

Agenda Brief 2.0: Policy Board of Directors Report

Presenter: Steve Slack, Eric Young

Background:

The Policy Board of Directors met on July 24 in Savannah, GA prior to the Joint COPs meeting. Below are some highlights from that meeting.

1. NIFA Update - Sonny Ramaswamy

- Challenge of really large grants versus small foundational grants
 - May need to scale back the CAP grants, but already committed for next couple years
 - First flexibility comes in 2014
- Lack of investment in production agriculture research and extension
 - Large data analysis showed level went from \$146M to \$136M and from 70% to 50% of pool. Note that plant research went from \$60M to \$40M while animal sciences went from \$40M to \$30M. This is a reduction across our production systems. In percentage terms, plant science in same period went from 38.7% to 22.4% and animal science went from 18.4% to 9.4% of competitive pool.
 - Food and agriculture will remain at forefront of investment.
- Past few years earmarks have disappeared, they funded site specific locally relevant work
 - These funds mostly went into Hatch and Smith-Lever, but that's being used more for salaries
 - So funding for local needs has gone way down
 - Current grants have an ROI from 5-10 years
 - Unable to make investments on short term work, 1-3 years
 - Should NIFA be investing in this type of work, answer generally is yes
- Foundation grants are ~30% for 3-5 year basic research and extension by small faculty groups
 - Some pressure to change that ratio
 - Currently have ~ 35% in CAPs and 25% in minority grants and fellowship.
 - Goal is to move the 30% Foundation to 50% of portfolio
- Pre & post doctoral fellowships have a very limited pipeline of candidates, not many young students moving toward food & agriculture
 - How do we make sure we have new people coming in these areas?
 - PCAST has recommended increased funding in food & agriculture, students, & infrastructure
 - PCAST scholarship level is 30 currently and desire is to double the number.
- Bruce McPherson – Does all the planning efforts done by COP's have a significant impact on decisions?
- Sonny- Yes, these documents as well as listening sessions are key input
- Bruce – Members of Policy Board of Directors and in COPs have best integrated perspective on how to move total agriculture enterprise forward. We can help in NIFA meetings where science priorities are decided
- Sonny – I want to take you up on that offer
 - NIFA Science Council meets regularly at the Waterfront Center
 - Representatives of the PBD and COPs potentially could meet with the Council, maybe quarterly
- Lee Sommers – What are your personal goals for NIFA?
- Sonny – Top two are
 - Food & agriculture enterprise recognized as an important aspect of our country's endeavors

- Increase interactions with folks on Hill, make NIFA proactive rather than just reactive to Congressional requests
- 2. Budget and Advocacy Committee Report
 - Received initial report of ESCOP/ECOP Working Group on budget line consolidation in IPM
 - IR-4 still wants to stay independent
 - Budget and Advocacy Committee would like them to be part of it
 - Motion made that Administrative Heads Section leaders would meet with IR-4 leaders to try to convince them to join consolidation (approved)
 - If this is unsuccessful, the WG will propose plan without them
 - Congress wants Land Grant Universities & NIFA to work together then develop a plan for IPM consolidation
 - Need plan by January 1 so NIFA can approve and include in FY'14 budget
- 3. Farm Bill & CLP Report
 - Matching requirements is biggest discussion item for Land Grant Universities
 - CLP had conference call with John Goldberg from House on July 19
 - John wants Land Grant Universities & NIFA to devise a plan for consistent match policy across all competitive grant programs
 - CLP will set up small committee to draft plan, working with NIFA and stakeholders
 - Timeline is "sooner the better" need to develop framework by early September
 - Senate has interest in this but not driving factor, House has historical perspective
 - House has not set any constraints on match mechanism, including use of federal funds as match, but has certain principles they want followed
 - Please note on the matches, that all institutions are impacted regardless of size; a harmonized policy must be an equitable policy across the system.
- 4. Congressional Oversight of AFRI Funding Priorities
 - Scott Angle has received calls from NIFA and staffers from both sides on Congressional oversight of NIFA research funding priorities
 - House has put language in Farm Bill that requires NIFA to indicate areas in which AFRI funds will be spent in President's budget request
 - Congress is reacting to large awards that haven't gone to production agriculture and overall decrease in production agriculture funding, as well as grants for work that could benefit US agriculture's competitors
 - There are on-going discussions with Congress on how this oversight should occur
- 5. Policy Board of Directors By-law Changes
 - AHS have brought motion to PBD to make chairs of the Budget & Advocacy Committee and Committee on Legislation & Policy ex-officio voting members of PBD
 - COP's will discuss this at their meetings and PBD will have conference call to decide whether or not to put this proposed change on BAA ballot in September
 - Proposed motion – change BAA by-laws to include chairs of BAC and CLP as ex-officio voting members of Policy Board of Directors and associated changes related to term lengths and appointments vs. elections
 - (PBD conference call the following week indicated that COPs were either in favor of this change or fairly evenly split, decision was made to place proposed change on the BAA ballot)
- 6. PBD Elections
 - One half of the PBD members are up for election, including ESS, ballots will be sent out first week of September
 - Steve Slack and Clarence Watson will be the two ESS nominees

Action Requested: Information only