

TESA Board Meeting, December 8, 2015, 1:25 p.m.

Attending: Ledbetter, D. McCorkle, Kiphen, Pierce, Mask, Warrick, Klose, Kimura, Jones, Jeffries, and Hurley

Jones called the meeting to order and asked members of the group to introduce themselves.

Jones appointed Joe Mask as parliamentarian.

Minutes – White reported that the minutes from the last board meeting had been approved via email and posted on the TESA website.

Correspondence – none

4-H Foundation – Joe Mask, TESA representative to the Foundation reported that he attended his first meeting in Lubbock with the Foundation. With the change of leadership at the foundation, a full audit was conducted, and an accountant was hired. Student worker will help with publicity, getting messaging out. Foundation changing its role to be more programmatic to help focus on some of the 4-H programs. They will still raise money to help with 4-H scholarships. Philanthropy committee has been formed to focus on fund raising efforts, which will leave other members to focus on programming for youth. The building needs additional parking spaces, but there is a conflict with their neighbor so they are still exploring options on parking and office space. The next foundation meeting will be January 18, 2016.

Standing Committee Reports

Nominating – Jones reported for Mitchell, who was not present, that the committee will begin meeting in the spring of 2016.

Financial Report – McCorkle distributed the treasurer’s report (attached). We have a balance of \$31,715.42. Review of the income and expenses was presented by Klose past Treasurer and McCorkle current Treasurer.

Audit –Pierce reported that she is new to this committee. Walker and Burton conducted the last audit. However, because they have some questions to ask the treasurer, they have asked that their report be tabled until the business meeting on Wednesday, July 22, 2015.

Membership – Jones spoke to J. Jackson about developing a mentorship program. There was a specialists’ onboarding in November held in college Station, where we had members present to talk about TESA. Sponsored lunch at Abuelo’s – TESA handed out a new brochure that was recently updated by Diane Bowen. Everyone should have received a copy of the brochure and can find it on the TESA website. Klose will follow up with attendees from New Specialist meeting.

Cavanaugh suggested to Jones that a TESA social be held on January 13th at 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at C & J. during faculty conference. A \$5.00 cover will be charged to attendees to help pay for some of the food costs, and TESA will pick up the balance. Joyce plans to advertise and Admin will help promote in the Ag Program materials.

Travis Miller has an Outlook group that if TESA contacts his assistant, she will send out an email to all the specialists. However, several members of our group have not received any of these emails. Jones will follow up on this distribution list.

Awards Committee – Ledbetter reported that the committee needs to review all nomination forms. They are hard to save once you look at them online. She also felt several awards should have their own applications and that they should be more accessible. Another issue she noticed was on some of the agent submissions the need for the District Administrator must sign them in order to be pushed forward. Warrick stated the only award that needs approval is the Johnny Hutchinson from the Director of Extension. Ledbetter wondered if we need to keep this award since we haven't had a nomination in this category in a few years.

Ledbetter also wondered what TESA and Awards committee can do to get better nominations, more nominations etc. Her committee will keep exploring

Discussion about awards getting to the right people, Kay also shared thoughts about TESA members being more active in making sure that we are involved in awards presentations. Committee will work on this.

Jones – Lori Colvin recently retired from AgriLife; Lori has worked on our program for years. Mask made a motion to recognize Colvin at the annual conference for her years of service by creating a scholarship in her name for 2016 only. Motion seconded by Ledbetter, Approved by consensus. Colvin could then present the scholarship to the recipient.

Scholarship – Jones spoke with Coker who couldn't make this meeting. Dennis indicated that it would be nice if the Board could look at raising the scholarship amounts since prices are increasing for students. We currently award one student \$500. The group had a discussion about increasing the amount for one student or award to more than one student.

Professional Development - McCorkle reported – committee will send out information about the professional development grant in March 2016. Eligible applicants must be a paid member for 1 year; first year is free to new members. Scholarship committee will make sure that the applications indicate that the grant is for TESA members, but all Specialists will be made aware of this program to help encourage more membership.

Retirees – Warrick said that there are 127 lifetime members since the last annual meeting. Lori Colvin will be added. Warrick passed out an updated Lifetime membership spreadsheet.

Industry Liaison – Mask will talk with Jackie Smith about working with businesses in the Woodlands since our annual meeting will be close to that area.

Website – Kiphen (Williams) said she has been adding information to the website as people send it to her and she welcomes any ideas for the website. She reported that Cushing Library is waiting on freezer space to freeze the TESA historical records. (Everything has to be frozen to kill insects before materials are stored in their archives.)

Promotion Task Force – Jones reported that there is not much movement on this. Last year we were active in updating the Program Specialists career ladder guidelines. These updated guidelines will be used for the 2017 fiscal year. The next plan is to work with Administration on the Specialists career guidelines, but this will take more time. Right now TESA has a committee in place made up of Specialists from AgriLife Extension and Prairie View so that when Administration decides to move forward we will be ready.

2016 Annual Meeting – Klose reported on the location for the meeting. State rate has increased for 2016 we have 60 rooms blocked at \$131 per night. Contract requires that we purchase a certain amount of food for this location. Since this is a self-contained place, rather than going off site, we will probably have at least one evening meal at [La Torretta](#). We may not do an offsite excursion. Meeting dates July 11 – 13, 2016. Room rate covers all the extra activities at the resort & spa.

New Business

2017 Annual Meeting - Klose reported no location has been chosen for this meeting. Typically it would be the year for San Antonio, probably the Menger or Gunther – but do we still want to do that? Austin is typically too expensive for our group and San Antonio does have many attractive draws. Dallas was another option addressed – either Arlington or Grapevine, and there was additional discussion of areas like Kerrville, Fredericksburg, and Bandera – Klose will begin looking into locations and report back in May.

Chapter Directors – Jones led a discussion about this group. Typically this is a 2 year term, but there are no term limits. On the revised brochure all the Directors are listed, we have a couple members who “serve” two districts. Each chapter has \$50 they can use each year for recruiting, social type meeting to help retain and recruit members.

Membership directory will be sent out to the membership after this meeting.

Member recruitment and retention was discussed on some of the best ways to recruit new members, but also how to retain members. Jones will work with Travis Miller’s office to send out regular messages to the specialists to help keep them engaged. Jones will also distribute the Specialist Blue Book that Miller’s office uses with the country agents.

Mentoring Program - Jones led a discussion regarding membership and mentoring. James Jackson has expressed interest in leading this effort in his role as membership chair. Jones had a conversation with Larry Redmon, Soils & Crops about how they on-board their new faculty members. Jones shared a handout from Redmon, see attached. Klose said that we should be able to start learning new employees through Administration and the new employee classes they are offering. How can we help new hires? The checklist that was shared with us is something everyone could benefit, plus a list of contacts that you “need to know and what you know”. Jones will talk with Jackson about creating a list and the authorization to move forward on this task.

Budget – McCorkle/Klose led the discussion on adjusting the 2016 budget. Proposed 2016 income is \$16,000. For expenses Klose proposed that for the annual meeting costs we budget

\$10,000, \$2,600 for Board Expenses and \$1,000 for scholarships. Total proposed expenses are \$19,000. Klose Motion and Jeffries second, approved by consensus.

Scholarship - revisit to align with above budget proposal and approval. For Professional Development grants, have to be a member for 2 years to receive. For student scholarships must be accepted to school, parent must be TESA member 3 of out the past 5 years.

A motion was made by Klose to increase the scholarship budget to \$1,000 that would allow TESA to give out two awards rather than just one. Mask seconded the nomination, motion was approved by consensus.

Logo and when TESA was established discussion. Jones- Kiphen led a discussion about the history of TESA; we have logos that have 1971 and 1973. We were requested by a long time member to determine when our organization became official. The group began organizing in 1971 and adopted official by-laws in 1973. Mask made a motion to adopt a logo with 1973, Hurley second, approved by consensus. Kiphen will develop an updated logo and distribute.

Webpage update – Jeffries noted that links for PVCEP staff are incorrect; Kiphen will change and make sure it's all updated.

Board Meeting Expenses – Brief discussion to pay for board member expenses for this meeting. Klose made a motion to pay expenses, McCorkle seconded motion, approved by consensus.

Discussion for PEAC meeting, Jones mentioned the questions she received. Klose shared his questions he has received.

A motion was made by Jeffries and second by Mask, approved by consensus to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

General Assembly, Dec.9, 2015, 8:30 a.m.

Ronda Alexander, President of TAE4-HA called the meeting to order. Association presidents were introduced and each one introduced their board members.

Doug Steele: "This is the fourth time for me to meet with you. Administration is trying to be transparent. What occupies our time and what we are working on, but we are also here to hear from you. Talk to us about the concerns you hear and if you have an issue, please let us know and let's work towards resolution.

"There is a retreat for senior administration next week (mid-December) to address a request from the system. System meaning Vice Chancellors and Board of Regents to address our strategic plan. Who are we and what we do, we had to submit something, so we changed some items and dates on our older one and submitted. However, that does not reflect where we are today. So over the next year we are going to devise a new plan. The plan will focus on what our needs are and reflect some of the expectations and accountability items we face each year. You will be hearing more about the strategic plan at the statewide conference in January."

“Part of this plan will be a review of organizational structure. I have been reading about disruptive change. It’s disruptive for a reason, change very can be positive or can cause problems. What is disruptive to me about a strategic plan is that you can’t have a plan that focuses on something five years from now when there are rapid changes every day. I hope to have a plan that is relevant 18 months from now. We as an agency need to be nimble in our planning to be able to “react’ to these types of changes.”

“Organizational structure, I’ve asked all the associate directors to look at what we do, we have a job tile, but does that reflect the work we do. You guys can relate to this, as you are asked to complete your plan of work, what you do on a daily basis. We too are looking at our job descriptions as well. I have really looked at my position and I feel my focus should be on 1) budgets (and the partnerships we need to keep those budgets), 2) policies around our agency (that’s really the politics that run our agency) and 3) employees, the people in this room are the highest priority I have.”

“A couple of things coming up, we are already preparing for the 85th Legislative Session which is January 2017. We are currently developing those exceptional items for this session. There is no formula funding so we start at zero and hope to increase our budget. Last two sessions no new money, exceptional items go to new programs, doesn’t go to our base to keep doing the good work we do in Extension.

- 1) Capacity building – This really is about adding money back to our base so we can be effective. We will probably call this something else, Strengthening TX, etc. I was visiting with Dean McCorkle, if we had some data that stated if we hired 2 more people to help with sugarcane aphid, we could help X number of producers and save them X amount of dollars. (yield a result)
- 2) Healthy TX- Expand the south TX model. The problem is the money for this program was given to another agency not Extension. Money for this initiative would go back to base 21 new positions created for agents, specialists and others, so we need money back in our base to keep those positions going in the future. FCS this initiative is a game changer we need a budget of \$8 to 10 million dollars, but we already have data to help support this initiative.
- 3) Increase Ag – In the last two sessions we have focused on health and youth but not on agriculture. The Ag coalition has requested that we give them something to support, so I need to talk with people in this room and other leaders about developing an exceptional item related to agriculture. We just hired a swine specialist and dairy specialist, we have no new money to hire these types of positions, but these are important program areas. Small acreage – horticulturist position down in the Valley, I’m taking a calculated risk on these positions that I will find continued funding to support these positions and more like these to help support our Ag producers. Ag productivity, security and profitability will be the third exceptional item.”

“During the last session we got a couple of items funded for the Forrest Service – firefighters and more specialists to help with education. Research received money on new invasive insects because there is a concern about new vector borne diseases. Ag and human health really do go hand and hand – typically who gets the first call is the county agents; we want to play up that

role we can play about educating the public. TVMDL received funding due to an increase in vector borne diseases; it was just last year that several people died in Dallas due to West Nile Virus. We must be prepared to deliver relevant exceptional items that will help everyone.”

“The System has asked us to come up with some big ideas. Sent out an email to Associate Department heads, Dr. Boleman, Dr. Rice and asked them to share with me what some of their big ideas are. I learned ‘We’ in extension don’t think really big, I think we have gotten used to living with limited resources. So my three big ideas are:

1. New facilities: we need facilities for 4-H and youth development, for health and wellness training and for district 9. Request the system buy out all the space out at Riverside and that they move closer to campus. If you are familiar with campus over by the Equine Center, we have 200 available acres, and I’ve requested 20 acres. And my big idea is plant a flag in the ground that says this is who we are and what we do. This is about a 40 million dollar request.
2. Value of health nutrition and wellness; I think we can do what we have done for health and wellness like we did with agriculture over the past 100 years. Asking the system to finance this type of initiative. It’s one thing to work with Health Science Center, but having the system behind this effort speaks louder. Money that comes in toward health and wellness helps all of us within the agency as well as our clients.
3. Brownwood looking at enhancing their Center to help with educating youth about STEM. We learned that we don’t own the land here and are working with our legal team to determine the actual history of this center. Our goal is to update this place so that we can replicate that across the state.”

“Sharing with leadership, we want to hear your big ideas. And big ideas doesn’t mean money to put on an awards banquet, that is what we do. But a big idea about STEM, health, etc. It’s an exciting time for Extension especially for the next 100 years.

Thank you for what you do, we are blessed to be doing what we get to do every day. Without a vision we will perish.”

Jeff Ripley: “I will echo Dr. Steele’s thoughts, thank you again for being here and letting us share with you our thoughts. Meeting with the associations, the PEAC group, the value of the informal visits we get to do. I protect these dates on my calendar so we can engage with you.

Jeff thoughts on behalf of Susan Ballabina

“All of you recently went through the program planning process. They structured that a little differently, more retreat format this year allowing time for specialists to visit with agents about their programs. Susan is curious on how that format worked; she asked if you have input that you contact her or the RPLs in your area about how your felt the meeting went.

BIG – piloted in January Ag literacy – how we target health professionals about Ag – pilot program – health in locally produced food

Healthy south TX – Dr. Elaine Fries, hired as the Director (Corpus) – 27 counties, 10 health specialists 7 new agents, these agents going into counties that needed FCS agents. Leadership team moved rapidly on this and really made a difference.”

Updates from Jeff

“Announcing 7 new agent positions: reopen 1 - Ag & Natural Resource, 3 - 4-H, 3 - FCS, 1 Hort. These positions are being driven by the Commissioner Courts asking for these positions to be filled. Direct reflection on value on what we do. Commissioners are making changes in their budgets to support these agent positions.”

Jeff is traveling to several commissioner meetings, as well as Peter McGill with V G Young. “As Dr. Steele mentioned this is a valuable use of my time, gives me a chance to update them on Extension and what we are doing. You always are nervous when you are in front of these commissioners as you might be “hit” with something unexpected. However, that has not been the case, mostly they want to know why a position has been vacant for more than 3 months. Agents are not mandated to be part of a county so when the county sees value in their agents it benefits all of us.”

“Questions last night about mentoring: Some of you may be aware that we piloted a mentoring program. We set it up 10 months ago between agents in Districts 1 & 2; 10 & 12. We identified a group of six peer agents who served as mentors and trained other agents. Regional on boarding training. These mentor agents are in charge of the mentoring program – bringing in speakers, setting up the meetings, and reporting back to the RPLs.”

Jeff is currently asking for evaluations of the program so that it can be replicated statewide. Wants to review after the first of the New Year (2016). “Onboarding is everyone’s job. 70 agents at Academy 1 – biggest group we’ve ever had, we hope the new onboarding process will help our new agents to stay and understand their role.”

Another question was about the performance appraisal system. “Some districts are training on this and some are not. But I will be in touch with each region to make sure we are meeting the needs of the agents. As you know we have been working on upgrading the Agent performance appraisal system. Agents will be required to submit a program summary, which is a total summary of what you do. Agent achievement report should fill the gaps that you want your supervisor to know what you have been doing over a year. This should complement the Texas Data system report that you file each year. This system is flexible, we don’t want to become “married” to a system that doesn’t work. We expect to make changes as we move forward, so we want to hear from you, your thoughts.”

“Finally, let me address the career ladder changes. As you know we have been working on this. And in November at the academy we met as a committee to discuss program implementation. The committee also met prior to this Board Meeting as well to work out and finalize the details. Email out to the agents later in the work.”

There are two major changes; one is what the agents will submit; two will be how the agents will be reviewed. All this will be implemented in 2016.”

“An agent promotion packet will not have a CV instead they will submit these five items:

- 1) 5 years of program summaries (what’s been submitted through Texas Data)
- 2) Agent achievement report
- 3) Vita – show cumulative work
- 4) County Job responsibilities – this can vary from county to county depending on commissioner’s requests/needs.
- 5) 1 page abstract/narrative highlighting something not spelled out in the above documents – something for the committee to consider

Review process for Agents will be Regional peer review committees made up of level 3 & 4 agents. A move from level 1 to 2 can be done through regional committees. For movement from 2 to 3 or 3 to 4, those agents will go through regional committee and then submitted to statewide committee for consideration. Major change, first two levels don’t have to go through the statewide promotion committee.”

“Program will begin Sept. 1, 2016. Timeline for promotion for agents will be

- Intent to apply letter sent to DEA June/July 2016
- Packet Due to DEA by Sept 1, 2016
- Review by regional committee fall of 2016
- For agents moving up to 3 & 4 packets submitted to statewide committee who will meet Spring 2017
- Final approval by statewide committee by May 2017
- Agents notified by summer
- Promotion goes into effect Sept. 1, 2017

Jeff thanked everyone again for allowing him to come and share what is going on right now. Remember to take some time this December to be with family.”

Assembly adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

TESA board meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Jones reconvened meeting by discussing the PEAC meeting items.

Jeffries brought up the collaboration between AgriLife and PVCEP and making those alliances work. She would like to see similar and consistent guidelines for both agencies so that employees will be on equal footing.

eXtension was brought up at PEAC. eXtension is going under Institutional review – will address during our sessions.

Jones brought up about how TESA could help PVCEP. Jeffries responded that from the collaborative event when she and Diane Bowen worked on the directory, there are a lot of people who want to work with others but are not sure of what they do. Not sure how well it’s

working on people working across the two agencies. Jefferies is aware of one in College Station, but it would be nice to know who is collaborating and maybe who is out there and needs to be matched up. Would like to see if TESA could look into this for future information to share with the group, Klose and Jones will look into this for May.

Jefferies – website idea – placing the information about agency collaborations, how can we document this and then have a place to showcase it. Someplace we can link into and share with our stakeholders and leadership.

TESA meeting with Dr. Steele, and Dr. Ripley:

Jones welcomed the administrators and everyone was introduced. Jones invited them to the annual meeting to be held July 11 – 13, 2016 in Conroe, TX. She hopes that since the meeting is close to College Station to have good participation from campus people, plus our colleagues at Prairie View CEP. Dr. Steele said it's important for he and Dr. Miller to be at our meeting and they look forward to participating again this year.

Question regarding SRS and Extension.

Steele: “there are two things at work: We (Extension) have requested that we pull any of our local/commodity/small partnership grants out of SRS and hire our own people to handle Extension local money, and then on Federal or State Agency type grants work with SRS because of the paper work involved at that level.

Email from Steve Schultz, HR, who serves on an SRS review panel: yesterday they held a meeting regarding SRS. SRS is in the process of restructuring again, part of this restructuring meant that SRS has moved under the University instead of the System. This works for the University but as a system member we are negotiating to take some of that small partnership money back into our group. We understand the frustration everyone has. We offered the Board of Regents this solution and we hope we can share more news of this later next year. He hopes we won't be talking about this in December 2016.”

Question concerning career ladder for Program Specialists and Specialists.

Steele: “consistency in what we do. We talked last night about program specialist, it's a category that has grown over time. A program specialist isn't someone waiting to become a Specialist; they have their own career ladder. As we focused on Agents and program specialists, we did not have a chance to look at Specialists. However, we hope to revisit this topic in the future as we are aware of the disparities in this area and are committed to be consistent and transparent. Once we're ready, will reach out to TESA.” Jones did remind Steele that we have a committee prepared to help when they are ready to address the issue.

Jones requested a copy of the “blue book” so that we can distribute it to our membership. TESA can use that information as well.

Klose brought up the topic about annual review for Associate Dept. Heads. Steele and Ripley both agree that is done differently in each department. Ripley stated when he was in Organizational Development he was asked to give 360 feedback on Scott Cummings. Klose

mentioned that isn't done in all departments, in some cases it's the department head. If we want to be consistent in all areas this might be something to look at.

Jones asked if Dr. Steele could explain how eXtension moved from universal contribution to a fee based contribution. "The leadership has reorganized, moved some of the operations from Nebraska (Iowa) to Missouri. Hired a new Executive Director, Christine Geith. Moved focus from being an external resource to an internal resource, a way to train agents. Regional – national teams together to help focus on training for agents, or act as a resource for agents. Steele mentioned his team has spent a lot of time talking about this. He hopes to initiate an Institutional Base Team to help with the new eXtension efforts. "

"At the same time, eXtension is building a core team to help with emerging issues. eXtension put out a request for over 200 innovators in the areas of food security and climate change. AgriLife submitted two programs, the *Learn Grow, Eat Go* program and one on climate in an effort to help eXtension do business differently. TX is still the highest assessment state; Steele believes that TX needs to have a national presence on the web as well. This is a work in progress. We are looking for a place to showcase the overall value of Extension."

"As for the new leadership, Chris is someone who moves rapidly. At times the Board realizes she is moving faster than Extension is comfortable with. We (meaning the eXtension Board) have asked to slow down and work with CoP leaders and others so we can retain those partnerships, and at the same time make changes."

Steele mentioned he was on the phone with Dean Johnson PVAM and he indicated that it's time they sit down and meet about the future. "Most of our meetings in the past year have been reactive rather than proactive." So after the first of the year, Steele hopes to meet with Johnson.

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

Board meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.