

North Carolina Policy Collaboratory Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes March 15, 2019 UNC Service Center of Excellence Carrboro, NC

Advisory Board members in attendance were: Al Segars (chair), Don Hobart, Jeff Hughes, Mark Little, Rick Luettich and Brad Ives. Advisory Board members joining by phone were: Anita Brown-Graham and Jaye Cable.

Guest presenters in attendance were: Jill Moore (UNC School of Government) and Steven Turner (NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services).

Other UNC and Collaboratory staff in attendance were: Laurie Farrar, Kasia Grzebyk, Allison Reid, Steve Wall, Jeff Warren, and Melanie Wright.

Segars began the meeting at 10:05. Segars welcomed everyone and asked for introductions of all in attendance. Segars asked for approval of the December meeting minutes.

Segars reminded the Board of the Conflict of Interest policy and noted that while adhering to the university policy, board members are encouraged to participate in Collaboratory projects.

Director's Report

Brad Ives provided an update on several of the meetings and briefings with Collaboratory staff and legislators that had taken place in recent weeks. Meetings to discuss Collaboratory projects included the energy storage study, the shellfish mariculture report, water sampling after Hurricane Florence, and the GenX work.

Ives noted the Collaboratory would be hosting public forums on the Jordan Lake Study in Chapel Hill and the PFAST Network project in Wilmington.

Ives asked the members to note the document in the meeting materials that lists the Collaboratory funded faculty. He stated how impressed that he was that more than sixty faculty members from across the UNC system had received funds. Ives referenced the important role that the Collaboratory's challenge grant played in supporting that work. Little offered to make a connection to a company that the Kenan Institute was working with related to the shellfish plan.

Laurie Farrar presented a brief overview of the Collaboratory's current financial status.

Project Reports

Jill Moore, a professor from the UNC School of Government, presented on her current project of the Drinking Water Working Group. The project focuses on a 21-member working group working to develop a tool kit to respond to drinking water incidents. The group is developing a set of practical tools for local government officials to use in response to a real or perceived threat to drinking water safety.

Segars asked whether the project was planning to utilize information from other states. Ives referenced the recent OWASA outages and cited the example of table top exercises to prepare for an outage. Little suggested toolkits from other topics could be of value to the project. Moore responded that a recent opioid toolkit was a good model that the group was using.

Steven Turner, a program manager with the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, presented an update on the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid project. Turner began with an overview of the spread of the invasive Woolly Adelgid and its impact on the Hemlock population in the eastern part of the United States. He detailed some of the control measures underway to try and protect the remaining Hemlock population.

Turner stated that the project funded by the Collaboratory is in partnership with Western Carolina University. The project is intended to research bio-control measures, which includes the release of beetles.

Segars asked about whether work was being done to identify the number of beetles needed. Warren inquired about the use of drones or satellite images to identify populations. Luettich questioned whether the trees were developing any type of resistance. Hobart asked about what a positive outcome of the project would be.

Legislative Update

Jeff Warren provided a big picture overview of the Collaboratory's work over the last three years. The Collaboratory has supported approximately 100 projects at nine UNC system campuses. The Collaboratory has committed \$12.5 million in support of environmental research projects during the past three years.

The \$3.5 million challenge grant that was provided by the General Assembly in 2016 will be fully utilized by the end of the fiscal year. Warren outlined the types of projects that would be a priority for funding next year and broke them down into categories of habitat, natural hazards and water quality.

Brown-Graham and Little recommended conducting outreach to some of the campuses that have not yet partnered with the Collaboratory. Warren agreed about the need to make strategic relationships across the UNC system. Hobart asked about the origins of the research reserve that Warren referenced. Warren noted the partnership projects that were underway with various state agencies.

Warren asked the members to note the letter related to the PFAST network that had been handed out at the beginning of the meeting. The advisory team for that project was asking for a legislative extension of their deadline.

Board Discussion

The Board engaged in a back and forth discussion responding to the issues that were presented by Warren. Segars framed the conversation by asking about the boundaries of the Collaboratory and stating that it is imperative to maintain the quality of the work being funded.

Luettich raised the issue of managing expectations of researchers who are engaged in the policy process and are disappointed with the results of how their research was used. Ives stated that the topic is clearly one that the Collaboratory can address. Hobart stated that as the Collaboratory matures, the discussion of policy options becomes more critical as projects deliver findings and recommendations that may be controversial.

Segars adjourned the meeting at 11:55.