



**IALR BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOT)
APPLIED RESEARCH COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 2, 2023 – 9:00 a.m. – IALR Conference Room 203 – In-Person

<p><u>Members Present</u> Dr. Guru Ghosh, <i>Chair</i> Mr. Charles Majors Ms. Leslie Mantiply Mr. Don Merricks, <i>Ex Officio</i></p> <p><u>Members unable to attend</u> Ms. Emma Kozlowski Mr. Kunal Patel</p>	<p><u>IALR Staff Present</u> Dr. Scott Lowman, Vice President of Applied Research Ms. Pam Patterson, BOT Secretary & Executive Assistant</p> <p><u>IALR Staff unable to attend</u> Mr. Telly Tucker, President Ms. Allison Moore, Director, PR & Communications</p> <p><u>Guests</u> None</p>
---	--

Call to Order / Quorum / Changes to Agenda

Dr. Guru Ghosh called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 2, 2023. A quorum was present. There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

- **Motion** – Mr. Charles Majors made a motion to accept the Minutes for the January 31, 2023, meeting. Ms. Leslie Mantiply seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a show of hands and the Minutes were approved as recorded.

Research and Business Development Update

Dr. Scott Lowman presented the Applied Research Report (**Exhibit A**). He commented that the department was working at capacity and reaching a point where they could not take on much more work internally. He added that multiple opportunities are available from outside companies. Dr. Lowman briefed the committee on current research. He highlighted ongoing work with several companies.

Current Activities by the IALR/VT Team

1) Research – VT/IALR Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) and Innovation Center

AeroFarms remains the biggest customer and focus for the department. AeroFarms Research Collaboration includes three projects: Bioinformatics (led by Dr. Sajeewa Amaradasa), Volatile Organic Compound Analysis, and Water Testing (both led by Jack He). All three projects address needs that AeroFarms could not find with their current partners.

The Controlled Environment Agriculture Innovation Center partnered with VT Professor Dr. Yun Yin on the grant titled, “A Flavor and shelf-life focused study of Virginia cherry tomatoes from field and indoor facilities. \$75,000 was awarded by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS).

The VT-IALR CEA Center submitted three Virginia Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Grants focused on indoor vegetable production.

The Applied Research department signed six new Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) with new companies. Over the past three years, 50 NDA’s have been signed for the research department.

2) CEA Economic Development:

- a) Met with *Plenty* regarding workforce training opportunities.
- b) Virginia **Governor Glenn Youngkin** and **Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Matt Lohr**, visited IALR to tour the Virginia Tech (VT) IALR Controlled Environment Agriculture Center (CEA) to celebrate “Controlled Environment Agriculture Month in the Commonwealth”. Following the hour-long visit, the Governor and Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry toured AeroFarms.
- c) **US Senator Mark Warner** visited AeroFarms to discuss the upcoming farm bill and to highlight CEA.
- d) IALR staff met with members from AeroFarms to learn more about workforce needs. Staff also met with Mike Grundmann with the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program (delivered by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to discuss ways IALR could help the program meet its goal for new CEA companies. A visit is planned for May.

AgTech (Agriculture Technology) and Life Sciences Manufacturing Support:

1. Fermentation workshop development is underway with a Virginia Tech (VT) professor. A grant was submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support initial cohorts of students for three years.
2. ISO Certified Analytical Testing Facility – IALR partnered with VT professor Dr. Bastiaan Bargmann on a grant that was awarded in the amount of \$600,000 by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

3. Contract Research – Working with three new companies developing contract research projects. Continuing to do work for *Plant Response, Inc.* and *AgroSpheres, Inc.* Working with ElectroGro systems to identify a new market for their technology.
4. Dr. Lowman and Dr. Chuansheng Mei have been invited to attend the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to discuss how biologicals can be used in agriculture. The meeting is scheduled for May 17th-18th.
5. Meta (formerly the Facebook company) is interested in exploring opportunities with the VT/ IALR Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) and Innovation Center around vertical agriculture.
6. The second CEA Summit East is planned for September 19-20, 2023. The Governor’s office has indicated they would like to participate.

Open Discussion of Concerns, Issues, and Observations

No concerns, issues, or observations were discussed.

Adjournment

Dr. Guru Ghosh asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Charles Majors made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Leslie Mantipty seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a show of hands and the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Minutes Recorded By:

Minutes Approved By:

Ms. Pam Patterson
BOT Secretary

Dr. Guru Ghosh
Chair

Date

Date

Attachments Included as Official Part of Minutes

Exhibit A – Applied Research Report