

National Sea Grant Advisory Board Meeting
March 4-5, 2024
Final Meeting Minutes

Yours Truly Hotel
Washington, DC

Monday, March 4, 2024

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 9:00 am – 6:00 pm Eastern Time

Dr. Jim Murray (Board Chair) welcomed everyone and officially called the meeting to order. He 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 Dr. Murray (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; Dr. Meghan Marrero; Dr. Jim Murray (Board Chair); Ms. Kristine Norosz; D. Jack Payne; Dr. Martin Tadlock; Dr. Nancy Targett (Vice Chair).

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

Dr. Dijanna Figueroa

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, Ms. Donna Brown, Project Administrator, National Sea Grant Office; and Ms. Patricia Razafindrambinina, National Sea Grant Office.

Audience Attendees (March 4, 2024):

Maddie Kennedy (NSGO), Jess Depree (NSGO), Hallee Meltzer (NSGO), Mark Rath (NSG), Maya Walton (HISG), Jennifer Stokes (NSG), Beth Lenz (HISG), Mary Collins (NSG), Judith Gray (RISG), Chris Petrone (NSGO-DESG), Madison Willert (NSGO), Lauren Alvaro (NSGO), Kate McClure (NSGO), Katrina Lewandowski (NSGO), Howard Forbes, Jr. (UVI), Paul Jobsis (UVI), Sherry Larkin (UFL), Summer Morlock (NSG), Larry Alison (NSGO), Abiola Obafemi (NSGO), Chuck Weirich (NSGO), Joshua Brown (NSGO), Amara Davis (NSGO), Karina Nielsen (ORSG), Jessi Kershner (ORSG), LaDon Swann (MASG), Karla Heidelberg (USCSG).

9:00 am - 9:10 am: Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Dr. Jim Murray, Board Chair)

Agenda

Dr. Murray gave an overview of the agenda and requested a motion to approve it.

Motion to approve the March 4-5, 2024 agenda: Dr. Peter Betzer

2nd: Ms. Kris Norosz

Vote: All in Favor

September 2023 Meeting Minutes

Dr. Murray asked for a motion to approve the September 2023 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes from the September 10-11, 2023 Board Meeting: Ms. Kris Norosz

2nd: Dr. Meghan Marrero

Vote: All in Favor

9:10 am: Public Comments (Ms. Susan Holmes, Designated Federal Officer (DFO))

There were no public comments.

9:10 am – 10:10 am: Introduction and Discussion with NOAA Administrator (Dr. Richard W. Spinrad, NOAA Administrator)

Dr. Murray (Board Chair) introduced Dr. Richard Spinrad. Dr. Spinrad was the first Administrator for OAR, or at least the six or seven years I was in OAR he was my boss's boss. He has served as Chief Scientist for NOAA management and he was the Assistant Administrator in OAR for a number of years. He is a faculty member and does appointments at Oregon State University, George Mason University, and the Naval Academy and he now has 12,000 employees he's responsible for at NOAA. So, without saying anything further let me introduce Dr. Rick Spinrad, thank you for joining us.

Dr. Spinrad - Thanked everyone for all their work in support of NOAA and emphasized the importance of science in education, particularly through his appointments at various universities. He stated that this was his first opportunity to join the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (NSGAB) as the NOAA Administrator and welcomed the opportunity to answer any questions about the content of his NOAA Update. Excited to be here today to share about NOAA priorities and have an open conversation. I was supervisor for Oregon Sea Grant Program – not indicative of every program, but familiar with Sea Grant design, structure, etc. Also served as OAR Assistant Administrator. The Sea Grant Program is a perfect example of how NOAA works with our state partners to provide substantial benefits to coastal, marine, and Great Lakes communities through research, extension, and education.

NOAA's Key Strategic Priorities:

- Establish NOAA as the U.S federal government authoritative source for climate products and services.
- Advance economic development without sacrificing environmental stewardship, with a particular focus on advancing the New Blue Economy.
- Integrate equity into everything we do, including how we build and provide services within NOAA. Promote diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the workforce. Externally, we will provide equitable access to our products and services including tribal.

Linking Sea Grant and NOAA Equities:

- BIL/IRA Investments
 - Recent Louisiana Sea Grant visit during OSM.
 - Partnering with others
 - Marine Debris
 - Climate-Ready Workforce
 - Coastal Inundation Community of Practice
 - Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

- We're building out other partnerships as well:
 - USPTO/NOAA MOU;
 - RAA
 - And more on the horizon.

- Seeking guidance on how to sustain the momentum of these activities:
 - USPTO MOUG Signing
 - Marine Debris Workshop hosted by Oregon Sea Grant.
 - CERF
 - Tribal Engagement Sea Grant
 - Recent meeting with Louisiana Sea Grant and LSU during Ocean Sciences Meeting 2024
 - Living Shorelines (Virginia Sea Grant)

- Sustaining the Momentum:
 - We are getting into the final year of this administration.
 - We've made progress through investments in industry proving grounds, accelerators, etc. via BIL and IRA, but not through base funding.
 - How do we maintain this progress?

- Sustaining the Momentum:
 - We are getting into the final year of this administration.
 - We've made progress through investments in industry proving grounds, accelerators, etc. via BIL and IRA, but not through base funding.
 - How do we maintain this progress?

- FY24 appropriation, FY25 budget, FY26 formulation
 - New Threats:
 - Election year; more scrutiny
 - The Sea Grant Evaluation Process that is coming up will be more important for us in an election year

- Formal evaluations useful to justify positions

- But there are also opportunities:

- Offshore Wind (OSW)
 - Sixteen Sea Grant Programs are dedicating staff and resources to leverage their trust and university, government, community, and resource user connections towards developing an OWE portfolio that responds to their state priorities.
 - mCDR FTAC and investments
 - FRN posted on 02/23/2024 to inform the development of an implementation plan regarding marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR) research.
 - Responses will be accepted until April 23, 2024
 - New Subcommittee on Climate Services
- What's keeping me up at night?
 - Sustaining the momentum – we are getting into the final year of his administration. We've made progress through investments in industry proving grounds, accelerators, etc. via BIL and IRA, but not through base funding. How do we maintain this progress?
 - FY24 appropriations, FY25 budget, FY 26 formulation
 - New Threats: Elections and more scrutiny
 - New Opportunities:
 - The recent release of the [National Climate Resilience Framework](#).
 - NCA5 is being rolled out at the White House level.
 - The FTAC is moving forward.
 - We're seeing new mCDR investments.
 - NOAA will continue to play a leadership role at the upcoming COP28 in Dubai.

He thanked everyone and then opened the floor for Q&A session.

Dr. Murray – Based on background, we're unable to get those monies to be the core of our human resources because it's my understanding it's so competitive and some other coastal programs were able to sort of build their core. So, the question I have is, it's an age-old problem in Sea Grant for sustaining our infrastructure over the years has never kept up with that need. So, looking to the future, what might Sea Grant do to position itself to build our core resources at the state local level?

Dr. Spinrad - The first thing I'd say is I do understand the specific implications to Sea Grant. And I'd say this is not necessarily the problem, in the sense that a lot of what we're doing across the board, though, is grossly undervalued. But I think there are two key elements that I'd recommend you think about. One is, one is sort of strategic and the other would be focusing on the economic development piece. Doing so in the context of what I said should be the future build out of this trillion-dollar industry. I'm trying to find a better phrase for it. I call it the climate industrial complex. The trouble is that has a bit of a negative connotation to a lot of folks. But I think you understand what I'm saying is that this thing is turning along, I guarantee you, in every one of the communities where you live, there is an entrepreneur who's thinking about, can I develop a climate product that will work for my local fishing industry, my local community planner, and I would say, to the extent you can up the game, within Sea Grant to engage with that group, every community has an economic development. To the one sort of number, every state in every county, every parish has something like that. But let's think about exploiting the economic

development. It might mean a different kind of extension agent in the future. But that's not necessarily bad. And I think that gets to the point of workforce development as well. So, I would say focusing on economic development, may be a good way to do it. And we want to help you do that in a way to have Sea Grant extension agents on the ground on pure advocating for economic development, then some venture capitalists saying hey, I want to do this thing, because folks who might tend to trust venture capitalists, people trust the agents on the pier. The other part, I would say, is a tactical one. And it's one that I'm trying to build into a lot of our budget justifications and activity. And it's spending less time talking about the value proposition more time talking about positive wins. So, the way I characterize this is, the National Weather Service will tell you their missions, products and services, their sort of unwritten defenses passes or you die. And I mean, it sounds awful. But the fact of the matter is, we have more success in justifying investments in radars and new satellite models or new forecast model development. If you don't do this, you will have to evacuate more of the population during a hurricane. If you don't do this, we won't be able to sustain the average 12-minute lead time on tornado forecast. If you don't do this, we're never going to be able to tell you when a tropical cyclone like Burbach is going to transit all the way up to the currency. And so, the cost of words is what not doing certain things means to lifestyles and livelihoods is an argument that can work.

Dr. Betzer – You spoke about the offshore wind. And also, there's a major emphasis on economic development. When you look at it, it's the scale of the interstate highway system that Eisenhower brought to bear on the United States. And so, the Gulf Coast, the East Coast, the West Coast, fixed arrays, floating arrays. In addition to that you've got ports and harbors, where I think the agents that Jim talked about are going to be needed to really assess what's going to happen when you start to judge dredging of these harbors and the dispersal of the materials that are in them. And so, I just listed on how you see Sea Grant association with this multibillion-dollar River.

Dr. Sprinrad – It's interesting because if you asked me that question two years ago, I would have a very different answer than I do right now. That is because if you are even looking at the media coverage on the administration's push toward offshore wind, two years ago, two and a half years ago, the lead on all the origins was that effectively, the Biden Harris administration can't get its act together. And we the developers need to get the job done and are under the gun. And it became clear that the partnership with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and NOAA was not good. So, we focus specifically on building a better relationship, even things as fundamental as putting the timeline for lease sales and permitting and final decision making on offshore wind development, and NOAA's schedule permitting around the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection. And oh, by the way, on our operational precepts for conducting surveys, so you know, we've conducted a survey for a particular species over the last couple of decades in a certain way, and they've been informed that there have been changes to survey as dramatic economic implications. So, we had to get the NOAA relationship working better. We've spent a lot of time and credit to all our staff in the National Fisheries Service for making that happen. But, now if you look at the media coverage the developers are still frustrated because it's not on permitting it's on supply chain. And they're pushing the limits on trying to get final decisions on these wind farms in extraordinarily fast time. And I think we've accommodated that. At the end of the day, most of the challenges that we face now are ones of communication, making sure people understand.

Dr. Targett - Sea Grant really is aligned with the three things that you had up there - climate balanced, and equity, we've done some wonderful work in effect leading work and know with equity and the

balance aspect I think about what we've been doing between communities and businesses and that feedback through research and translating work into the benefit of communities work that's been done on building codes and communities for example, etc. And so, I do think that achievement certainly going up its game. But I also think that NOAA needs to be aware maybe a little more of what Sea Grant really is doing and the boots on the ground and so on. And to have that maybe manifestation I wonder if there's a way for that to be manifested more perhaps in some of the funding that comes directly from NOAA from things like the work we do on resilience in some of the other areas that Sea Grant has done so just maybe a consideration for the future.

Dr. Spinrad – We welcome your thoughts on how we can up the game on that.

Dr. Figueroa - I work in the K12 – when I'm thinking about services and products – prioritizing education if we're looking at things two years from now – how do you see education efforts changing in the next five years – if I were to look back historically.

Dr. Spinrad – One is education is a challenge for us at NOAA because if I wanted to be an urban bureaucrat, I would say we don't have authorization for education programs. But, I have great faith in the program work in Sea Grant. Engagement is something that I love and feel passionate about, not so much from the standpoint of how we built another internship or another scholarship or make sure the best science is built into science, environmental standards, but actually bring you into the process.

Dr. Murray – Let's end this with a little fruit for thought – advise Sea Grant and NOAA – think about how this Advisory Board might help NOAA writ large – issues in the future – let Susan know what you think Sea Grant should look at and as a reminder we're here for NOAA not just Sea Grant.

10:10 am – 10:30 am – Morning Break

Dr. Murray – It is in our legislation now that we provide a report to Congress every four years and in the interim there's a shorter interim report. Dr. Payne has kindly stepped up and chaired the committee that's going to write the next report. And one of the things that is in that report is recommendations for Sea Grant that we provide to Congress. One of the action items today is for Jack to present what the committee has been thinking about in terms of recommendations. Dr. Murray then turns the meeting over to Dr. Payne.

10:30 am - 11:00 am – 2024 State of Sea Grant Report to Congress (Dr. Jack Payne, Chair of the Biennial Report Committee)

Dr. Payne – Good morning everyone. I'm glad to have this opportunity to talk about what we've done so far. And I must admit that if you're taking on this role, we spent some time just trying to get started because we're all new to this committee. Judy and LaDon have been tremendous in helping to steer us in the right direction.

Report to Congress Committee Membership

- Advisory Board
 - Jack Payne (Chair), Kris Norosz, Carole Engle, Meg Marrero, Dijanna Figueroa, Martin Tadlock
- Sea Grant Association
 - Mark Risse (GASG), Joanna York (DESG), LaDon Swann (MS-AL SG)
- Sea Grant Network
 - Beth Lenz (HISG), Kris Stepenuck (LCSG), Diana Payne (CTSG)
- External Expert
 - Judy Gray (RISG Advisory Council)
- National Office and Staff Support
 - Patricia Razafindrambinina, NSGO Communications Team and subject matter staff



What we've been doing since November is meeting twice a month collecting all the information we discussed and received from the network and keeping us on tract. And, Susan Holmes of course, is not on the committee, but she's always there at the national office to provide advice and counsel when needed. So, it's a great committee. But thanks to Judy, we finally have figured out what we're supposed to do, so we're ready to rock and roll. This is what we're proposing to the Board that it will look like as far as an outline:

The 2024 "State of Sea Grant" Report to Congress

Proposed Contents

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submittal Letter • Executive Summary & Contents • Responses to 2020 Recommendations • Sea Grant Model • Sea Grant by the Numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Opening paragraph on metrics and regional ◦ Sustainable Fish & Aquaculture ◦ Healthy Coast Ecosystems ◦ Resilient Communities & Economies ◦ Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured Issues • Organizational Excellence • 2024 Recommendations • Emerging Opportunities • Supplemental Materials • List of Impacts by State
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What we're responsible for is mostly the second and third columns. The first column, the submittal letter of course comes from the Chairman of the Board. The responses to the 2020 recommendations we do not do that, that is the responsibility of the National Sea Grant Office. The Sea Grant model is pretty much the same as what was in the other report, they changed slightly, if you had an opportunity to see the webinar last Tuesday that Dr. Pennock had, there was a slide in there, it was a terrific slide that had a lot of really important information on it. But these are the focus areas. What we've been spending a lot of time on is mainly what the 2024 recommendations will be. And the featured issues and emerging opportunities that we're suggesting to the Board for consideration. The Board is going to finally decide this. A lot of those recommendations, suggestions would be very specific, and important to the future Sea Grant. But John reminded me and we all agree as a committee, that this is a report from the Board to Congress. If you keep that in mind, and we need to look at those recommendations from a very high level.

Dr. Pennock – Thanks Jack, we’ve had a number of folks in our office who’ve contributed to each of these specific responses but also to the write up. I feel comfortable that we will as a program and as the national office have pretty solid things to report on that. I think we’re going to be in good shape and one of the things I noticed when I started to review the responses is this is natural with the work that we’re doing. But we were using are common examples and specific questions. But if we go to the network vision plans one of the prime examples of where we really have a big impact was with our DEIJA community of practice. And what I felt slowed me down is that we were repeating the same message in our responses and what our teams and individuals were putting together. So, I think what we need to do is make sure we show where we have many different successes, only a few of them are going to the ones that we can highlight in a paragraph for each response, or two paragraphs that we have and that's where we are right now. I think the Board should consider as a team is how we do the other recommendations. And if we really tried to look at the breadth of our program, because some of it is not just what we're recommending and how we respond is an important thing, but it's also a showcase for what Sea Grant is doing. And we do a lot of different things, capturing that into four items, we’re likely going to fall behind. And that’s one of the challenges we have every time but we'll figure that out together.

Dr. Payne – Thanks Jon I appreciate what you just said, because we spent the most time so far as a committee discussing what we want to put in for 2024 recommendations and its related back to this. So, I saved that for last because that’s been the most difficult. So, remember this is very preliminary, we’re going to look at all the data. But, going through all the topics I know the great work that the network does out there and our 34 programs, these are some of the things that were rising to the top in terms of numbers so that it was a common theme on these topics in the various programs that came from the States.

Dr. Betzer – I wondered why in the previous slide, you didn't include sports fisheries? Because that's a big deal?

Dr. Payne - Well, we can do that. Remember, these are just things that if it's not up here, maybe it wasn't mentioned enough, so it's up to the Board to tell us what they would like to see in order to take this further. This program I'm talking about at the minute is very important. What we looked at really aligns with the OSHA Climate Action Plan (OCAP) that was announced in March 2023 by the White House. And these are the three major topics in that plan. And this is a lot of what Sea Grant is doing.

Dr. Murray - Thanks Jack excellent summary. I'm amazed at how much you picked up in such a short time on the Board.

Dr. Targett – I really liked the presentation and all the work that the committee has done. I like the recommendations, but I wonder if there’s not an opportunity to rephrase some of them to get the same ideas across with some of the terminology that Dr. Spinrad used today. I loved his comment about stewardship and the blue economy. We do that all the time, that’s been our mantra from the beginning, is there some way to work that in and say, to extend the balance that we do between environmental stewardship and the economy, work in those kinds of words he used around climate in the climate recommendation, it’s just a thought.

Dr. Payne - I think we as a committee all agree on that, I didn't say it as well as you did. But, when I talked about rewriting the diversity recommendation to still be the same thing, but in a political sensitive way that doesn't cause our state programming trouble, apply that as a whole to the recommendations.

Dr. Pennock – I apologize for the speed of everything and you are all doing a great job as things are picking up. While we're talking about the recommendations for this cycle. The one that struck me and makes me a little nervous sometimes is when I feel like the recommendations are going to be asking for money that I might not have, right. The SGA and the national program had what were called theme teams years ago, they always had focus areas. And they're pretty big focus areas now. And there were things called theme teams that were really good in SGA, I think more. And it was a way to dig down a little deeper and the network visioning, we created that in 2017. Because they were no longer being used to really work in teams. And there were people doing amazing work around the network, that we wanted to try to have discussions and build the discussion between different programs and different entities that were doing the work. And we came up with a 10 that we have had there now. There was never a commitment and never a guarantee. It was really we put money into allowing those groups to get together and go to meetings and talk about how they do that work. There was never a direct connection to new dollars. That's some frustration. I absolutely understand that. But I do have a recommendation that says continue what we did in 2017. Right now, seven years ago, just because I feel like some of that justification is because we haven't added drastic debt. I'm not sure if that's where we want to be and how we continue to build those areas that were being very successful in the network and how to invest in that. Moving forward is that I'm not sure linking it directly to the 2017 recommendations is the answer.

Dr. Payne – I appreciate that Jon and those of us on the committee to hear that because it's difficult because of the passion without understanding the background.

Ms. Gray - Also there was a lot of effort put into all the visioning teams – right now there is a feeling that there is no more implementation – it doesn't necessarily mean more money, you can't even find them on the website and I tried mightily. So, the sense was that there was a ton of effort put into something that languished – and why is it languishing. Why can't we continue to put effort into that and not necessarily money but energy and focus on trying to implement the whatever is still languishing among the recommendations from those visioning teams. Because so much work was put in and because they're still important.

Dr. Pennock – I'm sure no one would probably argue; how would you do as a recommendation to implement what we did this last time coming back to the national office. Most of the implementation falls on our responsibility. And that's where our buying antennae goes up. It's like ok, how can I make this happen?

Dr. Payne – Let me say that once we get the response from the national office to the committee, I think that will help shape our views on how we want to continue.

Ms. Norosz – The difficulty for me, and maybe some of the team members is to understand what's happened? So, when I think about a recommendation. To me, it means doing something different in order to raise it up into a priority. It's not to say that those things that we had recommendations in the past still aren't important, but if we don't recognize and move on we're probably always going to have the same recommendation. So, I feel there needs to be some discussion as to how we approach this.

Dr. Payne – What Kris said is really important that the committee needs to face up to this and this has been the hardest discussions we've had. The whole network is represented very well, and we're trying to make everybody happy. But again, we want these to be at a very high level and something that's

going to be significant for Congress that we haven't done before. So, thanks for that, I really appreciate the overview and where things are going.

Dr. Lerner – Two things, when you do have a draft available, every single director is going to immediately look for their program.

Dr. Payne - That's why at the end of the report, we have highlights from every state.

Dr. Lerner - More importantly than that, of course is how that comes together. I think emphasis on partnerships and regional collaborations, etc. within our own programs is how you make plays, and I'm not suggesting it hasn't been mentioned, I'm just trying to kind of give comprehensive advice and the emphasis on partnerships, the emphasis on the leveraging that we do in the numbers are going to show that but there's more than just numbers that demonstrate that leveraging that we do within our own programs and in the states where we work and across programs, etc. regional collaboration to the extent that you're able to kind of pull that out. This is our voice to Congress. It is like the opportunity. This body I think, can't talk to Congress, unless Congress has come to talk to us. This is the one way you can, so take that initiative to talk to Congress to the extent you're able to think about some of the things you heard earlier that came up with Dr. Spinrad, that kind of growth of that core and base, and we go back and forth between these. But, supporting the need and continuation of that message so that Congress is hearing from us right from the Sea Grant Association. And it's more difficult to hear it certainly from the National Sea Grant office directly. I can't help but emphasize that need for that growth to keep up with this kind of capacity that we are demonstrating and leveraging.

Dr. Payne – Great comments. One little fact I forgot to mention, is when I talked about food security and preserving biodiversity climate change I talked about how we need to grow 56% more food and we need an area twice the size of India. What I meant to say after that, we got to make it more relative to the Board, it applies also to aquaculture and what I understand is that we need a 58% increase in what we produce today through aquaculture to meet that goal. And when you look at our sustainable fisheries program, it's my understanding that a third of fisheries are overfished and 60% of their maximum sustainable limits. So, it really draws attention to the Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture program of Sea Grant in terms of these global challenges. Thank you.

Dr. Murray – Jack that was a great report, particularly since this is your second meeting. You know as much about Sea Grant as the old timers here. So, we put a good discussion on, let me try and paraphrase a little bit of the discussion because I understand that what we have to do today as a Board is to approve going forward with the recommendations or the modifications or additions that we want to offer now. So, in terms of trying to summarize the discussion, we heard that the recommendations need some language change, reflect the kind of goals that Rick was talking about, and make it look different than the last time. Same thought, but make it match the language with more of a priority. There's a question around the sort of diversity language based on politics. My view is to do what's right – as you stated it is the way we ought to state it. There was a discussion on the envision documents, basically we want to prod the implementation which is something the Board can do, without the expectation that the National Office is going to find money that it doesn't have. So, we might want to word that in a way that encourages continuation.

Dr. Payne - That's assuming that the board creates a new one on work-force development. Address Kris remarks and move on from that.

Dr. Targett - I did find a few things troubling - if we are going to rehash 7 yrs. ago, shouldn't we be revisiting those instead of reinventing them? And I'm not saying let's just continue them. So, I'm wondering if there's a way to get the same ideas or elevate it up a little bit for Congress thinking in a broader way about it. Again, title and balance between environmental stewardship and audit, and the other one about social justice -and use Rick's language, and then continue to leverage.

Ms. Norosz – To that point, do we even have to say that? It's so inherent to what we've already done. I just feel like when we talk about leverage -- we're all about leveraging. So why is that even a recommendation? That's why I'm having trouble with this recommendation, we're just reiterating what we already do. I think it's a waste of time to do that.

Dr. Murray – I heard one new recommendation. This is our opportunity to bring it to the attention of Congress and I think we all know our core programs and human resources are stretched way too thin. And we need to build that capacity. And I think the recommendation that needs to be in this report addresses that.

Dr. Lerner – Correct me if I'm wrong, recommendations while written to the National Sea Grant College Program are really recommendations to Congress. Conduit is through the National Sea Grant College Program...right? I think if I've got that right. That's the framework in which we're thinking if you think about Jim supporting the idea that we focus on growing that core, National Sea Grant can't do that in and of itself. It's doing it via Congress. So, I think, to me that seems to be the approach and thinking even though the words are different, and thinking what are we asking Congress? What are we bringing to the attention of Congress about programs – demonstrating all the great things that the network is doing, to then take the recommendations to be able to leverage staff to grow the program further and to have boots on the ground.

Dr. Tadlock – I'm just kind of reiterating what I've hard working with legislators a lot the past few years in the State of Florida. Their language is different from ours. And the point that was raised about how's it going to impact economic development and how it's going to benefit our constituents and people back home, it has to be in the language of the audience for this report.

Dr. Pennock – What we're talking about are recommendations to Congress. I think there actually is an opportunity to keep the recommendations in this space, which is good, it's a recommendation from Sea Grant so that falls on our office. So, when you have a separate place in which the wording that we're talking about comes in, we don't want to mix that wording when it something for Congress, or whatever that might be, we put that elsewhere and not necessarily mix oranges and apples.

Dr. Engle – This has been a really good conversation. I appreciate all the comments. A lot of the issue of support for core programs that have been around for a long time ever since I've been on the Board. And that's one thought. And then I have this other line of thought that these are recommendations. But we also have a separate list of emerging issues that, as you said, a number of issues are growing. I'm wondering if we shouldn't have a recommendation in here. It goes back to Kris's comments – is there a way to link those two. Those are the core programs more or less, whether we should have one that does address core programs more or less and within that some of the continuing kinds of things in that recommendation that you work towards supporting emerging issues that's also part of the core – then there's aquaculture literacy, culture and environment. And, then we're going to have food security -- people need to understand the reality.

Dr. Brown – I'm Joshua Brown in the National Sea Grant office. I'm our environmental literacy and workforce development lead. As I was thinking about what Dr. Spinrad said about the weather service earlier, they frequently aren't able to grow their budget by saying if you don't do this, people will die. And as I prefer doctors talking about who our audience is, which is Congress. The recommendations are nice. What are the consequences of those recommendations not counted? And do we, in the report, spell that out so that we have it. And I wonder if that would make them both more compelling. And to Kris's point of what happens to keep carrying them forward? Well, we have the consequences. And we can state what those consequences are perhaps in a way that would appeal to our audience, and also give us a very specific direction, where the Board thinks the consequences will be the same, and our people will be more stressed, if we don't have money, probably is a wonderful thing for them to know. But saying, we will not be able to support we won't be able to help communities prosper, demonstrated over the last five decades that we help our communities will no longer be able to provide that kind of support that kind of return on investment at NASA sort of thing. And I know we don't like to talk about consequences, but maybe that would be something that is helpful.

Ms. Norosz – I'm a little worried that August is going to be too late. I know that we have some time set aside today, tomorrow for the discussion – if we might be able to call a few of us together to try to distill what we heard today into some recommendations to put in front of you – something along those lines. We've gotten positive feedback from everyone.

Dr. Murray – I think that is a really good idea.

Dr. Payne – The discussion we had today is very similar to what our calls have been. So many good ideas and so many important things are really difficult to get our arms around. So, I appreciate this opportunity.

Dr. Murray - Based on this discussion, those on the committee and on the Board – by our last session tomorrow hopefully come back with another slide maybe adding or deleting a recommendation or two. And, we'd have this discussion again. I think it would ultimately be really helpful to the committee to have more time to discuss this and get it right now, rather than to ask for a motion. So, maybe we'll table this until the last session tomorrow at which time we will discuss this evening.

11:30 am – 12:00 pm – Board Participation on Sea Grant Network Groups (Dr. Jim Murray, Board Chair)

Dr. Murray gave a short history and some background on the network groups. He shared the benefits and the various activities of the network and the need for guidelines. He mentioned the responsibilities of these groups such as participating in network activities, attendance and participation in major meetings of the networks and reporting those activities to the Board at least annually at an official meeting, as well as reporting to networks on the purpose and mission of the Board and the status of the Board's current activities. What I'd like to do is ask each of you if you have an interest in any of these groups. We're looking preferably for someone who knows something about extension, coordinating and legal networks. We have guidelines in the briefing book, so I'm going to ask for two votes. First, vote to approve the slate of the liaisons that we just chatted about with Jack as the assembly extension leader, Dijanna communications, Nancy as the research and fellowship coordinator, Meghan education, Deb as the legal network coordinator and Martin fiscal officer. I would like to get a motion to approve these liaisons.

Dr. Murray asked for a motion to approve the lists of liaisons.

Motion to approve the lists of liaisons for the Sea Grant Network Groups: Dr. Peter Betzer

2nd: Ms. Kris Norosz

Vote: All in Favor.

Dr. Murray asked for a second motion to approve the guidelines of how the liaisons functions which is in the briefing book.

Motion to approve the guidelines of how the liaisons function: Dr. Martin Tadlock

2nd: Ms. Kris Norosz

Vote: All in Favor.

Ms. Norosz – I made a comment at the last meeting and would really appreciate if someone can give us guidelines, etc.

Dr. Marrero – What’s the next step? Will you be putting us in contact with the network groups?

Dr. Murray – Yes, I will inform them and put you in touch.

Dr. Pennock – Asked those from the national office and the SGA to stand up and introduce themselves.

Dr. Murray – Thanks everyone we will now break for lunch.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm – Lunch Break

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Panel: Sea Grant Connections with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), (Drs. Deidre Gibson and Dijanna Figueroa, Board Members)

Dr. Murray – Introduced Deidre and Dijanna and gave an overview of their background. He also introduced the panel members and presenters:

Presenters

Sea Grant Network Efforts with MSIs

- Dr. Beth Lenz, Hawai'i Sea Grant; Co-Chair of the DEIJA Community of Practice, Professional Development & Evaluation Subcommittees
- Amara Davis, National Sea Grant Office
- Maddie Kennedy, National Sea Grant Office

NOAA EPP/MSI Cooperative Science Center Institutions

- Dr. Steve Moray, Distinguished Research Scientist for the NOAA Center for Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and a Professor in the Florida A&M University School of the Environment
- Dr. Paulinus Chigbu, Associate Dean of Research, Development and Graduate Education Education & Professor of Marine Environmental (Fisheries) Science, School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Enhancing Involvement of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in US Aquaculture

- Kaitlyn Theberge (2023 Knauss Fellow), NOAA National Sea Grant Office
- Mark Rath, Aquaculture Manager, NOAA National Sea Grant Office
- Dr. Chuck Weirich, Aquaculture Manager, NOAA National Sea Grant Office

Dr. Gibson – I’ve been on the Board for about a year – during a lot of the Board meetings I heard Jon talk a lot about working with HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) – The purpose of this panel is to hear about Sea Grant connections with minority serving institutions, which includes HBCU’s historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and universities and NOAA cooperative science centers.

So, there's three things you must know. The first is the National Sea Grant Advisory Board has requested a better understanding of Sea Grant connections with minority serving institutions and their DEIJA efforts. So, the session will include a panel discussion, moving forward with diversity, equity, inclusion, or DEIJA organization structure and programming through Sea Grant. And then the second part of the panel session will include a panel of representatives from these CSCs talking about the work that they do and how they connect or don't connect with Sea Grant.

Dr. Figueroa – I'm really excited about the next couple of minutes we will spend together. As a K-12 educator, and also as a leader in national foundation's whose lenses are through ocean sciences. Over the last eight years, the Sea Grant network has developed two national Communities of Practice in its programs to facilitate peer learning and promote leadership on DEIJA and traditional local knowledge. Additionally, the National Sea Grant office has been working with other NOAA offices to address the administrative executive order on racial equity and government services. The Board's recommendation on DEIJA have been included in the 2016, 2018 and 2020 State of Sea Grant report to Congress, this session that we're going to do today, will provide an overview and update on how NSGO and the Sea Grant network have been enhanced DEIJA and TLK in its organizational structure and programming. So, I'm happy right now to introduce to you our first set of panelists. We'll have Maddie Kennedy and Amara Davis from the NSGO.

All the panel members spoke and gave an overview of how the NSGO can strengthen Sea Grant engagement with MSI's, NOAA EPP/MSI CSC institution panelist and Sea Connections and how to enhance involvement of minority serving institutions (MSI's) in US aquaculture.

Dr. Gibson then opened the floor for questions.

Dr. Betzer - I wondered if Florida State vs. other institutions, if you didn't go to upper administration and say, look this is a really important program you're eliminating your diversity and equity officers, why not put the money into creating the match for the underrepresented minorities that are applying through the center?

Dr. Moray - To my knowledge, I have not heard of the positions, specifically being eliminated at FAMU. So, we do not use the terminology that we're hearing thrown around. The DEI terminology venue as an HBCU attract students and has strong support to students from these traditionally underrepresented communities. So, I'm not aware that there is any money that can be redirected.

Ms. Davis - I would also like to add that in having these conversations, I encourage us not to do is put the ownership back on the universities that's already struggling to do the work of getting the funds and the support that they need, but instead what can we do to support programs like these. So, I appreciate the sentiment here, but what I heard was since programs are being cut elsewhere, can you go and do the work of getting those funds for your program, instead of what we can do in our space to support programs.

Dr. Moray – I would like to say that as I've moved from a major university where I was fully research funded was very happy about the support that we get from our office, for example, I think we actually have more partnership and engagement between individual research. This could be in part because of the additional leadership pulling in the advancements in the research capabilities. However, resources are limited. So, in order to expand the capacity of these institutions, we have to go outside of the

institution and the state funding to be able to build progress and infrastructure and provide even financial mechanisms.

Dr. Murray – I was happy to see that further DEIJA vision principles were sort of entered into the national strategic plan. But as you know, the PIE system includes the planning, the implementation and the evaluation. If you thought at all about sort of building this into the evaluation system, which we're about to be doing site visits, so the best incentive is to have programs reviewed against these principles. Have you thought about building this into the evaluation system – it's something to think about.

Ms. Davis – In thinking about how we address what we already talked a bit about how different programs are not able to interact, in the same way with some of the things that we say we value at the national office because of the current geopolitical climate, particularly in Florida, Georgia, etc. It would be unfair to the programs to unilaterally judge them against something that they have no control over in that space. And I'm sure Kola and Jon can talk a bit more to how those things are integrated in SRT's and ways that we can do that. But again, metrics are also something that we're trying to figure out - how do you evaluate these kinds of efforts in a meaningful way that isn't tokenizing the work that we're doing. And that isn't punishing programs that are learning or already being punished for doing work in that space. So, I will pass that off to leadership.

Ms. Holmes – The way the evaluation is set up with programs, is that they're being evaluated through their programs own strategic plans. They have set up some of what they're doing in this space. And so, during the review we see those plans and you can ask those questions with programs as to what they've done. Because as Mark said, there's a spectrum here, where they are in the space and what they're trying to accomplish within their states. And so, it sets up an evaluation to even ask about that. But it sets it up in a way that they're being evaluated against themselves in comparison with other programs.

Dr. Lerner - In earlier conversations with Beth, Maddie and Amara – how do we deal with our programs that may not be able to do either – we had programs that simply said I can't do this right now. Other than following up on that collectively in this environment.

Dr. Gibson – Have some of the Sea Grant programs talked about what they're doing. But, then also I like what the CSC's are doing, and how can we work together to solve it. And so, if you've worked with the CSC, you don't necessarily have to use their language that is prohibited in some areas, you're just working with a cooperative Science Center within NOAA. I wanted to have some conversation around that and maybe it's too early to say, hey, what can we do? But, moving forward what are some ways that we can leverage what each other are doing and that was the whole goal of this. And so, I don't know where to go from there. But now you see what the CSCs are doing are all the things that we do – it's really hard to train our students so how do we work together so that no one's getting their hand slapped and using the language that we can't use, but still working together. And I know that the thing about the match is a huge issue. But there are other ways that I think you can partner with, you know, students coming in. And you know, I think Dr. Moray mentioned about some of the Sea Grant offices or programs, posting students in our nurture, that might be something that we can do because, you know, as expanding the research capacity across the Board, and you see that these CSCs have partnerships all around the country. It's not just on the East Coast. Actually, all of the all the leads are on the east coast, but our partners are spread throughout. So, I just wanted to kind of bring this group together and see how we can leverage. Maybe it's not always about money, but partnership and I know there's a lot of challenges.

Dr. Pennock – Thanks for the presentations that was really helpful. The one thing I think is in the next four, five or six years as we really try to dive in, I think there are a multitude of opportunities, working with some of the existing structures -- Sea Grant doesn't have deep enough pockets to just move money to expand certain things, right, we have to figure out how do we dive into the value of stronger equity and what we're trying to do while still achieving the goals we're charged for in our authorizing language if you want to take it back that far. So that was one thought, and I'm not sure exactly what was already one thing we haven't talked about. But at the meeting in Guam, we had colleagues from Northern Marianas and Paul is in from USPPI. These are minority serving institutions who have an interest, right. So, there's a model where we take our existing programs and how do we match them with the other is probably of the remaining locations, areas that are eligible for Sea Grant programs. Many of those would be ignored as serving institutions? And then certainly, to be honest, of USPPI. So that's another possibility, or part of what I think we could try to do. And, that takes money too, and we have to think those things out. So, I'm hoping that we will continue these conversations and come up with that sort of menu of the things that we can pick a few and have it be the Chef's Choice menu, this is like your three options, not your 50 options. So, how do we work with our current institutions? To excel, I think the first would have to be having a conversation. At this point or even before strategic planning in the cycle to bring that into our institutions, it doesn't mean we can't have those conversations, because that would be a valuable source of information, of where there are successes -- and these are just random thoughts.

Dr. Chigbu – I think maybe there's a way for our centers to work with the Sea Grant programs especially at the beginning with students who are considering research so that ultimately the outcome of the research will have more relevance to the communities and can then be shared with the communities.

Dr. Murray – This has been a really good discussion, so I'd like to ask Dijanna and Deidre where do we go from here?

Dr. Figueroa – We've received a lot of information and I want to thank everyone on the panel for sharing these stories. And now it's time for us to process and identify connections and opportunities. And I wonder if there's an opportunity to formulate a committee around this so that we can spend more time to process the information.

Ms. Holmes - I can walk you through the steps and processes for creating a Charge to the Board.

Dr. Gibson – I guess my question is that in order for us to move forward we would have to see if there is any interest in this collaboration. Because if there's not -- I'm seeing heads shaking - so I'm assuming it's a yes.

Dr. Murray – So what I'm hearing is that there's an action item where Dijanna and Deidre and whoever else get together and think about a Charge for the subcommittee report and when we want to do it, and give some thought to outside members and it doesn't have to be Board members, it can be the Sea Grant community with knowledge in this area. Just give it some thought and it doesn't have to be elaborate. And, at our next meeting, if you so choose, have a short proposal that we can discuss, put it in the federal register and then vote on it.

Dr. Gibson – We would like to thank the panelists and look forward to more work to be done down the line. Thank you.

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm – Afternoon Break.

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm – Enhancing Involvement of Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) in U.S. Aquaculture (Drs. Chuck Weirich and Mark Rath (National Sea Grant Office (NSGO))

Mr. LaDon Swann, Director of Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium gave an introduction of Chuck and Mark and shared some details of their working relationship.

Dr. Weirich – Thanks LaDon for that introduction. So, we had the honor of presenting this information to you today. We've been talking about engaging MSIs better and aquaculture over the years ever since I've been at Sea Grant for like the last almost five years. And we do have some congressional direction as well. We've been thinking about it, but we really needed to expand this and Katelyn did, she came in and her work is definitely a template that we can base future work on towards this engagement. So, she got the ball rolling. Katelyn has definitely planted the seed around the nation to get this going. So, the goal or goals here were to conduct a needs assessment of aquaculture and related programs at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) across the country through a need's assessment form and meetings. These meetings are a virtual or in person, I should say that most of our scope was focused on coastal marine Great Lakes resources which are programs we serve at Sea Grant, but she did engage with some traditional land grant institutions, MSI institutions, University of Arkansas and also Kentucky State University as well. Also, our goal was to complete a final report, which hopefully will be available soon, I haven't reviewed it yet, but it's just a draft report out there that will get out soon for people's input and also to look at a complete final report with recommendations for Sea Grant to increase our aquaculture engagement with MSIs. We were amazed at the different designations of MSIs, we traditionally think of HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions, but there's a wide variety which involves indigenous communities and Native American tribal colleges. So, there's a lot of designations out there and she tried to reach or she did try to reach or engaged with all members. I'll now hand it over to Mark to talk about the results.

Dr. Rath – Not very many of the institutions that she interacted with actually have formal programs, either degrees or certificates for aquaculture. A few do. Most of them have a couple of courses here and there. Or they've got faculty that have aquaculture research underway. And that presents volunteer learning opportunities for students that are molded as institutions but there isn't a whole lot of formal certification or degree programs, which wasn't really surprised but it's nice to get that documented and to learn from these institutions why that is in various places. He then gave examples of general program goals, challenges and areas of need and additional themes from meetings. He gave some suggestions as to next steps towards increasing aquaculture engagement at MSIs. He concluded by stating that there are many creative ways to engage MSIs regarding aquaculture to include aquaculture in curriculum and other course offerings (e.g., ecology, biology, botany), research and skill cultivation for industry or community and what aquaculture should look like and understanding MSI goals is a start. It's important to understand background and challenges faced by individuals, so it's important to initiate efforts at smaller institutions. The need for understanding history or MSI designation is to disenfranchisement with the US government and an opportunity to chip away mistrust and distrust. Aquaculture is in the early stages of growth in the U.S. and as such, there are opportunities to build relationships based on aquaculture and engage MSIs proactively, rather than as an afterthought. We'd like to thank everyone that participated in the questionnaire and I would like to now open the floor for questions.

Dr. Betzer - One thing Amara pointed out to me was the big differences between our big institutions and the smaller institutions and there's a powerhouse aquaculture university – the University of Wisconsin.

So, what about the possibility of having some of the money going toward those faculty members that are in minority serving institutions that really want to get some training or want to interact with the people who are really turning out good students and everything and help them? They're really good people.

Dr. Weirich – Thanks for that. We haven't put pen to paper yet, but we are wrapping up with Katelyn. Initially, we thought, well we have the aquaculture collaboratives or aquaculture hubs – 11 of them that were started back in 2019 on various topics, and we were thinking well, let's have an MSI. But I think we're still ways out from that. So, what we're thinking about is what you said – capacity building. Especially towards faculty and knowledge, perhaps towards supplies to upgrade facilities, although we have to watch the construction. But, we're thinking that would be our initial jump into this is to write funding opportunities directed towards capacity building toward aquaculture to get the ball rolling and make connections.

Dr. Rath - And I think it's important too, that we keep these calls really broad topically, because it's not just fish biology, or officious and economics, there's engineering there's nutrition, both human and animal nutrition. A lot of those programs existed in science, but they haven't really considered the idea that aquaculture might be an eligible topic area for them to expand into.

Ms. Davis – I just want to add to the storytelling point. I think that it's well known that underrepresented communities have tended to have great interaction with fisheries in the past and given some of the barriers to students getting into these spaces if we're considering having some of those stories being told at a younger age. It's worth having that conversation and bringing in communities so that again, they are seeing themselves in the ask like this isn't something this older white man is not telling me to go and farm for fish instead of going to the doctor like my mom told me to, however, or instead my community has had a great value. This is a part of my history. Not only is this a science-based thing, this is an area to build on history and build our community. So, tying those kinds of things in is going to be really important moving forward. And then just to touch on the collaboration between secret programs and MSI. That's and other institutions and MSIs in this space and circling that are when institutions tend to get a lot more of that money. So, what that means is if I were to partner with University of Georgia and Savannah State, it wouldn't be Savannah State's program and recognizing the threat that a lot of MSIs face with being cut from funding there are several constantly on the chopping block for low enrollment or for low funding. So, figuring out ways that yes, it's great we can partner with other institutions, but how we can get the money directly to these programs so that they can sustain themselves is really important.

Dr. Murray -Thank you guys for all your hard work.

4:30 pm – 5:10 pm – Welcome New Board Members (Dr. James Murray, Board Chair and Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))

Dr. Pennock – Gave an introduction of the three new Board members (Dr. Meghan Marrero, Dr. Jack Payne and Dr. Martin Tadlock). He also mentioned our impending Board member Dr. Dijanna Figueroa who is still going through the hiring process but should be joining the Board soon. We're happy to have each of you join the Board and the talent you've already brought by the experiences you have. Dr. Pennock then asked each member to introduce themselves and give a bit of background. He then asked the current Board members to introduce themselves and give some background on their experiences with working with NSGAB.

5:10 pm – 5:20 pm – Evaluation Committee Membership (Dr. Nancy Targett, Board Vice Chair)

Dr. Targett – I'm honored to be the Chair of this committee and the people who are on this committee are Peter Betzer, Meghan Marrero and Jack Payne. And, we've asked Jim Murray who was our current and past Chair to serve as an advisor to us on the committee and the other person who's on that committee is an external expert. And so, I've talked to Susan and I have talked with a number of people and then the recommendation that we're bringing forward to this Board and that we're going to ask for a vote on is that we ask Paul Anderson who is the former Sea Grant Director to be the external expert on this Board. Paul, was a longtime director of Maine Sea Grant. He was very active in the SGA. He held a variety of positions in the SGA. Very well thought of in the Sea Grant network, as someone who's very thoughtful and very well thought of, but most importantly, he's been retired long enough that he doesn't have the conflicts of interest that more recent retirees would have. So, what I'd like to do is bring forward to this group, Paul's name as the nominee, or external member of the committee. And of course, the other person who is really integral to the committee as she is to everything that we do is Susan Holmes, she will of course serve as the DFO and support for that committee as well and to also keep us all honest. So, the recommendation we're bringing to the Board is to ask Paul Anderson to be the external expert member of this committee. She then turned the meeting back over to Dr. Murray.

Dr. Murray – The evaluation system and Sea Grant over the past four years has been often historically controversial, right? No one nicely evaluated. We went through numerous iterations. This last time, I think we finally got it close to right. We're still tweaking it. But what we thought was really important six years ago, given the history is that on the committee, that was developing this whole evaluation process, that we have a highly respected former Sea Grant director, to give it credibility with the Sea Grant directors were being reviewed and that person was Wisconsin Sea Grant director, who had great credibility within the Sea Grant directors. I would submit that Paul Anderson is in that category. The credibility would be with the directors, because in this case, if adopted, all will be in with Nancy, from a former director's perspective, and I think that gives us a lot more credibility. I will call for a motion to accept Paul Anderson as the fifth member of this committee.

Dr. Murray asked for a motion to accept Paul Anderson as the 5th member of the Evaluation Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination for the Evaluation Committee: Dr. Jack Payne

2nd: Dr. Meghan Morerro

Vote: All in favor

Dr. Targett – Went over the timeline and commended Susan Holmes and Summer Morlock for the amazing job they did in pulling everything together for the site review visits.



5:20 pm – 5:50 pm – Strategic Discussion of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) – (Dr. James Murray, Board Chair and Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant Office)

Dr. Murray - Accidentally we're right on schedule. This session as we talked about a bit earlier, we've got a longer time for discussions tomorrow. There's been some ideas floating around so what we'd like to do over the next 40-50 minutes is whoever has an idea - lay it on a table and we can discuss. Let's come up with sort of a list of potential action items - potential work plans for the Board. And then we'll have a further discussion tomorrow afternoon. Think about it – prioritize and then hopefully come up with a couple of projects that we really feel are important to Sea Grant and move forward. So, let me open it up. From listening to Rick and all the discussions we've had today, what should the Advisory Board move forward with.

Dr. Payne – Tied back to our first presentation on ethics – what our role is, specifically is to advise the National Sea Grant office. And I think it would be good for the Board to strategize on how we can help Jon to convince Dr. Spinrad how to flow money in NOAA and invariably this includes Sea Grant's budget. I don't understand all the details, but I do understand that some of the ways that money can be used by different entities is not permitted within Sea Grant. I think in our advisory capacity, we can help with that.

Dr. Targett - Just to that, in talking with Jim, Jon and others, and then hearing Rick this morning, I wondered about a subcommittee that had some kind of title like Delivering on the Sea Grant Mission. And that could include Jon what you said about what the minimum should be, there could be some work on that. But it also could be what we could do to inform or advise Rick and others about what we are doing and how we can help them deliver better on the mission.

Dr. Murray – We were approached by the SGA who had this idea of putting together a group of the leadership from the National office, Advisory Board and the SGA to focus on what they were calling Sea

Grant 2066 And it's our 100-year anniversary. So, kind of a futuristic look, but that's sort of the idea. And was on a call last week, we were assigned an Advisory Board member, a National Office member and a Sea Grant director to sort of think this through and the three of us really had no guidance. And so, among the three of us, we came up with sort of a plan that I think Darren is going to talk a little about this week. I was coming out from a very futuristic standpoint, white paper and so on and so forth that in a retreat type thing. The National Office and Sea Grant are a little bit more practical – I'm retired. Keep in mind, they're working day to day and so we have this discussion where it is sort of a blend, you know, on the one hand or longer-term futuristic thing - severe coastal erosion and storms, climate change effects, etc. And how do we prepare for that? On the other hand, what can we do in the shorter term, to position ourselves to get to those issues? And that's kind of where we're at. I think what Nancy is suggesting is embedding them in a sort of configuration.

Dr. Targett – I just don't want to lose the research component of what Sea Grant does. And I worry that we keep hearing from NOAA about the importance of extension, which is totally why I think our model works is because it's research that goes to education and extension that goes into the community and businesses and then back, it's a loop. And we iterate on that by back and forth interactions and I think if they take away that research component we won't be able to do that, so I think we should reinforce that. That's the only reason I suggested that.

Dr. Murray – We put together subcommittees. A subcommittee doesn't have to be just our Board members. We can even have someone outside our Board Chair on the subcommittee. So, if we're trying to deliver a message to your high-level people, no one should influence the sort of people we want on a subcommittee. So, think broadly and creatively. Dr. Murray then gave some closing thoughts and the meeting adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 5:33pm

National Sea Grant Advisory Board Meeting

March 4-5, 2024

Final Meeting Minutes

Yours Truly Hotel

Washington, DC

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Eastern Time

Dr. Jim Murray (Board Chair) welcomed everyone and officially called the meeting to order. He 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 Dr. Murray (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; Dr. Meghan Marrero; Dr. Jim Murray (Board Chair); Ms. Kristine Norosz; D. Jack Payne; Dr. Martin Tadlock; Dr. Nancy Targett (Vice Chair).

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

Dr. Dijanna Figueroa

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, Ms. Donna Brown, Project Administrator, National Sea Grant Office; and Ms. Patricia Razafindrambinina, National Sea Grant Office.

Audience Attendees (March 5, 2024):

Gayle Zydkowski (MESG), Fran Castro (UOGSG), Amy Schrank (MNSG), Gabe Dunham (AKSG), Howard Forbes, Jr. (VISG), Sherry Larkin (FLSG), Summer Morlock (NSGO), Katrina Lewandowski (NSGO), Lauren Alvaro (NSGO), Madison Willert (NSGO), Chris Petrone (NSGO/DESG), Maya Walton (HISG), Maddie Kennedy (NSGO), Jess Dupree (NSGO), Karina Nielsen (ORSG), Mary Collins (NSGO), Victoria Luu (NOAA/OAR), Chelsea Berg (NSGO), Karla Heidelberg (USCSG), Jennifer Stokes (NSGO), Joshua Brown (NSGO), Amanda Lawrence (NSGO), Amara Davis (NSGO), Beth Lenz (MISG), Lacy Alison (NSGO), Mark Rath (NSGO), Chuck Weirich (NSGO), Abiola Obafemi (NSGO), Paul Jobsis (UVI), Mark Risse (GASG), Stephanie Otts (NSGLC), Hallee Meltzer (NSGO), John Downing (MNSG), Alison Krepp (NSGO).

9:10 am – 10:00 am – Discussion with NOAA Office of Research Assistant Administrator (Dr. Steve Thur, NOAA Assistant Administrator)

Dr. Jim Murray opened the session by introducing NOAA Research's Assistant Administrator, Dr. Steve Thur.

Dr. Thur began his talk by sharing that he has read 17 strategic plans. One for each line office, program, and lab that he is in charge of, and he was surprised at how different each was. He identified a key challenge across all of the strategic plans: the diversity of research conducted makes it challenging to tell a unifying story across the 17 strategic plans. Dr. Thur then emphasized that he is passionate about using science to solve societal challenges, and that is the primary driver that has kept him at NOAA for all these years. One effort that he highlighted was convening groups from the science and research side to create a unified message and passing that along to a team of communicators to convert the science jargon into something understandable and useful for the communities that NOAA serves. Dr. Thur also shared that a lot of his efforts are planned with a generational look, with the goal of lasting, long-term impacts.

Dr. Thur shared with the meeting attendees that he has crafted the top four challenges that NOAA Research seeks to solve:

1. Confronting challenges from our changing climate
2. Protecting Against Extreme Weather Events and Environmental Hazards
3. Managing Too Much and Too Little Water
4. Sustaining a Healthy Environment and Economy.

Challenge #1 is a cross-cutting challenge that impacts all other challenges: will we have water? How do we produce food? This is the one challenge to rule them all.

Challenge #2 is motivated by finding ways to prevent loss of life and minimize impacts due to extreme weather events and environmental hazards. For example, a question that Dr. Thur often asks programs is, "If I have more money, is it better to put research on extending the lead time of an extreme event or towards understanding human behavior on what people do when they get the notification? From Dr. Thur's perspective, harmful algal blooms are one of the environmental hazards that may fit under Sea Grant's purview.

Challenge #3 is about droughts and floods, where a primary concern is on how to provide better estimates for future flows, as well as water management.

Challenge #4 focuses on the connection between the environment and the economy (NOAA is housed under the Department of Commerce, after all). How do we make good on stewardship while maintaining a prosperous society? What science do we need to do?

The four challenges are interrelated, and Dr. Thur sees Sea Grant fully contributing to challenges 1 & 4 and partly contributing to the two remaining challenges.

To summarize, a challenge that Dr. Thur has is how to knit together the capacity of the various facets of NOAA. Within OAR, there are untapped connections between labs, other programs, and Sea Grant. Dr. Thur acknowledged that Sea Grant is unique, but that doesn't mean that it cannot be better connected with other unique beasts within OAR. Dr. Thur's vision is to find an effective way to funnel needs from

programs to OAR and also move in the reverse direction. Dr. Thur urges Sea Grant to share any recommendations on how OAR can make that happen.

To close the talk, Dr. Thur brought up the news of the recently published FY2024 budget, where Sea Grant remained at level funding. He mentioned that it is a positive and the best of the bunch when it comes to OAR as a whole. Out of the 18 OAR budget lines, 13 (including Sea Grant) were given level funding, and 5 had a decrease from FY2023. Dr. Thur projects that OAR as a whole will have a decrease in the budget for FY2025, and the cuts will be more broad-based (Dr. Thur sees a decrease in all 18 lines of funding). He implores all Sea Grant directors to prepare for such an event this year so that there will be some flexibility when next year comes.

Dr. Jim Murray proceeded to thank Dr. Thur for his presentation and opened up the discussion to the meeting attendees.

Dr. Payne - shared with Dr. Thur that he is currently leading the subcommittee charged with writing the State of Sea Grant Biennial Report to Congress. Dr. Payne asked about how OAR wanted advice from Sea Grant, and the answer to many questions is outreach.

Dr. Thur responded by noting that he has had conversations with all directors and agreed that the production of quality science and communicating it is the core to providing the best scientific information. On the budget side, on the core programmatic elements, communicators have produced high-quality work, but we do need more of it. Dr. Thur then mentions that NOAA/OAR can do really good work by doubling the budget - but even then, NOAA would still be at a quarter of NASA's budget. In reality, NOAA/OAR has attempted to grow the budget portfolio in areas that we think are important and where challenges need to be addressed. Dr. Thur emphasized that he focuses on the long-term growth of core programs, although Congress and decision-makers tend not to view that as important as new efforts. Dr. Thur declared himself a realist and saw that the current level of funding is the best NOAA can do at the moment. He also highlighted the work of Dr. Darren Lerner and colleagues who have external constituencies who can relay messages to the hill.

Dr. Murray - Assuming that NOAA has outreach needs and Sea Grant Has outreach capabilities (external connections, Sea Grant liaisons at NOAA labs), it is worth noting how other agencies, such as EPA, have maximized the use of Sea Grant outreach more than NOAA. For example, the EPA and Sea Grant extension have worked out an agreement where Sea Grant agents went to EPA for training and received take-home materials, and each extension agent was granted \$5,000 to go back to their home state and do work. Some of these extension agents are still working on smart growth with that little seed money.

Upon hearing this, Dr. Thur remarked that NOAA/OAR would like to replicate such programs with seed money and would like to know more information on how to use Sea Grant more effectively.

Dr. Lerner - took the conversation back to the four societal challenges highlighted by Dr. Thur. Dr. Lerner sees that Sea Grant has a place in all four challenges across the 34 programs. He recalls Dr. Spinrad's remarks from the previous day regarding core capacities, BIL, and IRA. Dr. Lerner expressed concerns about how NOAA would leverage BIL and RA funding into the future and not go back to the lower levels of funding. Dr. Lerner emphasized that an increase in core capacities is crucial and is a double-edged sword that can shift workload from communities to other things. He continued by saying that it is important that we maintain our core capacities. We have been moving forward with programmatic requests, and we know things are going to be pulled back. Our responsibility is to bring up those difficult

conversations, and we continue to talk together. Help us think through that and bring it to the table so that NOAA and DOC understand that it is the communities that we represent.

Dr. Thur - Concurred and stated that he understood and noted that what Dr. Lerner brought up was not quite within what the Assistant Administrator's scope can control. Dr. Thur then talked about how politically agnostic (or not) the societal challenges are. He said that the topic of climate is politically charged and challenging. However, one can talk about the challenges without talking about climate. In summary, finding methods of communication that reach all without being political will assist in getting the message out.

Dr. Targett - Applauded OAR's integration around these issues and recognized that some people are skeptical about it. She pointed out the need for trusted people on the ground to assist in communication. Dr. Targett also mentioned that Sea Grant did not benefit from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) as much as was hoped and asked Dr. Thur: Do you think there is a way in the future that when such funding comes along that Sea Grant is recognized for what Sea Grant does?

Dr. Thur - Responded with the following explanation: When discussions were held regarding BIL and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Dr. Thur was seated at the National Ocean Service, so he was not part of those discussions at OAR. The Secretary of Commerce herself made those decisions. OAR didn't fare as well as other Line Offices - it was not just Sea Grant. Dr. Thur urged the board not to view the decision to not send more money through Sea Grant as negative, as it was not part of the analysis. BIL, in contrast to IRA, was very prescriptive about how agencies spend money. IRA, by contrast, had three areas. The level of external influence was more for BIL than it was for IRA.

Dr. Murray - Pointed out Sea Grant's ability to leverage university strength and urged the advisory board, the Assistant Administrator, and Dr. Jonathan Pennock, the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) director, to harness that talent.

Building upon that, Dr. Thur called back to the four challenges that he shared and mentioned that one assessment was done on social science capability. Climate challenges can't just be answered by other sciences any longer, and NOAA needs to grow its social science capability. OAR should grow both internal and external capabilities (and external is likely the path of less resistance). Dr. Thur expects to see the needle move in social sciences with money flowing through Sea Grant from other NOAA programs.

Dr. Betzer - Built upon the idea of social sciences and behavior and highlighted that fascination and appreciation of coral reefs, which are major economic drivers, have changed people's behaviors. On that, Dr. Thur agreed.

Dr. Pennock then brought up the topic of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA) and asked Dr. Thur how he would speak to equity in the political environment that we are in.

Dr. Thur - Responded with the following: diversity and how inclusive we are as an employer, equity in serving customers, and the need to discuss how to leverage diversity policies. On the one hand, there is a thought of "Why bother with DEIJA? I am a public servant. The taxpayers are who I serve". Historically, they have not been served as much as they should have been. When there is a market failure, the government steps in regardless of political standing on DEIJA.

Continuing the topic, Ms. Amara Davis (NSGO) recalled that Dr. Thur highlighted how NOAA is funded much less than NASA. She continued to say that NASA runs like a business and has done a good job marketing itself. We (NOAA) can't lobby for those types of things (marketing). Is there a way to work across the groups to build into NOAA and market what we do? Is there a way to get public buy-in so that NOAA can tell our stories? It will need to be in the budget.

Dr. Thur - Concurred that he would like all those things as well, however, it all comes down to NOAA's statutory authority, NOAA does not have the bidirectional funding the way NASA does with private companies.

Dr. Murray - Closed the session by thanking Dr. Thur, and Dr. Thur expressed his gratitude for the time provided to interact with the Sea Grant Advisory Board (NSGAB).

10:00 am – 10:30 am – Morning Break

10:30 am – 11:00 am - Sea Grant Association Update with Q/A (Informational) – (Dr. Darren Lerner, President, Sea Grant Association (SGA))

Dr. Murray opened this session by introducing Dr. Darren Lerner, the President of the Sea Grant Association (SGA), and by thanking him for incorporating the NSGAB meeting seamlessly into the SGA Spring Meeting week. Dr. Murray then gave the stage to Dr. Lerner.

Dr. Lerner - Began by sharing the outline of his updates: in this session, he will be talking about the past, present, and future of the Sea Grant Association (SGA). In talking about the past, Dr. Lerner expressed his gratitude to Dr. Pamela Plotkin and Dr. Jim Hurley (both of whom have recently retired) for their service to the SGA and wished them well.

Next, Dr. Lerner gave a recap of the Sea Grant Association meeting in Guam that was held in September 2023. A few topics that were discussed at the Guam meeting included One Sea Grant, DEIJA, Capitol Hill Interactions, and resilience. He also shared that members of the SGA and NSGAB actively participated in planting over 100 trees in Guam. Dr. Lerner then emphasized his gratitude to Guam Sea Grant for their fantastic work. Dr. Lerner also highlighted the SGA's visit to Saipan, where the Northern Marianas College has been working to start a Sea Grant Program. The Northern Marianas College welcomed the Sea Grant visitors with open arms, and the SGA meeting attendees had a chance to interact with the local community during community night. Dr. Lerner also shared how many Sea Grant folks were stranded in the airport for over 24 hours and bonded.

Before moving on to the second bullet point of the outline, which is present, Dr. Lerner gave meeting attendees a brief explanation of what the SGA is, their roles, and their goals. Now, on to the present. Dr. Lerner started by welcoming Dr. Jack Bladauf and Dr. Christy Remucal, who recently joined the SGA. He also shared a graph that showed the years of service for Sea Grant directors as of Spring 2024: an average of 7 years and a mode of 0-5 years, followed by 6-10 years.

Moving into the last of three sections in Dr. Lerner's updates: the future. Dr. Lerner shared with the attendees what the SGA is and will be doing during this week of the meeting in Washington, DC. The SGA's external relations committee will be doing deep discussions on FY24 and FY35 budgets, programmatic requests, and continuing resolutions. Additionally, the committee will also be conducting multiple visits to Capitol Hill. The program mission committee will be discussing professional

development opportunities, the Oceanography Special Issue, as well as doing a DEIJA evaluation. In that same week, the networks advisory council will be collecting updates from the extension, research, education, communications, legal, and fiscal networks. The ethics committee will also be revising the code of conduct to develop new guidance documents and opportunities to support best practices for Sea Grant network-wide activities.

In addition to the committees, special sessions will also be held during the meeting. Topics include offshore wind, truth, and racial healing transformation, OAR update, aquaculture roadmap, American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, and Marine Debris.

To end his presentation, Dr. Lerner invited all meeting attendees to join the annual John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Reception and reminded attendees to be on the lookout for more information to come regarding the 2024 Sea Grant Week. Upon this conclusion, Dr. Lerner opened up the floor for questions.

Dr. Murray – I appreciate the work that Dr. Lerner and NSGO has done to create the concept of one Sea Grant, and he mentioned that he thinks Sea Grant is working more seamlessly together now that it has in history. Dr. Murray gave a lot of credit to Dr. Lerner and Dr. Pennock for making that happen.

Dr. Brown (NSGO) - Asked Dr. Lerner whether there is something he would like the network (including NSGO) to do more of in the future.

In response, Dr. Lerner said that the primary area for improvement is core capacity. Programs need more money. In this case, he is thinking of the capacity of programs and how each program may not be able to manage large-scale tasks such as the coastal resilience regional resilience challenge. The bottom line is that the network needs the capacity to do good work. He acknowledges that the NSGAB, NSGO, and SGA play different roles and can accomplish this request from different pathways. His request to the board is to continue to find pathways to promote the core increase for the network so they have the capacity to do the work that they are promising and continue to be competitive.

The last remark was made by Dr. Jack Payne, who highlighted how the NSGAB was able to express their concern regarding capacity to the Assistant Administrator earlier in the meeting. Additionally, the board is preparing a report for Congress that will include a recommendation for a core increase in capacity building.

Dr. Murray closed this session and introduced the next part.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm - National Sea Grant Office Update (Informational) – (Dr. Jonathan Pennock, Director, National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP))

Dr. Jim Murray introduced the Director of the National Sea Grant Office and National Sea Grant College Program, Dr. Jon Pennock.

Dr. Pennock - Greeted the meeting attendees, and mentioned that many of the updates that he will be presenting today have been presented a week before during the Webinar for the Network. However, as many NSGAB members were not present, this will be news to some.

Dr. Pennock opened his talk by sharing a few highlights from the Sea Grant network (Fisherman Makes Dramatic Rescue with Knowledge from Connecticut Sea Grant Training, Ohio Sea Grant Research Develops On-Site Testing for PFAS, USC Sea Grant Empowers LA Youth Through Ocean Conservation Education), and by sharing the recently published Sea Grant by the Numbers.

Next, Dr. Pennock congratulated Chelsea Briggs and Brooke Carney who recently received the OAR Employee of the Year and DOC Silver Awards, respectively. Following up on the topic of NSGO staff, Dr. Pennock welcomed four new NSGO staff (Dr. Madison Willert, Mary Collins, Po Chi Fung, and Julia Wolff), three new Knauss Fellows (Abiola Obafemi, Katrina Lewandowski, and Lauren Alvaro). Dr. Pennock also took a few minutes to celebrate Sea Grant Network colleagues who are currently working within NSGO via Interagency Personnel Agreements and cooperative agreements (Kate McClure, Katy Hintzen, and Chris Petrone). To wrap up this section of his talk, Dr. Pennock expressed his deepest gratitude to two NSGO staff who will be departing as they have taken new positions within NOAA (Alison Krepp and Elizabeth Diamond).

Dr. Pennock then jumped into fiscal matters. He reiterated that Sea Grant has been granted level funding for the current fiscal year, though FY 2025 may bring limited funds for new initiatives.

Dr. Pennock also highlighted the currently open Notices of funding opportunities (NOFO) and several ones that will be opening in the near future.

Building upon the topic of grants, Dr. Pennock acknowledged the network's frustration with the new grants tracking system (eRA) and echoed their frustration. He assured the attendees and the Sea Grant network that NSGO is working to provide all the flexibility possible and that he appreciates their patience and continued hard work.

The final part of Dr. Pennock's update touches upon the PIE Guidance and Annual Reporting. He shared the current information on 2018-2023 annual reporting, as well as changes that will be made for the 2024-2027 period (which includes removal of targets and target setting).

Dr. Pennock thanked everyone for the opportunity to present his updates and opened the session for questions from the audience.

Dr. Murray raised the first question and asked what is the one thing that keeps Dr. Pennock awake at night. In response, Dr. Pennock said that it is budgets. He said that it is comforting to hear FY 24 budgets, however everything we (Sea Grant) do flows out of the workflows that we have, and we have had some challenges with the new systems that are coming in. We are running \$500 billion worth of funds right now that we're managing as a pretty small group that are active grants. Now, some of those are at the tail end. The load of that in an environment in which the grant system is broken and the budget system is broken has put immense pressure on NSGO, and that also affects me (Dr. Pennock). Dr. Pennock then admitted that FY25 budgets keep him up at night and will continue to do so for a while.

Switching to the topic of reporting, Dr. Murray brought up that the 2018-2023 six-year omnibus cycle was an anomaly, although, in his opinion, it worked well. Previously, the omnibus was structured for four years, but most of the programs have two-year cycles. Dr. Pennock shared that the only reason we got this four-plus two-year omnibus cycle was due to the impact of a shutdown and the pandemic, both of which delayed evaluation.

Another question was posed by Dr. Murray. He asked whether the National Sea Grant Office has, in a way, given any thought towards expanding graduate research fellowships in social sciences and expanding the social science capacity, especially seeing as Sea Grant has had great successes in fisheries fellowships. Dr. Murray stated that he was curious to hear Dr. Pennock's thoughts on future fellowships that focus on social sciences. Dr. Pennock said that he has had some of those conversations and that Dr. Thur is deeply committed to social sciences. Dr. Pennock thinks that it is indeed within the Sea Grant wheelhouse to do something like that. The thing is, the Sea Grant does not provide core funding for social science. However, there is a budget for social science within NOAA. We may be able to go to parts of the agency, like the weather service, and do something as partners. Another possibility is to utilize cooperative institutes. Dr. Pennock would love to see a Sea Grant Cooperative Institute in social science. There are a number of opportunities, but we haven't really had any discussions about them.

A question came in from the audience regarding the Blue Economy. The discussion about the blue economy and the role that Sea Grant programs can play, SBIR may be a sweet spot. The question continues as the asker wonders if there is funding there, and an opportunity for Sea Grant agents to tap into taking those tools to help the network. For this question, Dr. Pennock passed to Dr. Nikola Garber for her thoughts.

Dr. Garber mentioned that we've continued to reach out about aquaculture. Historically, Sea Grant has \$2-3 billion of our budget that is used for research; it's about 3.5% taken off, or you have to pay it out in the next year. It goes into this SBIR pot. Historically, Sea Grant ran our money through us, but the amount was not as large as it is now. So, we have been in conversations with them. Dr. Garber urged the attendees to share their ideas on the topic. Dr. Garber also brought up earmarks and community-supported activities that are going through NOAA Research and will go into SBIR. Dr. Joshua Brown added to this conversation and shared Dr. Garber's point. From his point of view, he thought that there was no reason that an extension agent couldn't partner with an entrepreneur on a proposal to move something forward, and he has seen that around the network where folks come with no relevant inventions and they partner with the network to gain access to communities that are interested in that sort of thing. Similarly, with our marine debris challenge competition, we have what is essentially not quite an SBIR, but because it's focused on creating innovative new tools, technologies, and techniques, we've seen a fair number of entrepreneurs apply some successfully to participate. Something to think about that is not necessarily at the national office level but at your program level. Are there things we (NSGO) could do to help your staff understand that process? Dr. Brown also offered the audience to set up a time to have a conversation with him regarding workforce development. Adding on, Dr. Pennock mentions that the most recent SBIR involvement was in aquaculture. They (SBIR) buy into that for that year, but it really depends on how they advertise each year. There is a discussion to be had on where we could probably be most effective in terms of getting ideas together that Sea Grant could rally around. As it is a competitive proposal, there will be losers, and that is a tough place with all of the different opportunities. Dr. Pennock then urges the attendees, if they have any ideas from the board or other places, to send them his way. Dr. Pennock also mentioned that NSGO has been trying to do work with other line offices.

With that, Dr. Jim Murray thanked Dr. Pennock and called this session to a close.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm – Lunch Break

1:30 pm – 2:50 pm - Continued Discussion on 2024 Recommendations for the State of Sea Grant Report to Congress

In this session, Dr. Jack Payne, who is the chair of the Biennial Report to Congress sub-committee, started the discussion by recalling where the Board got to the previous day regarding the topic. Dr. Payne remarked that some work was done during the previous night and morning, during which the sub-committee members who were present refined the five recommendations that Dr. Payne would be sharing today.

Dr. Payne shared the first recommendation: "In response to growing community needs to address climate readiness and resilience, the National Sea Grant College Program should work to strengthen core programs with its university partners in support of research, extension, and education functions." This recommendation is in response to questions that were asked to the NOAA Administrator, Assistant Administrator, and representatives of the SGA. Dr. Payne then opened the session to discuss and react to this first recommendation.

Dr. Jim Murray's first reaction was to say that he understood the crux of this recommendation. He then pointed out the word strengthen, and how congress may interpret that. Dr. Murray suggested more clarity, but concurred that this recommendation is fine.

Dr. Nancy Targett followed up with Dr. Murray's comment by suggesting the addition of pointing out Sea Grant's support of the communities that it serves and clear wording that Sea Grant is working to achieve a community impact. She mentioned that, as written, the recommendation does not illustrate how Sea Grant impacts communities.

Dr. Jim Murray also added a minor comment to clarify what strengthening core programs entails, possibly by adding human infrastructure, and making it clear that it is the root of the request for program expansion. Dr. Murray's concern is that Capitol Hill staff who reads this may interpret that Sea Grant should have more research dollars, when in fact, what we are recommending is to expand capacity and human infrastructure.

Dr. Payne then shared the second recommendation: "Recognizing the importance of economic development for long-term community stability, the National Sea Grant College Program needs to balance environmental stewardship with the blue economy to promote sustainability."

Regarding this recommendation, Dr. Payne shared that he has discussed it with Dr. Judy Gray, who currently serves as the external expert on this subcommittee. Dr. Gray expressed her concern regarding this recommendation, as it sounds like we are promoting economic development and sustainability. Dr. Payne also shared that Dr. Pennock has suggested that the emphasis be shifted toward balancing the local economy. Dr. Payne also mentioned that people may be worried about promoting economic advancement over conservation.

Dr. Targett suggested that instead of the word balancing, it needs to be more considerate of the blue economy to promote sustainability. To follow up, Dr. Murray emphasized that the narrative portion of the recommendation should be used to clarify the definitions that we are using.

Alison Krepp (NSGO) added a comment, as her role in the NSGO is to help the inner economic valuation work. Alison urged the sub-committee and board to think about the goal of the Sea Grant programs and the National Sea Grant Office regarding the blue economy and how it promotes sustainability. To Alison's

point, Dr. Murray agreed and suggested that the sub-committee elaborate on this in the narrative paragraph for the recommendation.

Dr. Payne then shared the next recommendation: “The National Sea Grant College Program should focus on improving environmental literacy, including ocean, climate, aquaculture, and Great Lakes literacy, in the communities it serves.”

On this recommendation, Dr. Garber asked the board’s thoughts on the word “coastal,” as it seems like that word (which is included in Sea Grant’s mission) is missing from this recommendation. Sometimes, the word ocean is more closely associated with blue or deeper water. Additionally, clarity on what is defined as environmental literacy is needed.

Dr. Murray also had a question n why aquaculture is singled out. In response, **Dr. Carole Engle** said that in the aquaculture realm specifically, there is an incredible amount of misinformation and myths. Sea grant pland and programs that have competitions that include aquaculture literacy exist, and that’s why that was added. Dr. Murray, once again suggested that this can be clarified in the supporting narrative of the recommendation.

Dr. Targett then highlighted something that Dr. Dijanna Figueroa had mentioned about being aware of the audiences and what it would mean to them when we say we want to improve environmental awareness. Dr. Targett suggested that the word awareness be used up front as someone in Congress will understand that and then tie it to literacy. Additionally, does this literacy cover oceans? Environmental industry sustainability? Safety, resilience, and risk? Does literacy mean an elevated awareness? Kris Norosz concurred with this.

Dr. Figueroa added that environmental literacy should be added back, as she thinks that humans are very much aware of the environment, but in the human-nature relationship, there is a disconnect. And so the awareness piece is like they’re aware of what’s the connection and after the literacy.

The last recommendation is regarding DEIJA. Dr. Payne shared two versions of this recommendation to get the board’s thoughts on each of them and to see which version the subcommittee should move forward with:

The National Sea Grant College Program recognizes the critical importance of deepening its commitment to social and environmental justice, equity, and inclusion. The Program should enhance its efforts in assessing, broadening, and embedding these principles throughout its organizational framework and activities to develop a more inclusive and dynamic environment that accurately reflects the diverse communities it serves and to ensure that all its initiatives and programs contribute to equitable outcomes for all.

As the National Sea Grant College Program progresses, it recognizes the critical importance of deepening its commitment to social, climate, and environmental justice. To achieve this, the Program should enhance its efforts in assessing, broadening, and embedding these values throughout its organizational framework and activities. These efforts should work toward the development of a more dynamic environment that mirrors the multifaceted communities we serve. This approach can help ensure that all its initiatives and programs contribute to fair outcomes for all.

Dr. Figueroa explained that some triggering words were removed as a response from different members of the community. Dr. Figueroa said that crafting this was a challenge and reminded the board of the reality of Congress today and of unfair threats to the Sea Grant budget that can result from misunderstood and misplaced actions on words. Dr. Payne said that he advocates for us to have a recommendation around these issues and also wants to address various people and situations to come to some sort of compromise.

Dr. Targett suggested that the recommendation points out the deepening importance of the sea grant college program. As we progress, we recognize the importance of multiple perspectives. To understand the multifaceted or diverse communities that we are charged with addressing, then go on to say the rest of it. Dr. Murray then suggested using taxpayers as part of this recommendation so that when we talk about multifaceted communities, this can mirror the multifaceted taxpayers in the communities that we serve.

On the contrary, Dr. Payne advised that we do not adopt the taxpayers framing, and use that in the response, which is what some politicians justify reducing or cutting federal endorsed state support for DEI efforts in higher education. Further taking the angle of taxpayers creates an opportunity to justify disproportionate investments into communities by tax brackets, along with different tax structures, or US territories and states is complex.

Ms. Norosz stated her appreciation for this thought, as she pointed out that a lot of us know that historically, those areas of the community that are wealthier and pay more taxes and resources, and so it certainly was not the intention to go down that road.

Dr. Murray sees the opposite, taking Little Haiti in Miami as an example. Those people pay taxes, maybe not as much, but it provides an opportunity to go do programming and delay their taxpayers to deserve our services.

Dr. Figueroa expressed that she prefers not to use the taxpayer term. Additionally, Dr. Figueroa wanted to point out the K-12 aspect. Her six-year-old daughter wants to benefit from these services, but she is not necessarily an active taxpayer. It could be interpreted a little bit differently. Dr. Figueroa said that there are more inclusive words. Additionally, she removed the word inclusive for a reason and tried to replace that with other things, and “taxpayer” layers onto it as well for people to interpret in different ways. Chris Petrone concurs with Dr. Figueroa’s statement that using the term taxpayer excludes the K-12 community.

Dr. Pennock added his thoughts and suggested that finessing the words to this recommendation would be helpful. He also stated that the term “As the National Sea Grant program progresses” needs to be written as if the advisory board is making a recommendation to the program, not just the National Sea Grant Office, and he thinks that there is a word or two that needs to be shifted, and these efforts should work toward the development environment. He wanted to make sure that we have that as a recommendation for what Sea Grant should do.

Dr. Targett then said that the real question is, are we all comfortable with this *toeing the line* that Dijanna has proposed?

Dr. Deidre Gibson said that she has no other suggestions. She said that it is really sad that we have to do this and whitewash everything. The Board agreed with this sentiment, as Ms. Norosz stated. She also

emphasized that the board and sub-committee have had all those conversations but still want to be sensitive to the audience of this report.

In response to that, Dr. Figueroa expressed her sadness about having to change the language and is not sure if she felt good about it. However, she wants to make sure that the impact of our language will not do harm. She hopes that as a committee, they can come together and develop language around this that will not cause harm to the program but will also allow us to meet the objectives that we have laid out before us. It is a hard place to be, and she wanted to state on the record that it is really challenging to do this work. This is the time for us to make a stand and say the words that we need, or is this not the time? What are the impacts these words are going to have in the next 2, 5, 10, 20 years from now?

Dr. Martin Tadlock posed the question regarding declaring Sea grant values. Does this recommendation align with our values? Can we live with these as stated, or do they need to be stated more strongly? Dr. Figueroa stated that it should be stated more strongly.

Additionally, Dr. Figueroa shared her thoughts that the ideas of environmental, social, and climate justice at a high level encompass many of the other things that we are seeing, so ultimately, the goal of inclusion is justice. And we are getting justice in there [the recommendation] in a way that is particular to the work that Sea Grant does. She continued by stating that inclusion and diversity are core values to her.

Dr. Meghan Marrero added that we have a Sea Grant value statement that includes DEIJA language, and we've worked towards that as a community and as a program. So whatever language you use, it shouldn't take away from that.

Dr. Murray then stated that it seems that the committee is leaning towards DEIJA recommendation B, and started a motion to accept all 4 of these recommendations (1, 2,3, 4B) with any wordsmithing that the subcommittee may do.

Still, on this topic, Dr. Targett added that the first sentence of the recommendation should be "The National Sea Grant College Program recognizes the critical importance of understanding the perspectives of the multifaceted community it serves" and then go on to say that to achieve this, the program should enhance its effort in assessing, writing, and vetting the values of social, climate, and environmental justice throughout the organization, etc." or "the values of inclusivity." Dr. Targett emphasized that whichever DEIJA recommendation ends up being used, the first sentence should express recognition.

Dr. Garber then brought up the topic of funds. As the program only has so much money, and so is the goal for the National Sea Grant College Program to be able to do all of these? Are we already reaching a number of communities that need us that don't have a lot of money on the coast (as many as we possibly can) with the funding we have? There's still a lot we're not missing. R. Garber has heard from a lot of extension agents that they are working with a number of communities, and if they had more [funding], they could work with even more communities. So how do we highlight what we're doing, and we know we're not doing enough because we have so many communities that we can't reach? How do we get out to those? And this could then double down on some of the other recommendations.

Dr. Targett then proposes, "As the National Sea Grant College Program progresses, it has increasingly recognized the need for understanding the perspectives of the multifaceted community it serves."

Dr. Garber also urged the sub-committee to think about how we cannot do everything, and so which part of this recommendation is Sea Grant? Which part can Sea grant help to change, and how?

Dr. Murray then brought back the question of whether people have something in their minds that they feel should be a recommendation but is not.

Dr. Tadlock answered the question with the following, "I can't live with diversity and inclusion not being in the language in any of the recommendations" ...,"we need to find a way to make that apparent that we value that. And it's a principle that we stand for this practice. It's already in your strategic plan. It's already in other documents. Why wouldn't the board support that by including that language in the recommendation?"

As chair of the Board, Dr. Murray suggests that this discussion will be continued in an upcoming meeting.

Dr. Figueroa then chimed in, in response to Dr. Tadlock's concerns. She suggested that we get that language into the narrative paragraph.

Dr. Tadlock would rather see them in the recommendation headline because we are saying that it is about our principles and values. Dr. Tadlock also mentioned the he liked how the recommendations were written.

Dr. Figueroa then shared that she has a skill set for translating and navigating the DEIJA space, and she wrote the second version of the recommendation that would be less triggering. However, just because she did so does not mean she was supportive of it. Dr. Figueroa is also supportive of the first statement that included our values, although the second version may be more palatable to the target audience, and just wanted the board to have the opportunity to choose.

Dr. Targett believes that the group has made progress around the first three recommendations and wanted the group to think about Dr. Engle's suggestion about making sure we insert the Sea Grant values statement in some places. Dr. Murray then said that he went along with recommendation B because that's what he thought the committee was in favor of. However, he could also go along with A. He summarized that the argument really comes down to whether or not the word diversity is used.

Upon that, Dr. Target commented with the following, "we know where we need to go". We know what we need to do. We want to do no harm, and we want to live to fight another day for all of this. And so, how much of a compromise is too much? That's what I'm struggling with right now. And so, is it too much of a compromise to put to maybe we can put those words into equity and inclusion, which are really important words, can we put them in context of in other places that make it clear that these are part of our values, but we leave them out as "trigger words" and for some people, not all people in this and if you do that army compromising too much and it what counts as putting in the value statement proceeding, which is a statement for Sea Grant, and then putting our words in, does that help to negate I don't, that's what I'm struggling with. And that's the end where it's there to say we talk about that versus the harm that is done for all the people that have suffered injustice and non-inclusion, and our people suffered that a long time."

Dr. Murray then brought back the motion on the floor. The motion was to accept all four recommendations with the caveat that the DEIJA recommendation could be amended.

Motion to accept all four recommendations: Dr. Peter Betzer

2nd: Dr. Meghan Marrero

Vote: All in favor

With that, Dr. Murray finished the discussion on recommendation and looks forward to seeing it again in a more final format in August. He then thanked Jack and the sub-committee for driving a difficult but very good discussion.

At this point, 8 minutes remained for the session, and Dr. Murray used it to tee up two conversations:

1. To have a future conversation on working with MSIs and HBCUs;
2. We would like to have a future conversation about evaluating the infrastructure and core human capital issues.

Both of these may result in the creation of subcommittees for the upcoming board meeting.

As the meeting drew to a close, Dr. Murray gave a quick rundown of future NSGAB events and proceeded to thank all attendees, participants, organizers, and speakers for their presence and contributions, and officially closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm