

ARD Advisory Council Meeting Minutes **Approved** February 11, 2025 | 2:00 PM | East Campus Union

Meeting began at 2:04 PM.

1. Approval of minutes from April 10, 2024
 - Dinos moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Hyun-Seob. All were in favor. Minutes passed without changes.
2. Updates Dean Derek McLean
 - a. IANR budget and Federal Grants
 - i. Federal Funding – Vice Chancellor Boehm gave updates at the All Hands meeting on federal funding and executive orders and how they're impacting business, and likewise how that is impacting budgeting at the state level.
 - ii. IANR budget – direction is limited at the university level. There has been a wide range of numbers talked about regarding the budget deficit, but we may hear more details in a couple weeks.
 - iii. Federal Grants – the reduction of F&A from NIH to 15% would be about a \$27 million loss to the NU system.
 1. Federal Funding spreadsheet – shows the funding from federal agencies and IANR for the last 10 years. Strong and increasing trend in federal funding from FY16-FY24. USDA is consistent and increasing.
 2. NIH is not a primary funding agency, but 30% comes to IANR.
 3. Emphasized that this spreadsheet is only federal funding and that the total is about \$85 million. The vast majority comes from federal funding, however, about \$14 million comes from other sources such as commodity groups and industry.
 - iv. Total research expenditures are about \$170 million annually; IANR is about 46-47% of research at UNL.
 - v. Discussion and Questions:
 1. How likely will the decrease occur in other federal funding agencies? The process likely started in NIH because it is the biggest with about 42-45 billion in external funding per year, but this could happen in USDA and NSF.
 2. Block grant funding has been discussed, which would mean that the money would be given to the states, and each state would decide how the money is distributed.
 - vi. Derek will be attending an NIH town hall on city campus to learn more.
 - b. Innovate Nebraska – team science, team building and team scholarship.
 - i. Bioeconomy – Tala and Derek have met with state leaders in the bioeconomy to align with what they are most interested in.
 - ii. Grasslands – Dirac Twidwell is working to connect with NRCS, USDA, NGOs across Nebraska, Sand Hills Task Force, and cattle companies.
 - iii. Resilient systems – this would be a comprehensive approach to everything from plants, to humans, to climate and beyond. This would be a good topic for the ARD council to lead this objective.

- iv. Nitrate and water – ARD is partnering closely with Extension and there have been meetings over the last couple of weeks to talk about nitrates and water.
- 3. Discussion on team building for Innovate Nebraska and role of the council.
 - a. OR&I is rolling out PI Development (topics that will roll out every month) & Cohort Program (assisting teams to build a strong foundation so they are successful in competing for large grants)
 - i. Where are the gaps and how can they help teams get more grants?
 - ii. Focused on mid-career faculty and those who are ready to lead big grants/projects.
 - b. Other topic areas:
 - i. AI in Agriculture
 - 1. The survey that is being developed will address research, students and extension. Where do you see the needs and what is successful already?
 - 2. Companies are interested in AI, but don't know where to start or what to do.
 - ii. Human Health & Nutrition
 - c. Partnership with Extension is essential.
 - d. Seed grants may be most successful as it can create incentives.
 - e. This should be seen as a transdisciplinary effort and how they can contribute as well as an investment that they will get value out of.
- 4. Subcommittee assignments
 - a. Two larger assignments coming up in the summer: 1) Graduate Fellowships and 2) Travel awards.
 - i. Tala will reach out to members of the committee to help with reviewing applications.
 - b. Thank you to everyone that has helped with reviewing applications.
- 5. Vote on Chair at the next meeting.
- 6. Other items
 - a. Virtually approve of these meeting minutes via email by replying to all.
 - b. Please let us know your additional ideas for Innovate Nebraska.

Dinos moved to adjourn the meeting. Raul seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 3:01 PM.