

EGSA Meeting Minutes

March 7th, 2011
4:30 PM, 504 ASI

In attendance:

Flor Acevedo
Tom Bentley
Eric Bohnenblust
Tracy Conklin
Maggie Douglas
Megan Greischar
Ian Grettenberger
Sean Halloran

Becky Heinig
Beth Irwin
Wing-Yi Kung
Kerry Mauck
Jason Smith
Sheena Sidhu
Salil Siriwat

Committee Reports:

Insect Tours:

Ian thanks everyone who has helped out in the insect tours. As the temperature gets warmer, more tours will be requested, and we would need people to give them or help the person giving them. Check the outreach calendar on the EGSA website for tour dates. Ian has also made a cheat sheet for a 30 min tour. If you would like this, email him at img103@psu.edu.

Bug Camp Leaders:

We are in need of this year's summer bug camp leaders. Bug camp is a one week event usually on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday from 9AM to 4PM during the last week of June. Last year, the department had an advanced bug camp which introduces scientific thinking; however, this year, we would be doing the regular bug camp. Leaders will mostly be delegating work, organizing and carrying out the activities. Some parents may help out in the week. Co-leaders are welcome. If you're interested or want more information on this camp, feel free to ask Kerry, Beth or Jason.

Speaker Nominations:

Speaker nominations for Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 that we have so far are in the google docs (Link: [seminar speaker suggestions](#)). If you have other speaker suggestions, please email us quickly. We will soon be voting.

Ag Futures process (department change):

Gary Felton took some of his time to talk to us about the departmental changes of our college. He encourages us to participate in the survey (Link: [Academic Unit Structure Team Reports and Input Survey](#)). The college is restructuring from 12 departments to 6 or so. The motivation behind this restructuring was the quality assessment of our college. There are many departments but not many students.

As Jason has mentioned in his previous email:

“Dean McPheron has assembled six interdepartmental teams to propose plans for the consolidation that will hopefully make us a more focused and effective college. This could

mean very serious changes for our department, such as being split or merged. Thus it is critical for everyone to participate in the ongoing survey (**Link: [Academic Unit Structure Team Reports and Input Survey](#)**) by **March 11** and make sure that your voice is heard.

I have outlined each plan in the attached document (Link: [Ag futures- Outline of all six team's plans](#)). What they would mean for entomology:

- **Team 1 Plan:** Entomology is **split** between two divisions: Ecosystems and Natural Resources and Plant Sciences
- **Team 2 Plan:** Entomology is own division, now called “Insect Science”
- **Team 3 Plan:** Entomology is **merged** with Plant Pathology
- **Team 4 Plan:** Entomology is **split** between three divisions: Plant Sciences, Ecosystems science, Animal and Veterinary Science
- **Team 5 Plan:** Entomology is own division, now called “Insect Science”
- **Team 6 Plan:** Entomology is **merged** into a massive division called Plant, Insect and Soil Sciences (merger of 4 current departments: Horticulture, Crop and Soil Science, Plant Pathology and Entomology)”

Gary mentions that some of these plans have been used in some Universities for example, Plan 3 at Oklahoma State U and Plan 6 at Oregon State U. The reason why other universities have merged is because of small student population but in Gary's handout with ratio of students to Faculty, our department has the most graduate students. We are also the best ranked. If our department does merge, he is not sure whether our new faculty members would come since the department is broader. On March 18th, Dean will have a draft plan via webinar (encourages us to participate) and on April 8th will be the final plan.

He also explains that there is no significance in the name change from Entomology to Insect science. This is an attempt to broaden the knowledge of what entomology means. Judging from the plans proposed, some have no clue what entomology really is about. No need to worry since when we graduate, our degrees will still be in Entomology.

What we can do is **participate in the survey** and direct our responses with **arguments on the program's identity, quality of the program and impact on our outreach and extensions programs**. Our department has received National Research Rankings for Doctoral and Faculty input. We also have many outreach events such as insect fair, bug camp and insect tours and extensions in honey bees and urban agriculture. All these events help put Penn State's name out in the community. Splitting the department would be impossible for them to be carried on. Gary recommends us to put these arguments in the 'do you have any more comments' section than putting them at the end of each plan.

Arguments against us are mainly graduate program and research. There is no undergraduate program but the department is drafting one. The dean and provost did not mention this as a requirement for a department in the college.

In summary, we should **aim for a plan for a unified department**. Gary is welcome to any questions on this subject.

Inter-college Graduate Program:

Peter Hudson, director of The Huck Life Sciences Institute, has invited us to join them in an inter-college program. They have recognized our ranking and would like to put more resources. This means that there would be more opportunities for grants and assistantships. He plans to implement this in September. All recruitment will be done by the institute which we would have no control of. Gary points out that there may be some negative points such as the lengthening of the program, banking the research assistantships since some departments have only TA. Our departmental students would also decrease if most are inter-college students which are happening with soil science and horticulture in our college. This is still not finalized since the restructuring of the college of Agriculture is more critical.

Critter Care:

A sign up sheet was passed in the meeting and thank you to those who have volunteered. Critter care duties are filled to the end of May. Additional volunteers sign ups after those dates are welcome.

Activities:

Wine Tasting.

Christy will be hosting the annual wine-tasting event on **Friday, March 25th at 7 p.m** at her house, Copper Beech on North Aaron Drive. Please RSVP by emailing cmh347@psu.edu no later than Monday March 21st.

Here's her invitation:

“It is time for the annual wine-tasting event! For those who haven't been before, it's a chance to taste new wines and hang out with friends. You do not have to know anything about wine or spend a lot on a bottle (if you choose to bring one). Many great wines can be found for under \$10. Also, we encourage non-alcoholic wines or juices for tasting. We usually ask that people bring a bottle and something small to eat that compliments it (like a cheese, bread, or sweet). Last year we had too much wine and not enough food (bad mix) so I ask that a few people consider bringing a light snack instead of wine..... As always, friends and significant others are invited!”

Maple Harvest.

Sheena has informed us that Shaver's creek is holding the annual maple harvest festival on March 26 and 27th. Interested in learning about sugar maple tapping, enjoying pancakes with maple syrup, and checking out Nancy lab's pollinator garden, visit [Shaver's creek website](#). It would be great if you want to organize this event. Please let one of the officers know if you do and we would be happy to subsidize some gas cost.

Pancake Night.

Dan will be hosting a Pancake night sometime during April. Stay tuned for updates.

Next EGSA meetings:

April 4th :4:30-5:30 PM CEL conference room

May 2nd : 4:30-5:30 PM 504 ASI

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Salil Siriwat