



OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

MAELC Board Meeting September 19, 2024 Zoom Virtual Meeting

The September 19, 2024 MAELC board meeting was called to order by Rep. Tabke at 1:03 p.m.

Members Present:

Pat Dingels, Nikki Flaaen, Terry Gaalswyk, Julie Grossman (on behalf of Brian Buhr), Michelle Kamenov, Steve Olson, Chris Ovrebo, Rep. Kristi Pursell, Sen. Aric Putnam, Eric Sawatzke, Amy Smith, Rep. Brad Tabke

Members Not Present:

Rep. Paul Anderson, Patrice Bailey, Sen. Gary Dahms, Sen. Heather Gustafson

Quorum was established.

Staff:

Sarah Dornink (Executive Director), Kari Schwab (Program Coordinator), Meredith Taylor (Student Worker)

Guests:

Judy Barka (AgCentric), Lindsey Brockberg (MDE), Dr. T.J. Brown (MN FFA), Sue Knott (MAITC), Tina LeBrun (SACE), Dr. Mike Martin (UMC), Cliff Vreize (retired), Ann Marie Ward (MAITC)

Greetings from MAELC Supervisor & University of Minnesota Update

Dr. Julie Grossman, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, introduced herself and provided an overview of her role within the University of Minnesota, College of Agricultural, Food and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS). Her goals include helping students feel a sense of well-being and cultivating a feeling of belonging amongst new undergraduates. To build community, CFANS has hired a coordinator of student engagement. They are also working on a series of courses for first-year students, focusing on grand challenges in the world and using CFANS themes to address those issues.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Approval of Agenda

Gaalswyk moved to approve the agenda. Ovrebo seconded. Motion prevailed.

Approval of Minutes

Ovrebo moved to approve the June 10, 2024 minutes. Flaaen seconded. Motion prevailed.

Financial Report

Operating Budget

Dornink reviewed the operating budget. Meredith Taylor is continuing her employment as the MAELC student worker (line 6). The expenses from the June 2024 board meeting (lines 7-8) came in after the end of FY24. An Owl Camera was purchased to help better host hybrid meetings, which was discussed at the June meeting (line 21). The Spring/Summer 2024 AgEd Advocate print newsletter was also paid out (line 25). The Listening Sessions and Blueprint efforts have incurred several expenses (line 34), with a few more to come such as the final payment to True North for their contract work with Blueprint facilitation, as well as printing and mailing costs of the actual Blueprint (line 34). The fall half of undergraduate scholarships have been paid out, with the other half going out in January 2025 (line 36). Diversity scholarships have also been paid to three individuals (line 38). A reminder these are also split between the fall and spring semesters, and the other half of their scholarship comes out of the donor account.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)/Special Project Budget

Contracts were sent out for the grants approved during the June meeting. Most of the paperwork has been returned and submitted to accounting (lines 8-9, 34-46). The Strategic Initiative grants with RTR Public Schools and Rushford Peterson High School (lines 16-17) had expenses come in under budget, therefore the amount remaining was not claimed for reimbursement from the MDA (line 56). The 2024-2025 Strategic Initiative and Common Fund Grants (line 47) will be split between two rounds (November 2024 & April 2025). Dornink submitted the final paperwork for FY23 grants in August and will be submitting the next round of paperwork to the MDA by September 30 to receive reimbursement for the grant funds spent so far in FY24. Payments have continued for the Teach Ag Communications projects (line 48). Finally, the 2024 Ag Ed Internship (line 54) will have a few payments go out, fully spending the remaining funds.

FBM Budget

This budget includes funds for FBM Challenge Grants, FBM Additional Instructor grants, Mentor Program grants, and FBM evaluation. All colleges submitted their progress reports in July for the FBM Challenge Grants and received their second payment of 25%, except South Central College who will be submitting an invoice soon (lines 2-8). All colleges have submitted their Instructor Capacity Building Grant applications, however, some of those payments have not yet shown up in the accounting system. Alexandria Community & Technical College has completed their grant (lines 10-16). Final reports and invoices for the final 25% payment from all the mentor programs for FY24 have been received, with a few proofs of expenditures forthcoming (lines 18-20). Applications and invoices for the next round of mentor program and professional development grants (FY25) are being collected. Finally, Dornink completed the required paperwork from the MDA on July 1, however the next payment of \$1,200,833.34 has not yet been received. A third payment will be distributed upon receipt of a progress report due by May 1, 2025.

Smith moved to approve the financial report. Kamenov seconded. Motion prevailed.

Executive Director Report

Dornink thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and welcomed Eric Sawatzke to the board, who will be replacing Lindsey Brockberg from the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators. She also thanked Dr. Amy Smith for extending her term on the board as the Agricultural Education-Teacher Preparation representative. The University of Minnesota-Crookston is next in the rotation, however,

with their faculty changes, they requested to wait a year to give Dr. Martin time to settle into his new role and learn more about Minnesota Ag Ed.

Today is “National Teach Ag Day!” On behalf of MAELC, a thank you note, Teach Ag (Best Career Ever) sticker, and items to “tag” a future teacher were sent to every Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) education program in the state. Governor Walz also officially declared it Teach Ag Day in Minnesota with a proclamation from his office. A “Nominate a Future Ag Teacher” giveaway contest is also being conducted, and five winners will be receiving a “Tagged to Teach AG” kit.

Highlights since the last board meeting include both Dornink and Schwab attending the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) Summer Conference, where they presented a grant writing workshop. Dornink also facilitated a Team Ag Ed virtual meeting, attended Farmfest, and presented at the Farm Business Management Fall Professional Development Conference. In addition, Dornink was selected and attended her first meeting for one of the National AgEd Council’s working groups to create an administrator resource handbook. She also chaired the Minnesota FFA Executive Director search committee and finished her term on the Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) board of directors. Beyond this, staff spent the majority of the summer focused on the Teach Ag Communications Project and the Listening Sessions and Blueprint work.

MAELC continues to coordinate the recruitment and retention strategies with the State Teach Ag Results (STAR) program, with the committee meeting at the end of September to begin planning strategies for 2025. The 2024 Agricultural Education Internship program has been completed with six interns placed across the state. Applications will be posted soon for both students and hosting locations. About half of the costs to coordinate the internship come from special, one-time increased grant and special projects funds. There have been almost 60 interns since the program started.

MAELC also facilitates the Minnesota Team Ag Ed meetings, most recently hosting the summer virtual meeting in July. The next virtual meeting is on November 6. Much of the meeting was spent on updates. The November meeting will be the last meeting spent on working groups before moving to new priorities next March based on the MAELC Blueprint.

Work with Farm Business Management Challenge Grants included reviewing progress reports that were submitted in mid-July by each college. There is currently an FBM Instructor survey in progress, and three instructor focus groups were completed in August. Evaluation work based on the past ten years of the MAELC FBM Grant programs and special evaluation projects will also be completed over the next year.

Upcoming events include the Minnesota Ag in the Classroom Annual Meeting, Ag Literacy Networking Group, National FFA Convention, National Association of Supervisors Agricultural Education (NASAE), Minnesota Agri-Growth Council Food & Ag Summit, and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Summit.

Teach Ag Communications Project Update

MAELC staff have been working with the selected contractors, VantagePoint, on Teach Ag focused communication, primarily focused on social media. Looking ahead, projects will include starting to design handouts, creating videos, and securing stock photos. Overall, there is evidence of more reach on all three Teach Ag Platforms (Instagram, Facebook & LinkedIn). More people are seeing the content and there is an increase in interactions, which drives the content to more people’s feeds. Since hiring VantagePoint, Teach Ag Minnesota has had the highest reaches on Instagram (July) and Facebook

(June), and added 60+ followers on Facebook. VantagePoint has also helped add more content to LinkedIn, with over 3,000 impressions in June and 33 more followers. The Minnesota Teach Ag website is being redesigned with the goal of launching this fall.

Listening Sessions & Blueprint Update

In June, over 140 people attended six Listening Sessions throughout the state to share input on the future of AFNR Education across Minnesota. Participants developed strategies and action steps for implementation within Agricultural Literacy, School-Based Agricultural Education, Post-Secondary AFNR Education, Agriculture Teacher Preparation, and Farm Business Management. Groups spent time looking back at progress made in their specific sector through the 2025 AFNR Education Blueprint, identifying current trends affecting AFNR education, and brainstorming new actionable strategies that will have the most impact in the next five years. All participants then had an opportunity to review the work of one other sector and add their own suggested strategies. There was an opportunity for individuals to share written input, as well as a mini listening session with the agriculture teachers offered during the MAAE Summer Conference.

In August and September, sector committees, made up of 32 subject matter experts, met to prioritize the strategies gathered from the listening sessions within three focus areas: students, programming, and instructors. After selecting the most impactful strategies in each of the focus areas, they developed action steps that could be taken towards achieving those strategies for their sector. Committees are still meeting, wrapping up by the beginning of October. Then Dornink and Schwab will work on writing the Blueprint with the goal of it being published by January 2025.

While work is still being finalized on the Blueprint and will provide specific details, common themes have emerged across all AFNR education sectors. Many were complimentary of the efforts that have been made over the years and encouraged maintaining programming and funding that support teachers and students. Additional ideas were brought forth for increasing capacity to support new programming, growing efforts to attract and retain quality instructors, increasing communications to students about opportunities available across all sectors, and securing resources to ensure Minnesota students have access to industry-aligned technology, equipment and facilities.

Scholarship Committee Report

Smith provided an overview of the 2024-2025 scholarship programs, which include Undergraduate and Graduate scholarships. The committee met in early August to review and update the applications. No changes were made to the Undergraduate program. For the Graduate program, question three was adjusted to provide more clarity depending on if the individual is a full-time graduate student or if they are currently teaching while taking classes (part-time student).

Typically, the Diversity Scholarship program would also be approved at this meeting, however it is being paused for the time being. MAELC staff recently heard back from the UMN-CFANS scholarship coordinator and have confirmed changes will need to be made to the Diversity Scholarship based on the recent Supreme Court case that changed admissions around diversity metrics. CFANS provided some initial information about updated processes, but indicated MAELC should meet with University General Counsel to review the program and application. Dornink has requested a meeting with General Counsel. Because there is not have enough information to propose an updated Diversity Scholarship program at this time, it is being paused for the fall with the hope to be able to approve any changes to the program at the December meeting. This could still allow individuals to apply for the February 1,

2025 deadline. This program also utilizes a donor for half of the funding. Dornink will connect with them as well about any proposed changes.

Putnam asked if Minnesota legislative definition changes are being implemented by the University of Minnesota. Smith was unsure. Dr. Grossman encouraged talking with Starr Sage with the CFANS Office for Inclusive Excellence.

Dornink explained it is more about not asking an individual to specifically identify how they are diverse, and that a rubric cannot be used to weigh certain components of an application. There is also a need to update some questions. Applicants can still be asked questions about their lived experience, how diversity plays a factor, etc. but they cannot be specifically asked about race and ethnicity in the application or the review process.

Smith moved to approve applications as presented. Gaalswyk seconded. Motion prevailed.

Grant Committee Report

Flaen provided an overview of both the 2024-2025 the Strategic Initiatives grant application and the Common Fund grant application.

Flaen moved to approve the Common Fund and Strategic Initiatives grant applications as presented. Ovrebo seconded. Motion prevailed.

Grant Program Impact Presentation

Schwab presented a "MAELC Program Grant Impact Update," detailing the data collected through grant final reports from Round 26 & 26-2 (FY23), and FY2023 Common Fund projects (both rounds). These reports are the most recent completed reports for a full fiscal year. Twenty-seven grant projects were analyzed, totaling \$250,000 in funding. The largest category of funded grant projects is for Classroom Equipment (61%), followed by Curriculum (18.5%); everything else was split fairly evenly. Direct grant impact totaled 44,843 people, with the highest category being Middle/High School students.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Minnesota Department of Education – Secondary Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Education Update

Minnesota Department of Education staff Lindsey Brockberg, AFNR Specialist, and Michelle Kamenov, Supervisor of Career and Technical Education, presented about Minnesota AFNR education.

AFNR Education in 2023-2024

Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators take two or more CTE courses (concentrators are defined by Perkins 5). The graduation rate for Minnesota students who are CTE concentrators is 92%, with nearly 65% of concentrators enrolling in post-secondary. Overall, there was an increase in enrollment in AFNR education for concentrators and participants (those who have taken a CTE course) in FY23.

In FY23, there were 386 individuals holding an AFNR license; 351 in FY22 (15% are Tier 1 or 2). Brockberg noted this data is provided by PELSB. There were 45,365 students enrolled in an AFNR

course, an increase of 1,900 from the previous fiscal year (16% of AFNR students relative to all 9-12th grade students). The top three pathways, by participants, include Animal Systems; Power, Structural, and Technical Systems; and Plant Systems. There were increases in participants in all categories of ethnicity, except Asian, which remained the same. There are 211 approved AFNR programs; this does not count each school location, so districts with multiple schools with AFNR courses (ex: St. Paul) are only listed once.

Personal Finance requirement changes are being implemented for incoming 9th graders. They are now required to take a personal finance class between 10-12 grade, which can be taught by several licensure areas, including agriculture teachers. Several agricultural instructors have already previously taught personal finance or something similar through agribusiness. There is a Personal Finance working group putting together recommendations, which is now open for public comment. Economics courses cannot meet the personal finance credit requirement (they must be separate classes).

Table C lists approved programs, courses and teacher licensure requirements for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in Minnesota. It will need future updating to better reflect industry, AFNR, and pathways in which teachers are teaching. It may also see changes after national frameworks are finalized.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Update

Bailey was unable to attend the meeting; Dornink highlighted a few items from the written report. As part of preparing for the next biennium's budget, MAELC and FBM submitted to the MDA legislative suggestion portal.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Minnesota State & Farm Business Management (FBM) Update

Gaalswyk brought greetings from Chancellor Olson. He noted enrollment for the Minnesota State system is trending about 8% up (about 50,500 FYE equivalent students). The Northstar Promise Scholarship has shown some evidence of success. This fall, 45,000 students qualified for the scholarship. It is a "last dollar in" model, meaning all other forms of financial aid are applied first. After reviewing all the financial aid options, this scholarship served about 13,000 students who needed additional support (out of the 45,000).

Farm Business Management recently held their fall professional development conference, with an increase in the number of FBM deans attending. This is a success related to expectations of FBM leadership related to the MAELC Challenge Grant. Minnesota West is in the final stages of hiring a new FBM instructor. Seven new FBM instructors have been hired recently. FBM enrollment is trending strong for the fall semester, which Gaalswyk attributed to financial stresses within agriculture. A majority of the faculty will likely be at or above their workload, which highlights the need to examine if an increase in funding is needed for Challenge Grants to provide more opportunities for FBM to deliver programming to students. Dornink mentioned Central Lakes College is on third search for an Urban FBM faculty member; a critical position that many want to see successful.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

University Agricultural Education Updates

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU)

Dornink highlighted a few pieces of the SMSU report. There are 11 students enrolled in the Agricultural Education major. They have hired Sarah Lee as their new recruiter and outreach director (for all of the School of Ag departments). Lee studied Agricultural Education in Minnesota, and previously taught in Minnesota.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

University of Minnesota-Crookston (UMC)

Dr. Mike Martin presented about UMC. He thanked Nathan Purrington, who has retired, for all the work he did with UMC Agricultural Education. They currently have about 19 students in their program, with four student teaching in spring 2025. *Dr. Martin presented earlier in the meeting (right after the MDE report) due to needing to leave early.*

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Smith highlighted the poster and letter that was sent jointly from the three Agricultural Education institutions to all Minnesota AFNR education programs. The UMN-Twin Cities has about 20 undergraduates in their program with six student teachers for spring 2025. There are 10-12 students in the graduate program, however not all are pursuing licensure; some are in the advanced studies program.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) Update

Flaen provided an update about MAAE. They held their Summer Conference in July, which was a very successful event with many excellent award recipients. The Outstanding Early Career Teacher, Rachel Moe, Outstanding Teacher Mentor, Denise Reeser, and the Outstanding Service and Cooperation, Brad Schloesser, were also chosen as the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Region 3 winners. They will be recognized at the NAAE conference in December in San Antonio, Texas. The AgTech conference will be held in St. Cloud from January 17-18, 2025.

There is a committee exploring realigning regions to make things more equitable (some regions have more schools than others). The committee is in the process of exploring a plan of action before making recommendations. The Minnesota Association of Career and Technical Education (MnACTE) will have five MAAE members on the board, with the goal of helping revitalize MnACTE's impact on CTE.

MAAE's concerns include streamlining extended summer grants, personal finance credit implementation, growth in agricultural education and finding balance to avoid burnout, and supporting new members, especially with membership costs and attendance fees as districts are starting to make funding cuts that directly affect professional development funds.

Sawatzke explained that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture awarded \$350,000 for a meat processing grant; nine schools received all of that funding. He referenced the grant impact report (provided by Schwab earlier in the meeting), noting MAELC gave out \$250,000 to 27 schools in FY23, and how this highlights the need for sustained, increased grant funds to MAELC to support these schools and all of AFNR education.

**See handout for more information (included in board packet).*

Other Business/Announcements

The next board meeting will be held in-person in December. Upcoming dates of events and activities were highlighted (included on the back of agenda).

There will be two openings for Governor Appointees to the MAELC board as Olson and Ovrebo's terms are ending in January, 2025. Both have indicated they do not plan to re-apply. Dornink encouraged board members to share with those who would be great additions, one representing agriculture and one representing education.

Rep. Tabke adjourned the meeting at 3:11 p.m.