

ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC): <http://escop.info/committee/blc/>

Call NOTES for Tuesday, April 26, 2022, 4 pm ET (4th Tuesday monthly)

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Glenda Humiston (WAAESD) Past Chair: Ernie Minton (NCRA) Incoming Chair (FY23): Anton Bekkerman</p> <p>Delegates: Alton Thompson (ARD) Vernon Jones (ARD) Gary Pierzynski (NCRA) Marty Draper (NCRA) Puneet Srivastava (NERA) Anton Bekkerman (NERA) Steve Lommel (SAAESD) Saied Mostaghimi (SAAESD) Sreekala Bajwa (WAAESD) Shawn Donkin (WAAESD)</p> <p>Executive Vice-Chair Jeff Jacobsen (NCRA ED) Chris Hamilton (NCRA AD; Recorder)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Jon Boren (ECOP) Katie Frazier (CARET) Doug Steele (APLU) Caron Gala (APLU) Elizabeth Stulberg (Lewis-Burke, Advocacy) Bill Hoffman (NIFA) Paula Geiger (NIFA) Laura Jolly (BHS)</p>
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Attendees: Jennifer Tippetts, Gary Thompson, Saied Mostaghimi, Glenda Humiston, Alton Thompson, Vernon Jones, Shawn Donkin, Mark McGuire, Bret Hess, Sreekala Bajwa, Puneet Srivastava, Anton Bekkerman, Christina Laridaen, Caron Gala, Jon Boren, Elizabeth Stulberg, Paula Geiger, Laura Jolly, Rick Rhodes, Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton (recorder)

Meeting Agenda:

1. Welcome and roll call – Glenda, Chris
2. Approval of the 2/22 call notes (see: <http://escop.info/event/blc-call-23/>)
 - Approved as distributed.
3. Approval of Today's Agenda – Glenda
 - Approved as distributed.
4. [BAC-BAA Letter from ESCOP Chair Pritsos](#) – Glenda, All
 - Glenda expressed concern and disagreement with the letter, which indicated that the ESS Chair believes the ask wasn't handled appropriately, with the \$300M for Hatch for FFY23 being much less than we wanted, despite what was discussed during numerous BLC calls.
 - Glenda indicated her support of the 14% increase ask off the actual numbers (FFY21) for the next 10 years (rounded up equal the \$300M) and the final \$365M for research

infrastructure that was presented. As such, she believed she represented the ESCOP BLC' desire accurately when presenting the numbers to the BAA BAC. Given the letter though, she is now concerned that she isn't representing ESCOP BLC' interests effectively as BLC chair and suggested perhaps she should step down as BLC chair. Numerous BLC members indicated that her approach fully reflected the ESCOP BLC discussions.

- **The group on the call indicated that they are indeed supportive of Glenda's leadership as ESCOP BLC chair and on the BAA BAC. They definitely DO NOT want Glenda to step down.**
 - Discussion ensued on this topic to include these points:
 - BLC agreed that it's a constant battle to figure out to come up with the right ask in time for CARET/AHS March meeting and still be nimble, but appropriations/advocacy efforts have been improving.
 - Extension ask was much higher, but they also may have had good justification and support for this. We are not in competition with Extension, and they support many of the same initiatives that we do. Extension has supported the infrastructure ask.
 - The process this year was novel and somewhat confusing, so we need to communicate next year as clearly as possible to avoid issues like these. Things happened very quickly this year and were handled as best they could be.
 - We need to figure out a way to better to do a true Unified Ask, when Section numbers are different in percentages.
 - Members reiterated their displeasure at the continued grouping of AFRI, Hatch and infrastructure solely into a 'research' category with advocacy materials and asks.
 - The Farm Bill is a good place to be aspirational on larger budget requests and in particular, with infrastructure.
 - What can we do now and moving forward to improve how we communicate and understand what's going on across ESCOP? Be clear on the ESCOP BLC discussions and read the notes posted on the ESCOP site. Be willing to step up, ask questions and disagree, when necessary, to help stimulate better conversations and richer understanding. Get the process written down to help new members understand how the budget process works and what ESCOP BLC's role is.
5. BAC Update – Gary
- FY2023 NIFA Priorities/Amounts reviewed after the PBR came out. AFRI was higher at \$564M, but it was felt that it was played against the BAA BAC's \$365M, which is why we want to keep it at \$500M. 1994 Extension was higher for PBR, but they are fine with keeping it at \$17.5M to avoid confusion and to be consistent. Caron also shared this summary document in the chat:
<https://www.aplu.org/members/councils/governmental-affairs/CGA-library/fy2023-appropriations-priorities-chart/file>
 - Congressional visits and communications with staffers: We heard that they appreciated that we didn't use a flat percent increase in favor of our variable ones with justifications for each. Positive conversations with Senate majority and minority staffers occurred around infrastructure, but the lack of new money was reiterated. It is clear we have bipartisan support, though.

- Infrastructure: Staffers appreciated that we weren't asking for the original full at least \$11.5B, but they also questioned supporting university/state facilities with federal money. We need to continue to improve messaging around this ask.
 - Budget hearings to start up again very soon, so get your appropriations requests out. Mark-ups to start in June. Farm Bill discussions beginning. Expect another CR through the November election.
 - It will be very difficult to grow Hatch, AFRI, and infrastructure all in one year, so we'll need to take a multi-year approach. ESS needs and wants to play a leadership role in these processes and in particular, infrastructure.
 - Dear Colleague letters on infrastructure have gone out through Congress with many signing on, which shows good support. Caron thanked the group for reaching out to their representatives and encouraging them to sign on.
6. APLU Update – Caron, Elizabeth
- Elizabeth discussed the 302B allocation issues:
 - Ag appropriations committee only has a fixed amount of money to allocate across all mandatory and discretionary programs. Authorizations can be increased, but are only a recommendation, not actual appropriations. Committee and subcommittee allocation amounts are provided from a very selected cadre of leadership which in turn is not typically readily influenced. Given leadership and committee membership changes, there may be future opportunities to engage strategically with key members. The annual budget ask and advocacy will remain the primary focus of our collective efforts. Politics affects this greatly.
 - We need NGOs, non-profits, and other stakeholders to support our need for higher funding allocations, so partnerships with them are critical. Communications with staffers are also critical so we know where to spend our efforts to be most effective. Lewis-Burke can play a key role here for us.
 - Mark Becker will be the new APLU president. Agriculture is the first item on his letter of interests, which is very positive for us. APLU will be working with him to get him up to speed. See more details here: <https://www.aplu.org/news-and-media/News/aplu-names-mark-becker-as-its-next-president>
 - Communications and Marketing Committee vote passed, so it will become a standing committee on BAC.
7. CLP Update – Glenda, Alton, Jeff, Caron
- Tomorrow afternoon's meeting has a very tight agenda for discussions. Final votes will occur at Joint COPs, though.
8. Liaison Reports
- a. NIFA update – Bill, Paula
 - Acting NIFA Director Dr. Toombs is on board now.
 - Acting Assoc Director Dr. Jacobs-Young is still on board.
 - Parag Chitnis will be leaving soon, and Brent Elrod will serve as the Acting Director of Programs.
 - NAS call for comments on Blue Ribbon panel is open, see <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANIFA/bulletins/31457ed>, Please scroll down to section on "Call for Comments: Preliminary Observations on Collaboration in the Land-grant System"
 - b. ECOP report – Jon

- o Next ECOP BLC meeting will be May 10 and expect to continue advocacy effort and authorization discussions then.
 - c. BHS report – Laura
 - o Kelly Dalton is the new BHS Executive Director. Will start monthly board meetings then.
 - o Strategic planning for Joint COPs
 - o Leadership program fellows have been paired with their mentors.
- 9. Climate As a Moonshot Idea: Status of *Infrastructure for Climate Smart Ag* Messaging – Glenda
 - Climate smart agriculture seems to have become a big part of many USDA efforts now.
 - Future conversations will likely focus on processes associated with supporting the Unified Ask and the allied advocacy efforts. We will include that in next month's agenda for discussion.
- 10. Other business, as needed.
 - None presented.

Call adjourned at approximately 5 pm ET.



EXPERIMENT STATION COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION AND POLICY

Experiment Station Section
The Board on Agriculture Assembly
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Paul Patterson, Chair, Budget and Advocacy Committee
Tom Coon, Chair, Policy Board of Directors

March 17, 2022

Dear Drs. Patterson and Coon,

I am writing this letter as Chair of the Experiment Station Section of APLU. The Experiment Station Section (ESS) has had serious concerns over the effectiveness of various Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) committees representing the interests of ESS. Concerns vary in magnitude but are most pronounced over the budgetary recommendations put forth by the Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC) and approved by the Policy Board of Directors (PBD). For many years, while ESS has advocated for increases in research capacity funding, BAC and PBD have consistently supported significant increases to AFRI. Many of us believe that ESS lacks support because of the unwillingness to make research capacity funding a priority. This, in turn, has contributed to stagnant research capacity funding and jeopardizes the ESS' abilities to compete on a global level. Research capacity funding supports the infrastructure necessary for ESS to conduct over 73% of publicly funded agricultural research that generates the cutting-edge research to maintain the U.S. preeminent position in agricultural research and productivity.

I tried to relay some of the concerns and frustrations that the ESS was experiencing at the October fly-in meeting in Kansas City. I was hopeful that the new procedures being implemented for developing the FY23 ask would move us in a positive direction. ESS worked with our BAC representative to develop a budget request for our funding that we felt was reasonable, met our needs, and was justifiable. These were the basic criteria laid out in Kansas City regarding the process for developing a budget request. Subsequently, the request that was approved by the Experiment Station Section Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) Executive Committee at their November 12, 2021 meeting was \$329.38M for FY22 and \$399.38M for FY23. You can imagine my great disappointment and that of my colleagues when we learned at our February 17, 2022 ESCOP Chair's Advisory Committee (CAC) that BAC was recommending to the PBD \$300M for Hatch. While every other request was increased, the Hatch funding request was reduced by nearly 10% from the FY22 Unified Ask. This is something that is very difficult for ESS to understand.

Even more perplexing is the disregard to advocate for agricultural research infrastructure. Let's not forget that ESS funded the Gordion study and PBD supported the ESCOP proposal to seek \$11.5B for agricultural infrastructure. Once again, many ESS members were caught completely off guard when we learned that PBD approved a BAC's \$365M advocacy request for agricultural research infrastructure. The \$365M number has never been discussed among ESS.

I would like to emphasize that ESS leadership does not support the FY23 advocacy requests for Hatch nor agricultural infrastructure. Thus, the FY23 advocacy efforts are not a "Unified Ask." This also puts into question the value of ESS continuing to support an organization, as currently structured, that does not appear to value ESS' contribution to the BAA. ESS will, over the course of the next few months, engage in discussions with its membership as to the best way to proceed. I am open to discussions with you (and Doug Steele, who is copied on this letter) about ways to improve the functional relationships between ESS with BAC and PBD.

Sincere Regards,



Chris A. Pritsos
2022 ESS/ESCOP Chair

Cc: Doug Steele, APLU Vice President, Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources
Glenda Humiston, BAC representative for ESS
Mark McGuire, PBD representative for ESS
Matt Wilson, ESS Chair-elect
Michael Boehm, BAC Chair-elect
Ernie Minton, PBD Chair-elect