

Sea Grant Review Panel Meeting: Action Items
Sunday June 5, 2005

Action Items:

- Jerry Schubel will identify a member at the Executive Committee meeting to take over the job of providing information on Executive Meetings to rest of Panel
- The NRC is currently planning its 3rd meeting in the Great Lakes region, and will send Panel the meeting dates when available
- Jon Kramer (SGA) will provide Jerry Schubel with list of theme team committees missing Panel representation

Sea Grant Review Panel Meeting: Minutes
Sunday June 5, 2005

Panel Members Present: Robin Alden, Peter Bell, Ross Heath, Manuel Hernandez-Avila, Geraldine Knatz, Nathaniel Robinson (Vice-Chair), Jerry Schubel (Chair), Judith Weis, John Woeste

Panel Members Nominated: Barry Raleigh, William Stubblefield

Panel Members Absent: Robert Duce, Elbert Friday, John Knauss, Frank Kudrna, Jeffrey Stephen

Ex-Officio Panel Members: (NSGO) Ronald Baird; (SGA) Jonathan Kramer

Other Attendees:

NSGO: Francis Schuler (Designated Federal Official); Megan Agy, Nikola Garber, Melissa Pearson

SGA: Jennifer Greenamoyer, Robert Stickney

NRC: Jim Coleman, Susan Cozzens, Jennifer Merrill, Dan Walker,

Opening of Meeting (Jerry Schubel)

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the new members nominated to the Panel, Drs. Barry Raleigh and William Stubblefield.
- Approval of Minutes: Motion made to approve minutes of November 2004 Panel meeting, seconded and passed.
- Agenda approved with inclusion of John Woeste presentation on the Extension Academy.
- The group agreed to switch the informal Sea Grant Week follow up session to Tuesday, June 7, 2005 at noon, location TBD, due to travel schedules.

Executive Committee Report (Jerry Schubel)

- Jerry Schubel briefed the panel on the Sea Grant Retreat that occurred in Houston, TX January 24-25, 2005
 - Retreat included representative of the NSGO, SGA and NSGRP.
 - Retreat focused on ways to enhance Sea Grants role and use of resources. Full minutes of meeting available in briefing book, Tab D.
 - Participants agreed on need to generate a single, clear and compelling message to encapsulate Sea Grant - primary suggestion: "21st Century Sea Grant: Healthy Coastal Economies and Environments for a Stronger America."
 - Participants assume the present challenging fiscal situation will continue, and that the Sea Grant community needs to be active on the Hill to ensure understanding of the Sea Grant Program.

- Appointment of Nominating Committee Chair(Schubel)
 - Jerry Schubel asked Geraldine Knatz to chair the Nominating Committee and John Woeste to assist her. He charged them with talking with the panel to generate a list of names for the new Chair, Vice-Chair, and At-Large member.
 - Motion by Judy Weis was moved, seconded by Ross Heath and passed.
- Sea Grant Association Meeting (Robinson)
 - Nat Robinson presented overview of SGA meeting held March 7-8, 2005 in Washington, DC
 - Panel Chair traditionally invited to this meeting. Jerry Schubel also requested participation of Nat Robinson, Frank Kudrna, and Peter Bell.
 - Jerry Schubel presented the NSGRP perspective on the Sea Grant Retreat.
 - Frank Kudrna presented PAT evaluation committee study results with Category I-III issues.
- NSGO Final Review (Robinson, Bell)
 - NSGO charged to evaluate programs that have undergone PATS. Annual NSGO Final Review to be held in February.
 - Nat Robinson and Peter Bell participated in 2005 NSGO Final Review as observers and generated a report for panel.
 - Summarize report (handed out) of Final Review – found process fair and that all participants take task seriously.
 - Peter Bell stated credit for written report goes to Nat Robinson.
- Knauss Fellows Review (Robinson)
 - Nat Robinson reviewed the Knauss Fellows program for the group.
 - Program is excellent, and NAT provides comments to allow for continued improvement.
 - Credited Nikola Garber with tremendous improvements in program.
- Executive Committee / Panel Communication
 - Panel members feel communication between the Executive Committee and rest of panel has broken down.
 - This is the role of the “member-at-large,” currently a vacant Panel Executive Committee position.
 - Jerry Schubel will identify member at Executive Meeting to take over this role.
 - Discussion of appointing “member-at-large” as a yearly, rotating position.

National Sea Grant Office, Director’s Update (Baird)

- Director Ron Baird welcomed the Panel to SG Week
- Update on Agency
 - Continue to operate with matrix system, which results in severe consumption of staff time. This increase in responsibility may lead to need for increase in overhead rate.
 - Dismal season for grants. The new NOAA grants online system has had many problems and has severely hampered our ability to get funds out the door. Inclusion of legislative affairs in loop adds to the delay.
 - NSGO news:
 - Nikola Garber received a much-deserved promotion.
 - Amy Painter received 2005 Administrators Award.
 - Agency continues to have high turnover rate. Congress has expressed unhappiness with slow pace of R&D. Several major changes in R&D line offices expected to occur piece-meal in next year. SGRP needs to actively engage this change in leadership.
 - Carlos Gutierrez appointed as new Secretary of Commerce.
 - SG International listed as a deliverable in the President’s Ocean Action Plan
 - A number of bills relevant to SG activities are up this session with opportunities for public comment and the potential to get SG noted / involved.

- Update on FY06 budget - restoration of Presidential Budget appropriations due (in part) to high praise in Ocean Commissions report. However, NOAA taking big hit in House for the FY06 budget.
- Important NRC study evaluating the PAT process currently underway. This report will speak to questions on how to evaluate Research/Academia/Federal partnerships. To date the PATs *have* significantly improved program performance.
- There has been fallout from 2 lower scoring programs which the Panel needs to address
- Sea Grant Act up for reauthorization hearings in '07 – need to start considering language *now*.
- Ask Panel to look at 3 programs that are up for review (Coastal Communities / Ports & Harbors / Law Center).
- Final message: Changes are underway that will change how we do business – Sea Grant has an opportunity to LEAD in these changes.
- Asked about the “hot topics” for Sea Grant, Ron reiterated the need for action on the FY06 budget.
- Reviewed meeting with OMB (Ron and representatives from NOAA, DOC at meeting).
 - Discussed roll-out of “regional” emphasis - these areas and research priorities would be defined.
 - OMB is pushing NOAA for regional focus: Sea Grant as leader in conducting regional, place based research.
 - For first time, Sea Grant is providing role model for NOAA and the government in general and needs to be prepared for the greater expectations this will bring.

Panel Discussion with NRC Committee Members

- Jerry Schubel: National Academies’ Committee on Evaluation of the Sea Grant Program Review Process. NRC currently performing congressionally mandated review of the PAT process. They will complete the review by next year.
- Ocean Studies Board staff member Jennifer Merrill presented the status of the NRC report. She will also be leaving in a few weeks and Dan Walker will be taking over her position on the Sea Grant study..
 - Presented goal of report:
 - Emphasis - report intended to review evaluation process, not program
 - There will be no draft report, only final.
 - Process occurs through iterative feedback – the committee welcomes feedback, information.
 - For NRC to use information, findings and recommendations *must* be supported (references, citations, etc.).
 - All info sent to NRC will be made publicly available.
 - To date, NRC has gotten all requested materials from NSGO and SGRP reports. They are getting information from SGA and responses from 14 programs.
 - Results of study will be disseminated through: (1) final report; (2) Congressional staff.; (3) agency staff; and (4) public forums.
 - NRC goals for SG Week to: (1) discuss preliminary findings; (2) synthesize preliminary findings; (3) interact with / meet the Sea Grant community; and (4) solicit fact based, substantiated opinions from the community.
 - Summarized first meeting of NRC for Panel. **Currently planning third meeting in Great Lakes and will send Panel dates when available.**
 - Introduced Dan Walker and Nancy Caputo (folks on the ground handling the report).
 - Expressed strong desire for continued attendance of NRC members at future PATs.
- Jim Coleman (Chair, NRC) led Q&A session
 - Q1: Has effectiveness of review been shown in changes since 2002?

- General consensus was marked changes / improvements in program since first round of PATs (including shake up in programs, better strategic planning and vision, and better attitude of SG directors towards evaluation process).
- Q2: If SG program ranking necessary, should we use the PATs or other methods?
 - Problem with ranking may include loss of focus on network and decrease in inter-program cooperation.
- Q3: Do best programs receive best scores?
 - In general Panel felt that relative program rank does reflect program quality, although a few disagreed.
 - The main problem is that dramatic increase in quality of programs has brought all programs nearer to one another, making it harder to differentiate.
 - As differences in ranking lead to greater amounts of funds in future, this will become bigger problem.
 - SGA President John Kramer stated rating of programs important to University Administrations.
- Q4: Does the expense / effort of the PAT justify the outcome?
 - Panel believes that *legitimate* costs of running a PAT are not excessive for the benefits a thorough evaluation provides every 4 years.
 - Small cost for the benefits of a decentralized system.
 - Panel feels that if programs did a better job of documenting successes over the 4 years, this would reduce necessary effort at PAT time.
 - Programs still do too much unnecessary constituent events and field trips to demonstrate accomplishments to the PAT. The panel is actively working to reduce these expenditures.
 - Working on development of a standardized database that will reduce effort to pull together materials for PAT.
- Q5: What are primary changes Panel will make to the PAT process?
 - Currently have a Panel committee working on revising PAT process, preparing draft of recommendations – will supply this document to NRC.
 - Will have *draft* of recommendations to NRC for August meeting and will provide finalized version after draft recommendations are voted on in November Panel meeting
- Nat Robinson delivered prepared panel response demonstrating marked improvement since 2002
 - 1994 decentralization of SG management improved programs.
 - Evaluation criteria/benchmarks provide commonly understood benchmarks.
 - Changes have focused management on results / getting resources to right place.
 - Programs are less compartmentalized, better integration in research/extension/outreach.
 - Improved strategic planning.
 - Better university engagement with SG.
 - Increase in merit funding led to increased performance.
 - Reiterative PAT process improves over time.
 - PAT exposed important local users / stakeholders.
 - Performance evaluation process is indicator of well managed program.
- Panel discussed PAT methods to insure transparency and consistency:
 - Yearly PAT training sessions.
 - Open communication prior to PAT with SG director.
 - Program Officer to ensure non-Panel PAT members up to snuff.
 - NSGO annual review.

Update on Communications Report

- Panel Report: Robin Alden absent - no update.
- NSGO Implementation (Fritz Schuler)
 - NSGO implementing major recommendations of Task Force, outlined in “Communicating for Success.” Specific recommendations included: (1) designating Jamie Krauk, Communications Leader, as national POC; (2) ceasing publication of Sea Grant Abstracts; and (3) providing a NSGO POC (Jamie Krauk) for the SG Library; and (4) reestablishing the Media Relations Center.
 - Discussions underway about proper format for SG library and necessity of physical holdings versus a virtual format.

Committee Updates

- International Committee (Manny Hernandez)
 - Strong interest in International SG, particularly in S. America and Asia, with 5 International Programs at SG Week (Honduras, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Korea, Costa Rica).
 - International Sea Grant specifically recognized in the US Ocean Action Plan.
 - Ron Baird: International Sea Grant is “on the move” and needs to be included in next reauthorization. Had opportunity to brief Chinese Administrator on the program.
- Diversity Committee (John Woeste)
 - Panel is currently generating recommendations on diversity for SG. These recommendations were discussed with potential alterations suggested. Revisions will be presented to panel and a final version of the recommendations will be introduced at the November meeting for consideration.
- NSG Extension Academy (John Woeste)
 - This is a quality program with strong participation and great benefit to SG Network. It is vital to continue this program.
- Program Evaluation Committee (Nat Robinson)
 - Subcommittee serves as official liaison of Panel to NRC. Will hold a meeting Tuesday, June 7, 2005 at 7 AM.
 - Committee participants: Peter Bell, Manny Hernandez, Frank Kudrna (Chair), Jeff Stephans, Judy Weis.
 - Opportunity for full Panel comments on draft recommendation at lunch meeting Tuesday, June 7, 2005, 12:15pm. Draft will remain open for comments until June 15, 2005.
 - Motion to authorize the Executive Committee to present the draft report to the NRC was moved and passed.

Sea Grant Legislation Reauthorization

- Authorization runs through 2008. Last time the hearings came up a year in advance. Jennifer Greenamoyer said they are hoping to introduce a bill in 2007.
- Motion to create a Reauthorization committee was carried and passed. Member include: Robert Duce (Chair), Peter Bell, John Knauss and Jeff Stephans.

Panel Meeting Adjourned

- During break, Panel Members attended the open meeting of the National Academies’ Committee on Evaluation of the Sea Grant Program Review Process (Rockport Room).

Debrief on the NRC Committee Meeting

- Panel discussed the open meeting of the NRC and differing perceptions of PAT between the Panel and the SG Directors.

- Discussed time frame of cycles (potential for 5/10 year cycles) and problems in ranking generated by compression in quality distribution between programs.
- General agreement that communications within SG have improved, but there is still a ways to go. Further communication improvements will address problems and strengthen network.
- General agreement on need for definite transparency of NSGO Final Review process including role of PAT and definition of allowable “additional information” and the weight of this material in the grading.
- Discussion of the role of Panel / PAT / SG Director members at the review and associated conflict-of-interest questions.
- Decision by PAT to ask for any differences between PAT and NSGO Final Review grading to be documented and sent to Panel.
- Discussion of appropriate response to programs “complaining” after Final Review. Ron Baird stated there was no official process outlined at this point, but NSGO will decide on an appropriate response mechanism. Reiteration that the complaints are not about a grade but about the *process* - claiming bias.

Sea Grant Association – Report of the President (Jon Kramer)

- NSG Extension Academy (John Woeste)
- Congressional Interaction dominant theme SGA since March. SGA aims to be relentless at working the Hill.
- SGA made major effort to focus on strategic thinking/planning, ex. New Organizational Development Plan.
- Working to improve communication within network and improve relationships with affiliated organizations.
- SGA made significant progress at their meeting June 4, 2005.
- SGA committed to providing information to assist NRC process.
- FUNDING SITUATION IS DIRE. There is potential for some programs to shut doors if grants don't come soon.
- Program Mission Committee
 - Charged with evaluating current Theme Teams.
 - Questions: Are they too broad? Are they focused on correct issues? BIG Q: Are we using networks intellectual capital effectively?
 - Aim to release new groupings shortly and ask Panel to assign appropriate designees.
 - Hope to hold retreat of theme team co-chairs in the fall.
 - Jon Kramer will provide Jerry Schubel with list of committees missing Panel representation.
- Sea Grant International
 - SGA moving through the process.
 - Intend to vote during meeting October 31- November 1 on whether *ad hoc* international committee will become it's own committee.
- External Relations Committee
 - Focused on the FY06 appropriations.
 - Working to influence House, SGA planning meetings on the Hill.
 - Approached by Extramural Research Committee to make a community effort on the Hill.
 - Good opportunity for Sea Grant to be a “good citizen” in the ocean committee, but need to make sure not lumped with programs, which did *not* fare as well in the President's Budget.
 - Goal is to assist in development of ecosystems work and in identification of Regional issues.

- SGA just beginning discussions on reauthorization. Currently assessing “lay of the land” plan to gear up in 2006.
- Discussion of need to involve constituents in discussions with the Hill.

Wrap – Up

- Future Meetings and Panel Calendar
 - Fall Meeting will be held Tuesday and Wednesday, November 15-16, 2005
 - Jon Kramer expressed hope that Panel will coordinate spring meeting with SGA meeting to be held March 6-7, 2006 in Washington, DC.