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ALEC Committee Minutes

Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication Department

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February 8, 2013 - ALEC Department Meeting Minutes

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February 8, 2013, ALEC Departmental Meeting
East Campus Union

Attending: Ruchi Agrawal, Cheryl Alberts, Mark Balschweid, Kathy Bennetch, Allison Bennett, Will Bird, Karen Cannon, Betty Castan, Marcia Claesson, Nic Colgrove, Emilee Dorn, Jack Ehrke, Mike Farrell, Michael Forsberg, Mary Garbacz, Gary Goodding, Jennifer Greenlee, Janice Hamer, Lindsay Hastings, Mark Hendricks, Dann Husmann, Lisa Jasa, Lana Johnson, Michelle Kang, Sandi Karstens, Matt Kreifels, Charles Leslie, Gina Matkin, L. J. McElravy, Brad Mills, Anne Moore, Dan Moser, Judy Nelson, Marcia Oetjen, Janet Owens, Pam Peters, Anita Schaepe, Jennifer Schoen, Brandon Schulte, Vishal Singh, Roddy Spangler, Roger Terry, Linda Ulrich, Kristen Upp, Adam Wagler, Judith Wolfe and Malika Yadgarova. Jordan Anderson and Mae Anne Balschweid also attended.

Meeting started at 10:00 a.m.

Introductions and Getting to Know Each Other
Dr. Mark Balschweid welcomed everyone and asked meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

New Hire / Ruchi Agrawal
Ruchi Agrawal, a Software Development Specialist with EdMedia, joined the department in January 2013. Ruchi earned an undergraduate degree in computer science in July 2008. Then she worked nearly two years as a software engineer and systems engineer with Infosys Technologies, Ltd, in Bangalore, India. She came to UNL for her master's degree in computer science, which she earned in December 2012. She worked four semesters as a graduate assistant with EdMedia and, last summer, Ruchi was an intern with Microsoft.

"Guess Who"
Using information from the ALEC "Getting to Know One Another" Questionnaire, Jennifer Greenlee had the meeting participants guess four staff members from their descriptions – Yan Zha, Adam Wagler, Allison Bennett and Dan Moser.

Program / Platte Basin Time-Lapse Project Overview and ALEC Class
Dr. Balschweid introduced Michael Forsberg and Mike Farrell who discussed the production of the time-lapse photography project on the Platte River, which will build on the scientific knowledge base for use in teaching, research and extension and their new class on digital storytelling.

Mike Farrell began the presentation about the time-lapse photography project with an explanation of how it began. They spent three years developing the "Great Plains-America's Lingering Wild," the documentary film, released in November 2012 as a co-production of NET Television and Michael Forsberg Photography. During their travels, they discussed the possibility of doing time-lapse photography on something big, perhaps, an entire watershed. They applied for and received a grant; they are in their third year.

They explained that the grant provided resources to place 45 cameras. Thirty-nine solar cameras are located at various points from the headwaters at the continental divide in the Colorado Rockies to the mouth near Plattsmouth. The cameras tell a different part of the story by photographing what is in

front of them each daylight hour (sunrise to sundown) of every day. The images are then brought back to NET and students help create videos to tell the story of where our water come from, where it goes and how it moves through the system. The images also show how nature uses the water and how people use the water.

The Platte Basin stretches over 13,000 feet; it is about 600 linear miles. One outcome of the project is to build community around the watershed rather than the political lines on a map (e.g., county or state boundaries). The project will explain how the river works and how it seeks some balance within its flood plain (erosion). It is visual data rather than pages of a geography textbook.

An outcome of the Platte Basin Time-Lapse Project will take all images put them in the cloud, and 4-H students and junior high students around the country will be given access to them. A software program developed by students at the UNL Raikes School of Computer Science and Management offers the students the opportunity to select parameters (e.g., all images at a particular time of day or month) and then sort all the appropriate images and create a time lapse based on images.

Another outcome relates to pure research. A graduate student at the UNL School of Natural Resources is studying resiliency in the Platte River system and water quality issues. She is just starting her project now, but she will combine time-lapse images with sensors to look at water quality and changes in water quality during crane migration, agricultural irrigation, etc., and develop conclusions based on the information.

The third project is aimed at Ag students at the college level. The UNL School of Natural Resources collaborated with Colorado State University and the University of Wyoming to create set of classes about agricultural processes on the land and how water from the Platte system is used in support of agriculture.

Mr. Farrell and Mr. Forsberg discussed that during the process of putting together the Platte River Time-Lapse Project, they were asked to develop a course. They created a course focusing on the application of the time-lapse technology combined with the technology Mr. Forsberg uses for wildlife photography. Not only do the students use the technology (e.g., time lapse, photography, research) in their selected projects, they must decide what story they are trying to communicate. For the initial semester, there are four students (NOTE: two are Emma Likens and Nick Manes who are EdMedia student workers). Mr. Farrell and Mr. Forsberg discovered that one semester is not long enough, because the processes are time based and based on natural processes, so they are proposing that the course be multiple semesters based on the students' projects. The first part of the project is capturing the images. The second part of the project is telling the story. Both take time, but the end project is valuable experience for the students.

Program / ALEC and Using Social Media

Dr. Karen Cannon explained that she has been working with her graduate recruitment assistant and independent study undergraduate student on how to recruit students into ALEC – in the academic programs and as interns or student workers – and how to take the recruitment efforts to the next level. Social media is one of the ways to reach students, and Dr. Cannon stated that more effort in needed in that area.

Jennifer Schoen began the in-service by discussing demographics and uses of social media. Below is the information she provided:

- Need the help of all ALEC faculty and staff
- Reactivated ALEC's Facebook account and evaluated it
    - Information about ALEC being a close knit, family oriented community is not on ALEC Facebook account and it needs to be visible
- Demographics are potential students, our current students and alumni
    - Can't ignore current students and alumni
- Potential students:
    - 77% of Midwestern high school junior and seniors and college freshmen check Facebook daily and they use social media to research their college choices
    - 48% of Midwestern high school juniors and seniors and college freshman are on Twitter
        - Of that 48%, 95% are also active on Facebook
    - Percentages much lower for Pinterest and Instagram, so ALEC needs to recruit using Twitter and Facebook
    - They prefer social media to email and snail mail
        - They want an authentic image of the department
        - They want to connect to actual people; particularly current students
        - They are skeptical of information from admissions because they do not believe it is necessarily true; they do not believe it is the full picture

Current students:

- Adding current student information and photos to the ALEC Facebook pages increases ALEC's engagement
    - Potential students want to see current students on ALEC Facebook
- They want news announcements, deadline reminders, birthdays, etc. They want to engage in conversation with other students.

Alumni:

- They are ALEC's best recruiters because they have been through the programs.
- They want to stay connected with the department.
- They want to keep up: recognition, news about the department, events, faculty members, former and current students.
- They are an avenue for getting interns in the department.
- They are the academic frontline. Alumni share information about new things going on in their industries, and ALEC shares new things to keep a strong connection with these representatives.
- Recently, a post to Facebook included profiles of graduating seniors to inform alumni about which students are coming out of the department so that they can consider how to get them into their companies.

Jordan Anderson offered insights into social media.

- There is a variety of social media outlets, and people use many of these every day. As an example, people use Instagram and Tumbler to post pictures to Facebook. All three are social media.
- ALEC needs to engage students in conversation with faculty members and alumni.
- There are groups that post things all the time, so it can be extremely overwhelming
- ALEC needs to post on a regular basis, but it needs to be strategic about the posts (i.e., what, how often and the content).

- A recent article indicated that people generally spend one hour each day keeping up with Twitter and Facebook.
- It is important to students because they expect to get answers in two-way communication via Twitter and Facebook. Students no longer consider them just another website.

Malika Yadgarova concluded the social media in-service with the following information:

- Every two years there is a new graduate student working on ALEC recruitment, so all ALEC faculty and staff need to help in updating events to be posted.
- There are outlets that ALEC could use to program a New Year's greeting to post on January 1 rather than three weeks in advance (before the holiday shutdown).
- She explained how ALEC is using social media:
    - Last semester, there were poster sessions held as part of two classes and an event was posted for these so the faculty, other students, alumni, etc. could attend the sessions. This was posted on the ALEC Facebook page.
    - Recognition: Students and alumni were pleased with a post that showed Dr. Lloyd Bell talking with students about his award.
    - ALEC in the News: This can include a link to take the viewer to the news article in the original publication.
    - Introducing new additions (e.g., Dr. Will Bird when he joined ALEC).
    - Every week, new items (e.g., events, deadlines, registration reminders, etc.) are posted to Facebook.
    - All ALEC faculty and staff members can send Jennifer, Malika or Dr. Cannon things they would like posted.

Old Business / Strategic Plan Goal Updates

Dr. Arlen Etling began his update on goal #15, Enhance ALEC's Global Engagement through Increased Number of Courses/Initiatives, by thanking the social committee for the table decorations. The target for the goal is to "increase the number of departmental courses, initiatives, project and exchanges to eight per year by 2016."

Dr. Etling explained that the goal task force started with a December 2012 brainstorming session in which they put forward three pages of ideas. ALEC cannot complete all ideas, so the task force determined priority guidelines. Ideas should:

- Have high visibility,
- Have some impact (do good),
- Have quick success (at least some of the ideas),
- Fit within the institutional priorities and institutional reward system,
- Answer the question, "What's in it for me and my students," and
- Make wise use of time and talents.

Dr. Etling and Dr. Balschweid met with Dean Steve Waller (CASNR) and Director Mark Doyle (Global Engagement) to discuss the priorities to determine if there are conflicts or overlap and determine how the groups could work together.

Currently, international brown bag luncheons are held monthly. The task force will develop an online research priorities list to be updated annually. Additionally, they will consider and examine the possibilities for an ALEC role on other IANR projects leading to workshops or consultant opportunities.

From the three pages of ideas, Dr. Etling explained that the task force finalized the below list – not in priority order – for the consideration of the department.

Proposed Idea	Short Term	Long Term	Contact
Market ALEC within IANR with focus on LEAD, NDA and CASNR departments	Brochure (profile) what ALEC can contribute to international projects	Training and consulting opportunities for ALEC faculty and staff	Amy
Expand Education Abroad	Promote education abroad in all classes and investigate internship opportunities	Leadership and HRTM – internship partners for ALEC	Arlen
Internationalize ALEC curriculum	Try 102 section for Brazilians with ½ US students	Expand list of 102 sections and create or modify other courses	Gina
Connect with a Chinese University via video conference	Set up by Yan for China and Roger for US	Possible partnership for faculty discussion, distance classroom or planning	Roger & Yan
Create an international reading room	Check feasibility with Barry Shull and our library contacts	Work out details	Mark
Help revitalize Phi Beta Delta	Coordinate with IANR and UNL administrators	Active chapter contributes to UNL global engagement	Arlen
Organize a mixer activity with food to bring U.S. and foreign students together	Discuss best approach and plan	Mixer becomes a regular event (collaborate with CASNR)	CASNR
Community outreach via Ag Day or CES event	Need detailed plan indicating timetable and resources	Possibility of important and useful program when clarified and well planned – partner with Ag groups	IANR

Dr. Etling asked for ALEC faculty and staff feedback and participation by completing the feedback sheet and leaving it on the table so a task force member can pick it up following the conclusion of the meeting.

Old Business / ALEC Gift Fund Guidelines

Kathy Bennetch and Janet Owens discussed the ALEC Gift Fund Guidelines, which were distributed to all attendees. Kathy explained that the guidelines reflect the department's strong desire to maintain a spirit of professional unity and high morale. This is a voluntary gift fund and is open to all employed departmental personnel (ALEC/EdMedia).

An appropriate remembrance (flowers, gifts or memorial) from the department will be presented on the following occasions:

- Birth or adoption of a child to departmental personnel ($40 gift card)
- Marriage of departmental personnel ($50 gift card)
- Hospitalization of departmental personnel/spouse/partner/child ($50 flowers or plant)
- Continued major illness – card sent weekly

- Cards will be available for gathering signatures at appropriate unit
- Death of departmental personnel or immediate family (defined by University policies as "Wife, husband, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, guardian, ward, stepfather, stepmother, stepdaughter, stepson, or persons bearing the same relationships to the spouse.") ($50 memorial)
- Retirement of department personnel ($60 appropriate gift)

Other information provided includes:

- Contributions are encouraged to sustain the fund. Cash or checks acceptable. Checks payable to either Mark Balschweid or Kathy Bennetch.
- The funds are kept in a checking account with the University of Nebraska Federal Credit Union. Mark Balschweid, ALEC Department Head, and Kathy Bennetch have access to this account. The checkbook and statements are available for audit anytime.
- If funds become low, a note will be sent out to all employees for additional donations.
- These guidelines do not preclude anything you want to do on a personal nature.
- The guidelines will be reviewed annually.

Kathy indicated that a notice about other activities and/or events (e.g., graduation) would be sent to ALEC faculty and staff. Meeting attendees suggested that periodic email reminders about the gift fund be sent to all ALEC faculty and staff members. If you have concerns or questions about the guidelines, please contact Kathy or Janet.

New Business / EdMedia Update

Brandon Schulte provided a financial summary for FY13 through December 2012 (comparison of the same period in 2011 to 2012):

- Revenue is up 117% to $1,433,849
- Expenses are up 25% to $1,345,222
- Unbilled hours reflect reported time that has yet to be billed; when they are added back in with revenue, the adjusted accrued profit/loss is $170,000 profit.

EdMedia total productivity is 67%, which does include the time out in December due to the holiday break. At the end of December 2011, productivity was about 50%. Brandon expressed his appreciation for all the hard work by EdMedia staff members.

For revenue, Brandon explained that, in past years, nearly 85% came from the Vice Chancellor, CASNR, ARD and Extension. Brandon indicated that EdMedia has broadened its base, as, currently, approximately 50% of revenue comes from these four sources. The remaining 50% comes from other areas. EdMedia has brought in many new customers.

The Customer Appreciation Luncheon was January 25. Brandon indicated he was pleased with customer attendance, and he received a lot of good feedback from customers. He thanked EdMedia staff members for their participation and hard work. He reported that the Strategic Plan Goal #10 committee is working to develop an IANR customer satisfaction survey.

Brandon is working with Mary Garbacz on the 2013 marketing plan that includes great strategies. To continue the current momentum, Brandon and/or Mary will attend the upcoming Extension District Meetings. Additionally, one or both will meet with department chairs (IANR as well as selected City Campus areas).

Brandon stated that in 2013, EdMedia staff members are working on distribution, which will offer another service for customers. EdMedia staff members create great products that go back to the customers, but EdMedia is starting to consider ways to advertise and sell products to bring added value to the customers. Brandon stated that EdMedia is looking into additional services such as event planning, eBooks, registration process and distance education courses.

Renovation continues in the Ag Communications Building. Staff members in offices on first floor (101 and 104) are relocating temporarily so Facilities can remove the asbestos in the ceiling and floor. The University is paying for this asbestos abatement. Dr. Balschweid secured IANR funding for paint, carpet and new work areas.

Brandon indicated the new EdMedia website was launched prior to the January 25 Customer Appreciation Luncheon. In the new Drupal CMS system, the new website shows many new things being done in EdMedia and offers good resources to faculty, staff and customers.

New Business / Social Committee
Anita Schaepe thanked the many Social Committee members who decorated the tables for this meeting. Around the world, Pi Day is celebrated on March 14 (3/14). Pi (Greek letter "π") is the symbol used in mathematics to represent a constant – the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter (approximately 3.14159). Anita announced the ALEC Social Committee would celebrate Pi Day with "Pie Day" on March 15. Bring your lunch to 102 ACB and there will be pies. On April 19, the Social Committee will host a gathering for Emeriti Faculty.

New Business / Recruitment Update
Jennifer Schoen reported they are entering their busy season with recruitment. On February 22, there will be a departmental session for potential CASNR students with a tour of campus and meetings with advisors. March 3 is the Big Red Road Show, a University-wide event at which ALEC will have a display booth. The 2013 State FFA Convention is scheduled for April 3 through 5 in the Cornhusker Marriott. She expressed her appreciation to Dr. Balschweid and Brandon Schulte for their support and resources, Karen Cannon for her help and Jordan Anderson for her perspective on the undergraduate side and creating new slides.

New Business / Announcements
Dr. Balschweid indicated the ALEC website includes individual pictures of faculty and staff members. Dr. Balschweid indicated that Jennifer Greenlee would be available after the meeting to take pictures for people who do not have their picture but would like to have their picture on the website.

Dr. Balschweid discussed the ALEC Steering Committee, which rotates members at the beginning of each calendar year. This year, Gina Matkin and Vishal Singh are rotating off. On behalf of the department, Mark thanked Gina and Vishal for the time they spent on the committee. Nic Colgrove and Dr. Will Bird joined the Steering Committee in January 2013.

Meeting adjourned.