

MINUTES
LOUISIANA UNIVERSITIES MARINE CONSORTIUM
EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thomas Jefferson Room – A, #1-136, Claiborne Building, 1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA

August 19, 2015, 10:00 am

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 August 19, 2015 in the Thomas Jefferson Room of the Claiborne Building, Board of Regents, Baton Rouge, at 10 a.m. Dr. Levy recognized special guests, Dr. Joseph Rallo, Commissioner of Higher Education and Dr. Richard Lipsey, Vice-Chair of the Board of Regents.

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. Ioannis Georgiou**, Science & Education Advisory Council Chair
Associate Professor, University of New Orleans, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Dr. Mark Hester, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Interim Director, Institute for Coastal Ecology and Engineering

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

Dr. John Doucet, Nicholls State University
Dean, School of Science and Engineering

***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: Dr. Joseph Rallo, Commissioner of Higher Education; Dr. Richard Lipsey, Vice-Chair of the Board of Regents; Uma Subramanian, Deputy Commissioner for Legal and External Affairs;

Barbara Goodson, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration; Carrie Robison, Associate Commissioner for Sponsored Programs Administration LUMCON: Dr. Nancy Rabalais, Dr. Alex Kolker, Joe Malbrough, Heidi Boudreaux, John Conover, Holly Hebert, Debbie Cenac

III. Approval of Prior Minutes

Dr. Levy recommended the approval of the minutes from the last Executive Board meeting on January 06, 2015.

MOTION BY DR. VALSARAJ, SECONDED BY DR. KOLLURU, to approve the minutes of the Executive Board Meeting held on January 6, 2015.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Kolluru signed the signature page of the January 6, 2015 minutes for historical archive.

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 item. Dr. Levy stated that she would allow for the opportunity for public comments.

V. Reports and Recommendations of Standing and Special Committees

A. Consideration of Five-Year Master Plan

Dr. Levy stated that legislation in 2012 called for the LUMCON Executive Board to provide a five-year master plan for submission to the legislature. In the most recent action, Dr. Rabalais was asked by Dr. Laura Levy and Dr. Kenneth Sewell, after their conferring with Dr. Joseph Rallo, Commissioner of Higher Education, to prepare a Five-Year Master Plan focusing on three major goals. These goals were to (1) enhance Louisiana universities' marine science curricula with engagement in skill-based, field-based courses at the Marine Center and collaborative teaching opportunities across the state's universities, (2) enhance the opportunities for research led by Louisiana's university faculty that utilize LUMCON's outstanding facilities and resources to their best advantage, and (3) support and maintain an outstanding research facility for coastal and marine sciences. They also requested that relevant information from the draft Strategic Plan (vers. January 2015) be considered in the Master Plan development. Dr. Levy asked Dr. Rabalais to give an overview of the draft proposal stopping after each major goal for board discussion.

[NOTE: much of the discussion material is retained in these minutes because it directed modifications to the document.]

Dr. Rabalais: (1) enhance Louisiana universities' marine science curricula with engagement in skill-based, field-based courses at the Marine Center and collaborative teaching opportunities across the state's universities. Dr. Rabalais noted that the LUMCON course offerings across member universities, through consideration by the Science and Education Advisory Council, should be revised to be uniform in course title, course credits, and consistent descriptions. These problems are currently being addressed and some progress has been made. Another directive under education is to increase participation of member university faculty teaching coastal and marine science courses at the Marine

Center and across universities. LUMCON is working to engage younger faculty members at the member universities. The younger teachers are very engaged and enthusiastic about teaching at the Center. LUMCON staff is reviewing ways to strengthen education experiences in coastal and marine sciences. LUMCON faculty and staff are visiting the member university campuses and identifying point personnel to help facilitate enrollment. With regard to maintaining undergraduate education research programs, Marine Center faculty had an REU but were unable to continue due to the lack of faculty to support the number of students needed to maintain an REU. The program was highly regarded by NSF but not sustainable with current staffing levels. The LUMCON Executive Director will work with the Executive Board and the member universities to address an equitable mechanism for apportionment of tuition and teaching credits.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Kolluru inquired about the inequities of tuition and fee recovery between LUMCON and the universities since the Marine Center bears the cost of courses. Dr. Rabalais suggested an off campus tuition could be instituted. Dr. D'Elia reminded the panel that the purpose of the discussion was not to talk about implementation or action plans but strategic goals. Dr. Levy agreed. Dr. Napper stated that he was encouraged by plan development and the fact that it indicates which faculty and university departments are responsible for each specific goal in the five-year plan. Dr. Levy seconded the comment and furthered that at future board meeting the executive board would expect to receive specific reports on the progress of each of the goals. She also indicated that the field experience in the education portion of the plan needs to be a key ingredient of the curricular offerings. She stated that LUMCON should pursue another NSF REU. Dr. Doucet offered that the Marine Center was the perfect opportunity for a low-residency program. Dr. Rabalais stated that the Changing Coastal Oceans course was already using that criterion. Dr. Georgiou encouraged SEAC member contact in order to facilitate course enrollment.

Dr. Rabalais: (2) enhance the opportunities for research led by Louisiana's university faculty that utilize LUMCON's outstanding facilities and resources to their best advantage. She stated one of the goals was to recruit, retain and support leading marine science in-residence faculty, and particularly faculty with an emphasis on field-based research in Gulf of Mexico ecosystems. Dr. Rabalais emphasized the importance of this goal to be able to pursue another NSF REU, to maintain the current facilities and technical equipment, and to continue to receive the current level of research grants that generate indirect cost recovery. Indirect cost recovery is a major part of LUMCON's operating budget. Dr. Rabalais noted that the current number of faculty (4) limits the resident faculty ability to enhance the research opportunities for collaborators with university researchers or to support access to the unique facilities offered by the Marine Center. LUMCON has already embarked on the objective of creating policies governing provision of space for visiting researchers at the Marine Center and policies governing use of LUMCON property for experimental research. The ability to expand graduate education opportunities and postdoctoral experiences is currently limited to the research grants of the resident faculty with a focus on aspects of their grants. Opportunities should be afforded for graduate students and postdoctoral associates funded by member university faculty. A formal association of in-residence Marine Center faculty with member universities and a similar relationship of member university faculty conducting research at the Marine Center via adjunct status is an action item.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Levy prefaced the opening of the research section by stating that this portion of the five-year plan is the most contentious part of the plan with the most contrasting views. She shared her observation that the point of this section is to engage the state's research universities in work that can be done uniquely at the center. The largest disparity is on the size and magnitude the faculty should be residing at the center as compared to being housed at the universities around the state. Dr. Levy quantified that while LUMCON has operated largely as an independent, high-quality research facility this is not the desired intent for the facility. However, it is clear when reviewing the budget

for LUMCON that its existence in large part is dependent on indirect costs brought in by research grants and that the resident faculty, who are supported by these grants, are responsible for the technical operation and maintenance of the scientific spaces and equipment housed at the facility. Levy further stated that there needs to be a balance struck between an independent research center that is in competition with state universities and a weakened center without sufficient scientific personnel to maintain its operation in support of member universities. In addition the reputation as a nationally recognized and respected research center needs to be preserved.

Dr. Levy opened the floor for discussion. Dr. Rabalais clarified that the center is not in competition with member universities, but engages member universities in its proposal development. She used the GoMRI award as an example where LSU receives over 50% of the funding awarded. Dr. Kolluru agreed with Dr. Rabalais statement that a good amount of research dollars awarded to LUMCON is shared with research universities. Dr. Kolluru furthered that he believes that LUMCON has more than done its part to engage and collaborate with the universities.

Dr. Lipsey stated that LUMCON needs to be a more combined teaching and research center bringing with it a more field opportunities for the participating universities. A plan needs to be developed to maximize the use of this resource as such. The facilities need updating in order to attract faculty. The Board of Regents understands that in order to make the changes needed that LUMCON has to be better financed. However, before the Board of Regents can allocate those funds, there has to be a long-range detailed business plan to justify funding. There also has to be a willingness by the universities to participate more fully in scheduling year round classes at the facility. LUMCON cannot continue to exist as a primarily research focused facility. Dr. Napper suggested that the goal language should be changed from recruit, retain, and support leading marine science in-residence faculty with emphasis on field-based research to include the phrase university based faculty. Dr. Levy agreed. Dr. Kolluru recommended identifying a mechanism that the grant proposals cost should include direct and indirect cost sharing. Dr. Levy added that an MOU for indirect cost sharing and a fee schedule for direct costs could be implemented. Dr. Levy asked that Dr. Rabalais flesh these ideas out in the bullet point for that master plan goal.

Dr. Levy opened the floor for public comments. Dr. Kolker stressed that LUMCON faculty members are considered extremely productive members of marine science community which is backed up by the amount of dollars brought in and papers put out. Research and education are heavily combined in the work that is already being done. Dr. Levy added that the goal of the master plan was to engage university faculty to a higher level of participation not to indicate that current in-residence faculty needed to be more involved.

Dr. Rallo explained that one of his primary roles is to take diminishing resources and recommend to the Board of Regents spending priorities. LUMCON needs a viable business model showing where revenues will be generated outside of research. Revenue expansion could be done through expanding use of teaching facilities or inviting people for sabbatical. Dr. Rallo emphasized that he has an obligation to the Board of Regents to offer prioritized funding to the facilities under their umbrella and unless revenue generation specifics can be shown it will be very hard to recommend funding. He urged the executive board to be more urgent in developing a business plan outside of the five-year master plan under discussion.

Dr. Rabalais: (3) support and maintain an outstanding research facility for coastal and marine studies. She expressed that the first objective was a plan for maintenance of integrity of Marine Center assets and that there is an existing deferred maintenance schedule and capital outlay plan. Dr. Rabalais said that while the plan could be better detailed there is no way to capture emergency expenditures that are sometimes needed. As for the aim of ensuring long-term viability of research vessels and small boats,

once again there is existing plans in place which could be documented more. The goal of addressing mitigation issues of a changing coastal landscape is challenge for a number of reasons: LUMCON is outside of the Morganza protection levee, and there is less of a buffer against storm surge and erosion with the decreasing marsh system.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Levy stated that the facility is immensely valuable and remarkable. It is also costly to maintain. Dr. Lipsey commented that Dr. Rabalais is currently persuing all types of dollars for facility integrity. However ,due to the new election of a governor and increased focus on coastal issues, there will be a lot of money available for coastal protection that could possibly be lobbied for. A business plan needs to be developed to present to the new governor so that when federal funds for coastal projects are dispersed for protection and repairs, LUMCON will be in line to receive the funds.

Dr. Kolluru asked if there was a business plan to flesh out the funding portfolio. Dr. Rabalais answered that there was not. Dr. Rabalais stated that LUMCON's funding breakdown is 23% state and 77% external funding (user fees, research grants & federal funds). Dr. D'Elia expressed his concern over the amount of time that would be needed for Dr. Rabalais to develop a formal business plan with her additional responsibilities of running the facility and her research work. Dr. Rallo suggested that a member university's College of Businesses be engaged to assist in the development of a business plan. Dr. LaFleur commented that he has conducted a number of courses at LUMCON this past year and he was invigorated by the sense of vibrancy at the Marine Center. He noted the presence of two large research vessels and multiple research projects. Dr. Rabalais credited the success of the educational programs to Murt Conover, Senior Marine Educator. Dr. Levy called for a motion to approve the Five-Year Master Plan with slight modification to the language.

MOTION BY DR. NAPPER, SECONDED BY DR. WEAVER, to approve the Five-Year Master Plan with language modification to include the phrase university-based faculty in the research section.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Levy asked for a specific recommendation for a timeline for an implementation plan with necessary milestones. Dr. Rallo suggested that there be an interim meeting on or before October 15th for the business plan development in order to have something available for the Board of Regents gubernatorial candidate's workshop. Dr. Kolluru offered to spearhead a business plan development group and identify people within the Colleges of Business at the universities to help with the construction of a business plan.

MOTION BY DR. LEVY, SECONDED BY DR. GEORGIU, to approve the designation of Dr. Kolluru as lead of the business plan development and to have a plan to be presented by October 15, 2015.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Levy clarified that there are two plans to be developed and approved, the business plan and the action plan for the recently approved five-year master plan. In order to be responsive to both plans, a meeting

needs to be set to discuss development progress. Dr. Kolluru suggested that there be two different meetings. One to be held in October to approve the business plan and one held later in the year to review the action plan. Dr. Levy concurred with Dr. Kolluru saying that Dr. Rabalais will send out and invite to a meeting in mid to late October for the business plan and that a meeting will also be scheduled sometime in January for the action plan.

VI. Reports and Recommendations of the Executive Director

A. Faculty Replacement Request

Dr. Rabalais stated that due to the upcoming retirement of Dr. Chesney there will be a need to hire a Coastal Fisheries expert. The retirement will take place in 2017 but LUMCON is requesting an overlap period of at least a year for the knowledge transfer and also research grant establishment for Dr. Chesney's replacement. Dr. Weaver questioned if there was funding in place to pay for the replacement and the overlap. Dr. Rabalais assured him that the funding was already allotted in the indirect cost recovery from carry forward of ICR funding saved by using WISE funding in FY15. Dr. Kolluru offered that a year-long overlap is a bit of a luxury. Dr. Rabalais reiterated that she has funding in place through indirect cost recovery and that finding a replacement for this position is critical from a pure research standpoint and also research facility maintenance. Dr. Napper stated that he was uncomfortable voting on a faculty replacement until a business plan has been developed and approved. Dr. Rabalais expressed her concern about the length of time it takes to find qualified applicants and the delay may put LUMCON in an untenable position. Dr. Lipsey pointed out that it is only approximately 45 days until the business plan is developed.

MOTION BY DR. NAPPER, SECONDED BY DR. WEAVER, to table the faculty replacement request for Dr. Chesney's position until the board has viewed the business plan.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING:

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Levy opened the floor for public comments. Dr. Kolker emphasized that Dr. Chesney has a particular expertise in coastal fisheries and it would be valuable if he could be allowed to pass on not only his technical expertise but his grant connections some the research continues to be lucrative. Dr. Sammarco stated that Dr. Chesney system is the largest and most complex research system at LUMCON, which makes sufficient overlap for his replacement imperative.

VII. Fiscal Year Budget

A. FY 15 State Close Out

Dr. Rabalais stated that the FY 15 State Close Out does not require the Board's approval. It is informational information only.

B. FY 16 State Budget Means of Financing

Dr. Rabalais pointed out items of note for the FY 16 is the \$11,000 budget cut reflected in the LUMCON budget and also the new requirement the HR systems are to invoice to agencies. LUMCON now has a

\$10,000 unexpected liability. The Board previously approved the FY 16 Budget Request but that this is the official FY 16 LUMCON budget.

Barbara Goodson made a statement on behalf of LUMCON expressing the frustration of all public institutions being hit with **unfunded and undisclosed mandates** such as the new HR system fee, the vehicle GPS, the travel planner and other purchasing requirements. Since LUMCON is a small agency, when they are hit with these unfunded mandates it has a large impact because LUMCON has less resources.

MOTION BY DR. VALSARAJ, SECONDED BY DR. KOLLURU, to approve the FY 16 State Budget.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING:

CARRIED: 6-0

C. New and Extended Grants (January 1 - July 31, 2015).

Dr. Rabalais explained that the board approval is acknowledgement of money received by LUMCON and approval of grant funding.

MOTION BY DR. KOLLURU, SECONDED BY DR. NAPPER, to approve the New and Extended Grants presented.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING:

CARRIED: 6-0

D. Personnel Changes (January 1 – July 31, 2015)

Dr. Rabalais explained that there was one major personnel change outside of the usual seasonal hiring and position title changes. She accepted the resignation of the Marine Center Facilities Manager. She elevated Heidi Boudreaux to Chief Administrative Officer and Joe Malbrough to Marine Center Superintendent. The two new positions absorbed the duties of the Marine Center Facilities Manager.

MOTION BY DR. KOLLURU, SECONDED BY DR. LEVY, to approve all personnel changes that have taken place from January 1 – July 31, 2015.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 7-0

E. Research Vessels *Pelican* and *Point Sur* Calendar Year 2015 Schedules

Dr. Rabalais explained that the information in the board book is informational and requires no action.

VIII. Reports & Recommendations by the Chair of the Executive Board

A. Replacement of Vacancy in Vice Chair

Dr. Levy stated the Dr. Kenneth Sewell is no longer a member of the executive board due to leaving UNO and this leaves a vacancy in the Vice Chair position. Dr. Levy indicated she was nominating Dr. Kalliat T. Valsaraj for that office. Dr. Levy invited other nominations that the Executive Board may have.

MOTION BY DR. LEVY, SECONDED BY DR. WEAVER, to approve the nomination of Dr. Kalliat T. Valsaraj as the Vice Chair.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Levy expressed her gratitude to Dr. Valsaraj for serving for another year and his willingness to work with her and the other board members.

IX. Other Business

X. Closed Executive Session – Consideration of Personnel Changes

Dr. Levy explained that since there 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. LEVY, SECONDED BY DR. VALSARAJ, for the board to enter into executive session.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

All non-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 executive session.

Dr. Levy offered for consideration of the board a proposal to approve the promotion of Dr. Alex Kolker from assistant professor to associate professor for a 6 year term according to the existing LUMCON rules for promotion.

MOTION BY DR. KOLLURU, SECONDED BY DR. GEORGIU, to approve the promotion of Dr. Alex Kolker to associate professor.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

XI. Adjournment

MOTION BY DR. LEVY, SECONDED BY DR. KOLLURU, to adjourn the Executive Board meeting.

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

NAY: None

ABSTAINING: None

CARRIED: 6-0

Dr. Laura Levy announced adjournment of the meeting at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

(s) 29 October 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.