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WINE

WINE RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Virtual Annual Meeting - Minutes

June 25, 2020

1 p.m.

Chair Rick Hamman called the Annual Meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

Members present: Rick Hamman, Leah Adint, Dick Boushey, Scott Williams, Linn Scott, Wade Wolfe, Brian Carter, Kevin Corliss, Marie-Eve Gilla, Kay Simon

Staff: Melissa Hansen, Steve Warner

Guests: Dr. Thomas Henick-Kling and Dr. Scot Hulbert, WSU, Will Beightol, Collab Wine Co.

A quorum was in effect.

Approval of Minutes

Action: *MOVED by Wade Wolfe, SECONDED by Dick Boushey and unanimously CARRIED to approve the minutes from the June 28, 2019 and March 13, 2020 meetings.*

Research/WSU Updates – Research is a bright spot in the turbulent wine industry challenged with excess supply and closed tasting rooms from the pandemic. Hansen shared:

- USDA is hiring two new vit scientists at Prosser – soil health (27 applications), precision viticulture position posted; Virology position at Corvallis (to replace Dr. Bob Martin) closes July 10
- USDA Smoke Exposure Research fund are distributed: WSU/OSU/UC: each \$300K, ARS: \$900,000
- Markus Keller received \$4.7 million Optimizing Vineyard Nutrition SCRI grant to be announced later
- Auction of WA Wines has moved its August event to an on-line auction.
- Wine Commission has \$383,223 in research reserves (Salazar and Perez declined grant awards).

Thomas Henick-Kling reported that the V & E degree was recently approved by the NW college accreditation organization, the V & E Department has been approved and the degree completion approved for Tri-Cities. New students declaring V & E major this Fall will complete their last two years in Tri-Cities. Scot Hulbert shared budget reductions of an initial 15% are being put in place due to the pandemic and loss of state revenue. Plot fees and other services involved in research projects will be impacted as part of the reduced budget.

Research Proposal – Flash Technology Pilot Project – Will Beightol of Collab Wine, a viticulture consulting company, requested funding for a demonstration project titled Crop Estimation through Remote Sensing. Background information on the Flash technology of Bloomfield Robotics, a start-up company to commercialize the technology that was developed at Carnegie Mellon University and part of the SCRI Efficient Vineyard Project, was sent to the WRAC prior to the annual meeting. (Proposal attached.) The request of \$15,850 would allow Will to scan 10 vineyard blocks with the sensor, ground truth and compare scan information with actual harvested crop. Committee members asked Melissa Hansen to request that Wade be a project collaborator and be allowed to provide input and observe field collections; request that SMWE be a vineyard cooperator; ask how Will can account for data not collected at the start of the season from the Wine Commission funded blocks; and if Bloomfield has plans to publish the results. Hansen will send Will's response to the Committee for a follow-up vote on the project by email. Wade will work to have Manoj Karkee bring his smartphone app into one of the blocks for comparison and correlation. It was pointed out that crop estimation is a very high research priority.

2020-2021 Research Priorities – Hansen briefly reviewed results from the annual Research Survey as a summary was mailed earlier to WRAC. Participation was reduced by about half from the previous year (92 responses in 2020, 175 in 2019), which was attributed to the pandemic. Although the Committee had concern of survey fatigue by industry members, it was agreed that the survey is an important tool to receive input from industry. Hansen was encouraged to conduct the survey earlier in the year (perhaps January) to see if response numbers improve. Rootstock management and phylloxera were new topics added to the priority list, along with several new enology topics. She suggested a different format (paragraph style instead of bullet points) and will send out a revised list for final review and approval by the Committee.

Research Review - No changes were suggested for the pre-proposal process or timing. Deadline will continue to be November 15 and virtual meeting to make decisions scheduled for November 19. WRAC Chair should appoint leads for all pre-proposals invited to the Research Review and leads are encouraged to work closely with researcher to flesh the pre-proposal into a full proposal.

Discussion was held regarding the format for the Research Review. There was not clear committee consensus for the timing of making final decisions. Last year was the first time to make decisions immediately after the project presentations. Hansen will prepare two options (in-person and Zoom conferencing) for the Research Review and send back to the Committee for review and approval.

Chair Hamman shared that several members requested the score sheet be revised to facilitate scoring of projects from outside WSU. Hansen prepared a draft score sheet based on AVF, WSDA and Pesticide Registration Commission score sheets and shared with members prior to the meeting. Revisions were made to the scoring weight of objectives. (See attached final score sheet.)

Research Calendar and Timeline

Hansen will prepare a research calendar and send to the Committee with options for the Research Research dates and format.

Other Business

- Intentions to serve another year were received from Boushey, Hamman, Wolfe, Simon, Carter, Williams and Corliss. The other WRAC members serve appointed three-year terms and declaration of intention is not necessary.
- Election of officers – Rick Hamman announced his intention to not run for Chair, a position he has held for five or so years.

Action: MOVED by Brian Carter, SECONDED by Kay Simon that Linn Scott be nominated Chair. There was a unanimous vote to elect Linn Scott as Chairman of WRAC.

MOVED by Marie-Eve Gilla, SECONDED by Brian Carter that Scott Williams be nominated Vice Chair. There was unanimous vote to elect Scott Williams as Vice Chair of WRAC.

- Search for viticulture WRAC member – Dick Boushey reported on efforts to find a replacement for the open position created when Julia Kock resigned in 2019. Covid-19 has slowed progress in meeting with candidates. If members have suggestions, they are to share with Dick, Rick and Linn.

There being no further business, Chair Linn Scott adjourned the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

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