

Communications and Marketing Committee

Notes, February 18, 2021, 3:00-4:00 PM ET

In attendance: Karla Trautman (South Dakota State), JF Meullenet (Arkansas), Steve Loring (New Mexico State), Caroline Henney (APLU-Cooperative Extension), Doug Steele (APLU), Glynda Becker-Fenter (Washington State), Nancy Cox (Kentucky), Cynda Clary (Oklahoma State), Gabrielle Serra (Oregon State), Faith Peppers (USDA-NIFA), Katie Frazier (CARET-Virginia Tech), Ryan McConaghy (Forbes-Tate), Ryan Taylor (Forbes-Tate), Kate Jahries (Forbes-Tate), Alekhya Tallapaka (Forbes-Tate), Rick Rhodes (NERA, Ex-officio), David Leibovitz (NERA, Ex-officio)

1. Approval of the agenda
 - **The agenda was approved unanimously.**
2. Approval of minutes, 10/29/2020
 - **The minutes were approved unanimously.**
3. Update on the APLU/FANR position “Executive Director, Communications, Outreach and External Partnerships” (Karla/Doug)
 - After incorporating feedback from the CMC, all bases on the position description appear to be covered. The position description reflects a high-level skillset. Primary responsibilities emphasize both building partnerships and leading the communications effort.
 - One significant change was in title – this is now an Executive Director position.
 - Goal: Conduct interviews and have hire complete by May. It’s critical to get the position description advertised.
 - Forbes-Tate contract with APLU has been extended and its timeframe aligned with these goals.
 - The position should be announced next week and will be out in the public for ~6 weeks. Distribution of the position description will be made using a multitude of channels including university educators, ACE, job posting boards online, Forbes-Tate rolodex.
 - **Position description will remain open for comments until COB February 22. Send feedback to Karla Trautman, CC Rick Rhodes and Doug Steele.**
4. Forbes/Tate Partners Update (FTP; Ryan McConaghy, Kate Jahries, Ryan Taylor, Alekhya Tallapaka)
 - Discussion of BAA Roadmap implementation
 - FTP compiled a document of tools and tactics for communicators across the system to use.
 - The toolkit doc will be circulated to all LGU communicators; a straightforward guide with pertinent information for institutions with all levels of communications expertise.
 1. Included in the doc: draft content for earned media/social media, “how-to” guidance, paid digital advertising guidance.
 - FTP also drafted a content calendar – key dates and hooks for every month are outlined for the year (e.g. national state days, National Strawberry Day). Suggested actions are outlined for each month.
 - It’s time to move from “how” to “what” – FTP needs broad-based input from across the system. Time to fill the framework of the plan with content and suggestions.
 - When the Executive Director position is filled, FTP will provide onboarding for the work that has been done to date.
 - AgIsAmerica will be revitalized as part of the effort, for all to use.

- **The CMC is encouraged to share the guidance materials with all sections and seek feedback so the plan can continue to evolve.**
 - Immediate feedback from the CMC:
 - Add suggestions to include Government Affairs personnel in the communications effort.
 - Consider tailoring more stories to reflect Academic Programs. There could be greater representation of academics-related stories in the toolkit and content calendar. (Cynda Clary shared a helpful website: Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment: <https://www.purdue.edu/usda/employment/>)
 - **The CMC is invited to share comments and suggestions on the toolkit and calendar with Forbes-Tate Partners. All are encouraged to contact the FTP staff directly, or email aplu_baa@forbes-tate.com.**
 - **The toolkit and calendar will be distributed after the call.**
5. BAA-Policy Board of Directors consideration of designating the CMC as a standing committee (Karla/Doug)
- The BAA-PBD meets on 2/19/21 and will discuss the repositioning of the CMC as a standing committee of the BAA. Voting will not take place at this meeting. (There was an attempt to reposition the CMC in 2017 which was not approved.)
 - Repositioning the CMC requires the vote of 60% of PBD voting-eligible members
 - There is no known objection to the repositioning of the CMC, however it is critical that PBD members attend the meeting and vote when asked to do so.
 - **CMC members are encouraged to ensure their respective PBD members participate in the vote.**
 - **Rick and Doug will draft brief talking points to provide CMC members with a consistent message to bring forth to PBD members.**
 - Designation as a standing committee elevates the CMC's voice when big decisions are being made, and appropriately recognizes the contributions the CMC makes to the BAA.
 - The motion to reposition the CMC must be posted for 30 days after it is introduced prior to voting. (Potential timeline: Motion goes out in March for approval of CMC repositioning by late April.)
6. National Impacts Database update
- NIDB held its 2020 annual writing committee meeting virtually.
 - ESCOP and ECOP communicators across the system gathered and reviewed 400+ impact statement submissions from 2020.
 - *2020 submissions were turned around into a culmination of 93 products (74 web stories, 18 fact sheets, and 1 video) to be posted on the NIDB frontpage.*
7. Upcoming CMC business
- The Executive Director search committee is assembled and will be active in March.
 - **Hold a calendar appointment for the monthly CMC meeting: third Thursday of the month, 3:00 pm ET, through June.**