

Fall 2008 National Sea Grant Advisory Board Meeting
November 11, 2008

Chair's Report – R. West

- Robin Alden has resigned.
- LaDon Swann (MS/AL) will call in later today to discuss regional team efforts.

NSGO Director's Report – L. Cammen and S. Grimes

- Pressing issues: Climate change, economic downturn
- Sea Grant update: Declining budget, increased demands from OMB/DOC (reporting, accountability, national impacts, deliverables, outcomes, etc). Pressure to tell a national story—integrate 32 programs. Budget: CORE funding maintained at 2005 level but there were cuts in other funding efforts. Some funding set aside for focus teams. Fund Sea Grant Academy (training for new extension agents). NSGO will try to set aside small funding for collaboration with NOAA regional teams.
- CORE will maintain level funding, there will be no PRP review in 2009, FEE will phase out over the next few years, and Alabama SG funds will be held in reserve.
- Budget changes mean: Reductions in:
 - Representation, advocacy in NOAA and Congress
 - Advocacy for role and scope of program
 - National program and partnership development
 - Staff, travel, Board budget
- NOAA transition: Current head is Dr. William J. Brennan. On January 20, 2009 Mary Glackin will take over until a new Head of NOAA is appointed. NSGO needs a transitional document.
- Coastal Strategy (Sami Grimes lead): Response from OMB is now undergoing NOAA clearance. Emerging priorities for NOAA coastal programs are: Hazards and climate change ('09-'10), Competing Coastal Uses and Habitat Loss, and Coastal Pollution and Human Health Effects. The NSGO would like the Board to point out direction NOAA should be going with this.
- Coastal climate service likely within the next year but we're unsure how it will be structured. Jim Hurley will carry this through the end of the year and then hand it over to Mike Liffmann. A white paper on how Sea Grant can play a role in the climate service is in development. The NSGO is also talking with cooperative extension in the interior to integrate ourselves and come up with a joint approach.
- Engagement Strategy: NOAA is responding to SAB recommendations (March '09). Sea Grant is using this to push extension and outreach and reinforce concept of engagement and support from the inside. Sea Grant is taking a leadership role in this through the NOAA Engagement Executive Committee (see organizational chart in Cammen's presentation).
 - The SAB is forming a committee to review research side of this (Kudrna). When this happens, there will be a public notice seeking members for working group. Frank Kudrna will let everyone know when this occurs.
- NSGO Personnel: Mike Liffmann is replacing Jim Murray as Extension Leader/PO in the NSGO. Hiring of a Social science PO, Aquaculture PO and a possible replacement of Joe Brown (FTE) is in progress.
- NIMS: Responded to hundreds of recommendations for improvements, weekly updates, trainings for programs. Programs have begun to enter info themselves.
- PIE (S. Grimes) – Response to NRC recommendations. Designed to enhance SG national identity and let national planning lead state planning. Strategic plan with four

focus areas, but is flexible and able to be modified if need be. We are in the implementation process right now. When the implementation plan is done, it will be an appendix to strategic plan. National plan will measure progress and guide for program to align their outcomes and measure with those at the national level to help tell the national story. Plan alignment is occurring now and information should be coming in over the next few weeks. Once the implementation plan is finished, programs will need to develop/align their performance measures with those at the national level (happening next spring). State plans have never been approved at the national level before. The PIE document outline and strategic plan was sent to Hill last week. Plan doesn't have details of criteria. Sami Grimes is leading the evaluation criteria working group to work on the details.

- Yearly: Annual reports/self-evaluation, NSGO fall review – Board observes
- Every 2 years: State of the SG – Board responsibility
- Every 4 years: Site visits – Board members participate, performance review panel (PRP) – Board members participate
- Sami Grimes: (See powerpoint presentation)
 - Evaluation Criteria Working Group met in July 2008 to develop criteria and make recommendations. Criteria were to be simple and transparent and descriptive, not prescriptive. Distinction between PRP and site visits and no need to rank programs.
 - Comments on the report are due November 20, 2009.

Comments:

- Sea Grant needs to redefine itself with new administration and break out of funding mold. Get into investment in alternative energy (Harris).
- Tidal energy could be particularly beneficial. However, how do we take Sea Grant in a new direction when new strategic plans might take us in another direction? (Weis)
- The Board should form a small task committee to develop creative ideas for a new direction (Duce).
- Concern over congressional earmarks and affect on SGA and overall program. Not a constructive way to go about getting additional funds. How do we communicate this to Congress? (Anderson)
- Board could go back to Senator's office and discuss the fact that the whole program needs to grow, not just one program. There needs to be some kind of response. Board could form a group to discuss this and come up with a recommendation? (Woeste)
- Board could come up with a statement by 11/13) for one of the members to take to Senator Shelby's office (West).
- Evaluation Process: A half-day doesn't seem like enough time to write a review of a program.
 - The PO will help set up the review and the team will be well prepared and ready to write by that time.
 - There will be standardization of reports.
- Please send comments to Leon and Sami (Cammen).
- A copy of Leon's Powerpoint will be sent out to the Board.

SGA Report – P. Anderson (See hand-out)

- Reauthorization a success.
- Retreat: included short and long-term advocacy plans. Dear colleague letters as well as plans to partner with NSGO to have a constant presence on Hill.

- Need to tackle the challenge of being brief and concise when communicating what Sea Grant is to new administration/transition team. Thinking about focusing on priorities (economy, education, etc) and on what Sea Grant can deliver rather than on what we've done in the past. We'll need some background for credibility but our message shouldn't focus on that.
- SGA has concerns about NIMS, and relying on it to communicate what Sea Grant does.
- Network Advisory Council is moving along nicely.
- SGA membership – lot of new members. Leadership – SGA President serves for 6 years, Gordon Grau (HI) will take over next year. Anderson will work with Grau in the future. New President will be announced later this week. The SGA Spring meeting will take place February 9-10, 2009. The Reception will be at the Botanical Gardens on the 10th (also the 30th anniversary of Knauss fellowship)
- The Board offers a unique lens for Sea Grant and the network needs your advice and ideas (critical thinking and creativity).
- NOAA outreach: SGA and the Board should have complimentary message – it would be good to work on advocacy/outreach together (with NOAA and Congress).

Comments:

There isn't a national identity. West:

- Sea Grant needs a mechanism to keep updated on congressional caucus activities. We also need to improve visibility of NOAA (not just Sea Grant) (West).
- For a caucus to be successful, there needs to be a strong constituent base to push them forward (Harris).
- We need to know where Knauss fellows are in Congress (Weis).
- Many fellows don't know Sea Grant well enough to sell it to their congressional offices (Byrne).
- Sea Grant's elevator message needs to focus on what the program can do that no one else is doing (Rabalais).
- Land Grant has the Peter McGraw engagement award – each university can submit a proposal—Anderson might want to bring this up with SGA because none of the proposals so far have highlight coastal issues. This is an opportunity to do outreach, not just inreach. Might want to send delegation to state offices (with one message) instead of inviting offices to briefing (they might not come) (Byrne).

Report of the Research Review Committee – R. Duce

- Data problems: Not exactly sure how much has been spent on research. Only CORE funding was included in this report. Program development funds are counted as management funds. Only one project type as allowed (projects with research and extension only counted as one or the other).
- Percent spent on research has gone down slowly from 1995 to 2008. Extension has increased, as has administration.
- Dollars have remained roughly steady around \$20m (until 2006) but buying power has decreased. Research publications have also begun to decrease.
- Board Research Committee is charged with determining long-term implications, reasons for decline, do we still need to focus on research, how to evaluate research performance, can the decline in research funding be reversed and if so, how?
- First meeting was in Sept. 2008 in Silver Spring to identify approach:
 - NIMS research data being verified
 - Each committee member responsible for a charge
 - Questionnaires have been sent to SG Directors and NOAA Lab Directors

- Committee members are synthesizing responses.
- Considering interviews with congressional and OMB staff.
- Responses from NOAA offices not as detailed as responses from Sea Grant directors (though most saw Sea Grant as a partner). It's too early to give a generalized response (although there seems to be general discontent with NIMS). Synthesis of responses should be complete by January 2009.

Comments:

- Recommendation that the committee sit down with Dr. Spinrad to discuss this report sometime after the synthesis is complete and figure out how Sea Grant fits into NOAA research plan (West).
- NIMS data is tracking proposed research, not actually realized research. Even though data isn't 100% correct, there shouldn't be much change in the trends. In terms of perceptions, NOAA research council was briefed last week on this research study and Sea Grant in general. They want to see the final report and they suggested that we brief SAB as well. The budget offices also want to hear about it. Sea Grant research tends to focus on smaller projects and doesn't fit in with big, noble prize winning OAR research. That doesn't mean Sea Grant research isn't aligned with what NOAA is doing (Cammen).
- OAR has annual rewards for outstanding research papers (limited to federal employees). Sea Grant papers are only eligible if an OAR employee is on the paper. Could the Board carry that message that OAR should change this rule to include Sea Grant? (Cammen)

**Motion to approve minutes from conference calls and last meeting
Byrne motions - Stubblefield seconds – Approved.**

Stakeholder's Session

- Value of Sea Grant:
 - Stakeholders draw heavily on Sea Grant expertise/advice. In terms of the state of Louisiana, people don't fully understand how important Sea Grant and NOAA are to coastal populations. Louisiana is going to have to learn how to live smarter and NOAA and Sea Grant are ideally suited to aid in this. A policy think-tank would be useful to communicate this to coastal populations.
 - SG provides critical link—research to communities.
 - SG specialists are trusted by communities (EPA rotated personnel out every few weeks). Link to university research lends credibility.
- How do you communicate the value of Sea Grant:
 - Communicate it to the people you're serving—get them to support you. Remind them that it's Sea Grant and NOAA providing the funding.
 - Make sure congressional offices know you're a resource.
- Do constituents realize Sea Grant is part of NOAA?
 - No. Put the Sea Grant/NOAA logo on everything.
 - Direct beneficiaries know, but others don't.
 - Sea Grant is more often associated with LSU, not NOAA.
- Louisiana is somewhat short-sighted as to what kinds of investments need to be made to prepare for hazards. Recovery money is too late—damage has been done. Sea Grant is useful because it can share impacts/info/experiences from other states dealing with similar issues.
- Sea Grant is essential to have around immediately after a storm (need more people). There is a lot of info constituents need immediately after a storm. Sea Grant could be particularly useful by providing post-storm assessments of impact.

- The State of Louisiana could do more to fund Sea Grant.
- If you could change NOAA, how would you do so?
 - More externalization. Easiest way to contact NOAA is still through Silver Spring. NOAA needs to be more integrated into the community.
- The Sea Grant workforce has to handle multiple issues and adapt to changes.
- How do you weigh the pros and cons of land use options?
 - Sea Grant can help make these decisions based on economic/demographic assessments and then work with the state to implement decisions in a wise manner. Help people understand science-based consequences and if decisions are made, how to minimize negative impacts.
- Sea Grant's involvement is needed from the very beginning at all levels of development.
- If Sea Grant loses the research piece, it will lose a bit connection to universities/credibility.
- There needs to be an increased combination of federal and state resources for Sea Grant. If state and federal match, it's a shared investment. If it's lopsided, then the state treats it as a freebie.

NOAA's GOM regional efforts and role including follow-up to SAB Extension, Outreach and Education report – L. Swann

- Background: Regional teams started 2-3 years ago. Buck Sutter involved SG in NOAA Gulf Regional Team. When the SAB came out with recommendations, LaDon Swann contacted them to express willingness to work with them under the regional framework. Asked to put together a regional workshop on engagement (Jan-Feb 2008) and again in August (2008) to bring in NOAA folks (80 people across the Gulf), NERS, NWS, all line offices. Panel of 17 constituents from mainly MS/AL participated in a day and a half meeting. Sutter then asked Sea Grant programs to develop coordinating team with reps from each Sea Grant program in the region. At this point, Sea Grant simply needs to be persistent and show them we're engaged. Involvement revolves primarily around education and outreach. Funding is limited, roughly \$50K (budget for all NOAA regional teams money comes from PPI) and other in leveraged funds.

Comments:

- NOAA leadership on this particular team is perhaps a major reason why it has worked in the Gulf and not so much in other regions. Other regional teams have taken the position that if you aren't an FTE, you don't belong at the table (Cammen)
- The SAB might want to hold a meeting in the Gulf to demonstrate how regionalization is taking place here. You might want to work together to get the SAB invited to Louisiana (Kudrna).
- Gulf programs already work together well. There has been ample opportunity to bond over hazards and shared concerns (Liffmann).
- We're working with other groups to kick in funding and could get significant impacts in 2-3 years (Swann).
- The SAB is working on pilot project in the Gulf – hiring Sea Grant staff to assign to various line offices in the region, helping to get their products to constituents. This probably can't be done without adding resources. And each region needs someone completely dedicated to regional efforts (Swann).
- Suggest adding "programmatic activities" link on NSGO website with link to EOP website (Stephan).
- Workshops cost \$10K; similar workshops in other regions could be very beneficial (Swann).

- Not sure which line offices will house regional teams (Cammen)
- What should the board do with all this? Make a statement describing the interaction in the Gulf and presenting that as something we would like to duplicate in other regions that Sea Grant serves (Cammen).

Coastal Issues in Louisiana – G. Graves, C. Wilson and N. Rabalais

- Can't replicate access through Louisiana to other parts of the country
- Important to the nation for a variety of reasons.
- State's CZMA plan has not been updated since this Master Plan. CZM plan should be updated next year and expand geographical area.
- Very positive experience with Sea Grant fellows on the Hill, but I don't think the average hill office is aware of capacity of SG network and availability of SG to provide advise and information. Fellows provided great access to SG network for hill offices. Ease of access and awareness of info is very important so having fellows in the office is key (Graves).
- Cooperative extension has been very involved but there is no national initiative to deal with LA problems (Rabalais).

No public comment

Motion to Adjourn - Approved

November 13, 2008

- Request for information from Chuck Wilson to promote Ocean Commotion in upcoming newsletter (Schmitt)
- Concern that the Sea Grant logo wasn't apparent enough at the Ocean Commotion exhibit (Bell)

Closed Session Begins

- Board will attend the Knauss reception in February 2009.
- Interest in having more meetings in the field rather than the program office.
- Comments on Duce Research Report?
 - Committee has a list of 10 people (NOAA and outside agencies) to interview and will try to do interviews during week of next Board meeting in February.
 - The committee will conduct all interviews by anyone can join. Committee will let the Board know when interviews are scheduled.
 - The purpose is to get impressions of SG, why funding has decreased, etc.
 - Research committee meeting will be Hawaii.
 - West will report to SGA on status of the research committee and get feedback from SGA on draft evaluation report.
- **HCE Update – J. Weis**
 - First meeting in June 2008. Developed 3 main goals.
 - Focus Teams help NSGO develop implementation plans and identify progress and gaps. They will also review annual reports every year to see if SG is on track, make suggestions if we're not, and develop synthesis documents.
 - Each focus team will be given 25K (Murray).

Comments:

- There is a re-competition for two of the NURP centers in the Atlantic—has SG been asked to participate? (West)
 - Yes, SG expects to be involved in the center. A few programs have been included in some of the proposals (Cammen).
- Jeff Stephan will forward summary of Arlie Meeting to new panel meetings.
- The point of focus teams is to demonstrate that SG is a national program. The details (outcomes, performance measures, etc.) are developed in the national implementation plan. It was sent out to the focus teams for review. Sami Grimes is working on decreasing the number of performance measures and cleaning up the document, which should be done by end of December. Programs are also developing more detailed measures, outcomes, etc. that will roll up into national plan. The next big step is the development of state strategic plans (Cammen).
- The final implementation plan will be complete by the end of December. Evaluation criteria should be done before the holidays as well. The draft has gone out to the network for comments (Cammen).
- What can panel do in the near-term?
 - The second draft of national implementation plan will be out shortly. It will be compressed, with fewer performance measures. Please take a close look at these. Also, Evaluation criteria report—please review this and provide comments within the next week or two (Cammen).
- Cammen will go to the hill next month to talk about the new strategic plan and PIE document.
- The first evaluation under this new system will take place in the fall of 2009. NSGO will send out an announcement shortly.

- **Rollie Schmitten volunteers to participate in the SSS focus team.**
- **Harris and Simmons volunteer to participate on the SCD focus team.**

- **Evaluation Criteria**
 - Board and SGA need to submit feedback on evaluation criteria.
 - Evaluation is against what programs proposed to do and programs that perform better should be rewarded. Rankings are out, but we are still going to have a formal evaluation system. NSGO is not certain how this will translate into funding. The funding process should be reasonably transparent. There will be some rules that everyone will know. It won't be left up to the Director (Cammen).

Procedures Manual

- Received comments from the Board and made some of them. Would like to make final changes during the meeting and then approve the document. The new manual is consistent with new reauthorization (Bell).
 - Kristin or Sami can double check to make sure that the procedures manual matches the reauthorization language.
- Board needs to address minimum participation and level of involvement with individual SG program in particular. It needs to be consistent with the FACA act.
 - Details shouldn't be in the preamble (Rabalais).
 - Members can serve two 4 year terms plus one year extension. Leon will be asked to extend current members for another year (Sept. 08-09). If it's necessary to keep someone beyond that the Board is allowed to vote to extend for another year (West).

- It takes awhile to get a replacement—there needs to be flexibility (Bell).
 - That was changed in the new legislation—nine years is now the max (West).
- Is a board member allowed to serve on a SG advisory committee?
 - No, as noted on page two of procedures manual (West).
 - The Board discussed this in the past and it was approved with the caveats that the member can't participate on a PAT of that program (Stephan).
 - Board reached consensus that direct involvement isn't okay—reflected in the minutes.
 - The Board can do the minimum per the legislation or it can go beyond that and set its own additional rules.
 - Concern that there is perceived conflict of interest—prohibiting direct involvement might make the Board more credible. Board might not have the man power to recuse ourselves in evaluation processes. Whatever is decided needs to be in the procedures manual.

MOTION: Propose an amendment that would prohibit any individual who serves as an advisor to a SG program from serving on the Board (Rabalais). Second: Vortmann. Failed (5 in favor, 7 opposed).

MOTION: To approve procedures manual with amendments consistent to current legislation (Kudrna). Second: Byrne. Approved.

Board Assignments Review:

- By law, the Board has to decide on the Board's budget. In December, West will meet with NSGO to determine budget—there will be reductions.
- Board participation in focus team activities will come from the Board's budget, not the focus team budget.
- Given budget constraints, the Board should look at the stipend for members (Byrne).
- What should we continue?
- Board needs to let the Chair know what assignments to keep and what to get rid of due to budget constraints.
 - Could do more virtual meetings to cut down on travel.
 - PRP will also be very expensive.
- Old committees:
 - Committees were ad hoc because there was money—they were not standing committees.
 - The executive committee has too many people on it and isn't really necessary (West).

Nomination process:

- Please continually provide names for potential Board nominees (West).
- Need more diversity and someone from the Great Lakes.

Next Steps for the NSGAB – R. West

- SG has a recognition problem. Board should find out whether this is a problem with communication or the model.
 - Constituents need to reach out to hill.
 - Better media relations.
 - Are we trying to be too much everyone—should we focus are message?

- As for the model, research is going away, is that impacting the model's success?
- Does the Board need to get the word out to next administration that it's not being recognized within NOAA and therefore needs to be moved, renamed, or repackaged?
- One problem in the past has been mixed messages. We've done better this past year with a unified approach to reauthorization (Kudrna).
- There also needs to be improved identification of Sea Grant. Jackets would probably be helpful.
- Board will form two committees; one to figure out how to promote SG and another to figure out what's wrong with the model.
- Futures Committee:
 - Harris (Chair), Stubblefield, Vortmann, Simmons, Weis, and possibly Gordon Grau (Hawaii Sea Grant).
- Communication Committee: Kudrna (Chair), Woeste, West, Stephan, Rabalais.
- There needs to be someone in the NSGO to coordinate all the communicators to help with advocacy (West).
- First Futures Subcommittee meeting will be during the research committee meeting in Hawaii in January, where they will come up with an agenda for discussion in February. Simmons, Heath, and West will join them in Hawaii.
- Both groups will report out to panel in February.
- West and Woeste will go to hill and visit with Senator Shelby.
- Suggestion that the Board take a role in the climate change issue (Murray). NSGO needs advise from the Board on defining SG's role in NOAA climate services program.
 - SG might want to focus only on extension in terms of the climate program—don't try to do too much (Kudrna).
- February there will be a discussion by West, Woeste, and Murray on how to handle 2-year report.

Future Meetings/Events:

- Feb 10-11, Knauss event (reception on Feb. 10).
- Summer/fall 09 meeting – August – dates TBD.
 - Perhaps on the west coast. Murray and West will talk to Penny Dalton to see if it's a possibility.
- Panel to meet February 11 and 12th. Venue to TBN. Two committees will report back. West to present financial plan for next couple of years.
- Leon and a few Board members plan to visit Mary Glackin later next month to keep SG on the radar.

Other business:

- SG fellows don't know enough about SG.
 - Some part of the Knauss selection process that requires potential fellows to demonstrate some knowledge of SG (part of their essay)?
 - At the Assembly meeting in Seattle, there was talk of requiring fellows to spend a week with host office.
 - Chair encourages new panel members to serve on selection team for incoming fellows.
 - Request that West add Knauss issue to discussion with SGA later this week.

MOTION to adjourn: Kudrna. Second: Stephan.