

Communications and Marketing Committee Meeting

Westin Alexandria - Bell Room [2nd floor]

The Westin Alexandria, 400 Courthouse Square, Alexandria, VA 22314-5700

Sunday - March 6, 2016, 4:00 – 6:00 PM

Draft Minutes

In Attendance:

Rick Rhodes III, Chair
Nancy Cox
Cameron Faustman
Mike Harrington
Shirley Hymon-Parker
Jeff Jacobsen
Darren Katz
Sarah Lupis
Ian Maw
Rick Mertens
Faith Peppers
Scott Reed
Jim Richards
Michelle Rodgers
Dan Rossi
Daniel Scholl
Jane Schuchardt
Hunt Shipman
Adel Shirmohammadi
Lou Swanson
Tony Windham
Rubie Mize, Recorder

Actions/Decisions Made:

- Approved Minutes of Jan. 28, 2016 CMC Quarterly Meeting
- Approved Agenda for this meeting
- Approved amendment to Operating Guidelines
- Prepare list of tasks discussed at this meeting to implement Plan of Work – Rick and Dan R.
- Draft one-pager cover for kglobal reports – Rick and Faith
- Contact Joint ESS/CES Planning Committee for Sept. meeting to include Strategic Issues Management workshop – Michelle R., Dan R. and Mike H.

- Explore funding for message testing and kglobal evaluation/review with respective Sections – CMC Executive Committee
- Organize communicators’ database and set-up online resources and listserv – Faith and Sarah

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions – Rick Rhodes III

Chair Rick welcomed everyone and asked for brief introductions. He thanked and commended CMC Past Chair Scott R. for his service and success in bringing the committee to where it is now.

2. Approval of Minutes of January 28, 2016 CMC Quarterly Meeting – Rick Rhodes III

Motion by Scott R. to approve minutes was seconded by Tony W., and approved by the members.

3. Approval of Agenda – Rick Rhodes III

Motion by Nancy C. to approve the agenda was seconded by Hunt S., and approved by the members.

Chair Rick noted he would like to steer the group to devote more time in discussing recommendations from the three working groups and come up with actionable tasks by the end of the meeting.

4. kglobal Update – Darren Katz

Darren shared briefly what updates to expect from the 2016 First Quarter report, now posted at following URLs –

<http://nera.rutgers.edu/cmc/kglobal2016Q1Report.pdf>

<http://nera.rutgers.edu/cmc/kglobal2016Q1ExecSummary.pdf>

[kglobal reports should be viewed as internal documents and not shared outside your office.]

- Twitter followers continue to increase. kglobal hosted Twitter Town Hall with UNL-IANR. Strategy remains the same, tweaking and improving tactics on ongoing basis. Message testing in realtime. Send Tweet or info email, send multiple versions, check which has best feedback at different times of day.
- More detailed report will be given at Monday’s ESCOP meeting.

5. Cornerstone Update and Feedback on CMC – Hunt Shipman

- Continue to improve incrementally on ability to lay groundwork for CARET and Cornerstone, and system as whole in delivering messages. When talking of BAC priorities, we now have better way of saying what Land-grant does, through kglobal and CMC.
- Challenge is who sets the message. Issue also discussed at the CARET Executive Committee meeting. Figure out who’s the driver. Challenge is determining exactly what are the priorities and how do we get there?

Discussion:

- What messages are getting out? Concerned with multiple messages, what's important and what's not?
- Communicators asking same question, "what are messages they're supposed to carry?" Need to get consensus, how we gather these messages, and who carries them.
- More effective to send same message in different formats, but challenge is people and institutions doing their own thing. Need to have some oversight and way to harmonize.
- Dan R. clarified that message comes out from BAC PBD and CMC helps deliver. Ian added that priorities come from sections then go to BAC PBD. Given that, how can we be understood by variety of audience?
- Starting CARET with key issues has been positive, but how can we get better percentage? How do we educate people to carry same message? How much do we need to be successful? How do we measure success?
- System had significantly gotten better considering limitations, and issue is more of figuring out how we optimize in our institutions.
- "Are we damaging ourselves by the 'name' we call ourselves?"
- Want to support university, not necessarily an extension, or research or academic. Talk as a whole, not make or choose one or the other.
- Important to understand how funding streams work. Struggle which media works best, try different elements and determine more effective tactics.
- Leveraging power of communicators – give them access to message. Need to decide if message are those going to be passed down from Deans/Directors. Should we create a website where they can access that info?
- How do priorities relate to people at the Hill ex. water, healthy food system? How do congressional members know that they are supported by Hatch, AFRI etc.?
- States, like Rhode Island, shape message to their congressional delegation - what's needed in state.
- Relate what funds the story. National impact database helps as it shows funding info. When going to talk about water quality etc. mention what funds the project.
- Are info sheets prepared before going to Hill? Are funding embedded in sheets? Input and narrative may vary to a certain degree from program to program. Need to work on this more.
- Emphasize consistency in theme (use ag impacts website), stress this as states differ in messages, and bring the message home. Key in particular funding for each program in their districts, if one is to ask for more funding, ex. Hatch, Smith Lever etc.

6. Proposed Amendment to the Operating Guidelines – Dan Rossi

- Made terms more consistent using terminologies also used in Plan of Work
- CMP is Communication and Marketing Project and CMC-Communication and Marketing Committee oversees the CMP
- Clarified appointments and process how they are selected
- Included responsibilities of Executive Directors

Motion by Shirley H. to accept the amendment to the Operating Guidelines was seconded by Michelle R., and approved by the members.

7. Working Group Meetings

The groups had met separately prior to this meeting, so there was no need to break into groups during this session.

8. Discussion of Communicating CMC Progress Working Group Recommendations – Cameron Faustman [See attachment below]

- What do those facts and figures in kglobal reports mean? For non-communicators, how do we understand what reports mean and their significance?
- Need for qualitative assessment – are they heard by intended audience?
- Should we hire external entity to evaluate accomplishments, but this may require some funding
- Executive Summary of kglobal report – may need some explanation to deans/dirs
- Develop rubric that CMC members can use—what are elements, where do they come from?
- How does data relate, for example to increase in capacity funds or AFRI?
- Cornerstone in better position to gauge success
- Two-part: advocacy and education. Can't just look at funding as endpoint. How do we measure value of our investment? What are direct results? On education side- kglobal is like basic research and Cornerstone is applied research.
- Suggest using experts in the system to interpret data for us. How do we engage group of communicators to review and help us understand that we're having impacts?
- Depends on what info we want. We may need an expert on metrics measurement who can evaluate if they're meaningful and of good value. If just interpretive, go to your communicator and ask them to interpret.
- Panel review- communicators look at and gauge if we're making progress on issues, not based solely on Quarterly Report, but also anecdotal from Cornerstone.
- Conduct comprehensive review every 3 years. We currently have an annual contract, 3-year agreement in future, with annual review.
- Define progress. Is it increasing audience, but is it the right audience? Likely to reach if greater number is engaged and there's continuous growth, and Cornerstone story reaching right people.
- Cornerstone suggested focus group in one year and alternating year to do message testing – see how that's working.
- kglobal did focus group with former members and staff. As volume increases, also quality of who they're engaging. Constant communication – back and forth is what sticks. Has staff heard about this? Are they getting message from their districts? From social media?
- Are those hearing, regurgitating message to offices concerned? Careful with measuring anecdotally that it does not draw direct attention to what kglobal is doing.
- There are multiple steps in educating staff for example – why they should fund Hatch etc.? Connections have to be established and to work, needs sustained effort.
- kglobal is wallpaper and what we're doing is sticking to that wall. Reinforcing those messages so they stick to congressional staff.
- Application nationwide through individual communicators and giving it unified voice

9. Discussion of Engaging Communicators Working Group Recommendations – Scott Reed [See attachment below]

- 1st strategy is have a database. Faith will manage the database online, make it dynamic so info can be updated. Create an online space for sharing info and other resources.
- 2nd goal is to use ACE meetings for seminars and periodic webinars on specific topics by kglobal.
- Group also mentions cover from CMC Chair when sharing the kglobal quarterly report.
- Plan for next New Deans Orientation – training should start with strategic issue management and ideally hit new deans as they come in.
- Explore with ESS/CES planning committee for the joint meeting this Sept. if training can be offered as one of the workshops (90 minutes). Michelle R. will also bring it up at Board meeting this week. Mike H. mentioned that Sept. program can still be adjusted.
- Another option is to give a 30min. presentation and point them to online training.
- Darren noted that actions suggested are profoundly important to kglobal. Communicators are critically important. Strategies are terrific. If we're committed, we can really improve the process.
- Timing is perfect, according to Faith. Communicators now looking to partner with kglobal. Sessions are well attended and have evolved tremendously in getting to that attitude.
- Need to continue to be thoughtful with sharing with communications team – sensitivity is with process, individually sharing is good idea. Shared by deans/directors is OK and with understanding not to be shared publicly.

10. Discussion of Message Testing Working Group Recommendations – Rick Rhodes III [See attachment below]

- Opportune time to move this forward. Summarized suggestions into three - evaluate, integrate and communicate
- Periodic evaluations are not in budget but can be built into next year's budget. Look at alternative funding mechanism for message testing. Group to make recommendation to committee. Need to do fairly soon, as we did message testing last year. CMC work important to guide what kglobal does.
- 1st message testing funded by the Policy Board.
- 2nd option is to increase \$133K to \$150K from all 3 sections, have \$50K to spend each year for message testing. Raise this to all Sections for discussion. Ian suggested mentioning it at AHS meeting and other sections. ESS and ESCOP meeting this week. ESCOP has existing assessment that can cover that.
- PBD perspective on CMP is positive - a useful endeavor. AHS also stepped up, with the assessment coming from them.
- Sarah suggested that at June ACES meeting, have specialists look at report and provide feedback in advance of that conversation.
- Chair Rick suggested using Executive Committee with help from ED to come up with proposal for funding message testing. Will meet offline/calls. Should we cherry pick what's doable or in general approve the recommendations?

- Dan R. suggested to utilize three AHS Reps. to be that link to carry that message forward and engage communicators early on in the process. Lou Swanson said it's in the agenda and Nancy or Scott will present. CMC to provide info they need. Nancy discussed it at Southern region AHS meeting and feedback was positive.
- Rick asked Faith to provide assistance in developing one-pager/cover for explaining kglobal quarterly reports.
- Rick to create Roadmap, training on tackling strategic messaging has a process (Rick will work on Roadmap and have small group finesse it.)

11. Concluding Comments and Adjournment – Rick Rhodes III

Chair Rick appreciated the groups' actionable recommendations.

Faith and Sarah already have a group in place with representatives from the regions, college level communicators that they can work with.

Members of the Communicating CMC Progress group were encouraged to look into issues for discussion at quarterly calls.

On seeking feedback from Deans/Dirs., having everyone represented here, they know that there's action being taken. Dan suggested those who had Twitter Town Halls should be asked to give feedback.

Chair Rick and Dan R. will develop actionable steps and present them to CMC for review and approval.

kglobal reports will continue to be shared with Deans/Dirs., including communicators in Faith's database. A listserv of communicators will be set-up by Faith/Sarah.

Faith will work with Chair Rick in crafting a one-pager/cover (sent under CMC Chair's heading) explaining the kglobal reports.

Chair Rick was struck by similarities of discussion among the groups. He noted that success has many parents and thanked everyone for their active participation in group meetings, and the lively discussion today.

He thanked Dan Rossi who has been instrumental in getting this committee going, appreciated his enthusiasm, intellect and ability to tap collective resources around the table.

Chair Rick adjourned the meeting at 6:03PM.

Recommendations of CMC Working Group: Communicating CMC Progress

[Members: Bev Durgan (Leader), Cameron Faustman, Shirley Hymon-Parker, Connie Pelton Kays, Ian Maw, Dan Rossi, Tony Windham, Rubie Mize (Recorder)]

Goal 1: Enhance the effectiveness of the CMC by providing clear guidance and oversight to CMP

Strategy 2, Regularly review and evaluate metrics and overall results of kglobal communications efforts as presented in quarterly kglobal reports, provide feedback to kglobal, and provide updates to deans and directors. (Any assessment of communications and marketing efforts should not be confused with or focused on advocacy.)

- CMC will focus quarterly calls on reviewing quarterly reports and providing specific feedback to kglobal on the following issues:
 - Different interests within the system to be promoted
 - Different types of programs to be promoted
 - New programs that might be of interest to promote
 - Different impacts and outcomes that should be promoted
 - Unique relationships with media, members of Congress or Congressional staff
 - The internal politics of the system
- CMC will utilize the following sources in evaluating metrics and overall results of communications efforts:
 - More specific feedback from Cornerstone on impact of communication effort on advocacy and a rubric that CMC members can use to make an assessment of value for money
 - Requesting input from institutional communications specialists who are better equipped to evaluate metrics
 - Examining results of message testing to determine whether messages are resonating with the targeted audiences
 - Seeking feedback from deans/directors and especially those who have worked more closely with kglobal on specific projects including Twitter town halls
- If necessary, a fifth source of evaluation could be the hiring of an external entity to evaluate the efforts
- In addition to continual periodic evaluation, a more thorough evaluation may be appropriate upon a renewal of a three year agreement for the services of kglobal (kglobal is on a one-year contract basis; an agreement may be developed that involved a three year arrangement with annual contract renewals).
- As a result of evaluations, CMC may be better able to provide input into the development of the kglobal contract and particularly scope of work (need to recognize the importance of flexibility in such arrangement given a very dynamic environment)

Strategy 3, The CMC in cooperation with kglobal will provide the deans and directors with a quarterly executive summary of the communications and marketing efforts.

- A separate Executive Summary is distributed to deans and directors on a quarterly basis.

- CMC will more closely examine the Executive Summary and make suggestions for improvement
- CMC Chair will prepare a one page report when distributing kglobal's quarterly executive summary that highlights specific results and shares other CMC accomplishments.

Goal 4: Promote internal advocacy within the "system" for the communications and marketing project

Strategy 1, Communicate regularly with deans, administrators, and directors, their assistants, communications specialists and government affairs specialists on the activities of the communications and marketing project (referred to as constituencies).

- CMC Chair will distribute one page report along with kglobal quarterly executive summary to entire institutional points of contact list
- See Engaging Communicators working group report for further discussion of regular kglobal webinars/seminars for communicators and training opportunities for deans/directors and trainers

Strategy 2, On a quarterly basis, share project metrics including message testing results with deans and directors.

- See previous discussion

Strategy 3, Solicit input from deans and directors on the project.

- Input will be sought from deans and directors through periodic requests in part focusing on those that have most direct interaction with kglobal

Recommendations of the CMC Working Group: Engaging Communicators

[Members: Scott Reed (Leader), Sarah Lupis, Faith Peppers, Dan Rossi, Daniel Scholl, Louis Swanson, Rubie Mize (Recorder)]

Goal 3: Effectively engage institutional communications specialists

Strategy 1, In cooperation with the Regional Executive Directors/Administrators, annually survey institutions to insure that kglobal has a current database of institutional points of contact including: deans, administrators, and directors, their assistants, communications specialists and government affairs specialists.

- Faith Peppers will, in her capacity as the ACE representative, manage the database.
- Need to explore how the database can be used more effectively
- Will investigate a web format so that institutions can directly submit updates. Some security issues will also need to be investigated.

Strategy 2, Identify opportunities for added value by fully engaging communicators upfront as communications targets and strategies are developed.

- The goal is to increase transparency across the system. Communicators need to better understand CMC objectives, target audiences, key issues and result of message testing so they can easily bring them to a broader audience.
- kglobal should provide regularly scheduled seminars (perhaps at ACE June meetings) and possibly periodic webinars in specific topics to communicators.
- Section chairs have a role in encouraging deans and directors to engage early in the process.

Strategy 3, Collaborate with kglobal and Cornerstone to develop sessions at the annual joint CARET/AHS meeting and at any New Deans/Directors/Administrators Orientations programs to stress the importance of engaging institutional communications specialists in the CMP efforts.

- Faith and a colleague at the Univ. of Arizona have developed a program on best practices on strategic issue management in Land-grants to help strengthen institutional plans and linking them to national plans. A publication and a potential for funding is available to support training of deans and directors and training of the trainers.
- Schedule training for CARET/AHS next year and a new Deans/Directors orientation if one is offered
- Explore potential of including a session at the joint CES/ESS session this September (recognizing that the agenda is already quite full)

Strategy 4, Send periodic reminders to encourage institutional leadership and communications specialists to:

- *Continue to submit impact statement to the Land-grant Impacts Database*
- *Notify kglobal of important institutional events/activities with broader communications potential*
- *Consider co-hosting with kglobal Twitter Town Halls*

- CMC Chair will prepare a one page report when distributing kglobal's quarterly executive summary that highlights specific results and shares other CMC accomplishments
- The report and executive summary will be shared with the entire institutional points of contact list.
- Explore new avenues for promotion of impactful LGU stories

Recommendations of CMC Working Group: Message Testing

[Members: Rick Rhodes (Leader), Nancy Cox, Darren Katz, Rick Mertens, Michelle Rodgers, Jane Schuchardt, Hunt Shipman]

Goal 1: Enhance the effectiveness of the CMC by providing clear guidance and oversight to CMP

Strategy 5, Continually evaluate messages and delivery mechanisms through qualitative and quantitative research.

- Work with kglobal to perform ongoing tactical analyses including checking the *Ag is America* website (<http://agisamerica.org/>) and performing social media analytics.
- Work with kglobal to develop a one-page summary that defines the communications and marketing strategy underlying the goal of increasing the awareness of the value of Land-grant University agricultural and related programs, Agricultural Experiment Stations (AES) and Cooperative Extension Services (CES). The purpose is to build a basic understanding of the communications and marketing effort.
- Engage land-grant communications specialists for involvement in and confirming effectiveness of the kglobal effort.
- Engage Cornerstone to assess kglobal's educational efforts.
- Integrate comments from communicators, Cornerstone and university partners to analyse the effectiveness of the communications and marketing approach.
- Inform kglobal on programs, activities and people to highlight.

Strategy 6, The CMC will commission kglobal, on an as needed basis, to conduct periodic message testing surveys to insure overall effectiveness of the project.

- Identify a sustainable funding strategy for systematic message testing.
- Commission kglobal as needed for this purpose.

Goal 2: Support and contribute to unified system messaging

Strategy 5, Engage kglobal to access the resonance of the identified issues through appropriate methodologies including message testing surveys.

- See Goal 1, Strategy 6.