

**Utah State University
Research Council Minutes
April 24, 2008 - 3:00 p.m.
Champ Hall**

RESEARCH COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jeff Broadbent
for Brent Miller, Chair
Clifford Skousen
for Doug Anderson
Byron Burnham

Nancy Mesner
for Nat Frazer
Mac McKee
for Scott Hinton
Mary Hubbard

Gary Kiger
James MacMahon
Doug Ramsey
Jim Dorward
for Carol Strong
Vincent Wickwar

INVITED GUESTS:

Adam Fowles
Irene Jorgensen
Michael Kennedy (telecon)

Anna McEntire
David Paul
Bonnie Pitblado

Sara Rule
Teresa Seeholzer
Lorraine Walker

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Approval of Minutes of March 27, 2008** (Jeff Broadbent)
Doug Ramsey motioned to approve the minutes of March 27, 2008. Mary Hubbard seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSIONS

1. **Welcome & Introductions** (Jeff Broadbent)
2. **Presentation: "Prospecting for Paleoindian Sites in Southeastern Idaho."**
By: Bonnie Pitblado, Associate Professor – Department of Anthropology

Dr. Pitblado is the director of the Museum of Anthropology (Old Main Room 252) as well as associate professor of archaeology. Most of her work has been focused on one laboratory in the Southern Rocky Mountains; however, recent research has evolved to a location near Soda Springs Idaho.

Upon arrival at the Soda Springs site, she discovered resources in the area that immediately caught her attention. These resources gave insight on people who might have lived in the area 10-12,000 years ago. Bonnie decided to gradually introduce 8 successful field school students to the site. The purpose of their initial visit was to investigate the surroundings and build a relationship with the local citizens. Next, the team assessed the potential of the area for Paleoindian studies and research. They targeted a three prong approach based on

the following: 1) Review of private Paleoindian collections, 2) Broad-scale reconnaissance, and 3) Geoarchaeological assessment. The private collections educated them with a snapshot view of the artifacts that have been recovered to date. She relayed that spearheads and spear points help educate us on both chronological and geographic representation i.e., who was using the landscape, and what time frame did they exist. The goal during the reconnaissance phase was to get a sense of the geography of the land, its land forms, the environmental variability, and what the “hunting” and “gathering” population would have visualized from the area. During the assessment portion, the team obtained a sense of the geology of the area and created models that helped them target land forms that would contain the oldest dirt for successful research.

Bonnie shared a map of the targeted research area and commented on the excellent exposure that exists. From the teams initial broad scale overview, they were able to look at the depositional regimes and get a sense of soil formations that could help answer questions related to how long sediments have been in place. The site is well preserved and has proven to be an excellent resource base with phenomenal representation which includes young tertiary and quaternary basalt flows.

Bonnie’s enthusiasm for Paleoindian research showed in her presentation. The area is rich in diversity with numerous appealing attributes and portends that future Paleoindian research in the area looks very promising.

3. **State & Federal Relations Update** By: Michael Kennedy

The 2008 Utah legislative session was successful for USU. Unfortunately, the projected state revenues were \$300 million lower than anticipated with adjustments to the following:

- **USTAR** : This initiative was targeted for additional ongoing funding support of \$10 million. Even though the return on investment numbers look promising from current projects, the budget reality is funding was only approved at \$2.5 million onetime support for FY2009.
- **USU Ag Science Building**: Projected cost → \$103 million (Federal support: \$60 million, State support: ~ \$43). As Utah’s entire Capital Facilities Budget only allowed for \$150 million in expenditures, higher ranked state projects received priority allocation of the available funds. Through the efforts of our local legislators, the state approved a general obligation bond to cover the state’s portion for this new building; however, the bond stipulates that these funds will only be released proportionally as federal funds are released. Obstacles exist at the federal level, but efforts with Senator Bennett’s office will continue as USU would like to move the project forward in phases if necessary.
- **USU Engineering Initiative**: Efforts towards the general obligation bond made it difficult to leverage additional projects for USU. Consequently, USU’s engineering initiative was not funded, and Weber State received the available funds in this area.
- **Focus for the Future**: An important effort will be to expand the vision of our legislators that Utah’s institutions of higher education are the economic engines for the state of Utah. The infrastructure at these institutions is just as important as road projects are to the state’s infrastructure. He commented that it takes long term commitments to realize the economic benefits.

On March 7, 2008, USU submitted 20 FY2009 earmark requests to Senator Hatch, Senator Bennett, and Congressman Bishop. These requests were heavy in Agriculture focus due to USU's expertise, experience, projected available funds, and support within the Ag committee. Other requests included projects targeted in Energy & Water, Defense, Health & Human Services, and Labor.

Michael relayed an overview of potential scenarios that could evolve with Senate Committee rankings as a result of the 2008 elections. A Continuing Resolution is likely for FY2009. This would result in "stopgap" funding at the FY2008 level, which would likely expire sometime near Thanksgiving. With the elections on the horizon, it is too early to project what will happen. USU has excellent representation and support at the Federal level, but it will be awhile before we know what funding will evolve for FY2009.

Michael gave an overview/ update related to the topics associated with earmark scrutiny. He commented that overall, earmarks are good for the state as well as the economy and that the scrutiny can be both positive and negative. In fact, earmarks ultimately only account for approximately 1-2% of total spending and budget allocation in congress. It has been proven over and over that "return on investment" does occur from these earmarks. Cutting edge research also evolves from these earmarks which has benefited universities across the nation and the world. Earmark scrutiny will continue so USU needs to be smarter and target our strengths and capabilities with Federal opportunities. Strategic collaborations in research will be critical as we understand the direction of the next administration and target goals based on USU's strengths.

4. **Research Week Recap & Research Matters Update** By: Anna McEntire

Research Week

Anna thanked everyone for their support of a successful 2008 Research Week. During the four day event, 500 individuals participated and 40 received award recognitions (i.e., College Researchers of the Year & D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award- 2008 Recognition: Fred Provenza). She recapped the week's events and mentioned that 12 high school students from In-Tech and Logan High participated for the first time in sharing their research posters. Another positive outcome of Research Week is the Robins Awards also recognized the 2008 University Researcher of the Year, Dr. Jagath Kaluarachchi, and the 2008 Undergraduate Researcher of the Year, Adam Kynaston. Anna commented that Research Week did not exist 4 years ago and it has been exciting to see the rapid growth, success, and increased interest each year. Research Week for 2009 will be held on March 30-April 3rd.

Research Matters

All Colleges and Centers were sent numerous copies of Research Matters for their use. Extra copies are available from the VPR Office as needed. This publication is an excellent tool to share at conferences as well as with fundraising efforts to showcase research at USU. She thanked the deans for their help in identifying USU's research achievements and requested that as new projects evolve for 2009, please inform Anna so she can keep the list compiled for consideration in future publications.

5. **Other Issues & Upcoming Calendar Events** (Jeff Broadbent)

Calendar Events

- April 25, 2008 – 7:30 am → Sunrise Session, Little America Hotel, SLC
 - Mac McKee --- Exciting Projects at the Utah Water Research Lab
- June 13, 2008 – 7:30 am → Sunrise Session, Little America Hotel, SLC
- New Faculty Orientation will be held in August, 2008
 - As soon as the date is finalized, notification will be sent across campus
- September 25, 2008 → Next Research Council
 - No Research Council for the months of May through July, 2008

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Minutes Submitted By: Teresa Seeholzer, Research Council Secretary