



Center of Excellence Advisory Board Meeting

Friday March 14th, 2014

Walla Walla Community College

12:30pm – 2:00pm, Working Lunch

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

Leslie Hammer, Dean Farrens, Mike Swan, Ike Malson, Cristie Crawford, Becky Wallace (on phone), and Kimberlee Kidwell (on phone)

Others in Attendance:

Jerry Jr. Anhorn, Bill Griffith, LaKatherine Stanger, Jason Selwitz, and Patricia Hurin

Welcome & Introductions

Bill Griffith welcomed Advisory Board Members. Bill asked that everyone go around and introduce themselves, and who they represent for the Advisory Board for those who are new to the committee.

Action Items

The October 2013 meeting minutes were reviewed by the Advisory Board members. Mike moved to approve the minutes and Leslie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Center of Excellence Updates/News

Recent Center Projects: Bill gave a brief overview on events attended by the Center staff since his hire in the fall. Hay Growers had a low ROI and will be reviewed for future participation. The Community and Technical College site review went very well. The review committee sent a letter stating how happy the State Board representatives are to hear the direction the Center is headed. The work plan is packed full and the use of current funding is spread across all projects with the assistance of industry sponsorships for events. Land O'Lakes and WSDA pesticide training went well. Precision Ag conference had roughly 60 participants and was well received. Bill explained WACANE, giving a brief description of what it is and the purpose. The major goal for the Center is 'reviving' the WACANE group meetings through the use of conference calls. Summer conference will be held in central Washington around July or August and be a one-day event. Emails have been going out to the list serve for the conference survey, interest cards, and program guides. Some interest areas for the topics at conference related to articulation agreements. The Program Guide updates emails have been sent out replies have changes and updates to broaden the focus on the programs across the State. Also, at the back of the Program Guide booklet will be a list by Community and Technical Colleges with programs offered as an easy reference guide for the programs. The Program Guide is also projected to expand with a list of courses as a database to share across the State to help Community and Technical College faculty and students in Washington with their career and program pathways.

Wenatchee Valley College requested for Bill to come to their college and share his presentation with their Board of Trustees as he did for the site visit in the fall. The meeting went well and Bill met with the college agricultural faculty after the meeting. Discussions around the Program Guide and the

articulations with WSU allowed for further partnerships with Wenatchee's programs and faculty members. WACANE will continue to be a focus area for the Center and emails will continue to go out weekly to the listserv to encourage building interest for the group. Bill then gave a quick list of meetings the Center has partnered in, participated with, co-hosted, and represented the Ag education and Ag industry across Washington State since his hire in the fall. District FFA was hosted in March and WA-State FFA will be hosted again on Walla Walla Community College campus in April. Bill gave a quick projection on the State FFA contest and the new regulations requested to host a successful event while protecting the Center.

USDA/AHB & WWCC Bioenergy Operations: Jason began by handing out a brief written list of updates for the grant while explaining the USDA grant purpose, vision, and background. Jason has been strengthening relationships and working with industry and educational representatives to achieve the grant deliverables. Starting the year with roughly \$865,500; Jason explained the budget spending past and future, scholarships, marketing expenses for the grant, and equipment purchases. Jason has been teaching Bioenergy courses at Walla Walla Community College for the pilot stage. The Bioenergy Program at WWCC is now part of the Energy Systems Technology with Wind and HVAC programs. While enrollment for the new Walla Walla Community College Bioenergy degree program has decreased throughout the Winter Quarter, Jason has been working on a new marketing plan for the program, focusing on internships for students and working with them on outreach for the program co-op opportunities during the summer. Jason has contacted multiple industry representative and educational partners on behalf of the students for the internships explaining what path the students in the bioenergy program are expected to follow. Jason has been working on improving his current courses as the program moves forward, as these are all piloted to gauge the course quality and student interest. Tours and field trips with Bioenergy students have taken place successfully and will be planned for future dates as well. Solid wastewater and wastewater management programs are underway.

L.E.A.D Project: Patty began by updating the group on the Curriculum Assessment Testing project. She gave an overview for the C.A.T. program and listed the completed tests and the tests currently under development. College faculty and high school instructors have connected with Patty to begin working on the content and questions for the Ag Mech test for C.A.T. Patty has a newer focus in her duties in addition to C.A.T. The USDA has awarded the Center a recipient of the L.E.A.D. grant in partnership with the FFA Foundation contracted as a sub-recipient. Now that the contract has been finalized and signed, the funds have been dispersed. There have been nine teachers who have been selected for the Ag equipment Challenge Event to present at summer conference revolving around the L.E.A.D. program. The Blue & Gold FFA tour helped with dispersing the interest cards to the high school students and linking the connection between the high school students and higher education in agriculture. Patty attended the Rural Alliance Conference in Spokane and had a good ROI for future participation in the event. Patty discussed the possibility of using mobile apps, videos, and handouts for classrooms teaching agricultural education to reach out to those who are not typically Ag interested. The plan in using videos is to start with current college students and tape their stories, then moving to industry to capture what it is they are looking for in college graduates to hire as employees. Patty plans to have the videos and gathered information posted on the Ag Center of Excellence website for access. Leslie and Ike gave additional information and offered assistance to Patty in her endeavors to promote the education and career information.

Leslie suggested planning to have the Agri-Business week and WACANE at the same time for higher exposure in both programs and groups. It was also planned for the Center to be attending and participating in the WAAE Summer Conference in June 29th thru July 2nd. Becky has ties with the top coordinator for the schedule and suggested that Patty get in contact with them to be included on the agenda for presentations.

2013-2014 Plans and Status Updates

Winter & Spring Travel Plans: Bill briefly discussed the travel plans coming up and the “TBD’s” that are listed on the Travel Handout. These are due to scheduling with other representatives and many high school teachers while trying to pair up with Community and Technical College faculty. Patty and Bill have been working on the scheduling and finalizing travel plans for high schools for a few weeks already and plan to confirm dates for April and May. The Center plans to be conservative with the travel funding while attending to those who have an interest in the Center and Agriculture in general or have an Ag related program at their location. This will be used in scheduling multiple events and visits close together by location and dates to lessen the amount of travel funding used and the amount of time away from the office. Many events and conferences planned for summer and the following year are in progress with coordinating and organizing, but are well intended to complete, host, or participate in.

Budget Status Update: Bill reminded the group that the budget for the Center does not have a ‘performance funding’ allowance any longer, in fact it is all included and awarded in the beginning of the year with what used to be “base funding”. The team as a whole has decided to make larger spending decisions together to better allocate the current funding and involve everyone as a whole team and not individually. There are funds left to be spent and allocated toward a specific purchase, event, or services before the grant year end closes. (June 30 for ACE, and August 31 for USDA) The USDA budget has a rollover allowance from year to year, and even though it shows quite a high number un-allocated the funds are planned to use toward student scholarships, equipment needs, and student tours of industry locations.

Feedback and Discussion

Bill asked the committee, “Which industry representatives or organizations should the Center start to connect with?” He can move forward with plans once we get a few on a list, instead of starting blind with an abundant number of representatives across the State. The Center needs more industry partners to connect with and create stronger partnerships, so the focus has been turned to the Advisory Board for a more specified approach and shorter lists.

Leslie says that Far West Agribusiness covers five states in the Pacific Northwest and partners with many industry sectors for Agricultural Business. Ike suggested connecting with RDO; since they deal with hay, potatoes, etc. and Ike can share info with Bill on who to call first. Leslie suggested contacting the Blue Mountain Growers in Milton Freewater. Dean mentioned the young chapters with Farm Bureau and will give a contact to Bill to connect and maybe from the high schools as well on behalf of future Farm Bureau members.

Leslie suggested bringing Agricultural Industry partners along with Center representatives to the high schools and community college visits to give the other side of education a voice and allow students and faculty to see what the farmers and industry are looking for. Bill will be looking into this idea further, and the group as a whole encouraged the Center to use industry when reaching out to the younger generations.

Next Meeting

The next Advisory Board Meeting is *tentatively scheduled for June 2014*. LaKatherine will send out meeting reminders and materials as the date approaches.