

Maize Genetics Cooperation
Board of Directors and Maize Genetics Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes
March 17 2023 at the Maize Genetics Meeting (in person)

Meeting convened 12:30 pm Central Time

Board members present:

Marna Yandea-Nelson (Chair)
Jay Hollick (Outgoing Chair)
Wojtek Pawlowski (Incoming Chair)
Erin Sparks (Treasurer)
Mike Muszynski (Communications Director)
Andrea Eveland (At Large Member)
Jeffrey Ross-Ibarra (At Large Member)

Board members absent:

Thelma Madzima (At Large Member)
Laurie Smith (Secretary)

Guests:

John Fowler (Chair of CODIE)
Karen Cone (NSF)
Cliff Weil (NSF)
Jack Okamuro (USDA-ARS)

1. Update on NSF priorities (Cone)

- a. NSF FY23 budget is increased from FY22 largely due to new Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (TIPs) directorate.
- b. NSF can't lobby but it can advocate for priority areas (e.g. TIPS Regional Innovation Engine hubs)
- c. The CHIPS in Science Act provides a mandate for research areas (not additional money).
 - i. More ERPSCoR funding (<https://new.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/epscor/state-websites>)
 - ii. TIPS programs fund basic/applied (use-inspired) research addressing big societal challenges.
 - iii. All Federal agencies must satisfy new Biden Administration priorities e.g. climate change, biotech& biomanufacturing, workforce development
- d. *The MG community works in this space and it so should be able to fit within these priorities.*
 - i. MG community can drive priorities in plant science research to address climate change
 - ii. NSF can fund meetings or workshops on how the MG community can lead here.
- e. New NSF solicitations come from ideas from the community including MG community
 - i. We have strong fundamental research we can begin to move forward to develop solutions
 - ii. Emphasis on biotechnology & biomanufacturing (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/09/12/executive-order-on-advancing-biotechnology-and-biomanufacturing-innovation-for-a-sustainable-safe-and-secure-american-bioeconomy/>)
 - iii. New market opportunities to help build the bioeconomy.
 - iv. Help farmers be productive and sustainable.

- f. USDA and DOE will have similar priorities around critical needs for plant research.
- g. Proposals that are multi-disciplinary and collaborative with other disciplines will be more competitive – emphasizing potential solutions to societal problems.
- h. *The MG community can coordinate as a group to address funding gaps and where the community needs to build research capacity.*

2. Update on USDA-NIFA priorities (Okamuro)

- a. Plant Introduction Station is undergoing re-authorization and review as a germplasm repository.
- b. Interagency partnerships across federal government are strong for plant biology with potential opportunity for synergy and shared funding.
- c. A priority is student training (workforce development) [MGC is strong here] – what types of training are needed here for biotech & plant science at all degree levels and institution types?

3. Maize Genetics Advocacy Committee update

- a. New name planned
- b. Committee advocates for advancement of the vision and goals for MG community. What are these, for the next few years?
- c. Plans: identify new members including international participants; identify members' networks; review and clarify roles and responsibilities of MGAC (post revised docs)

4. How we respond to reports of Code of Conduct violations

- a. Goal is to have an established decision tree and process that is publicly disclosed
- b. The NSF-funded Root and Shoot RCN is working with MGC and other plant societies on formulating these and working with an external ombudsperson in the resolution process
- c. NSF funds can be requested to support the CoC violation response process as part of a conference grant proposal

5. Treasurer's update on the MGC budget

- a. Our accounting service providers raise their rates each year.
- b. Old docs are being archived.
- c. Spending compliance will be more closely monitored going forward

6. BOD website and email control transferred to new Communications Director.

7. BoD Chair's update on priorities and changes planned for 2023:

- a. 2026 MGM proposal
- b. Monthly meetings will continue to have an open forum for community input and discussions; opportunities will be advertised on social media and have a theme for discussion to encourage more community participation
- c. Start distributing a quarterly newsletter for the community?

Meeting adjourned ~1:30pm.