



WASHINGTON STATE WINE COMMISSION

WINE RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING

June 28, 2019

Prosser, Washington

MINUTES

Attending: Leah Adint, Dick Boushey, Brian Carter, Kevin Corliss, Rick Hamman, Julia Kock, Kay Simon, Linn Scott, Russ Smithyman, Bruce Watson and Wade Wolfe

Guests and Staff: Melissa Hansen (WSWC), Steve Warner, (WSWC), Thomas Henick-Kling (WSU), Scot Hulbert, David Gang, Martin Hubbard - (WSU-ARC)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.

WSU/WSWC MOU Update

A final draft of the MOU was emailed to the Committee prior to the meeting. Steve Warner shared that WSU CAHNRS Dean Andre Wright was ready to sign off on the MOU, which had gone through several rounds of negotiations. The agreement to pay off WSU's approximately \$2 million debt on construction of the Wine Science Center was approved by the Wine Commission board in January with the caveat that payments be made in installments based on milestones achieved by WSU to accomplish a V & E Department. The final MOU reviewed by WRAC has the three components desired by the wine industry: V & E degree, V&E department and the last two years of study completed at Tri-Cities campus. The first payment will be made in April 2020 after WRAC has reviewed the milestones identified in the MOU.

Action: Moved by Wade Wolfe, seconded by Kevin Corliss and unanimously carried that the Committee approve signing of the MOU by Steve Warner.

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory Tour and Visit

Hansen developed a relationship with Jenn Lee of PNNL's Transfer and Development Office last summer, who encouraged the wine industry to explore collaboration with PNNL. Lee arranged for an industry tour and meeting of WRAC members with PNNL scientists to discuss areas of mutual interest. Hansen, Dick Boushey, Rick Hamman, Linn Scott and Wade Wolfe attended the June 24, 2019. The Environmental Molecular Sciences Lab tour showcased PNNL's plant growth chambers, mass spectrometry, HC, GC, NRM (magnetic) equipment and more. Notes of the meeting taken by PNNL were sent to WRAC members. The purpose of the meeting was to start dialogue with PNNL to learn if there are areas for future collaboration, particularly with WSU faculty and researchers. Areas



identified by PNNL that may have potential are rhizosphere microbiome, molecular profiles, source-sink interactions, genome-to-phenome maps. Hansen will continue to explore potential collaboration.

Overview of Strategic Research Plan FY 2020-2023

The Wine Commission paid off the industry's \$7.4 million commitment to build the Wine Science Center in May 2019. An updated strategic research plan is needed to guide the Wine Commission's scaled up research program. Drafts of the plan, developed over the past 9 months, was shared with WRAC in November, May and June. The Wine Commission Board approved the plan on June 21. The Committee focused on the plan's three new areas - Wine Commission's competitive grant research program, competitive grants for demonstration/proof of concept research and a strategic research initiative. For FY20, approximately \$1 million of the Wine Commission's budget will be allocated to the Research Program. The Wine Commission's competitive research grant program will run separately but simultaneously with the statewide research program, sharing deadlines and simultaneous review procedures. (Further discussion is contained in FY20 RFA and RFP agenda item.)

- *Proof of concept/Demonstration Research Program* – addresses need for extension/practical application trials and provides way to involve community colleges and university undergraduates and fund proof of concept projects. Hansen proposed that the WA Wine Technical Group assist in reviewing the proposals as she anticipates significant expansion in the future of proposals for WRAC to review. Results could be presented at the Tech Group's annual Trial Showcase. Of the \$1 million budget, \$55,000 is budgeted for operations and outreach; \$745,000 budgeted for research. The demonstration program was proposed to start small, with \$35,000 available for grants that would fund four to five projects.

Concerns expressed by members:

- Some trials from previous Tech Group showcases have not been well planned and some published trials conducted at community colleges have lacked in research design. Proposals must be well planned and executed to provide valuable data to industry.
- \$35,000 would take away from other research grant awards
- WRAC should be the review arm
- Clear protocol and standards need to be established to ensure high quality proposals are submitted

Hansen will develop research protocol standards to guide demonstration trials; proposals will be reviewed by WRAC during normal review process of other research. Hansen will develop an RFP similar to the pre-proposal format.

- *Strategic Research Initiative* – concept is to identify a research initiative (major industry issue or priority) in which innovative research can result in transformational changes. Hansen envisions a planning summit to bring diverse disciplines, R & D, outside the box thinkers together with traditional research community to identify potential research. WRAC would then review research proposals and recommend funding. \$300,000 has been budgeted for initiative research, \$10,000 for the planning summit. The \$300,000 is not anticipated to impact the current statewide research program but could enable the Wine Commission to seek other federal grants. Industry feedback from past Research Surveys identified grapevine



virus, mechanization/precision viticulture and climate change as top priorities. In 2018, WRAC developed four long-term, grand challenges areas:

1. Precision Viticulture
2. Climate Change
3. Virus Management
4. Wine Quality

WRAC members individually shared their top initiative topic. Precision viticulture/mechanization and grapevine virus were within one vote of each other; climate change received 1 vote. Members discussed the pros and cons of virus and precision viticulture/mechanization.

Grapevine virus: *Pros* – significant economic problem, impacts long-term vineyard viability and health, impacts fruit quality of virus (economic problem impacting long-term vineyard viability and grape quality). *Cons* – can a research solution be found?

Precision Vit/Mechanization: *Pros* - economic impact from labor shortages and wage increases, offers something for wineries, WSU's Center for Precision Ag Systems already established, is a top priority of National Grape Research Alliance, topic is broad enough to cover wide area of vineyard and winery topics. *Cons* – Broad topic, scope will need to be narrowed.

WRAC choose Precision Viticulture and Enology as the research initiative topic.

Subcommittee of Linn Scott, Russ Smithyman and Leah Adint were appointed to work with Hansen to define and narrow the scope of research priorities and topics .

Research Survey Results/Research Priority Review

Overview of 2019 Research Survey

- 175 total responses (up from 162 responses in 2018)
- Well balanced between winery and vineyard responses

Committee reviewed ratings of research categories and research topics suggestions. It was suggested that the wording of smoke taint will be changed to “smoke effects from wildfires” and “effects from freeze” be added. It was also suggested that the survey be open year-round for industry to share feedback or list problems as they arise.

Action: Moved by Kay Simon, seconded by Brian Carter, and unanimously carried that the Research Priority list as reviewed be approved, with the suggested changes above (smoke exposure and freeze effects) made. A draft will go to the Committee for final review. Hansen will include the list in the RFP and announce the list to industry. Russ Smithyman will work with Hansen to develop priorities for the Unified Grant Management program.

FY 20 RFAs and RFPs for Statewide and Wine Commission Research Programs

Hansen distributed drafts for the Request for Application and Request for Proposal for the Washington State Grape and Wine Research Program and new Wine Commission Research Program prior to the meeting. The Wine Commission program will participate in the Unified Grant Management Program that coordinates RFPs for American Vineyard Foundation, Oregon Wine Board, and others. This will help publicize the Wine Commission's new program.



Hansen shared a streamlined RFP for the statewide program that closely follows the format used by the Unified Grant Management program. The Committee reviewed the draft RFAs and RFPs. It was noted that paying research grants in three installments (proposed for the Wine Commission grants) may not be acceptable to some universities that need research funding up front. Hansen will check with Oregon Wine Board to learn if this has been a problem as they pay in three installments. Pre-proposal screening is still planned for the statewide program but will not be part of the Wine Commission program.

Date for Pre-proposal submittal will be November 15, 2019. WRAC will screen and choose pre-proposals to invite for full submittal by teleconference on November 21, 2019. Deadline for full proposals for both statewide and Wine Commission grants is January 31, 2020.

Hansen will include mention of WRAC Leads in the RFAs and determine payment schedule and resend RPA and RFP to the Committee for final review.

Changes to Research Review Format

Rick Hamman noted that other review committees (Tree Fruit, Pesticide Registration Commission) make funding recommendations at the end of research reviews while things are fresh instead of holding another meeting several weeks later. To eliminate travel by members from the westside, he suggested the Committee convene at the end of the Research Review, meet for dinner and make funding recommendations. This means that members must review and preliminarily score proposals before the Research Review. He also suggested that as the number of research proposals increase, WRAC members would only be required to score those proposals that fall in their viticulture or enology expertise. Those members who want to score all would be free to do so. Last year, 28 proposals were submitted for review - 19 in the viticulture category, 9 related to enology.

WRAC agreed to try the new Research Review format for 2020. Research Review will be February 25-26 (1.5 days for presentations, afternoon and dinner following the review used to make funding recommendations).

Calendar for 2019-20

A draft calendar was distributed. Hansen will finalize dates and resubmit to WRAC. Annual Meeting will be Thursday, June 25, 2020.

Election of Officers/Commitment to Continue Serving

- Bruce Watson submitted his resignation from the Committee effective June 30, 2019.
- Statements of intent to serve for the coming fiscal year were received from all WRAC members (with the exception of the newly appointed members that serve a three-year term).
- By-laws state that chair and vice chair are elected annually.

Action: Moved by Kay Simon, seconded by Dick Boushey and unanimously carried that Rick Hamman be nominated Chair for FY20. There was unanimous vote to elect Hamman as chair.

Action: Moved by Kay Simon, seconded by Bruce Watson and unanimously carried that Linn Scott be nominated Vice Chair for FY 20. There was unanimous vote to elect Scott as vice chair.



It was agreed that Bruce Watson's position should be filled to continue the WRAC succession plan of bringing new members to the committee. The pool of applicants on file interested in serving on WRAC will be reviewed by a subcommittee appointed by Chair Hamman. The subcommittee will report to WRAC with a suggested name for appointment by the Wine Commission Board.

Action: Hamman appointed Linn Scott, Dick Boushey and Rick Hamman to review the pool of candidates for nomination by WRAC. Nomination will be presented to the Wine Commission board at their August 16, 2019 meeting for appointment.

Hamman adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Hansen
Research Program Manager
Washington State Wine Commission
July 12, 2019