

Report of Combined SURA and Relations Committees
SURA Meeting – April 7th/8th, 2008

1. The committee considered and endorsed efforts to determine whether SURA should have a major initiative in Bioenergy – is there a role for SURA?
 - a. Bioenergy was previously identified as a topic by the Development committee
 - b. It is being explored by Chuck Staben (University of Kentucky), part-time SURA Fellow, who has visited some member institutions to assess their bioenergy-related assets, spoken with DOE leadership, attended a conference, etc
 - c. The Committee agrees that bioenergy may be a good potential fit for SURA and southeastern (SE) universities for the following reasons:
 - i. The SE is ideally suited to growing large amounts of biomass cheaply
 - ii. ~60% of the less expensive biomass is already produced in the region
 - iii. Agricultural economies of the SE states need a new mission
 - iv. Helping identify that mission fits with the role of land grants and other SURA member organizations
 - v. The SE already has good start, with one of the three new, \$135M DOE Bioenergy Centers housed at the Oak Ridge National Lab and several SE universities playing major roles
 - d. How can SURA participate in a bioenergy initiative? Whatever it does has to ...
 - i. Be a good fit and a unique contribution
 - ii. Avoid competition with member universities
 - iii. Bring value added to what members are already doing
 - e. Some initial ideas
 - i. Logistics & Scalability Research Center: leveraging and integrating member programs to develop models and tools to ensure that solutions innovated by SURA institutions are viable and economically sustainable - avoiding the backlash associated with the use of corn as biomass
 - ii. Pilot Plant Capabilities: fits with SURA's role of providing essential infrastructure – here providing the resources required to demonstrate feasibility to industry interested in university innovations in bioenergy – filling in the academic bench-to- production plant continuum.
 - f. Jerry: we need to coalesce around an idea and some entity has to step forward to provide leadership; agreed, so next steps:
 - i. Revisit original bioenergy steering committee membership roster to see if we need to expand it
 - ii. Hold a bioenergy summit meeting, perhaps as early as this summer, that includes a goal of developing an action plan
 - iii. Try to identify a SURA member with 3-4 member partners to take the lead in fleshing out this initiative
2. The Development committee is tasked with identifying new areas for SURA initiatives
 - a. Historical approach – have sessions with strategic, forward-thinking experts
 - b. Committee suggestions?
 - i. Bioenergy
 - ii. The fourth generation light source that SURA / JLab might play a key role in: who are the potential users and what are the potential applications?
 - iii. Natural disaster recovery, infrastructure resiliency, emergency preparedness
 - iv. Keep thinking (all members please offer thoughts)

3. The Development committee endorsed the notion that SURA should seek support from foundations
 - a. SURA has characteristics that would be well received by foundations
 - i. SURA strategically leverages the strengths of its members
 - ii. SURA is well regarded and has longevity
 - iii. SURA has initiatives in areas favored by foundations
 - b. The committee understands the potential downsides of foundations
 - i. Little to no indirect or management costs – cost to benefit ratio?
 - ii. Potential for competition with members
 - iii. Presidents need to be aware and involved
 - c. Approaches to foundations need to be strategic
 - i. These have to match with key SURA initiatives (IT? Coastal?)
 - ii. Accept long lead times due to the need to build relationships
 - d. Conversations are underway with a consultant expert in foundations

4. The committee considered and encouraged the growing efforts in commercialization
 - a. This program started 3-5 years ago under Matt, with Marc now carrying the baton
 - b. It is now judged to be an effective and comprehensive program that includes:
 - i. Enhancing member IP management
 - ii. Providing help with licensing – including to JLab
 - iii. Providing tech reports
 - iv. Providing venture capital to help start new companies
 - c. The latest addition is the “business plan competition” which is designed to engage member business schools and foster local entrepreneurship
 - d. In particular – the SURA Fund
 - i. Successful and expanding
 - ii. 30 plans submitted this past Spring
 - iii. Matt has assembled a core of six VC experts to evaluate plans
 - iv. These VCs are highly accomplished – they help SURA build relationships to VC-rich areas
 - v. Help overcome key limitations for many member schools
 - vi. Plans are 30% out of the SURA footprint – that’s okay
 - vii. Life science has been a key area but this spring’s plans are dominated by IT, demonstrating expanding portfolio - good

5. The committee is pleased by the progress with the Distinguished Service Awards, including the ...
 - a. SURA Distinguished Scientist Award – given to Dr. Lonnie Ingram at the meeting
 - b. The committee recommended incorporated improved language into the Distinguished Scientist Award instructions to ...
 - i. Encourage more comprehensive applications
 - ii. Inviting emphasis on the impact nominees have had on SURA or SE research as a potentially important criteria (there are many honorific programs – how to distinguish the SURA award?)

6. Government Relations
 - a. The committee underscored the importance of continuing to work with other organizations through our elected officials to keep funding for research and development high on the national priority list