

AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE ADVISORY BOARD
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Wednesday, September 18, 2019

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, September 18, 2019

TIME: 9:00am – 11:00am

LOCATION: Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Princess Keelikolani Building, Room 329

DRAFT

Members Present:

Scott Murakami, Board Chair, DLIR Director
Representative Mark Nakashima
Nicolas Comerford, Dean – UH Manoa CTAHR
David Fuertes (Representative of Farmers)
Bruce Mathews, UH Hilo [through teleconference]
Brian Miyamoto, Hawaii Farm Bureau for Randy Cabral
Michael Moser, Windward Community College
Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser, Chair, Department of Agriculture
Troy Sueoka, DOE – for Superintendent Christina Kishimoto

Staff:

Elaine Young, DLIR WDD
Carol Kanayama, DLIR WDD
Jay Ishibashi, DLIR WDD

Guests:

Michael Barros, FFA
Jeffrey Garvey, Waipahu High School [through teleconference]
Leonard Hoshijo, DLIR Deputy Director
Joshua Silva, CTAHR [through teleconference]
Jayson Watts, DLIR Director's Office

I. Call to Order and Introductions

With a quorum of members present, the meeting was called to order by Chair Scott Murakami at 9:12 a.m.

II. The attendees introduced themselves to the new Chair and those present.

III. Review and Approval of Minutes

A draft of the minutes of the previous meeting held on December 3, 2018 was presented to the Board for approval. After Board member Brian Miyamoto motioned for acceptance and Board member Nicolas Comerford seconded, the minutes for the Board meeting held on December 3, 2018 were accepted by the Board.

Chair Murakami asked the Board what they believed to be their role in the carrying out the Governor's and Department of Agriculture's initiatives with regard to doubling food production and driving the industry throughout the State. David Fuertes sees the Board's role as an enhancement to the initiatives. Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser added that in April the department was encouraged by the USDA 2017 census data received showing an increase in the number of farms (7000 in 2012) to over 7300 farms in 2017. The DLIR workforce development projects allocated through the Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board's assistance has helped the fledgling type (1-9 acres) agricultural businesses (the largest growing agricultural area) in their development and maintenance. The age of the farmer in Hawaii has increased with more than of half over the age of 56. Part of the Department of Agriculture's mission is to give economic opportunities to farmers to help them succeed. The Board members believe that the work being done by the Board is relevant in part by helping to create interest and exposure not only to students but the population in general. Brian Miyamoto stated that you can't attain the goal of doubling food production without the farmers. Dean Nicolas Comerford further cited - To do sustainable (1) farming must make money; (2) must maintain environmental quality; and (3) it can't be just the farmer that benefits, the community has to benefit too. Agriculture is going to fail here unless we have people in the workforce to support it.

Chair Murakami mentioned an article in the Hawaiian Airlines in-flight magazine which featured the shrimp truck industry and how the selling brood stock and the doubling food production model extends to a global community.

A discussion ensued about how to change the mindset of students regarding agriculture using science and technology and other means as a draw to the industry.

IV. FY19 Project Updates

A. Agriculture Tech Entrepreneurship

Joshua Silva represented the project on behalf of Nancy Ooki and provided an update. Most of the time on the project was spent on developing the curriculum and testing equipment to construct a program for middle and high school students. The creation of agriculture sensors for local farmers in the original proposal was changed to a target audience of school gardens to sharpen the scope and direction of the project through the use of technology, specifically various sensors in the growing of crops. Students were recruited from 4H clubs and Hawaii's Future Farmers of America (FFA) to attend a workshop in crop production and entrepreneurship in the development of sensor technology in agriculture. Four students from Oahu, eight students from Maui and two from Molokai attended the multi day workshop to learn to and become identify important sensors, develop sensor kits, and become more creative/entrepreneurial in the growing of crops. As a pilot project, the program has not been showcased yet and

there are plans for another workshop during the fall break to explore the use of other sensors.

B. Waipahu High School “Increasing Yields in Baby Green”

Jeffrey Garvey spoke to the project and explained that one of the challenges the program encountered was the ratio of available land area to the increasing number of students interested in agriculture. A total of one hundred twenty five students in two “Natural Resources Production” classes (I & II) will be learning to collect and compare data from an aquaponics system, hydroponic system, and a traditional soil based growing system; manage the systems and provide recommendations on how to improve production while being cost effective. The project will be trying to acquire as much data as possible and to simulate as closely as possible real farm production conditions.

C. FFA Workshop Preparation

Michael Barros and Troy Sueoka reported that the funding provided by DLIR was used to support a delegation of FFA students in attending the National FFA Washington Leadership Conference (WLC). In July of this year fifteen (15) students and two (2) advisors led the Hawai’i delegation participating at the WLC in Washington D.C. The focus for the conference is to have the student participants take leadership roles and become advocates for the agriculture industry. Seventy-three percent of the students from Hawai’i participating in this year’s conference were underclassmen providing hope for strengthening school level student leadership in agriculture in our schools.

Additionally, two FFA State Officers attended the State Officer Summit also held in Washington D.C. Following the Summit, the attendees expressed an interest in reconnecting with the other chapter attendees from around the nation to form councils in an effort to follow up and hold the different chapters accountable for what had been discussed and agreed upon at the Summit.

Through pre and post surveys, the student participants believed in the importance of agriculture in the community and that there was considerable growth in most areas of agriculture. They also shared that they would be more active in the community advocating for the agriculture industry.

A discussion arose regarding the tracking of agriculture students following their secondary education.

D. Agriculture Teacher Professional Development

Michael Barros and Ken Kajihara approached David Fuertes to see how the DOE, UH Hilo and the farming community can partner to work with the public school teachers to help increase awareness of and interest in agriculture in their students. UH Hilo contracted with non-profit Kahua Pa’a Mua to provide the deliverables for a three day workshop to educate and train the agricultural teachers various

areas of the agriculture industry education including AET tracking, Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Korean natural farming.

David Fuertes explained that more of the slots for the workshop would have been filled if the teachers had known sooner that they would be receiving professional development credit.

The remaining funds will be used to have the workshop instructors visit the schools of the attending teachers and provide further hands-on assistance with their curriculum and the farm experience in the school.

E. Go Farm Hawaii

Janel Yamamoto was unable to attend the Board meeting and submitted a Mid-Term report which was distributed to the Board members.

Dean Nicolas Comerford offered additionally that of the one hundred twenty three Go-Farm graduates – 44% are farming; 22% are working in agriculture – demonstrating the success of the program.

Chair Murakami asked the Board members with regard to the Hawaii Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board Recommended Project Criteria and Agriculture Workforce Projects Proposal Guidelines documents, to e-mail any suggested changes to Jay Ishibashi by September 27, 2019.

The documents will then be distributed with a proposal submittal deadline of October 31, 2019.

It was suggested by the Board that a Proposal Review Committee comprised of Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser (Chair), Bruce Mathews and Brian Miyamoto be again formed to review and make recommendations to the full Board.

A meeting date for the Proposal Review Committee and the next Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board will be determined after the receipt of proposals on October 31, 2019.

Chair Murakami adjourned the Board meeting at 11:28 am