

North Carolina Policy Collaboratory Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2016, South Building, Chapel Hill, NC

Advisory Board members in attendance were: Al Segars, Anita Brown-Graham, Jaye Cable, Greg Characklis, Reggie Holley, Jeff Hughes, Rick Luettich and Brad Ives.

Guest speakers in attendance were: Joy Bryde, UNC Conflict of Interest Officer and Will Tricomi, UNC Associate University Counsel.

Other UNC and Collaboratory staff in attendance were: Allison Reid, Emily Harnish and Steve Wall.

Chair Al Segars began the meeting at 10:06 with a welcome and stressed the importance of this Board to the University and thanked members on behalf of UNC-Chapel Hill Provost Jim Dean. Segars noted that he knew and worked with many of the Board members in other capacities and was excited to be working with them in this new role.

Board members proceeded to go around the table and introduce themselves.

Segars stated that the establishment of the Collaboratory was fairly unique. There are a few examples of where other states have created similar entities. He said the Collaboratory represents an opportunity to showcase the environmental and natural resource research and expertise on campus and build closer ties with state leaders and the legislature.

Joy Bryde led the Board through a discussion of “conflicts of interest” issues noting that transparency in the Board’s discussions is critical. She also stated that as chair Segars has recused himself from seeking funding for any of his projects from the Collaboratory. Bryde provided an overview to the the Board of the standard UNC Conflict of Interest language. She stressed that individuals need to report to the chair when there is a potential conflict of interest and at that point the chair can decide whether to recuse the individual member from the Board’s discussion and decision-making process.

Bryde noted that the Board members are all leaders in their field and should not be penalized for their service on the Board with a prohibition from receiving funding from the Collaboratory for research projects. Bryde again emphasized the need for transparency and advised that those disclosure statements made by members should be documented in the Board’s meeting minutes.

Brad Ives asked about the potential for a conflict of interest from the receipt of private funding, such as a corporation or foundation. Bryde referenced the institutional Conflict of Interest policy and suggested that this is an issue for further discussion with the UNC Development Office.

Rick Luettich suggested that one way of ensuring transparency of the Collaboratory would be for it to go through a review process similar to the external review that Centers and Institutes are subject to every five years.

Segars thanked Bryde for her time and assistance to the Board.

Will Tricomi, UNC Associate University Counsel was asked to lead the discussion on the applicability of open meetings law to the Collaboratory. Tricomi began with an overview of the open meetings law and its intended purpose. He stated that the Board was a public body subject to the open meetings law and shared the relevant definitions.

Segars inquired about individual meetings with other Board members. A one-on-one phone call or meeting would be fine, but if additional members were added and the majority participates it would qualify as an official meeting.

Segars and Ives asked if and when the Board could have confidential discussion about sensitive topics such as human resources matters. Tricomi described the various situations in which a public body is permitted to go into closed session in accordance with the open meetings law.

Reggie Holley inquired about the Public Records Act and its relevance for the Board. Tricomi informed the Board that most documents, correspondence, etc. related to the Collaboratory will meet the definition of a public record and be subject to disclosure. He briefed the Board on the public records definition and the exceptions. Holley noted that he was a non-UNC employee and had a non-UNC private email account. Tricomi advised that his emails related to the Collaboratory would be subject to the Public Records Act.

Luetlich inquired as to what makes the Board a public body. Tricomi read through the elements necessary to be designated as a public body. Segars thanked Tricomi for his time and assistance to the Board.

Ives led a discussion on the background and mission of the Collaboratory. Ives briefed the Board on the legislative language that established the Collaboratory. He referenced that the Collaboratory is intended to work across the UNC system and call on expertise from university faculty and staff. Ives stated that the legislative language gave the Collaboratory the ability to do demonstration projects and make recommendations to the legislature.

Anita Brown-Graham questioned how the Collaboratory would handle requests and questions from individual legislative members. Ives recommended that initially the Collaboratory work closely with legislative staff and the leadership of both chambers to identify projects of interest to the legislature.

Luetlich asked how the Collaboratory would disseminate information and what type of review process was in place. Ives referenced the organizational structure developed by the Provost and himself which provides the Advisory Board with oversight over project selection and staffing, research guidance, and grant approvals, report review and approval. Ives stated that the Advisory Board does not make final decisions on the selection or projects but provides guidance and are charged with ensuring the academic integrity of the projects.

Ives provided an overview of how he viewed the process from start to finish giving by way of example wastewater treatment issues facing breweries in western North Carolina. Holley noted the importance of communicating with the legislature as to the types of projects that are selected.

Segars transitioned to a discussion on the role of the Advisory Board. Segars referenced the document "Advisory Board Responsibilities" and specifically emphasized the role of the Board in ensuring academic

integrity through the project selection and review process. The importance of using peer reviewed research was raised.

Jeff Hughes agreed with maintaining the highest of academic standards in project selection but noted that research and work at the School of Government and at other units on campus would not be considered peer reviewed. Hughes also pointed to the legislative language that called for the deliverables of the Collaboratory to be of “practical use by state and local government.”

Board members had a discussion on the formalized processes for evaluating projects and making funding decisions. Greg Characklis raised the issue of scaling up projects in the short-term and the importance of focusing for the initial year of the Collaboratory on supporting ongoing research with practical application for the state.

Segars suggested that project and funding selection was an evolving process, but one that needed to be transparent and clear for faculty. Segars offered to speak at the UNC faculty council in the coming months to provide an update on the Collaboratory. Brown-Graham suggested that a web presence would be an important tool for communications and transparency.

Steve Wall provided an update on the status of the UNC Nutrient Management Study of Jordan and Falls Lakes. The six-year study mandated by the legislature falls under the purview of the Collaboratory and the Board. Wall outlined the various research components of the study that will be led by UNC and NCSU faculty. It was referenced that two members of the Board (Hughes and Luetlich) will receive funds for research purposes during the study. Wall stated that an Interim Report is due to the legislature by December 31, 2016. He also suggested that the study would include a Jordan Lake educational component in later years of the study.

Wall briefly outlined the work underway related to the UNC Shellfish Aquaculture Industry project that also falls under the purview of the Collaboratory and the Board. Wall noted that Pete Peterson of the Institute of Marine Sciences was working with various interested parties to develop a stakeholder group.

Ives raised the possibility of utilizing some of the Collaboratory funding for Hurricane Matthew recovery and resiliency projects. Holley advised that a special legislative session was likely to be held in early December to focus on hurricane response.

Ives outlined the recommended meeting schedule for the Board, which includes monthly meetings for the first six months and then a transition to quarterly meetings.

Luetlich suggested that finding a recurring time for the meetings would benefit members as they plan their schedules in coming months.

Segars adjourned the meeting at 12:07.