

Notes from Closing Session

CEREL Winter Meeting - January 20, 2010

Report from Energy Education breakout, chaired by Steve Salley

- discussed how best to assess state of energy education?
- perhaps ID core competencies and best practices
- provide a forum for educators to share their ideas
 - in specific disciplines, there traditionally are associations - for energy there is no one such thing, but perhaps CEREL could take on that role
- also provide a clearinghouse for syllabi in different areas
- since there is no accrediting body, CEREL could be a resource that institutions could use to provide site visitors for program review and program evaluation
 - similarities with what CEDD has done with environmental program review
- look internationally

Report from Energy Communications/Outreach breakout, chaired by Susan Jenkins

- group included seven members from diverse backgrounds and areas, so a good mix of perspectives
- who's our target audience?
 - possibilities: K-12, general public, policymakers, those interested or involved in the area of tech transfer or on the more corporate/business side, those interested in continuing education or certification programs
 - internal vs. external audiences
 - keep in mind "inreach"/engagement as a term - there are silos within institutions that don't interact or communicate as well as they could; different task with different approach from outreach
 - in the next 6-12 months: with limited resources, we should opt for an external audience
- what are the key challenges that we would face in this effort?
 - challenge due to different/diverse programs - how to prioritize messages with limited human/financial resources?
 - funding limitations always a concern
 - need to break down silos between the groups and disciplines
 - how do those of us untrained in social science access/disseminate information?
 - as we pull together fact sheets for dissemination, need to ensure correctness
 - CEREL is not the group to assess data, but to use our expertise
- specific requests/recommendations for CEREL's role:
 - website and information dissemination
 - make it more comprehensive and user-friendly
 - a place to upload curriculum that has been developed in K-12 layman audience
 - developing something like the E-Extension for land-grant universities (a national repository/public resource for extension info)
 - make sure materials are plug-in instead of add-on
 - survey us and larger energy community to collect best practices for dissemination and communication

- continue to build CEREL as a resource/point-of-contact, then act as signatory on proposals, lobbying efforts
- goal: have a couple of things in progress or checked-off the list by the NREL meeting

Report from Energy Research breakout, chaired by Jay Gore

- develop value proposition for research support
 - jobs: what are the possibilities for new job creation in the energy area, and how can CEREL demonstrate this?
 - interactions with industry
 - entrepreneurship
 - interaction with government laboratories
 - federal offices
 - e.g. ARPA-E has a group discussion in next few days on what they could do on a regional basis to promote energy entrepreneurship
 - couldn't CEREL help moderate this type of discussion?
- information development & sharing
 - definition of fundamentals: e.g. what does sustainability mean?
 - sharing with other stakeholders
- promote research collaborations
 - two or three universities going in on joint proposals after CEREL meeting
 - joint review papers
 - mimicking CEDD in terms of co-written proposals
 - with industry - jobs should be emphasis instead of blank-check increased funding

Report from Executive Committee Planning Session in mid-November, David Blockstein

- energy is getting a lot of attention with new programs and funding, some of which is stovepiped
- CEREL strengths:
 - unique niche
 - very active Executive Committee, with monthly conference calls
- CEREL weaknesses:
 - we are still relatively new, don't have some of the major players, not yet well-known
 - still very much on supply side of energy, and haven't yet connected well with groups working on efficiency & conservation
- Opportunities:
 - better engagement with members
 - energy education and outreach
 - crossdisciplinary energy curricula
 - re-energize RE-ENERGYSE
 - connect with federal government and have agencies connect with each other, since we're a place for cross-cutting conversation about big-picture energy issues
 - connect with industry