



**WINE RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
WASHINGTON STATE WINE COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
March 2, 2016  
Prosser, Washington**

**Attending:** Joy Andersen, Dick Boushey, Brian Carter, Rick Hamman, Julia Kock, Mike Means, Kay Simon, Bruce Watson, Wade Wolfe

**Absent:** Kevin Corliss, Scott Williams

**Guests and Staff:** Melissa Hansen (WSWC), Steve Warner (WSWC)

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m.

**Meeting Purpose**

Chair Rick Hamman stated the meeting purpose was to add organizational structure to the Committee, such as by-laws, process, and procedure, as a way to highlight the Committee's activities and bring transparency to the research program.

Kay Simon and Wade Wolfe gave a brief history of the wine industry research: In 1981, Sen. Max Benitz sponsored legislation (Substitute SB 3408 that specified ¼ cent tax per liter of all wine sold in the state would be designated to WSU for viticulture and enology research. The legislation stated that "when formulating or changing plans for programs and research, the College of Agriculture shall confer with representatives of the Washington Wine Society." Wolfe could not recollect if the Wine Society was a formal society with origins dating back to Walt Clore's era and research funding, or a later ad hoc committee representing the industry. Those involved pushing forward the legislation included Wolfe, Benitz, Mike Wallace, Bob Betz, and others. Wolfe's first involvement with the original Wine Advisory Committee was in 1985 when he was invited to join after he left Ste. Michelle Winery. Kay Simon was already on the Committee.

At the time, there were less than 20 wineries in the state. In the late 1990s, the WAC became formalized as a subcommittee of the WSWC.

There was unanimous consent that the name of WAC did not provide any connection to research and that changing the name to the Wine Research Advisory Committee would strengthen the linkage to research.

**Organizational Structure**



WRAC recommends the following be approved and adopted to provide structure to the research review process and activities of the Committee:

### **About Us**

The Wine Research Advisory Committee, established in 1981 through legislation, is the scientific review arm for the Washington wine industry and responsible for making research funding recommendations. WRAC is a subcommittee of the Washington State Wine Commission.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Wine Research Advisory Committee, on behalf of the Washington wine industry, is to set priorities for scientific research, review proposals, recommend funding, and support research activities.

### **Appointment of Members**

WRAC seeks broad geographic representation for its membership.

In filling vacancies, the WSWC will partner with other industry groups to disseminate application information. Candidates should submit applications to the WRAC Chair. WRAC will forward nominations to the WSWC for approval.

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- Educational background – a minimum of BS degree (e.g. viticulture, enology, chemistry, biology) is suggested
- Analytical thinker and highly interested in research
- Minimum of five years in the wine industry
- Willing to commit required time to review proposals, meet with researchers and attend WRAC meetings
- Willing to commit minimum three years to serve as WRAC member
- Be a resident of Washington State

### **Structure**

WRAC strives for appropriate balance of member disciplines in alignment with research priorities.

- Currently, there are 11 members. The number of members will be reviewed annually and adjusted according to the needs and growth of the industry.
- At least one non-voting member will be the director (and/or designee) of WSU's Agriculture Research Center.
- The Committee elects officers, such as chair and vice-chair each year during the annual meeting. Annual meetings are held following the first WSWC Board meeting of the new fiscal year (FY July 1 - June 30).
- Each committee member will submit annual letters of commitment no later than the annual meeting.
- A member of the WSWC's Research Committee, preferably the Chair, will hold one voting seat on WRAC.



- In the event that a member is not fulfilling his or her WRAC obligations, the Chair will initiate a three-step process: 1) Coaching/Communication, 2) Documented, and agreed to, plan for improvement, and 3) As a last resort, the Chair will bring the matter to the Committee for a vote for removal, a step requiring a majority vote. All members represent the industry and serve at the discretion of the WSWC.
- To confirm or remove a new committee member, two-thirds of the WRAC must agree, before approval is sought from the WSWC.
- Minutes of meetings will be taken by the WSWC Research Program Manager and distributed to WRAC no later than 10 days following the meeting date.

### **Travel expenses**

Expenses (hotel, mileage, meals, and incidentals) incurred for meeting attendance can be reimbursed by the WSWC, according to Washington State Office of Financial Management – Travel Regulations: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/resources/travel.asp> .

### **Administration**

A calendar of dates, deadlines, and meetings will be approved annually by WRAC and published on the WSWC's web site.

Existing Annual WRAC Milestones:

1. Set research priorities.
2. Seek priority setting input from industry and research community through survey.
3. Administer industry survey, summarize results and report back to the industry.
4. Finalize research priorities.
5. Issue RFPs (request for proposals).
6. Chair assigns leads for all projects and balances member work load as necessary.
7. Research Program Manager follows up with researchers to ensure they know their Lead.
8. Ongoing communications between Leads and researchers are encouraged, with mid-term Lead reports shared with WRAC and tracked by Research Program Manager.
9. Review progress reports.
10. Review new proposals.
11. Finalize funding recommendations.
12. Present funding recommendations to WSWC for approval.

### **Funding sources**

Current funding sources for viticulture and enology research come from:

WSWC (24%)

Auction of WA Wines (23%)

Liter tax on all wines sold in Washington (28%)

WSU – Agriculture Research Center (25%)



### **Other Business**

WRAC provided input to Hansen in development of an on-line industry survey that will be administered in early April as a way to broaden industry input in the setting of research priorities. Survey Monkey will be utilized to conduct the survey. In addition to asking about research priorities, the survey will gather baseline information about awareness of research, how industry currently accesses research and how they would like to receive research. The following suggestions were offered by WRAC:

Survey researchers as well as industry for priorities.

Ask in the email that the survey be forwarded to the appropriate person involved with viticulture and enology.

Survey should ask for general information (what category do you best identify yourself with: grower, winemaker, researcher, size of operation- acres, cases of wine produced).

Include the current research priorities and ask to rank the top five. Ask what other topic areas are important to you.

Hansen will draft survey questions and share with WRAC and the Research Committee to fine tune before sending out.

Survey timing would be at the discretion of the Committee. It could be annual, or at a minimum, every three years.

Hamman adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.