

Environmental Education Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 19, 2016

Baton Rouge Marriott, Bonaparte Room

4 PM

I. Call to order

Chairman Cole Ruckstuhl called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

II. Roll Call/Sign-in

Commission Members present: Jessica Dixon, Ann Wilson, Gary Balsamo, Jonathan Dearbone, Brenda Walkenhorst; Dean Blackett, Deepak Bhatnagar, Cole Ruckstuhl, Dinah Maygarden, Jennifer Roberts, Connie Conner, Heather Niemic, Heather Egger. (Melanie Dupre was manning the registration table.)

Guest present: Lauren Hull, Louisiana Sea Grant.

Staff present: Venise Ortego; Thomas Gresham and Brian Gautreau arrived later.

III. Minutes from last meeting

Approval of minutes were postponed until a quorum was met, which occurred immediately following the Coordinators' report.

IV. Financial Report

Venise Ortego passed out copies of the report.

V. Coordinator's Report

Venise reported that \$5000 has been donated by Shell for the symposium.

Symposium: The online registration has been problematic, as LEAA receives money and Thomas receives paperwork. Some people did not receive confirmation.

There are 24 concurrent sessions, 20 exhibitors, and 7 university research posters.

10-12 middle school students are attending with teacher-mentor Jean Marie Williams.

Registration: Total registrants at 128, compared to last year 94 participants.

Only 8 requests for lodging assistance were received. Schools are paying for teachers to attend.

Preschool program (Brenda N.) is very popular.

Deepak commented that the Baton Rouge location is also popular.

Venise said that one college student was given lodging assistance and paid a nominal registration fee.

Deepak made a motion to accept the November 2015 meeting minutes. Ann seconded. Minutes were unanimously accepted by the Commission.

VI. Old Business

A. Symposium Committee Reports/Needs

1. Audio Visual - Heather N. has the equipment provided by the LSU AgCenter.
2. Door Prize/Hospitality - Connie said that there are 35-38 prizes in hand.
3. Evaluation - Cole said that they are all set.
4. Exhibitors: Venise said that they are all set.
5. Finance - Deepak said that we received \$5000 from Shell and we may possibly receive another \$1000. All expenses seem to be covered. Shell's Curtis Thomas will accept the Shell award.
6. Keynote - Kelley said that CC Lockwood will speak.
7. Programs – Brenda N. stated that a session update will need to be inserted into the programs.
8. Public Relations – Dean's report is below.

- 9. Registration - Ann said that registration is going well.
- 10. Short Course – Brenda N. just completed her short course. All went well and no problems were reported. Chris Rogers took photos.
- B. Symposium Volunteer Assignments:** Venise said that Brian will monitor sessions and Dean, Ann, Brenda have volunteered to make sure people turn in evaluations. Deepak and others will oversee packing up after the event.
- C. Art & Language Arts Contest:** Thomas reported that the reception will take place at the governor's Mansion on June 14. Judges are currently needed for the judging on May 2nd. Ann, Heather, Gary, Jonathon, and Jennifer volunteered to judge.
- D. 2016 Grants Program:** Ann reported that the Green Schools grants program is going very well. More applicants are needed for grants programs. Brian is developing the Green Schools Program. He met with Entergy and is applying for funds to develop an App. There are three 2015 Green Schools grants.
- E. Environmental Literacy Program:** Venise reported that she met with the new LDWF Secretary to discuss the ELP. He is interested in pushing it forward with the new administration. It is likely to come at end of session.

VII. New Business

- A. Outreach Report:** Dean stated that he is continuing LEEC Outreach in northern Louisiana, building the Playmaker's project. He also reported on the Center for Clean Water Technology in Calhoun LA, Associated with ULM. The Ag Center is partnering to address water pollution and bioremediation. Hanbat National University in Korea is also a partner in this project. There are plans to incorporate K-12 STEM education and student research for area schools.
- B. 2017 Symposium:** Cole commented that the location for the symposium in Baton Rouge is the best location for 2017. There was higher attendance this year and Marriott is a good venue. The date for next year's symposium was discussed.

A motion was made by Jonathan to hold the date for the 2017 symposium on February 3-4, with a back-up on February 10-11 in Baton Rouge. Deepak seconded. The motion passed.

Venise proposed a symposium debriefing meeting for March 9 or 10. She will send out an email.

- C. Formation of Outreach Committee:** Cole opened discussion on the formation of an Outreach Committee to provide support to Venise, Thomas and Brian for outreach activities. He requested support from the commission. An informal meeting already took place.

Cole made a motion that this committee will keep the goals of the Commission at the forefront. Two meetings may take place outside of each Commission meeting. Minutes will be presented at the next Commission meeting. Cole recommended Heather N. as the chair of the committee. The committee will develop a mission statement. Jennifer seconded the motion.

The committee will be open to all commission members. Currently 9 commission members are members of the Outreach Committee: Heather N., Brenda W., Brenda N., Jennifer, Cole, Angela, Dinah, Dean, and Chris Rogers.

VIII. Announcements

Cole's term as chair is coming to an end. He stated that he enjoyed his role and enjoys serving on the Commission. Cole announced that Brenda Walkenhorst will be the new chair. Recognition of Commission members and new officers will take place at the luncheon tomorrow.

- IX. Next Meeting Dates:** May 10, 2016, August 9, 2016, November 15, 2016

- X. Adjournment:** Ann made a motion to adjourn. Cole Seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:07.