

NERA Zoom Conference Call Minutes

Wednesday, December 20, 2017, 11:00 AM

Roll call: Carol Thornber-RI, Fred Servello-ME, Bill Miller-MA, Ted Andreadis-CT New Haven, Jason Hubbard-WVU, Jan Nyrop-Cornell, Matt Wilson-WVU, Kumar Venkitanarayanan-CT Storrs, Rick Rhodes-NERA, David Leibovitz-NERA

1. MAC Report – Fred Servello

- Fred Servello provided an overview of the MAC – a committee with representation from NERA and NEED that provides the administrative and science review for Northeast multistate projects. The committee also discusses planning grant programs, both NERA and joint NEED-NERA. The MAC's recommendations are being introduced as a motion for the association to approve.
- Requests to write – does not mean the approval of a project, it is a relatively low bar. More thorough review by the MAC happens at the full proposal stage.
 - Common comment – teams should be expanded, across discipline areas, across institutional lines.
 - No questions on the MAC report/recommendations.
 - **MAC recommends approval of all requests to write: NE_TEMP1835, NE_TEMP1836, NE_TEMP1832, NEERA_TEMP1806, NECC_TEMP29 and NECC_TEMP1832.**
 - **Action on requests to write are deferred until the Northeast Guidelines changes are approved.**
- AA approval
 - Cameron Faustman and Fred Servello have become Deans and are seeking replacements for some of their AA duties. Pat Vittum, similarly is in the process of retiring and also seeks replacements for her AA duties.
 - Rick Rhodes is currently placeholder AA on NRSP9, NE1501, and NE1602.
 - Kumar Venkitanarayanan agreed to serve as AA for NE1442.
 - NE1602 – UMass has a greater investment in this project due to involvement with turfgrass, and may or may not be able to find an in-house replacement for Pat Vittum. Bill Miller or Jody Jellison to serve as AA.
 - Walter DeJong has not yet agreed to serve as AA for NRSP6.
 - Jan Nyrop offered to serve as the AA for NE1501.
 - **Recommendations for AA's: NRSP6-Rick Rhodes, NE1442-Kumar Venkitanarayanan, NE1501-Jan Nyrop, NE1602-Bill Miller or Jody Jellison.**
 - **For the 2018 NERA Spring Meeting – we need to determine a strategy for filling in placeholder AA positions, so they don't linger over time.**
- NERA Planning Grant proposal

- New strategy to prevent recurring issues – release more focused calls for planning grant proposals. A more targeted effort to get faculty to write in a way that addresses what we’re looking for. NERA drafted an RFP for Emerging Problems in the Northeast: Invasive Species/Pests.
 - Planning Grants are the largest commitment in the NERA operating budget and we do have enough capacity to support these RFPs.
 - “Other topics” isn’t encouraging when the RFP is written to be targeted. However, since submissions by the numbers have been low, the targeted strategy could be more attractive to our audience than an open-ended RFP.
 - Since we fund three of these projects, and we often receive few proposals, should there be more than one target area?
 - **Positive feedback on the Planning Grant strategy based on the MAC’s recommendation, but the RFP will be placed on hold.**
 - **NERA will engage in an in-depth discussion at the Spring Meeting, develop a strategy with the full association, vet it, and if approved, release an RFP.**
- ESS NE Leadership Award
 - Suggestion to nominate Ian Maw for the ESS Northeast Excellence in Leadership Award. Ian is a long time champion for the Northeast, who holds a position at the national level. Supports the ESS, and is a former Dean/Director at Cook College, Rutgers University.
 - Support from attendees on the call for this nomination.
 - **Rick Rhodes will send a ballot to NERA, to formally vote on Ian Maw’s nomination for the ESS Northeast Excellence in Leadership Award.**
2. Rules of Operation changes – Rick Rhodes
- Reduction of the number of voting stations within NERA from 15 to 14 – a consolidation of NY-Geneva and NY-Ithaca into one vote
 - Ithaca and Geneva are both part of Cornell CALS, under one Dean. Different relationship than CT-New Haven and CT-Storrs. There isn’t a strong benefit for having two voting voices from NY.
 - Elimination of Nominations Committee
 - Minor editorial changes
 - The current Rules of Operation doc has been posted for 30 days and requires a quorum to approve changes.
 - **NERA will include approval of changes to the Rules of Operation on the ballot with the ESS Leadership Award nominee. NERA will provide an opportunity for further feedback, along with the vote.**
3. Northeast Supplemental Guidelines changes – Rick Rhodes
- AA nominees can now be designees as determined by Deans or station Directors

- MAC takes over approval of request to write. MAC can defer the approval of a request to write to the full association
 - Minor editorial changes
 - **The presented changes to the Northeast Supplemental Guidelines have been adopted. The MAC is now able to approve requests to write.**
 - **Requests to write that were discussed at the beginning of the meeting are now approved: NE_TEMP1835, NE_TEMP1836, NE_TEMP1832, NEERA_TEMP1806, NECC_TEMP29 and NECC_TEMP1832.**
 - Proposed change to Administrative Adviser Duties (introduced on the call)
 - Administrative duties for AA's – centralizing the submission of reports to the NERA office rather than having it fall on the AA's.
 - Or, opening up the submission of reports so that AA's, Multistate Chairs, or the NERA office can submit reports.
 - Changes to AA duties, also item X-A: Annual Report
 - **NERA will draft another red-line version of the Northeast Guidelines for presentation at the Spring Meeting.**
4. Spring Meeting Agenda – Rick Rhodes
- Suggestions for best practices presentations (see attached past and potential future presentations)
 - **Rick Rhodes knows who suggested the potential best practices sessions, and can include recommendations on a straw person agenda for the Spring Meeting.**
5. Summer Meeting – Rick Rhodes, David Leibovitz
- June 4-6, 2018 in Bethany Beach, Delaware
 - Theme: "Opportunities at the Rural-Urban Interface"
 - **NERA intends to minimize transactional business, conducting as much as possible either beforehand, electronically, or via consent agenda.**
6. Meeting adjourned at 12:17