



Wine Research Advisory Committee Annual Meeting
Thurston Wolfe Winery
June 14, 2022

Chair Linn Scott called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m.

Present: Linn Scott, Dick Boushey, Kevin Corliss, Marie-Eve Gilla, Lacey Lybeck, Katie Nelson, Russ Smithyman, Kay Simon, Scott Williams, Wade Wolfe
Staff: Melissa Hansen, WSWC

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 16, 2021.

WRAC Membership/Election of Officers/Timeline for 2023

Linn Scott conducted a roll call to learn of committee member plans to serve another year. Rick Hamman shared his intent via phone with Melissa. Linn will reach out to Brian Carter to learn of his intent. (Brian Carter stated his intent to serve another year to Linn Scott following the meeting.) Russ Smithyman gave his resignation of serving as a member of WRAC. He has accepted a viticulture extension position with Michigan State University beginning in August. All other committee members expressed intent to serve another year. Rick, Dick and Linn will review the list of potential WRAC members that was compiled two years ago for a replacement and identify a couple of names. Melissa will reach out then to see if they are interested. Members should share names of potential members with Linn. Ideally, a candidate would be identified and nominated by WRAC in time for appointment at the next WSWC board meeting on August 12.

MOVED by Wade Wolfe, SECONDED by Kevin Corliss, and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED that Linn Scott be elected chair and Scott Williams as vice chair.

The 2022-23 WRAC Calendar was approved and will be shared with the Committee. Calendar invites will be sent to all for ease of scheduling and holding the dates.

Research Priorities

The Committee reviewed results of the 2022 Research Survey. Smoke was listed as the most important research topic. The Committee did not find any areas of the current research priority list that warranted revision and recommended to keep the 2021-22 list as is.

MOVED by Dick Boushey, SECONDED by Wade Wolfe, and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED to approve the attached list of Research Priorities for the 2022-23.

Grant Program RFP Review

- Length - During the Research Review, Markus Keller and Jim Harbertson asked the Committee to review the project length of maintenance or support type projects, like the vineyard maintenance and research winemaking support to at least five years. Additionally, Melissa asked the Committee to consider increasing the length of projects (WSU and WSWC grant projects) with PhD. Students from three to four years as it tracks better with their completion dates and helps reduce accounting paperwork. The Committee was supportive of making both changes: research vineyard

maintenance and support and research winemaking projects can be approved for up to five years; other projects that can be justified with PhD students can be approved for up to four years. Projects must still be annually reviewed and recommended for continual funding by WRAC. Hansen will incorporate the changes in the FY24 RFP grant applications and have WRAC review changes before finalization.

- Research wine sensory evaluation – Jim Harbertson brought it to Melissa's attention that currently, research wines do not include sensory evaluation as part of the project. He no longer can send research wines to UCD for free sensory work as was the case pre-pandemic and other researchers should not assume that making wine includes sensory work. The Committee agreed there is value in sensory evaluation. The Research Winemaking Guidelines of the grant RFP should be clear that sensory evaluation is not included in the winemaking fee. As soon as the new Department Chair is in place, WRAC should initiate discussions with the chair and Jim to find a solution. Oregon State University can perform sensory work if given 6-12 months lead time and this is an option for current projects. Costs would have to be reflected in the FY24 budgets. Cost for sensory depends on the project, but according to Elizabeth Tomasino, prices range between \$5,000 to \$20,000. Dr. Hildegard Heymann at UCD charges up to \$70,000 for sensory work. A sensory technician could be hired by WSU to conduct the work.

Research Budget Forecast

Melissa shared a three-year research budget forecast (Attached.) The short crops in the last three years have adequately funded research, but not allowed any targeted focus on issues like leafroll virus. The WSWC Board of Directors would like WRAC to set a target for the research reserve account. There was consensus to set the target reserve amount for \$400,000 and re-evaluate that level in two years, giving the Auction of WA Wines a chance to rebound from the pandemic and the WSU V& E Department to become established. Future budgets could focus more resources on sustainability research if the new Sustainable WA program is well accepted by industry.

WSU V&E Curriculum Review

Melissa shared results of a survey of WSU graduates and employers of recent graduates that was conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program for Committee feedback. The Committee agreed that science is important but so is practical knowledge. Lacey Lybeck shared that management and human relations courses are missing from the curriculum. The WA Wine Technical Group was also sending the survey link to its members. Results of the survey will serve as a starting point in discussions with the new V&E Department Chair.

Acreage and Variety Statistics

The last grape acreage survey was conducted in conjunction with the tree fruit industry in 2017 through a WSDA Specialty Crop Block grant. The Ag Land Use division of WSDA conducts windshield crop acreage surveys every three years. WSDA pegs wine grape acreage at 57,000 acres and has a map with every vineyard located but not by AVA or variety. There is need to update the acreage, both for crop estimation purposes and for grower and winery decision making. The WSWC staff is continually asked by trade and media for variety acreage. Oregon Wine Board spends about \$70,000 annually for the University of Oregon to conduct and compile a grape and crush report. The Committee agreed there is value in updating statistics and would like to explore with WSWC staff the ability to gather more data from the current grape report filed by wineries and growers. Additionally, WSWC should reach out to the other wine organizations to explore joint funding of a survey.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Committee members were encouraged to attend the V&E Chair Finalist presentation at the Wine Science Center at 3:30 p.m.