

## **Partnership Working Group Meeting Summary Notes from Portland, OR – April 20, 2009**

**Present:** Suzanne Le Menestrel, Glenn Applebee, Maria Arnold, Dorothy McCargo Freeman, Christy Bartley, Bo Ryles, Don Floyd, Johnathan Despain, Cheri Booth, Chuck Morris

**Absent:** Harry Thayer

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### **1. Partnership Working Group (PWG) Role Description**

PWG members reviewed a description of the PWG and roles of PWG members. They discussed, for some time, the PWG, perceptions of the PWG, how the PWG has been operating of late, characteristics of groups no longer active such as the 4-H Leadership Trust, and how best to use the PWG and communicate across the 4-H system. Some highlights follow.

- The PWG is primarily a communication tool, as 4-H National Headquarters cannot have an “advisory group” or “decision making group.” The PWG is at its best when input is needed – such as the input needed for the National Institute.
- In response to questions about adding an NAE4-HA member, discussion included: concerns that the PWG not get too large; NAE4-HA’s role is professional development – how many roles can they absorb; openness to NAE4-HA, but reservations that some information discussed, such as tax exemption issues, needs to be communicated through State 4-H Leaders first rather than through NAE4-HA membership; it is the role of the State Leader Chair (or Chair Elect) to liaison with NAE4-HA. The PWG will remain as configured.
- Members cited making decisions. When Glenn asked what decisions that group had made. the response was having input on shooting sports issues, National Congress, and the naming 4-H clubs fact sheet. Some State Leaders do view the PWG as a decision making group.
- Glenn agreed the system perspective is a challenge. The PWG is a communications group that informs decisions. It’s a sounding board, and there is a 2-way conversation. A great example – the feedback on the National Institute. Headquarters determined this was a top priority and pressed a button – and we got feedback. Communication needs to be open and fluid, the leadership at USDA needs to have a quick response mechanism that is powerful.
- 4-H was described in various ways – as 50 loosely held monarchs, with national partners; grassroots and reaching a lot of numbers which is unique; our system was set up with many local input mechanisms – on purpose.
- Concerns about 4-H included talk of holding each other accountable while remembering State 4-H Program Leaders are accountable to their Extension Directors; 4-H operating as a “veto” organization where one person can stop something; the need to come together on the “right” issues ; 70+ 4-H missions on the web; the PWG being a place to discuss issues; how to be unified; the need to decide on quality assurance and what that looks like; remaining visible within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture—keeping 4-H at the forefront.
- We’ve come a long way in how we talk about 4-H – including that while there are a lot of delivery methods, we talk about the 4 Essential Elements and the 3 Mission Mandates. We can count on Extension Directors need to support those relationships.

- Glenn – it is important to align with the priorities of the National Institute and with Deans, Extension Directors, and others to keep resources flowing. Our best connection with The National Institute is through the Extension Directors.
- Suzanne reiterated the PWG discussion - ready response, sounding board, feedback loop, voices of the system. The PWG cannot be an advisory group. This is an opportunity to get some input into a feedback loop. As an example, Suzanne requested participation in a group in support of the CSREES CRIS board. Suzanne will convene the identified group when roles are clearer. (Glenn noted that while the group will influence how 4-H is categorized, the new system will not fix multiple reporting needs.) Don advocated that USDA articulate what they need from the PWG and appreciate that they want us at the table.
- Glenn reiterated the connection to Extension Directors, finding that voice, this is our window of opportunity – keep this part of our special status as the youth program of the land-grant system providing access to all to higher education. Align with priorities. Pay attention to what is really important. Look at CYFAR – CYFAR could become open to others beyond LGUs. IPM could be wide open soon. Carnegie Mellon got the largest grant for Specialty Crops.
- ***See attached updated PWG description.***

## 2. Communications Strategies

- Suzanne reviewed the messages 4-H National Headquarters will communicate this week:
  - Focus on leadership—program quality, program priorities, policies & procedures
  - Expansion of partnerships
  - Collaboration at the national-state level – the role of the LGU
- Input from PWG on items of importance
  - Clear mission/vision (reference was made to *The Power of Youth in a Changing World – The National 4-H Strategic Plan*)<sup>1</sup>
  - Importance of being recognized in scholarship and stewardship of excellence
  - Quality 4-H Youth Development programming
  - Need for core principles. Get past “everybody gets to decide” scenario. Consider an accreditation process, like a university – self police, operate like a credible department in the university. Accreditation process – a 4-H program is or is not an accredited 4-H program. Deal with program quality – with State Leader and Extension Director input.
  - Support 4-H Headquarters’ messages; support, for example, federal agency partnerships – help them understand the power of the LGU system.
  - Governance model (Glenn) – get past sticky wickets like IRS – we will work on governance model that clearly shows where LGUs have responsibility and authority. Cornell example – “4-H connects kids to Cornell” – every 4-H youth should have a university ID. Message to Extension Directors – you are the CEO of the largest youth development organization in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Vision: A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change. Mission: 4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

- Challenge – make sure it is what you say it is. Note Cornell Extension economic impact study – included chapter about Cooperative Extension.
- Ideas –
  - White paper to share with Extension Directors, new presidents...
  - Toolkits for new State 4-H Program Leaders
  - New State Leader meeting – have language about 4-H Youth Development at LGUs to use with Directors that can go to Deans, Presidents
- PWG communications: Meet annually in the spring and at NAE4-HA – need to identify time/place

### **3. Regional Updates**

- Southern:
  - Bo Ryles – retiring, leaving in August
  - Chris Boleman – new in Texas
  - Darlene Millard – retiring
- North East:
  - Jeff Howard – new in Maryland
  - Mark Manno – acting
- North Central:
  - Denise Legvold – new in Illinois as of May 18
- Western:
  - Gary Heusel – new in Hawaii
  - Peter Nielson – new in South Dakota