



Wine Research Advisory Committee Annual Meeting
Thurston Wolfe Winery
June 16, 2021

Chair Linn Scott called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m.

Present: Linn Scott, Dick Boushey, Brian Carter, Marie-Eve Gilla, Rick Hamman, Lacey Lybeck, Russ Smithyman, Kay Simon, Scott Williams Wade Wolfe
Staff: Melissa Hansen, WSWC
Guests: Scot Hulbert, Director of WSU's Agriculture Research Center

A quorum was in effect.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Wade Wolfe, SECONDED by Kay Simon, and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED to approve the annual meeting minutes from June 25, 2020 and minutes from April 26, 2021.

WSU Update

Scot Hulbert reported activity at WSU:

- Labs and research activities are returning to normal for those vaccinated.
- Rich Koenig, chair of the Crops and Soils department was appointed interim CAHNRS Dean. A search for new dean will begin in the fall.
- CAHNRS hiring plan was submitted to Administration, with V&E Chair included as priority, along with several other vacant department chairs.
- New weed scientist has been hired.
- Digital agriculture/AI is a growth area for WSU, and they anticipate a major grant award to WSU will be announced later this summer. Wine industry should make its precision viticulture and enology needs known to WSU.

Precursor Research Project Budget Shortfall

Brian Carter shared that the Research Winemaking project (Harbertson) approved for FY 23 does not include \$15,000 for winemaking costs related to Thomas Henick-Kling and Hailan Piao's precursor research project. Winemaking for the project includes 15 Cabernet Sauvignon samples and 15 Chardonnay samples, totaling 30 at \$500 per wine sample. It is the responsibility of the PI to discuss research winemaking needs with Jim Harbertson in advance of submitting proposals.

MOVED by Rick Hamman, SECONDED by Russ Smithyman, and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED that an additional \$15,000 be added to the Research Winemaking project to cover winemaking for the project *Impact of Yeast and Malolactic Bacteria on Wine Flavor Precursors*.

Research Priorities for 2021-22

The annual Research Survey generated 123 responses from Washington growers, wineries and the research community. Data from the survey was reviewed. It was noted that although sustainability is on the current priority list under both Vineyard and Winery, it should be more prominently positioned for visibility. Research to develop additional sustainability tools will be important as the industry implements the new certified sustainable program. Sustainability was mentioned several

times in the survey data for new research topics. Committee members also suggested including biochar in the vine and soil health and specifically listing grape mealybug as a pest. Also, Emerging Issues should be a stand-alone priority and not be included under Viticulture as it also applies to Enology.

MOVED by Kay Simon, SECONDED by Wade Wolfe and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED that the 2021-22 Research Priorities with the above-mentioned changes be approved.

WRAC MEMBERSHIP/ELECTION OF OFFICERS

WRAC membership is balanced between volunteers with vineyard and winemaking expertise. With the resignation of Leah Adint, who relocated to Oregon's Erath Winery, there is an opening on the enology side. WRAC agreed there is value in having a winemaker from the state's largest winery on the committee, but stability and continuity are also important. Hansen will reach out to SMWE to learn of their interest in suggesting a winemaker willing to serve on WRAC. Hansen noted that a list of potential members for future nominations is kept. All WRAC members are encouraged to share names of potential members with Hansen.

All current WRAC members indicated their intent to serve for 2021-22.

MOVED by Kay Simon, SECONDED by Brian Carter and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED that Linn Scott be nominated as Chair and Scott Williams as Vice Chair.

PNNL Wastewater Proposal

Juan Lopez-Ruiz, an engineer in the Catalysis Science and Application department at the Pacific Northwest Laboratory in Richland, has developed catalytic technology with potential to remove contaminants from winery wastewater. He has reached out to a handful of large wineries in the Tri-Cities area to share the concept and identify interest. Ruiz would like to apply for a grant from the Dept of Energy to further develop the technology. To move the project forward, he needs to find a minimum of \$100,000 (\$50,000 can be in-kind match). The Committee is interested in the concept but wants to see the research proposal and better understand the scalability of the technology. Hansen will reach out to Ruiz for a proposal. Hansen will also explore the possibility of research grants from the Department of Ecology and Port of Benton.

FY 2023-25 Research Program Budgets

Dick Boushey, chair of the WSWC Research Committee, shared that the Research Committee has initiated budget planning for FY 2023 through 2025. The Committee is taking a multi-year approach to the budget for succession and strategic planning. The Research Committee believes that sustainable research and education may become more important if there is widespread adoption of the certified sustainable program under development. More work will be done in the coming months and a draft budget will be shared with WRAC as the process moves forward.

Smart Vineyard

A smart vineyard concept paper developed by Scott Waller of Thingy, LLC, was distributed to WRAC prior to the meeting. Waller has wired the Roza Research Vineyard as part of Tom Collins' smoke research project to receive air quality data through remote sensors. Waller proposes to take advantage of the connectivity of the vineyard to create a smart vineyard. A pre-proposal will be developed for FY 23.

The meeting was paused and resumed at the WSU Roza Research Vineyard for a tour. One of the portable hoop houses used in the smoke trial was on display for the committee. A team of WSU students described the smoke simulation process and Waller showed how the air sensors will work.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.