

**UMass Extension Board of Public Overseers  
UMass Collaborative Service Center**

**Meeting notes  
January 27, 2012**

**Present:**

**Members:**

Jack Angley, Nathan L'Etoile, Mary Jane Bacon, Lynn Griesemer, Ted Wales, Rena Prendergast, Mike Leuders, Bob Macleod, Stephen Herbert

**Guests:**

Joe Shoenfeld, Bob Schrader, William Miller

**Welcome – Jack Angley**

Meeting called to order at 9:05.

**Approve minutes from November 18 meeting, Jack Angley**

Minutes were not approved due to lack of quorum.

**Discussion of proposed new name for Center as well as proposed vision and mission statements, Bill Miller**

Bill Miller framed the strategic planning process that has occurred in last six months, beginning with Dean's guidance document last summer. That document called for increased integration between research and extension, increased innovation, and for programs and projects driven increasingly by faculty and by public needs. It called for work that benefits both the public and the academic disciplines and for increased flexibility to address challenges and opportunities and for increased visibility in communities. Next, Bill mentioned the results of the survey that the Board saw and discussed at the last meeting. The next step he mentioned was that a group of 15 Center leaders looked at the survey results and the notes from BOPO and from the Center Advisory Board and developed a number of draft mission and vision statements. Stephen, Joe, Bill looked for common themes in these drafts and found lots of input to develop the versions being proposed now. The restructuring process will offer more opportunities to have input into future function. The proposed statements now in front of the Board will be finalized soon and Bill requested members' impressions and ideas on how we can revise them to reflect what the mission and vision of the Center should be.

Jack Angley asked for additional explanation of the Dean's idea about faculty driven efforts. Bill discussed the idea that services and extension outreach needs to be complementary and grounded in scientific disciplines and based in collaboration of extension and research. Faculty are increasingly providing leadership and involved in that integration. Faculty may not be doing the outreach but it will have complementary participation. The concept of extension faculty has expanded... now involves combination

of research, college, and Extension funding... in some ways work may continue to proceed from some of the same individuals.

Lynn Griesemer asked for further explanation of the new faculty status. Stephen Herbert explained that the role is non-tenure track and one that can make use of state funds, can mix state and federal dollars. He mentioned that in building energy, we've chosen to hire extension faculty as well as in climate and water in Geosciences Department. Bob Schrader mentioned that hiring extension faculty is a way to upgrade and invest in academic departments and potentially increase the value of Extension within the University. Lynn said that other universities have called these positions 'professors of practice' "Harvard had Bob Reich as a professor of practice." She inquired whether there are unlimited contracts for extension faculty? Bob responded that they are three-year contracts. Lynn commented that the University does a poor job of recognizing professional staff who make important contributions, in many instances by people with doctorates, do paid funded research but are seen as second class citizens within the University even though out in world they are not seen differently, just as valuable, they are the face of the University. She suggested that we add words "and staff" into the vision statement to positively address that issue. Stephen mentioned that one of his goals is to lift the position of professional staff who don't transition to faculty so that they are fairly valued as well. He said that the Dean has said a lot about how to position Extension and research closer together... goal is to create a model that could be in other areas.

Lynn discussed President Caret's interest in in greater satellite presence for the University in places like Springfield, Lawrence and that she believe that in many instances it is Extension faculty and staff who drive those community presences. Jack said that returns us to the original definition of Extension "those thoughts have come up over last 18 years of sitting here." He said that many in the past have asked how we are going to function without being out in the state.

Ted Wales agreed wholeheartedly that staff must be part of vision. Mary Jane Bacon mentioned Greenfield Community College's downtown campus as a good lesson in community presence with interesting benefits, saying that the building is not large but on weekends and nights it is cheaper to open the small building for programs. Ted said that Extension staff are often in the position to bring real needs back to the faculty driven. Bill said that faculty have have goals in research, teaching and outreach and that often it is the professional staff that inform faculty. Stephen commented that faculty 'driven' might not be the best word. Rena Prendergast said that Extension professionals are part of the managing group within the Nutrition department.

Bill returned the focus of the conversation back to the vision and mission statements. Ted asked theis purpose of phrase 'honest broker'? Nathan suggested substituting 'impartial' for honest which Ted agreed was important. Bill asked for feedback on the proposed new name. Nate was pleased that sustainability was not used in named. Lynn commented that the proposed words are not slang. Mary Jane said she liked that the name was in real English. Lynn asked whether others thought the word sustainable should in the name. Ted responded that by using the word environment, his industry can see themselves in the name.

### **Status and directions of Waltham redevelopment process, Joe Shoenfeld**

Lynn questioned the scope of Waltham's mission in our documents and said that she is interested in opportunity for multidisciplinary place beyond agriculture. "As we look at what it is, I hope we can look at broad vision, beyond agriculture, beyond the college." Joe responded that the documents had merely summarized what we had heard in the interview process and that there weren't many opposing views heard during that process. Most ideas heard could be merged into a larger vision. He mentioned that the clearest emerging themes were the unique value, location, and uses around sustainable landscapes and agriculture.. All fashioned into a vision piece reflecting both themes and enthusiasm; used to build a coalition to move forward.

Ted questioned the inclusion of term "sustainability" in the proposed name of the center while Rena said the word is well-received and means a lot right now. Rena commented that use of the word may attract people

to the site. Joe asked how legislators would react to the word and Ted responded that they would love it. Nathan said that “there is a value to having it. It is ambiguous, but that could be good.”

Lynn reiterated her feeling that our efforts needs to be part of a bigger enterprise at the site. She cited nearby life science companies and the potential for the Center to do applied life science education.

Mary Jane brought up the upcoming Economic Development bond and said that our worry shouldn't capital costs, that legislators want to know what the University's long-term commitment is to running a Center there. Lynn said there remains money in Life Science legislation, \$90 million for something in Life Sciences from legislation 4-5 years ago. Nathan added that agricultural stakeholders are invested and protective of this site, but doesn't mean there isn't room for other opportunities as well. Joe said that we need to make this happen or pass it along to the University. “Which partners do we enlist to make it happen, and to what purpose?” Lynn responded that with a narrow mission, she was dubious of whether we can raise the money.

Bob Schrader commented that we need to learn more about the potential, legal and otherwise, for expansion to life sciences. If it goes to that level, who are the champions? Stephen wondered whether this may be part of our introduction to the new president. Lynn responded that “If the Dean wants to pursue this with the Provost on Board, I can go other routes, I don't want to step on the college. But I would love to see Waltham become something but it's going downhill. Urban agriculture and sustainability could be a cornerstone, but for something to happen we need to broaden the agenda.”

### **Discussion following from last meeting, Joe Shoenfeld**

#### **Given Extension's limited staffing, what are good options for communication?**

Ted said that the Landscape & Nursery Program's communications are fine and mostly electronic. Newsletters, green directory; it's all there, accessible from the Website. Joe asked whether if you had a question, would you go to the website? Ted responded “If I have a problem, I want to talk to someone. I want to have direct access and that has gotten somewhat harder. The immediate feedback is useful. Responds to panic I may have. Plus we are out there and we give useful feedback to them.” In response to Stephen's question “How many people are out there like you?” Ted responded that every business owner in MA Arborists and MA Landscape Associations. “We touch all the homeowners. There is a multiplier effect.” Jack commented that people will come to the Cranberry Station and roam the halls with a bug looking for someone.

Stephen asked “Should UMass Extension have a cell phone directory to send photos?” Mary Jane said that “this is good for constituents, but not as good for general public. How easy is it to access resources? Is there a searchable database?” Joe responded that there is one, but its not well-known. Nathan said he didn't expect to get directly to the expert, but to someone who can get him in touch with someone who helped get the answer. Stephen asked “What if we had a person located in different part of the state whose role was to be that linkage?” Nathan suggest that they don't need to be in different areas as long as there is one number to call. Ted commented that this is better for general public rather than familiar constituents and added that the system could be connected to all New England state extension systems.

Bob Schrader commented that technology is the common denominator. “4-H has an electronic resources hat will become a social network site.” Nathan commented that “This is what I did when I worked in the Governor's western office. Found resources, made connections and referral. They can recognize accurate information and they are on the pulse of that the public needs and issues are.” Joe asked Rena about the nutrition perspective on the question and she replied that “We do have a state network. We are still out there, so it's not such a big issue. And we have a networks outside of Extension that can address those issues. American Academy of Nutrition, the MA Dietetics Association. Extension is not a part of this.”

### **Suggestions for Agricultural Day at the Statehouse, April 3, Stephen Herbert**

Nathan commented on the white paper. “We have a group that meets regularly to talk about it. You can get on by contacting Susan at Farm Bureau susan@mfbf.net. Fee can get you a table and can get your name on the white paper. (\$40). You also get a preview of the address in the great hall (2 tickets). To be in there you need to serve food or be giving away cool stuff.” Ted said that there should be an exception for Extension, make sure they are in the room regardless.

### **Brief news update, Stephen Herbert**

Ag Learning Center is moving forward. Working with an entrepreneur on growing crops with LED lights and containers.

### **Brief budget update, Bob Schrader**

Nathan observed that he noticed the decrease in revenue from Soil Testing and Bob Schrader explained this reflected hiring of new director. Ted added that improved billing would be helpful at the Soils Lab. Bob added that credit cards will be introduced. On the overall budget he commented that the overall financial health is fairly good, while Stephen added that if things go bad at the federal budget, the carry-forward would vanish quickly.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:05**