



**2021 ESCOP Meeting Minutes**  
**February 25, 2021; 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. ET**  
**Moses T. Kairo – Chair,**  
**Alton Thompson – Executive Vice-Chair**

***In attendance:*** Moses Kairo, Ami Smith, Bernie Engel, Bob Godfrey, Bret Hess, Calvin Keeler, Calvin Walker, Caroline (Crocoll) Henney, Caron Gala, Carrie Castille, Chris Davies, Christina Hamilton, Conrad Bonsi, David White, David Ragsdale, Deb Hamernik, Doug Steele, Doze Butler, Majed El-Dweik, Subramania I.Sritharan, Faith Peppers, Fulya Baysal-Gurel, Gary Jackson, Gary Thompson, George Smith, Glenda Humiston, Greg Cuomo, Hector Santiago, Hunt Shipman, Jason White, Jeff Jacobsen, Jody Jellison, Katie Frazier, Keith Owens, Kevin Kephart, Lesley Oliver, Leslie Parise, Maggie Earle, Marikis Alvarez, Mark Hutton, Mark McGuire, Martin Draper, Matthew Wilson, Mike Salassi, Nick Gawel, Orlando McMeans, Parag Chitnis, Chris Pritsos, Ralph Noble, Rick Rhodes, Rob Gilbert, Saied Mostaghimi, Saige Zespy, Shirley Hymon-Parker, Steve Loerch, Steven Lommel, Susan Duncan, Susan Stluka, Timothy Conner, Vernon Jones, Vernie Hubert, Wondi Mersie, Doug Buhler, J.F. Meullenet, David Leibovitz, Alton Thompson, Mohamed Ahmedna.

Agenda Item	Topics and Notes
1.0	<p><b>Call to Order – Moses T. Kairo, ESS Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 Approval of Agenda<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>The agenda was approved by unanimous acclamation.</b></li></ul></li><li>1.2 Approval of Minutes (ESCOP Executive Committee Meeting, Oct. 27, 2020)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>The ESCOP Executive Committee meeting minutes were approved by unanimous acclamation.</b></li></ul></li><li>1.3 ESCOP Interim Actions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Martin Draper was appointed to the National IPM Coordinating Committee.</li><li>Martin Draper was appointed to the Strategic Realignment Implementation Committee</li><li>Bret Hess was appointed ESCOP Liaison to ACOP.</li><li>JF Meullenet was appointed as CMC Incoming Chair.</li><li>Hongwei Xin was appointed to NCFAR Board of Directors.</li><li>Gary Thompson was appointed as ESS representative on research working group for Food, Agriculture, and Climate alliance.</li><li>Launched Agriculture Research Infrastructure Initiative (ARIA).</li><li>Aligned STC priorities with the USDA Ag Innovation Agenda.</li><li><b>The interim actions were approved by unanimous consent.</b></li></ul></li></ul>
2.0	<p><b>Dialogue with NIFA Director – Dr. Carrie Castille</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>USDA Secretary Thomas Vilsack has been sworn in.</li><li>SAES Directors are encouraged to communicate with NIFA and Dr. Castille directly to find their fit within USDA-NIFA's priority areas and hold NIFA accountable.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate research / mitigating climate change has been identified as a “North Star” priority for USDA. Additional funding is warranted for both capacity and competitive programs related to climate research.</li> <li>Food, agriculture, and forestry are at the center of NIFA’s Climate-smart policies.</li> <li>A particular emphasis is placed on addressing the effects of climate change on producers, consumers, and small businesses.</li> <li>NIFA is committed to finding new revenue opportunities for landowners.</li> <li>A new NIFA reporting system (being developed) will integrate Research and Extension.</li> <li>Specific NIFA priorities related to climate are being developed and will be socialized to the APLU community.</li> <li>Specific methods of investment for both capacity and competitive funding models are being determined at NIFA.</li> </ul>
3.0	<p><b>Ag Research Infrastructure Advocacy (ARIA) – Moses Kairo, Alton Thompson, and Jeff Jacobsen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARIA is a top priority for the Experiment Station Section, and we are now engaged with Rebuild Rural Coalition.</li> <li>We are tasked with conducting cutting-edge research in old facilities, and now is the time to pursue an investment in infrastructure.</li> <li>An agenda brief is enclosed with detailed information on the ARIA effort to date. A list of societies and groups engaged by ESS is included in the agenda brief.</li> <li>SAES Directors are encouraged to provide feedback on ARIA at the link enclosed in the agenda brief.</li> <li>A communications toolbox will be sent to Directors next week, this should be used hand in hand with the advocacy toolbox provided in January.</li> <li>Glenda and Caron have been on the phone with one of the ARIA external groups, and interest is high. External groups need to know “what’s in it for them.” There is further marketing to be done, but there is enthusiasm around the effort.</li> <li>Directors are encouraged to engage with state-level agricultural and infrastructure working groups.</li> <li>The first Rebuild Rural Full Coalition Meeting of 2021 is on March 4th at 11:00 am (Eastern). It will include a summary of the Gordian report deferred maintenance costs at ag research facilities at colleges of agriculture. The roll out will showcase the importance of investing in this critical piece of rural infrastructure to ensure the future of U.S. agriculture’s competitiveness through research. Register for the March 4 meeting: <a href="https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_55H8fCVLTQqdcHlm3Sz1WAroups">https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_55H8fCVLTQqdcHlm3Sz1WAroups</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Congressional Engagement – Caron Gala and Doug Steele</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doug Steele joined a NASDA panel on 2/24 and encourages AES Directors to engage with state departments of ag.</li> <li>Barb Glenn (NASDA Director) has infrastructure investment as a high priority for the NASDA portfolio.</li> <li>The ARIA effort has been pitched to White House representatives as a component of addressing climate change mitigation.</li> <li>Directors should reach out to Caron, Alton, or Cornerstone with champions identified to engage with congress.</li> <li>It is helpful for anybody who would benefit from the ARIA effort to participate – beyond AES Directors.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If anybody who clearly understands the ARIA details is ready to participate in marketing to external groups, please contact Caron directly.</b></li> </ul>
4.0	<p><b>Advocacy Report – Hunt Shipman</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fifth COVID-19 assistance package is working its way through congress. Congress is using a budget reconciliation process to pass this legislation.</li> <li>• The House version of this package includes provisions related to minority farmers, loan forgiveness, and direct assistance to producers.</li> <li>• Cornerstone’s focus in the near-term with congressional offices is talking about the appropriations request, but they also keeping an eye to the infrastructure request. Enthusiasm and support are critical for the ARIA effort to succeed.</li> </ul>
5.0	<p><b>Strategic Realignment Implementation Committee (SRIC) – Marty Draper and Gary Thompson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Strategic Realignment slide deck is enclosed with these minutes.</li> <li>• <b>Directors are encouraged to send questions or concerns on Strategic Realignment to Marty Draper (<a href="mailto:maddr@ksu.edu">maddr@ksu.edu</a>) or Gary Thompson (<a href="mailto:gat009@uark.edu">gat009@uark.edu</a>).</b></li> </ul>
6.0	<p><b>APLU Report - Doug Steele</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Board of Directors is rebidding the advocacy contract from 2022-24 (Cornerstone contract is now in a termination year).</li> <li>• APLU BAA has joined the Food, Agriculture, and Climate alliance, and that group is supportive of the ARIA effort.</li> <li>• NIFA + APLU-BAA joint committee is on hold for now as USDA works through leadership transition. NIFA is in close communication with the BAA and Dr. Castille values our relationship.</li> <li>• <b>Joint CoPS will not be meeting in-person. A virtual meeting will be held July 19-23, 2021.</b></li> </ul>
7.0	<p><b>ESCAP Committee Reports and Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Budget &amp; Legislative Committee – Glenda Humiston / Jeff Jacobsen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BLC meets monthly and attendance has been strong. Call notes are posted regularly on the ESCAP BLC website.</li> <li>○ The Gordian report has been rolled out nationally as part of the Rebuild Rural Coalition.</li> <li>○ Addressing climate change is a priority for the BLC. The committee is considering what a “moon shot” ask would look like with regard to climate research funding.</li> <li>○ The current unified ask is an 8% increase for capacity and competitive lines, as well as additional emphasis for 1994 funding lines.</li> <li>○ The TD Wealth account for the ESS Cash reserve has grown since its inception.</li> <li>○ ESS Budget and Finance Update: an ESS Financials slide deck is enclosed with these minutes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Communications &amp; Marketing Committee – J.F. Meullenet/Rick Rhodes/Doug Steele</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CMC materials are enclosed with these minutes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Karla Trautman (ECOP/SDSU) is now the CMC Chair following Mark Rieger's departure. J.F. Meullenet (ESCOP/Arkansas) is serving as incoming chair.
- CMC Executive team meets bi-weekly with Forbes-Tate Partners to work on the communications roadmap, toolkit, calendar of events, and new APLU Executive Director position description.
- Forbes-Tate is seeking system-wide input to generate content for the roadmap plan.
- CMC has requested consideration to be repositioned as a standing committee of the BAA. The Policy Board of Directors is moving forward with this request, which will be voted upon during Spring 2021.

- **Science & Technology Committee – Jody Jellison/Bret Hess**

- STC materials are enclosed with these minutes.
- A letter was submitted through ESCOP providing feedback to NIFA on the Ag Innovation Agenda.
- STC has provided content and support for the ARIA toolbox
- A document illustrating the importance of off-campus facilities and branch stations was drafted by the STC. The goal: a national map and inventory to illustrate the impact of AES facilities beyond our campuses.
- **ESCOP was asked to approve the seconded motion by the CAC, to provide STC documents to APLU and request the inclusion of the branch station materials in the ARIA effort. The motion passed by unanimous consent.**

- **Diversity Catalyst Committee – Rick Rhodes, on behalf of Henry Fadamiro**

- DCC materials are enclosed with these minutes.
- **ESCOP is asked to approve the seconded motion from the DCC to present up to two \$1,000 + travel cost awards (one individual, one team) for the National ESS Diversity and Inclusion Award, should there be two compelling nominations. The motion passed by unanimous consent.**

- **National Impact Database Committee – Rick Rhodes, on behalf of Steve Loring**

- NIDB materials are enclosed with these minutes.
- In 2020, 383 impact statements were submitted to the NIDB. 182 of those impact statements addressed COVID-19.
- NIDB anticipates the implementation of the strategic communications roadmap and toolkit.

- **NRSP Review Committee – Doug Buhler / Jeff Jacobsen**

- New approved NRSP Guidelines are posted on the ESCOP website, the new two-track NRSP submission system is in place.
- NRSP8 is renewing this year, and NRSP1 will renew next year.
- The NRSP RC will meet virtually in the spring.

- **NRSP1 Management Committee – Keith Owens/Jeff Jacobsen**

- NRSP1 Management Committee materials are enclosed with these minutes.
- NRSP1 management committee has met quarterly since COVID-19. The mid-term review was favorable and a renewal proposal will be drafted beginning in fall 2021.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paula Agudelo from Clemson University will serve as the new NRSP1 Chair upon Keith Owens's retirement.</li> <li>○ Faith Peppers was thanked for staying on this committee.</li> <li>● <b>REReport Research Working Group – Bret Hess</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A NIFA RWG agenda brief is enclosed with these minutes.</li> <li>○ The RWG continues to meet biweekly to discuss the buildout of individual modules.</li> <li>○ Katherine Webb Martinez from University of California has joined the RWG.</li> <li>○ Rollout of the integrated NIFA reporting system has been paused in response to feedback from across the system.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
8.0	<p><b>CARET – Katie Frazier</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARET Executive Committee met in October 2020 and are currently working through finalization of a new strategic plan.</li> <li>• Virtual CARET-AHS meeting begins on 2/26/21, nine new CARET delegates will be introduced this Sunday.</li> <li>• “Effective Advocacy Strategies for CARET and AHS” webinar was held in January – a powerful, productive activity for both groups.</li> </ul>
9.0	<p><b>ECOP Report – Caroline (Croll) Henney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caroline (Croll) Henney shared a slide and brief for the ECOP report, both are enclosed with these minutes.</li> <li>• ECOP is working on an “Extension Priorities 101” toolkit for the section to have consistent messaging in hand across the system, relevant to all states.</li> <li>• A group of teams are working on concept notes around ECOP priority areas to include in the toolkit.</li> </ul>
11.0	<p><b>ESS Fall Workshop, Squaw Valley, California, September 27 - October 1, 2021 Meeting – Chris Pritsos (UNR) and Bret Hess (WAAESD), Hosts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2021 ESS Meeting is still moving forward to be held in person. (view a video about the meeting: <a href="http://escop.info/event/ess-2021/">http://escop.info/event/ess-2021/</a>)</li> <li>• UNR will keep everybody up to date on the status of the ESS meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Directors were invited to respond to a brief survey to gauge interest in attending the 2021 ESS Meeting: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ESS-2021">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ESS-2021</a>.</b></li> </ul>
12.0	<p><b>Final Remarks and Adjourn – Moses T. Kairo</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCFAR has been circulating a letter to new USDA Secretary Vilsack in support of NIFA capacity and competitive programs. Many regional associations have signed on to the letter. The deadline for co-signing the letter in tomorrow, 2/26/21.</li> <li>• <b>Chair Moses Kairo introduced a motion to ESCOP for their approval to sign on to the letter to Secretary Vilsack. The motion was approved by unanimous consent, and ESCOP will sign on to the letter.</b></li> <li>• The meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM ET.</li> </ul>