I. **Presentation and Discussion: Facilitating Inter-disciplinary Research and Collaboration**

_Laura Huenneke, Karan Jarratt-Snider, Jane Marks, Bruce Hungate, Rom Coles_

_Laura Huenneke:_ National Science Foundation’s “Dear Colleague” letter ([http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11022/nsf11022.jsp?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11022/nsf11022.jsp?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click)) outlines the Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability investment area, a multi-year, multi-program effort to address complex challenges. These types of initiatives encourage everyone to look beyond past frustrations (if any) about interdisciplinary work. NAU is unique in how supportive and flexible we are toward interdisciplinary work – small, interactive, don’t have the same intense publishing pressures or departmental silos as many universities. Being successful with proposals is dependent on how unique and crisp the ideas. More competitive – 10% receive funding. Capitalizing on unique opportunities – regional, tribal, strong cross-disciplinary development, etc. (i.e. an engineering project involving social scientists). What sets ideas apart? Talk to Laura Huenneke, deans, others to help identify what is unique. The EC creates unique opportunities to identify potential partners.

Keep in mind the departmental structures on campus to be considered and discussed long before submission (i.e. fund sharing, business managers, logistics once funding is received).

Research Division tools available for collaboration: SharePoint (can also be used with other AZ universities), experienced grant administrators ready to facilitate conversations with NSF program directors, etc. NAU has a great track record with NSF -- ask others, talk to potential collaborators on campus early in the process.

Regents have set goal for the state as a system to double its research funding from external sources --$2B by 2020.

_Jane Marks:_ $1M NSF grant received last year for climate education partnership. Puts NAU in strong running for next phase of program, 16 grant recipients will compete for $5-10M (~10 awards). P.I.s are Bruce Hungate and Darrel Kaufman (climate scientists), Karen Jaratt-Snider (pedagogy), Rom Coles (political scientist), Jane Marks (biology, coordinating grant). Very challenging application process. NAU’s campus environment encourages this type of
collaborative work – across hard sciences and social sciences. Trend emerging that social science collaborations bring a unique edge to applications.

Karen Jaratt-Snider: Many proposals today do not fit into specific fields. Multi-disciplinary proposals and projects take much more time; remember to accommodate this. Community engagement is a natural part of these projects. Extra time must be afforded to work with tribal communities and tribal approval processes, community engagement.

Rom Coles: Interdisciplinary, community, K-12, and other connections are produced by the grant.

Jane: This project capitalized on the relationships that already existed among faculty and different parts of the community. 21 letters of support were gathered to show NSF that they already are working in the community.

Bruce Hungate: Fast Lane submissions challenging. Looking at his success rate on submissions, he sees collaborative grants are more successful than single grants, and Educational grants are more successful than Research. In any case, proposal must be a cutting-edge idea. Challenging part is to be sure natural/social science collaborations are truly innovative. Stay in touch with who is publishing and in what journals. Do P.I.s have leading edge? Consider also collaborating with scientists at other institutions who are leaders in the field.

Logistics of multi-disciplinary, multi-college proposals: Logistics of submission can be prohibitive. Better support from Research Division will make submissions more feasible. The quality of the project description is the most important part of the NSF proposal and should be the focus of the experts’ (P.I.s) time. Research Division moving towards an electronic signature Proposal Approval Form and working on improvements to other systems to assist in submissions. VPR can help make inter-disciplinary connections that reflect NAU’s strengths.

II. Announcements

Billy Parish: Several paid and academic credit internships are available for his new business, Solar Mosaic, which was just accepted into NACET. Focused on building an online tool for personal/community solar energy design, facilitating communities/individuals coming together to fund projects on public and private buildings. Implementing pilot projects in Flagstaff, new and innovative model (see “Clean-Energy Business Interns” at http://green.nau.edu/students/jobs_internships.html). Contact: billy@solarmosaic.com

Regan Emmons: Slow Food NAU is organizing Food Film Fest 2011, Feb 18-19. 10-15 films, tabling, Mark Winne speaking on Friday, author of Food Rebels, Guerrilla Gardeners, and Smart Cookin’ Mamas. More info on the way!
Jane Marks: Winona LaDuke, speaking on Environmental Justice, February 1, 7 pm, Ardrey auditorium, co-sponsored by Martin-Springer Institute, Environmental Caucus, Program in Community Culture and the Environment.

Rich Bowen: Postal services purchased new plug-in electric and hybrid vehicles. Electric vehicle charging stations on the way for campus.

Scott Perelstein: Planning for bike lockers (rent a locker for a semester) and bike storage in parking garages (adding to existing and designing into new). Project to improve intersections on campus and other improvements around campus after construction is complete.

Paul Gazda: Sustainable Environmental Practices action team created a Green Fund proposal for sustainable landscape maintenance and was approved! Internships related to the project are available, see http://green.nau.edu/students/jobs_internships.html.

Shawn Newell: Student Connections on Green NAU needs promotion so that students can be matched with internships. Many are going wanting. If you have ideas on getting the word out, or have questions, e-mail Studentconnections@nau.edu.

Jim Allen: Forestry job fair next Thursday afternoon, January 27 (15-17 employers).

Rom Coles: Call for action and possible revenue generation for NAU in the Solar Mosaic project.

Casey Fisher: Introduced Catherine Sullivan, the new Sodexo sustainability coordinator. Welcome!

III. Environmental Caucus Business

1. Concept Presentation: Associate Vice Provost for Sustainability (Rod Parnell):
   - Rod’s fall 2010 sabbatical focused on sustainability leadership at peer institutions. EC Steering Committee has been in discussions on this and recognizes the need for sustainability leadership at NAU to catalyze and facilitate cooperative curricular, research, facilities and development partnerships. Strategic and logistical need to move concrete changes forward on campus, make creative connections across all departments on campus, from what the president endorses to the interaction between curricular and co-curricular activities. A gap exists on the strategic side. Leadership in the Provost’s office can help coordinate these activities within NAU, with focus on resource development from private, state, federal, NGOs, etc. We can’t cut our way to greatness -- this is a good time to be strategic because of reorganization that will occur over the next few years.
   - Questions and response: “Another administrator?” EC Steering Committee believes there are huge benefits in the savings this position can create in reduction of campus redundancies, the reputation that can be built for NAU
(recruitment plus), and the opportunities to increase student retention through greater engagement on campus and in community. A commitment to transforming this institution will take high level leadership. This is essentially a “Harvey Charles” (Vice Provost for International Education) for sustainability. The position will more than pay for itself through generative connections/focus on grants and fundraising. This will be a principal role of the position.

- Involving students in sustainability projects: It would be helpful to have a single person/office to encourage and support for student involvement. Important for NAU to walk its talk! Many opportunities go unfilled due to lack of centrality.
- Heather’s position (Office of Sustainability Program Coordinator), how might this role change? Ideally, need sustainability leadership in Capital Assets and on academic side. Together, they will work to break down silos. Work within the context of existing university structures. The Director of Office of Sustainability position not filled; we need someone at that level in Capital Assets as well. For now, the Sustainability Program Coordinator will work closely with Capital Assets and, ideally, with AVP for Sustainability.
- This position will focus on bringing in external funding and collaborations/connections.
- Rich mentioned that Mason Gerety, VP of Advancement, is ready to raise funds for sustainability. He just needs a “white paper” about the best sources, ways and places to start. That will also help this proposed position. They need the contacts/knowledge to get started.
- Rod: Middlebury College has a Dean of the Environment and an inspirational sustainability leader (Bill McKibben). What is the most important aspect of leadership for NAU?

2. American Democracy Project/New York Times Discussions – Seeking faculty discussion leaders for spring semester
   - NYT will fund lunch or dinner for up to 50 students for faculty-led discussions focused on current sustainability issues which have been covered in the NYT. Will also assist with advertising and providing newspapers. We plan to hold three “Times Talks” this semester. Interested faculty should contact Shelley.Silbert@nau.edu and Kevin.Ordean@nau.edu.

3. Student Environmental Caucus Update (Bryan McLaren)
   - Kevin and Bryan are going to freshman classes to talk about the Student EC. Advertising the group as a resource to help students make connections and prevent redundancy in initiatives.
   - Tomorrow is the first SEC meeting of the semester.

4. Green Fund Update
• Student seat is open on the Green Fund committee. To increase diversity across colleges, need a student who is not in SBS or CEFNS, and is not a graduate student.
• Approved first funding for two proposals last week.

5. Hooper Student Fund Sustainability Awards
   • Applications are due Feb 7 [Note: Deadline has since been extended to February 24]. Graduate & undergraduate students, individuals or teams. See http://www.research.nau.edu/undergraduate/hooper.aspx

IV. EC Action Teams: Team leaders are in parentheses; contact them if you are interested in working on one of the following:
   1. ACUP Climate Commitment (Lindsay Wagner)
   2. NAU's Environmental Identity (Kathy Maloney)
   3. Student Environmental Caucus (Kevin Ordean)
   4. Transportation Action Team (Kristen Bullard)
   5. Water Action Team (Tamara Ramirez)
   6. Sustainable Environmental Practices (Paul Gazda, Patrick Pynes)
   7. Curriculum and the Environment/Ponderosa 2.0 (Blase Scarnati)

Next Meeting: Monday, February 7, 2011, 12-1:30 pm, ARD Large Pod

Thanks to Kristen Bullard for taking notes!