

Board of Agriculture

December 2022 Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Approved March 3rd, 2023

Executive Summary

The meeting was held on Friday, December 2nd 2022, from 9 am to 2 pm. The meeting was attended by 13 board members and 10 invited guests, as well as all 4 members of the Board administration. Samantha Warren, Director of Government and Community Relations with the University of Maine System, presented University Legislative Priorities and Processes. The Board approved the following meeting schedule: February: Budget meeting and preparation for conversation with Governor in March, March: Governor meeting to share UMaine partnerships and priorities. during the MAFES/Cooperative Extension Day at the Legislature during National Ag Week , April: Agricultural Needs. Needs from the agricultural community articulated to the University, October: Report of University to Board. University highlights, research, extension and other initiatives allowing for the Board to advise, December: Officers and Reporting meeting: Nomination of officers and preparation of annual report to the Board of Trustees and legislature's Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry committee. The Board voted to submit a title to clarify and update the Statute language. The Board approved a nominating community and elected Julie Ann Smith as Chair and Tade Sullivan as Vice Chair.

Meeting Details

Date: Friday, December 2nd 2022

Time: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Location: Bodwell Area, Collins Center for the Arts, University of Maine, Orono

Format: In person with President and Vice Chancellor Joan Ferrini-Mundy attending by Zoom

Recorder: Linden Schenider, Board of Agriculture Clerk

Attendees: Julie Ann Smith, Amanda Beal, Bruce Hall, Sam Warren, Carol Woodcock, Jake Ward, Don Flannery, Hannah Carter, Edie Smith, Jim Dill, Tade Sullivan, Zach Schmesser, Jason Bolton, Jessica Leahy, Linden Schneider, Diane Rowland, Carol Weymouth, Jake Pierson, John Volin, Ryan Dennet, Heather Spalding, Justin Gray, Emily Horton, Marge Kilkelly, George Criner, Kevin Woltemath, Marilyn Meyerhans

Board Members in Attendance (13): Julie Ann Smith, Amanda Beal, Bruce Hall, Don Flannery, Hannah Carter, Jim Dill, Tade Sullivan, Jake Pierson, Heather Spalding, Justin Gray, Marge Kilkelly, Kevin Woltemath, Marilyn Meyerhans

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The meeting was called to order at 9:05 by the Board of Agriculture Chair Julie Ann Smith and all those present provided a brief introduction. The first order of business was to approve minutes from

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March 14th, 24th, and September 9th meetings. Marge Kilkelly moved to approve the minutes, Heather Spalding seconded. All members present voted in favor, no opposition and no abstention.

Samantha Warren, Director of Government and Community Relations, University of Maine System, presented [University Legislative Priorities and Processes](#). Warren concluded by emphasizing the way that the Board can advocate for the University of Maine System by demonstrating at the legislature how the University is of value to what the Board members do using examples of partnerships and encouraging support for university programs and investment, while drawing attention to university research and programs. Kilkelly raised the interest the Board has in an economic impact study for the work the University does in agricultural research and extension. Spalding inquired about if there was an earmark to support the dairy industry that would go through.

How You Can Help

Be explicit in communications about how you/your organization are partnering with the university and the benefits of doing so

Incorporate support for university programs and investment and encourage research-based policymaking in your organization's own outreach and advocacy efforts

Partner with the university including on education and advocacy related events/activities

Respond to university requests to share your story (letters of support for earmarks, legislative testimony, provide quotes for press releases, participate in events, direct legislative outreach, op-eds, etc.)

edible MAINE

10 Things to Know About Maine Grains

1. Maine Grains (MG) is celebrating its 10th year of operating a grain mill in a renovated Bangor mill. The mill is in central Maine grain the region is a center for economic development and regional agriculture in the region.
2. The mill is open a half mill in process Maine grain was first processed by having millstones at the original Bangor mill in 1837. The 2022 millstones will run July 21-30. Find the schedule at [bangorgrain.com](#).
3. At its historical peak circa 1837, Somerset County, where Skowhegan is located, harvested 14.3 million pounds of wheat, enough to feed 100,000 people.
4. Before MG got its Austrian-made, wood-and-stone gristmill up and running on September 8, 2012, Maine grains were last milled in Skowhegan in 1955, when the Spaulding & Watson mill stopped processing grain into animal feed.
5. To date, MG has purchased 9.4 million pounds of Maine grains from 45 local farmers, keeping millions of dollars circulating inside the state's food economy.
6. MG's unique offer: Buy the Mill's 100% whole-grain, Certified Past Grain, plus dough makes The Good Crust, and the Bangor Process Wheat.
7. MG's best-selling products are sifted all-purpose flour, rolled oats, and pearled farro.
8. MG has encouraged farmers to grow heritage Maine grains like red, hard enduro, red, and white to increase biodiversity.
9. In 2021, MG began selling custom crop bags (flour, feed, and more). Bakery, marlin, pizza, and pasta can be made in a market for farmers who want to reach diverse dining and marketing options with their value chain.
10. MG is working with University of Maine food production specialists on a line of baking and animal grain products, great meal and side dish, and more with Maine grains at home.

Chair Smith inquired from the audience about what each of their legislative priorities for the University might look like, they included in no particular order; excused absences for 4 H program participation, increased meat processing capacity, support for dairy farmers, increased professionals in landscaping, increased education through the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, continued support for education and research, applied research on PFAS, University experts testifying more frequently at the legislature, modernizing agriculture and grower education, and rural innovation.

The meeting then moved to reporting out from each of the subcommittee chairs or their representatives. Chair of the Structure and Charge Subcommittee Kilkelly reported that the

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subcommittee met twice. They discussed who is not represented by the current board membership and how a listening session would allow for those voices to be heard without amending the membership. Additionally she reviewed the suggested revisions to the statute that she and the subcommittee had prepared. Those include updating naming and softening of the language to accurately represent the Board as an advisory board to the University. She discussed the addition of an economic impact study to the statute.

Bruce Hall reported out for the Director's Advisory Subcommittee that the subcommittee met once for an informal initial discussion with Director and Dean Diane Rowland and Dean Hannah Carter. The Deans provided information around retirements by informing the subcommittee that those positions are not automatically filled. The subcommittee had received some enrollment trends data for Agricultural majors. Further information that the subcommittee requested was a list of the positions impacted by retirements, the impact of the budget cut that the university currently faces, and understanding budget processes and cycles.

Tade Sullivan, Chair of the Governance Subcommittee reported that the subcommittee had met 4 times, with appreciation for the dedication and work of the subcommittee members and representatives of the University of Maine that attended and supported work of the subcommittee. The subcommittee explicitly worked to build consensus and unanimous agreement among the members for all things that he is proposing.

1. The first item proposed was more frequent meetings that are pre scheduled to lead to more strategic and impactful discussions and a hand and glove relationship between University and agriculture. The schedule of four business meetings and one special meeting was proposed as follows:
 - February: Budget Meeting. Guide conversation with Governor in March
 - March: Governor Advocacy. During MAFES/Cooperative Extension Day at the Legislature during National Agriculture Week
 - April: Agricultural Needs. Needs from the agricultural community articulated to the University
 - October: Report of University to Board. University highlights research and projects and allows for board to advise
 - December: Officers and Reporting meeting: Nomination of officers and preparation of annual Report

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Sullivan noted that the subcommittee modeled an active and productive subcommittee approach in the Governance subcommittee and that he thinks this approach should continue going forward to make the regular meetings more impactful.

2. The second item proposed was a nomination and succession plan for officers. The subcommittee recommends a nominating committee process as well as the election of a vice chair, who would serve as the chair after two years, with the chair being affirmed annually, thus creating a natural succession plan. The nominating committee, which would be the Governance Subcommittee, would provide a slate of officers every December and the Board elects officers based on this slate and any floor nominations.

3. The third item brought forth was the terms of regular board members in order to ensure fresh and innovative ideas continue to energize the Board. The subcommittee had decided that it was better to encourage participation of people who might be logical future board members rather than institute terms and that the Board could work in a development process to attract people to the Board.

The Board took a 15 minute break and reconvened at 10:56

Chair Smith began the discussion of administrative support for the Board, expressing that the Board has perhaps overburdened the University administratively and that the Board should consider a budgetary request for funding an administrator. Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost John Volin recommended that if the state provided funding for the Board it should be outside of the block grant. Warren expressed that it would be unprecedented to have a designated position to support an advisory board. There was some discussion of the individual not working for the University. Sullivan offered a third way considering the proposal to meet on a more regular basis and the use of subcommittees for more significant work. This could tighten up regular meetings and the subcommittee work would fall upon the shoulders of individual subcommittee members. Sullivan concluded that if for example after the first year it was too overwhelming - then they could resume discussion with the University about how to approach Board administration differently in the coming year. Marilyn Meyerhans reminded the attendees that in the past subcommittees would meet frequently and informally and Board administration had nothing to do with those meetings. Director and Dean Rowland provided information on how the administrative support role has changed at the University - to shift to more strategic support for the farms and faculty and so perhaps we now have less capacity to support that in the past. Jake Pierson reminded folks that the Board has statutory obligations for which it is not funded, and Amanda Beal echoed that this is often the case.

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President and Vice Chancellor Joan Ferrini-Mundy joined remotely to provide remarks. Among other comments she assured the Board that the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension are critical pieces of the Land Grant University. Additionally the President and Vice Chancellor would look to the Board of Agriculture to help with student recruitment and mentorship in the career path development to support retention and also workforce development.

The conversation resumed around administrative support for the Board. Director and Dean Rowland expressed that if the administration could not attend the subcommittee meetings, if the regular meetings were shorter and no meals provided that would move to a level of support that could be more manageable. There is general discussion that the Board should better understand the deliverables of the Statute and also a sense of the reception of the request for administrative funds from the legislature. Sullivan reminds the group that we should first decide on the meeting schedule. Sullivan moves to approve and institute the following meeting schedule:

- February: Budget Meeting. Guide conversation with Governor in March
- March: Governor Advocacy. During MAFES/Cooperative Extension Day at the Legislature during National Agriculture Week
- April: Agricultural Needs. Needs from the agricultural community articulated to the University
- October: Report of University to Board. University highlights research and projects and allows for board to advise
- December: Officers and Reporting meeting: Nomination of officers and preparation of annual Report

Hall seconded the motion, all members present voted in favor, no opposition and no abstention.

Kilkelly brought to the Board the question of statute changes with a motion to submit a title, so we have possibility of changing statute. Hall seconds. There was much discussion on changing the statute, with anything beyond correcting language and softening tone to be reviewed by the Board and the University. There was additional discussion of continuing the Structure and Charge Subcommittee going forward to inform the statute revisions. Additionally it was discussed that the Dean of Cooperative Extension and Director of the Experiment Station would become ex officio members of the Board, non voting members.

All members present voted in favor, no opposition and no abstention.

Sullivan requested to convene a subcommittee over lunch, develop a slate of officers for approval. Sullivan moved to re-establish the position of Vice Chair. Hall seconded.

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All members present voted in favor, no opposition and no abstention.

The Governance Subcommittee composed of Burce Hall, Tade Sullivan, Heather Spalding, Justin Gray, and Kevin Woltemath convened over lunch, requesting that anyone who wishes to be an officer or to nominate someone please come see them. Bruce Hall nominated Sullivan for the role of Vice Chair. The committee also nominated current Chair Julie Ann Smith to another year long term.

Mexican fiesta lunch went from 12 -1.

The meeting reconvened and Sullivan presented the slate of officers to be nominated. The subcommittee brought the following officer nominations to the board Julie Ann Smith as Chair and Tade Sullivan as Vice Chair. Justin Gray motioned and Spalding seconded.

All members present voted in favor except for two abstentions by the nominees, no opposition.

Dean and Director Rowland and Dean Carter presented the Experiment Station and Extension Budgets. A central focus of their presentation was that there were many ways for the Board of Agriculture to influence priorities and support UMaine's agriculture research and extension, as shown in these two slides:



- Advocacy at the federal level beyond capacity - help determine agency funding priorities
- NIFA topic areas
- College advisory board service, communication
- Recruitment
- Mentorship and training of our students - help us create new opportunities
- Impacts on retention
- Guides on fundraising opportunities

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
MAINE

How can the BOA impact our budgeting processes?

Tuition Revenue

Help us with enrollment

University/State Funding

Advocate for UMS funding increases to E&G and MEIF

Federal Funding

Advocate for increased funding to capacity funding (Hatch & Smith Lever)

Advocate for Experiment Station & Extension related activities in the Farm Bill, other
USDA programs, etc.

County Funding

Serve on our county Executive Committees

Participate in the county budget hearings (testify on the impacts of Extension)

Competitive Grant Funding

Partner on grants with letters of support, cost share, on-farm sites, and involvement

The next meeting will be scheduled for February.