



Research Committee/Wine Research Advisory Committee

Annual Meeting

Thurston Wolfe Winery

June 14, 2023

Chair Linn Scott called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

Present: Linn Scott, Dick Boushey, Brian Carter, Kade Casciato, Kevin Corliss, Rick Hamman, Katie Nelson, Kay Simon, Scott Williams, Wade Wolfe, Sadie Drury
Staff: Melissa Hansen, Kristina Kelley, WSWC
Guests: WSU- Jean Dodson Peterson, V&E Department Chair, Wendy Powers, Dean of CAHNRS, Scot Hulbert, Director of Ag Research Center
Kent Waliser, Sagemoor Vineyards

A quorum was in effect.

WSU Wine Science Center MOU Debt Repayment

The WSWC Research Committee joined WRAC to discuss progress made by WSU regarding the MOU agreement between the WSWC and WSU for debt still owed on the Wine Science Center. The MOU spells out 4 milestones to be completed by WSU before annual payment on \$1.95M. Three payments of \$200K have been made. The first items of the MOU (create a V&E degree and V&E Department) have been completed. The third item called 2+2 (last two years required to be completed at TriCities campus) could not be implemented in a phased in model because there are too many student variables. Thus, in Fall 2024, new students majoring in V&E must be at the TriCities campus to take V&E labs and classes, however, exceptions can be made. The fourth item includes several expectations of a new department (revenue generation through teaching, clearly identified structure of department, defined accountability, integration between Pullman/TriCities/Prosser, defined organizational chart, fully funded maintenance and operations of Wine Science Center, teaching vineyard, research facilities in Prosser, fully funded equipment upgrades and updates and key support staff including a research winemaker).

- Establishment of V&E Department – Jean Dodson Peterson gave an update on progress in setting up the Department and work to revise curriculum. The teaching vineyard has been reimagined and will play a key role in classroom labs once it is redeveloped.
- Wendy Powers – she shared that a 16% reduction in state funds has occurred which translates to \$600,000 cut from the Ag College for FY 24. She has no resources for new Department startup, including administrative support. She said the MOU wasn't properly signed because it lacked signatures of the President and TriCities Chancellor. From Dean Powers' perspective, CAHNRS has addressed all items in the MOU.
- Research winemaker recently resigned for a better paying industry position. The research winemaking project's budget had included increases for salary and benefits the last two years, but increases were not passed on. Scot Hulbert responded that if Human Resources doesn't approve the increase, it does not go into effect and the additional funds remain in the project account.
- Jean Dodson Peterson's signing contract includes administrative support and six faculty

positions. Dean Powers has no plans to provide support or faculty.

Committee members highlighted the following immediate concerns for the Department:

1. Administrative support is needed
2. Teaching vineyard needs redevelopment
3. New faculty lines will soon be needed
4. Research winery fermentation software is obsolete and must be upgraded

MOVED by Rick Hamman, SECONDED by Wade Wolfe, and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED that the Washington State Wine Commission withhold payment of \$200,000 at this time and assemble a task force to work with Powers, Dodson Peterson, President Kirk Schultz, Provost Elizabeth Chilton and Tri-Cities Chancellor Sandra Hayes to find a path forward.

Next steps for the MOU: Determine who holds the account and where it is located. Task Force members suggested to work on drafting a new MOU are Kent Waliser, Wade Wolfe, Linn Scott and Dick Boushey and WSWC staff.

Research Vineyard Deficit

The Committee considered two requests from WSU IAREC relating to the research vineyard:

1. Approve transfer of surplus funds (\$14,000) from the current research vineyard support and maintenance account to an older service center account that has a \$22,516.58 deficit.
2. Provide \$8516.58 to clear the outstanding deficit.

MOVED by Rick Hamman, SECONDED by Wade Wolfe, and UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED that WRAC recommend to the Washington State Wine Commission Board of Directors to pay \$8,516.58 to IAREC to clear the outstanding debt on the research vineyard.

V&E Department Equipment

Bhaskar Bondada was asked to provide information regarding the cost of upgrading the department's current digital camera used for microscopy research. The current camera, nearly 20 years old, is not compatible with new modern computers. A full package of two cameras, adapters and software for a work station would cost \$23,785. No action was taken by the committee to purchase the camera equipment.

Research Priorities

The Committee reviewed results of the 2023 Research Survey. It was suggested that incentive be given to encourage survey participation, such as a free ticket to a WineVit session. The survey data shows that many of the respondents are unaware of current research efforts as the topics they list for future priorities are already on the priority list, or the topic is related to extension work and not research. It was suggested that the Research Program Director utilize such topics for future WAVE newsletter discussions and point readers to additional resources. The committee had no changes to make to the current Research Priorities list.

WRAC Membership

Except for Rick Hamman, who after 15 years of service to WRAC will step down, all members signed the intent to serve for FY24. With Rick's departure from WRAC, two vacancies from the viticulture side need filling. Lacey Lybeck resigned from the committee in May. Chair Linn Scott appointed Kade, Scott and Dick to join him to serve as the nominating subcommittee and bring a candidate forward for nomination by WRAC and appointment before the WSWC Board meeting on August 18. Several

names were suggested for follow-up by the subcommittee to learn if they are willing. Once a candidate is confirmed, WRAC will meet virtually to nominate.

FY 24 Research Grant Program

The Committee reviewed the 2023 Research Review process and suggested the following changes for FY24:

- Both the WSWC Research Grant Program and the WA State Grape and Wine Research Grant Program should have a pre-proposal process.
- Collaboration with WSU is mandatory for all proposals except the one-year demonstration trials at community colleges.
- Industry members will be invited to physically attend for the Research Review. (Since the pandemic, industry participation has been virtual.)
- A cloud-based grant management software program will be utilized for FY 24. Applications will be submitted through an online portal and WRAC will review proposals online.
- Research Calendar for 2023-24 will follow the same track as 2022-23. Pre-proposals will be due in mid-November with the preproposal reviews to be completed the last week of November. A timeline will be provided to WRAC by August 1.
- Discussion should be held with WRAC Leads first before making any changes to Lead assignments.
- Date for the 2024 Annual WRAC Meeting will be set as soon as the WSWC Board meeting for June 2024 is determined.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

