

From the desk of the Vice President and Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

The last weekend in February and first week in March are always busy and productive ones for members of the Board on Agriculture family as the Administrative Heads Section (AHS) and the Council on Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET) meet together, the Academic Programs Section, its ACOP, and the Executive Committee of AASCARR meet, and there is the Science on the Hill Exhibit. This is followed by meetings of the Board on Human Sciences that will assemble next week. The APS meeting was sparked by two very good programmatic segments that engaged the attention of all those present. For those that were unable to make the meeting, you missed some wonderfully productive dialogue and information

First, the National Academy of Sciences which is now deep into its processes of planning the Leadership Summit, scheduled for October 3-5, 2006 here in Washington, brought together three members of its steering committee as a panel to discuss the summit and the higher education challenges it seeks to address. The presentations of the three panel members, Peter Bruns, Jane Coulter, and Pat Verduin, were not only well received, but prompted a rich exchange of dialogue between the panel and the audience. In addition, for the first time the Academy released the composition of the steering committee which is attached to this letter.

I am very pleased with the membership of this committee – many of whom are know to me – and with the selection of Jim Oblinger as its chair. For those of you relatively new to APS, Jim is a food scientist who served as associate dean for academic programs at Missouri before moving to North Carolina State University in a similar position and was very active in APS/ACOP. Over the past almost two decades he has moved up the administrative ladder to Dean, Provost, and now Chancellor and is clearly well versed in the challenges facing academic programs in higher education. I view him as both a colleague and friend. Other committee members that are good colleagues and champions of the academic enterprise known to me are Larry Vanderhoef (Chancellor, UC Davis), Mike Martin (President, New Mexico State), Vern Cardwell (Univ. of Minnesota), Mike Hamm (Michigan State) and, of course, Jane Coulter who for many years championed our academic efforts at USDA. It is a committee well balanced with individuals drawn from leadership positions in the academy and from industry and government agencies.

As a corollary to this, LH Newcomb (The Ohio State) has forward to me two articles most worthy of your attention [*What Do Students (or Professors) Know About Teaching?* and *A Self-Directed Guide to Designing Courses for Significant Learning*] and as we continue to engage in discussions surrounding the themes for the summit I would urge all to bring items such as these to our collective attention so they can be shared among the membership. I am more than happy to distribute them. Thanks LH.

Secondly, we are indebted to Bill Hardy our colleague at Auburn who gave a stirring presentation on his institution's commitment, and outstanding leadership, to the War on Hunger campaign. A number of you were fortunate enough to attend the War of Hunger Summit several weeks ago on the Auburn campus so you, as well as those at the APS meeting, know the impact of this program on and by students. I, personally, was so moved that I wished I were back on a campus to pick up the challenges of this program and initiate it with students. For those interested, I am certain that Bill would be more than willing to send you a CD describing Auburn students' program and more information can also be gotten from Maggie Carrington of the United Nations World Food Programme (New York), Carrington@un.org. Auburn University is serving as the lead academic partner in this effort and by any measure is displaying superb leadership and through this work providing a real significant learning experience for students. It is a model of engagement.

The majority of the APS membership has completed its CIPs survey and returned these to me, but we still have a number of institutions that have not yet completed this effort. APS leadership urges you to do so quickly in order that we can effect the changes desired in the FAEIS system. **Every institution must participate in order that USDA can have a complete data set.** There were presentations of the challenges faced by FAEIS at both the ACOP and APS meetings.

At both the ACOP and APS meetings, Mike Mullen provide an update of CREATE -21 efforts to outline a new partnership paradigm between the land-grant university system and our partners in USDA. This particular effort is spawning a great deal of discussion among the members of the BAA and our stakeholders. Although there is a natural tendency to link the BAA CREATE-21 proposals with the FY07 President's budget proposals, the two are very **separate** items. The budget is a congressional **appropriations** issue; CREATE -21 is a congressional **authorization** issue. CREATE -21 suggests a very new way of doing business with our principal federal partners that is more collaborative and integrative in its approach both within USDA and between the university community and that department. Most importantly, it has the clear potential of increasing funding for our various enterprises in teaching, research, and extension in ways that reduce or eliminate the stagnation of funding that has been experienced over the past decade. The immediate product of the CREATE -21 effort will be proposed authorization language for the reauthorization of the Farm Bill or, perhaps, as free-standing legislation. Please follow this effort closely and provide to Mike or me your suggestions on the proposal.

As to the President's Budget, I hope that all of you are following our advocacy efforts for increases in the items of importance to our academic efforts. The proposed increases in the challenge grant and graduate fellowship programs are indeed welcomed. In addition, the re-emergence of the line item for Agrosecurity Education while unexpected would, if funded, provide a new venue in which academic programs could make a significant contribution. In a year of very tight resources any increase is considered a "win." Thus, in discussions with your institutional leadership that will be carrying messages of advocacy (including your governmental affairs personnel) please be sure to put this on their agenda for interactions with congressional delegates.

At the final session of our APS meeting there was discussion of the need to reschedule the winter meeting to a time later in the week. There are two reasons for this: First, it would eliminate weekend travel which for all of us (particularly our western-state colleagues) would be welcomed and secondly, given my new responsibilities encompassing all of the BAA, it would allow me to spend undivided time between the various groups meeting that week. What I am proposing is that for the purposes of the winter meeting, ACOP and APS Business Meetings be combined and held on a Thursday morning, with Thursday afternoon and Friday morning sessions devoted to Program – Professional development issues/sessions. Regional APS meetings would follow the Thursday afternoon program sessions and the joint reception/dinner would, obviously, be on Thursday evening. Parenthetically, AHS/CARET is contemplating moving its meeting from Sunday-Tuesday to Monday-Wednesday, with the Hill exhibit on Wednesday eve. The APS executive committee would like some further feedback on this proposal so please send me your comments. Thanks.

Finally, I attach the minutes of the ACOP and APS business meetings for your information.

Have a wonderful weekend!

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