

MINUTES
LOUISIANA UNIVERSITIES MARINE CONSORTIUM
EXECUTIVE BOARD

Claiborne Building, North Dakota Room, 1-155, 1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA

October 29, 2015, 1:00 PM

I. Call to Order (Dr. Laura Levy)

Dr. Laura Levy, Chair, LUMCON Executive Board, called the meeting of the Executive Board for the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium to order on October 29, 2015 in the North Dakota Room of the Claiborne Building, Board of Regents, Baton Rouge, at 1:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call (Dr. Nancy Rabalais)

LUMCON Executive Board members present for the meeting:

* **Dr. Kalliat T. Valsaraj**, Louisiana State University and A&M College
Vice Chancellor for Research and Development

***Dr. Neal Weaver**, Nicholls State University
Vice President, University Advancement

***Dr. Ramesh Kolluru**, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Vice President for Research

***Dr. Stan Napper**, Louisiana Tech University,
Vice President for Research and Development

***Dr. Laura Levy**, Tulane University
Vice President for Research

***Dr. Eric Pani**, University of Louisiana at Monroe
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Christopher D'Elia, Louisiana State University and A&M College
Dean, School of the Coast & Environment

Dr. Stephen Johnson, University of New Orleans
Dean, College of Sciences

***Denotes voting members of the LUMCON Executive Board.**

Dr. Rabalais determined that 6 of 8 voting members of the LUMCON Executive Board constituted a quorum, and Dr. Levy called the meeting to order.

LUMCON Science and Education Advisory Council Members present for the meeting:

Dr. Gary LaFleur, Nicholls State University
Associate Professor of Biological Sciences

Guests in attendance:

Board of Regents Staff: Uma Subramanian, Deputy Commissioner for Legal and External Affairs; Board of Elementary & Secondary Education Staff: Dr. Judith Miranti, BESE ex-officio member; LUMCON: Dr. Nancy Rabalais, Dr. Alex Kolker, Dr. Ed Chesney, Dr. Paul Sammarco, Dr. Brian Roberts, Heidi Boudreaux, John Conover, Jennifer "Murt" Conover, Holly Hebert, Bruce Benoit, Debbie Cenac; Other guests: Dr. James Underwood III, Professor in Marketing,

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Dr. Cherie Courseault-Trumbach, Associate Professor, Department of Management and Marketing, University of New Orleans, Dr. R. Eugene Turner, LSU Boyd Professor, Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences, Louisiana State University

III. Approval of Prior Minutes

Dr. Levy recommended the approval of the minutes from the last Executive Board meeting on August 19, 2015.

MOTION BY DR. RAMESH KOLLURU, SECONDED BY DR. STAN NAPPER, to approve the minutes of the Executive Board Meeting held on August 19, 2015.

AYE: Valsaraj, Weaver, Kolluru, Napper, Levy, Pani

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Levy signed the signature page of the minutes thus certifying them for historical purposes.

IV. Public Comments

Dr. Levy called for public comments. Dr. Rabalais stated that no one had expressed interest in making public comments but that there must be a call for public comments prior to any vote being taken on any specific agenda item. Dr. Rabalais added that she has submittals to be considered during specific agenda discussion. Dr. Levy stated that she would allow for the opportunity for public comments after an agenda item and she also asked the guests in attendance if they intend to present during agenda discussion. Several guests indicated they would be participating.

V. Reports and Recommendations of Standing and Special Committees

A. Consideration of Draft Business Plan

Dr. Levy stated that after the last meeting and the recommendation of the Commissioner of the Board of Regents the Executive Board was tasked with the development of a business plan. Dr. Levy recognized Dr. Kolluru's role is spearheading the drafting of the business plan. Dr. Levy requested Dr. Kolluru to present an overview of the business plan to the board. Power Point presentation is Exhibit A and is an official part of the minutes as requested by Dr. Levy.

Dr. Levy called for public comments. Dr. Rabalais distributed materials for consideration and as a rebuttal to several business plan items. Exhibit B is a written statement dealing with the education and outreach portion of the business plan. It addresses key points from the Field Stations and Marine Laboratories (FSML) "Enhancing the Value and Sustainability of Biological Field Stations," which Dr. Rabalais states is quoted frequently in the plan. Dr. Rabalais introduced Exhibit C & D which address inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the business plan. Also submitted was a list of positions held by Dr. Rabalais as Director of LUMCON, Exhibit E, and her final statement, Exhibit F.

Heidi Boudreaux read from a written statement, Exhibit G speaking to the hiring of a new director and the two coordinator positions. John Conover offered a rebuttal to the proposal in the business plan to do away with the librarian position. He supplied supporting documentation that the Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS) and the Louisiana Academic Library Information Network Consortium (LALINC) require an institution to have a librarian with a master's degree in residence in order to avail themselves of the LOUIS resources, support and services.

Dr. Alex Kolker offered a verbal statement relating to the business plan development. He acknowledged that while the plan had some good ideas it was rushed, which led to aspects not being very well thought out or tested such as the ecotourism and the culinary experience. Also the section of the business plan about member universities sharing their indirect costs with LUMCON sounds good in theory but with the recent budget cuts, will the universities fiscally be on board with that idea? Dr. Kolker added that there are inconsistencies between the strategic plan and the business plan about teaching at member universities. He continued by saying that there are contradictory proposals in regard to K-12 within the plan and definitely not enough emphasis on the value of the K-12 program. He proposed that it might be more feasible to have one coordinator position instead of two. Dr. Kolker spoke to the idea of limiting faculty positions to 6 months and how this will hamper recruitment and retention efforts. He finished by stating one of his major concerns was the fact that the \$20 billion dollars for coastal restoration that is coming to the Gulf coast over the next 15 years is not mentioned in the plan at all even though LUMCON is ideally suited to take advantage of those dollars as they come in. This is in direct conflict with LUMCON's mission to support coastal efforts in Louisiana. Dr. Kolker recommended that the Executive Board not adopt the business plan as submitted but instead use it as a starting point until all the ideas and proposals can be fleshed out.

Dr. Judith Miranti, BESE ex-officio member, spoke to the importance of the LUMCON K-12 program and the importance of promoting and developing science in schools. She stated that the LUMCON K-12 program is an excellent example of what the Environmental Education Commission promotes, of which she and Dr. Rabalais are both members.

Dr. Paul Sammarco offered his support for the business plans emphasis on strengthening the consortium and promoting further interaction between LUMCON and the member universities. He expressed his concern that there were sweeping changes to take place in a short time and this could cause destabilization of the facility and the way it functions effectively. He stated that if the faculty focus is on revenue generation they will lose their focus on quality science. Dr. Sammarco also expressed concern regarding the 50% salary proposal. He said that comparable institutes all offer 75% and that the new proposal will inhibit recruitment and retention. Dr. Sammarco added that the LUMCON K-12 program impact is under-represented in the business plan.

Dr. Brian Roberts echoed some of the previous comments about the business plan not appearing fully developed. He stated that the budget breakdowns listed in the document are not completely accurate. The business plan states that the 21% of the state's allotted funds go to the faculty. Also the faculty position are not fully research, a portion of the salaries should be categorized as education because the faculty participate in education. Dr. Roberts also spoke to the 50% salary proposal and reiterated that it was a retention and recruitment obstacle. He specified that the reaction of the faculty represented at the meeting should give the board pause and perhaps give them the impetus to re-evaluate the plan and its impact.

Dr. Ed Chesney emphasized that the business plan is based on a faulty assumption of what the marine center actually is. LUMCON and the faculty are the marine center. The Executive Board represents the consortium and has the power to make it work. Hiring an education coordinator for LUMCON to reach out to the member universities is essentially backwards. Unless a person at each of the universities facilitates the coordination and cooperation with LUMCON, the consortium and the framework will never be truly successful. He added that the business plan contained factual inaccuracies that he would like to see amended before the document is put to a vote.

Dr. Levy opened the floor to board members for discussion. Dr. D'Elia stated that the comments from the LUMCON faculty members were compelling and should be carefully considered before the board moves forward with the plan. He stressed that the plan needs to clearly differentiate between LUMCON the consortium and LUMCON the marine center. Dr. Valsaraj clarified that the business plan was not an operational plan or action plan. He expressed concern that a long-term growth project was not a part of the business plan. Dr. Valsaraj stated that the hiring plan is dependent on leveraging the ability of the member universities having their faculty participating at LUMCON. Dr. Valsaraj addressed the proposal to add a business advisory council to the organizational plan. He worried that this would just be adding complexity to the process. Dr. Kolluru clarified the university education portion of the plan in that the plan is dependent upon the member universities teaching classes at the marine center and sharing tuition with LUMCON. Dr. Levy supported this by saying that a tuition sharing formula must be implemented because the funds must go to the performance site to recover any of the site's costs. Dr. D'Elia suggested that the pursuit of revenues such as the coastal restoration or the BP research money be added. Dr. Levy argued that having LUMCON pursue those funds would put LUMCON in direct competition with its member universities. She furthered that the universities should be the ones aggressively pursuing the funds and do so in collaboration with the marine center. Dr. Levy stated that she would ask that the board proceed with a vote on the plan but with the stipulation that the plan be amended with certain board clarified specifications. Dr. Kolluru indicated he had begun a revision after Dr. Valsaraj submitted his concerns to him.

MOTION BY DR. WEAVER, SECONDED BY DR. VALSARAJ, to amend the Business Plan with the following language modifications: The Business Plan language must be clarified to indicate that this is a business plan for financial stability not an operation plan for the marine center; The Business Plan language must be clarified to indicate that long term projections for financial stability are not necessarily in the report; The Business Plan language must be clarified that some university members are actively participating in marine center activities; The Business Plan language must be clarified that future faculty hires will leverage university resources; The Business Plan language must be clarified if not corrected with regard to the possibility that BTNEP might act as the fund raising arm for the consortium; The language with regard to the technical role of the executive director should be clarified so as not to suggest it should be interpreted literally; The Business Plan must be amended to correct factual inaccuracies; Add definitions to the Business Plan to define LUMCON the Marine Center from LUMCON the Consortium; Explicit language needs to be added to the Business Plan to clarify that no change is recommended to the contractual relationships for the current faculty; The Business plan language must be changed to state "Survey past and current patrons to determine which of the current K-12 efforts might serve as feeders to the niche program, while simultaneously reevaluating the business of K-12 education as it stands right now."

AYE: Valsaraj, Weaver, Kolluru, Napper, Levy, Pani

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None
CARRIED: 6-0

MOTION BY DR. NAPPER, SECONDED BY DR. NEAL, to approve the Strategic Business Plan incorporating the amendments adopted in prior motion.

AYE: Valsaraj, Weaver, Kolluru, Napper, Levy, Pani
NAY: None
ABSTAINING: None
CARRIED: 6-0

VI. Reports and Recommendations of the Chair of the Executive Board

A. Executive Director Performance and Role Evaluation

Dr. Levy stated that the Business Plan calls for a significant change in the Executive Director's role and job duties. Dr. Levy explained that since this is a personnel item to attend to the board will have to enter an executive session for discussion in accordance with R.S. 42:17 (A) (1). The employee has been given written notification and has opted in writing to allow the discussion to occur in private as opposed to an open meeting. She further clarified that no action will be taken nor will any polling or voting take place during this executive session.

MOTION BY DR. NAPPER, SECONDED BY DR. NEAL, for the board to enter into executive session.

AYE: Valsaraj, Weaver, Kolluru, Napper, Levy, Pani
NAY: None
ABSTAINING: None
CARRIED: 6-0

All non-board members, including non-voting board members, were excused and the executive session was convened.

When regular session was reconvened, Dr. Levy stated for the record that no action or votes were taken during the closed session.

Dr. Levy offered for consideration of the board a proposal to begin the search for a new Executive Director more compatible with the performance expectations articulated in the Business Plan.

MOTION BY DR. WEAVER, SECONDED BY DR. NAPPER, to approve opening a search for a new Executive Director based on the expectations presented in the Business Plan with the expectation of having a replacement in place by July 1, 2016.

AYE: Valsaraj, Weaver, Kolluru, Napper, Levy, Pani
NAY: None
ABSTAINING: None
CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Levy requested the Executive Board authorize her to appoint a work group to develop the search process for a new Executive Director.

MOTION BY DR. KOLLURU, SECONDED BY DR. PANI, to authorize Dr. Levy to appoint a work group to develop the search process for a new Executive Director.

AYE: Valsaraj, Weaver, Kolluru, Napper, Levy, Pani

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Levy clarified she would seek funding for the search from the Board of Regents. Dr. Weaver added that the implementation of the Business Plan would be delayed until a new Executive Director is in place. Dr. Valsaraj stated he would like to recognize the extraordinary leadership that Dr. Rabalais has shown. Dr. Levy seconded Dr. Valsaraj sentiments and made clear that the executive session did not include a performance evaluation of Dr. Rabalais.

VII. Adjournment

MOTION BY DR. PANI, SECONDED BY DR. VALSARAJ, to adjourn the Executive Board Meeting.

AYE: Valsaraj, Weaver, Kolluru, Napper, Levy, Pani

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Laura Levy announced adjournment of the meeting at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

(s) 7 December 2015

Dr. Laura Levy*, Chair
LUMCON Executive Board

*Transcribed and edited by Debbie Cenac, LUMCON Executive Assistant, audio tapes archived.

*Further edited by Dr. Nancy Rabalais, Secretary to the Executive Board.