thing you said that we do. Merit was the other question. So, merit is in the reauthorization language and for competitiveness and the expectation of merit there. So that's a slippery slope. Right? Would that be something we wanted in a reauthorization? No, we were not really interested in reauthorization right now. But if that was the case, that would have that language. It doesn't dictate what that 10% was, again internally to the Board and coming up with a recommendation we have been asked before. Why isn't that more? Because there are some members and some appropriators who don't like what they consider to be more block grant. They really value merit - make it competitive. We could argue whether it's a good idea but I don't think we can just remove it right now.

Dr. Larkin – I appreciated the report, the reference to the metrics and where you're coming from for the coastline and the population and then they'll be an eye toward the next census. So, your comment reminds me what's your thoughts on inflation. Was there a discussion on which statistics are going to be used in the Bureau of Economic Analysis regarding inflation measures, which ones are going to be used and how, as the next step would be in relation to that formula?

Dr. Pennock – Kola's going to check to see if it's in the report. There are a lot of things around inflation. It's standard national numbers for inflation. I don't know which Bureau those came from that we use. When I was in New Hampshire, Fred's saying about keeping up with inflation. I'll just be clear. When we went back and looked at that we did that from I believe the 2014 adjustment that Leon made after the last allocation committee report was adopted, and he had some funds that he could put towards that. That's where we made those calculations. I think mathematically our programs kept up with inflation, minus a few and those programs and they know who they are. They tend to be the larger programs

because the budget would break to bring those programs along and that we talked about last year, and the rest so I feel what you're saying I understand the inflation. I'm just saying factually, what we did is we took where we were in coming through 2015 and brought it up to 2023 when we made the additional adjustments that you're reacting to individually for this year, as well as incorporating it into the 2024-2027 omnibus.

Dr. Targett – It was said that the committee has made some decisions but felt rushed on things and left all this stuff on the table. And that's not quite an accurate reflection of what we did. So, if that is the impression that came across then I didn't do a good job. The committee was unanimous in feeling that this policy needed to be recommending that this policy be adopted by the Board. But the committee also then said there are other issues – we considered a lot. And we think that we've addressed many of these issues, but there is always more than one can consider. And one of the things that you've heard from Kris and from some others and we're hearing from people here about some other metric's issues that could be considered going forward for another allocation policy. So yes, there are other things that can be considered but we are comfortable with the document as we're recommending it now.

Dr. White – The work was really fantastic. And I would like to reflect when we have this conversation with SGA. We have a lot of new members and so they may come out in different ways. But this is the same information that was presented to us functionally with more detail. You know, when it came out in whatever the last round was, however, I think there's room for us to have a good conversation and it's not on metrics, and it's not on population or coastline. It's really on what Sea Grant wants to have as a vision for their costs? It's laid out in a way that's able to defend it by numbers but that doesn't necessarily translate to what we want our nation's coastlines to look like necessarily. In fact, the investments are in spaces likely from numbers that will perpetuate saying in many spaces and discourage others in other spaces. So, we are invested in spaces that are within the allocation that are set already. Is that the path that we collectively want to think about? And that is not a metric and it's not an easy conversation to have but at some point, we need to have that because we're investing and that's the project.

Ms. Stirling – Thank you everyone. What I would like to entertain now is a motion to pass this allocation report as written subject to some minor edits that have to be made. And then take just a few minutes to talk about next steps. If in fact, there is a desire to revisit this allocation issue and we're looking FY24 in the face so I think we really need to get this allocation policy on the books so that Jon's got its guidance. But that doesn't mean that we can't take this issue up again, if the Sea Grant community would come together and decide how they would like to proceed and work that out with national office, so that we were then given a charge that would enable us to take a look at other approaches, if in fact, that is the will of the community and the will of the national office, then that's an entirely different situation. And we can set aside sufficient time. Stand up an allocation committee, and we can go after that. But it seems there's more than one thing on the table right now. Including Susan White's point about vision. I for one would like to see some of these issues settled out to a point where the Board understands how it can weigh into this and be helpful. So that's my thinking on it. Given that, let's deal with this motion. And then if there are additional thoughts on this I'd like to hear them. May I have a motion to accept the allocation subcommittee report and recommendations subject to minor edits?

***Motion to accept the allocation subcommittee report and recommendations subject to minor edits:*** Dr. Jim Murray



2<sup>nd</sup>: Dr. Carole Engle

Vote: All in favor

So, what is the thinking about future action on allocation?

Dr. Engle – I wasn't around with the other previous allocation committees but I've been hearing a lot of discussion about it, they've been contentious or a lot of issues and all that sort of thing. My view of this is that between what Susan said and what Nancy said is that the next step not refusing to discuss allocation more, but the next step would be develop some sort of vision of strategic longer term plans specifically related to the funding mechanisms and bringing new programs on and considering these kinds of things but lay out that plan first, and then come back to revisit the allocation as Nancy suggested, to me, that seems the better way if you get into more discussions about allocation, but you don't really have a firm plan of where you're trying to get to and what's most important in that it just continues to become a lot of contentious discussion. So that's my view on whether we need kind of the charter pathway forward first and then see whether there's a need to revisit it.

Dr. Targett – Thank you Carole. I think that my take is a little bit different. Not that much different but a little bit different. I think I turn it back to the SGA or the national office to work together to tell us what they want to see us do so that we have clearer guidance, rather than us trying to figure it out. I'm thinking if they want to do it longer term I think they do -- that's the whole goal but I'd rather them tell us that.

Dr. Murray - The only issue that's come up that I think can be addressed in the short term and that is one the base program and \$1.2 million. And that's an old figure and Gail made a good point having an updated figure on that which would be relatively easy to get, I think polling the network on what's the basic infrastructure that's needed and I think that was done whenever that \$1.2 million figure was derived but that was some years ago. An updated figure on the \$1.2 million. I would suggest that could be done. Let's say our next meeting the Allocation Committee collects some data and adjust the number accordingly.

Ms. Stirling - We've accepted this report at this time. And that there are additional things that need to be done in the future. I'm leaning toward Nancy's point here, which is let's have the community come together with Jon and Jon's folks and sort out how you would like this address so that we have a clear Charge that gets at the nut of the problem. We've got myriads of issues that have been raised here today. They're all good issues. There's the issue of are there other metrics that should be considered because a lot of time has gone by and things like that. If we're given sufficient time, with a sufficient Charge, and we're not facing, you know, a looming fiscal year, then I think we could be very helpful but I like to see what the community comes up with in conjunction with Jon and see what the Board can do to assist. Any other thoughts?

Dr. Lerner – From sitting around the room here and over the time period in which we discussed this, what I heard is that Nancy tried to pull this together and then verbalize it, is that, there's this piece that Susan has brought to the table. And we've had conversations around this before that might speak to where it could go next or needs to go next. And it seems to me based on what you've said about the community coming together in the conversation with Jon. We've talked very generally and I know that the SGA will talk more and it's both closed and open sessions about coming together and having a discussion about that vision. What do we want it to look like? And what's the magic number of months?

Is it 25 years? Is it 30? What does that look like? But having a conversation about that vision? And then as I believe it was Nancy who articulated. How does that match up with where we sit and maybe that is the trigger - then should we approve this and that's going to move forward in the recommendation to Jon. We'll wait to see what Jon does with that. In the meantime, I think having a conversation and planning for discussions to include the whole community to discuss that vision and then see how that vision informs it. Again, just trying to put into words, and I guess for the record, is what I heard sitting in the seat.

**11:00 am – 12:00 pm – Standing Up the Evaluation Committee of the Board Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (PIE) Committee (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program and Dr. Jim Murray, Advisory Board Vice Chair)**

Dr. Pennock - Jim and I are going to tag team but to be honest, the first tag is going to be pretty quick. We've talked a bit about this over the last day and we will go from there. The way that Sea Grant works, we have a planning implementation and evaluation cycle and we refer to that as "PIE" sometimes. And the "E" part of that is evaluation and that's what we're coming up to - we will start next fall in the preparation but next fall in the required evaluation of our programs, all of our programs.

The evaluation of the programs has been done in a number of different ways since the early 2000's, in more formal ways. There are a few people here that have lived through some of those. But, there's been so much turnover, change on the Board and also within the network that we need to make sure we're articulating everything and our goal today is to do that for the Board.

We are asking the Board to set up an evaluation committee for this next review cycle of program site reviews. That committee would be charged with helping to coordinate the evaluation of all 34 programs. There is specific guidance as to who plays what roles. There needs to be one Advisory Board member on each of those 34 reviews. It's somewhere between two and three site reviews per advisory board member. We call the program reviews, site review team (SRT) visits, that often gets used as the acronym, that describes the site review process that happens during a normally 4-year cycle (this time around a 6-year cycle). Advisory Board members play a crucial role. The evaluation committee helped set up what the teams were composed of last time and are going to look like and try to make sure that there's fairness and equity and make sure that we don't have conflicts of interest. Some of you who have served on a state advisory committee can't be one of the people reviewing it from the federal level.

And then primarily in the summer of 2025, the evaluation committee's role is to review all 34 reports and digest the feedback from the directors. Is it really for the evaluation committee to sit down, look at those individual evaluated reports and look at them with an eye as to whether they were fair? Was there something that happened in one program that seemed to impact a score that may be fine, but if that's radically different than what happened in another review, the role of the evaluation committee is to identify those and make sure that it is as equitable as it can be.

And then the final item is the independent review panel (or the IRP) that is carrying out a similar evaluation of the national office and the impact of Sea Grant network writ large overall and what's being generated because each program focuses on somewhat different things and around their focus areas. And the other work that we do is Sea Grant spending the federal dollar appropriately being as impactful as we can. Are there things that we in the national office could do better?

Nancy actually chaired the IRP the first time. Typically, we have evaluations of the National Sea Grant Office and our activities occur sort of every year at one level a little bit longer for years with OAR (our line office), they've shifted those things around but we really wanted to have a review that meets those goals within NOAA with the goals that we have within the network and that's what this is for. So, helping to coordinate and create an evaluation committee that is charged with helping to coordinate the evaluation of 34 Sea Grant with the NSGO, identifying Board members, reviewing the SRT reports and then helping to populate the independent review panel. So, I'm going to hand it over to Jim to provide Board members with a little bit more detail of what that really means but this is one of the heaviest lifts that the Board has on a four-year cycle.

Dr. Murray - Since our last site review process, most of our Board members are newer and haven't been involved in that stuff. What I want to do over the next few minutes is to sort of go into a little bit more of the details and tell you new Board members what you're getting yourself into.

That Charge is the same Charge almost identical as to what it was six years ago. And for those of us who've been around Sea Grant a long time. That's the first time we've been able to say that. We used to change the evaluation process pretty much every cycle and it goes back 40 some years. And we were improving all the time, but we never quite got it right. The fact that we have the same Charge this cycle tells us we got it right. And I want to read two sentences actually. This is sort of the conclusion of the evaluation report from the last time. And I quote... "our overall observation is that the site review process is working quite well. And has matured to a level that is accepted by most of the Sea Grant community members". There were surprisingly few negative comments indicating the site review process does not need a major overhaul. And generally, SRT reports were very consistent; numerical scores were generally well defended, and only four programs expressed concerns about their scores. So, the point being, I think we've come a long way and we have a good process.

If you go to the National Sea Grant Advisory Board's website, under Reports under 2020 - I highly urge each of you in the next couple of months to read both of those reports. One was on fairness and equity and I'll describe how we did that a little bit later. And it really shows you how we kind of kicked the tires on reviewing all of these 34 reports.

The second one was how we reviewed the process. And obviously this was a new process six years ago, different than the time before. So, we felt it very important that we evaluate the process and where there's tweaks to be made. And I'm not going to talk too much about that.. Jon of the national office pretty much has endorsed the tweaks that we've made and that will be part of the training in the new system. Some of those tweaks relate to the directors and the national office. So, I urge you also - everyone in the national office involved in the evaluation process as well as the directors before you get too heavily involved in thinking about site visits, take a look at those two reports, it's some helpful information.

So, Jon mentioned that it is a major lift and is probably one of the most important activities we do. We're required by legislation to evaluate the programs. And so, we will be co-chairing as advisory Board members, each of the 34 programs - do the arithmetic. Happily, we're up to full membership right now, there's 15 of us so that means on average you'll get two people. Last time I considered some of us I did six because we weren't up to full staff. And that was too many unfortunately.

So, to let you know, kind of what you will be expecting. Let's say you're doing two site visits, probably think about two weeks of your life that you will be devoting to Sea Grant next year. In that there's a day of travel on each end of the site visit. The site visit is Tuesday - Wednesday. So, Monday would be a day of travel and typically there's a Monday night meeting of the team, Tuesday and Wednesday are the site reviews, and Thursday afternoon will be the report out and we'll be writing a draft of the report and Friday you'll head home. So there's a fair amount of conference calls, reading of materials and so on before and after the site review. And reviewing drafts of the report and editing the report after you get home so that's kind of the workload to be expected and we expect everyone to be super prepared. This is a very serious undertaking. It's very important to the universities. It's very important that we get it right.

The rest of the team - we have a Chair from the National Sea Grant office, typically the program officer for that program in that region. We will have three other experts, one of whom is a Sea Grant director. And one of the changes that we recommended to Jon is that the Sea Grant director for Conflict of Interest reasons, will not have a vote this time around. We feel it's important to have a Sea Grant director on the team. He or she learns a lot and they also are very valuable to the discussions because they can provide the insight of a director into the discussions but they will not have a vote on their ratings.

We're always looking for the good names of high-level University official types to be on these teams as external reviewers. The more competitive credentialed the team is, the more the report will be looked at with the gravity that it should have. So, we're hoping that these two other members are sort of high-level people that would sort of fit the strengths of a particular program. For example, a particular program was really heavy in fisheries and aquaculture. Hopefully one of those outside experts would be an expert in that area. So, it is a legislative and statutory requirement that programs must meet the requirements in the legislation and the Standards of Excellence to be a Sea Grant program, which are in federal regulations. So that's part of the legal requirement why we're involved in this.

I would say at this point number two, the PIE System. I'm biased but I would submit that it's the most effective, efficient way of running a program in the federal government that I know or can think of, the fact that we begin with a strategic plan that we all buy into and endorse. We implement that plan over a four-year period (and this time a six-year time period). And then at the end, we're evaluating a strategic plan. I can think of no other programs such as ours that a government does that. And I think that's important once we sell this program to Congress and others.

So as a FACA committee, Jon and the national office rely on advice from the Board and our role here is to advise Jon, so the way this will work is that the evaluation committee once it does its job and evaluates all 34 reports and ensures that they're equitable and fair. The evaluation committee will present the findings to the Board and make adjustments if needed. And we as a Board will vote to endorse the evaluations committee's report.

One of the things I'd like to point out here is that we got great support last time, I'm sure we will this time, also from the National Sea Grant office. Both from the program officers that will be chairing the reviews, also in terms of the data and logistical support. For example, one of our charges is to appoint a co-chair to each of the 34 site visits and that requires knowing the director's schedule when he or she wants to have their site visit occur calendar wise, and then we've got to ensure that both the program officer and the co-chair can accommodate that schedule. And the last go around, the national office

basically did that job for us. It was really helpful because it's really a fairly complicated process given 34x4 schedules (directors of programs being reviewed, program officers, Board members, and directors participating on the reviews) and they helped immensely. So, this is what the evaluation committee needs to be thinking about.

At the end of this fairness and equity report, what we did the last time worked really well if we used a research review type process. Whereby the committee of five which included me as Chair, Judy, Gordon, Deb, and I felt back then that it was really important to have a highly credentialed former Sea Grant director on the committee. We used a research review type process and a panel discussion. And we had not only the reports, but we had the director's response to those reports. And in four cases, their directors raised issues about the rating that they got in a particular focus area – we took that very seriously. So then, as I mentioned, the report is issued and presented to the full Board.

And I would suggest again, because we'll probably find some new places where we can improve further that the evaluation committee do another attempt of reviewing the overall process. You can always learn from that given the amount of effort that the Sea Grant community puts into these reviews. I think we owe it to ourselves to take another look at the process, can we improve it even further? So, the guidance has been provided to each of us by the national office and there'll be training for the advisory Board before we get into this, you know, there's a lot that I'm not mentioning in terms of the kinds of things you're looking at a review. But that will all be sort of made clear as we go through training on a future day. There are some changes that we recommended that are not major, but I think they will improve the process and the training will be provided to us by the national office.

The last charge is to set up an independent review panel (aka IRP). I thought this was a really good idea – it was Jon's idea. At the end of this process for six years, we've had 34 snippets of great information that the programs have done, but we're also a national program. And what we never did very well is to sort of take those 34 success stories and see if it will make it into a national story. So, the independent review panel or IRP, that is sort of one of their major jobs, is to look at all 34 programs and make a coherent national story out of it, which can be used for a report to Congress, justifications within NOAA etc. We also asked the IRP to be critical in certain areas for growth or improvement are the ways that we can have the network work even more effectively together. And last, Jon sort of took it upon himself and said we need to be reviewed too. So, the IRP also reviews the national office and has a report that says how the national office might improve, where are they doing well and where some improvements need to be made.

So, here's our timeline. What we're going to establish today is an evaluation committee. Sometime this coming year the national office will schedule for the Board a webinar that will provide much more detail than this. The national office will work with us and the directors to help establish a schedule for the site visits and that will be done this winter. We'll begin preparing in the spring/summer. And by this time next year we're going to start the site visits in October or so and they will continue for about nine months between October 2024 through June 2025. Fall meeting 2025 Advisory Board Evaluation Committee convenes; National Sea Grant Advisory Board public meeting and full cycle NSGO review conducted. We'll vote on those reports, etc. and the national office then based on all of this will send certification letters out to the programs in the winter of 2025. And then shortly after that, we convene the IRP. And what we did the last time is the evaluation committee solicited from the national office, the SGA and the Advisory Board names of high-level people we wanted to serve on the committee – I think we got

something like 70 names and actually had a conference call with the Board to sort through some names and chose the team and got Nancy to Chair it. So, they made a really good group and I would recommend going about it this way again – let's get the community involved in coming up with the names.

So, what we need to do today is vote on membership. We need a Chair, Nancy fortunately has agreed to Chair the committee and we had people to volunteer. I believe it is Peter, Jack and Meghan because we need three other Board members. And, then we need a former Sea Grant director, so we asked the leadership of the SGA for some names of former directors that were not at all involved in this on a six-year cycle because apparently a conflict of interest, and from those names Nancy and the Board will be choosing one of those directors that were recommended by the SGA. And, I've been asked – I'm only on the Board one more year. So, the first year I've been asked to serve as an advisor to the committee. And, Susan has always provided excellent DFO support to the committees. Any questions?

Ms. Gray – You said that the meeting would be two days but one of the things that we wanted to incorporate in the site reviews was time to write. In my recollection I thought it was three days, but two days is not enough time to review a program and write.

Ms. Holmes – It was guidance that went out on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The guidance has time set aside on Tuesday and Wednesday lunch and end of day writing time and Thursday morning is set aside for a writing session before the exit interview report out on Thursday afternoon to the program and university leadership.

Dr. Betzer – I sat on the reviews – I was only on five last time. The restrictions on some of the reviews were such that we weren't able to go to some of the remote locations to look at some of the things that were done at Sea Grant programs. In the case of the University of Wisconsin for instance, they produced 60,000 heads of lettuce today and I don't know how many 1,000 pounds of salmon. I would argue that we're losing some flexibility that's important for us as a group. We're doing our best to evaluate a program to do an adequate review.

Dr. Pennock – Based on all the feedback we got, we basically have said no field trips. The rationale behind that is it becomes an arms race between the programs. There's some that have the ability and others that don't. We used to have what was called a performance assessment team in the early 2000's. And there were programs that had the capacity to move the team around large states. And so, where we've ended up is we're trying to have equity and my argument would be with that is that there is the opportunity with technology today with weaving into superior fresh or any other examples to weave that in but to keep the team basically on the campus or at the location that is most convenient tends to be the campus because of the interactions with the administration that you would want. So, I hear you, and the policy that went out does not allow for that movement around because we're trying to create the writing time and not have it be over longer than a few days with travel days. And there was really no other way to make that happen.

Dr. Gibson – I remember at the last meeting we talked about how we engage previous advisory Board members to participate on site reviews, is this appropriate activity?

Ms. Holmes – The Charge that came from Jon says that we can pull in the most recent Board members into co-chair on the upcoming SRT visits, if you want to – they can also be external reviewers as well.

Ms. Gray - The last cycle one of the biggest challenges was the interpretation of the scoring one, two, three, four and five. Some of us were using the Nobel Prize criteria for a score of one (best score), like, you know, this was a Nobel Prize, and other people were much more generous when they scored a one. One of the things that we talked about in the evaluation committee was making part of the training of the SRT visits very specific, to better understand what a score of one, two, three, four and five mean, and I think that's just critically important to state and restate state again. Thank you.

Dr. Murray - I would really suggest that the site visit itself - that the Chair and co-Chair keep reminding the review team of what those criteria state.

Dr. Pennock - There's some mixing and matching here and I just want to make sure that it's clear that we're talking about roles during the evaluation that everybody will be engaged in but the real issue for today is voting for the evaluation committee. Jim went over that we sort of had both of those things intertwined. I just want to make sure to the new members that that's clear. And, the evaluation committee, the roles are defined and the workload for the evaluation committee. And, I think Jim, you'd agree it's fairly well defined in time. Most of that heavy lift is when we get through all of the reviews that everybody will be involved in programs making sure there's fairness.

Dr. Murray – Well said Jon. The evaluation committee's work is the 34 reviews. So, it's going to take three or four days ahead of the fall meeting to assess the reports. And that's really the work of the evaluation phase. So, think of it as an extra three or four days out of your life two years from now.

Ms. Stirling – Let's recognize the nominations for the evaluation committee. Nancy Targett as Chair, Peter Betzer, Meghan Marrero and Jack Payne as members when they receive their final approval. Jim Murray as advisor and those who have expressed an interest and we have a long list of those. So, if I may have a motion to approve.

***Motion to approve the nominations for the Evaluation Committee:*** Ms. Kris Norosz

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

Vote: All in favor

**12:00 pm – 1:30 pm – Lunch Break**

**1:30 pm – 2:45 pm – Strategic Discussion of the National Sea Grant College Program (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant Office and Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

Ms. Stirling – This discussion we'll call recurring topics from earlier today and yesterday. We have two main topics that we need to address. One, is on HBCUs, which Jon said he would give some thought to and address. And, the other is the issues that Carole raised about institutional support. There's been some chatter among some of us on that. So, I think that might be a useful discussion. It is also open to anything else you would like to address. So, having said that, Jon would you like to lead off with HBCU?

HBCUs

Dr. Pennock – We've dealt with this coming in throughout the program. The University of the Virgin Islands is an HBCU so that gets tied up into the discussion. And we have a Charge to be more diverse – to be more inclusive. How we do that right now – not by Congress, but our own internal policies and this came from the Board a number of years ago. We should only have one Sea Grant program in a state – we do have two states that have two programs. The understanding for USC is that they are really not

eligible right now to move towards college status because of California status. How do we bring diversity to Sea Grant with HBCUs? It's some of the discussions we've had to some extent. The idea that we have large universities under the wing of a bigger program doesn't feel right to me. So, we have to want to create opportunity, we want to create diversity, but how might we best achieve that? We know money is an issue. But I think we should stay away from that. What policies come into play and what policies are ok. What's our vision? Should we not pursue any programs right now because we don't have the money for all the existing programs? Part of my job description and legislation is both to sustain excellence in the network and to grow the network. So, I don't know if that is enough. I would like to open it up for some conversation hoping the conversation drives thinking probably better than I can do right now. Does that make enough sense to get us started?

Ms. Figueroa - I'm wondering if there's an opportunity for someone here to share maybe a brief 90-minute summary of what the discussions have been in the past around this issue to just kind of give us guidance to enter into the conversation?

Dr. Murray – There was never at least at the national level any systemic policy towards HBCUs around this size. It was encouraged at the site visit level, that the Sea Grant College in that particular state would reach out and have representatives from an HBCU on the advisory committees and they would have representation. But it was kind of deferred to each state Sea Grant program.

Dr. Briggs - That's kind of what I was going to say, I think at least in the last seven years that I've been at the national office the conversations around working with the MSIs, there has been limitations to us opening NSIs or national NOFOs or for the states to do targeted NOFOs and get funding to HBCUs and the MSIs is how might we be able to do that? We've spent some time focusing on that and you might recall in our latest aquaculture funding announcement, there was actually some language associated with a requirement that the aquaculture program actually do some work related to MSIs and because of that, we brought in a Knauss fellow who is looking at where we already have existing funding and relationships with HBCUs around the country - where does that exist and then how might we grow that for the aquaculture program? Like Jon said, that's almost tangential from this conversation about building new programs. And I don't think that conversation has been had at this level, because as Jon mentioned, when we talk about building new programs, the thing to recognize is that there's the language in the authorization that actually states that we can only build programs where they fall within the jurisdiction of the Coastal Zone Management Act. So, there's language...there's limitations there about where we can actually build and create Sea Grant programs and then there's the language around the one per state right. So, then it becomes this idea of where are the gaps in that language that allow us to do something more than just put out national NOFO's and get money to HBCUs but actually build, like Jon's saying here, a real concerted effort to change the program to actually have Sea Grant programs at those institutions and is that something we want to be looking at or is it just this idea of we're just going to keep trying to get funding over there?

Dr. Engle – I think that somebody should reach out to all the HBCUs and find out and make a directory of capacity of skills and expertise and then have some in there about what kinds of Sea Grant programs and activities would they be interested in? I think it's even really interesting to ask if they're familiar with the CASP program, for example, if anyone know about it, and if they are even plugged in enough to encourage students to apply for all the internship programs, not just a college program, but across all Sea Grant programs and kind of gauge a level of interest, the expertise, facilities capacity to make the



directory. I'm kind of wondering whether maybe thinking outside the box and whether it's possible. And then to look at that and see what might make sense and maybe even think a little outside the box, some sort of a consortium across all the HBCUs and open it up to all of them from a single one. Kind of deals with a one per state kind of thing. Having data and specifics that are capacity and expertise and interest.

Dr. Briggs – I do want to draw the attention to the group as you guys think about this, but the National Academy of Sciences about five years ago did a report from minority serving institute's and the resources strengthened in the STEM workforce there. And there was a series of recommendations for federal entities about supporting and getting money over there and the limitations that exist in MSI's and we should probably look at that as we consider this because there are limitations at the MSI's that we overcome as we think about the federally funded money there too.

Ms. Marrero - I think we have to think both short term and in terms of like, where are we now and what can we do now? Because I feel like it's always a lot of people who want more diversity. What are we doing? What are the tasks? Is it reaching out to MSI and saying, hey, there are scholarships available? How can we build capacity at your college? How can we support students in applying? And, even if it takes a little bit more effort from staff members or whomever within Sea Grant or beyond, so we can think about things like that? The aquaculture example of are there funding opportunities where you need to partner with an MSI in your state or in your region? And that's sort of low hanging fruit. You can control a lot of that without blowing up the whole system. But maybe we need to long term, blow up the whole system and think more broadly, and look at places of untapped talented students who are not becoming great scientists, who are not becoming marine engineers, because they're not getting the same opportunity as other candidates who are at these other institutions. So, there's elitism there still, and we can't pretend that that's not true.

Ms. Stirling – It strikes me that there are some relationships at the state level that would probably be useful for us. I know in my state of South Carolina, because I sit on the South Carolina Sea Grant Advisory Board down there, we have a consortium in the state that includes all the major universities and many minor ones, and that includes South Carolina State University. And the requirement is basically that the Presidents show up for these periodic meetings and generally they do or they're very senior vice presidents. And we have had vigorous discussions about creating greater opportunities for people of color and other vulnerable communities. In stem and providing opportunities to learn more about scientific endeavors and get engaged in science and all of that, to the degree that we have engaged with a number of NGOs in the state to figure out how to drive some of these things down into the public-school system into particularly at least to the eighth grade, if not earlier. And I mean, this is beyond environmental literacy. It's a focus on vulnerable communities and communities of color. I don't know exactly where all that stands now, because I've been busy with you guys. And one of those things happened within the last two years and I haven't been able to make most of our meetings but I know that those are being pursued. And I know that Susan Lovelace in South Carolina, very vigorously pursues candidates for fellows and all that sort of endeavor. But, knowing what's going on in South Carolina and the efforts in focus that's been put on this. I suspect that there may be some other states that have similar types of focus and similar relationships that might be instructive for us in terms of how to create relationships and capacity and to create opportunity along the way. That does not necessarily stand in the shoes of creating a more robust focus in the national office. I think this is something that we should discuss with some level of sincerity here and seriousness. But what I'm saying is, as we found in the

DEIJA community of practice, there's a wide variety of things going on, and I suspect that that's probably, to some degree the case in some of the states in terms of relationships.

Ms. Figueroa – I think we should think about what is the capacity for us to engage in this work in a way that is truly meaningful and not directed by policies and numbers - generating a narrative that makes everybody feel good, but having a true strategic impact to diversify - the voices that are in these cases that will have an impact on the future, the challenges that we're trying to solve, so I just wanted to throw that out there as something to think about and all of these amazing brains in the room because I think that's going to be something important as we continue to discuss these items. And then as we move forward from discussion or decision making.

Dr. Engle – I think this is a really good conversation because my perspective on this is that it's a multifaceted kind of a problem and issue and to your point, Peter, in trying to recruit students to our program that you need to get our numbers up in our undergrad student body was about 90% African American, about 90% Hispanic and then once in a while we have a white student - trying to recruit students. A student comes along who just really loves science or really loves math, nine times out of 10 they have parents and aunts and uncles that are really pushing him to become a doctor or a lawyer because there's money there and how do you say encourage that student not just pursue that, especially if the family has low income and a lot of our students were very low income. So, I agree with you. Our recruitment efforts started early, we were trying to recruit juniors and seniors and we're not very effective and then we started creating programs and getting all of our faculty into junior high and then trying to follow some of those kids and trying to do some things. We started with Aquatic Sciences day where everyone comes out to our facilities and gets them involved and gets them engaged and then try to follow up and you're more successful. But that's long term. And most successful workforce development programs I know has come to the same conclusion where they're targeting eighth grade junior high and indirect recruit, so it's multifaceted, but I think what we're talking about some kind of a putting a program together that addresses multiple phases in this including the education piece and strengthening that like a Sea Grant and create some of these programs in targeted areas. But I think at HBCUs, in fact I know there are faculty and scientists that are talented, HBCUs that are not engaged in Sea Grant who would like to be involved in Sea Grant, but there may be the one person in a biology department or in another program or something that has an interest but they don't have connections. They have a heavy teaching load. They don't have time to go out and really engage in that. And that's why I come back to kind of reaching out to someone trying to find those folks in the directories of who might be interested. And then try to figure out a way to hook them up with Sea Grant programs for the competitive programs because I know some folks would be very competitive and they are with other grant programs and who would be interested but they have no connections to Sea Grant whatsoever. And so, I think we need to think about kind of a multifaceted program and not just one but one college program, Sea Grant College Program at one HBCU. I think the problem is much more complex than that and we have to understand that the kids that we dealt with in Arkansas, the counties that we recruited from, are some of the lowest income counties in the whole country. And so, these kids are coming to us from the most dysfunctional families that I've ever met and, in some cases, the internships are just so important that trying to get parental permission for even an internship in the state of Arkansas that would be maybe two hours away from their home. The parents would not approve it, especially if it was a woman, especially if she was female. And a lot of it had to do with the fact that she was doing a lot at home to care for the parents and this sort of thing. There's just a lot of dynamics especially in low

income areas like this. So, if you're talking about workforce development, a lot of shellfish farmers require that somebody can swim for obvious safety reasons. In our program we required that all of our students take swimming classes, because so many of our students - 98% of our students didn't know how to swim in our undergrad program and are coming into fisheries. And so, you've got safety problems, so there are a lot of things involved in this. I think we need to think about local pieces to this. The education part is one but I think reaching out to HBCUs and MSI's to find these faculty that could compete and get involved in finding a way to help make that happen. I think there are opportunities there as well.

Dr. Brown – I think we're hitting on multiple levels here, one we're leaving lots of talent on the table. The other one is service delivery that Jim brought up. How do you work with all communities and states and how do you capture talent and connections? So, there's multiple levels.

Ms. Stirling – At the risk of throwing a firebomb in the middle of this whole thing. We had an existing resilience and environmental justice committee which we're going to review at our spring meeting. And if we're going to keep it going it requires a new Charge. So, there are a lot of moving parts to this question. It isn't simply a matter of reaching out to an HBCU. That's clear to me and I think it's clear to everybody here. So why don't we think about a Charge for the subcommittee in the spring and we will also need to repopulate that subcommittee. And let's come up with a Charge in conjunction with Jon and Becky and the staff and SGA and the DEIJA community of practice and whatnot and see how we can address this set of issues so that we can create the information and begin to really reach out and (a) identify the problems that are within our reach to resolve; and (b) provide the support to do that. What do you think?

Ms. Holmes – My recommendation is that, Deb since you currently sit on that committee, to bring that to the committee at your next monthly meeting and to move that forward through the current committee right now.

Ms. Stirling – Done! Any other thoughts before we wrap this up? So, you'll be hearing from us at the next meeting of the resilience and environmental justice committee and some of you may want to attend. So, we can go through this and see if we can start articulating a pathway.

#### Institutional Support

Ms. Stirling – The next topic that we were going to pick up on was the one that Carole raised and this has to do with whether or not guidelines are required or some level of guidance for institutional support. And the way we left it at the last discussion was we need more information. And so, we were talking in terms of having one or more listening sessions with the system, SGA and the Sea Grant network. And to see how widespread this issue is, what the aspects of these issues are, because there may be more than one. And we know there actually are more than drivers in these kinds of things. And then see if we can figure out whether or not there's something here that we should be getting our arms around. How does this sound to everybody and please chime in if you've got another approach that you think we should pursue?

Ms. Gray – I think listening sessions are essential. The first step is to listen and give everybody a chance to verbally express themselves - I think that's critical to our next steps. I think we have a timeline. I think at the SRT's we need to communicate to the university leadership, what our expectations are, in a very

clear way and that needs to probably even be a scripted speech from the Board Co-Chair - we always have like an introductory remarks period and I think that this could be something that could really make a difference with the programs.

Ms. Holmes - I think that more discussion needs to happen on this, you don't want the Board to overstep the Charter of what is being asked of you and it is the national office that regulates and manages the program. So, what we can do is take this conversation back to Jon and Kola, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board as well as the President and the incoming President of the SGA – who have monthly meetings so they can take it back to there and determine an appropriate way forward so that we can understand more of what's going on in this space. Is that acceptable Jon?

Dr. Pennock - I think having a Board interested may be a problem. It's not as though when programs reach out. We're pretty responsive to that in terms of going and talking to university leaders or directors. I just want to make sure that we don't...because we're coming in at another angle. It's just needing to know that's the thing. I believe that the SRTs is a place to do that. I just don't want to have this feel like it's a brand-new issue – it isn't. There certainly are continuing and newly developed challenges with state funding of universities and state budgets and the rest. I think it's increasing the pressure on leaders at the universities, it's impacting these long-term commitments that they know it's a new president and provost or whoever. They've never seen it before and we have to figure out how to do some of that.

Dr. Murray – I think on a point of caution here, my experiences with university administrators is they felt like the fed's were telling them how to run their universities. So, you have to be very careful about what's management and what sort of a legal requirement. I think we need to keep that in mind

Dr. Targett – I wanted to say that because we have so many directors that we want to make sure that they understand that at an SRT, the directors come up. Those are the seasoned directors that understand what an SRT is, and some of the unseasoned directors many of them who are coming in may not understand that that's a mechanism that they have, so maybe the listening sessions, or whatever sessions you have, could help to educate them as to what the options are too.

Dr. Briggs - The program officers actually know, that is one of the roles of the program officers. And it's one of the things that we talked about in our program officer group. Make sure that you're going to the directors at the breaks of the SRT's and ask them what they want and need. And one of the things I do want to put as a little bit of a word of caution, I do encourage you guys to get the information and understand where this is because we're hearing the problems, but I will also say that we – Jim and I sat on a site visit team where the director looked at us was like, please do not even put in there that you appreciate the support I get, because if it's written down, others know about it at the university and I will lose it. So, there are some directors that don't want to talk about the support that they get because it is in relationships they've spent a lot of time fostering and developing. And if it is too widely known that exists, they're afraid they're going to lose it. So, we do need to have some caution about how we talk about this so that we don't hurt those that have very good relationships that they've spent a lot of time developing.

#### **2:45 pm – 3:00 pm – Wrap up and Adjourn (Ms. Deborah Stirling, Board Chair)**

Let's go over a few things. Our spring Board meeting and SGA meetings are going to be in DC, March 3-8, 2024 so you need to save those dates. And the fall Board meeting is going to be in Savannah, GA August

18-23<sup>rd</sup>. We were looking at the prospect of an October meeting, but we may have to have a virtual meeting in October.

**3:00 pm – Meeting Adjourned**