

SOUTHERN REGION PROGRAM LEADERSHIP NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE CALL MINUTES

April 17, 2013 – 2:00 P.M. (CST), 3:00 P.M. (EST)

Attending: Debbie Archer, Maria Bowie, Matthew Browning, Suzanne Deatherage, Doug Edlund, Cathy Gant-Hill, Elizabeth Gregory North, Bobbie Hancock, Ed Jones, Ayanna McPhail, Lyvetta Mickell, Bob Reynolds, Lyndall Stout, Bridget Udoh

Ayanna McPhail, presiding.

Minutes of February 20, 2013, meeting: Approved with change to the header on the white paper section. Maria moved to approve. Cathy seconded.

Old Business (Plan of Work):

- Strategic Communication White Paper: Bob gave an overview of the white paper's purpose, which is to examine the position of communications within our organizations and where the communications director should be within the organizational chart, as well as to give a broad explanation of what one should expect from that role within the executive team. Current and historical snapshots of these positions have been compiled. It's been reviewed by Bob, Frankie and Ruth and now Bob is adding references. He will provide an updated draft to Ayanna for placement into Google Docs for the entire group to review and provide feedback. *[Please share a gmail account address with Ayanna so you can gain access to the document; please create one if you don't already have one.]* The plan is to share it with directors. Ed suggested sharing it at PLN. (Suzanne said that, per Ron Brown, the agenda for the director's meeting at PLN is supposed to be set one month in advance of the meeting.)
- Social Media Best Practices Initiative: Ayanna shared an update that Frankie provided prior to the call (since she couldn't make it) indicating that Frankie touched base with Terrence Wolfork on the IT committee. The group will move forward on the project.
- Communication Skills in Extension Education white paper: Maria's proposal to ACE to have a session that encourages dialogue about the topic has been accepted and will take place at the conference. Its goal is to get communication professionals from different institutions to share their current communication training methods for extension agents and educators. Suzanne has been getting information from assessment companies regarding pre-employment assessment tests. Will gather the ones that would be of most benefit to the group. Next steps include survey development to determine current training and testing practices at our institutions.

New Business:

- Association of 1890 Research Directors Impact Initiative: The ARD Chairman has asked 1890 communicators to help strengthen the impact reporting process relating to research. It is being chaired by Cathy at NCA&T. Parts of the initiative include building a success-story database with

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institutions submitting 1-2 impact stories annually on a scheduled basis. This initiative is in response to the NIFA call for stronger impact reporting. The initiative at this point is confined to research.

- Communications Representative(s) for CRD subcommittee: Elizabeth and Lori are serving on this subcommittee. Elizabeth stated that she has received no communication beyond the initial contact from the chairperson.
- Meeting in San Antonio to roll out plans for 100-year Smith-Lever Act: Suzanne shared some notes from the meeting, including that at the meeting Frankie provided a link to www.extension100years.net. Special events are being planned at the national level for 2014 including at the Galaxy Meeting and at regional summer meetings.
- Plans at Respective Institutions for the 100-year Smith-Lever Act: Maria of the University of Georgia said they were waiting to see what's in the national toolkit before making any concrete plans, but they have created a budget and outline with things such as signage, a campus event, a video project, PSAs, etc. UGA's first step was using a grad student to gather information on the history of Extension. Lyvetta stated that Alcorn will tie its annual Small Farmers Conference 2014 into a celebration of the anniversary. Alcorn may also send out educational materials.

Other Business:

- Next year's plan of work: Ayanna stated that we might be asked to provide a draft or outline of a plan of work for 2013-2014 for review ahead of the August meeting. She asked the group to begin brainstorming on ideas for next year's goals.
- PLN Newcomer Orientation: Ayanna is on a committee for this initiative and asked for ideas and suggestions for inclusion from the group. What is needed in orientation? How can it be made more interactive? Submit thoughts to her. Cathy noted that getting orientation information in advance would've been helpful. Maria added that an outline of the purpose of PLN would be helpful.
- Reminders about upcoming conferences:
 - PLN in Nashville Aug. 19-23. A session on impact reporting will be presented by Frankie and Faith Peppers of the University of Georgia, who are working with the professional development committee. Also, Frankie, Ruth and Virginia Morgan-White will be presenting an issues management session.
 - ACE-NETC in Indianapolis June 10-14. Several people from the committee are involved with ACE – Maria Bowie's panel discussion, the impact session and issues management session Frankie is presenting on with a team, Elizabeth Gregory North is leading a SIG meeting; Doug has just been named SIG director-elect. Ayanna noted that the issues management session will be running through Saturday, June 15.

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- Announcements: A reminder about the PLN Communications Team Facebook group was made. Send a personal friend request to Matt Browning at [fb.com/mabrowning](https://www.facebook.com/mabrowning) to be added.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 19, at 2 p.m. Central, 3 p.m. Eastern