



Agricultural Research Stations Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 7, 2022

1:00pm-2:00pm

250 Ag Hall

Attendees: Francisco Arriaga, Julie Dawson, Nancy Esser, Luiz Ferraretto, Erica Flyte, Deena Patterson, Mike Peters, Valentin Picasso Risso (arrived at 1:15pm), Doug Reinemann, Mark Rickenbach

Not present: Claudio Gratton, Brian Luck, Jamie Reichert, Doug Sabatke, Phil Townsend

Minutes by: Erica Flyte

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

Welcome and call to order

- The meeting was called to order by Francisco Arriaga at 1:02pm.

Approval of January 18, 2022 meeting minutes

- Deena Patterson made a motion to approve the January 2022 meeting minutes. Nancy Esser seconded the motion. The motion was passed with 5 votes in favor, 0 votes not in favor, and 0 votes abstaining.

ARS director's report

- There have been personnel transitions at Arlington headquarters. Phil Dunigan retired on January 31, 2022. Brandon Blackburn, formerly from CALS business services, was hired as the financial manager for the agricultural research stations. The transition is going well.
- To be compliant with university policy, land leases for land that ARS operates that does not belong to the Board of Regents need to be done through Facilities Planning & Management (FP&M). Several of these areas of land are being used for ongoing research, so efforts are being made to get these land rentals in place. There are meetings with the legal team occurring about insurance coverages, etc. The goal is to get the land rented that is needed for research work this year.
- The Marshfield land purchase at the old south site was finalized through the Board of Regents in April 2022. The sale was approved, and the city of Marshfield exercised their clause to purchase. The final purchase price was approximately \$650,000, of which a down payment of \$250,000 was made 20 years ago. The residual of this funding will be reinvested in the research stations. ARS will work over time to decide how to strategically reinvest at Marshfield.
- The Board of Regents voted to approve the purchase of 70 acres at Arlington. Will be closing on that acreage soon so it can be included in this year's operations.
- USDA funding for a plant breeding facility at WMARS has gone through. Once clearance is given, ready to start work.
 - Senator Baldwin and Representative Pocan will be at West Madison ARS on Friday, April 15, for an unveiling of the facility, discussions with students, and a reception.
 - The building is not sited and there is not yet an architect. The building will not show up this fiscal year. The long process has begun, and ARS will work with the dean's office regarding procedures for how to pass along information to USDA. Faculty input will be sought out to create the best facility to meet needs.

- This is a USDA ARS federal structure placed on university land. The initial work will be how the land lease looks and works, and to establish an expectation for UW use of the facility. This is a building that will transition work happening in the field to labs on campus for further refinement. The USDA leadership teams in D.C. and in the Midwest region will come to campus this summer to have more conversations about the relationship.
- It cost \$40 million in today's dollars to construct the building. Inflation and other costs are factors that affect all federal buildings. The federal relations team can assist with adding money to the project if the time comes; there is a procedure.
- The USDA potato germplasm group will be housed in the new building.
- An opportunity currently exists for advocacy with Senator Baldwin and Representative Pocan and the federal relations team to receive USDA dollars for the Marshfield office building. A plan is being created. There have been letters of support from the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW), UW–Madison's Dairy Innovation Hub, and others for the request of \$5 million for the facility. The team at the Marshfield station is being consulted with. One component of the building will hopefully be an on-site dormitory for summer research and students. This project is a top priority for ARS director.
- The ARS director is working with the Agronomy department chair and the CALS senior associate dean, as well as other campus and external stakeholders, to build a MESONET weather station network across Wisconsin. Other land grant institutions across the nation operate these, but this has been a missing component of UW–Madison. A consultant is being sought out to develop a robust plan, and funding is being pursued. The ARS committee will be provided updates at the fall committee meeting.
- The safety program in CALS is developing nicely. Tom Kohn has been in his position as CALS' safety coordinator for 8 months and is working on items including worker protection at the stations, greenhouses, and campus; and building a safety culture. Effort is being put into developing one cohesive safety plan across all areas. Worker protection training will be available at regular intervals.
- Hatch funding matches have been allocated toward key maintenance and upgrades.
 - Arlington dairy has upgraded bunkers and feed storage, which positively impacts 30+ projects just by having proper storage.
 - Half of the funds will be allocated to upgrade the environmental monitoring system at the greenhouses. The station leader will receive bids this month. The new system will notify both scientists and greenhouse staff of temperature changes, humidity, etc., so issues can be resolved as quickly as possible.
- ARS is in a solid place with its budget this year. Funding requests for next year's staffing have been submitted. The ARS directors has worked with CALS to identify resources toward student labor for all stations. ARS can meet the needs of its faculty and researchers for growing season 2022.
 - Supply chain issues are impacting everyone. ARS can overcome these challenges with good planning and preparation.

Questions/comments from committee:

- None

2021 annual report

- Committee members received the report in advance of the meeting. 2021 is the fourth year the annual report has been completed in this format. Each station has the flexibility to report in their own style within the overall parameters. The director is open to feedback from the committee on this format.

- Highlights include over 12,000 research projects that were counted in 2021, which is likely an underestimate, as tracking all projects is difficult. Total projects may be closer to 15,000. ARS is servicing approximately 370 scientists, and this number will probably increase following the pandemic.
- There was quite a bit of employee turnover across the stations, likely due to the pandemic. The number of retirements was not unique to ARS or to campus; this was a global trend. The new hires have been successful.
- Challenges have been the maintenance of aging structures, which is an area that is continually being worked on. ARS will continue to find room in the budget for these issues.

Questions/comments from committee:

- Will the report be posted online?
 - Yes, it will be posted on the website as soon as the committee votes to accept the report.
- Is there anything committee members can do to help provide numbers of research projects that are not being counted?
 - A request goes out; communication is continuously improving. This is heading in a positive direction.
- Would it be beneficial to capture the numbers of graduate and undergraduate students working at the stations?
 - Great idea: can talk about how to best report these numbers and demonstrate the value of instruction.
- Comment: research stations are the backbone of research at the college and at UW–Madison.
- Comment: the area of the report concerning greenhouse crops does not seem accurate. There may need to be a better indicator of usage for greenhouse crops.
 - Good feedback, this will be mentioned to the station manager.
- Luiz Ferraretto made a motion to accept the 2021 Agricultural Research Stations annual report. Valentin Picasso Risso seconded the motion. The motion was passed with 6 votes in favor, 0 votes not in favor, and 0 votes abstaining.

CALS updates

- The growth of the research at the stations is consistent with that of the college. Over the last five years, total expenditures in research have grown from about \$82 million to \$95 million. This will continue to grow. Important work has been done by many to grow the research mission, including the faculty who generate the grants, those who do the work in the field at the research stations, and those who work on proposals and awards.
 - There will continue to be high research rates and station usage moving forward.
- It has been a successful year for federal appropriations and support from Senator Baldwin and Representative Pocan.
 - Details regarding federal funding can be found here: <https://news.cals.wisc.edu/2022/03/24/federal-funding-will-support-new-plant-research-facility-and-other-programs-at-cals/>
- Data is being gathered for the CALS master plan and the campus footprint for the next 10-20 years. Consideration is being given to which infrastructure will be needed now and in the future. Walkthroughs of facilities will conclude in May, after which data will be shared with CALS leadership. There will be a planning process for how the research stations fit into the master plan.
- There will be three finalists for the CALS dean search. All are external to UW–Madison. The search timeline is driven by the Provost’s Office. Each candidate is on campus for one day. There will be public seminars by each candidate, which will be CALS faculty and staff’s opportunity to interact with the candidates. The seminars will be recorded and there will be an opportunity to give

feedback. Candidate's CVs will be available 48 hours in advance of the seminars. See eCALS for more information: https://ecals.cals.wisc.edu/2022/04/08/dates-and-times-for-public-presentations-by-three-finalists-for-the-cals-dean-position-announced/?utm_source=ecals_email_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ecals_email_newsletter

Questions/comments from committee:

- Will the dean candidate's public presentations be livestreamed?
 - No. The presentations will be recorded, but the Q&A portion will not be recorded.
- What is the timeline for next steps of the dean search?
 - Feedback will be collected by the end of April. The final candidate will likely be selected by the Chancellor in early May. The start date may be effective sometime between July 1 and the start of fall semester. There will be a transition period over the summer.
- Does the search committee get to provide a recommendation?
 - The search committee's job collectively was to recommend the finalists. The search committee members can provide further feedback as individuals.

General questions & feedback

- Members whose terms are ending, Julie Dawson and Valentin Picasso Risso, were thanked for their service to the committee.
- The next meeting will be TBD in fall 2022.
- Send future agenda items to Brian Luck and Erica Flyte.

Adjourn

- Valentin Picasso Risso made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Luiz Ferraretto seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:43pm.