

CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.
Minutes of Closed Executive Committee Meeting
November 30, 2017

A closed meeting of the Executive Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Thursday, November 30, 2017 at the University of Florida, IFAS, CREC, Ben Hill Griffin Hall, in Lake Alfred, Florida. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am by Chairman Tom Jerkins. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

CRDF Executive Committee Present were Mr. Tom Jerkins, Mr. Rick Kress, Dr. Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Mr. Jerry Newlin, Mr. Hugh Thompson and Dr. Harold Browning. Other Board members attending included Mr. Bobby Barben, Mr. Larry Black, Dr. Jackie Burns, Mr. Joe Davis, Jr., Dr. Greg Hodges and Mr. Wayne Simmons. Missing from the Board were Mr. Ned Hancock and Mr. Ben McLean.

IFAS Representatives included Dr. Jack Payne, Vice-President of Agriculture and Natural Resources, IFAS, UF; Dr. Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Executive Associate Vice President; Dr. Jackie Burns, IFAS Dean For Research; Mr. Cody Elmer, Executive Director of Development, UFF, IFAS SHARE; Dr Michael Rogers, Center Director, IFAS, CREC; Dr. Calvin Arnold, Center Director, IFAS SWFREC; and Mr. Chris Moran, Special Assistant to the Vice-President, Communications.

The purpose of the meeting was stated as information exchange from IFAS on CRDF/UF relations, and the Public Meeting Law limits associated with the closed meeting were addressed by the COO.

Vice-President Payne addressed the group from a written script, highlighting background and 7 points of concern regarding CRDF/UF relations. The following notes are derived from his verbal presentation.

Background: Changes have occurred over the recent six or perhaps twelve months with regards to CRDF direction, procedures and activities which are creating concerns within UF. Complaints have been received from respected UF scientists, citrus growers, and board of trustees members. In addition, the UF Board of Trustees and Florida Legislature are considering how to better manage State University Direct Support Organizations (DSOs) and their relation with host systems.

UF has a wide range of DSOs and seven or eight reside within the IFAS domain. These include the larger Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc., CRDF and the 4-H foundation.

Seven areas of concern were identified by VP Payne through information centralized with the VP office.

1. The UF Board of Trustees is engaging more directly in understanding DSO missions and how they support their organizations. State Statute 1004.28 define the purpose and characteristics of a DSO. The intended purpose of a DSO may be at odds with the evolution of CRDF, in particular that more activities can be interpreted as not in the best interests of UF. AN excerpt from this statute was recited as follows“

1004.28 Direct-support organizations; use of property; board of directors; activities; audit; facilities.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

(a) “University direct-support organization” means an organization which is:

1. A Florida corporation not for profit incorporated under the provisions of chapter 617 and approved by the Department of State.
2. Organized and operated exclusively to receive, hold, invest, and administer property and to make expenditures to or for the benefit of a state university in Florida or for the benefit of a research and development park or research and development authority affiliated with a state university and organized under part V of chapter 159.
3. An organization that a state university board of trustees, after review, has certified to be operating in a manner consistent with the goals of the university and in the best interest of the state. Any organization that is denied certification by the board of trustees shall not use the name of the university that it serves.

The 2017 Florida legislature passed a bill that would limit DSO use of state resources at no cost. This could have materially affected all DSOs. The law also would require a BOT appointee to serve on all DSO boards and Executive Committees. Although passed by the legislature, the bill was vetoed by the governor. Senate bill 4 is before the 2018 Legislature and would reconsider these issues.

2. UF Foundation dissatisfaction with donations and fund-raising by CRDF.

Changes to CRDF articles of incorporation were submitted in 2011 to remove IFAS as recipient of residue funds, were never run through UF, and were never verified, and therefore, are not in force.

It appears to UFF that there are donations coming to CRDF that were intended for CREC research that are being used by CRDF for other purposes. In addition, competitive fund-raising by CRDF independent of UF and UFF is confusing potential donors, as evidenced by Vice President discussion with Tropicana Leadership. Dr. Rogers indicated that Tropicana reported that they have provided what they planned for CREC support by way of donation to CRDF.

Another example was the 2017 donation to CRDF by Certis, which was intended for UF, CREC and ended up at CRDF. Confusion occurred within UFF and at CREC, and Michael Rogers indicated that the check should have been written to CREC.

An existing MOU between CRDF and UF, signed by the VP and current COO with regards to fundraising requires coordination with the IFAS VP office and with UFF and this is not occurring.

Donors are thinking funds are directed to UF, but are going to CRDF, in essence competing with IFAS for fundraising. CRDF is choosing to use these funds for other purposes.

UFF exists to raise donor funds to be directed back to UF faculty and students, and this in conflict with CRDF fund-raising objectives.

3. Disrespect for IFAS Researchers:

Currently there are no funds to Immokalee Center SWFREC, and no funds to IRREC, Fort Pierce. Funds are being directed to other institutions and parties, and there is no reason to go outside. UF has hired and maintained highly qualified faculty who can do all that is needed to address HLB. Despite this, CRDF is funding UC, Cornell and many other institutions when the best one for HLB work is UF, IFAS.

CRDF showed no support for the implementation of UF Indirect Cost. As a senior scientist and former UF, IFAS CREC Director, the COO should have communicated why the IDC is important.

UF finds objectionable the expensive investment in the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate the HLB portfolio and propose refinement to CRDF priorities. This is an inappropriate use of funds. The first panel of NAS to establish the industry response was too expensive. Engagement of NAS demonstrates mistrust of UF and IFAS scientists. IFAS scientists are the ones being contacted by NAS and thus the NAS report will merely reflect the IFAS perspective on HLB research needs, and thus is a waste of money.

Increasing Service contracts from CRDF to IFAS:

- Whole plant assay for evaluating chemical HLB therapies
- Oxytet quantification efforts
- UF, IFAS PI engaged as part of thermal therapy, and the PI indicated that goals of the project were not valid

IFAS knew that bactericides would never work and does not support the work on this strategy. A lot of funds have been wasted in pursuing bactericides when it is clear that foliar application will not work (quoting CRDF Citrus Industry column that foliar application of bactericides is less effective than desirable). Michael Rogers cited a white paper written by IFAS in the Section 18 review process that indicated that the materials would not work.

Use of pass-through contracts to support field trial staff for CRDF (M Rogers). No benefit to IFAS. Now these staff are CRDF employees.

All of the relevant HLB research has been provided by IFAS, and CRDF's Board is ignoring their results and good ideas. IFAS faculty statewide are unanimous in this feeling and Dr. Rogers is increasingly spending time managing the complaints.

4. CRDF morphing into its own in-house research organization that is competing with IFAS for research projects or conducting to the exclusion of IFAS.

An example is taking over trunk injection field work after UF PI did foundational work, taking their ideas and making them CRDF's under CRDF Project Manager.

CRDF scientists do not have the necessary experience to conduct citrus HLB research. Field staff should not be conducting research, but experts in applicable areas should be leading the research. CRDF is not utilizing the existing (including new faculty) expertise of UF, IFAS.

As a result, CRDF is wasting millions of dollars.

Supplemental nutrition research has not been supported by CRDF, since it was determined (by CRDF) that this is not an area for HLB solutions. Dr. Rogers believes that there is not enough work being funded by CRDF in supplemental nutrition.

This bias against IFAS scientists is moving to national funding levels, where CRDF representation also has influence. No one should have that much power.

5. CRDF is moving towards more funding of commercial development instead of research.

Section 18 by CRDF not going anywhere

Bayer products not going anywhere. Their portfolio is not that promising, and screening is not a good way to find solutions. If a product is found, it is very likely to have resistance build. CRDF is investing in a 10-20 year project.

After Bayer was funded, they realized that they could not do the work, so they reached out to IFAS to solve their problems.

6. CREC Faculty Issues

Resent CRDF looking over their shoulders
Stealing IFAS data
Claiming IFAS information as their own

Research ideas of CREC scientists taken by CRDF. Examples: from Michael Rogers

- Brassinosteroids project idea by IFAS PI not funded, as it was not a CRDF priority. The project then was internally funded by IFAS. CRDF subsequently initiated their own field trials with Brassinosteroids and asked the IFAS PI for help in how to do the work.
- A CREC PI Bactericide Injection proposal for MAC funding was taken over by CRDF Project Manager, as the lead for MAC project (covered under number 5 above)

The location of CRDF on-site at UF, IFAS, CREC creates greater challenges for the funding organization and the researchers, and contributes to the friction reported here.

7. Elimination of the PCR lab at Immokalee. This lab was in place for 10 years at a cost of about \$125,000 per year. CRDF also was funding a private company PCR lab. Grower samples have decreased. Why did CRDF reduce funding for IFAS lab, and keep the private lab? It should have been the other way around. CRDF is the largest user of the lab. The SWFREC Lab is now under new leadership. The COO recommended to the board to stop funding SWFREC lab, and called the Director the day before the decision was approved by Board to let him know that there would likely be only one lab proposal approved. M. Rogers indicated that the COO reported to him that the PI at SWFREC was not interested in running the PCR lab.

The SWFREC Director indicated at the Executive Committee meeting that a reduction and retention of both labs could have been a better outcome.

When asked about his views on potential solutions to address these concerns, Dr. Payne indicated that CRDF will have to change how they are doing business to remain a DSO.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

Minutes submitted by Harold Browning