

WSSA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Virtual

February 15, 2021

Meeting called to order by Bill Curran at 9:00 AM CST.

Attendees:

Lee Van Wychen, Francois Tardif, John Byrd, Marty Schraer, Eric Gustafson, Bill Curran, Phil Banks, Rakesh Chandran, Dawn Refsell, Wykle Greene, John Lindquist, Chris Willenborg, Stanley Culpepper, Larry Steckel, Rob Richardson, Anita Dille, Lynn Sosnoskie, Greg Elmore

Trouble with entering annual meeting virtual site. Virtual meeting folks are working on it.

Old Business:

Conflict of Interest Policy Update (MOP 5.8)

The policy focuses exclusively on the board of directors, must disclose conflicts of interest. Because of a couple occurrences decided to revise it. Expanded to include most people in WSSA. Wanted to include the BOD, liaisons, Fellows, CAST rep, AHIS TAG rep, and other paid or volunteer committee members. What if an associate editor thought they might do something that would be a conflict of interest? What does everyone think? Discussion: Did have some comments back. Seems that the scope of including every member, maybe went too far. Could scare off volunteers. How would they know that the criteria exists? Trying to clarify that it is not every WSSA member, but members of the BOD, liaisons, Fellows, CAST rep, AHIS TAG rep, and other paid or volunteer committee members. Strike "each member". Strike "duty of". "They shall communicate such conflict to the attention of the BOD". Where did the original language come from? Think it came from an IMI customer. The original document was dated 2010. Should we have a lawyer review? The consequence of having a conflict of interest is for that person to withdraw from any further interaction on that subject. Executive committee members shall work on the document, send it to Bill and then Bill will bring it back to the BOD.

Performance Review (NIFA Fellow and EPA Liaison)

Nothing spelled out about how these folks will be reviewed. Bill added a sentence at the end of both role descriptions. Evaluating the program rather than the individual but the two are closely connected. EPA folks are included in the feedback but NIFA folks are not. Maybe include NIFA folks in feedback for the NIFA Fellow.

Motion is to add the following language to the NIFA Fellow description: The NIFA Fellow's advisory committee will review program performance along with USDA NIFA partners. The advisory committee will report the performance progress to the WSSA BOD. The Motion also includes adding the following sentence to the EPA Liaison description: The advisory committee

will report the performance progress to the WSSA BOD. Phil stated the motion, John Byrd seconded. The BOD voted. Motion passed.

Other old business? NONE

New Business:

BASF Certification Proposal (Ginger Light, BASF)

Background: BASF certification study guide, brochure and WSSA endorsement proposal documents were shared. Ginger Light and Kimberly Cantrell, iCEV, approached Anita and Bill to ask WSSA to endorse the certification back in November. The WSSA has not endorsed programs like this in the past. The WSSA has endorsed Take Action and general certification programs. Ginger was with Bayer, through merger landed at BASF. Kimberly is with a certification company (iCEV). Program launched with BASF. They target VO-AG programs, some college, some postgraduate. Anything we could do to increase the number of students going into plant science, wouldn't that be great? Why just BASF supported and not broader across companies? **Ginger Light has joined the call.** Head of operation planning and excellence for the trait development group. 12 years in Bayer and now BASF. iCEV approached Bayer regarding certification. Helps high school grads to have an expert in plant science on their diploma. iCEV created a lot of certifications across a wide area. iCEV is based in Lubbock, TX and had local connections with Bayer. Bayer supported the Plant Science certification for five years. Bayer folks reviewed the content and put their name on it, etc. The program was divested to BASF during Bayer purchase of Monsanto. Requesting WSSA endorsement to make it a broader certification (broadly across industry) rather than just for employment with BASF. For example, there is a Bayer, now BASF, agriculture museum in Lubbock, TX but it includes exhibits by other companies. Introductions of BOD members to Ginger. iCEV / BASF will reach out to other societies to get their endorsements. Helps them get certification approvals in each state. Why is this not bigger than BASF but wider across multiple companies? iCEV needed a sponsor. Some certifications are through a society. For this one, Bayer was willing to step up to be the sponsor (now BASF). Could be sponsored by multiple companies but would be challenging (a lot of red tape). Have you approached Crop Life America, or Entomology society or Plant Phytopathology society? No, starting with WSSA first. Ginger open to talking with Crop Life America about a broader industry coalition. iCEV goes to each education board with each state to get state approval. Probably have 15 or more states approved as of now. Once approved in a state, there are monies that flow into state educational program (iCEV does this). How often is the material updated, maintained to insure relevance? A lot of the content is very basic and will not change over time. Adding new concepts may be relevant, like digital phenotyping or something like that. Does this program integrate with FFA education programs and CASE education programs, how is the program different from that? Not sure about the CASE program. They are trying to start working more closely with the FFA program to showcase the course work and the program. What does the endorsement really mean, where is the acknowledgement of the endorsement be used? The endorsement will be used with specific states that may need this

type of endorsement to approve the certification. The endorsement can be placed on the web page of the certification advertisement page through iCEV. Has any other member of the WSSA other than BASF taken this course? Not a course we would take. BASF thought that individual sales people might take the course if they are at a basic level. BASF has reviewed the content. Could have iCEV send the certification exam to us to review. The course was developed by iCEV. The certification questions were co-developed between iCEV and Bayer (now BASF). Can take the exam without taking the course if you want. Pricing reflects iCEV pricing to take the course and the exam and the certification. BASF does not receive any monies for the course and the certification. **Ginger left the call.** BOD member comments: This is really needed but it would be better if it was not just BASF. Fundamentally agree that this is valuable. Unfortunate that the iCEV person was not on the call today. Like the idea, but not keen on supporting because don't know how the content will change and WSSA associated with changing content that we might not agree with. Oversight would be needed by the WSSA BOD. Important to share agriculture with young people but not clear on the content. iCEV is willing to share the content and open to feedback on the content. What if the content changes down the road and WSSA name is still on it? This is needed but do we have repeated ability to review content over time. Does the WSSA want to get involved in educational programs broadly? Why this one in particular? There was a certified professional in Weed Science but that was dropped because there was not enough weed scientists participating so it became certified Agronomists. If endorse, would WSSA get some revenue? Is there a committee that would be good to task them to review this proposal? There was no indication of what committee that this would fit into. This is in its infancy of development. May be dangerous to get involved on the ground floor. Bill will contact Ginger and Kimberly and let them know that the WSSA is not ready to endorse this program at this time, but that could change in the future. The WSSA would like to remain in contact, and we can revisit in the future.

Other new business? NONE

John Byrd made a motion to adjourn, and Marty Schraer seconded at 11:00AM CST.

Adjourned

Thursday, February 18 is the WSSA Business meeting at 3 pm CST

Friday, February 19 is the WSSA BOD meets at 1:30 pm CST