

Legislative Task Force Report
American Association for Agricultural Education
May 15, 2006

Members: Gary Moore, John Hillison, Robert Martin, Jackie Deeds, Rob Terry,
Jim Leising, Chair

Ex-Officio: Bill Camp, Larry Case, Jay Jackman, Doug Loudenslager, Coleman Harris

Task Force Charge:

Recommend to the AAAE Executive Committee actions to influence legislation, policy or programs to provide more support for agricultural education.

Background:

AAAE was concerned that Agricultural Education has input into the new federal farm bill likely in 2007 and that agricultural education research and development be emphasized.

Progress:

The Task Force held a series of phone conferences in July, September, October and November of 2005. Members of the Task Force organized into a "Current Issues Working Group" and a "Future Working Group." The Current Issues Group, chaired by Jim Leising, focused on the development of a proposal to modify the USDA Secondary/Postsecondary Challenge Grant Program to allow 4-year universities to become lead institutions and for faculty to serve as principal investigators for the grants. The Group outlined steps, developed a proposal and gained approval from the AAAE Board. Jay Jackman and Jim Leising held a meeting with George Cooper, Deputy Administrator, Science and Education Resources Development, CSREES, USDA and Jeff Gilmore, Director of Higher Education Programs. USDA did not support this change internally and indicated that the legislation did not allow such a change. Meetings were held with staff of the Senate Agriculture Committee and senate staff members who serve on the Agriculture Committee to communicate the need to obtain changes to the USDA Secondary/Postsecondary Challenge Grant Program. AAAE members from key states were contacted and requested to suggest the proposed change to governmental relations staff within their university who could recommend these changes to members of the U.S. Congress who serve on the Senate or House Agriculture Committees. Although there appeared to be support for this proposed change, it may not be acted upon until the new farm bill is considered.

The Future Working Group, chaired by John Hillison, developed a white paper titled "Recommendations for Enhancing a Long-Term Relationship between Agricultural Education and the United States Department of Agriculture." The paper was divided into three parts: 1) history of relationship between agricultural education and USDA; 2) present situation for using school-based agricultural education to strengthen and safeguard the American food supply; and 3) recommendations for future relationship between agricultural education and USDA.

Proposals from both the “current” and “future” working groups were forwarded to the AAAE Executive Committee for consideration. During this consideration, the National Council for Agricultural Education decided to appoint a National Advocacy Task Force that would be more representative of the agricultural education profession. This Task Force was appointed in January 2006 and has the following charge and membership:

Charge

1. Recommend to The Council the annual federal legislative agenda for agricultural education at all levels (K-adult) in the United States.
2. Identify other (non-legislative) advocacy needs in agricultural education at the national level.
3. Recommend priorities and general approaches for pursuing a comprehensive, systematic, long-term advocacy program for agricultural education.
4. Pursue ongoing implementation of the advocacy program under the guidance and direction of The Council.

Authority

The Advocacy Task Force is appointed by The National Council for Agricultural Education, and therefore, presents its recommendations to The Council for consideration and action. These recommendations may be presented by the task force chair or another member of the task force who also sits on The Council. At its discretion The Council may convert the task force to a standing committee for more effective pursuit of a long-term, coordinated, advocacy effort.

Task Force Membership

NAAE representatives (2) – Hugh Mooney (CA), Paul Larson (WI)
AAAE representatives (2) – Jim Leising (OK), John Hillison (VA)
NASAE representatives (2) – Donna Moore (NY), Jim Barbee (NV)
Postsecondary/adult representatives (2) – Brad Schloesser, Rich Baumann
Industry representatives (2) – Larry Gundrum (IL), TBD from FFA Sponsor's Board
National FFA (3) – Doug Loudenslager, Kent Schescke, Norman Gay
Former federal legislator (1) – TBD
Jay Jackman – NAAE (chief administrator of the task force)
Keri Haars - ACTE

The Ad-hoc AAAE Legislative Task Force has not held a meeting since the National Council Advocacy Task Force was appointed. The National Task Force has held a conference call and a face-to-face meeting was held during the ACTE Legislative Policy Meeting in Washington D.C. The Task Force identified advocacy priorities for 2006:

Short Term

- Perkins reauthorization
- FY 2007 Congressional Budget
- FY 2007 Appropriations for CTE
- Other items for the Agricultural Education legislative agenda as they arise
- Initiate Agricultural Education Grassroots Education and Awareness Campaign
- Identification of data required for key messages

Longer Range

- Fully develop and maintain a grassroots advocacy program
- Incorporate advocacy training in the curriculum for agricultural educators
- Develop and launch an Agricultural Education marketing program
- Develop alternate sources of funding for Agricultural Education
- Identify and develop strategic alliances with key agriculture organizations and other interested parties
- Establish relationships to obtain support from other Federal Agencies such as the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, EPA, etc.
- Explore food safety as an initiative to garner support for Agricultural Education

Specific to one of the short term priorities, a sub group of the Advocacy Task Force was chartered to identify the data to be tracked and reported to support the advocacy and marketing initiatives. The results of their efforts should be ready in early May. A conference call of the Advocacy Task Force will be scheduled for the month of May. The National Council has recently approved the priorities of the Task Force.

It appears that with the appointment of the National Council Advocacy Task Force AAAE will need to consider if a separate AAAE Legislative Task Force is any longer needed.