



Grow your skills, grow your network, grow as a professional in ACE!

**ACE Board of Directors
June 23, 2019
Westin San Antonio Riverwalk
Meeting Minutes**

Voting: Elizabeth Gregory North, Doug Edlund, Suzanne Steel, Jennifer Alexander, Lori Greiner, Tobie Blanchard, Becky Koch, Linda Benedict, Dennis Thomas, Victor Villegas, Donna Sheffield, Lauri Baker

Celtic: Deb Ryan, Blair Ciecko

Director-Elects: Craig Woods, Lulu Rodriguez, Matt Browning

Incoming elects: LaRachelle Smith, ChaNae Bradley, Brian Meyer, Robert Casler, Kay Ledbetter

Absent: Lauri Baker

At 2pm - Learning Community Leaders: Lori Wright, Suzie Hutton

Call to Order – Elizabeth Gregory North at 8:07 am CT on Sunday, June 23, 2019. Elizabeth welcomed all continuing and elect directors and previewed the agenda. Next each attendee shared a fact about themselves to the group as a “get to know you” exercise.

May Minutes – It was suggested that the Zoom chat conversation be edited and pertinent conversations inserted into the specific report it pertains to. Suzanne made a motion to accept the minutes. Lori seconded the motion. All approved and the motion carried.

Per the agenda, each director provided their “big idea” for ACE. The summary of all big ideas was tracked by Blair Ciecko, there was further discussion to prioritize an action plan and that is included as a separate report.

Officer Reports

President – Elizabeth Gregory North

Refer to written report. Elizabeth emphasized the need to find nominees for the JOE Board and for ACE curator. The terms of both are up in December. Linda will encourage retirees to consider these positions.

President-elect – Doug Edlund

Refer to written report. Doug encourages a collaborative spirit amongst the Board during his tenure. And he mentioned he intends to reach out to other organizations seeking collaborative opportunities that can benefit ACE members.



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Vice President – Jennifer Alexander

Refer to written report. Jennifer stated that the strategic goals of the vice president may change as the strategic plan moves forward. In addition she would like to work to capture information about potential partners and or sponsors.

Past President – Suzanne Steel

Refer to written report. Suzanne welcomed all the new members of the Board, and reminded all that the membership affirmed them by their votes. She also encouraged newly elected to share their ideas from the start.

Elizabeth reiterated that the most effective board is one that puts ACE's best interests first, rather than personal interests.

Celtic's Report – Deb Ryan

Deb reported on the first year of managing ACE with the following summary: successful transition, corporate name change with IRS, Quickbooks implementation, monthly financial reporting, Strategic Plan – refreshed logo, tag line, constitution changes approved by membership, instituted monthly member newsletter, website – banner images, streamlined content, member database cleanse, and all aspects of conference management.

Treasurer's Report – Becky Koch

Refer to reports. Becky noted that reengaging with lapsed members is an easy way to increase membership while also recruiting new members. Becky also encouraged collaboration with NETC and NAADA. Elizabeth added that communicators who are not part of a comm department could find benefits in joining ACE. Other ideas included reaching out to Ag Communicators of Tomorrow, Ag Media Summit, tribal institutions, state agriculture departments, and local farm bureaus. Additional ideas included co-locating joint meetings. There was also a suggestion to share membership marketing materials on the website so that any member could have info to share in recruitment efforts.

There was a discussion about reinstating the ACE Leadership Institute.

2019-2020 Budget Discussion – Elizabeth and Doug

There was an extended discussion about the proposed dues increases. In addition there was clarification made that once the board voted on the specific amount of the increase then the members present at the business meeting would vote. The bottom line is that ACE's finances are such that without a significant dues increase, the organization cannot sustain itself for more than another 18 months. The group agreed to the following motion made by Victor and seconded by Suzanne: to increase dues for professional members to \$160 annually, student members \$80 annually, to increase conference registration rates by at least \$25 (Lori suggested \$500 early bird, \$525 regular and \$560 late for members) and to keep C&A submission rates the same as 2019 rates. More



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discussion followed: Becky stated that \$150 was an easier amount to accept and that she thought 260 professional members was achievable, especially by getting lapsed members active again. Suzanne noted that ACE needs the money and Doug agreed. Becky requested that a detailed marketing plan regarding the retention of members be developed. There was a clarification about who present could vote. Elizabeth stated that directors-elect have a voice and not a vote and that continuing members could vote. All but Becky approved the motion.

The group also agreed that Elizabeth will make an announcement about the Thursday vote to members at the start of the conference on Tuesday morning, Doug and Dennis will make a video explaining the need for an increase and that all directors be prepared to answer questions prior to Thursday's member business meeting.

The group took a break at 10:25 and called back to order at 10:40.

Director Reports – Elizabeth noted that the director reports should emphasize action items and big ideas

Marketing –Dennis Thomas

Refer to written report. Dennis commented that he shared member testimonials with Matt and that they will be posted on the ACE YouTube channel via the ACE website. Dennis also encouraged the LCs to be more active in providing member benefits. Dennis also asked for budget funding for marketing.

Elizabeth also referred to Becky's request for a marketing plan and asked Matt to work with Tobie on a comprehensive plan by the October board meeting for retaining and gaining members. Lori made a motion to accept this plan. Victor seconded the motion. All approved and the motion carried.

Member Services – Tobie Blanchard

Refer to written report. Tobie would like a member list by state, increase pro tips in ACE Edge and introduce local share programs. She also discussed developing a mentorship program. Celtic will provide a list of new members on a monthly basis for Tobie to reach out to personally.

Learning Communities – Lori Greiner

Refer to written report. Lori stated that 4 or 5 of the 8 learning communities are active and that Diversity, IT and Marketing are struggling. Dennis asked which LC is most active and Lori responded that it is the Social Media LC. Lori mentioned developing a content calendar that could assist LCs in being more productive.

Professional Development – Victor Villegas

Refer to written report.

Retiree – Linda Benedict

Refer to written report. Linda will seek to recruit ACE Curator and JOE editor candidates.



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Research –Lauri Baker

Refer to written report. Lulu noted that there are so many quality article submissions for JAC that perhaps a 5th issues could be published. Although she also noted that it is difficult to find enough reviewers. Suzanne asked how reviewers are found. There was also the suggestion of a more detailed description of the JAC process on the ACE website. Elizabeth also asked Lulu to check in with the JAC board about a paywall for nonmembers to access the issues. Becky asked if ACE received the curator grant and Lulu stated that no the grant was not given to ACE.

Development Officer Report – Donna Sheffield

Refer to the written report. Donna reported that the development grants program schedule is posted on the website. She requested that there be an all-inclusive financial policy and procedures document developed. Deb stated that Celtic is working on streamlined and update policy and procedures document that encompasses all aspects of ACE including development and LCs, development and finances.

The group adjourned for lunch at 12:00pm.

The group reconvened at 1:30 pm and Elizabeth began by asking if there were any questions about the morning meeting. There were no questions.

Big Ideas Summary/Action Plan – Blair Ciecko

Refer to written report

Learning Community reports

Refer to the separate written annual reports from Publishing and Graphic Design, Diversity, Leadership & Management, Media Relations and Writing and Social Media.

LC leaders present: Suzie Hutton, for Electronic Media reported that the LC wrote a new mission statement and will engage in a more relaxed atmosphere in the hopes of engaging more members on topics such as drone mapping. Lori Wright, for Media Relations and Writing, wants the LC to develop best practices for content and engagement.

Jennifer asked why there were no leadership awards this year. Lori responded that LC leaders just did not take the initiative to make nominations. Jennifer asked if there was an easier process to implement for nominations. The awards nomination process will be reviewed. Kay encouraged all directors to attend LC business meetings as she was emphasizing the lack of conflicts to make it easier to attend.

JAC Editor – refer to written report.

ACE Curator – refer to written report



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2019 Conference update – Kay Ledbetter

Kay reported that there are 199 paid registrations. There was not so much space available for Gold Displays during the reception. She also encourages more specific rules be developed for sponsors in terms of sponsor benefits like table exhibits, etc. Donna noted that is part of her policies and procedures document. Kay also noted that finding AV volunteers was difficult and suggested providing free registration for volunteers in the future. She noted that Jennifer's guide for the NOLA meeting was detailed oriented and helpful in conference planning.

2020 Conference Update – Doug

Doug noted that he produced a save the date video for 2020, that giveaways would be placed on all the tables and that the committee was planning to meeting on Monday.

Old Business – Listservs. Elizabeth reminded the group that NC State is discontinuing their listserv program. Celtic tested Wild Apricot group forums with select members of the Board and the group agreed it is worth pursuing. Lori will follow up with Lori Wright regarding her husband's professional experience. All agreed further testing was warranted and that extensive training necessary.

Old Business – Constitution. Suzanne reminded the group that a membership vote on changes agreed to will be put to membership vote in the fall. Suzanne told the group that based on previous board discussions she reconsidered and would remove her proposal to change the number of years of officer terms and will not ask for a change in the length of the terms. Discussion followed on the activity and length of term of "elect" directors. All agreed that the incoming "elect" directors should, upon election, begin to participate on Board business rather than waiting until the conference board meeting to get involved. Suzanne made a motion to change the director-elect term from upon election for one year plus the time until that year's annual conference to - from election until the next annual conference. Dennis seconded the motion. There was discussion about the outgoing director providing the new director mentorship, as needed, for up to six months after the conference.

New Business – Elizabeth reviewed the member meeting agenda. All agreed that revising the powerpoint slides with more specific points about the reason for the dues increase was necessary. Deb will work with Doug and Elizabeth to update the slides and that all directors should be prepared to answer questions. Lori emphasized the need for transparency. Elizabeth will make the announcement at the start of the conference.

Doug asked that the Top 5 big ideas be recapped by each lead identified earlier by the August Board meeting. Doug confirmed that the second Tuesday of each month at 2pm CT will remain the meeting time.

Doug made a motion of appreciation for all of Elizabeth's hard work during her tenure. All approved the motion.

Elizabeth called the meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm CT and thanked everyone for their contributions.



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Treasurer's Report

June 2019

Becky Koch

Strategic Planning Goals

- Renew lapsed members & engage Communication's Dept. Directors
- Finance
- Planning
- Communication to committees about their budgets

Accomplishments since last report

- Emailed another 20+ lapsed and potential new members
- Continued to go through old lists and current websites to find more lapsed and potential members
- Reviewed current Wild Apricot list and made recommendations on lapsed and pending members; Celtic will follow up with phone calls
- Reviewed April and May transactions

Informational items

- See separate May financial report
- Cash balances as of May 31, 2019
 - Unrestricted \$104,453.80
 - Restricted \$ 2,083.50
- Cash on hand June 21 = \$16,229.63
- Vanguard Accounts as of June 18, 2019
 - Account 1 – General Investment \$27,054.25
 - Account 2 – Development Fund \$57,940.68
 - Account 3 – Hermance Fund \$24,874.48
 - Total Vanguard \$109,869.41
- With conference registration and membership dues income, we didn't have to dip into investments to pay the \$90,000 hotel bill up front. However, we have little cash on hand, and not many dues coming in until year-end.
- We have about 30 nonmembers attending the conference. Let's convert them to members!

Next steps

- Wrap up reviewing old member lists and completing a spreadsheet of lapsed and potential members to recruit

Items for Board decision/action

- We need dues income.



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- Think of others at your institutions who could be recruited for ACE membership. If you don't feel comfortable recruiting or think they'd be more open to somebody from another institution, send name and contact info to Celtic staff.
- Think about other professional communicators in your state, especially those who may not have another professional organization but would be a good fit with ACE.
- We received \$92.60 in Communicators Handbook royalties in April. The board needs to discuss a process for updating this publication since it's embaressingly out of date.
- Financial checks and balances between the board/treasurer and Celtic staff need to be improved.



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ACE Curator Report
June, 2019

Joanne Littlefield

I visited the ACE archives within Special Collections at the National Agriculture Library on May 14, 2019. Previously I had been sent archival materials for inclusion in the collection by former ACE Executive Director, Holly Young. Working with the library staff, I identified the proper folders for these materials, determined that the documents had not been previously included and submitted them for inclusion. These included Development Fund materials (Holly was among the most active related to Development Fund activities, and was among the founding members.)

I also completed a review of archived physical materials to begin to create a plan for digitization. At that time of my visit it was still unknown the status of the Project CERES grant that was applied for in February, 2019.

A list of the contents of the collection is available here: <https://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov/guide-collections/association-communication-excellence-agriculture-natural-resources-and-life-and>

I suggest that the following folders be considered for digitization, regardless of the status of the grant. I have requested information for the Special Collections staff member, on the process. It is my belief, based on my graduate school experience, and as an advisor to students and members of the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) that these documents are the most relevant to current, upcoming scholars, as the Journal of Applied Communication (JAC) has digitized many years of the journals, and has a plan in place for completing digitization of the Journal archives.

Series V. *The Presidents of ACE*. 1985 - 1997. (Box 21)

Folders in this series contain research data and correspondence for the book *The Presidents of ACE*. A copy of the book is also included. Material is filed chronologically.

Series XII. National Project in Agricultural Communications. 1952 - 1977. (NPAC) (Boxes 30 - 33)

This series includes organizational materials, proposals, talks, budgets, reports, newsletters, board minutes, correspondence, and workshop publications. The material is arranged by subject.

Series XIII. Professional Agricultural Communications Editorial Research (PACER). 1973 - 1979. (Box 34)

This series contains articles of incorporation, bylaws, minutes, a proposal, annual reports and correspondence. The materials are arranged chronologically by subjects.

Series XVI. Professional Improvement, Communications Training. 1959 - 1961. (Box 39)

Communications training surveys, AAACE professional improvement survey and correspondence arranged by subject.

Series XVII. Miscellaneous, A-C. 1800s - 1997. (Box 40)

American farm press, 1800s; ACE archives; Association of Educational Communicators; calendar of deadlines; communications handbook; code of ethics; constitution; Council of Communication Societies, Critique & Awards. Material is arranged alphabetically.



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Series XX. Publications, Miscellaneous. 1916 - 1980. (Box 47)

AAACE stylebook; proceedings of early meetings; history of AAACE, 1967; Log of Odyssey II. Material is arranged chronologically.

Series XXI. Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT). 1971 - 1979. (Box 48)

Newsletters, constitution, correspondence. Materials are arranged chronologically.

Information on duplication services, and publishing guidelines for the collection is available here:

<https://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov/duplication-services>

Contact information for the collections is located here:

<https://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov/contact-us>

Respectfully submitted,

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Yearly Report Publishing and Graphic Design Learning Community

Mission statement: To develop and recognize professional skills and facilitate networking and information sharing among ACE members who work in the editorial aspects or graphic design of print or electronic publications.

LC Chair: Ana Iverson, Louisiana State University Ag Center
LC Chair-Elect: Stacey Herrick, West Virginia State University
Past Chair: Melea Reicks Licht, Iowa State University

GOALS: Our goals were to host a webinar, nominate a professional skill award winner, identify incoming leadership prior to 2019 conference, keep LC information up-to-date online, add an award-winner showcase section to LC website/Facebook.

ACTIVITIES UPDATE: We hosted a very successful webinar on publication pdf and webpage accessibility. We had about 40 people remote in to watch and had 6 sit in physically on the presentation. Many emailed requesting the PowerPoint presentations and supplemental info.

We identified new incoming leadership. Tanya Engel has volunteered to be the new Chair-Elect. Stacy Herrick will move up to Chair. Ana Iverson will stay on as Past Chair to assist.

We have worked on correcting information about our LC on the website as well as updating the webinars.

We plan on contacting Deb at Celtic after the conference to request information on C&A winners in the design category. We would like to start yearly albums on our Facebook that showcases their work.

TOPICS OF INTEREST:

What are your Learning Community's goals for the year including professional development offerings?

We will be gathering information from our LC members at our business meeting to see what they will be interested in for the next year.

How are/did you communicating with members, and on what schedule?

We sent out monthly newsletters and also utilized Facebook to communicate.

What thoughts or comments do you have for the ACE board?

Thank you!

Did the Learning Community present an Award of Excellence this year? Please comment on the nomination and selection process itself.



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We called for nominations through our newsletters and Facebook. We did not receive any. As a leadership team, we came up with a name and contacted ACE members who we thought could be a great source for nominating the person. We never received responses from any of them.



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Learning Communities

June 2019

Lori Greiner

Strategic Planning Goals

- Engage LC's and create content as topic experts
- Calendar for LC's
- Social posts on LinkedIn
- LC Webinars

Accomplishments since last report

- June LC call was cancelled.
- Finalized the new Learning Community Guide – I'll review at the LC leader meeting on June 24.
- Followed up with LCs about plans for LC meetings at conference. Information was added to LC web pages and to conference schedule.
- Participated in a C&A committee call.
- I'm working with Alan Dennis and Victor to reorganized the Instructional Design/IT LC.

Informational items

- The Publishing/Graphic Design LC held a webinar on accessibility May 29.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_4eWqbkbMY#action=share#action=share
- I will be recognizing the outgoing LC chairs at the LC meeting on June 24.
- I will provide the LC submitted reports prior to board meeting on June 23.
- Susan Hutton from the Photography/Electronic Media LC is planning to attend board meeting.
- Continuing to work with Heather and Deb on listserv solution.

Next steps

- LCs will be asked to provide a short report from their LC meeting at ACE.

Items for Board decision/action

- BIG IDEA – Develop a content calendar for LinkedIn and schedule topics for each month. Recruit LC members to submit articles. Offer an incentive for submissions. Every quarter do a drawing for a \$25 Amazon gift card from those submitting articles for that quarter. Each article submitted equals one entry. Establish minimum guidelines for submissions. Cost to ACE would be \$100. Articles could also be promoted on other social media channels. If this works, the program could be expanded to offer a drawing monthly.



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Past President Final Report
June 2019
Suzanne Steel

Accomplishments

- Participated in strategic planning for ACE before fall board meeting.
- Led nominating committee for future ACE leadership, including vice president; directors for retirees, learning communities, and membership; treasurer; and development officer.
- Drafted proposal for changing guidelines for nominating committee to allow for flexibility in the number of nominees/position. Proposal was adopted by board.
- Conducted a mail campaign to deans and directors of Extension and research at land-grant universities to encourage their support of ACE membership for communicators. Anecdotally know of one new member that came from campaign. Unclear if other new members can be attributed to this campaign, to the annual conference, or to some other effort.
- Drafted proposal to modify length of time directors serve on board. Proposal to be considered at annual conference.
- Drafted proposal to modify officer structure on board.

Thoughts

I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve ACE these past four years. What a remarkable change in the board! Our fiscal status is clear, as are our membership numbers. With that critical information, the board is set up to make decisions based on facts for the good of ACE and its members. A big thanks to Becky Koch for starting us on the road to clarity, and to Celtic for bringing it home.

Thanks also to Elizabeth North for her support and her leadership. It's been a pleasure to watch the board work with such efficiency and purpose this past year. Thanks to everyone on the board, including those rolling off and those rolling on. Your service and your diverse points of view are vital to ACE's future.

Finally, I wish all the best to Doug Edlund, Jennifer Alexander, and LaRachelle Smith in the coming years. I am looking forward to seeing great things from ACE under your leadership.



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President Report

June 2019

Elizabeth Gregory North

Strategic Planning Goals

- Create industry connections with government, industry, and associations
- Invitation campaign
- Conference Keynote speaker

Accomplishments since last report

Secured Gold Sponsorship for the ACE 2019 Conference from my institution, Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Worked with others on my staff to produce ACE Honors and ACE C&A Outstanding Professional Skill Awards plaques and the ACE 2019 program and awards booklet. This year, the program information and the awards listing are combined into one book.

Developed slide decks for the ACE 2019 overall conference and for the 2019 Member Meeting.

Procured new pins for the ACE Past Presidents, as we presented the last of the previous ones to Suzanne Steel last year. I am donating these to ACE.

Purchased gifts for the keynote and Hermance speakers.

Worked with Deb Ryan and Marlene Byrne on agendas and plans for June Board meeting and Member meeting.

Informational items

Repeat from prior report:

Joanne Littlefield has been serving as ACE Representative on the Executive Board of JOE, the *Journal of Extension*. Her new dean will no longer provide support for her to participate in the face-to-face meetings of the JOE Board, so she requests that we replace her with someone who has institutional support to participate.

Joanne is also serving as ACE Curator, and her term ends in December.

Next steps

Young Professionals Task Force?

Items for Board decision/action



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Deferred from last meeting

- Nominations for ACE Representative to JOE Board.
- Nominations for ACE Curator.

Big Idea(s)

Idea #1

Involve Board Members in a Strategic Approach to Development

1. Build time into every board meeting for members to write thank you notes to donors to thank them for their gift.
2. Create standard talking points and an “elevator pitch” so everyone is literally speaking from the same script. As process matures, they can add their own reasons for giving.
3. Coach board members on the fundraising cycle and what they can do to ensure a potential donor says yes.

Source:

<https://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/3-reasons-your-board-isnt-fundraising-and-how-to-turn-them-around/>

Idea #2

The ESCOP/ECOP communication committee has not renewed their contract with K-Global. ACE should develop a proposal on how ACE and Ag Comm directors might interact to create a more effective and functional committee.

Idea #3

Rename and re-envision the ACE Professional Award to be the Fellow of the Association for Communication Excellence (or ACE Fellow) Award. This will make it more parallel to the highest awards given by the professional societies for our subject-matter colleagues and will reinforce ACE’s pre-eminent status in the field of agricultural communications. Retroactively, make all prior winners ACE Fellows, too.



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Retirees
June 2019
Linda Benedict

Strategic Planning Goals

- Create opportunities for retirees to engage.
- Communicate with retirees.
- Update directory of retirees and life members.

Accomplishments since last report

- Continue with my quest to find ACE retirees and contact them.
- Working on updating the retiree website with Celtic.
- Working on changes to the constitution about retirees and life members.
- Working on my next newsletter for retirees, which will include highlights from ACE meetings past.

Informational items

- To board members: please send me any leads about retirees.

Next steps

- Continue searching for new retirees and recruiting life members.
- Continue working on changes to the constitution that affect retirees.
- Continue working on the next newsletter.
- Continue sending updates for the ACE retiree directory.
- Continue working on the website.

Items for Board decision/action

- None at this time.



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Vice President Report
June 2019
Jennifer Alexander

Strategic Planning Goals

- Industry engagement and partnerships

Accomplishments since last report

- Participated in budget review call with officers/Celtic.

Informational items

- None

Next steps

- Transition to President-elect role, with mentorship from Doug Edlund.
- Mentor incoming VP LaRachelle Smith.

BIG idea

- Research related and complementary organizations and potential industry partners and summarize findings for the Board's consideration. Outcome would be an at-a-glance summary of which organizations/industry partners have the most potential (ROI) for engagement with ACE and what that could look like (e.g., recruit members, approach as sponsor, co-host conference/event, etc.).

Items for Board decision/action

- o Question: What's the status of a shared online space for meeting notes, reports, and collaborative work on documents?



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