

TESA Board Meeting – April 30, 2013

Attending: Cavanagh, Faries, Jones, Klose, McCorkle, Mitchell, Robinson, Smith, Warrick, White, Yates, Young

Robinson called the meeting to order.

Minutes of the December 4, 2012 board meeting were reviewed. Klose moved that the minutes be accepted. Jones seconded.

Correspondence Report

Klose said he had received a letter from the V. G. Young Institute thanking us for our support.

Financial Report

Klose reported that the association has a total of \$20,453.47 in five accounts (see attached treasurer's report). There are 39 paid members, 8 first-year members (membership is free), and 122 lifetime members. There were no further questions. The board voted to receive the financial report and submit it for audit. All were in favor.

Standing Committee Reports

- Other financial (tax exempt status, etc.) – no report
- Membership – see financial report above
- Retirees – Warrick reported that Ed Smith and Rey Santos are new lifetime members. Warrick will organize the retirees' memorial service at the annual meeting in July.

Old Business

2013 Annual Meeting –

- Program - Young reported the program is all set. Coastal Catering will cater the two dinners. The retirees' memorial service will be Monday night. We'll have a Texas luau on Tuesday night. There will be two educational tours on Tuesday morning: a dolphin watch boat tour and a UT Marine Science Institute Wetlands guided tour. The administrative update will be Tuesday afternoon. Professional development topics throughout the meeting include a benefits update and sessions on grantsmanship, using social media in educational programming, e-learning, and eXtension.
- Poster session - The board discussed including a poster session as part of the annual meeting. Robinson said it is easy and useful to present posters at professional meetings. The competition part is not really necessary. Jones said it can educate other specialists about what we do. It was decided to let anyone bring a poster. They will need to bring their own easel.
- Fund raising – Young said that \$10,000 is our goal. We have received \$3,000 from Farm Bureau, \$500 for Texas Ag Finance, and \$500 from El Campo Cooperative. We're expecting \$1,000 from Ag Workers and \$500 from Central Texas Ag Credit

Association. Smith said in addition to the \$4,000 received, \$1,500 is expected from letters sent out.

- Registration – Klose and Candace [?] are working on a flyer to send out. Candace will also work on the registration website. June 28 is a firm deadline for hotel registration.
- Miscellaneous - Young asked about providing thank you gifts for the presenters. Robinson said that in the past we gave honorariums for some speakers but not always. White will look into possible gifts for the presenters. Young said that continental breakfasts will be provided for the meeting. Smith will have posters for the donors. Yates will help with audio/visual needs.

Chapters and Chapter Directors

Robinson has made a point of e-mailing a wider group for feedback. Klose said that Donnielle Hairston-Green [correct name?] has agreed to be the chapter director for Prairie View. Cavanagh commented that the Prairie View group is very interested in being involved. They are a new, young group and we can help them grow their chapter.

Cavanagh said that she, Walker, and Williams are planning an on-campus survey. She suggested that Robinson promote the survey in conjunction with that event. [What event? Obviously, I've left out something here. Please advise.] She has asked Maryland Mitchell for a date that Dr. Steele is available.

Faries asked if there is a list of chapter directors. Klose went over the current list. Faries suggested making sure the chapter directors are correctly identified and give them some training.

Professional Development

Special workshops – Since there wasn't enough demand at the annual meeting in Granbury to do it, Cavanagh said Walker and Williams are thinking about online workshops or Centra sessions. Yates pointed out that the poster sessions can serve as a professional development opportunity. Klose asked if the hotel would let us put posters on the wall. Young will ask.

Grant/RFP for TESA members – Yates reported that he had two inquiries from people who didn't really qualify for the grant. Both were new members. Diane Bowen submitted a proposal for \$1,500 for design software for online course production. The proposal is out of committee and presented to the board as a recommendation. Cavanagh asked if this software is a tool the agency should provide. Faries pointed out that the grant is to be used to support the recipient's programs, but Cavanagh has a good point if the grant is supporting people who are not TESA members. The board voted on the recommendation and it passed. Yates will contact Bowen. Faries asked why we were not flooded with applications and suggested a failure in the communication somewhere. Jones suggested promoting the RFP through a Facebook page and through department heads and unit heads. Cavanagh asked how many of our associate department heads are members?

Website

Mitchell reported that the website has been brought into a new template and is mobile-ready. She asked for help in producing a survey to be put on the website. It can be set up so that once the survey is submitted a report is generated. Robinson offered to help Mitchell. He suggested sending out a notification before the annual meeting. Faries said that this is a good time to use chapter directors—resurrect that system or go to a different way of communicating to members.

New Business

Questions for Extension Administrators – Robinson and Young will attend the PEAC meeting (April 30, 2013). The board went over the questions that have already been submitted. The questions covered topics such as recruiting good students to become CEAs, employment opportunities for spouses in dual-professional families, joint appointments and Salary Enhancement Program conflicts, policies regarding consulting, and salary enhancement for PIs who bring in grants in order to compensate for the additional work load.

Award Categories – See attached memo. Yates moved that we accept the three awardees (Netradus, Miller, and Griffis). On unfilled categories, the awards committee will solicit missing information from the nominators to reconsider the nomination. They can make their recommendation back to the board to be approved by an e-mail vote by the board. Young seconded the motion.

Young said the awards committee is planning to review the nominations process to streamline it and add specialist and team categories. They will submit their recommendations to the board at the summer board meeting. Mitchell seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Faries asked if a request went out for the John E. Hutchinson award. Yates said it had. Young added that it had the last two years. Faries encouraged the Association to strengthen that award. Robinson offered to discuss this with administration. Young suggested a timeline with a list of nominees (probably 3?) for administrative consideration and/or suggestions by the December board meeting. Klose advised bringing it up in our meeting with administrators tomorrow to set up a time to meet with the administrators.

Board Meeting Expenses – Robinson asked the group for authorization for reimbursement of board members' travel expenses to this board meeting. Young moved. Mitchell seconded.

Nominating Committee – The board needs to approve the nominees 30 days prior to the annual meeting. Yates as past president will head the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

General Session

May 1, 2013

8:00 a.m.

Robinson called the meeting to order. He introduced the TESA officers and recognized the Epsilon Sigma Phi officers, our co-hosts for today, and then recognized the presidents and other officers of the other professional associations. He announced that because of the Board of Regents meeting in College Station, Dr. Steele was not able to attend our meeting today.

Kyle Smith:

Dr. Steele has made great inroads travelling around the state and getting reacquainted with Extension programs and staff. We appreciate the effort he has put in and he is already making an impact in his role as our director. We're pleased to be a part of the senior administrative team. If you haven't already met Dr. Steele, I know that he will be making an effort to be at the professional association meetings this summer and that would be a great opportunity for those of you that may have missed him in his visits around the state.

Legislative session: This has probably been the least challenging legislative session in quite some time. At this point anything can happen and we by no means have our budget in the bag, but it looks very favorable on several fronts. One is the fact that we're not facing significant cuts. We're optimistic and feel that we're well positioned in Austin. All of this is preliminary, but we know the Senate is considering a 3 percent salary increase for state employees. On the House side, they had factored in a 1 percent. Now our budget deliberation is in the conference committee and hopefully they'll come out at least closer to 2 percent. So, we'll keep you informed as we continue to move forward on that. The concerning side of that is they're looking at that being for FY14 but not FY15. We'll just have to see.

Another thing that's happening in Austin is in regard to the Texas Teacher Retirement System. On the Senate side House Bill 1458 and on the House side House Bill 1884. They are proposing to raise the retirement age from 60 to 62 for those people who are under the Teacher Retirement System. What this would mean would be a 2-year increase in the minimum age for retirement but it also proposes a 5 percent reduction in benefit each year that someone retired prior to reaching age 62. But one change that occurred because of Sen. Robert Duncan is that he proposed that the 5 percent be reduced to 2 percent and that's how it came out in the language for both the House and the Senate committee. There is a grandfather clause that has August 21, 2014 that would exempt any employees that were at that time age 50 or older or had 25 years of service or meet the Rule of 70 rule. We don't know how this will turn out. We will keep you informed. Bottom line, we feel that we are coming out of this legislative session much better than we have in the past.

Emergency Management: In recent events—the fertilizer plant in West, Texas is clearly a distinct incident that required the support of our agency. We know that potentially we are getting back into wildfire season; the drought conditions continue to escalate. We know that it is not a matter of if but a matter of when will the next incident happen. We've involved a representative group of agents, specialists and middle managers of about 22 people that met April 11 and 12. This group met with Andy Vestal and Joyce Cavanagh and myself. We have named the group the Texas Emergency Management Steering Committee. This group has been actively meeting on an annual basis for the last 6 years. This group helps us stay on target in terms of what are the critical needs to help people across the state be prepared in the event of an emergency situation. This group will continue to look for ways in terms of materials and support. We have come a long way in clearly defining what our role and responsibility is. It is important for everyone to recognize what each agency's role is in an emergency. We now have clear guidelines and have input into the various emergency plans at state, county, and local levels. It is critically important for us to continue to look for ways that we can do what we do best in communication in helping inform and prepare people in the event of an emergency situation.

Pete Gibbs:

83rd legislative sessions: Things do look good and most of you are aware that our agency did go forward with significant involvement in four exceptional item requests:

- 1) Water – As I was walking into the Leadership Lodge, I saw a sign about water restrictions in this area, and you folks read the news and many of you agents live where there are serious concerns. Our agency is going to be busy about water education regardless of whether we get an exceptional item funded or not. If we were to get it funded, it would increase our capacity to utilize different types of technology more than ever before. If that happens we'll be working closely with Texas AgriLife Research in some areas and also with the College of Engineering.
- 2) Health Initiative (Preventing Chronic Diseases) – This would give us a great opportunity to do some of the things we do so well and do some of those things a little differently and get more done. (One of the goals with all these exceptional items is to work smarter, work bigger. It's to collaborate at different levels than we ever have before, and to reach larger numbers and do an even better job of education. In order to do that if we get it funded we'll have some challenges of how to shift some things around and how to make it possible for that to happen.)
- 3) Quail – AgriLife Extension is in the lead role if it gets funded. It will address the issues of quail decline and repopulation in key areas of Texas.
- 4) Youth Work Force Initiative – It will allow us in our 4-H and Youth Development arena to expand on some things we're already doing and do some things better.

If these items get funded, we will quickly be identifying programmatic leadership and putting teams together. For example, if water gets funded, one of the first things we'll do is put together an internal water conference pulled together across disciplines, agencies, and colleges. There's lots of interest and lots of people in the A&M System working on water. It will be important to keep our impact statements and outcome measures strong.

Positions – We’re refilling several specialist vacancies. The emphasis as much as possible is going to continue to be on strong justification for filling off-campus positions. As specialists are rehired and stationed at the Centers, I want to challenge all of us to think more “regional” and not so much “district.” We’re challenging the departments to think seriously about opportunities for joint funding for certain specialist positions. What this is about is identifying our most pressing needs, best utilizing available funding to identify where the specialists need to be, and, in some cases, it really is multidisciplinary. We will continue to share a position or two here and there with some of our sister agencies such as the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab—that’s a great arrangement. It’s working good for us. And we’ll have some positions based on fit with AgriLife Research. We are working on verbiage for funding endowed specialist positions. That’s not an endowed chair or professorship—we want to keep it “agency” and not “university.” As long as we keep the emphasis on programmatic we can take on some of these opportunities. This is new ground for us.

4-H and Youth Development – Enrollment now is about 45,000. The question some of you have asked is how do we get to 60,000? Can we increase beyond where we are? I am convinced the way to do this is to grow our volunteer support and manage it like never before to do this. We are looking at how to simplify support materials to help agents identify and manage volunteers.

Technology Use –

Online course development: Most of you are aware of the Moodle platform which is available through eXtension and many of you on the human sciences side will know that Family Development and Resource Management several years ago developed their own platform for online courses. We entered into a few months ago a 1-year pilot contract with E Strategies Solutions. We’re looking at that as other vendors continue to come online that will be state-contracted to serve in that capacity. And just in the last month, four videos have been completed with E Strategies on V. G. Young.

The reason I bring this up is because we all look at performance measures. And we see how are we going to continue to reach people, hold on to the traditional, and embrace the things we need to embrace to reach more numbers. We want to be able to have various delivery methods, but we’re not going to abandon face-to-face direct contact. But we do have areas in the agency where specialists and agents are looking at appropriate and well-placed online courses and we’re knocking the ball out of the park with it. And it’s not hurting our attendance at other programs either.

We’ve entered into a 1-year contract with AgSmart TV (internet TV). We have started placing videos on there. We have 4,015 videos viewed in the month of March. We have 51 agency videos on there now. The most-watched videos line up with our issues identification process.

Integrated websites – We have information everywhere and it’s hard to find the best information when you just Google. About 8 months ago we tried searching with various

key words and our information wasn't showing up. When we looked at water, we had information on 87 websites. With the help of Treye Rice, we developed the Water Education Network. It's an example of how we've got to position our material in defined areas as much as possible where folks can find it. Dan Hale is working on a site that will be beef.tamu.edu.

Protected websites – FCS has a protected website. ANR has one as well. As we think about internal support for this agency, it will be so important that agents and specialists work together in terms of what's the information that the specialist can put on that site that's not information that's already come out in the newspaper or been seen across the state—something that's an internal, protected piece of information that will help a county Extension agent do their job better?

Dr. Dromgoole and I are both working to refresh the roles and responsibilities documents for regional program directors and district Extension administrators.

Compliance – I serve as the chief research officer for this agency and also as the research compliance officer. As compliance topics continue to come up, our agency wants to stay on the front end of that so we don't get blindsided and we're positive in our approaches in making sure we can continue to do our jobs and serve our clientele across the state of Texas as best we can. With Institutional Animal Care and Use, we're trying to be very specific with them that we can't sign a memorandum of understanding unless we have clear understanding that a lot of what we do is education and not research. Also, IRB approval, human subjects, you folks know we survey people a lot. That's how we develop our impact statements, so we have lots of surveys going on. Most of the time that does not constitute what most would call research. We do what we do to satisfy requirements to the state entities that we have to report to as part of our contract.

Dromgoole:

Thanks for what you have done as we prepared for the legislative session. You are held in high regard by your commissioners' courts and legislators.

Positions update – I'm pleased to say we have as few a number of vacancies that we've had in a good while. From a county programs standpoint, about 556 positions. It is fairly normal to have 50 or so vacancies in the state—normal turnover, people retiring, people getting married and moving to other states, changing positions within the state, etc. Right now, we have 56 vacancies. We have 16 positions that we are interviewing people for. We have six positions with offers being extended. No positions are on hold except for one and that is at the request of the county. We've had good applicants for most positions. We have two key positions in the state that we are trying to fill. That's the district Extension administration position in District 6 (Brenda Rue retired the end of March) and the district Extension administrator position in District 10 (Cheryl Mapston retired at the end of January). Both of those positions are being advertised.

Back to the Basics – Our hallmark is working directly with clientele in program development. We have developed an initiative called Back to the Basics that is a reemphasis on our program development process with local clientele, ensuring that the right local people are on your committee and that you are meeting with them enough.

Mid-Career Academy – Bring mid-career agents in to sharpen program development skills in time use, evaluation, gathering data, and look at new ways to manage and prioritize programs.

Urban Times 7 – It is essentially taking some common educational programs (such as water, bullying, and health and nutrition) and providing resources to address those issues in seven urban counties. The goal is that at the end of these programs we can collectively say that across the state of Texas in these seven urban areas, this is the kind of impact we have. We want to ensure we have some core concepts tied to high-priority issues in this state. We can better deploy resources by having common programs. There are 5 million people in Harris County. To reach them, we have to collaborate and efficiently deploy resources.

Program Excellence Academy and Extension Foundations – We had 47 participants at the academy and 36 at Foundations. The week was very productive. It's always exciting to interact with new employees. I believe we have the best Extension Service anywhere in the world. What we do in Texas is held up as an example nationwide. What can you do to help these new employees and help the agency? Be a mentor to a young agent.

Robinson opened the session for follow-up questions.

Someone asked if there will be training on how to produce videos, etc., as we utilize new technologies. Gibbs: Yes. We have some capabilities now with our continuing work with Ag. Comm., IT, and the Department of Ag Leadership and we've been working with folks such as Holly Jarvis. We don't have that finalized or formalized yet but we understand you need information about what you need to do and the steps you need to follow. That is a priority and it's being worked on.

Meeting adjourned.

TESA Meeting with Administrators

May 1, 2013, 10:40 a.m.

TESA Board members met with Kyle Smith, Pete Gibbs, and Darrell Dromgoole

1) Association update:

Robinson gave a TESA current snapshot:

Active members 50+

Retired members 122

Top Four Units

Represented FDRM, Ag Communications, Ag Economics, Cooperative Extension Program

Appointment Mix Extension Specialists, Program Specialists, and Extension Assistants/Associates

Our membership is diverse across subject matter, appointments, career stage, and age.

Smith: What does this mean to the leadership team when you look at that?

Robinson: We've wondered why we aren't larger and why it doesn't include a lot of folks from agronomy, horticulture, animal science, and entomology. Do we have enough capacity to operate, have meetings, have officers, etc. So, we've come to the conclusion that we like what we're doing, those of us who are active members. We think we are providing a service to ourselves and to the broader set of specialists, so we're going to keep doing what we're doing. If others want to join us, they can. Right now, we can operate, so here we are.

Klose: We've taken active steps in the last couple of years to try to include all specialists whether they are members or not.

McCorkle: We talked yesterday about doing a survey and asking what do you think we're doing well and what do you think the Association ought to be doing. If you don't ask those questions, you're not going to get any answers.

Faries: I look at what the Association was in the 80s and 90s and what it is today. We spent a lot of time yesterday talking about surveying or reaching out to the specialists to ask what their needs are in the Association and make some changes to meet their needs. I think that's a good move. Each year we revisit this. As I've seen the change over the 30 years, when we were not departmentalized and we had issues to address at the specialist level (back then it was project groups and not program units and department units) there was a lot of activity because this Association served as a means of communication. Being departmentalized and technology has improved communication, which opened new avenues of communication to the specialists to meet their needs, which then kinda set the Association aside. There has also been less direct communication from administration to the Association. We're having to re-think this. Our 24 chapters are not as active. We lost horticulture, animal science, wildlife. We need to ask them why. What are we missing

here when you were once very active? When we worked on the career ladder we were active. Now we're struggling to keep 40 members and have an annual meeting where before we were over 100. How can we get more involved with the department and with administration as a way to communicate more?

Smith: We ask the question not to intervene, but it's helpful to us to see what your goals are and where you're heading. If there is some opportunity to communicate or to help encourage that, then I think it's a whole lot better if we have some idea of where you're headed than if we come in and you say, well, we've got 50. That may be good in your mind.

Faries: The 50 we do have, some are not real active. We have professional development funds and awards. Participation is low. We need help from program leaders, department heads, and administration to generate more interest.

Gibbs: Robinson can contact Scott Cummings to get on the agenda in one of the monthly associate department head and program leader meetings and talk to them for about 10 minutes about the Association.

Yates: We've been trying to change our focus from the issues that were so big back then and have been resolved to focus more on professional development.

2) Restrictions and limits on consulting time:

Gibbs: The unwritten standard is 2 days per month for specialists but every situation is different, so it's not prescriptive. The thing we watch the most closely is consulting requests for inside the state of Texas. Sometimes we do approve a request for consulting inside the state, but it is for work that is above and beyond what our agency mission encompasses.

3) Relationship of the Salary Enhancement Program—the restriction on source money (particularly Federal) and the restriction on those less than 100 percent Extension.

Gibbs: Yes and yes to both of those. We have no recourse to Federal grants because they come in so strongly worded on what the money can and cannot be used for. Split appointment is possibly something we need to look at.

4) Follow-up on December discussion on the cost of using fleet vehicles:

Smith: Please know that it's not a lack of interest or priority. This is on Dr. Steele's radar. This is something that is will probably get some attention this summer. There will probably be some of you that will be tapped to help us. A lot of things need to be considered on this.

5) Recruitment/Retention:

- When recruiting a faculty member who has a professional academic spouse, who does the negotiating if the spouse is a petroleum engineer or something? Gibbs: It gets complicated. Over on the college side there is a process even in the provost office where they might provide 1/3 of the funding for up to 3 years but that's

over on the TAMU side. So, if you're hiring for 11 percent Extension appointment, you might or might not get any benefit from that. I don't know if it's a sign of the times or just an anomaly but we have had about three of those in the last 4 months where a department is trying to hire a specialist and they have a spouse that is completing graduate work or looking for a job. So right now the department heads literally talk among themselves. They may engage agency directors or the vice chancellor and dean. The question everybody asks is there a pool of money to accommodate that and there is not in our agency.

- The possibility of exposing graduate students to Extension specialist operations to recruit future specialists?

Gibbs: Sometimes we can hire a graduate student as an Extension assistant, which sometimes pays at the level of a graduate teaching assistant or a graduate research assistant. That's only happening in some of the departments.

Dromgoole: We have a meeting set up with a graduate student to talk about this in the next couple of weeks. I think there are ways we can do things like internships. What we need is like a collegiate 4-H and there could be ambassadors in that group that could bring kids to us. I devote about \$40,000 a year for interns in the counties. Tarleton sends a lot of interns that are not necessarily paid interns. So, we have a lot of interns out there. We need a system to track them better. There is a movement of grad assistants on our campus that have that interest but it's not limited to Texas A&M.

Yates: It would be good if we could work it out where they could be at Tarleton, Tech, and Angelo where we could get them scattered out across the state for county and district office exposure.

Gibbs: Back to your question as it relates to growing awareness about Extension in departmentalized units because there are students who are interested in going to graduate school and could decide they are interested in going into Extension.

Robinson: I think it wouldn't be hard if we had a seminar with a panel from entomology and agronomy and whoever to talk about interdisciplinary work and Extension programming.

Dromgoole: The graduate student I'm meeting with is interested in volunteering and shadowing people.

Warrick: This helps Extension spot outstanding recruits.

Yates: Monsanto uses an intern program to vet candidates.

Faries: I met a young lady who interned in Comal County for a month because she indicated she wanted to be a county agent.

Dromgoole: The dollars you invest in internships give you a good return on investment. We get good candidates and it also gives a leg up and they have a quicker transition as a new hire.

- 6) Yates: Where are we on the Quarter National Food Security Program? Gibbs: We are in a holding pattern on it.
- 7) Faries: Any revisions to the policy on honoraria? Smith: It's the same as it was.
- 8) Klose: State portion of health care cost? Smith: We don't know yet.

Meeting adjourned.