

## Communications and Marketing Committee Draft Notes

October 29, 2020, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

In attendance: Mark Rieger, Karla Trautman, Steve Loring, Jean-Francois Meullenet, Moses Kairo, Elizabeth Gregory North, Cynda Clary, Faith Peppers, Glynda Becker-Fenter, Doug Steele, Ryan McConaghy, Kate Jahries, Ryan Taylor, David Leibovitz

1. Introductions and opening remarks
  - Mark opened the meeting and announced we are preparing to present the CMC request to the BAA-PBD for approval. The group went through a series of introductions.
2. Approval of the agenda
  - **The minutes were approved unanimously.**
3. Approval of minutes, 9/8/2020 (attached)
  - **The 9/8/2020 minutes were approved unanimously.**
4. Solicitation of ESCOP for Incoming Chair (chair-elect to follow Karla Trautman)
  - In March, Karla Trautman (CES/ECOP) rotates into Chair position, Mark Rieger (AHS) becomes Past Chair and Steve Loring (ESS/ESCOP) rotates off the CMC.
  - New Incoming Chair (or chair-elect) comes from ESS/ESCOP. In seeking regional parity, director from South is suggested (previous chair regions: 2020-NE, 2019-W, 2018-1890, 2017-NC, 2016-NE, 2015-W).
  - **JF Meullenet (SAAESD / Kentucky) was nominated after the call to serve as the next incoming CMC Chair. Voting has not yet taken place to approve his appointment.**
  - **Mark Rieger is leaving UD in January 2021 to become Provost of Florida Gulf Coast University. Karla Trautman will start her term as CMC Chair early.**
  - **Steve Loring is retiring February 2021, but has offered to serve as a CMC "Past Chair Emeritus."**
  - **Doug Steele, Rick Rhodes, Karla Trautman, Steve Loring, and David Leibovitz can hold a discussion offline to determine the future makeup of the CMC Executive Committee.**
5. Forbes/Tate Partners (Ryan McConaghy, Kate Jahries, Ryan Taylor)
  - Preparation for the roadmap was a three-phased process.
    - Assessment and strategic alignment – audit of previous work that has been done.
      - Main findings: desire to lean heavily on advocacy, make consistent use of clear, unified messaging, and build capacity and strengthen the internal understanding of external objectives. Recommendations: post regularly, own the content, run paid campaigns to boost exposure.
    - Plan development.
    - Integration and execution – finalizing the roadmap, executing the content calendar and delivering a best practices guide.
  - CMC-related outreach conducted to date by FTP: ACE, APLU Public Affairs, Cornerstone, APLU Government Affairs, AHS/ESS/CES, CMC Leadership, BAA Committee Chairs.
  - Latest draft of roadmap plan (attached).
    - Ensures everyone has their views represented.
    - Strengths – the breadth of the system, the significant contributions of our work (to public health, economy, food safety and security), the human resources component (students, faculty, staff).

- Challenges – this plan is not only a messaging exercise, it’s important to think about internal communications. Think of BAA and CFERR as communications entities themselves.
  - Opportunities – we have a great story to tell.
  - Audiences
    - Decision makers (elected officials and staff who are responsible for making funding decisions).
    - Amplifiers – the “end users” who benefit directly from the BAA’s work.
    - Messengers – communicators put into place with messages to share and rationale for those messages.
  - Sample messages (“*Investments in ag and life science research and the Extension system...*”).
    - *result in safer, higher quality food systems*
    - *make communities stronger and healthier*
    - *address critical challenges facing agriculture and the environment*
    - *are vital to safeguarding America’s status as a global leader in innovation*
  - CMC responsibilities: internal coordination, overall management of the strategic plan and calendar, execution of recurring daily, monthly, and “tentpole” communications activities.
  - Policy Guides (guidance on priority setting, updates on decisionmaker contacts and feedback): PBD, CGA, Cornerstone, LGU Communicators.
  - APLU Communications: Engagement in ongoing message coordination through standing channels including regular scheduled consultation, technical advice to CMC updates.
  - Local Actors: CARET, ESS, CES – content generators that carry and elevate the local messages.
  - Tactics for sharing organic and paid content are broken down into daily/weekly, monthly, and quarterly activities.
  - Regular cadence of promoting owned content is essential.
  - Earned media tactics are outlined, including press releases, reporter notes, letters to the editor, feature articles.
  - **A sample “Month of the communications roadmap plan” was shared with the committee.**
6. What needs to be highlighted for the BAA General Section meeting on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>?
- **The CMC is invited to share suggestions with Forbes-Tate Partners, Rick Rhodes, Doug Steele, and Mark Rieger.**
7. Update on the CMC funding request to AHS, ECOP and ESCOP. If request is approved by the sections, what are the next steps with developing a description for the new position and responsibilities of the CMC-funded personnel (Director of Communications and Marketing) (Mark)
- This is a framework for the CMC to put together a plan in the next year; this is not “the plan”.
  - Request: \$300k per year (\$100k per section) for two years to run a pilot program.
    - Mostly a personnel commitment, 1.5 FTE within APLU.
    - Some funding for paid media tactics and travel.
  - The AHS section has already approved the request.

- Update on voting from ESS – voting currently underway, the section seems generally supportive in the wake of the ESCOP Executive Committee business meeting.
- Update on voting from CES – questions about metrics of success, voting to happen tomorrow.
- Input from ACE – the group is engaged and excited to take this on. Some concern about AgIsAmerica and its brand message. If the brand message is wrong, should we / can we tweak that or is it too late? Audiences for recruitment might be different from advocacy audiences, we must be sensitive of that. ACE is excited to be able to plug into a national framework and participate in this effort from a local level.
- APS – the section would like to have clear guidance on what sorts of stories we are looking for. What examples of student success should we be showcasing through these channels?
- APLU – these documents bring more credibility to why we need a position within APLU. It is important for the BAA-PBD to understand strategies for tactics and engagement.

*The meeting adjourned at 3:02 pm EDT.*