

**PLC and Program Committee Chair Joint Conference Call
February 12, 2009
Minutes**

Program Leadership Committee Members in Attendance:

ANR		
COM	Debbie Archer	Frankie Gould
CD		
FCS	Kasundra Cyrus	Shirley Hastings
4-HYD	Dorothy Wilson	
IT	Lalit Rainey	Nina Boston
MM	Ellen Smoak	Ray Rice
PSD	Mitch Owen	
Assn Rep	Gaines Smith (ASRED)	
Admin Advisor	Gina Eubanks (AEA)	

Program Committee Officers in Attendance:

	<i>Chair</i>	<i>Vice Chair</i>	
ANR		William Hodge	
COM	Robin Adams	Carol Whatley	
CD	Michael Wilcox	Sandra Thompson	
FCS		Carolyn Nobles	
4-HYD	Mark Tassin		
IT	Jonathan Davis	Karen Craig	
MM	Barbara Board	Joe Schaefer	
PSD	Joyce Martin		Chris McClendon (substitute)

Ex-officio

AEA	L. Washington Lyons
ASRED	Ron Brown
SRDC	Alan Barefield
	Vicki Vaughn
	Rachel Welborn

Approval of December Minutes (http://srpln.msstate.edu/plc/plc_dec08_mins.pdf)

Minutes were approved as presented.

Update from AEA – L. Washington Lyons & Gina Eubanks

AEA met on February 3-6, 2009 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida along with the program team chairs and vice chairs of eight program teams. During the meeting, the attendees heard updates from various individuals from USDA, National 4-H Council and Dr. Ken Stokes, from the Southern Region Risk Management Center. The group also discussed Ag Day on the Hill and Farm bill opportunities.

Last Monday and Tuesday AEA representatives participated in the Budget and Advocacy Meeting in D.C. and approved the 2010 budget priorities for the system. The budget will probably be under continuing resolution until mid March 3. The committee also identified four budget themes for 2010:

- Competitive, sustainable and productive American agriculture
- Food systems and wellness
- Sustainable and renewable resources
- Workforce development and education

The 1890 community lost an individual who has contributed significantly to the system: Dr. P. D. Mayberry, former dean and research director at Tuskegee University.

Update from ASRED – Ron Brown and Gaines Smith

There have been a number of personnel changes recently:

- Larry Arrington is now Interim Senior Vice President for the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida
- Millie Ferrer is Interim Dean and Director for Extension at the University of Florida
- Jimmy Henning, at University of Kentucky, was elevated from Associate Dean and Associate Director to Associate Dean and Director
- Fran Wolak, from Clemson, plans to retire at the end of June.
- Tim Cross is now Dean and Director at Tennessee
- Paul Warner (University of Kentucky) is retiring at the end of April, with a post retirement appointment for a year.

Other items from ASRED:

- ASRED and SAAESD are meeting jointly in April.
- Paul Coreil is chairing ECOP.
- The Specialty Crops Research Initiative proposal request went out recently. March 2nd is the deadline for preliminary proposals with full proposals due in April. eXtension is one of the types of proposals that can be submitted. Those will be reviewed by the eXtension review panel which should provide a better chance of getting those funded.
- The National Extension Director/Administrator is scheduled to be held next week in New Orleans. The proposed ECOP staffing change was passed reducing the national staff by one, with each of the regions expected to give 25% of regional representative's time as part of the national team.

[PLN Structuring Report for Directors/Administrators](#)

- Overview – Owen
- Questions, Clarifications, & Final Edits – Owen
- Overview: The Directors and Administrators asked PLC to review how PLN operates, identify critical issues faced by PLN, and make recommendations on how to improve PLN based on the input of the focus group studies, survey, committee input and administrative input. A draft was constructed during the December PLC meeting and is posted to the web. The document needs to go to Administrators and Directors soon to give time for feedback before August PLN Conference.
- Several items need clarification:
 - Program committees should mirror leadership within the states. PLN is to help facilitate cooperation among the states, not to create new structure that states don't have. Mitch will edit the statement to clarify.

- Committee Chair/Vice-Chairs descriptions – PLC Committee, Chairs and Vice Chairs are encouraged to read through this section and give feedback on the descriptions within the next week.
- Ensuring fulfillment of committee duties – Who is responsible for notifying the person’s administrator or director? Directors/Administrators would likely wish to know if their representative is not participating. The Chair should first contact the individual and clarify the problem. If this does not resolve the issue, the chair can discuss the concerns with the Administrative Advisor. The Administrative Advisor then can notify the state Director/Administrator.
- Committee members should be communicating to the chairs if they are unable to participate. This is discussed during newcomer orientation. This needs to be emphasized at orientation as well as chair training.
- Time with Administrative Advisors is limited. Their time would be better spent on action items instead of information items such as state reports. The conference agenda shows when the Administrative Advisors will be with the committees. Chairs should structure the agenda to make good use of the Administrative Advisor’s time. This will be added to the committee chair description.
- Add a bullet that reflects a vice-chair’s willingness to support the duties of the chair as assigned.
- All committee officers and Administrative Advisors should be required to participate in at least 75% of the committee communication. This is different from current guidelines. If this is recommended, then the guidelines need to be adapted to reflect the change.
- All are encouraged to read the draft document in the next week and forward additional changes or suggestions to Mitch or Alan within the next week.
- PLC representative – a bullet is needed that outlines each person’s responsibility to help with annual conference. Nina will draft the bullet

[Draft PLN Conference Agenda](#) – Alan Barefield gave an overview of the agenda, highlighting and clarifying key points as he went including these:

- The Urban Task Force Tour will be Monday, August 24th. Charlie Vavrina is in charge. The registration form has a check box to indicate plans to attend.
- The PLC will meet with Program Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs on Monday at 3:30 p.m.
- Mitch Owen will be in charge of Newcomer Orientation
- Ray Mobley and Millie Ferrer were confirmed as the appropriate individuals to provide the state welcome.
- Drs. Brown and Lyons will present the session on the new Farm Bill
- Deborah Sheely (CSREES) – has been confirmed, but needs the request in a letter. Frankie will write the letter for all the speakers so all invitations will be uniform.
- Epcot speaker – Nina has contacted the University of Florida to inquire on contacts. The Director’s office pointed to Terrell Mill to provide assistance in finding a speaker. Nina has not been able to confirm a speaker yet with Terrell. Joe Shaeffer volunteered to follow up.
- Chairs and Vice Chairs were encouraged to note when Administrative Advisors will be with the committee (stated on the agenda).

- Last year PLC ran out of time on the Thursday morning meeting. Thus, the meeting will begin **promptly** at 6:45 a.m. This morning meeting includes current PLC reps and newly appointed PLC reps. Both come.

Overview of Biggest Changes to the PLN Conference – Nina Boston

- Background: The changes for this year are based on feedback from the committees, focus groups and survey. One of the biggest concerns identified was the challenge of fostering cross-committee work.
- Biggest change: The biggest change is that the conference will not start with the first half of the first day in general session. The first day morning session has been shortened and a short session has been added on Tuesday afternoon. Plans are to discuss implications of the Farm Bill with a report back time, creating a more interactive environment. Committees will be asked to report on how they will use the information given.
- A second report-back time will follow the lunch keynote on Tuesday regarding innovation. Committees will report intervention responses via PowerPoint template that will be incorporated into a single presentation to scroll during breakfast on Wednesday. There will not be a formal presentation.
- Templates are on the web site for reporting out to both the Farm Bill and Innovation Presentations (six questions). All are asked to review the templates over the next week and provide feedback to Alan or Mitch to ensure that these guidelines will provide meaningful feedback from the committees. Keep questions clear, short, and meaningful.
 - [PLC Committee Report Out Template](#)
- On Wednesday afternoon, time will be devoted to cross committee issue meetings (2 hours). Committees will be responsible for assigning representatives to each of the groups. Call participants encouraged PLC to make sure this was structured well so that it was not just busy work. Provide thought beforehand on how to structure leadership within the group so time is not wasted in organizing the group. PSD committee will be asked to identify facilitators for the groups. PLC will issue a call to committees for identifying issues before the conference that will mold the discussion groups. These issues need to be identified by June so that committees have time to decide how to ensure representation across all identified issues. Plans are to have at least one person from each committee in each group.

[Committee Chairs Training](#) - During the summer, a committee chair orientation/training will be presented so that all chairs and vice-chairs understand what will be happening at PLN.

Templates for action and information items as well as instructions are already posted to the web for review. Please make efforts to participate on the session so we are all ready to present to ASRED and AEA in a succinct manner. Let Alan know if you have any changes to suggest. Action and Information Items need to be very concise and to the point.

- [Information Items template](#) and [examples PowerPoints](#)
- [Action Items template](#) and [examples PowerPoints](#)

[New Member Orientation](#) – please review the PowerPoint and give feedback to Mitch. We will market the orientation more effectively so that Administrative Advisors, Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and PLC reps are informed of the time and encouraged to attend to welcome newcomers.

[Meeting Evaluation](#) – please review the meeting evaluation form and offer suggestions to Alan. To encourage greater participation in evaluation, we will be asking the committee chair to take responsibility of distributing the evaluations and taking them up on Thursday so we can increase the input.

[2008 Accomplishment Report](#) – All committee reports are in. Nelson Daniel, past chair of PLC, will be writing an introduction letter. Copies will be delivered to Drs. Lyons and Brown for distribution to AEA and ASRED. A portion of the next PLC call will be devoted to discussing the 2009 Accomplishment Report.

Pen drive discussion – Alan Barefield

One of the themes submitted for 2009 PLN was striving for a greener environment. In the past, the SRDC has taken charge of assembling and printing the participation lists, agendas, etc. After everyone leaves, many copies are left on the tables. One possibility is to put all documents on individual pen drives with the participant lists, etc. Chairs will have their reporting documents on their drives. Each person will still get a hard copy of the agenda, but all other documents will be on the web site and on the pen drive.

The SRDC requests that, if pen drives are used, that the SRDC be allowed to put their logo on the drives because we get a price break by ordering greater quantities than are needed for PLN. Cost is about \$8-10/drive which is offset by printing and shipping costs of paper copies.

The discussion centered on whether the pen drives were needed if all the information was on the web. Pros and cons were discussed. Alan will follow up by creating a survey to get a clearer picture of what the wishes of the group may be.

Attendance discussion – Alan Barefield

State university budgets and the economic crisis have us concerned. The contract for the hotel is already signed and rooms booked at the same rates as before the economic crisis. (The contract is signed two years in advance.) Encourage attendance as much as possible. Some universities are within the same budget year, while some will start new budgets in July. PLN is the infrastructure of all our regional work. During economic downtime is not the time to “cut the advertising budget.” With the emphasis on regionalism, cutting these efforts may send the wrong message. Could there be a conversation among AEA and ASRED to encourage participation? Dr. Lyons stated that at the last AEA meeting, all directors reported that they were facing travel cuts.

Dr. Brown suggested that early registration be backed up further than normal to help gauge attendance early. This may provide some help in negotiating adjustments with the hotel earlier. Alan reported that the PLN Registration form is ready and will be posted within the next week.

Final charge – Mitch Owen:

Please review all materials on the web and provide feedback this next week so we can finalize conference plans.

Next PLC call: April 9, 2009, 9:00 a.m. Central.

[PLC Call Date Schedule on the Web](#)