

GREAT BASIN CESU PRE-CONFERENCE

September 19, 2006

Boise, Idaho

IDWR, 6th Floor

11:00 AM – 1:30 PM

MANAGERS' MEETING

AGENDA

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Welcome and Introductions | Rang Narayanan |
| 2. Host Institution Updates | |
| ○ Announcements | Rang Narayanan |
| ○ Report on Status of Renewal Application | Mary Foley |
| ○ External Review Summary | Bob Alverts |
| 3. Agency Reports (approximately 3 min.)
(Bring a brief written report-25 copies) | Federal Partners |
| 4. Grants.gov | Mary Foley/Nora Devoe |
| 5. Break | |
| 6. Strategic Planning Process | Rang Narayanan/
Angie Evenden |
| 7. Communication Plan | Angie Evenden |
| 8. Annual Work Plan and Assignments | Rang Narayanan |

Summary Notes

Great Basin CESU Annual Meeting Manager's Meeting September 19, 2006 Boise, Idaho

Present:

Bob Alverts

Angie Evenden

Bruce Roundy

Steve Caicco

Mary Foley

Joe Tague

Steven Daley Laursen

Susan Giannettino

Robin Tausch

Nora Devoe

Rang Narayanan

Richard Vigil

Rang Narayanan welcomed the attendees on behalf of David Thawley, Dean, University of Nevada, Reno, host institution.

Renewal Application

The renewal application was submitted in January 2006. Bob Alverts completed the external review. Mary Foley, National CESU Coordinator, noted renewal in April 2006.

Overall renewal process went well, but there were several administrative issues raised:

- 1a. Indirect cost rate at 17.5% remains a concern for several universities that want to see the rate raised
- 1b. Rang would like the Manager's recommendation regarding the indirect cost rate to bring to Mary Foley and the National CESU Council
2. Grants.Gov is a concern administratively regarding the indirect rate (CESU rate vs. full university rate)
3. Set aside or earmarked funds should be at the CESU indirect cost rate
4. There remains confusion over allowable direct costs and how to get approvals. Rang would like Mary Foley's assistance with this.
5. The host institution has subsidized much of the administrative work from the University Experiment Station. Only 50% of funds have been used. The remainder is in special account. There are real costs incurred by the host and partner universities. Rang would welcome manager's support on this issue.

Rang announced the Watershed Workshop in Reno, November 28-30, 2006. The agenda and flyer were distributed. Registration is open.

Rang mentioned that the University of Nevada leadership is beginning to take action on an EPA sponsored initiative in the Great Basin. This will involve a coalition of universities. It will be called the Great Basin Environmental Initiative (land based initiative, modeled after Chesapeake Bay Initiative). On October 26, 2006, Michael Burke will come from the Chesapeake Bay Initiative for a one day briefing in Reno. University vice Presidents/Provosts will be invited. There is much work to be done to get organized.

There are two objectives for this manager's meeting:

1. Develop revised strategic planning process now that the renewal is approved (what, how, timeline, etc.)
2. Communication plan for the CESU. Angie has offered to assist with the website update, other work on plan and strategic plan. Need to improve overall communication, address increased participation and attendance, getting agency field staff more involved, faculty more involved, increase university involvement, do better job of project tracking

Renewal Application - Mary Foley

Mary's first experience came in after her initiation by Gary Machlis. Two elements: 1) technical review and 2) administrative process. She said the administrative process came too late for the CESU Council to weigh in. She suggested that the renewals should be discussed by manager's at least one year in advance. The self assessment, tech review and manager's reviews all went

very well. She noted that Grants.Gov and other emerging process details need to be addressed. The CESU Council wants to see minority institutions.

Bob Alverts briefly summarized the External Review (handout).

Agency Reports

BLM – Nora Devoe

- Distributed summary worksheet
- BLM has increased project activities and hired new procurement staff which has significantly helped the administrative process
- BLM spending more effort on project modifications
- UNR and UNLV have provided major support to BLM by showing match funds (makes more work for UNLV) but of major help on large projects
- New procurement system will require more work to track projects and funding

RMRS – Robin Tausch

- No direct activity to date from RS research
- FS needs internal discussion regarding future involvement and role of forest system
- Mary will contact Jan Engert in WO

NPS – Angie Evenden

- Distributed handout
- NPS has similar \$ of projects for \$5+ M
- Nearly all funding from SNPLMA
- Projects with 8 of 13 academic institutions

F&WS – Steve Caicco

- FWS since 2005 - > \$800 K spent on CESU work, mostly on desert tortoise with UNR

NRCS – Richard Vigil

- Great Basin Plant Materials Center just opened
- PMC Advisory Group will meet in November
- Agreement just signed with NPS for native plant work in Zion NP
- NRCS would like to help SWCDS with their needs, EPA, NDOW, BLM and others on weed issues
- Cited huge fires in Nevada near Elko and major cheatgrass areas and associated management problems
- Announced new Chief of NRCS – Arlen Lancaster from Idaho. Should help advance western issues

Grants.Gov – Mary Foley/Nora Devoe (handout)

All science agencies are required to use Grants.Gov. This is a major issue within DOI. Mary is not sure how it will affect the CESU.

- NPS is arguing that CESUs have already been competed
- NPS also suggests dollar limit on projects to be competed (e.g. > \$100K)
- NPS lacks administrative staff to handle collaborative coop agreements (competition seems and awkward tool to develop cooperative partnerships and ventures)
- BLM initiated new direction in March 2006 that required additional detail on how to implement
- More competition was key focal point of Grants.Gov
- BLM given latitude to post projects limited to CESU members
- USGS has begun posting on Grants.Gov naming recipient and indicating that nobody else available
- Like all new processes, there is much to learn to make it usable – currently many delays experienced

Strategic Planning Process

- Rang handed out original plan

Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

- What process?
- Timeline – before meeting next spring
- Three questions to address
 1. Is a new process needed? (small team -2 agencies; 2 universities; and host)
Is a new strategic plan needed?
Can existing plan be reviewed and updated?
 2. What should be changed or added?
 3. What is timeline for doing the job? Draft for approval
- Research themes seem relevant
- Need to update education
- Angie wants to see more focus on major elements and strategies, but not so inclusive as current plan with all the extra details
- A more succinct document should be useful
- Strategic planning process often as important as content
- Consider linking the CESU strategic plan with other agency and departmental strategic plans (e.g. DOI)
- Plan should include what we intend to do and provide links for information on projects
- Agreement to use original plan as foundation, modifying and updating as needed
- Team Members:
Agency: Angie Evenden, Richard Vigil
Academic:
- Need to cover how to get all partners engaged and especially minority institutions. Also cover how to work with other cooperators (e.g. tribes).
- Timeline: draft complete by end of February 2007

Communications Plan

- Handout
- Team: Angie Evenden, lead, and Nora Devoe
- Website update, info exchange, research needs, funding support, academic expertise, etc.
- Wants to be sure details are meaningful and have usefulness
- Suggests plan include agency research needs and expertise database
- Consider joint development of western CESU database
- Consider development of searchable databases
- Add section of process/administrative guidelines for both agency and academic partners
- Consider updating tri-fold brochure and developing new fact sheets (Rang will have updated brochure done by year end)
- Improve tools for getting out and exchanging information
- Improve tools for science delivery – communicating science results to managers
- Rocky Mt. CESU and So. Appalachian CESU have good tools to model

Assignments for Agency Manager's Group

1. Each partner agency identify current:
 1. research needs
 2. education needs
 3. technical assistance needs
2. Develop full contact information from field officers (several folks in each office) that can be used by academic partners and host institution
3. Richard and Angie will be agency reps on strategic plan with draft by end of February
4. Angie and Nora will work on website and communications plan. UNR will involve Robert Moore with website help

September 19, 2006

Boise, Idaho

IDWR, 6th Floor

2:00 – 5:30 PM

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Welcome and Introductions | Rang Narayanan |
| 2. Host Institution Report | Rang Narayanan |
| 3. Reports from Partner Institutions
(2 minutes per institution –
Bring brief written report-25 copies) | Partner Universities |
| 4. Agency Reports Summary | Nora Devoe/Steve Caicco |
| 5. Report on Status of Renewal Application | Mary Foley |
| 6. External Review of Renewal Application | Bob Alverts |
| 7. Break | |
| 8. Communication Plan | Angie Evenden |
| 9. Strategic Planning Process (2006-2011) | Rang Narayanan/Angie Evenden |
| 10. Grants.gov | Mary Foley/Nora Devoe |
| 11. Engaging all Partners
and Agencies in CESU Projects | General Discussion/facilitated
by Peg Reese |
| 12. Future CESU Annual Meeting Issues
Work Plan and Assignments | Rang Narayanan |

Summary Notes
Great Basin CESU Annual Meeting
Executive Committee Meeting
September 19, 2006
Boise, Idaho

Present:

Mike Auerbach

Steve Caicco

Steven Daley Laursen

Nora Devoe

Paul Doescher

Angie Evenden

Mary Foley

Matt Germino

Susan Giannettino

Jim Munger

Rang Narayanan

Peg Rees

Bruce Roundy

Gene Schupp

Joe Tague

Robin Tausch

Richard Vigil

Rang welcomed the attendees on behalf of Dean David Thawley and gave a Host Institution Report. UNR and the partner institutions submitted a renewal application in January 2006 and the renewal was granted in April 2006. Several issues of concern were raised by the partner institutions during the renewal process:

1. Indirect cost rate too low and rate should be increased. This is an issue that needs to be presented to the national CESU Council and a recommendation from the Managers Group to the CESU Council would be appreciated.
2. Grants.gov – a new, competitive process is being implemented. If only full competition allowed, then why have a CESU? If competition, then full indirect cost rate should be assessed.
3. Any set aside or earmarked funds to partner institutions should go at agreed to CESU overhead rate.
4. Confusion over definition of allowable direct costs; still need for clarity on this issue; need guidelines and clarity from the National Council.
5. Host institution spending considerable time and effort on CESU work without seeing benefits of 17.5% indirect costs. Agencies should

Two key points of meeting today:

1. Need to review strategic plan and need for process to update; will build on existing plan. Two agency and two academic representatives will form a committee to develop plan with draft by end of February, 2007.
2. Need to develop communications plan and update CESU website and related communication issues. Angie and Nora will lead agencies. Many issues to address.

Rang announced a workshop in Reno, Nevada on November 28-30, 2006 (handed out agenda and flyer).

Rang mentioned the new Great Basin Environmental Initiative which is being considered. It will build on the Chesapeake Bay model with EPA funding. University presidents and vice presidents/provosts are involved. A meeting is planned for Reno on October 26 with a one day visit by Michael Burke from Chesapeake Bay. Other university presidents, VPs and deans will be invited. This will be explored further.

Partner University Reports

1. University of Idaho – Steven Daley Laursen
 - o Hosted informational CESU meeting at the university with targeted marketing – 87 participated
 - o Hosted NPS Research and M Group
 - o New initiatives that may have links to CESU:
 - Water in the West Initiative
 - Bio-regional planning
 - The Sustainable Campus
 - Nanotechnology
 - Energy and biomaterials
2. Boise State University – Jim Munger
 - o Several projects
 - o University Strategic Plan addresses research that is relevant to constituents
3. Brigham Young University – Bruce Roundy
 - o New dean
 - o New hires from OSU and Alaska
4. Desert Research Institute – Mike Auerbach (handout)
 - o Roughly \$2 M in projects
 - o Since DRI is 100% soft money institution
 - o New overhead rate being worked on (74%)
 - o Trend with projects – getting larger, more complex, more costly
 - o Functional overhead rate 61%
5. Idaho State University – Matt Germino (handout)

- Don't have connections to agencies like land grant schools
- Capacity to help agencies in shrub-steppe
- Strong interest in applied science to Idaho land managers
- Currently under utilized
- 6. Oregon State University – Paul Doescher
 - OSU continues to struggle with budget issues
 - Grants office not happy with low overhead rate
 - Lack of understanding of CESUs at OSU
 - Consider adding dean or other academic lead to improve involvement
 - Major problem in tracking CESU projects at OSU (handout)
 - Rang suggested similar meeting at OSU like this one at Idaho
- 7. Utah State University – Gene Schupp
 - No complaints over 17.5% at USU
 - Difficult to track projects with grants office
 - It's still about personal relationships
 - Major capacity at USU to do relevant science/research
 - New dean and many other leaders
- 8. University of Nevada, Las Vegas – Peg Rees (handout)
 - New president and academic leads and existing vacancies
 - Discussed SNPLMA funds that have funded projects
 - University engaged in community education and research projects

Agency Report Summary – Nora Devoe/Steve Caicco

- Nora distributed BLM, NPS and FWS handouts from Manager's Meeting
- Nora mentioned new NRCS Plant Materials Center
- Five of eight federal partners were at the 2006 meeting
- Projects were greater than \$11 M
- Mentioned changes in procurement policies/procedures
- Fed agencies also changing leadership
- Mary Foley serving as Interim Director of the National CESU program

Renewal Status – Mary Foley

- Finally approved in early August
- CESU Council noted lack of involvement of minority institutions
- Administrative processes proved challenging (e.g. dealing with overhead rate)

External Review – Bob Alverts

- See handout

Manager's Report – Nora Devoe

- See handout

Communications Plan – Angie Evenden

- See handout in addition to Power Point
- Angie and Nora will move ahead same points as discussed in the Manager's meeting

Strategic Planning Process

- Build on existing plan and modify as needed
- Working committee to draft revised document
- Agency reps: Angie (chair) and Richard
- Academic reps: Rang, Paul Doescher and Steven Daley Laursen or Alton Campbell
- Draft due by end of February 2007

Grants.Gov – Nora Devoe and Mary Foley

- Federal agencies have been given varying directions with varying degrees of implementation on new administrative procedures called Grants.Gov
- DOI bureaus working on this
- GB CESU may wish to send comments/concerns to agencies plus CESU Council
- Nora described major effort underway in BLM –Montana was pilot state
- Currently everything in BLM is being done under Grants.Gov
- What are the elements of CESU that are competitive

From Manager's Meeting:

- All science agencies are required to use Grants.Gov.
- This is a major issue within DOI. Mary is not sure how it will affect the CESU.
- NPS is arguing that CESUs have already been competed
- NPS also suggests dollar limit on projects to be competed (e.g. > \$100K)
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Engaging all Partners and Agencies – Peg Rees

- One of the best examples of large-scale collaboration is the JFSP project within the Great Basin
- Success requires understanding and working within the cultures of each involved agency/institution
- Take advantage of relationships and reward folks who collaborate
- Link SCEP positions to community colleges and minority institutions
- Build on ROA and RAU programs to get minority students and faculty members involved
- Develop education forums at other partner schools (e.g. community colleges)

Future Meeting Issues – Rang Narayanan

- Next Annual Meeting: September 2007
Salt Lake City University of Utah with field trip (BYU)
Logan Utah State University (Mark Brunson)
Perhaps Joint Meeting with Colorado Plateau – Rang will check

Rang will arrange one day meeting if needed to do other business (e.g. strategic plan)