



Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Extension Council Association

November 19, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Iowa Extension Council Association met at the Boone County Extension Office on November 19, 2022.

Those present include Connie Casson, Tyler Heeren, Sterling Young, Jenny Lichty, Kasey Peters, Paul Gieselman, Chrissy Westercamp, Al Ralston, Bruce Clark, LeAnn Lawler, Tom Monroe, Roberta Hersom, Jamie Thompson, Dan Lamgo, Gwen Hanson, and Kelly Jared. Also present were Dr. John Lawrence, Andrea Nelson, Cindy Gannon, Jennifer Vit, and Julie Baumler

President Connie Casson called the meeting to order. Tom moved to approve the agenda. Paul seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Roberta moved to approve the minutes from July 28 and August 30, 2022. Paul seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The treasurer's report was presented by Jamie Thompson. There is a balance on hand of \$46,672.63 in checking and \$105.00 in savings. The following bills were presented:

- Whitfield & Eddy - \$650.00 for October 2022
- Julie Baumler- \$51.25 for printing
- MailChimp - \$36.38 for November subscription
- ISU Print Services - \$37.04 for printing of brand persona cards

Kasey moved to approve the treasurer's report and bills. Bruce seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Sterling moved to appoint Jenny Lichty, Johnson County, as Region 19 board member for the remainder of term ending in 2024. Tom seconded the motion. The motion carried.

An ISU Extension & Outreach update was given by Dr. John Lawrence, Vice President for Extension and Outreach. The following information was shared:

- The final Vice President for Extension and Outreach candidate finished his interview yesterday. All videos are now available to view on the provost's website. They have requested feedback by Nov. 23. The committee will meet on Nov. 28 to review the feedback and confer, giving their thoughts to the provost to make the final decision. The goal is to make an offer before Christmas with an announcement at the beginning of the year. There were 18 applications. The search committee interviewed 10 via Zoom and there were 5 in-person interviews.
- Dr. Lawrence shared budget trends for Extension and Outreach. State appropriations have been flat since 2014. Grants and contracts are down. Federal dollars have been relatively flat.

Fees and other revenue generation are also down, as are ISU appropriations for Extension and Outreach. We can expect more pressure on the state and federal level. Meanwhile, county valuations have increased significantly over the last several years, but with the upcoming economy, Dr. Lawrence predicts that inflation will likely outpace valuations. These revenue numbers will need to be monitored over the next few years.

- MyData now allows us to get total direct educational contacts for all counties for the first time ever, as well as looking at market share (how many contacts/total population). We can also easily look at total number of contacts by content area. Council members should start getting these reports each month. Staff members are asked to get their numbers all entered by the end of the month. Program units can also now look at contacts by program to help them make some determinations about which programs should be offered. President Wintersteen is provided with the contact information for those regions of the state she is visiting. We can also start to provide this information to the legislators. The Board of Regents are working on putting together an interactive map to view contacts by program in each county to help identify where ISU extends their reach to the state of Iowa.

There have been staff concerns about the amount of time it takes to enter data. We need to identify ways to make it more efficiently, but we also need to recognize that it's important time to be able to capture our efforts. There are ways to use technology to improve the data entry process.

Our next step with MyData is to start reporting impacts. Many programs already have an evaluation plan associated with them. We will eventually be able to enter data with those. Some programs will be doing follow-up evaluations.

- The MOU draft was released on Oct. 15 and there has been a feedback window through Nov. 15. The committee will reconvene on Tuesday, Nov. 22 to look at the feedback and make tweaks. Key updates include:
 - Shared support fee increase (covers IT, accounting support, administration of county ISU insurance plan). Requesting a move from 2.7% to 3.7% of a county's maximum tax ask. In doing projections, the 1% increase will move us out of a deficit (where we're at currently). If we do nothing, at some point, there will need to be fewer services as costs increase.
 - Roles and responsibilities of the county director and regional director have been articulated more clearly – especially in Model 3 counties. They are exploring title changes of county directors in model 1 counties to help increase role understanding. It really boils down to effective communication, mutual respect, and professional behavior between extension staff, councils, and regional directors. The relationship in Model 3 is one of shared leadership and workload and collaboration to effective stakeholders of the county.
 - Curriculum approval/vetting process
 - Value of housing a field specialist (cost vs benefit)

A County Services update was shared by Andrea Nelson, Asst. Vice-President for County Services. The following items were discussed:

- Many county finance committees are working right now to put together a budget proposal to bring to the council for their approval. Councils should also work on putting together a "wish list" that they can work off of if there is carryover at the end of the fiscal year. This is especially helpful in terms of program resources.

- The fiscal policy has been recently updated. Several parts are written in conjunction with the state auditor's staff. Councils will be approving for their own county in the upcoming months.
- County and Regional Directors will be invited to campus on Jan. 25 for county finance training.
- Newly elected/re-elected council members should have received an invitation to participate in new council orientation to take place in December through early January.
- Organizational meetings will be taking place in January. Andrea and Cindy are working on the materials that councils will need to address at those meetings.
- Final Two-way Scorecard report was sent out on Friday. This one focused on program. When asked how they learned about programs, the most valuable method was engagement with program specialists
- Around 290 new council members were elected this year.

The board reviewed and discussed the results of the IECA Member Benefits survey. There were 96 total responses. All surveys were completed as a full council. The survey has provided some ideas of what councils are looking for and find value in for member benefits. There may also be some staff and council members who do not understand what we do as an association.

We may need to do better at sharing some of our benefits and how they help councils (i.e., how representation on statewide committees helps councils, our legal services rate with Whitfield & Eddy is a discounted rate of \$250/hour vs. their normal rate of \$450/hour).

Group buying was discussed, including opportunities to purchased discounted Extension staff/council apparel. A rating and feedback system for Extension and Outreach programming was also discussed, as well as regional meetings, and discussion boards.

The group also noted that there were several mentions of budget constraints with regard to hiring, programming, and facilities. By making legislative contacts we can help legislators understand the value of extension could in turn help with the funding piece. How can we help tell the story about Extension's impact to bring community organizations together?

The board committees met and reported back.

Finance, Policy, and Legislation Committee:

- Council members will be encouraged to connect with their local legislators through local legislative coffees. Jennifer and Julie will work on creating guidance and talking points to share.
- Legislative Breakfast on February 15 will target key legislators and committee leadership. IECA will recruit council members from those legislative districts to come to the breakfast, with emphasis on people that they "represent." Legislators will be emailed at least twice to get them to register and make them aware of it. Council members will be encouraged to connect in advance with legislators from their district. ISU government affairs rep Carolann Jenson has agreed to provide some information to assist the association.
- Fiscal policy review: committee recommends raising the spending limit of the executive committee from \$2,000 to \$5,000 when paying for recurring legal aid expenses. This will be on the agenda to be voted on by the entire board at the next meeting. Suggested language for Board Process Issues: *"Executive Board may approve up to \$2,000 in association's available funds in addition to recurring legal aid expenses up to \$5,000."*

Human Resources and Member Services Committee:

- Following discussion about the member benefits survey, there were some thoughts about helping to develop a wellness program

- Even though the EAP usage is fairly high, some work needs to be done about listing the benefits of the EAP
- Remote work policy information could be shared with councils
- Consider a “stackable” usage of legal services for Whitfield and Eddy. This would be difficult to enact and fund from an association point of view.
- Develop “list serve” for various council positions

Communication and Networking Committee:

- Council Conference
 - Discussed conference promotional strategies: providing a special promotional item for “new” council members/newly elected members that register for the conference.
 - Conference sessions staged/tailored to committee assignments from organizational meetings in January.
 - Make the QR registration code available in an email/text to all council members; flyer to each council by the January organizational meeting; IECA board member representatives to contact each county chair to encourage attendance.
- Communication with newly elected council members:
 - series of three-minute videos talking about areas of responsibility
 - geared around first year of service
 - a special three-minute video “welcome”
 - chairperson of each subcommittee detailing the responsibilities of the committee (legislative, HR, communication/networking)
 - encourage councils to have mentors for new elected council members
- Board members should send an email to county chairs with bullet points after an IECA board meeting with highlights.

Jennifer shared the executive director report:

- Jennifer detailed the schedule in December for area newly elected council member orientations.
- Vice President search update – Rich Degner (Polk County) and Bruce Clark (IECA Board member) represented extension council members on the search committee. They met with every candidate. The hope is to have the new vice president hired before Christmas
- Jennifer presented at the recent county directors meeting.
- Finance training is planned to include council treasurers and chairs. The meetings will be by area and face-to-face only (no “zoom” option). They will include a working dinner and sessions. Topic request included information on program fees versus tax dollars.

The following county concerns and issues were shared:

- The possibility of having the legislative committee take up the idea of the number of council members on each council being tiered according to county population instead of just the standard nine on each council. Also, the possibility of the terms being shortened to two years instead of four.
- Request was made to research the legal allowability for council policy concerning drug testing of employees or employee candidates
- Remote working policy revisions post-COVID; what should councils do?
- VOIP - Setting up call-forwarding from the main office number to employee cell phones. Is there a contract that counties could buy into? Service recommendation?

Le Ann moved to approve board member travel expenses of \$2,507.50. Gwen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Julie will send out a poll to determine the next meeting date.

Tom Monroe moved to adjourn. Al Ralston seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Lamgo, IECA Secretary