

**Hubbard Brook Research Foundation
Development Committee Meeting Minutes**

Friday, December 16, 2016, 2:00 pm

HBRF Administrative Offices in Woodstock, VT and via Zoom Videoconference

Trustees Participating by Zoom: Charley Driscoll (CD), Steve Hamburg (SH), Peter Martin (PM), John Smitka (JS), and Anant Sundarum (AS)

Other Participants in Attendance: Anthea Lavalley (AL), Zach Ralph (ZR), and Dave Thurlow (DT)

Absent: Fred Hunt

At 2:05, PM called the meeting to order.

Role of the Development Committee

PM began the meeting with a discussion of the role and functions of this new committee. He identified the following three essential fundraising activities which will serve as the committee's initial areas of focus:

- (1) consortium development
- (2) corporate sponsorship
- (3) other specific development projects

PM explained how he selected committee members and made the point that HBRF fundraising projects should have clear and direct connections to our mission.

Corporate Sponsorship

AS discussed a possible new approach for corporate sponsorship and offered to connect HB to contacts within his corporate network. SH emphasized the importance of clarity of purpose and transparency, citing the conflict of interest and public relations issues that resulted when AGU accepted funds from Exxon Mobil. Committee members agreed to consider a vetting process for prospective corporate sponsors. The process would reflect Hubbard Brook's mission and priorities.

CD asked if we have reason to believe that corporations would be interested in supporting Hubbard Brook. He explained that the rationale behind the current consortium model is based on the concept that cooperating universities/institutions each contribute what they can to support the HBRF. In particular, CD had a recent conversation with Tim Fahey confirming Cornell's membership renewal. AS explained that at Tuck, clearly defined rules of engagement are keys to maintaining academic freedom. AS stated that, if HBRF had clear parameters for considering corporate sponsors, we may very well find corporations who would be interested in supporting our work, particularly among organizations with practical connections to HB science or environmental issues (e.g., land management organizations, forest products industry leaders). The fit should be natural. AL described what she perceives to be a growing number of corporate responsibility initiatives that include support for environmental projects. This seems to be an increasingly important part of corporate culture. JS explained the business implications of corporate responsibility; success in the marketplace is directly tied to environmental and social responsibility. It is a matter of bottom-line economics. PM concluded the discussion by stating that the question of corporate sponsorship would require careful consideration. Having an established decision-making scheme or matrix would be very useful.

The Hubbard Brook Consortium: Cooperating Universities and Research Institutions

AL, AS, and PM recently met with the Senior Vice Provost for Research at Dartmouth to discuss their renewal in the consortium. The meeting was successful, and Dartmouth renewed at the \$15,000 level, but HBRF also committed to organizing a half-day roundtable event. We need to think carefully about committing to new

projects under conditions of limited staffing. PM would like to develop a menu of services to give to consortium members to support AL when she visits with university decision-makers. CD explained that, unlike other LTER sites, HB does not have one university/institutional partner. Our partners include 24 institutions with active, ongoing research at HB. If the institutions want to be involved at HB, they should have some skin in the game. In an effort to recruit new members, AL will develop customized proposals based on each institution's level of engagement at HB and potential member benefit. The fee structure should be in sync with member benefits (i.e., not one-size-fits-all). Our approach is basically a "Community-Supported Experimental Forest." AL had a conversation with John Battles at Berkley, and he is willing to make a pitch to his Dean. AL explained that if we are successful at raising the level of support for HB through new consortium members, we should make the effort to direct some of these funds to address FS priorities (e.g., summer field techs.). CD offered to work with AL to rethink the consortium model and how to best acknowledge members at varying levels of support.

PM stated the need to grow our list of private donors. DT shared his ideas for expanding our individual giving program. JS described recent interactions with two Colgate trustees who could help us to make a case for consortium membership. JS and CD agreed to work together to bring Rich April's students to HB to help with CD's research.

JS recently met Jeremy Grantham and took the opportunity to gauge his interest in supporting HB through the Grantham Foundation. At Jeremy's suggestion, JS sent a letter to Ramsey Ravenel but received a response indicating that the foundation had other, more pressing priorities. SH stressed the Grantham Foundation's current interest in soil carbon and suggested a more targeted approach. The information exchange between the HBEF and the Chinese scientific delegation is not enough to attract their interest. SH offered to review a second letter, but it cannot come from him. CD, SH, Chris Johnson, and Matt Vadeboncoeur are all investigating soil carbon at HBEF.

AL suggested taking the opportunity, during Development Committee meetings, to exchange information related to donor and foundation prospects. Committee member feedback, based on previous experience and contacts, has the potential to significantly strengthen our proposals and approaches. SH explained that he cannot share names, but he can provide input on specific proposals. CD recommended targeted approaches to foundations for specific projects. DT described a good list of 20 to 25 foundations with priorities that align with our mission and work. DT asked why HBRF was so successful with foundations between 2005 and 2007. CD explained that this correlates with Science Links programs which were in active development during that time. DT commented that cultivating individual donors is the most effective strategy for raising unrestricted support.

PM concluded the meeting with a review of action items. [The Grantham letter will be refined. AS will start thinking about a check list for evaluating potential corporate sponsors. AL will develop a menu of services for consortium institutions. AL will send CD the written proposal and notes from her recent consortium pitch at the Rubenstein School for feedback and advice. SH suggested picking one current corporate sponsor \(e.g., Lyme Timber\) and working backward through the decision-making process in order to determine a set of criteria for assessing the fit between HB and potential corporate sponsors. JS volunteered to work with AS to develop ideas related to a new corporate sponsorship program.](#)

PM thanked committee members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 3:06.