

## **BIOENERGY VISION STATEMENT TASK FORCE MEETING**

**May 1, 2008**

### **Minutes**

The Bioenergy Vision Statement Task Force Meeting was held on May 1, 2008 at 3 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20, 2008 at 3 pm, Morgan Hall Room 301.

Attendees were as follows:

#### **Task Force Members:**

Joe Bozell, Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries  
Burt English, Agricultural Economics  
David Harper, Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries  
Doug Hayes, Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science  
Lorna Norwood, Marketing and Communications  
Daniel De Le Torre Ugarte, Agricultural Economics  
Neil Rhodes, Plant Sciences  
Neal Stewart, Plant Sciences

#### **Absent:**

Caula Beyl, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources  
Pat Keyser, Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries  
Mark Windham, Entomology and Plant Pathology

#### **Guests:**

Dr. Joseph DiPietro, Vice President, Institute of Agriculture  
Dr. Tim Rials, Director & Professor, Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries, Office of Bioenergy Programs and Sun Grant Center  
Dr. Kelly Tiller, Director External Operations, Office of Bioenergy Programs

#### **Support Staff:**

Patty McDaniels, Marketing and Communications  
Sam Jackson, Office of Bioenergy Programs  
Ann Ryan, Office of Bioenergy Programs

The Bioenergy Vision Statement Task Force met on Thursday, May 1, 2008 at 3 pm. Dr. Joe DiPietro, Vice President, Institute of Agriculture, Dr. Tim Rials, Director & Professor, Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries, Office of Bioenergy Programs and Sun Grant Center and Dr. Kelly Tiller, Director of External Operations, Office of Bioenergy Programs were guest speakers. The meeting opened with discussions regarding the charge, the challenges, the focus and the vision of this committee.

Dr. DiPietro challenged this committee with the responsibilities of developing a strong, precise and focused vision statement, utilizing SWOT analysis as a means to develop a strategic plan for the Bioenergy Program as well as recommending, implementing and solidifying the necessary process to make this program a success. He stressed the importance of widespread, effective communication of the efforts of this committee and the bioenergy program as a whole throughout the Agriculture Institute as well as the

entire University. It is the challenge of this committee to gain input from the Institute and keep people engaged about this initiative.

Dr. DiPietro noted that the way in which this committee implements the vision statement for this initiative should address our long-term goals, knowing we have the capacity to take the Bioenergy Program to a new level and impact the future of the biofuels industry.

Dr. Kelly Tiller spoke to the group reiterating Dr. DiPietro's thoughts on strong communication throughout the Institute as well as conveying and demonstrating that the initiative will be ready to move to the commercial scale. The Biorefinery should be ready for the construction process to begin by Fall 2008. We should be producing cellulosic ethanol by early 2010. Dr. Tiller noted that switchgrass planting began on May 1, 2008. We have been extremely fortunate to have the Extension Agents, Ken Goddard and Jon Walton as well as Dr. Clark Garland and Dr. Burt English involved in the contracting side of our efforts. We are exploring additional partnership opportunities to assist in leading our efforts into the commercial industry.

Dr. Tiller stressed that we are totally committed to making this a true research opportunity. We have established an LLC named **Genera Energy, LLC** to be responsible for implementing this project which will enable UT to remain focused on expanding our research efforts for future benefits to Genera Energy as well as UT. Dr. Tiller emphasized to the committee that this is a business proposition and should be treated as such. UT is the driving force behind this effort as an institute, but we need to remain very aware that although UT is viewed as a research facility; there is very much a business and technical component to this initiative. This must be run like a business.

Dr. Tiller indicated we are ahead of anyone in the nation as far as our research in this field. This committee is charged with training people to be ready for the future of biofuels as well as determining how to change the mindset from negative to positive, keeping in mind and being aware of the conservation of energy and the way America lives as well as how this will influence the behavior of American's.

Dr. Tim Rials expressed his gratitude to the members of this committee and thanked them for their interest in the Bioenergy Program and the future of the State of Tennessee as well as this nation. He stressed the importance of a clear vision and strategy for research and development aspects of this program. It is imperative that we maintain interdisciplinary and interdepartmental projects as this is an extremely important factor in making this program a success. We are committed to and continue to work toward the development of funds in this area. Dr. Rials stated he would like to thank everyone from UTIA for their hard work and continued efforts in making the biofuels initiative a success.

The committee began the meeting with concern from Dr. Burt English regarding consideration of direct combustion, ways to make energy, liquid fuels and how TVA handles energy. We need to consider whether or not TVA and the State will be receptive of this initiative. This is a very valid concern, and the committee agrees with Dr. English.

The committee began dissecting the common vision themes, which originated from the first meeting, in an attempt to narrow down a strong, precise and focused vision statement. Below were the categories addressed:

- Rural economy that is thriving
- Sustainable fuel and products
- Stewardship of resources
- The “5 F’s” in abundance:
  - Fuel
  - Feed
  - Food
  - Fiber
  - Flowers
- Diversity in fuel and energy resources
- Interdisciplinary teams
- Research and science
- Policies and political will
- Development (Engineer)

A draft of the vision statement reads as follows:

The University of Tennessee, Institute of Agriculture will become the national and international leader in cellulosic bioenergy and bioproducts research and education within 5 years through:

- Excellence in scholarly reputation and visibility among higher education institutions, private sector companies and government entities
- Research accomplishments that produce
  - Economically viable biofuels utilized by industry and citizens
  - Advanced technology that results in new products entering U.S. and world markets
  - Publications in highly respected refereed journals and intellectual property worthy of patent and licensing
- Programs fostering economic growth, rural community development and sustainable use of natural resources
- Undergraduate, graduate and other educational programs that meet the needs of private, government and university entities
- Partnerships that leverage resources and build relationships

The committee is very much in favor of staying within our focus of cellulosic energy which does not diminish other research, i.e. biodiesel. We want to continue our efforts with cellulosic materials but not lessen the fact that we will learn and apply this energy to other areas of research.

The timeframe of 5 years was discussed. It was the consensus of the committee that the 5-year timeframe definitely needs to be included in the vision statement because it sets a clear understanding of our commitment and forces focus. It also sends a powerful statement to the Institute, the state and the nation that our intentions are to

take control and commandeer the leadership role in this industry. It also conveys that UT truly believes in this vision and is 100 percent committed to Bioenergy.

In claiming the leadership role in bioenergy, it is imperative that UT differentiates itself from other entities involved in bioenergy. We must determine what sets us apart from other institutions and qualifies us to demand and dominate that leadership role. UT should be perceived as the “voice of authority” in the biofuels industry. We are at the start of something brand new and are presented with an enormous opportunity to take this initiative to a higher level. Perception will come down to how we market this product and our approach in presenting this initiative. It is also imperative that we secure the commitment of our faculty and staff.

There was some discussion regarding “Food vs. Fuel.” The committee is in agreement that we are not competing with the food supply. We need to counteract this negativity and make it well known that our intent is not to take food away from third world countries.

Dr. Burt English suggested conducting a point/counter point analysis prior to the SWOT analysis.

He also suggested, in an attempt to gain national and international exposure, that a key UT alumnus could possibly head up a fundraising program. With private funding available, it would enhance our exposure both nationally and internationally.

There was discussion regarding developing a Website which would also assist in communications, i.e. keeping faculty, staff and the public updated and informed as to the current status of our initiative.

There was also discussion regarding the possibility of hiring additional faculty and staff. This would allow us to maintain our focus as well as continue researching additional funding and maintain our competitive position.

It was suggested that a budget is needed in order to better communicate the initiative, even if it is a small budget for seminars. If we can offer an honorarium and cover expenses, we would be able to invite several high profile speakers and guests to participate.

In closing, it was determined that the Vision Statement would be amended to read:

The University of Tennessee, Institute of Agriculture will become the national and international leader in **sustainable** cellulosic bioenergy and bioproducts research and education within 5 years **enhancing the state's economy** through:

- Excellence in scholarly reputation and visibility among higher education institutions, private sector companies and government entities
- Research accomplishments that produce
  - Economically viable biofuels utilized by industry and citizens
  - Advanced **science** and technology that results in new products entering U.S. and world markets
  - Publications in highly respected refereed journals and intellectual property worthy of patent and licensing

- Programs fostering economic growth, rural community development and sustainable use of natural resources
- Undergraduate, graduate, **public** and other educational programs that meet the needs of private, government and university entities
- Partnerships that leverage resources and build relationships

The Vision Statement will be updated by Lorna Norwood and presented at the next meeting. Discussion for the next meeting will also include a strategy as to how we think we can achieve the objective defined in the Vision Statement.