



Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education

Promote education in and about agriculture.

Address the changing needs of agricultural education to strengthen its viability and competitiveness to serve industry.

Develop investment opportunities involving human and financial capital for the benefit of all groups having interest in agricultural education.

March 31, 2023 ILCAE Meeting Minutes Held via Zoom

In attendance:

ILCAE Members - 16

Erika Allen	Jared Brown	Allyn Burrow	Jeff Galle
Warren Graeff	Kim Haywood	Michael Hmurovich	William Kling
Don Moffitt	Kay Shipman	Tyler Strom	Dan Swanson
Ryan Tate	Greg Webb	Wyatt Williamson	Michael Zecher

Advisory Members – 15

Lucas Allen	Patrick Barry	Casey Bolin	Mindy Bunselmeyer
Megan Coy	Dean Dittmar	Jesse Faber	John Heiser
Charlie Mitsdarfer	Brian Myers	Jessica Nardulli	Shanell Rainey
Jenna Rossi	Steven Still	Jennifer Waters	

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Allyn Buhrow at 9:43 am. Allyn thanked everyone for attending and declared a quorum present.

A motion to approve the January 27, 2023 ILCAE meeting minutes was made by Dan Swanson. Kim Haywood seconded the motion. Motion passed.

There were no Public Comments.

Old Business

1. Governor Pritzker has finally made several appointments to ICAE. These new members are participating in ICAE meetings but still await Senate confirmation.
 - a. Agriculturalist – Elizabeth Patton-Whiteside, Public Health Administrator East Side Health District
 - b. Agriculturalist – William Cladd-Hawthorne, Farm Manager, Gary Comer College Prep School
 - c. ILCAE/Agriculturalist – Karen Schieler, Compeer Communications Specialist
 - d. Ag Teacher – Bill Hook, Principal, Chicago High School for Ag Sciences

Erika Allen was notified that she has been reappointed to another 3 year term

Allyn Buhrow and Kim Haywood terms have expired but are willing to continue as ILCAE Representatives. No communication has been received from the Governor’s office.

To secure the future of agriculture in Illinois through the continual advancement of quality agriculture education

Warren Graeff and Don Moffitt have completed ICAE appointment applications and have not heard anything back from the governor's office following their submittals.

Future ICAE meetings are scheduled for May 12, July 14, Sept 8 and Nov 9.

2. It was reported that the Ag Ed 365 Advocacy Fund has experienced strong donations and is currently funded into May. A total of \$60,000 per year is used to support legislative lobbying efforts on behalf of Ag Education. ILCAE members were encouraged to support this program by contributing through this website: <http://iavat.weebly.com/advocacy.html> .

New Business

1. Future ILCAE Meeting Dates

The June meeting is currently being targeted for the week of June 12 or 26 pending notification of when the new Chair of the Illinois State Board of Education might be able to meet with us. Notice of the meeting date and location will be communicated as soon as we know the Chairmans availability. The August meeting will be held Aug 31 in Decatur in conjunction with the Farm Progress Show.

2. ILCAE Membership

Brenda Dismore has submitted her resignation from ILCAE due to her being relocated out of Illinois by her employer. Michael Zecher moved to accept the resignation. Bill Kling seconded the motion. Motion passed.

3. "Agniter" presentation

Tyler Strom and Shanell Rainey provided an update regarding the Agniter ag career platform. The system is currently up and running, but enhancements and additional content continue to be added. It has been piloted at 2 suburban schools with 12 career chats completed to date. They have participated in the Jr MANNRS conference and plan to participate at the National MANNRS conference. They are also working to tie the system in with the national FFA Ag Career web site. One positive impact of the site was noted: In a pre presentation survey of students, only 17% responded that they would consider a career in agriculture. Following the demonstration of the site, 80% of students indicated that they would consider a career in agriculture.

Shanell shared a couple videos of actual interactions between students and ag career presenters that were used in the pilot rollout. They are looking for people who are passionate about their ag careers to be included in the project. ***Please email Shanell with any suggested participants.*** By the end of the school year, they expect the program to have been rolled out to 10 schools. Over the summer months, they plan to focus on spreading the word about this initiative. The first point of contact will be with teachers and students. So far the initial response from the pilot schools has been very exciting!

4. Legislative Update

Patrick Barry and Jessica Nardulli introduced Jenna Rossi as a new member of their ag education legislative team and provided an update of Statehouse activity. FFA Day at the IL State Capitol was held last Wednesday and was received very well with legislators. Today is the last day for bills in the Senate to pass to the IL House and there are many big issue bills still in process. One

bill that directly impacts Ag Education would allow students participating in livestock shows during school days to have those days count as regular attendance at their schools (HB3814/SB2132). This bill has passed the House unanimously and is currently in the Senate. The team expects Senate passage today.

Two issues were identified for future ILCAE discussion:

- How does IL Ag Ed increase participation in legislative witness slip completion?
- How can ILCAE ensure active participation from ISBE in all ILCAE meetings? Concern was expressed that there ISBE participation does not appear to be a priority during times when Andrew is engaged with National Guard activities.

Jesse Faber provided his perspective that legislator attendance was very good at the Legislative Day and that 3 targeted visits were made at the Lieutenant Governor's office. He also acknowledged Senator Turner's instrumental engagement with processes in the Senate. The next meeting of the IAVAT Legislative Committee will be April 13.

5. FCAE LPS (Local Program Support) program evaluation

Dean Dittmar introduced Brian Meyers, Ag Education professor at the University of FL, originally from Pike County IL, who has been asked to conduct and evaluation of the FCAE program. The last evaluation of the program was completed in 1994. The evaluation will consist of an on-line survey, online focus group discussions and individual interviews. Over 4000 online survey requests were sent out and so far, approximately 39% have been completed and returned. 469 people have been identified to participate in either the focus group discussion or personal interview. Brian reported that he plans to have a draft report ready by the end of May, and will have a more formal report to present at our June meeting.

6. FFA Center Update

Mindy Bunselmeyer reported another record year for IL FFA with over 40,200 members. This year will be the 95th State FFA Convention and will feature a Spanish Creed Speaking contest as a new addition to the program. ILCAE recognition at the State FFA Convention is currently scheduled for Tuesday Jun 13, but may be rescheduled to coincide with the new IL State Board of Education Chair's availability to attend. She also discussed the rationale behind the proposed FFA Constitutional amendment to change "sections" to "regions".

Mindy also presented a summary of WBL (Work Based Learning) activities and presented the formal grant report card. Similar to what is currently being done for the LPS grant, a evaluation process for LPS activities is planned to begin later this year. A discussion was held about ag teacher obstacles to SAE program inclusion in local programs (namely time availability, resource availability and personal comfort with SAE activities) as well as student perceptions of SAE possibilities.

7. Curriculum Committee update

Warren Graeff and Don Moffitt shared that the IL Grain & Feed Assoc is very interested in reaching students about local career opportunities and that there is a desire to have our ag curriculum reflect actual ag career opportunities. One idea is to possibly also incorporate a student certification process for local employers. They plan to visit with 2 IL ag teachers who are currently certifying students for entry level ag mechanics positions with CNH.

8. FCAE update

Dean Dittmar shared that he visited with Andrew Klein about the CRM (Curriculum Resource Management) Grant award status, but that Andrew could not share any details about how many applications were received nor could he provide any estimate on when the grant would actually be awarded. The current balance on our Royalty account is \$1,055,847.70. Ag Teachers have provided input on areas of curriculum they would like to see developed.

FCAE participated in the Jr MANNRS conference. 150 students from 16 IL schools were represented. East St Louis school district has just established a chapter and so far industry partners have provided a very positive response. The National MANNRS conference will be held in Chicago in March of 2024.

There are currently 54 ag teacher openings throughout the state with 33 of those openings filled. 17 programs added an additional ag teacher to their program (this number could rise to as many as 30). 8 new FFA chapters were added to FCAE District 2.

Finally, Dean introduced Jennifer Waters as the new FCAE Executive Director following his retirement. Allie Bode, ag teacher in Lincoln IL, will become the new FCAE District 3 Coordinator.

A motion to adjourn was made by Don Moffitt. Ryan Tate seconded and the motion was adopted. Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Zecher

ILCAE Secretary