

# **WEST VIRGINIA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL**

## **June 25, 2020**

A meeting of the West Virginia Science and Research Council was held on June 25, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. via video conference call. Attendance was as follows:

### **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Dr. Sarah Tucker  
Dr. J. Ulises Toledo  
Dr. Fred King  
Dr. Juliana Serafin  
Anne Barth  
Rachel Roberts  
Dr. John Maher  
Jeff Vandall for Ed Gaunch

### **OTHERS**

Annette Carpenter  
Angela Sundstrom  
Dr. Brandi Ettehadih  
Dr. Sheena Murphy  
Jade Irving  
Jack Smith  
Matt Turner  
Albert Berrebi

### **CALL TO ORDER**

After declaring a quorum was present, Dr. Tucker called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Dr. Tucker announced that this will be the last meeting for members Laura Gibson (served 2 terms) and Jan Fox (resigned due to health reasons).

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes from the prior 2 meetings held on February 7, 2020 and March 23, 2020 was requested; the motion carried.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Dr. Serafin introduced Jade Irving as the program coordinator for First2 program and the newest member of the staff for the Division of Science and Research. She also announced that a search is underway for an Associate Director who will also serve as the division's Education, Outreach and Diversity Manager. Dr. Brandi Ettehadih will be resigning soon but has agreed to stay on board until her replacement is found.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **Federal Programs:**

#### **NSF RII Track 1**

As reported in a prior meeting, the newest RII track 1 proposal was declined and as a result, a no cost extension for our current award was granted; it now expires in July 2021. A supplemental proposal will be submitted with a budget to cover the Division of Science and Research staff's operations along with other infrastructure costs once our total balance is under \$1M. Dr. Serafin will ask the Council to approve the supplemental proposal in a future meeting (fall target). The next All Hands meeting is also planned for this fall.

New proposal- Before beginning a new proposal, it's been determined that *Vision 2025* (the state's science and technology "S&T" plan) needs to be updated to include research topics to align with our proposal. Our last proposal used *WV Forward* as a supplemental plan to satisfy this requirement but Dr. Serafin feels that it's important to have one comprehensive plan. She used Nevada's plan as an example of such. Dr. Tucker suggested a subcommittee be formed to work on a revision. Suggested members include the Vice Presidents for Research (VPRs), a designated faculty member from each institution familiar with NSF, Jeff Vandall and Anne Barth. Dr. Murphy suggested that the plan include statewide strengths and weaknesses rather than targeting those related to NSF EPSCoR. She referred to Kentucky's plan. The VPRs will send names of those they want to assist with this initiative to Dr. Serafin.

Before the white paper process for a new proposal is to begin, it was suggested that the focus areas should come from the revamped S&T plan, followed by an invitation for receiving short proposals (one pagers) that will then be reviewed by the same subcommittee in charge of the revamped S&T plan. The subcommittee will then make a recommendation for the Council to approve. Dr. Maher is in favor of identifying collaborative activities early in this process to gain a statewide interest rather than a narrow focus. Dr. Murphy and Dr. Toledo are in favor of letting all find their own collaborators rather than "marrying" unnatural partnerships. Dr. Serafin noted that our program officer indicated that we should look for collaborative efforts that NSF is already funding in West Virginia (such as the First 2 project). All agreed that good guidelines will be essential for the white paper process.

Any revisions or updates to *Vision 2025* will need presented to LOCEA. Dr. Serafin will look into deadlines for presenting the Research Trust Fund annual report and will circulate reporting instructions. Dr. Tucker believes both are due in January 2021.

The NSF EPSCoR Project Director/Project Administrator/Education and Outreach Manager meeting was held virtually this year (Julie, Annette, Brandi and Jack Smith attended sessions).

#### **NSF INCLUDES**

Jade Irving has made significant progress with this project since joining our staff in April. As the backbone for this project, our role has become clearer and is improving; a strategic plan is underway. In addition, a First2 advisory board is being formed; Dr. Tucker and Dr. Toledo have both been asked to join this board.

#### **State Programs:**

Some spending slowdowns or halts have occurred due to COVID 19 but in most cases, no cost extensions have been approved; revenue collections to fund these projects have decreased since April.

#### **FINANCE**

Annette Carpenter presented a fiscal year 2021 proposed budget and spending plan. Current revenue is approximately \$480,000 below the expected revenue for FY '20. It is not expected to be recovered in FY '21. She asked the Council to approve both the spending plan and to allow Dr. Serafin to reduce, delay or omit future annual allotments if PIs have spent less than 80% of their existing awards each year. A motion to approve this plan was requested; the motion carried.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH**

Angela Sundstrom reported that the *Neurite* (youth magazine) has become electronic and the first e-version was sent to K-12 teachers and individual subscribers this week. She deemed this a soft release (with little publicity) until more feedback is received from the teachers about future editions. However, she will place a link on our Instagram page per Dr. Toledo's request. Jade Irving added that this link is available on First2's social pages. She also encouraged all to review the new First2 website. The spring and summer editions of the *Neuron* will be combined into a single special edition featuring Dr. Clay Marsh. Dr. Philippe Georgel will be featured in the fall edition. The STEM speaker series for spring/summer has been postponed until 2021. The fall speaker (contracted through NSF) may be a virtual presentation.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Council was not announced. Dr. Serafin will determine some dates later this summer or fall.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.