

The Iowa Master Gardener program advisory committee met in-person on Friday October 28, 2022. The Zoom meeting was called to order at 9:10 am.

Members present include: Chair Chelsea (Martens) Llewellyn, Steven Eilers, Sam Genson, Cindy Haynes, Alicia Herzog, Cindy Hutcheson, Lori Scovel, Linda Schreiber, and Doug Brightman.

Committee Updates:

The committee asked for term re-commitments from Steven Eilers and Cindy Hutcheson. Both agreed to another term. Sherry Ford was not in attendance, but previously submitted confirmation to re-commit to another term. The committee voted to replace Chelsea Llewellyn with Steven Eilers as co-chair effective at the start of the calendar year 2023. Committee agreed to solicit and vote on nominations for secretary replacement electronically. Motion carried.

Nominations for two vacant campus positions were discussed. Alicia Herzog will be responsible for soliciting verbal agreements from willing candidates and presenting candidate names to the committee for an electronic vote. Candidates will include: Kaycie Waters (NREM), Aaron Steil (Horticulture), Dan Fillius (Horticulture), Dennis Todey or another Climate Science candidate, and a PIDC candidate.

Alicia will solicit recommendations for a SW area staff vacancy from SW area regional directors and provide nominations to the committee for an electronic vote.

Motion to approve the minutes from our April meeting. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

Committee discussed committee guidelines document's age and need for updating. Verbiage needs to be added about one virtual meeting per year, quorum, rules of order, and voting standards. Alicia will update the committee guidelines and distribute to the committee to be discussed at the spring 2023 meeting. The committee voted to add that spring meetings will be virtual and fall meetings will be in-person. Motion approved. Motion carried.

Alicia reported on the newly created 100-hour volunteer recognition level award. The committee discussed staff suggestions for an Emeritus status level and decided not to add this level as it is unnecessary. The committee also discussed at which point MGs who have been active since before VRS should be granted lifetime status without records to document hours, keeping MG of the Year as county administered award, and other ideas to share with coordinators about possible ways to recognize volunteers. The committee will decide at the spring 2023 meeting if Lifetime Master Gardener status should remain as 10 years and 1500 hours or change to 7 years and 1500 hours.

Alicia presented AEA accreditation as an option for the Master Gardener training program. The committee discussed the merits of this option including diversifying the volunteer pool, forming a stronger connection with school gardens, and broadening program exposure. A question remains about any cost to become accredited. Alicia will research cost, develop details of a proposal, and report back to the group at the next meeting. Motion to move forward with accreditation pending research. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

Alicia reported on the following options for future programming: Junior MG, collegiate MG, Master Composter, and skill development webinar series. The committee decided a statewide implementation of Junior MG may infringe on work of 4-H and be repetitive. The committee decided a catalog of resources should be created by Alicia to share with counties desiring youth garden programming. The committee decided no special designation was needed for collegiate students wanting to become MGs and they should follow the standard statewide requirements. The committee discussed bringing Master Composter content exclusively to Master Gardeners through Canvas and creating guidance for option county in-person activities. Alicia will wait to develop Master Composter curriculum until contact can be made with Kapil Arora.

Steven introduced a discussion about marketing Master Gardener to people with Veteran status. Discussion centered around funding and marketing/outreach. Alicia will create statewide resources county coordinators can use to market to this demographic.

Alicia presented a demonstration of the MG Coordinator Training and MG Training curriculums on Canvas.

The committee discussed what, if any, guidelines should be given to counties about standards for MG in-person training sessions. The committee approved of only one standard, that in-person sessions be no less than one hour in length. Alicia will communicate this guidance to county coordinators.

The committee discussed the current policy for MG transfers from other states. Alicia provided feedback from other states that required training based on geographic relevancy of transfers. The committee decided to change the policy to indicate MGs transferring from Midwest neighboring states are approved without restriction. MGs from non-neighboring states will be required to complete IA MG training upon transfer. Alicia will develop verbiage for policy update and distribute to committee for an electronic vote. Motion to move forward with changes. Motion approved. Motion carried.

Cindy Hutcheson introduced a discussion around MGs being able to volunteer out of state and count it in the VRS. After lengthy discussion about nuances of reporting impact to county and state stakeholders, the committee decided to inquire about new reporting options in the VRS. Alicia will work with developer to assess adding a designation for out-of-state hours, how to diversify those from county hours, and adding an ambassador project designation. The committee agreed on new guidance allowing for no more than 25% of a new MG's internship to be completed out-of-state. In concurrent years, a MG may only count hours out-of-state once their 20 hours in IA have been accounted for. Alicia will develop verbiage for the Master Gardener coordinator handbook, volunteer handbook, and What Counts? document about ambassadorship hours and present it to the committee for approval. Motion to approve requirement update. Motion approved. Motion carried.

Our next meeting will be April 5, virtually with a 9 am start time.

With no further business, the committee adjourned at 3 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Herzog