



THE GEORGE
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Environmental and Energy Management Institute The George Washington University

November 1, 2017

Dear Members of the EEMI Advisory Board,

The EEMI Advisory Board met via WebEx on October 18, 2017. We had a very interactive and productive two-hour exchange and we thank all members that were able to participate. As advertised, this meeting was devoted entirely to our proposed strategic refocusing of the EEMI and as well, to elicit your ideas for bolstering its financial soundness. Jon and I were pleased with your response and your ideas which we will now work to utilize for the advancement of the Institute.

A short summary of the meeting's output follows:

- The proposed strategic refocusing of the EEMI.
As outlined in the attached slides and presented at the meeting, we propose to restructure the EEMI from nine into four focal areas. We believe that without losing sight of all potential areas of interest, a repackaging will help to sharpen the message and profile of EEMI, improve its appeal to potential benefactors and partners, and result in fewer but more robust programs in the select areas. Board members were uniformly supportive of the proposed change which we are implementing and will keep you updated on achieved progress.
- Ideas proffered during the meeting by Board members and special guests.
 - 1) Carol Singer Neuvelt suggested we take advantage of our location, contacts, and experience to direct our programs at the Federal government; “to triangulate EEMI research and education with government needs (e.g., GSA, DoD, DOE, and EPA),” and to consider forming an interest group with the chief sustainability officers of U.S. Federal departments and agencies.
 - 2) Tracy Mehan suggested that since the Federal government appears to be lowering its presence in our areas of interest, we should look more to ties and opportunities with states and private firms; that we should set a budget and plan for visiting groups such as the Joyce and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundations.

- 3) Mitchell Stanley suggested that we keep EEMI agile by refocusing as often as needed when opportunities arise and not stay bound to a set of exclusive areas (perhaps we have implicitly followed that model without acknowledging as much); and he encouraged us to think of EEMI as a “global consulting firm” focused on what is now favored in China as “solutions and not so much on options.” He mentioned one area in particular for us to exploit, that being “big data mining” which now evidently is on China’s radar.
- 4) Michael Ware advised us to consider doing fewer things at first and then broaden to more areas (the proposed restructuring may be seen as an explicit acknowledgement of our consensus on that advice). He also suggested that we capitalize on GW’s own experience in the environmental and energy spaces by highlighting them so as to bring attention to both GW and EEMI.
- 5) Lilia Abron agreed that we should highlight and make better use of the GW experience. She pointed out that the DCSEU (Sustainable Electricity Utility) can provide us with data on GW operations and that we might work with them to get meters installed in buildings that either have none or have only one that cannot differentiate usage by different tenant groups. She also remarked that water remains a big area of attention.
- 6) Win Porter recommended we make additional strategic alliances with other universities (e.g., Ohio State).
- 7) Ed Pinero agreed that the four focal areas selected are more thematic and suggested we add “resiliency” as a generic attribute to the energy management focal area (now done). He also recommended more collaboration with other universities, and for us to prepare thought pieces on the four select focal areas.
- 8) Jimmy Jia pointed us to an emphasis on leadership within the four focal areas and not just on the “management nuts and bolts.” He mentioned an ongoing project at the DOE Pacific Northwest National Labs (PNNL) on “transactive grids” that we might look into for possible joint efforts.
- 9) Sean McGinnis suggested that we seek strategic partnerships with other Universities and research centers outside the DC area (e.g., National Great Rivers Research and Education Center) on specific opportunities of national interest (so far, we have tried one with American University). He also thinks this might be an opportune time for us to contact the newly merged Water Environment and Reuse Foundation (WERF) and Water Research Foundation (WRF) into the “The Water Research Foundation.” This newly formed entity has 1,200 subscribers, 2,300 research studied, and a \$700 million portfolio. They continually issue RFPs (some on water reuse) that we might be able to pursue. (Melissa Meeker and Paul Oruchuk are contact points for us.) As it pertains to Federal government work, he also suggested reexamining GWU’s membership with the CESU Network (i.e., Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units; <http://www.cesu.psu.edu/>).
- 10) Rachael Jonassen agreed that the refocusing on the climate change focal area makes good sense; that “big data” and “blockchain” are additional areas for us to consider; and that our location provides a desirable vantage point for assembling talented people able to explore opportunities in innovation and leadership.

11) Jon Deason offered that at GW we are blessed with professors without tenure, hungry for research engagements, which we need to engage for creative partnerships and collaborations that can put all their wonderful talents to work.

Many other remarks at the meeting have not been captured in the above but they are nonetheless appreciated as they helped set the backdrop for a fruitful exchange.

As always, Jon and I are grateful for your dedication and delighted at your spontaneity and creativity in the suggestions you make for the benefit of the EEMI.

We send to you our greetings, our sincere thanks, and our best wishes for the upcoming holiday time of the year.

Sincerely,



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