



**Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium  
Executive Committee Annual Meeting  
Minutes**

Monday, August 27, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

**Attendees:**

Dr. John Stewart, University of Montevallo  
Dr. Jack Hawkins, Troy University  
Dr. Steven Leath, Auburn University  
Dr. Tony Waldrop, University of South Alabama  
Dr. John Valentine, Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium  
David England, Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium  
Shelley Stephens, Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium

**Absent:**

Dr. Stuart Bell, University of Alabama

- Roll call of conference call attendees.
- Meeting called to order by Dr. Waldrop, Chair of the Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) Executive Committee.
- Dr. Waldrop called to approve minutes from the 2016 MESC Executive Committee conference call on August 8, 2017. Motion made by Dr. Steven Leath to approve the minutes; motion seconded by Dr. Jack Hawkins. Motion to approve minutes carried by unanimous vote of committee members present.
- **Fiscal Year 2019 Budget (Document A) –**
  - The budget numbers were broken down categorically to facilitate the discussion on the budget.
  - MESC is conservatively projecting some increases in both expenses and revenues in the coming year, based on historical changes in our budget data this past 5 years, and grants and contracts we have in hand.
  - The total 2019 budget is estimated to come in at \$24,272,662 million; some 63% of this total comes from grants and contracts. This is a slight increase over last year's estimate. An additional \$9,000,000 is coming from auxiliaries and the general fund. Our employment levels remain steady with an even mix of hard and soft money employees. Currently we have 110 employees.
  - On the back of Document A you can see the budget highlights; notably we received about a 9% increase in our state appropriation. We are kicking off a major new initiative which is the establishment of a development office that will be staffed by three personnel. The job descriptions and the development manual are available upon request. We have made an offer, and it has been accepted, to Ms. Helene Hassell who has served as our foundation's

- ED for several years now. We have located office space and are now developing the equipment lists for the office. We anticipate this will kick off in October.
- We have encountered several infrastructure issues this year, some expected and some not expected. With that said, you will notice we are also directing a portion of the appropriation increase into vehicle, small boat, and AC purchases. We have also funded the renovation of an 8<sup>th</sup> house this year.
  - In terms of contingency, it is set at 4% which is roughly consistent with the previous six years.
- **Campus renovation status -**
    - We have made a difference with the bond and the proposed renovation plan is now complete.
    - Currently, not mentioned on the budget document, Americorps volunteers are on the campus pressure washing and painting our three dormitories. This will go a long way towards continuing our efforts at campus renewal.
    - Lastly, we are working with master gardeners living on the island to spruce up the appearance of the lab. Among the events will be pressure washing, and restaining decks and fences on the campus, plus planting additional live oak trees at multiple locations. While on the matter of the oak trees, bronze plaques will be placed at the base of our live oak trees commemorating the efforts of employees who have worked for the MESC for over 20 years and have passed away.
  - **Summer School Performance Metrics**
    - On the next 3 documents in your package (labeled B, C, D), you can find the distributions of credit hours among the member schools of our 23-member schools, 17 schools sent students to DISL this summer (same as last year), graduate students from 2 institutions also enrolled in summer courses this summer (Document C). Troy maintained its increase in number of students. Document D simply shows the totals. Document E shows the long-term trend in terms of summer enrollment; the data show we are continuing to strongly appeal to student interests. In fact, this summer's enrollment was our highest on record and reflects, I think, the success of our engagement efforts with the MESC's students. Lastly, Document F shows the proportion of graduate hours taken on the DISL Campus.
    - Discovery Hall Programs were similarly successful this summer. Document G provides insights into how well the K-12 program is thought of in Alabama. With one exception, all the summer programs operated at, or in one case the High School Program near, over capacity this year. The apparent reasons for the somewhat lower enrollment seem related to the availability of scholarships for the high school students. Also, not mentioned in the graph form, we will be close to 10,000 visiting students participating in DHP in 2017-2018.
  - **State Audit Report**
    - Document H is the state auditor's annual report. The take home message from this report is a 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of no findings – a clean audit.

- **Faculty Handbook Revisions (Document I) -**
  - Section 2.5 - The revisions here were to clarify the role (chief academic administrator of UP) and responsibilities (academic, personnel, financial and administrative needs, general direction and supervision of the program; advocate for UP faculty and programs within MESC) of the Chair of University Programs.
  - Section 2.6 - The revisions here were added to form a written policy by which the Chair of UP is selected, the terms of the appointment and reappointment, and the procedure for the search process.
  - Section 2.7 - Revisions here included describing a formal recruitment policy, with guidelines for faculty and administrative searches within UP.
  - Section 2.9.6 - Revisions to this section were added to define and set the criteria for extensions granted during the probationary period of incoming faculty members.
  - Section 2.9.7 - The Summary of Review Requirements located in this section was modified to meet the change instituted for the delivery of reports by the faculty.
  - Dr. Tony Waldrop called for a motion to approve the changes to the faculty handbook; Dr. Jack Hawkins made the motion, and it was seconded by Dr. John Stewart.
  
- **USCG Property**
  - USCG has decided to divest themselves from the recreational property located adjacent to the DISL campus. It's listed as a 27-acre parcel but based on property maps located in the tax assessor's office, about half of it is under water. We have since discovered that the county values the property at \$1.6 million. It is not clear if this estimate is based on the 27 acres. We independently conducted a second appraisal that set the property at \$2million dollars. We have been in regular communication with a GSA who is handling the process for the USCG.
  - Justification for this effort is that we are becoming space limited and the acquisition of this property would be in the long-term interest of the MESC in terms of physical plant growth.
  - In the past month, with an eye towards preventing a bidding war with other local entities, have entered into discussions with the DI Park and Beach Board who has similar interests in the property and we have a verbal agreement not to compete. We are meeting with legal counsel at the end of the month to work out the mechanics of how we can both come away winners.
  - Dr. Jack Hawkins suggested the members of the Executive Committee should express their support for Dr. John Valentine's efforts on behalf of the DISL in pursuit of acquiring the USCG property. Dr. Tony Waldrop called for a motion from the committee; Dr. Jack Hawkins made the motion, it was seconded by Dr. Steven Leath.
    - Dr. John Stewart asked if the property was known to have any toxic materials buried on the property. Dr. Valentine responded that the answer should be disclosed once the NEPA report has been finalized by the GSA. This fact could impact the desire to obtain the property.
  
- **MESC Outreach**
  - Call your attention to our efforts at the local, state, and national levels, plus campus visits to nine of the 23 MESC campuses.
  - **Executive Director's Highlights of 2018 Activity (Document J)**

- **Center for Excellence**
  - All of the information by U.S. Treasury has been supplied to the State of Alabama now it's a matter of waiting on them to complete the process
- Dr. Tony Waldrop call for any additional comments or questions.
- Dr. Tony Waldrop called for a motion to adjourn the call; a motion was made by Dr. Jack Hawkins, and seconded by Dr. John Stewart.
- The call was adjourned at 10:36 a.m.