

MEETING MINUTES

**ANR: Research & Extension Centers
Superintendents' Conference
Hopland Research & Extension Center
February 10 - 11, 1999**

Present: Janet Clark, Mike Connor, W.R. Gomes, Daniel Hagillih, Brian Marsh, Ivan Miller, Zak Mousli, Fred Perry, Jimmie Ross, Fred Swanson, Bob Timm, David Towle, Louis Whitendale and Toby Winer

Wednesday, February 10, 1999

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. Fred Perry reviewed the proposed agenda and schedule. The proposed agenda is as follows:

- DANR Conference
- UC Budget Update
- Generic Block
- Agenda for Thursday
- Dinner
- Open discussion

Other items up for discussion include Rebirth of the Workgroups, Pesticide Policy and the Poster Sessions.

Rebirth of the Workgroups

Following the DANR conference, the group consensus was that several workgroup can be key in the REC system. The advantages of belonging to several group was discussed, especially the opportunity to make sure REC resources are known. It was suggested to make sure the workgroups are aware of the availability of the centers' conference rooms.

There was discussion of the workgroups as a possible source of funding for research. An example was "needy" projects that don't have recharge funds available, and the hope of the workgroups being in a position to help starting researchers.

Workgroups were also discussed as a guide for RAC decisions and/or criteria in selection of projects. One suggestion was having workgroups support prior to a project acceptance. The conversation also included discussion on the various types of overhead involved in University grants. There was a suggestion to ask Carol Berman, Contracts and Grants Coordinator at Assistant Vice President - Planning and Budget office to speak to the group regarding grants.

Pesticide Policy

Fred Perry is on the Pesticide Policy Committee (on experimental materials). Although not finalized, the proposal will be "business as usual" for University of California (UC) property. Off-university property won't have the research authorization requirement, but will have 24-hour advance notice reporting to the County Agricultural Commissioner. Also, "pesticide research" may be exempted. Even if the RECs are doing the application, the language will make the researcher responsible for the reporting.

DANR Conference - Poster Sessions

The oranges and pistachios were a hit at the DANR conference! It was noted several people attending the conference were not aware of the REC system.

Personnel Actions

Dave reported there are three Centers that have had organization reviews. DREC was the first Center, and the reorganization has been completed. Jimmie Ross will go to DREC to review employee reactions.

KREC field operation review was completed last spring. The major shift was in the agricultural technician area. Effective 5/1/98, two Principal Agricultural Technician positions were changed to Senior Superintendent of Agriculture and Principal Agricultural Technician/Supervisor.

SCREC also had an organizational review, both in the field and physical plant. Some issues taken into consideration were the condition of their equipment, and the availability of UCI for refrigeration and other physical plant repairs. It was decided to consolidate the physical plant and field operations under the PSA. As a result, effective 7/1/98, the position of Assistant Superintendent of Physical Plant was eliminated and that staff person was laid off. Dave made a general offer to other RECs for an organizational review. The reviews could be made offsite and in confidence.

Discussion with Vice President W.R. "Reg" Gomes

A buffet lunch was served, and introductions were made. Dr. Gomes began by giving an organizational history of DANR. Ten years ago DANR was reorganized, and he has now set up five organizational teams, one of which is the Transition Team. The Transition Team has been gathering information (without lobbying), and its members are part of the team, rather than acting as a representative of their respective group. He stated he would not make any comments on the Transition Team, but did note the REC submittal was thoughtful.

Dr. Gomes also commented on the changes in the early 1990's. Academic, CE and Farm Advisor positions were filled, but due to budget problems their support eroded. Some of the support needs include labs, building, field stations and equipment. He talked about changes in other service units and the recharges to support those units. Specifically, he referred to the recharges for slides, and how the Division will be underwriting a good portion of the costs.

Fred Perry led a discussion with the group regarding some of the decisions the RAC committees must make. Some of the questions to be decided include whether or not the REC system should be in the business of subsidizing research, i.e., if other organization (competitive research) doesn't support a project, should we? Dr. Gomes then suggested asking the question of whether the project has both a research and an outreach component. Should the REC be looking at cost recovery? These are difficult questions that need to be

decided. Sources of funding were also discussed. Although commodity groups may not fund natural resource projects (as an example) there are other sources of grant funds that will.

Dr. Gomes also talked about a federal funding proposal, that while it had strong initial support, it no longer appears promising. There is also a state proposal for an increase in Cooperative Extension (CE) funding, but that has not yet been finalized. There was also discussion on other state agencies that have research funding, and reluctance to give those dollars to UC, and the need for UC to prove it can do better research and wants to. The lack of UC strawberry royalty being passed onto the REC system where the research occurred was also discussed. He agreed that there isn't anything that can be done for patented or patent pending research, but this is an area for discussion for future research. He indicated he believes there is plenty of research funding available from many sources, and indicated his preference that researchers pay a share of the expenses. He also indicated the RECs should be looking at the total funding package that the researcher receives, particularly any share that refers to centers or field research. If the Centers are short of funds and the researchers are fully funded, we should be able to "tap into" those resources. Fred thanked Dr. Gomes for attending the meeting, and welcomed him to visit the Centers, and provided a short tour of OFPM.

UCOP Update

Toby Winer reminded everyone about the Statewide Conference set for February 9 and 10, 1999. She also stated that Barbara Schneeman had resigned as Dean, effective July 1, 1999. Allyn Smith has also announced his retirement effective March 1, 1999. DANR administration located in Oakland moved to the new UCOP building. Although the space and ambience has changed, they are doing business as usual.

Toby then began a discussion of the *State of Our Organization*. The recruitment for a new Director is over with no candidate being selected. At this time, Fred will remain as Interim Director. Toby will await the outcome of the Transition Team before a decision will be made about the Director's position. Toby then asked for our input on the REC System and the Director's position. Some of the comments and suggestions were:

1. The Research and Extension Centers should absolutely remain one unit. There was no doubt that the Centers are stronger when unified and a Systemwide Organization.
2. There needs to be a linkage between Programs↔Director↔Superintendent.
3. Academic responsibilities (positions) of Superintendents seems to be a positive step. This has allowed Superintendents to remain current in their respective fields.
4. Superintendents with split appointments (such as Farm Advisor) was discussed. The problem with this situation is promotions. The work and effort needed on the academic side does not balance with the split percentage appointment. In other words, a 20% academic appointment appears to require as much effort for promotion as if the appointment had been at 100%.
5. Director's Position: There were several comments on duties and responsibilities, and what the candidate's background should be. Some general comments were:
 - a. Director's position should be a full-time position. If the position were an academic appointment, the superintendents could report to the Director for both programmatic and administrative responsibilities.
 - b. Research and/or education background would be preferred; however, there was also discussion on the advantages of a management/business background.

- c. Experience in the UC system was also considered a valuation resource. Agriculture and life sciences were considered the strongest research fields.

Duties and responsibilities suggestions:

- a. Management of resources (budget, land, labor, equipment, etc.)
- b. Program coordination
- c. Development officer (particularly in view of diminishing resources)
- d. Policy development
- e. Leadership role
- f. Vision for the Centers along with the Division
- g. Public relations

A discussion was also held on the department chairman model. Department chairs are often rotated among faculty members. The Director's position would be filled by a Superintendent for a specified term then rotated.

EH&S Strategic Plan

Dave Towle showed the group the Water Treatment System plans that had been developed by Richard Smith. Dave also distributed the Strategic Plan for EH&S that was developed based partly on comments from the last Superintendents' meeting and meetings with EH&S staff. Part of the handouts included policy statements, task listings and responsibilities, and a matrix of responsibility. Some of the major developments include a proposal for three *unannounced* Center reviews per year, similar to a surprise agency visit. Mark Barros will be forwarding an audit schedule to the Centers. Dave thanked the Superintendents, Harry and Fred for their support of the plan.

Recharge Rates

Fred began the discussion by announcing the new rate of \$13.96/hour. This rate was calculated by a weighted average of all the research hours, based on the respective job series and pay scales, and adding the benefits cost that is now to be forwarded to the Division.

\$11.63	Weighted Average
\$2.33	Benefits Cost
<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	
\$13.96	Recharge Rate

The job series included in the calculations were farm labor, ag technician series, purchased and casual labor.

Another plan could be to recharge the actual cost of additional labor used. The discussion ensued on advantages and disadvantages. As either plan could require the benefits cost, it was requested that Janet review the benefits cost to see if that amount could be lowered.

Action: Janet Clark will continue review of the benefits cost portion of the new recharge rate.

Estimating for the variables in farming were also discussed. Is it more appropriate for the Center or researcher to budget for these variables? Is there a percentage limit ($\pm 10 - 20 \%$)

that a researcher should expect? There was a discussion on how various Centers handle the costs associated with a low estimate and the contract with the researcher.

Another discussion was on research projects that are 100% researcher paid. Some samples included proprietary research; variety trials, IR4, screening trials and comparative trials. At one time a \$160/hour figure was used to charge the researcher.

Action: Janet will develop a uniform methodology for determining recharge rates for the different situations.

Discussion continued with various problems with the current recharge system being discussed. Some examples:

1. Researchers changing the scope of work to meet the hours allotted by the RAC, rather than following the scope of project submitted. Researchers are then not paying for any additional hours, which the Center had projected.
2. Researchers purchasing their own outside labor for the hours in excess of the allotted hours rather than using Center labor and equipment.
3. Who pays for additional hours if the estimate is significantly low through no fault of the researcher? Who benefits if the estimate is too high?

Meeting adjourned

Tuesday, June 30, 1999

Progress Review

1. Unveiled EH&S strategic plan
2. Take Home Message from the VP--High points
 - a. Researcher should pay for a portion of direct support
 - b. RAC makes funding decisions, but not necessarily program decisions
 - c. Aware of industry-perceived problems with working with the University
3. Input to AVP--organization/Director's position
4. Recharge:
 - a. Keep current system with new rate (Fred Perry and Janet Clark to further review benefits issue with AVP)
 - b. Encourage "voluntary" contributions.

Recharge Discussion - *continued*

Land-use fee was discussed. Various scenarios include cost-per-acre or dollar-amount per project. Dollar amount per project ("project cost"), OFPM appears as a granting agency and as a service unit.

An alternative recharge program was suggested. Estimate total cost of the project minus RAC allocation. This would equal the cost to the Project Leader. This would be collected prior to beginning of work, and Center completes all the work as agreed to without further cost to the Project Leader.

1. Researcher knows cost "up front", and the funding is transferred up front as well

2. Change in project would require “change order”
3. Less administrative overhead, i.e., no tracking of hours, no quarterly reports.
4. Probable ease of working conditions with researcher “no looking over shoulder” to see if hours are used correctly or which staff is assigned to the project.

Disadvantages:

1. Researchers could perceive this as “total control” by Center.
2. Researchers do not get benefit of variable in their favor.
3. Centers would have incentive to make estimates high.

There was a discussion to consider a trial, such as 2 or 3 centers trying the project cost method. Fred Perry stated he would need approval on such a change, and it was decided to continue this discussion at the September meeting. At that time, it would be decided if a trial run would be set up and a further discussion as to problems that might evolve from this change.

Action: Centers volunteering to try new model would consider advantage and disadvantages before next meeting.

Budget Discussion

Fred Perry began the discussion with the good news of the increase in OMP funding and the new deferred maintenance program:

OMP Base Budget

- 1997-98: \$200K increase
- 1998-99: \$100K increase
- 1998-99: \$229K increase in workload
(includes Hansen Trust & LREC screenhouse)

Deferred Maintenance (*UC Program*)

- \$300K anticipated annual funding for 5 years
- Projects: \$50,000 minimum (combination accepted)
- Priority #1 projects with 15 year life expectancy
- Pre-approved projects from UCOP

Deferred Maintenance (*State Program*)

Deferred maintenance funding of \$125K expected, not yet confirmed and conditions not yet set.

What do we do now? What are the priorities for the Centers? How should the funding be distributed?

These programs were considered a high priority by all:

	<u>Rough Estimate</u>
1. Connectivity Costs	\$18,000 (fund at OFPM)
2. Liability Costs	\$35,000 (augment Center budgets)
3. OMP Emergency/Contingency Funding	\$50,000
4. Director Contingency	

The balance of the budget to be allocated varied by Center needs. Some of the Center needs included increased workload, researcher hours, or equipment allocation. The Superintendents voted for the following priorities:

OMP:	Equipment	8 Votes
	Projects	6 Votes
	Workload	4 Votes
Other:	Project/Initiatives	8 Votes
	Director Contingency	6 Votes
	Workload	6 Votes
	Income Kickback	6 Votes
	Recharge Relief.....	1 Vote

Action: Fred will complete temporary and permanent budget allocations.

A farming initiative proposal was also discussed. This proposal would allow Centers to receive a portion of their income that exceeds their base income. This will also be discussed further at the meeting in September.

Action: Janet will prepare farming income cost share proposal alternatives by next meeting.

Miscellaneous Discussion

Janet reported that DaFIS had some downtime over the year and some growing pains. New Oracle database was installed which should help. The frame relay is also up and running at LREC, KREC, HREC and DREC.

Louis Whitendale reported he will investigate the possibility of setting up a Safety Coordinators' meeting in October.

Action: Louis will coordinate the Safety Coordinators' meeting in October.

Staff Congress

There were some concerns with the timing of the next meeting in August due to busy Center schedules. There were also concerns with the purpose of the Staff Congress, its need to provide feedback about the Centers to the Director, and the distribution of the recognition awards. For most of the staff, the awards are not considered to be successful and have declined rather than helped morale. Everyone agreed the Staff Congress was given a difficult task of distributing the awards and gave it full consideration, and the Superintendents recognized and appreciated their hard work. Dave indicated there was a meeting scheduled on campus to discuss the award program. Fred also stated his support of the Staff Congress and the educational value to the members.

Action: Dave will work with Staff Congress to reschedule the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Superintendents' Conference is scheduled for September 30th in Fresno.

Summary of Action Items

1. RCAS Meeting: Paul Sebesta is to provide meeting information to the group, including V.P. Gomes.
2. Janet will continue review of the benefits cost portion of the new recharge rate.
3. Janet will develop a uniform methodology for determining recharge rates for the different situations.
4. Superintendents will consider a total Project Cost vs. existing recharge system, and bring advantages and disadvantage to the next meeting. Superintendents will also consider the farming initiative.
5. Fred Perry will complete temporary and permanent budget allocations.
6. Janet will prepare farming income cost share proposal alternatives by the next meeting.
7. Louis Whitendale will investigate the possibility of a safety coordinators meeting in October.
8. Dave will work with staff congress to reschedule the meeting.

Luzanne Martin, Recorder