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February 18, 2010 - ALEC Departmental Meeting Minutes

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February 18, 2010, ALEC Departmental Staff Meeting
East Campus Union

Attending: Sarika Agarwal, Cheryl Alberts, Mark Balschweid, Kathy Bennetch, Terry Bockstadter, Betty Castan, Jan Cejka, Natalie Enochs, Dick Fleming, Mary Garbacz, Karen Gatherer, Gary Goodding, Jennifer Greenlee, Janice Hamer, Heath Harding, Kurtis Harms, Lisa Hastings, Mark Hendricks, Dann Husmann, Lisa Jasa, Lana Johnson, Mike Kamm, Sandi Karstens, Jim King, Matt Kreifels, Renee Lanik, Bob Losee, Gina Matkin, Brad Mills, Anne Moore, Dan Moser, Marcia Oetjen, Pam Peters, Anita Schaepe, Shawn Sheets, Vishal Singh, Ken Smith, Linda Ulrich, Rob White, Dave Wiens, Mike Wilmot and Judy Wolfe

Meeting started at 9:00 a.m.

Introductions and Getting to Know Each Other
Mark Balschweid welcomed everyone to the first all-department staff meeting of the spring semester. Using information from the ALEC "Getting to Know One Another" Questionnaire, Mark Balschweid had the meeting participants guess the five staff members he was describing (Jason Ellis, Anita Schaepe, Kathy Bennetch, Shawn Sheets and Matt Kreifels).

Changes in EdMedia
Karen Gatherer, Interim Director of Educational Media, discussed the transition of moving EdMedia forward. Karen began her presentation by stating that EdMedia needs to identify and focus on the collective potential. We need to identify the things that drive us with a passion, which is a core ideology for business. We also need to identify what won't change because this will free us up to explore. One of our advantages is the IANR brand in agriculture, Nebraska, nationally and internationally. Another advantage is that EdMedia is perfectly poised in the mixed media environment for long-term sustainability. That is what we are striving to achieve. We need to determine how we can use the technology that is out there for our customer base for agriculture and IANR. Karen explained that a mission statement is very important; she developed a temporary one, "Delivering Exceptional Results Every Time." We need to define "exceptional" and "results" so that this statement will help in making decisions. From discussions with EdMedia customers, Karen has learned that we need to anticipate; provide them with ideas and not just sit and wait for them to come to us with their ideas. EdMedia needs to help customers identify their potential, which we can do by better knowing our customers and clients. Karen explained that Renee Lanik, Gary Goodding and Mark Hendricks took the initiative to be innovative and anticipate what the client might want. In a presentation in Ag Hall, the client was "blown away." First Renee and Gary will discuss interactive PDFs; then Mark will talk about e-Book and IPad developments.

Publications
Renee Lanik explained that a Portable Document Format (PDF) is a world-wide electronic delivery standard used to present electronic information with a fixed layout similar to publications such as books, brochures, magazines, flyers, newsletters and other documents formatted for viewing and download via the Internet, DVD format and other online options. Advantages to PDFs include lack of concern about

browser or platform differences or complying to specific standards, using any font you want, graphics appear sharp at any magnification and you don't need an Internet connection to read or print it.

Interactive PDFs include Rich Media interactive content added to the document such as a video, slide shows, narration, music and animation to enhance the user's experience. Possible applications include Extension educator displaying PDF on IPad in the field, 4-H manuals packaged as DVDs as an option to printing, embed interactive learning activities into classroom materials, distribution via e-mail and downloaded from the Internet.

Renee and Gary took information from a publication that was already created and applied new technology to it. With the publication already developed, the goal was to "repurpose" it. Gary explained that a publication may only allow for small pictures, but an interactive PDF could include a pop up window with the picture or graphic. Active links to Web sites (even outside the University) could be added as well as video, which would be embedded within the file so it would not need the Internet. Gary indicated that there was a team working on this project. Brad Mills helped with this project; especially the video. Brad stated that one video (e.g., Backyard Farmer) now has many applications (YouTube, Web site, etc.) but this same video could be used in this new application and with other media types. They explained that should a DVD be created, it would include information from all the links. Karen indicated that EdMedia wants to be on the forefront of new technologies. More is to come; we need to talk with customers to determine their needs.

e-Book and IPad Development

Mark Hendricks discussed that he has been working on a prototype of an e-Book and IPad development. He explained that these applications are other ways to distribute information to the client in the way that he/she prefers. The customer could put documents where we traditionally haven't been so that more people look at the work. The e-Book would also be a way to get publications in front of different audiences (e.g., Amazon.com).

The e-Book is mobile based, in a new format (e-pub, which is an open source format). It has some of the same features as interactive PDFs. You can bookmark items, embed links and videos. However, fonts and, thus, layouts can be changed in e-Book. With the e-Book, the quality of the publication would not be diminished even with a slower connection.

Mark explained that for the IPad development, he is writing an application to "find my county extension office." Mark explained that there are not many IPad applications available yet; EdMedia wants to be the first to offer this application. It could bring up the local Extension Web site and address. This application would provide the customer with information on how to get from where he/she is to the local Extension office. This specific application would be helpful in finding Extension to provide nonbiased information on many topics.

Departmental Shirts

Renee Lanik indicated that she would be looking at the embroidery samples on the fabrics so she will have an idea as to how long it will take to get the shirts. February 14 last day for initial orders but, as new people are hired, they will be able to order shirts.

Autotask
Bob Losee reminded the staff members that autotask software is for customer relationship management, invoicing, project management and help desk. It should help us integrate what we are doing and provide answers as to how well we are doing things. There is quite a bit ahead of us but Bob remains positive that we are on track. We had a site visit on February 9-11, which resulted in lots of things to be done. Bob reported that more people will become involved in the near future to make sure that the right configuration is created. Bob indicated his belief that autotask will be tie in with the most "project" orientation being developed in EdMedia. There are other ways that autotask can help. Mark Balschweid and Bob have been discussing the potential with student recruitment. Bob talked with Deana Namuth-Covert about using autotask with the e-Library grant. Bob has set her up with a temporary account to see how it might work. Bob also talked with Jennifer Greenlee about the potential to use autotask for smaller ALEC conference registrations.

Steering Committee and Strategic Planning
Mark Balschweid explained that he has adopted a steering committee concept for strategic planning and road mapping for entire department. He selected ALEC/EdMedia staff members to be representatives on the steering committee. These individuals are Lloyd Bell, Kathy Bennetch, Kurtis Harms, Sandi Karstens, Matt Kreifels, Gina Matkin and Vishal Singh. This is a standing committee that meets regularly. Their first task was to select a facilitator. Mark got input from Marjorie Kostelnik, Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences. Dan Sedor from Leadership Resources, a company in Lincoln, has been identified as the facilitator. It is anticipated that this will take 12 months during which time Dan will get to know us probably through group meetings. Dan will work with us to help us create the future that we want to have. He will help us identify our values; what we have to do and what we want to do and help us create a roadmap to succeed.

Web Integration
Jennifer Greenlee indicated that the Web Integration committee is very excited because they are close to merging the two web sites. They have the pictures (to be approved) and timelines (approved). There will be tag lines and pictures that people can link on to go to different parts of the Web site. The committee (Jennifer Greenlee, Lana Johnson, Marcia Oetjen, Vishal Singhl and Malika Yadgarova) will be meeting to finalize the Web site and determine the URL. At this time, the "go live" date has not been determined.

Recruitment
Malika Yadgarova reported that there are 26 students admitted to the program for fall 2011. This is up a little bit from past years. Malika, along with Mike Wilmot, attended the Big Red Road Show on February 13 in Omaha and reported that it went very well. There will be a FFA advisor hospitality room at the Cornhusker Marriott during the Nebraska State FFA Convention at the beginning of April.

Social Committee
Kathy Bennetch reiterated that the purpose of the social committee events is to get to know each other. A 2011 Social Committee calendar was distributed and it includes the ALEC monthly coffee, an April family picnic and the September service award coffee. For the ALEC monthly coffee, Kathy stated that we need volunteers to bring refreshments and help with the set up and clean up.

Mark stated that he wants to have a culture of continuous improvement. If you have ideas about things, be sure and share those ideas or suggestions. We don't want to do things just because that is the way we have always done them.

Announcements

Karen Gatherer discussed the EdMedia relationship with NET. Currently, we have a couple of large projects with NET that they secured and that EdMedia will pay a major role. NET has a high-end accounting package and their cost accountant has maximized its capabilities. NET will manage the projects but the financial aspects need to run through our accounting system. She restated that there is tremendous revenue potential in working with NET. One of the things that NET discussed with Karen is development of education ideas. They want to develop an internship program and they want ALEC to find and target potential interns.

Karen announced that since November, we have brought five new people into EdMedia; all within the IT area. Brad Brakenhoff is an assistant system administrator, Chris Evans in the Help Desk area, Nic Fargo works with Agronomy/Horticulture and is also in the Help Desk area and Ken Smith and Dave Wiens are new system administrators.

Mark Balschweid introduced the new faculty member, Dr. David Kwaw-Mensah. Dr.Kwaw-Mensah has international experience plus he has worked in Extension outreach. He will be an assistant professor of practice through June 2012 (grant funded).

The CSREES recommendations, which Mark has shared with all ALEC staff members, require a response. Some faculty groups have discussed undergraduate and graduate programs and research programs. The meeting about the integration of EdMedia into ALEC will be rescheduled with the meeting date and time included in an upcoming Monday Memo.

Recent grant proposals submitted – totaling $1.73 million – include those from:

Dann Husmann with Amy Boren
Jay Barbuto, Gina Matkin and Michelle Kang
Roger Terry
Gina Matkin, Mark Burbach, Amy Boren and Mark Balschweid

Dann Husmann reported that the Holling Teaching Awards will be presented on March 4. Gina Matkin is the winner of the Holling Family Junior Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award.

CASNR is hosting a February 22 brown bag luncheon about dealing with students under stress.

Jennifer Greenlee requested assistance from anyone who is knowledgeable about listserves.

Cheryl Alberts reported that the ALEC in Action newsletter is in the final proofing stage. The first newsletter will be sent out starting March 4 to over 4,300 stakeholders (e.g., alumni, Extension offices, Nebraska Departments of Education and Agriculture). There will be two newsletters per year; one in February and another in September. Mark commented on the outstanding work of Cheryl and her team on the development of the newsletter.