



Education Committee Meeting

Thursday, August 31, 2023 1-3 p.m. (HST), 12-2 p.m. (SST) /

Friday, September 1, 2023 9-11 a.m. (ChST)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Craig Severance, Education Committee chair, opened the virtual meeting at 1:09 p.m., (HST). Members in attendance were Craig Severance (chair), Aufai Areta (ASCC), Kelsey McClellan (NMC), Christina Tudela (CNMI DLNR), Keith Korsmeyer (HPU), Ali Bayless (NMFS PIFSC), and Scott Bloom (NMFS PIRO).

Others in attendance were Amy Vandehey, Felix Reyes, Josh DeMello, Zach Yamada (Council staff), David Field (HPU), Alex Filardo (NMFS PIRO).

2. Education & Outreach Program Overview

a. Funding Structure for Capacity-Building

Council staff described the two main sources of funding for the capacity-building program that covers both scholarship students and vocational training. Funding streams have specific end dates and some funds can only be used for students from certain island areas. The criteria for soliciting students for the 2023-24 school year was narrowed to try to ensure student success in finishing their degree in a timely manner.

The chair noted there had been successes and failures with the scholarship student program. Some students struggled because of inadequate preparation rather than ability. Years ago, an advising contract was developed that each participating student signs. The process worked at UH Hilo, UOG and HPU. Students were required to consult with advisors to keep them on track. Given the funding realities, student extensions must be tougher to obtain and the scholarship subcommittee needs to push students a little harder. The program did well but could do better. Help from all Education Committee members is needed.

The chair noted that the scholarship subcommittee is made up of himself, Frank Camacho, Erik Franklin and Keith Korsmeyer. Students must be admitted to the school and must share detailed personal statements on why they want to study fisheries. Undergraduates are required to go through a paid summer internship. In the past, this included information equivalent to a one research credit on "Council 101." There is a need to work towards



making a better match between undergraduate and graduate education and the needs of the local agencies for hiring.

Due to funding uncertainty this year, there was a delay in opening the scholarship application period. In 2023-24, the focus will be more on graduate training. Some scholarship program graduates are working with local agencies. Some want to work elsewhere for more money or because local agencies pay less. That requirement is in the MOU as a way of focusing on capacity-building for the territories' local marine resource management agencies.

3. Council Education Committee Memorandum of Understanding Review

a. U.S. Pacific Territories Fisheries Capacity-Building Scholarship Program

The chair noted the MOU was last revised and signed in 2020 and is due to be reviewed every three years. The tuition at Hawaii Pacific University (HPU) is higher than University of Guam, UH Manoa and UH Hilo and the option to remove HPU from the list of approved schools was considered. The committee reached consensus that HPU should remain on the list, and encouraged HPU to seek supplemental funding for individual students.

The chair asked if there should be a specification to require an internship with the Council in the MOU for undergraduates only and not graduate students.

Council staff said that is how the program is currently running. Summer internships are for undergraduates. Graduate students are already working on their own fishery-related research projects. There is a desire to ensure undergraduate students become familiar with the fisheries management process through internships.

Another committee member agreed and said being pulled away from graduate studies only delays a student's graduation date.

The chair said there is a need to encourage transition from university studies to employment. Eric Franklin had been monitoring some limited progress at UH Manoa to encourage fisheries course development including a cluster hire. At UH Hilo, there were discussions on a possible undergraduate certificate program.

A committee member asked if there is financial support in the MOU for faculty to teach and develop fisheries-related curriculum.



The chair said there has not been funding for anything except for the scholarship program. The Council does the best it can with its limited budget. There will very likely not be an opportunity to fund even part-time faculty positions.

Council staff agreed and said the scholarship/capacity-building program has funds attached but there are no dedicated funds for other parts of the MOU.

The chair said the MOU is very aspirational - a reactivated committee can get its members involved with institutions close to them and work with their administrations.

A committee member said there is work being done on developing a 4-year program at the Northern Marianas College in the CNMI. Fisheries-related work is a high priority with the CNMI public school system.

Council staff added to transition from community college studies to a 4-year university program for students can be difficult.

The chair said the students who struggle are because there is a lack of preparation and matching of coursework content. Discussions between American Samoa Community College and UH Hilo Marine Option/QUEST summer training program have suggested that it is more a matter of beefing up courses. UH Hilo has offered some tutoring with math and that helped students get through.

A committee member said his experience with scholarship students revealed that for them to graduate in only two years is unrealistic and hopes it will be changed to 3 years.

The chair said the scholarship subcommittee has had discussions and agreed to keep it at two years as long as students are showing progress.

A committee member asked if the scholarship subcommittee makes the determination for allowances from 2 to 3 years and said he would like to see this documented.

Council staff noted that the Education Committee has recommended that contingency funding for an additional semester be available should a student request it. This is documented in the contract the scholarship recipient signs when he/she receives their scholarship. It has language that says two years of funding are offered if the student maintains a minimum GPA, with the possibility of extending to one additional semester of support upon approval.



The chair said the important thing is to get students through. There were a couple who did not finish because of personal or medical reasons. When a student has fully withdrawn for medical reasons there is not much that can be done. One student had completed five semesters and had struggled and run out of funding, but came back on her own and completed the program. There is a need to better document dropouts.

b. Vocational and Training Development Related to Fisheries

The chair said the Marine Education Center at the Honolulu Community College was just shut down. Institutions who teach boat building, including diesel mechanics training have been scouted. UTI in Florida has a year-long effective training in outboard motor repair and staff is looking at their program but it must match with the types of motors being used in the territories. It would be useful to get help from people in the region with ideas and ways to get good training through supported internships to improve support for marine industries in the territories and commonwealth.

Council staff said it has been challenging to pin down realistic options. Some other technical institutes and community colleges are interested, but are still looking for funding to get programs started. With time limits on available funding, the committee can try to choose existing programs that make a good fit. Also, Council members and others have expressed a need to increase local capacity in this area. Fisheries management agencies like in American Samoa may have someone currently doing these types of repairs that can be sent to training and return to work. The question is do we try to set up vocational training programs the same as is done for university degrees, with a similar work commitment after they graduate.

The chair said there is a need to get more specific responses from local fishery management agencies on how they manage their vessels and what kinds of skills they have in their shops, such as the types of motors they work on. This discussion came out of the Council 2-3 years ago.

Council staff said pursuing vocational training was added into the MOU revision in 2019 and reiterated at the December 2022 Council meeting.

The chair said members can do some scouting and let the committee know what may be in development. What we need from the territories is a sense of the most common motor



in use - Yamaha and Honda? Force Marine in Hilo is willing to take students for 6 months to a year for an internship - that is just for fiberglass boat building and repair.

A committee member added there are 3 weeks of the 51 weeks with Universal Technical Institute focused on Yamaha engines. The Yamaha national dealership does training to help with the shortfall of trained people. The chair will scout this option.

c. Education Plan Development and Classroom Incorporation

The chair said getting fisheries-related curriculum into classrooms in Hawaii has been very difficult. Efforts have been more to provide enrichment and informal lessons on fishery-related topics.

A committee member said PIFSC has done a lot of classroom visits and is developing content for teachers to use. Resources are created, including lesson plans for the classrooms that are critical for implementation to give them ideas for how to use them.

The committee member responded that there is a lot of material that could be translated into the local language of the island areas to make for better understanding, and are now translating some of them into Hawaiian.

Another committee member said CNMI currently has a curriculum within the public school system for the sea turtle program. The CNMI DFW just filled a position for an aquatic outreach person focused on fisheries. Together, they will work with the public school system to see how to develop a curriculum for fisheries.

Council staff added that when she traveled to the territories for Council meetings in March and June 2023, she was able to meet with subgroups of Education Committee members in the region and discuss ways to get fisheries information into classrooms. The Guam committee member and GDOE staff Sylvia Calvo recommended developing content to put in the back pages of school planners that are given out to all students - timeframe is March to June to develop for the next school year. The content complexity could vary depending on the student's age group. For both American Samoa and Guam, she suggested committee members tap into the summer teacher professional development (late June/early July for Guam, late August for American Samoa). New educational products can be introduced, along with activities or ideas on how they can be incorporated into the classroom.



This starts the connection with the teachers and they can ask the speaker back during the year when it fits into what they are teaching. The Council's Advisory Panel (AP) in each region, whose mission is to be the connection between the community and the Council, could possibly be a good fit for this.

The chair suggested asking Sylvia Calvo to take the lead on this effort and coordinating with the CNMI and American Samoa DOEs.

Council staff said the contact for American Samoa could be Magdalene Augafa and the CNMI could be Asap Ogumoro.

The chair said outreach like the speakers bureau initiated in Hawaii could be broadened to include the other island areas. It is good to have folks able to share speakers between each region.

Council staff further explained that the speakers bureau is a compilation of people who can speak on a number of topics. The most recent version of the bureau was a brochure with each person's photo, what they would be willing to talk about to the different groups, and their contact information. Some regions may have more expertise than others and they can be tapped virtually for support. An updated version could be made available online to facilitate revisions as information changes.

The chair confirmed that there is value using the AP members (primarily fishermen) as part of the speakers bureau.

A committee member said there are very active groups of local fishermen in the CNMI. In partnership with local organizations like Friends of the Marianas Trench, they partner with boaters and ocean elders, are active with their outreach events, and may be interested. With DLNR's assistance on the technical side, they can be partners.

Council staff said the Council tries to do the same with organizations like Tasi to Table in the CNMI, to partner with organizations who have a similar focus to multiply the outreach efforts.

The Education Committee will work together to support the development of speakers bureaus in each island area.



The chair noted the Council's 5-year program plan development will begin this fall. A very broad list of education and outreach goals and objectives should be a part of the plan. Members are requested to reach out to the Council's education/outreach coordinator and the chair with their thoughts.

A committee member said that with the authorization for Marine Education and Training (MET) in the MSA, it behooves the Council to look at this for when funds become available. With the North Pacific and Western Pacific MET reauthorization under MSA in 2006, and the needs assessment, the Education Committee came up with a regionally based list of priorities. It would be powerful if the Council and this committee looked at the priorities and the needs/gap assessment. The original was in 2008. PIRO is being pushed to develop a formal policy with some headway showing. COVID impacted the work already done. It would be good if the Council relooks at the authority and derives a reprioritization of activities or initiatives that would stem from the needs gap assessment.

The chair asked the PIRO committee member to be involved in this effort or to delegate someone.

The committee member replied that from a PIRO perspective, it was from that authority that they did their own needs/gaps assessment. A contractor through the University of Hawaii Sea Grant was hired to gather data, resulting in a bunch of initiatives, including grants to help displaced workers in American Samoa, and MET with the Honolulu Community College. The territories, through the Council, could benefit from these.

4. Marine Resource Education Program in Pacific Islands Update

Council staff provided an update on the MREP, including its initiation on the east coast and spread to the Western Pacific Region based on interest and funding availability. It was created "by fishermen, for fishermen" to train fishermen so they can participate effectively in complex fisheries science and management processes. Lauren O'Brien (MREP Director) is coordinating with the Council, NMFS and industry leaders on scoping to bring a full workshop to the region, possibly by FY2025.

A committee member said MREP started 12 years ago with cooperative research funding. There is some effort at NMFS to look at this as well with both science and



management modules. The benefit is they not only learn the material, but sequester fishermen participants with managers and scientists; a relationship-forming exercise.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

7. Discussion and Recommendations

The Education Committee recommended the following:

Creation an addendum to the existing U.S. Pacific Islands Education and Employment Capacity-Building MOU, signed by current committee members, to make minor revisions to the language.

That the Council create working groups to: 1) discuss broad goals and objectives for Council education initiatives to be included in the Council 2025-2029 Program Plan; 2) incorporate fisheries science into K-12 and higher education classrooms; and 3) review and support course articulation agreements between 2-year and 4-year higher education programs in the Western Pacific Region to support the scholarship program.

That the Council support the expansion of the Marine Resource Education Program to the Pacific Islands Region.

That the Council reexamine its efforts in supporting the objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Act 305(j), the Marine Education and Training program in the Western Pacific.

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m. (HST).