

**National Sea Grant Advisory Board (NSGAB) Conference Call**  
**August 6, 2012**  
**Minutes**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**1315 East West Highway**  
**SSMC3, Room 10836**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20910**

**Monday, August 6**

**2:00 PM - Introductions, review agenda, approval of minutes, etc. (Dr. Nancy Rabalais, Chair, NSGAB)**

**Roll call:**

**Board Attendees (on conference line):** Frank Beal, Patty Birkholz, Leon Cammen (*Ex-Officio*), Jeremy Harris, Michael Orbach, Nancy Rabalais, Harry Simmons, Bill Stubblefield, Dick Vortmann, Dick West

**Board Members not in attendance:** Rollie Schmitt, Jonathan Pennock (*Ex-Officio*)

**Other attendees:**

John Byrne (on conference line)—Former Board member

Elizabeth Ban – Designated Federal Officer, NSGO

Nikola Garber – Acting Deputy Director, NSGO

Jennifer Maggio – Program Assistant, NSGO

Amy Painter—Director of Communications, NSGO

Amy Scaroni—Program Specialist, NSGO

**Chair's update (N. Rabalais, NSGAB)**

Review of the Agenda

**MOTION**

**Change agenda to discuss Board travel to Alaska for Fall Board Meeting (Dick West, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jeremy Harris)**

**Vote: Unanimous approval**

- Dr. Cammen gave a status update on the Group Travel Request: Sea Grant started the process in January and due to new regulations, new procedures and rules came into effect. We have not been able to get approval since then.
- Dr. Rabalais said she would get in touch with the NOAA Administrator.

**MOTION**

**Approve minutes as presented (Stubblefield, 2<sup>nd</sup> Beal)**

**Vote: Unanimous approval**

**Biennial Report to Congress**

- Dr. Rabalais thanked the other committee members (Dr. Orbach, Mr. Beal, Dr. Garber, and Dr. Grau) and all who helped, particularly Admiral West for leading this effort.
- Admiral West said the goal of this discussion is to approve the draft. He thanked Ms. Painter for all of her work. Dr. Byrne reviewed and provided comments and edits. There was an additional independent editor who reminded the committee to better define terms for those not familiar with Sea Grant.

- Discussion
  - The committee needs to tighten up the introduction and executive summary.
  - A key recommendation will be to get rid of the 5% administrative cap on the National Sea Grant Office. It was in the 2010 report and will be in the 2012 report as well. There are other ways to keep an eye on the national office spending.
  - Dr. Orbach was concerned with the Challenges section on Pg. 23. It seemed to only pertain to money and integration with NOAA. He doesn't want it to look like our only challenge is buying power.
  - Mr. Vortmann said that the issue of allocation needs to be addressed by the National Office. We need to assert it more aggressively in the report. Admiral West said that it was worded more strongly and can be changed back.
  - Mr. Vortmann said he had a concern with the style. Pg. 9 on the response to the 2012 Report recommendations. Who is recommending and who is responding? Dr. Rabalais said that the Board is responding to the recommendations in what the National Office has or has not accomplished to meet the recommendations. It should be changed to "We recognize the following changes that have been made in response to the 2012 recommendations". Mr. Vortmann noted that recommendation number six (allocation plan) had not yet occurred. Dr. Orbach suggested that the Report should state that this has not yet occurred.
  - Mr. Vortmann noted in the Section 2 (Sea Grant Model) the language says that there are over 3000 scientists and researchers, but only 400 extension agents. It may be perceived that scientific research is almost 10 times the priority of extension. He doesn't want to portray the image that research is more important than the rest of Sea Grant. A discussion followed. It was agreed to use the phrase supports the work of more than 3000 scientists and researchers.
  - Dr. Orbach asked if it would be detrimental to the program to report on climate programs and the money associated with them. Mayor Harris said that the Board needs to stand up for what they believe in. Sea Grant can certainly justify why they are doing climate work. The Board then discussed moving the Climate section after the Social Science section and elaborating more on social science. Mayor Harris said as the Advisory Board it is our responsibility to not pull punches.
  - Admiral West said that Dr. Rabalais, Ms. Painter and he will be meeting with OAR Leadership on August 21, 2012. The meeting will be a courtesy for them to review the Report before it goes to Congress.
  - Dr. Byrne said he had a couple of comments as an outside reviewer.
    - Contact with the public is the hallmark of Sea Grant. There is data on the number of contacts that extension agents make and it is in the tens of thousands. We need to make that stand out.
    - The National Office requires an increase in overall funding and staff. It challenges the effectiveness of the program.
  - Admiral West then said that Carol Mason's comments were very useful. Dr. Byrne said congrats to Ms. Painter for her excellent job in coordinating the Report.

## **MOTION**

**Approve the 2012 Biennial Report with revisions as discussed (Orbach, 2<sup>nd</sup> Simmons)**

**Vote: Unanimous approval**

Ms. Ban, the Designated Federal Officer, said that there were no public comments and no members of the public at the meeting to make public comments.

Dr. Rabalais thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.