

TESA Board Meeting, Dec. 2, 2014, 1:15 p.m.

Attending: Granovsky, Hurley, Jeffries, Klose, Mitchell, Warrick, White, Williams, Young. Mitchell appointed Warrick as parliamentarian.

Minutes – Minutes from the summer board and business meetings have already been approved by e-mail and are on the TESA website.

4-H Foundation – No report.

Financial report – (Attached) Klose reported that the association has more than \$31,000. The Texas Extension Education Foundation I account 2500 is used to collect credit card payments. Will be good to use for professional development grants. They charge 5 percent. We have \$1,306.25 left in it that we can use.

Granovsky asked if Klose had looked into IRS 501C status. He said yes—we are non-profit but not tax exempt. We are 501C6 not a 3. People could give donations and those donations would be tax deductible. We file a 990 form.

Klose reported that annual meeting registration was about \$2,600. A little short of what we were expecting, but not too far off. Membership dues are up compared to last year. Sponsored donations continue to do very well. There are two more checks for \$1,000 each that are still expected. The annual meeting expenses were about \$9,000, which is very good for San Antonio as a location. Board expenses have been a little higher this year because of sending a board member to PILD. Young recommended that we send someone to PILD in April 2015. Because the board expenses were getting a little high, at the summer board meeting we bumped our budget a little bit so we will probably have enough to cover this (December) board meeting. Klose said that Bowen returned \$1,437.00 for a professional grant that was not used. Young asked if we have expensed money to Rebekkah Dudensing for her grant. Klose said no. As of December 2014, we have 55 paid members, 10 free members, and 127 lifetime members.

Standing Committee Reports

Collaboration Task Force – Jeffries distributed a preliminary directory of specialists (both AgriLife and Prairie View) that she and Bowen compiled. The completed directory will include Extension specialists, program specialists, regional program leaders, and others eligible for membership. There was discussion about how to distribute and update it. Granovsky suggested checking with administration about the status of the “green sheets” we used to receive for personnel updates. Mitchell suggested checking with Summer Wilson about ongoing updates if it is posted on the Web.

Promotion Task Force – Granovsky reported that the task force (Dozier, Granovsky, Hurley, Jeffries, Klose, Mitchell, and Young) has reviewed the document they received from Deatherage about the career ladder system for Extension program specialists. She reviewed the changes the task force is recommending to the document and invited board

members to also add recommendations. She pointed out that there is an uneven level of mentorship in the agency and praised Agricultural Economics for doing a good job tutoring and mentoring their specialists who are going through the promotion process. The task force will also address web site issues in their recommendations. The task force will send their report to Deatherage in early spring. Granovsky said it is not known when the review of professorial advancement will be due, but that issue may be something the task force will want to also address. She asked Klose and Jeffries if they know of a CV-builder template. They did not. Jeffries indicated that she is not sure if Dr. Johnson and Dr. Steele have met about collaborating about promotion issues and format. Granovsky asked her if she knows of other states that have done this. Jeffries said that Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee are aligned as well as Virginia Tech and Virginia State University in promotion, rank, and career ladder.

Annual meeting 2014 – Mitchell said that coordinating the meeting was a learning experience and thanked the board. Everyone agreed that the meeting was well done.

Website – Williams said that the site is updated and asked about what reports to post. Jones said that once approved by the board, reports could be posted. Jones asked if 2015 annual meeting dates have been posted on the site. Williams said yes. Young reminded the group that administrators need to approve their comments before the minutes are posted on the website. Williams asked if old items should be taken off the site. Granovsky suggested looking at ways to archive that information so we don't lose our history. Mitchell-Linger asked how the historian stores the old records. Hurley suggested this be a "new business" item. Granovsky suggested checking with the Cushing Library to see if they are interested in any of our documents. Warrick suggested storing historical documents on a 32G flash drive.

Audit – No report because it was given at the annual meeting. Burton will chair the committee. An audit will be conducted after the first of the year with a report at the spring board meeting. Mitchell-Linger will appoint a co-chair.

Scholarship – No report. Coker and Jackson will lead the committee.

Professional Development – Young suggested Andy Crocker to head the committee. Mitchell-Linger will ask him.

Awards – Williams reported that last year we were short on nominations. Jones suggested that everyone prepare nominations. Hurley suggested that we check with the nominee's supervisor (DEA or associate department head) to make sure they are in good standing. Williams said she would like to streamline the process. Hurley offered to help. Mitchell-Linger pointed out that if we don't have a nomination, we shouldn't give an award. Warrick suggested sending deadlines to RPDs, District Directors, etc., and asking them to encourage nominations. Williams confirmed with Mitchell-Linger that the committee members are Williams, Payne, and Rukeia.

Membership – Klose reported 55 paid members, 10 free members, and 127 lifetime members. Jones requested that an email be sent to members to let them know their membership has lapsed. She also suggested sending an email to new-hires letting them know their membership is free the first year. Mitchell-Linger asked Klose if any chapters have asked for money to host a chapter event. Jeffries said that she plans to. Klose suggested looking at pairing districts with few specialists as chapters. Mitchell-Linger said that Joe Mask has agreed to be chapter director for Campus 05-Animal Science, Poultry, and Veterinary Science.

Retirees – Warrick said that in lieu of giving clocks, our association put a plaque at the 4-H Center. Plates to commemorate lifetime members Dale Pennington and Carl Anderson will be added to the plaque and a \$50 donation (for each) sent to the 4-H Foundation. Jeffries suggested putting retirees' names on the TESA website and also having an In Memoriam section.

Industry Liaison – No report.

Unfinished business:

2015 annual meeting – The 2015 annual meeting will be July 20-22 at T Bar M Ranch in New Braunfels. Jones said that she and Hurley would visit New Braunfels in the spring and set up logistics and recreational events. She presented some ideas for the agenda:

- A session presented by Prairie View.
- Concurrent session with Granovsky about retirement and living wills, and McCorkle about college savings plans.
- Something on public speaking or a team-building exercise. (Andy Crocker?)
- Involve under-represented members such as RPLs and new employees. Maybe a topic such as bridging the gap in internal communication between specialists and agents. (Hurley suggested Paula Butler.) Have a new-employee panel.
- Administrative updates
- Water issues
- Back to barnyard basics

Jeffries suggested Milton Daly speaking on Aquaponics and recommended that representatives Kellye Thompson, Rukeia Draw-Hood, Scott Horner, and Joice A. Jeffries from the One Kid at a Time (OKAT) program participate in the upcoming summer meeting. Young suggested Meagan Clayton's work on sustainable agriculture.

2016 annual meeting – Jones proposed that the board consider the La Torretta resort in Montgomery on Lake Conroe. She distributed an information packet about the resort. They will give us the state rate and waive the resort fee. That includes the fitness center, a 3½-acre water park, wi-fi, free self-parking, and free mini-golf. Hurley said that the county agent in Montgomery County and Paul Nester have hosted meetings there and both rave about it. Granovsky asked if they would extend the rates for a few days before and after the event. Jones will ask them. Hurley asked if there is a price break if you meet a certain food budget. Jones will ask. Young suggested Jones check on free internet access in the meeting room. Mitchell-Linger pointed out the need for a room for the past president's breakfast. Klose moved that the group approve La Toretta as the location for

the 2016 TESA annual meeting and for Jones to continue working with them to book the meeting. Jeffries seconded the motion. The motion passed. Jones said the dates La Toretta wants us to book are July 11-13, 2016. She is not aware of any conflicts with that date. She will check with the other associations and the administrators.

Additional items – None

Questions for Extension Administrators – The board discussed questions to submit for the administrators at the PEAC meeting later that evening. Topics included how to get time on the agenda for TESA to address employees at new employee orientation, status of the “green sheets,” future plans for eExtension, and changing the winter board meeting dates.

New Business

Winter board meeting dates – Jones said the first Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of December conflicts with the Farm and Ranch Show in Amarillo. It affects attendance at the board meeting for specialists, agents, and administrators. This will be discussed at the PEAC meeting. Jones said that the second week of December or Monday and Tuesday of the first week in December would be better.

Sponsors – No questions. Smith has done a great job.

Storage for historical files – Mitchell-Linger told Williams to store items on flash drives for now. Granovsky will work with Williams on the boxes of hard copy files.

Board meeting expenses – Klose moved that the board approve the expenses of this board meeting, but if it is more than \$600, amend the budget. Young seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Proposed 2015 budget – (See attached financial report.) Young moved that we accept the preliminary budget for 2015. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed.

TESA social at the January AgriLife conference – Mitchell-Linger will contact Cavanagh about planning a social.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

General Assembly, Dec. 3, 2014, 8:30 a.m.

Karen Dezarn, President of EAFCS, called the meeting to order. Association presidents were introduced and each one introduced their board members.

Doug Steele: This is the third time for me to meet with you. What words of wisdom do I have for you in 2014? I get worried that we get consumed with our individual calendars and activities and don't look at the horizon. I think it is important to talk to you as leaders of your organizations about what that horizon looks like. People expect a lot from Extension. As we get consumed with our activities, where do we have time to come together to talk about leadership for our agency and how we're going to move forward? I want to share a couple of things with you as we think about what is on the horizon.

The first one is no surprises. We don't need to have big secrets. Let us know what's important so we can at least form some opinions and come back here. Another thing is if we're not doing something well, give us some options and solutions, not just what the problems are. You're looking at three individuals that have all been county agents and specialists. As we moved up through the organization, we never forgot our roots and the expectation we have placed on you. We want to really work with you and one way to do that is no surprises. I appreciate your openness to talk to us and I hope you feel that you can pick up the phone and call any one of us.

The other thing is meaningful change. I don't believe in change for change's sake. I believe if we're going to make something different, we need to understand why we need to make it different. Sometime change happens to us and we have no impact on that. The conversation I had with you back in 2012 is different from today. The conversation administration had with you in '09, '10, and '11 were a lot different because change was being forced on us in somewhat of a surprised way when our budgets were falling down. Unfortunately, Ed Smith had a perfect storm when everything bad happened at one time. I was blessed in having a perfect storm when a lot of good things started happening at one time. The state budget came back, the federal sequester was returned to us, we've had some good things happening on campus with partnerships and new resources. And so some change we can plan for and some just happens to us.

But I'm concerned because we get so preoccupied with daily activities that we as leadership don't talk about the change that we can influence and have an impact on and is going to be necessary for our future growth and success.

I'm concerned that even after a 100-year history, which I love and am passionate about, I believe we still have one foot in the past. For example, today we talk about ag and natural resources, but in today's world, ag and natural resources doesn't mean anything to most people. When you talk about you're helping ag producers be more profitable, when you talk about private applicator certification and making sure people are knowledgeable about using chemicals appropriately to protect our environment and control a safe and secure food supply, that means something to people. When we talk about being in the position to have the most affordable, safe food supply in the world on your table every

day, that means something to people. Let's figure out what those descriptors are that describe why we do what we do so people will understand. Instead of saying FCS, we talk about health and wellness, we talk about binding families together, and we talk about financial management. People understand those words; they are important to us today.

4-H has always been on the cutting edge of youth development. We talk about service learning in the public school system; we've done that for 100 years in 4-H—it's been community service projects. We've never taken the terminology people understand today and translated that into the 4-H program today. We have the best projects out there and home schoolers are finding that out because they want the opportunity to have curriculum in their setting and get to do things. Young people are looking for mentors. We've had mentors for 100 years: organizational, club, and project leaders and caring adults working with youth in a fun and safe atmosphere. Yet when people look at us, they don't see that opportunity. My goal is when people talk about volunteer development and youth organizations, 4-H ought to be the best example. We've got to tell our story better moving forward.

If you go into a community and you say we're going to do community development, they'll stare back at you and not know what you mean. If you say we're going to help develop leaders in your community, if we're going to talk about how to develop sustainability in a community, how we're going to bring people together, there's no better facilitator in rural areas than what Extension has been for 100 years. But we can't keep doing that using language from the last 100 years to help people understand the next 100 years. We've got to figure this out together.

My concern is that we will all leave here and get busy and these questions will go unresolved. We need an administrative retreat to talk not about how to administer and manage better, but talk about how to lead this organization forward. The City of San Antonio just hired an urban agriculture coordinator. The Food Bank in San Antonio has hired their own urban ag coordinator. The school system in Bexar County may hire their own urban ag coordinator with a youth focus. My concern is that people don't understand who we are and what we do. They don't understand what we do in connecting kids and volunteers and doing projects. The school system doesn't understand how our projects complement and support the concerns they have on meeting the standards coming out of Austin. We have got to free up some time to do this.

Every year we do what we call a risk matrix, partly for insurance and partly for the general council. We were asked of all the things on this list, what is the biggest concern for Extension moving forward? And I said it's our employees. It's our ability to hire people, get them onboarded, and help them be successful.

We're hiring a different kind of work force. How do we build a system where you won't have to work Saturday and Sunday and three nights? It may be more multi-county trainings. Instead of doing a training five times, get together and coordinate them. With Jeff in his new role, we're going to talk about how to program differently to free up some of your time. How do we work with volunteers differently to free up some of your time?

If we don't think about it, we run the risk of collapsing in on ourselves if we never say never.

For example, TCAAA asked what is the biggest demand on many of our ag and natural resource agents. It's the small-acreage owner, the backyard flocks, and the hobby people and they need our support. So, what do you give up? How do you make it look different?

You'll be hearing more about this. I don't believe we have another year to make this conversation happen. We have an AgriLife conference in January for all the agencies and the college. Representing Extension will be what I call our Central Leadership Team (our DEAs, RPLs, associate department heads, and county Extension directors from the urban counties) and we're going to use our time to frame a retreat for us to come back in May to really talk about things that are important to us. And I'm not saying that career ladder, agent evaluations, urban programming, and fee-based programming are not important, but those are all management aspects of what we do instead of leadership to what we need to be doing. That is the challenge we have going forward. I wanted to put that before you and your associations. You guys are going to be part of helping us figure this out and it's going to be very critical, I believe, for us to be able to move forward.

Now, let's look at some daily management things:

We have an opportunity to present to the Chancellor what we're doing in Extension. Our Director's Executive Team is going to meet with him. We're moving forward with our three exceptional items. When completed, we will send them out to you so you have talking points because people need to start hearing what we're going to ask for. It's going to be drought, expanding youth programs, and our partnership in health. We've had two outside organizations that want to do some work on our behalf. For those of you who have been involved with the Quail Initiative, Parks and Wildlife struck it from their rider, so we're working on that one. We'll have a couple of requests come through TDA and one of those is to re-evaluate the Pesticide Applicators Training to make sure we have the right distribution of responsibilities and how we do that. We have some interest in rebuilding capacity from lost funds. When I visited with Commissioner Miller, he said the number one thing on his agenda is water. We're the people that can address water issues in Texas, so I'm encouraged about that. We have a lot of support on the proposal to expand youth programming.

Some really good things are happening. We're trying to hire back positions. We're investing more money into the summer internship program. We just entered into a partnership with WT where they are going to have a for-credit intern in the summer, spring, and fall and we'll try to replicate that at Tarleton, Kingsville, and Texas Tech. With Jeff on board, we're back to talking about urban programming. We're not going to hire a lot of administrators but we have put some positions for urban program specialists. If Healthy South Texas hits, those 26 counties, that will change how we do Extension work practically overnight and hopefully will be replicated across the state. It will be a huge opportunity. We've had more corporate partners come to us. Besides Scott and White, there has been interest from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and St. Joseph Hospital. It's exciting times, but I understand about balance and I talk about it a lot. We need to find

out how to do this by expanding our volunteer base, hiring people to run grant-funded programs, or finding things we can transition and go to other areas.

Susan Ballabina:

The Texas System: I've heard good feedback on the planning system from agents. The North Region piloted it. I need to ask for feedback on two areas:

- I have already heard from RPLs and associate department heads on what worked well and what didn't and I am compiling that feedback. What is evident already is there are clear best practices. So, what I want you to do is email me by December 15 things from your perspective as a participant in the process. What is most beneficial to you or what do we need to re-think? The goal is quality programs.
- Another thing I need your feedback on is I have asked the RPLs and associate department heads to send me ideas of issues or programs they feel will advance the agency and they are passionate about and willing to lead. I don't mean "lead" from a subject-matter perspective, but that they would be a catalyst for agents, specialists, and partners to get together to identify opportunities, other partners, resources, evaluation strategies, ways we can give you information, and resources you need to go and make a difference in the program areas of the future. I have received responses about energy, absentee landowners, and financial literacy. So, if you have ideas, please send them in also.

Next Talks: First of all, several of you have sent in ideas. Over 400 of you watched the Ebola talk, which I think illustrates that there is a need to get timely information out when it's hitting the news, not six months after. In 2015, we'll still have the Next Talk topics that you can submit. But two other things we want to do with that initiative is to have Next Talks that are partnership highlights. We did one of those last year with the Texas Hunger Initiative and it was well received and illustrates how we're working with that group. The third area we are going to introduce in 2015 will be short, 10 to 15 minute county features/success stories.

Employee Wellness Initiative: A 4-hour workshop kicks off at the AgriLife Conference in January. Patsy Shulak, a doctor at Scott and White, will lead it. Each district has designated a district employee wellness point person. There will be three webinars throughout the year. The topics are time management and stress management, healthy eating, and financial wellness.

Jeff Ripley:

This is day three for me on the job. There will be no shortage of challenges and opportunities in the job, but I'm looking forward to it. Let me tell you a little about me. I worked at the county level for 18 years either as an agent or a county director, two years as a district administrator, and then the past 6 years in ALEC doing onboarding and employee development.

A top priority is onboarding and helping new employees get off to a good start. Extension is a complex organization. When we hire people from industry or straight out of college, there are a lot of things they don't understand. We have an onboarding committee that has been meeting since summer looking at ways to improve that. In January we'll do some training and offer resources to get everybody up to speed and make sure they are all doing the same thing. How many of you know that onboarding.tamu.edu exists? Go to that site. Look. See what's there and let us know what's missing.

The other thing that will be a high priority is how do we market what we have to offer to attract new employees and recruit them? We know what the competencies are that make a good agent. How do we identify those in a one-hour interview? We've got to move forward and make some changes and get things working there.

The last thing we talked about briefly last night was the performance appraisal system. There's a committee that has done some good work on that and gotten us to a starting point in making some changes. We're going to push that forward fairly quickly and will be looking for some additional feedback. I would ask you as agents to give me your feedback on what's good, what's missing, and what's weak in the way we evaluate performance at the county level. The purpose of performance appraisal is to recognize solid performance, but it's also to help improve. To help coach and help people get better at their jobs. So, think about some of those newer agents and some of those who are struggling. What do we need in a performance appraisal system that can help make them successful?

Karen Dezarn announced that there has been discussion of changing the meeting dates for the winter board meeting next year because of a conflict with the Farm and Ranch Show in Amarillo. She asked that each association board discuss whether December 8-9, 2015 will work and let her know.

Assembly adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

TESA board meeting resumed at 9:40 a.m.

The group discussed that there is no way to send out a group email to all specialists.

Granovsky shared with the group the draft of the cover letter the Promotion Task Force will send to Deatherage. A few minor word changes were recommended. Granovsky will make these revisions and send the letter to the group this week.

TESA meeting with Dr. Steele, Dr. Ballabina, Dr. Ripley:
Mitchell-Linger welcomed the administrators.

Hurley: Where do you see eXtension going?

Steele: Since 2004 we've operated under a voluntary assessment to support eXtension and that assessment was a percentage of our Smith-Lever funding. We pay \$100,000 a year—more than anybody else. From 2004 to 2009 there were some financial targets for eXtension to hit and they did not meet those targets. In the last Farm Bill we got a separate line item, new technology for agriculture, which is eXtension. We get \$1.5 million in federal funding. The voluntary assessment is about 2.5 million. So \$4 million a year is going to eXtension. Last year 14 states said they weren't going to pay anymore. The ECOP board came forward and had two votes: one that totally dissolved the voluntary assessment, and one that set up a new funding model where you can be a premium subscriber, a basic subscriber, or no subscriber. So, we dissolved and we are currently in the process of the vote. I voted that we would be a premium subscriber, which is actually 25 percent less than what we were paying. Premium is a 25 percent reduction; basic is a 50 percent reduction. So, we are in this uncertain phase right now about how many people will be on board. Where I faulted eXtension is there were too many Communities of Practice on the website that were no longer functioning and none of them were taken down. They will take down the ones not functioning; the others will remain. They should not be like websites but environments where people connect and interact and learn from each other. Once the premium membership has been voted on, there will be a new board of directors and you will see plans for the future including hiring a new eXtension director. Right now, what do you get for your investment and what are the consequences of not paying so that you won't get all the benefits that the paying members get? One thing we need to do is start buying up time for those who lead the Communities of Practice.

Hurley: It has afforded me to do more for School IPM because I was able to link in all these other people.

Steele: Another factor could be, Janet, if you have an AFRI grant, Extension will be your dissemination point. They created too many CoPs and didn't stay up with technology fast enough. We will need to discuss what our institutional team is going to look like once this all shakes out and re-establish our commitment to it.

Klose: We talked a little last night about having the green sheets, but just as important is having access to a directory.

Steele: I get frustrated when I travel and I want to make a county agent stop, I go to the directory that says “find your county office,” and a lot of times the stuff’s not even there. You can’t find who the staff members are there. I get frustrated when I go to sites and can’t find people or do a database search on specialties.

Klose: We’ve been working on that but it’s bigger than that—knowing who the specialists are, what their specialties are and just having a document. It’s really important for the agency to have something bigger than our association that ties into a personnel directory.

Granovsky: We discussed this in our group earlier. Susan, when you talked about the Next Talks, none of us recall receiving information or announcements about that. Then our discussion focused on the fact that within Outlook, there is no all-specialists category. We think there was that capability in GroupWise.

Klose: We can email our members but we want to share also with nonmembers and show them some value to what we’re doing.

Ballabina: With the Next Talks, I had to email that to the associate department heads and ask them to share it with you. Some of them do and some of them don’t.

Granovsky: Our recommendation is simple. Those names are embedded within the system. Could they not add an all-specialists category?

Steele: We’ve had that discussion. Right now there’s about a six-step process to add a new list group.

Klose: Whose job is it to add the names of new agents, etc. to the existing list?

Steele: We lost a lot of shared services and we’re finding out which functions are not getting done. We should be able to have a personnel directory with a searchable database. Like even if it is a county agent that specializes in swine, why can’t I just Google “swine”? Right now I can’t do that.

Mitchell-Linger: Years ago there was a report that came from BBP and HR every time someone was moved, transferred, title change, name change, new hires, and a report went to Washington. Is that still being generated?

Steele: They quit collecting that. That’s what the Excellence in Extension database is supposed to do. When we do it now it is voluntary and self-reported.

Klose: *Onboarding for specialists?*

Ripley: It’s hit and miss. Some units ask that their new hires participate in at least the first couple of days of orientation to get an Extension overview and then a few days in the department on campus getting some specific onboarding with the associate department head. We’ve got some that we haven’t had a specialist from that unit in a couple of years. The last true specialists’ Foundations we had was in 2011 and it was seven specialists. The reason it went away was when we transitioned from Foundation to Program Excellence Academy. Program Excellence Academy was very county agent-specific training. We have not had many specialists go through it. Travis and I have had that discussion that we need to revive something for specialist onboarding. We have left it to the units.

Klose: Can we get something like that back?

Ripley: We’ve also got to look at what is a specialist. There’s an Extension specialist and an Extension program specialist, and Extension assistants. There are so many different titles that sometimes we have problems identifying. And then we moved to a point where

we said it's only those that are going to be program delivery. Then we said we don't want grant-funded because they're temporary. And that's when we got to the period where we only had seven left. We need some help in who needs to be included and what that's supposed to look like. It's probably a half-day of the Extension overview, which we already do. And then a half-day that's specialist-specific and relevant to all units, and maybe a day where they go and get some very specific unit things with the associate head and the department head. Something like that has been talked about.

Hurley: It may not be just new employees. Even some seasoned specialists can use some extra professional development and help.

Klose: Another part of that is just a reminder that the associations would like to get in front of the new employees to tell them about the value of the professional associations.

Maybe during a lunch?

Ripley: I don't see why we couldn't do that for sure.

There were no further questions. The board members thanked the administrators.

Board meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.