



On behalf of the School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and the Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD), I welcome each of you to the virtual 2020 Fall Meeting of the Experiment Station Section as we focus on “Inclusive Excellence.” In an article entitled, “Achieving Inclusive Excellence: Strategies for Creating Real and Sustainable Change in Quality and Diversity,” Damon Williams defines ‘inclusive excellence’ as “the idea that excellence should be measured by how well campus systems, structures, and processes meet the need of all institutional citizens, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, other characteristics . . . In essence, true excellence embodies solutions to deep-seated problems.”

This theme of inclusive excellence is explicit in all three sessions of this meeting and is celebrated in the Diversity & Inclusion Award Program. We will engage in inclusive deliberations about (1) actionable steps that may be undertaken within the next year to affect inclusive excellence; (2) effective leadership and inclusive excellence in these challenging and unprecedented times caused by COVID-19; and (3) the need of the scientific community to engage in inclusive deliberations about the impact of a disruptive technology and the unknown future. The topics/issues of these sessions have to begin (and end) with deliberately engaging, thoughtful, and inclusive discussions.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), the state’s historically black 1890 land-grant institution is a Carnegie R2 institution whose purpose and uniqueness are grounded in distinctive learning, discovery and engagement opportunities. UMES has a historic tradition of inclusiveness and its constituent membership in the University System of Maryland combine to make the institution a strong engine of growth and development in its community, providing over 3,000 students with opportunities to learn from a well-balanced array of academic programs that respond to local needs as well as more global concerns. These include agriculture, arts and sciences, business, education, engineering, technology, natural resources and environmental sciences, and health professions.

The School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences (SANS) is home to three academic departments: Agriculture, Food and Resource Sciences; Human Ecology; and Natural Sciences, as well as the UMES Agricultural Experiment Station and the UMES Extension Program. We offer seven B.S. majors with many concentrations, one M.S. and three M.S./Ph.D. programs.

Our research and extension programs are driven by clientele needs and the overriding goal of providing effective solutions to challenges faced by the citizens of Maryland, the nation and the world. We enjoy a strong collaborative partnership with our sister land grant partner, the University of Maryland College Park.

The ARD is the official representative body of the agricultural research administrators of the nineteen 1890 land-grant universities. ARD is considered one of the five regions of the national land grant university system's Experiment Station Section (ESS) of the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). The mission of ARD is to "provide visionary and enlightened leadership to member institutions as they continually address issues impacting their ability to provide innovative solutions to the food and agricultural research challenges facing the state, nation and the world-at-large."

Special thanks to the 2020 ESS Planning Committee for their consummate leadership in planning and making this meeting and workshop a virtual reality.

Thank you for joining us virtually. This would have been an in-person gathering were it not for the pandemic, but ESS is committed to having a very meaningful fall meeting with a succinct, well-defined set of outcomes. Together we will prevail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Kairo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Moses Thairu Kairo

Dean and Research Director, School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
Chair, Experiment Station Committee on Policy