



## agInnovation Executive Committee Meeting Minutes July 19, 2023, 8:00 am – 11:45 am CT Loews Kansas City Hotel, Kansas City, MO

In attendance: **Matt Wilson (West Virginia-agInnovation Chair), George Smith (Michigan State-Incoming Chair), Chris Pritsos (Nevada, Reno-Past Chair), Rick Rhodes (NERA-Executive Vice-Chair), David Leibovitz (NERA Coordinator and Recorder)**, Lingying Zhao, Mary Burrows, Gary Thompson, Steve Lommel, Jose Toledo, Sreekala Bajawa, Jenette Thurston, Mark McGuire, Alton Thompson, Drenda Williams, Vernon Jones, Gregory Goins, Shibu Jose, Glenda Humiston, Bret Hess, Erica Mirich, Martin Draper, Kevin Kephart, Faith Peppers, Rochelle Sapp, Elizabeth Stulberg

### Introductions and meeting administration – Matt Wilson, agInnovation Chair

- Matt called the meeting to order, and the group went through a series of introductions.
- **The agenda for this meeting was approved by acclamation.**
- **The minutes of the December 07, 2022, ESCOP Meeting were approved by acclamation.**

### A Recommendation to Establish the agInnovation 501(c)3 Non-profit Organization – Chris Pritsos, ad hoc committee chair.

- Chris Pritsos prepared a [document](#) outlining the background and recommendations for the establishment of an agInnovation nonprofit organization.
- Meeting costs are increasing. Currently, agInnovation is unable to accept funding from other organizations to support national meetings.
- The purpose of establishing an agInnovation 501(c)(3) would be to support the efforts of agInnovation and the research Directors' regional associations. This 501(c)(3) would not interfere or compete with institutional fundraising efforts.
- The ad hoc Non-profit committee explored the services made available by APLU to agInnovation. Establishment of a 501(c)(3) would not duplicate capacities currently provided by APLU, regional meeting host institutions, or other institutional members of agInnovation.
  - APLU can enter meeting contracts on behalf of agInnovation.
  - APLU cannot solicit or accept donations on behalf of agInnovation.
  - APLU cannot enter contracts on behalf of regional associations.
- Chris Pritsos presented the following recommendations to the group:
  - Establishment of an agInnovation 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to be reviewed and evaluated after a period of 3 years of operation.
  - The newly formed Finance Committee oversee the establishment of agInnovation's 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, with support provided by the regional association offices.



- Use of the agInnovation 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to support and enhance current business practices at the national level (e.g., offset cost of professional development opportunities and accepting charitable donations) and to support regional association efforts (e.g., meeting contracts, payments, and accepting charitable donations).
- Approval by agInnovation of a funding amount to seed the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with carryover funds currently in the agInnovation operating account held by the APLU. Regional associations would not be expected to pay an assessment to support the agInnovation 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- **Chris Pritsos formally introduced a motion to proceed with the establishment of an agInnovation 501(c)(3) non-profit with up to \$5,000 to retain an attorney to help develop and submit articles of incorporation, create bylaws, apply for federal tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), and request an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The motion as presented was approved by the agInnovation Executive Committee by acclamation.**
- A discussion on budget activities associated with the 501(c)(3) will be held at the agInnovation business meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan this September.

Work session: agInnovation rollout – Erica Mirich, PIVOT Creative and Consultants and Matt Wilson

- The slide deck with detailed information supporting this session is [posted on the ESCOP website](#).
- agInnovation is the new brand identity for the organization formerly known as the Experiment Station Section. The goal of rebranding was twofold:
  - To position Experiment Stations as the global leader in agricultural research, innovation and discovery.
  - To create a modern and engaging website that encourages the general public to learn about our impact and work.
- This brand identity is the product of a creative exercise involving Directors from throughout the system, the regional office teams, and Erica Mirich of PIVOT Creative and Consulting.
- The [aginnovation.info](http://aginnovation.info) website is now live, and a plan is being developed to roll out the new brand identity to our key stakeholder audiences, starting internally and moving to increasingly external audiences. The timeline for roll-out is July through December 2023:
  - Regional Directors
  - LGU Ag Colleges and Communicators
  - Cooperative Extension partners
  - APLU Leadership and Communicators
  - University Leadership
  - Industry Leaders
  - National Media



- **Suggestions for changes to the website were offered throughout the meeting. Immediate follow-up actions include re-examining the preamble of the home page to remove dates and language that may be harmful and offensive.**

#### Chair's Priorities and Initiatives – George Smith (Incoming Chair) and Matt Wilson (Chair)

- The 2023 agInnovation meeting will be held in Grand Rapids, MI from September 24-26.
- Incoming Chair George Smith presented a [draft of Chair's priorities and initiatives](#) for the upcoming year and opened up a discussion with the agInnovation Directors.
- In 2024, George intends to explore additional agInnovation advocacy efforts beyond APLU, and additional partnerships with USDA groups beyond NIFA.
- The Research Facilities Act remains a priority for the Directors.
- Regular engagement with Directors throughout the year will continue in 2024.
- Climate issues are important discussion items for all. It has been difficult for this community to rapidly take action to address pressing issues. George has challenged the agInnovation Directors: Can we mobilize faster to be more responsive? A multistate rapid response activity or project could be the right mechanism to do so.
- agInnovation will continue to improve its longstanding relationship with NIFA and DOE. Access to National Labs may be opened to NIFA sometime in the future.
- George has considered a "Research funding moonshot" outlining goals and deliverables that will resonate and help to convene people around issue areas.
- Market shock – prices of inputs have dramatically increased. How can we reduce the amount of inputs required throughout the supply chain? More efficiency in use of inputs could benefit food prices and address climate change issues.
- We would need to be careful in crafting a "moonshot" as there is no one size fits all message that applies to all institutions. There may be too many different directions to accommodate. Another strategy could be to consider multiple, targeted "mini moonshots".
- Alternatively, all of our proposed initiatives might fall under the umbrella of "One Health" (Human, economic, environmental).

#### A Visit from the NIFA Director – Manjit Misra, Director, USDA NIFA

- Dr. Manjit Misra became the NIFA Director on May 8, 2023. Manjit will serve a 6-year term.
- The strategic agenda for the next 6-years will be refined and include priorities on Precision Food for Health, Agriculture as an engine for economic growth, and Communication.
- The vision for NIFA is to feed and nourish people through collaboration, cultivation, and communication.
- Dr. Misra is a strong advocate for communication in the form of "stories that touch the heart." We are encouraged to communicate the beauty of agriculture, not just the value.
- The agInnovation Directors presented a hat in appreciation to Dr. Misra for joining the meeting.



### LEAD21 Update – Rochelle Sapp

- 96 institutions have participated in LEAD21 and there are ~1,400 alumni to date.
- LEAD21 has 14 members on its board, including 2 from agInnovation/ESCOP (Alton Thompson-ARD and Kumar Venkitanarayanan-UConn)
- The LEAD21 facilitation team has been together for 5 years; many have been with the team for 13-15 years. Some turnover and change will be coming over the next few years. The LEAD21 board is also discussing its succession plan.
- Registration fee will increase moving forward. Anticipated ~\$12k registration for Class 20.
- LEAD21 Class 19 is underway and being held in person. There are 88 participants; 60% female and 40% male. (The inaugural LEAD21 class was 25% female 75% male.)
- The LEAD21 Alumni association is working toward establishing its nonprofit status.
- **The Class 20 LEAD21 application deadline is November 15, 2023. A call for applications will go out through APLU and the LEAD21 alumni listserv.**

### Work session: Strategic advocacy – George Smith, agInnovation Incoming Chair and Gary Thompson, Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) Executive Vice-Chair

- The slide deck with detailed information supporting this session is [posted on the ESCOP website](#).
- The BLC has been charged with developing annual justifications for the federal budget process and legislative priorities, including the Farm Bill, in consultation with other sections of the APLU Board on Agricultural Assembly (BAA) and other stakeholders. The committee is aligned with two standing committees of the BAA: Budget and Advocacy (BAC) and Legislation and Policy (CLP).
- The Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC) is a standing committee of the BAA, charged with preparation of annual Congressional budget recommendations and supporting materials to justify and message budget requests for USDA NIFA capacity and competitive programs as well as other major ESS-supported legislative initiatives.
- Both the context of the Agricultural Experiment Stations and the role of agInnovation are being more clearly defined in new advocacy materials.
- Our message is both impactful and aspirational: what *can* we do? National level impact (broad, easily communicated) and four related but more specific impacts from across the regions are included in new materials. A forward-looking, aspirational component recognizes the need for continued knowledge development and critical need for continued funding.
- Capacity (Hatch) programs are described and justified, and there are references to the effect of funding declines since 2004. There are references to global competition (~14% more investment in ag compared to America) and seek an increase to level the playing field.
- The succinct message as part of our strategic advocacy elevator pitch is that “the status quo is dangerous” – we need to illustrate the dangers of the status quo.



- AFRI Funding Long-term goal for AFRI is to reach \$700M in less than 25 years (the status quo). The recommendation is for a five-year strategy (Farm Bill Cycle) to reach authorized levels.
- RFA Funding Long-term goal: reach \$500M / year
- Discussion items:
  - We also need to look beyond NIFA and continue to communicate the value of Land-grant universities.
  - University-Industry Consortium: how do we get the corporate world to sign on to what we're asking for in support of our efforts? How can corporations contribute to our work?
  - How do we raise the awareness of the need for better research infrastructure? Competitive funding is great but what if our facilities are falling behind?

#### agInnovation Committee Updates

- Finance Committee (Chris Pritsos, Chair)
  - The agInnovation Finance Committee held its inaugural meeting on July 14.
  - The committee's description, membership, and supporting materials can be found on the ESCOP website: <http://escop.info/committee/finance-committee/>.
  - A budget will be prepared by the incoming agInnovation Chair for presentation at the national meeting in Grand Rapids this September.
  - agInnovation investment account funds have decreased slightly over the past 12 months. The Finance Committee may revisit the chosen investment mix for those funds.
  - Questions for consideration: What is the plan for our future? How do we deploy the agInnovation dollars that have been accumulated to take some risks and try things? This is taxpayer money and we should ensure there is a positive return on investment.
- Science and Technology Committee (Bret Hess, Executive Vice-chair)
  - 2023 Excellence in Multistate Research Award winner: *NCERA137 Soybean Diseases*
  - Research awardees will be celebrated at the September agInnovation meeting in Grand Rapids. Regional Leadership Award recipients are invited to be part of that celebration.
  - Awardees will be recognized in the APLU Awards Booklet and announced at the fall APLU annual meeting.
- NRSP Review Committee (Mark McGuire, Chair)
  - The NRSP portfolio is nowhere near its authorized 1% off-the-top spending. New NRSP ideas are encouraged to be submitted.
  - NRSP1 (NIMSS and MRF Impacts) will be providing a revised budget this September which includes a salary increase for Sara Delheimer.
  - A new NRSP concept was discussed at the annual meeting which involved an Extension component. Should we consider more integrated research-extension NRSPs? Should we encourage Extension to have a parallel off-the-top program to the NRSPs?



Follow-up Actions for the agInnovation Chair

- **Establishment of the agInnovation 501(c)(3).**
- **agInnovation Website rollout – immediate edits to the website preamble to remove 1862/1890/1994 dates.**

*The meeting adjourned at 11:48 am Central Time.*

DRAFT

The purpose of AG-NGINE is to enhance graduate student recruitment and placement by land-grant institutions and non-land-grant agriculture and renewable resources universities (NARRU) through facilitated exchange of prospective student information across institutions. Many institutions and graduate programs have the goal of increasing their pool of high-achieving students, domestic students (U.S. citizens and permanent residents), and those historically underrepresented in our disciplines.

Concept: Create a national online database of prospective graduate students in the agricultural, natural resources, human, and related sciences using as a model the Engineering National Graduate Institutional Name Exchange (ENGINE) established by the University of Florida's Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering (<https://engine.eng.ufl.edu>).

With initial funding from ESCOP and ACOP, the University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has established systems and processes for AG-NGINE and recruited participants for the first year of a three-year pilot project.

Accomplishments to date:

- Established an AG-NGINE Advisory Committee (members: Cynda Clary, Oklahoma State; Wendie Cohick, Rutgers; Shawn Donkin, Oregon State; De'Etra Young, Tennessee State; Wendy Fink, APLU; Gary Thompson, SAAESD).
- Created the AG-NGINE website (<https://ag-ngine.cals.ufl.edu>).
- Developed the AG-NGINE process and timeline for soliciting participation from institutions, managing communications, compiling, and sharing student data.
- Developed relevant documents including the following:
  - AG-NGINE Member Agreement
  - AG-NGINE Institution Contact Form
  - Student data survey (Microsoft forms)
  - Sample emails for soliciting student participation
- Invited 33 institutions to participate.
- Collected AG-NGINE Member Agreements and Institution Contact Forms
- Opened the student data survey for data collection.

We developed a slightly different process for managing AG-NGINE than has been used by ENGINE. Specifically, we are managing documents and data using Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Forms rather than having institutions gather student data and submit spreadsheets. This approach places less of a burden on the Institution Contact for compiling data.

Announcements of the AG-NGINE Pilot Program and invitations to participate were sent to 33 land-grant colleges of agriculture and related sciences. These institutions were either active participants in ENGINE through their college of engineering or were represented by members of the advisory committee. We only included the college of agriculture for this pilot and did not contact any related colleges (e.g., human sciences, natural resources) if these were separate units. Initial invitation was made via email from Elaine Turner to the APS contact with cc to the AHS representative. Included in the invitation was

the ENGINE contact at their institution for reference. Of the 33 institutions invited to join the AG-NGINE Pilot Program:

- 2 never responded to the initial announcement, the invitation or three follow-up emails
- 3 declined to participate this year, but will reconsider for 2024
- 2 are still considering
- 3 are interested, but have not yet returned the signed Member Agreement
- 23 have returned a signed Member Agreement

Of the 23 current participants, 19 have returned the Institution Contact Form and have begun soliciting student participation. As of July 6, 2023, 630 students have entered their data into AG-NGINE, representing 11 institutions.

Data collection will continue through September 1, 2023. At that time, access to the intake form will be closed. The AG-NGINE team will take one week to clean the data and assemble the spreadsheet for all participating Member Institutions. From September 11 to October 6, all Institution Contacts will be able to download the complete spreadsheet of students from the Microsoft Team. Data can then be used by individual institutions for student recruitment.

Other comments/lessons learned:

1. The set-up of AG-NGINE has involved several UF personnel:
  - Mike Nazareth, Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering – consultant
  - Joe Gasper, UF IT and Andrew Carey, UF/IFAS IT – Microsoft Teams and Forms development
  - Wendy Williams, CALS IT Director – website development
  - Jarred Shellhouse, CALS Strategic Communications – website and document development, institution communications
  - Nico Mora, CALS Data Analyst – data collection systems development and monitoring
  - Elaine Turner, CALS Dean – AG-NGINE oversight and institution communications

Going forward, management of the system will still require staff time for communications and monitoring, particularly as the number of institutions increases.

2. Repeated communications and reminders to institutions are necessary to finalize each step in the process – Member Agreement, Institution Contact Form, starting student data collection.
3. A few institutions have requested minor modifications to the Member Agreement upon advice of their General Counsel. We have accommodated these requests and will review the Member Agreement with this in mind for future recruitment.
4. We have used a different system for compiling and sharing data than ENGINE had. While this process should be easier on the Institution Contacts, it requires some working knowledge of Microsoft Teams. Going forward, staff time may need to be devoted to training the Institution Contacts on how to access their data.
5. The AG-NGINE Advisory Committee has discussed options for sustainable funding for AG-NGINE and a process for evaluating outcomes and impacts and potentially assisting students in preparing for



graduate study. We were unsuccessful in submitting a Higher Education Challenge Grant proposal in 2023 primarily because the committee members did not have the expertise needed in program evaluation. We will continue to pursue possible faculty who could lead a HEC grant as PI.

6. We will continue to need financial support from the Academic Programs Section and Experiment Station Section to continue the AG-NGINE Pilot Program and expand the number of participating institutions.

## **Agenda Brief: ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC)**

**July 19, 2023**

**BLC Chair: Anton Bekkerman**

**Action: For Information**

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

Anton Bekkerman (NERA, University of New Hampshire) assumed the duties of the BLC chair for a two-year term replacing Glenda Humiston at the 2022 ESS Annual Meeting in Baltimore. The BLC chair is a multifaceted leadership position given the multiple committee assignments (BAA-BAC voting member, BAA-CLP voting member, ECOP BLC liaison). Lewis-Burke Associates (LBA) has regularly participated in our meetings with Dr. Elizabeth Stulberg being designated as the point person to the ESCOP BLC from LBA. Monthly meetings occur on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 4:00 – 5:00 ET. In January 2023, Gary Thompson replaced Jeff Jacobsen as Executive Vice-Chair after Jeff Jacobsen retired from his role as the NCRA executive director.

The predominant focus of the ESCOP BLC is to create, adapt, monitor, and change agInnovation's input into the BAC, CLP, and infrastructure budget and legislative activities. Modification to existing processes, advancing new deadlines, and creation of new steps and requests make this an iterative process. The BAA Unified FY 2024 Appropriations Request was approved by the BAC and the BAA Policy Board of Directors and is summarized here ([FY24 approps](#)). The CLP finalized the BAA 2023 Farm Bill Request, which is summarized here ([BAA Farm Bill](#)).

The BLC is working to assess what changes to its operations structure may be needed to better represent and serve the needs of the section. The BLC Rules of Operation were formally adopted at our March meeting ([BLC Operations](#)). The committee also began alternating its meetings: one month the meeting is for voting members only to foster open discussion, and the alternating month includes the more traditional discussion and liaison report structure. One of the outcomes of this revised structure is more time for in-depth discussions by the voting members that is valuable in reflecting on broader questions that the BLC needs to address, while still receiving timely input from the liaisons. Additionally, due to the BLC chair's involvement in many other parts of the BAA where liaisons provide updates, the chair can bring back information to the BLC in a timely manner even with liaisons joining the BLC meetings less frequently.

The BLC Finance subcommittee was formally dissolved on March 8, 2023, and its activities incorporated into the newly formed ESCOP Finance Committee, which was approved by the membership as an ESCOP standing committee.

The APLU BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC) is in the process of developing an "advocacy framework" for FY2025 appropriations earlier in the annual advocacy cycle. Each section was asked to outline the description, justification, and initial budget request for relevant NIFA lines. The BLC submitted the following information for Hatch, AFRI, and RFA, which will be discussed at the Joint COPs agInnovation and BAC meetings, respectively.

### **Defining the State Agricultural Experiment Station**

#### **What is an Agricultural Experiment Station?**

AESs are research institutes that steward public federal and state investments toward scientifically proven and trusted solutions for ensuring food security and access, economic and environmental sustainability, and continual innovations in the agri-food sector.

#### **Why do Agricultural Experiment Stations exist?**

AESs push the frontiers of innovation and knowledge development to help U.S. food systems be more resilient, secure, forward-looking, and accessible by every community—ensuring economic strength for food producers and economic stability for consumers.

### **Where are Agricultural Experiment Stations located?**

By being located in every state and territory and leveraging the highly connected network of Land-grant universities, the nation-wide AES research system is the primary and largest contributor to advancing food, economic and environmental resiliency within every U.S. community while also elevating U.S. leadership in global agriculture.

### **How are Agricultural Experiment Stations funded?**

Agricultural Experiment Stations receive capacity funding through federal and state appropriations. Capacity funding is leveraged with support from granting agencies, foundations, commodity groups, and private industry.

### **Who do Agricultural Experiment Stations represent?**

AESs are comprised of university faculty, staff, graduate students, and affiliated scientists who partner and collaborate with agricultural producers, agri-food sector, and consumers—all of whom are the beneficiaries of the scientific knowledge and innovations.

**Our Purpose** – to promote and elevate agricultural research that improves lives and makes the world more food secure.

**Our Vision** – enhanced human and world well-being through agricultural innovation.

**Our Values** – collaborative, solution-oriented, impactful, global, innovative, science-based.

**Map of AES locations:** [https://webdoc.agsci.colostate.edu/aes/wcrc/US\\_Map/](https://webdoc.agsci.colostate.edu/aes/wcrc/US_Map/)

## **Infographic 1**

### **Hatch Act (includes Hatch Multistate)**

#### ***Program description:***

- Federal (USDA-NIFA) funding through Hatch and Hatch multistate grants provides long-term sustainable support for scientists to undertake critical research on national, regional, and local challenges to agricultural systems. (USDA FY24 Budget)
- Over 140 years of strategic federal investment funding to conduct bold, long-term, location-specific research at State Agricultural Experiment Stations in the 50 States, D.C., and Insular Areas in agricultural, food, forestry, natural, and human resources research.
- Science experts at AESs address issues of national importance with research addressing local problems. These experts respond to critical issues that affect their state’s production, profitability, invasive plant/animal species, biosecurity, land and water use, climate resilience, economic analysis, and farm safety.
- “Knowledge capital arising from public (research) spending spurs innovation that promotes productivity and enhances the global competitiveness of US agriculture.” (Pardey)

#### ***Facts and figures:***

- AESs are the lynchpin in the National Public Agricultural Research System.
  - “The federal government funds about two-thirds of public agricultural research in the United States, with State governments and non-government sources funding the rest.” (USDA ERS)
  - “Land-grant universities and other non-federal institutions perform about 70% of US public agricultural research. USDA agencies perform the remainder.” (USDA ERS)

- USDA agencies (ARS, ERS, and NASS) form strong partnerships with AESs, often co-locating on LGU campuses.
- “Long-term, multifaceted benefits from public spending on agricultural R&D (research) will benefit the agri-food sector, the economy in general, and the environment” (Pardey)

### Infographic 2

- “US public investment in agri-food research and development has lost considerable ground over the past two decades, exacerbating the shrinking US share of global agri-food R&D spending to such an extent that America now lags well behind China.” (Pardey)
  - “US public agricultural R&D expenditures, when adjusted for the rising cost of conducting research, have declined by about one-third since peaking in 2002.” (ERS)
  - Inflation adjusted decreased funding has led to -21% of scientist FTEs, -20% research projects, -32% of annual hours of research (12.37 million) since 2004.

### Infographic 3

#### ***Impacts and aspirations (developed for the OGA process – issues of national importance):***

We’ve identified five key topics around which we can build a central impact communication strategy. For each, we will summarize a national-level impact summary and provide examples of impacts from each of the four ESS regions. A sample infographic is provided below. Sources from which impacts will be drawn are below:

Five topics of focus for ESS:

- Food security is national security
  - <https://www.mrfimpacts.org/impact-statements/categories/food-security>
  - <https://landgrantimpacts.org/food-security/>
- Climate resilience
  - <https://www.mrfimpacts.org/impact-statements/categories/climate-change>
  - <https://landgrantimpacts.org/environmental-stewardship/>
- Advanced technology agriculture
  - <https://www.mrfimpacts.org/impact-statements/categories/automation>
- Food systems’ effects on nutrition and health
  - <https://www.mrfimpacts.org/impact-statements/categories/human-health-nutrition>
  - <https://landgrantimpacts.org/nutrition-health/>
- Global innovation leader
  - <https://www.mrfimpacts.org/impact-statements/categories/biofuels>
  - <https://landgrantimpacts.org/agricultural-systems/>

### Infographic 4

#### ***Funding goal:***

- Annual growth of 14% is needed to keep pace with international competitors that are investing at an aggressive rate. Annual growth of 7% (FY25: 5% inflation rate plus 2%) is the minimum essential to keep our activities on a constant trajectory and to avoid putting public and food security in danger.

### Infographic 5

#### **AFRI**

#### ***Program description:***

- The nation’s premier competitive grants program in agricultural, food and natural resource sciences, supporting pioneering research in federally identified priorities for practical

innovations that improve rural economies, increase food production and security, stimulate the bioeconomy, mitigate the impacts of climate variability, address water availability issues, ensure food safety, enhance human nutrition, and train the next generation of agricultural scientists and professionals. Much of AFRI's successes is built on the back of long-term research carried out via capacity programs.

***Facts and figures:***

- The success rate for AFRI applications in FY 2020, calculated in terms of number of proposals funded (excluding conferences, supplements, continuing increments of the same grant, and NIFA Fellowships) divided by the number of proposals submitted for review, was 24%, up from the reported success rate in 2019 of 16%.
- However, since AFRI's authorization in the 2008 Farm Bill, the program has not received more than approximately 60 percent of its authorized level of \$700 million.
- In FY 2019, over 2,000 competitive funding applications, totaling over \$1.5 billion, were submitted, but congress only provided \$415 million to AFRI that year, leaving many promising proposals unfunded.
- In 2022, NIFA invested \$73.5 million of AFRI appropriations for development and adoption of climate-smart agricultural and forestry practices, including launch of a new program to respond rapidly to extreme weather events that impact agriculture. (USDA FY24 Budget)
- The FY24 AFRI budget proposal includes \$94 million for innovations in development and application of clean energy technologies for food and agricultural systems and \$45 million for climate science and monitoring greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture.
- The FY24 Budget invests \$240 million in supporting new supply chains and markets that uplift small and mid-sized farmers through programs such as the Local Agriculture Market Program, Dairy Business Innovation, Farmers Market and Local Food Production, and Transportation and Market Development, through Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) grants and other programs. (USDA FY24 Budget)

***Impacts (developed for the OGA process):***

- <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/national-institute-food-agriculture-annual-report/impacts>
- <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/national-institute-food-agriculture-annual-report/agriculture-food-research-initiative-afri>
- As examples, AFRI research grants support detection of cattle disease, cut greenhouse gases from dairy cows, and elucidate heat impacts on bees.
- Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement (FASE) grants, which constituted 20 percent of AFRI awards in 2019, provide support for pre- and postdoctoral fellowships, and new investigators from a diverse array of institutions.
- Agriculture Workforce Development: AFRI supported 5,026 undergraduate/graduate/post-doctoral students in 2022 and has targeted 5,659 in 2023 and 5,951 in 2024. (USDA FY24 Budget)

***Funding goal:***

- We recommend reframing the ask in terms of a timeline to get to \$700m. For example, if we continue increasing AFRI at its historically typical level of \$10m/year, it will take about 20 years to get to full authorized funding. If we increased AFRI by 5% each year, it would take about 7 years. If we increased AFRI by 10% each year, we'd get there in 3 years.
- The rationale is that this approach would be more, (a) concrete ("we want to get to a certain funding level that has already been authorized but not attained") and (b) psychologically manageable ("we don't have to do it now, but let's all commit to a 5-year timeline that's in line

with the big piece of farm policy legislation and set an automatic increase schedule so that we don't have to worry about in the future")

- We recommend using a 5-year goal to align with the length of a Farm Bill. That is: What will it take to get to the \$700m authorized funding level over the life of a Farm Bill? That would be about 7%. As such, we recommend an FY25 appropriation that is a 7% increase over FY24.

### **Research Facilities Act (RFA)**

#### ***Program description:***

- Statute supports NIFA capacity eligible institutions as contenders for the Research Facilities Act competitive grants program to assist in the construction, alteration, acquisition, modernization, renovation, or remodeling of agricultural research facilities at colleges of agriculture.

#### ***Facts and figures (Gordian report):***

- Today, agricultural researchers at U.S. colleges of agriculture are conducting 21st century research in mid-20th century facilities.
- A 2021 report found that 70 percent of the facilities at agricultural colleges and universities are beyond their useful life, with an estimate of deferred maintenance of \$11.5 billion and a replacement value of \$38.1 billion.
- Many good infographics.

#### ***Impacts (developed for the OGA process):***

- Modernizing research, Extension, and education facilities would advance cutting-edge research and applied science innovations critical for 21st century R&D goals at public colleges of agriculture, veterinarian, forestry, and natural resources across the country.
- Investment in the RFA will also help further attract and retain top-level talent into the U.S. agri-science sector and raise the return on other federal public agricultural research and Extension investments.
- We suggest that USDA outline a framework for the disbursement of funds for the Research Facilities Act Program, as it will be a vital tool to ensure all colleges of agriculture can:
  - recruit top talent,
  - develop a diverse workforce nation-wide,
  - continue to develop transformative agricultural innovation that will benefit all farmers and ranchers, and
  - keep pace with international competitors.

#### ***Funding goal:***

- APLU requests \$500 million for the Research Facilities Act in FY2025.

# Agricultural Experiment Stations

AESs receive capacity funding through federal and state appropriations. Capacity funding is leveraged with support from granting agencies, foundations, commodity groups, and private industry.

## How are AESs funded?



AESs are comprised of university faculty, staff, graduate students and affiliated scientists who partner and collaborate with agricultural producers, agri-food sector, and consumers—all of whom are the beneficiaries of the scientific knowledge and innovations.

## Who do AESs represent?

AESs are research institutes that steward public federal and state investments toward scientifically proven and trusted solutions for ensuring food security and access, economic and environmental sustainability, and continual innovations in the agri-food sector.

## What are AESs?

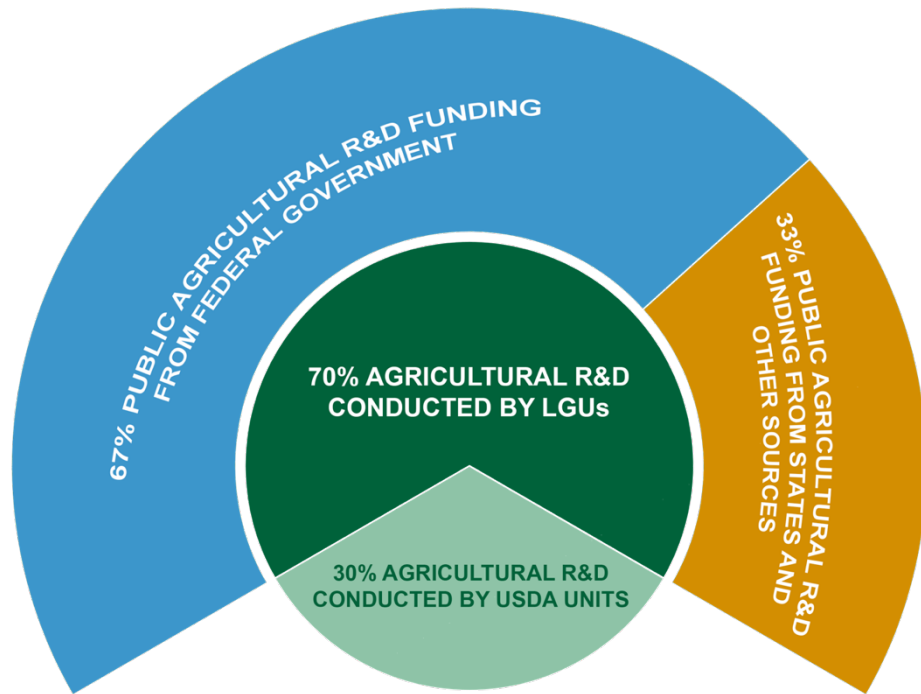
## Where are AESs located?

By being located in every state and territory and leveraging the highly connected network of Land-grant universities, the nation-wide AES research system is the primary and largest contributor to advancing food, economic and environmental resiliency within every U.S. community while also elevating U.S. leadership in global agriculture.

## Why do AESs exist?

AESs push the frontiers of innovation and knowledge development to help U.S. food systems be more resilient, secure, forward-looking and accessible by every community—ensuring economic strength for food producers and economic stability for consumers.

**Infographic 1.** Defining the “what, why, where, how, and who” of State Agricultural Experiment Stations.

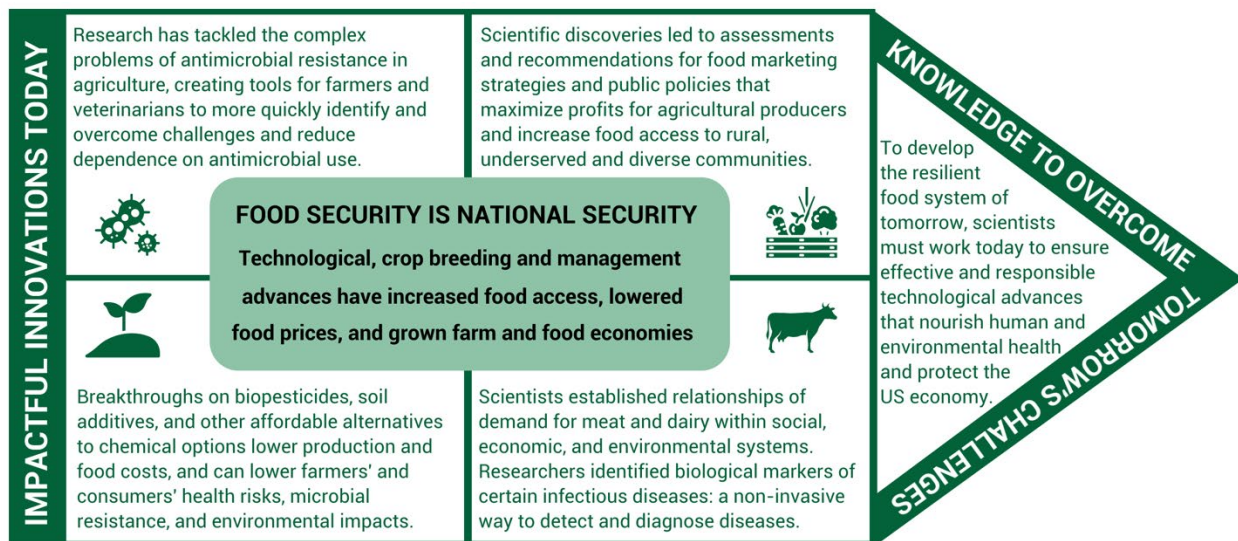


**Infographic 2.** Agricultural Experiment Stations are the lynchpin of the National Public Agricultural Research System.

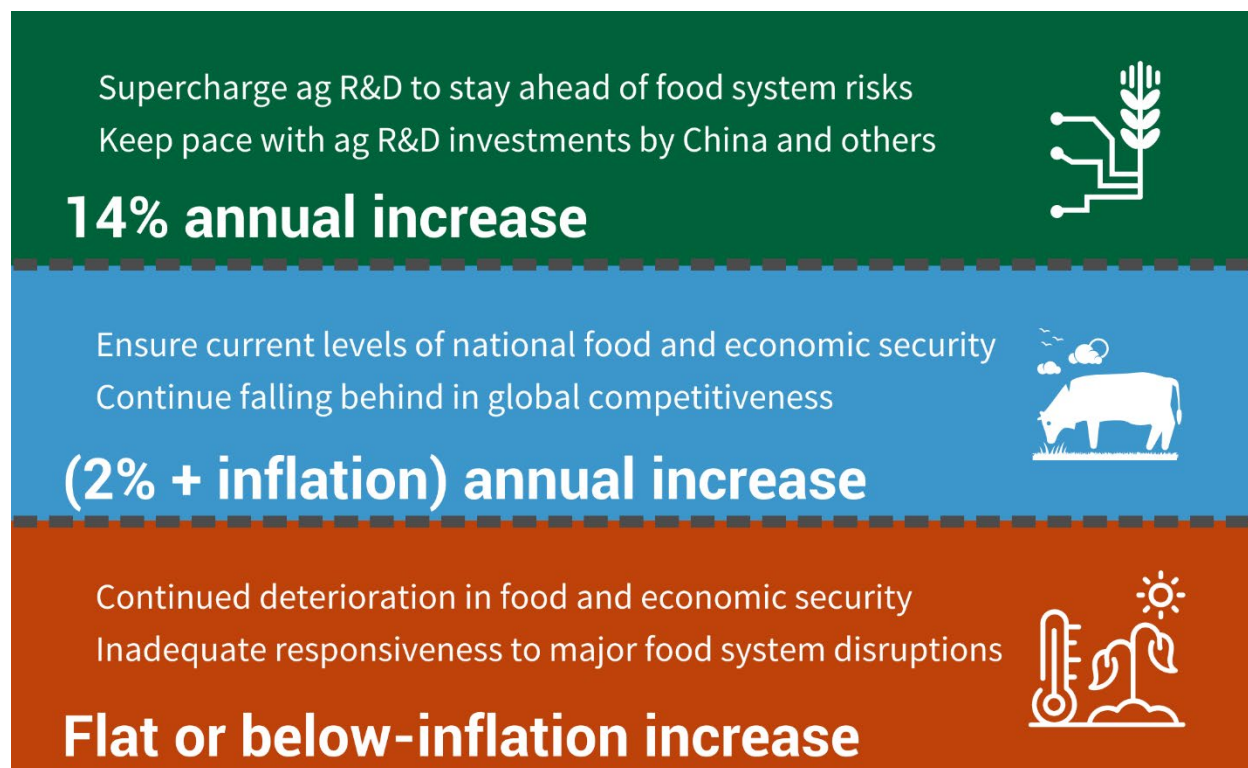


**Infographic 3.** Impact of a twenty-year decline in real funding to agricultural capacity research.





**Infographic 4.** A short blurb that summarizes a national level impact (a bit broad but easily communicated by anyone) and then 4 related but more specific impacts from across the regions. Each regional impact would include information that loosely aligns with research at least two regions. Finally, there's a forward-looking, aspirational component that can provide a pathway to the future, recognize the need for continued knowledge development, and signal the critical need for continued funding.



**Infographic 5.** Strategies for annual Hatch appropriations requests.

## Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC) Agenda Brief for agInnovation Executive Committee

**Date:** July 10, 2023  
**Prepared by:** Andrea Putman and Kim Scotto  
Office of Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources (FANR), APLU  
**Last ESCOP agenda brief:** September 27, 2022

**Committee Membership** (as of July 2023): see CMC page [here](#).

**Meetings:** The CMC held the following zoom meetings from September 2022 - July 2023:

- October 20, 2022
- November 17, 2022
- December 15, 2022
- January 19, 2023
- February 16, 2023
- March 16, 2023
- April 2, 2023
- May 18, 2023
- June 15, 2023
- July 20, 2023 (to be held in person at Joint COPs)

### HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Following the April 2022 vote that elevated the CMC to a standing committee of APLU's Board of Agriculture Assembly's (BAA) Policy Board of Directors (PBD), the CMC Operating Guidelines were updated and then approved by the PBD at the APLU annual meeting on November 3, 2022. The updated CMC Operating Guidelines document is [here](#).

The 2023 BAA budget created a budget line in support of the CMC. The assessment model was discontinued at the end of the calendar year 2022. The PBD approved this change at the APLU Annual Meeting. Therefore, the three BAA sections (Administrative Heads, Cooperative Extension, and Experiment Station) no longer have separate assessments for the CMC, which had been a 2-year commitment for \$100K per section (2020 – 2022).

The following changes were made to the CMC's composition:

#### These slots were "sunset"

1. Administrative Heads Section (AHS) Chair
2. Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) Chair

3. Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) Chair
4. Experiment Station Section (ESS)
5. Cooperative Extension Section (CES)
6. Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, & Teaching (CARET)
7. National Impacts Database (NIDB)

### **These slots were maintained**

#### **Voting**

1. Chair
2. Incoming Chair
3. Past Chair
4. Academic Programs Section (APS)
5. Council on Governmental Affairs (CGA)
6. Association for Communication Excellence (ACE)

#### **Ex-Officio**

7. AHS Executive Director (Vice President, FANR)
8. ECOP Executive Director
9. Assistant Vice President, Communications & Partnership, FANR
10. Executive Vice-Chair
11. Assistant Executive Vice-Chair

### **These slots were added**

#### **Voting**

1. Regional communications rep, 1890s
2. Regional communications rep, Southern
3. Regional communications rep, Western
4. Regional communications rep, North Central
5. Regional communications rep, Northeastern

#### **Ex-Officio**

6. Regional Executive Director, ESCOP (to align with Executive Director, ECOP). Note: Currently Rick Rhodes has dual role including this slot and the Executive Vice Chair.
7. International Agriculture Section (IAS)

Each region's Executive Directors for ECOP and ESCOP together nominated their regional communications representative. The representatives for CES and IAS were nominated by their respective Chairs in consultation with the sections. Andrea oriented all the new CMC members. **New members include:**

#### **Voting**

#### **Incoming Chair (CES)**

- **Sharon (Shelly) Nickols-Richardson**, Associate Dean, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences & Director, Extension and Outreach at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

### **Regional Ag Communicators**

- **1890s:** Latasha Ford, Research Communications Specialist, Fort Valley State University, Agricultural Communications
- **Northeast:** Stacey Stearns, Communications Specialist, UConn Extension; College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut
- **South:** Frankie Gould, Associate Vice President and Professor, Strategic Communications and Outreach Relations, LSU AgCenter
- **North Central:** Michelle Enger, Director of Strategic Communication and Marketing, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, University of Missouri
- **West:** Jennifer Alexander, Director of Communications, Oregon State University Division of Extension & Engagement

### **Council on Governmental Affairs**

- Anne Megaro, Government and Community Relations Director, University of California (system)

### **Ex-Officio**

### **International Agriculture Section**

- Manoj Shukla, Professor and Director, ACES Global Program and Aggies Go Global, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, New Mexico State University

### **Multistate Research Fund Impacts Program** *(other non-voting member as deemed appropriate)*

- Sara Delheimer, Program Coordinator/Writer, Multistate Research Fund Impacts Program
  - Sara also served as co-Chair of the NIDB writing committee.

## **Material Development and Distribution**

### **FANR Focus**

Produced FANR Focus, monthly toolkit that is distributed to ~850 BAA stakeholders. Past editions are [here](#) including a streamlined way to get added to the distribution list.

### **Monthly Communications Toolkits (Sept. 2022 – July 2023)**

The team develops and distributes a monthly communications toolkit for university communicators. The toolkits' themes tie to the ***“Strategic Communications Roadmap”*** (developed by Forbes Tate with extensive input from BAA members) forward. Dozens of communications professionals have requested to be added to the distribution list, which has grown from approximately 140 (when Andrea started) to ~240 people.

## 2022 Toolkits

- September - BACK TO SCHOOL/BUILDING THE FUTURE
- October - CULTIVATING AND HARVESTING
- November - GIVING THANKS: STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITIES
- December - HEALTH, WELLNESS AND NUTRITION

## 2023 Toolkits

- January - INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE: Climate-Smart Solutions
- February - PROTECTING WATER: ENHANCING EFFICIENCY AND MANAGEMENT
- March - SUPPORTING FARMERS and RANCHERS: Research, Education, and Extension Working Together
- April - CELEBRATING EARTH DAY
- May - ADVANCING AG WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- June - GROWING URBAN AND CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT AGRICULTURE (CEA) TO CULTIVATE RESILIENCE
- July - INCREASING FOOD SECURITY AND SAFEGUARDING NATIONAL SECURITY

The FANR team produced a 68-page booklet *“A Community of Scholars Honoring Excellence”* to honor the **2022 Food and Agricultural Sciences Excellence in College and University Awards** winners. It includes descriptions of winners and their projects. Awards were presented at the APLU annual meeting in November. See: [2022-Awards-Booklet.pdf \(aplu.org\)](https://www.aplu.org/2022-Awards-Booklet.pdf)

This included:

- National Teaching and Student Engagement Awards
- National Teaching Awards
- Regional Teaching Awards
- Early Career Teacher Awards
- National Excellence in Extension Award for a Team
- National Excellence in Extension Award for an Individual
- Regional Excellence in Extension Awards for an Individual
- National Diversity in Extension Award
- National Excellence in Multistate Research Award
- Experiment Station Section National Excellence in Leadership Award
- National Experiment Station Section Diversity and Inclusion Award
- Board on Human Sciences Awards
- Food Systems Leadership Institute 2022 FELLOWS, COHORT 16

## APLU News Releases and Blogs from FANR:

- [APLU and Cooperative Extension Names William Hoffman as the Next Executive Director, Cooperative Extension System and Extension Committee on Organization and Policy](#)  
June 12, 2023
- [APLU, 340 Agriculture Groups Urge Congress to Fund Research Facilities Act in 2023 Farm Bill](#)  
April 24, 2023

- [APLU Statement on the Appointment of Manjit K. Misra as NIFA Director](#)  
April 24, 2023
- [National Experiment Station Section Awards Top Honors](#)  
November 6, 2022
- [USDA, APLU & Cooperative Extension Award Top Honors in Extension Excellence and Diversity - APLU](#)  
November 6, 2022
- [USDA Announces National Teaching Awards for Food and Agricultural Sciences - APLU](#)  
November 6, 2022
- [APLU Announces 2022 Board on Human Sciences Award Winners](#)  
October 27, 2023
- [New Support for Institutions Seeking USDA Grants for Diversifying Food and Ag Professionals - APLU](#)  
October 4, 2023

### **The National Impact Database (NIDB) Transition**

The NIDB database, located at [Land-grant Impacts](#), is a publicly accessible repository for land-grant universities' impact statements. Texas A&M University has hosted the website and database for approximately a decade. At the request of the NIDB team and the CMC, the NIDB is transitioning to APLU's Office of FANR. The discussions to transition the NIDB to APLU were part of the broader discussion regarding the elevation of the CMC's elevation to a BAA standing committee with significant input from the CMC.

Karla Trautman, who was both NIDB's Co-Chair and CMC's past CMC Chair at that point, presented a NIDB transition proposal to the CMC in October 2022. Sara Delheimer, Program Coordinator/Writer, Multistate Research Fund Impacts Program and Co-chair of the NIDB writing committee, presented to the CMC in November 2022. The NIDB Impact team was "sunset" of December 31, 2022. Fortunately, several members of the former NIDB team currently serve on the CMC.

The transition of the hosting of the NIDB database from Texas A&M to a new provider has advanced. Texas A&M notified APLU that it wishes to terminate hosting and retire the technology.

The Extension Foundation has had technical meetings with APLU and Texas A&M and done due diligence on the technical requirements of the website transfer. They created a mock-up site, answered extensive questions, and presented at a CMC meeting. There are on-going discussions with CMC members, particularly those who served on the NIDB writing team.

The Extension Foundation developed a proposal that includes the technical transition, ongoing maintenance and customer service, and long-term improvements. The initial proposal was first evaluated by the Executive Committee and approved to put in front of the entire CMC. The CMC had several questions that were then answered in writing by the Extension Foundation. A revised proposal was sent in June. The CMC voting members approved the proposal unanimously in early July so that the Extension Foundation will be the new provider to host the database.

Before this transition, APLU was not officially involved with the NIDB (beyond paying the bills on behalf of CES and ESS). Each of the two sections (CES and ESS) contributed \$12,500 annually (\$25,000 total) to support the NIDB through Texas A&M University separate from any APLU assessment. Previously, the sections also contributed \$5,000 each (\$10,000 total) to support travel by communicators to do the year-end impact stories gleaned from the NIDB. This year, APLU provided funds to support travel for the communicators who met in February 2023.

Moving forward, the initial cost of \$25,000 will be paid by BAA residual funds (carry forward from the old CMC account that was closed) and the annual maintenance cost will be built into the CMC budget.

### **CMC Leadership Transitions**

In March 2023, the CMC leadership team rolled over. **JF Meullenet (ESS) became Past Chair; Nancy Cox (AHS) became Chair; and Karla Trautman (CES) rotated off the CMC.** In April, the CES named **Sharon (Shelly) Nickols-Richardson as the Incoming Chair.** Dr. Nickols-Richardson is Associate Dean, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences & Director, Extension and Outreach at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

### **Website Updates**

- **AgisAmerica.org**

The team has updated, streamlined, and improved the AgisAmerica website. Enhancements include:

- [Member Institution Directory](#)
- [Communication Toolkits](#)
- [Updated homepage video and monthly rotating content](#)
- [Blog posts linking back to NIDB and Multistate Research Fund Impacts](#)

- **Land-grant.org**

The team updated all advocacy materials on land-grant.org and will be using the site as the primary resource for CARET delegates. In the coming months, Kim is developing a members-only portal for CARET that will host internal materials like directories, training videos, and meeting minutes.

### **Social Media**

#### **EXPANDING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT / LIST CREATION:**

- In early 2023, Kim launched a [Twitter list](#) of all available member college, research, and Extension accounts. This list is used as a resource by our member institutions, but also the communicators behind regional Experiment Station, Extension Foundation, and other national accounts.
- In addition to the Communications Toolkit mailing list, Kim has created a sublist of 60 social media managers. She communicates with this group monthly about upcoming campaigns and opportunities to submit content.

**EXAMPLES OF CONTENT:**

**Award Announcements:**

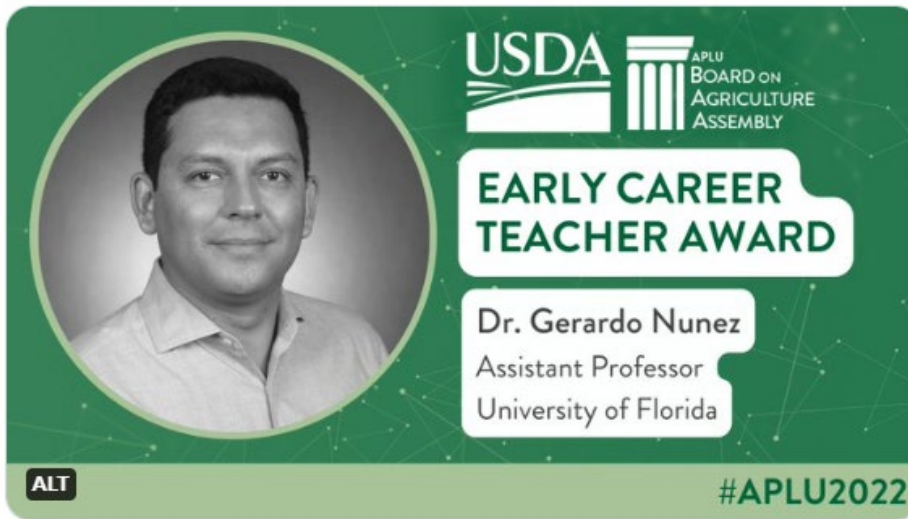
- Created graphics for 30+ USDA NIFA/APLU award winners:




**Agriculture is America**  
@AgIsAmerica



Congratulations Dr. Gerardo Nunez @UF\_IFAS @ufhorticulture on being awarded @USDA\_NIFA's Early Career Award for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences! @UF @UFCALS @GNunezUF @APLU\_News @APLU\_Ag [aplu.org/members/awards...](http://aplu.org/members/awards...)



**Agriculture is America** @AgIsAmerica · Nov 6, 2022



Congratulations Dr. Gerardo Nunez @UF\_IFAS @ufhorticulture on being awarded @USDA\_NIFA's Early Career Award for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences! @UF @UFCALS @GNunezUF @APLU\_News @APLU\_Ag ...

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Impressions ⓘ  
**13,366**

Engagements ⓘ  
**79**

Detail expands ⓘ  
**18**



## Videos:

- **National Farm Safety and Health Week (September 2022):** ["It's National Farm Safety and Health Week! #LandGrantUniversities promote #FarmSafety through their teaching, research, and Extension programs. How does your school help to "Protect Agriculture's Future"? Quote tweet and share your story! #NFSHW"](#)
- **National Ag Week (March 2023):** ["From the classroom, to the lab, to the greenhouse, and beyond, #LandGrantUniversities are leading the way in #ClimateSmartAgriculture education, research, and Extension. How does your university "Grow a Climate for Tomorrow"? #AgWeek #NationalAgWeek"](#)
- **Pollinator Week (June 2023):** ["#LandGrantUniversities are crucial for protecting pollinators. Through teaching, research, and Extension programs, university experts combat disease, pesticide stressors, habitat degradation, and other challenges pollinators face: <https://t.co/EmT84xXbdX> #PollinatorWeek"](#)

## Campaigns:

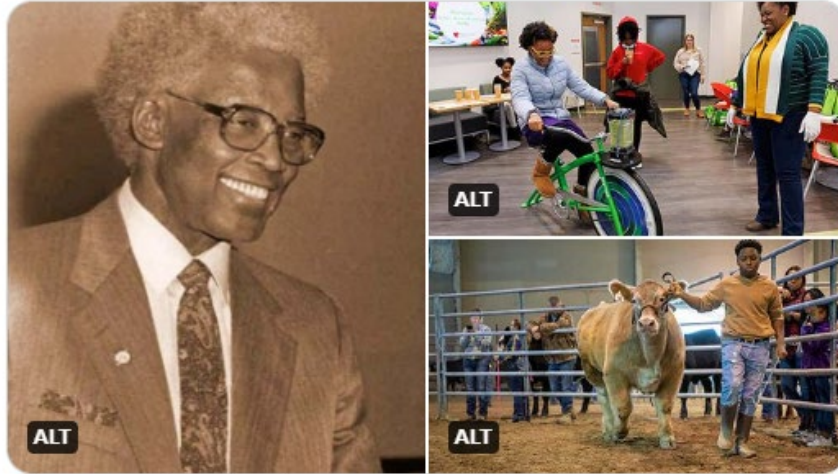
- **Thanksgiving (November 2022):** collected submissions from members to share in a Twitter Collection: <https://twitter.com/AgIsAmerica/timelines/1594709896720633859>
- **Black History Month (February 2023):** solicited communications professionals from 1890 member institutions for content to post throughout the month.



**Agriculture is America** @AgIsAmerica · Feb 27

...

From the late Dr. James Ira Dawson, the 1st Extension Administrator at @aamuedu, to the 80-year tradition of @LSUAgCenter's livestock show & @KYSUag experts teaching today's students about nutrition, 1980s are #MakingBlackHistory in Cooperative Extension: [1890aea.org/extension-toda...](https://1890aea.org/extension-toda...)



Alabama Extension and 7 others

🗨️ ↻ 4 ❤️ 5 📊 425 ↗

- **National Volunteer Month (April 2023):** highlighted CARET delegates with Q&A blogs and social media posts.
- **Workforce Development (ongoing):** collected submissions from communications professionals at member institutions.

**Celebrating National/World Days, Weeks, Months:**



**Agriculture is America** @AgIsAmerica · Oct 12, 2022



Today, and every day, we thank the folks feeding our country! Land-grant universities' research, education, & Extension programs partner with farmers and ranchers to tackle complex challenges in a fast-changing world. [#NationalFarmersDay](#)



2 27 34



**Agriculture is America** @AgIsAmerica · Mar 1



Land-grant universities are working together to evaluate pork production systems and their economic viability, agricultural sustainability, and impact on swine welfare: [mrfimpacts.org/single-post/20...](http://mrfimpacts.org/single-post/20...) [#NationalPigDay](#) @SDStateCAFES



College of ACES and 9 others

5 10 1,445

**Other:** Providing graphic design, video editing, and website design services to FANR team.

### **Media**

Reached out individually to journalists and invited them to a virtual press briefing on the Research Facilities Act (RFA) following the CARET/AHS meeting in March 2023. Collaborated to develop talking points and organize the briefing. The sign-on letter for RFA received coverage from Farm Journal, Pork Business, Agency West Radio Network, Feedlot, Agri-Pulse.

### **Association for Communication Excellence (ACE)**

Andrea and Kim participated in the ACE conference in Asheville, NC. APLU's BAA was a silver sponsor. [Sponsorship Ad in ACE Conference Program.jpg](#)

### **Kim Scotto**

Kim earned a promotion to Senior Associate in January 2023. Kim was hired as an Associate to work half-time on communication and half-time for the Board on Health and Human Sciences in December 2021. Kim will increase from .5 FTE to 1 FTE in support of communications in July 2023.

### **CMC Meeting Minutes**

See 2022 minutes [here](#), and 2023 minutes [here](#).

## **UPCOMING PLANS (July – December 2023)**

**Toolkits:** Produce compelling monthly communications toolkits on topics such as (1) Building the Future (back to school); (2) Protecting Animal and Plant Health; and (3) Connecting Agriculture, Nutrition, and Health.

**FANR Focus:** Continue to produce and distribute monthly FANR Focus.

**National Impacts Database (NIDB) transition: Facilitate** an effective, smooth NIDB transition to FANR including hosting transition from Texas A&M to the Extension Foundation.

**Media:** Continue to build productive relationships with journalists and encourage coverage.

**Network Development:** Continue to grow and strengthen active networks of ag communicators at member institutions and at other NGOs.

**Publication:** Develop and produce publication on climate-smart solutions and land-grant universities.

**Websites:** Continue to improve and update the three websites (APLU CFERR BAA section; AgIsAmerica, and Land-grant.org)

**Social Media:** Focus upcoming campaigns on Farmers Market Week (August 2023); HBCU Week + Farm Safety & Health Week (September 2023); Hispanic Heritage Month (September – October 2023); Native American Heritage Month + Thanksgiving (November 2023)

**Travel:**

1. **Joint COPs with CMC meeting**, July 18 – 20, Kansas City, MO (Andrea and Kim)
2. **Experiment Station Section (ESS) meeting**, September 25 - 27, Grand Rapids, MI (Andrea)
3. **National Extension Directors and Administrators (NEDA) Meeting**, October 9 -12, Tucson, AZ (Andrea)
4. **APLU Annual Meeting**, November 12 - 14, Seattle, WA (Andrea and Kim)

**Action Requested:** For information only.

**Agenda Brief:** ag Innovation Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC)  
**Date:** July 19, 2023  
**Chair:** Brian Raison (Ohio State)

- 1.) **Committee Membership** (as of July 19, 2023): see ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) webpage – <http://escop.info/committee/dcc/>
- 2.) **Meetings** (since March 2023): The DCC held the following meetings via Zoom. Minutes/notes from those meetings are available at on the [DCC's page on the ESCOP website](#) (see Past Events).
  - March 23, 2023
  - May 25, 2023
  - June 22, 2023
  - July 27, 2023
- 3.) **Accomplishments / Upcoming Plans:**
  - Brian Raison (Ohio State) graciously accepted the nomination as the DCC chair.
  - In March, the DCC adopted a mission statement. That statement reads “We unite Experiment Station leaders in promoting a more diverse and inclusive future.”
  - The agInnovation executive committee (or ESCOP), approved the DCC’s plan of work (attached). One of the hallmark activities to be taken up in 2023/24 is the offering of a series of quarterly diversity, equity, and inclusion seminars/ professional development opportunities. The seminars will be paired with “at home” and lived experience discussions.
  - The DCC will be seeking input from directors in response to the Call to Action originally launched two years ago. The intent is to identify ongoing DEI activities and initiatives that directors have undertaken.
  - The DCC has initiated a conversation on how best to assist directors who are located in states that have promulgated limitations to diversity, equity and inclusion activities.
  - On July 27, the DCC will deliberate and select winners, individual and group, for the Nation Experiment Station Section Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awards.
- 4.) **Action Requested:** For information only.
- 5.) **Attachments:**
  - DCC 2023 Plan of Work

# Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) Plan of Work 2023-2026

## 2023 Activities

**Mission of the DCC:** We unite Experiment Station leaders in promoting a more diverse and inclusive future.

### Plan of Work 2023-2026

- Intentionally engage ESS directors on a regular basis on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).
- Recognize outstanding DEI efforts by ESS member.
- Seek best practices currently undertaken by ESS directors and widely share and promote.
- Provide ESS directors with opportunities to engage in DEI educational events.
- Serve the ESS as a DEI resource provider.
- Identify metrics of progress for the DCC and for member institutions.

### FY2023 Activities

During 2023 the DCC will:

- Meet on a monthly basis.
- Support the ESCOP Chair's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Engage in strategic planning to identify the mission, vision, purpose of the DCC including re-writing the description of the DCC for the ESCOP website.
- Identify metrics for assessing progress towards improving diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Assist directors in integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion as an essential component of all programs.
- Issue a call for nominations for the National Experiment Station Section Diversity and Inclusion Awards (individual and group.)
  - Seek nominations.
  - Evaluate nominations and identify a winner.
  - Provide winners with an opportunity to share what they've done during the annual ESS Meeting in September.
- Follow-up on the Call to Action issued to all directors in August 2021.
  - Create an inventory of DEI actions and best practices taken by directors.
  - Collaborate with NIFA to profile exemplary actions of the directors.
- Collect ESS DEI best practices and submit to NIFA for profiling.
- Collaborate with NIFA on the presentation of DEI webinars (e.g., "DEI and the NIFA Compliance review process")
- Propose to the Experiment Station Section DEI-related activities, exercises, trainings, and opportunities are included in the Experiment Station Section agendas.

- Examples:
  - Longer format, cultural competence training (occurring over several days); creation of ESS DEI Fellows.
  - Offer reading resources (e.g., *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming* by Natasha Bowens). Follow up with presentations by the author.
  - Re-offer the Intercultural Development Inventory.
- Collaborate with ESCOP's Science and Technology Committee to develop a working definition of and a framework for "Equity in Science."
- Collaborate with the Cooperative Extension Section DEI program Action Team.
- Implement a DCC DEI Webinar.
  - Quarterly
  - Initial theme "The Lived Experience".



**Agenda Brief: National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee (NPGCC)**

(<http://escop.info/committee/national-plant-germplasm-coordinating-committee-npgcc/>)

**Date: July 19, 2023**

**Presenter: Bob Stougaard**

**Action Requested: For Information**

**Committee Members:**

**Chair:** Bob Stougaard (SAAESD)

**Executive Vice Chair:** Bret Hess (WAAESD ED)

**Members:**

Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (NCRA)

Scot Hulbert (WAAESD)

Olga Padilla-Zakour (NERA)

Melanie Harrison (USDA ARS)

Peter Bretting (USDA ARS)

Larry Chandler (USDA ARS)

Ann Stapleton (NIFA)

**Liaisons:**

David Baltensperger (NAPB)

Sarah Wilbanks (AOSCA)

Ksenija Gasic (PBCC)

Tim Cupka (ASTA)

**Ex-officio:**

Jennifer Tippetts (WAAESD Administrative Management, Recording Secretary)

**Meetings:** A virtual meeting was held via Zoom on May 30, 2023. Plans are to host a hybrid meeting in Ames, IA next year, likely in June.

**Meeting Attendance:** Bob Stougaard, Bret Hess, Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Melanie Harrison, Peter Bretting, Larry Chandler, Ann Stapleton, David Baltensperger, Sarah Wilbanks, Ksenija Gasic, Tim Cupka, Jennifer Tippetts (recording secretary). Guest: Clarice Coyne.

**NPGCC Reports:** Peter Bretting presented on the USDA ARS National Plant Germplasm System's (NPGS) status, prospects, and challenges. Total numbers of accessions and distributions are up in 2022 reaching 605,700 and 233,500, respectively. Although the total dollar amount in the NPGS budget is up through 2018, the buying power has dropped to [approximately mid-1990s 4992](#)-levels. Challenges include: 1) expanding the NPGS operational capacity and infrastructure to reduce PGR management backlogs and meet increased demand for PGR and associated information; 2) increased operational costs (labor, inputs, overall inflation). See <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2022/june/investment-in-u-s-public-agricultural-research-and-development-has-fallen-by-a-third-over-past-two-decades-lags-major-trade-competitors/?cpid=email#>; 3) NPGS personnel transitions—hiring, training, etc.; 4) developing and applying cryopreservation and/or in vitro conservation methods for clonal and some seed PGR; 5) BMPs and procedures for managing accessions (and breeding stocks) with an increasing diversity of GE traits in more crops, the occurrence of adventitious presence (AP), and the products of gene editing; 6) acquiring and conserving additional PGR, especially of crop wild relatives. To address some of these challenges, G. Volk (ARS-Ft. Collins) and P. Byrne (CSU-Ft. C.) lead a project, supported by ARS and a NIFA grant, to design and develop a training program for PGR management to be delivered primarily through distance-learning. The

PGR Management Training is a three module, 3 credit hour Colorado State online course Plant Genetic Resources: Genomes, Genebanks, and Growers was taught for the first time in Aug.-Sept. 2022 (<http://pgrcourse.colostate.edu/>). Numerous PGR training/educational materials are also freely accessible from GRIN-University at <https://grin-u.org/>. Infographic posters for PGR, genebanks and conservation, and PGR and food security in 6 languages (download at <http://genebanktraining.colostate.edu/trainingmaterials.html>). Lastly, the [internal USDA review and clearance process for the Congressionally-directed NPGS Plan](#) is estimated ~~to be at~~ 85% complete. A [recently published article by NPGS staff publication on safeguarding plant genetic resources in the United States during global climate change](#) includes case studies, software for estimating future conditions, identification of potential adaptive strategies and actions.

Melanie Harrison provided an update on behalf of the Regional Plant Introduction Stations. The update included staffing, accessions, and distributions by each of the stations.

Ann Stapleton discussed NIFA's new and current funding opportunities, the agency's priorities, how the agency is addressing the needs of partners, and that the agency is beginning to realize its potential.

Liaison [representatives](#) provided brief reports. Concern was expressed about very valuable germplasm potentially being ignored and/or eliminated [from breeding programs](#) if selections [of germplasm for further breeding were](#) based solely on genetic markers.

Field Code Changed

**Written Brief: NRSP1 Management Committee Update for Joint COPs**  
**Prepared by: Paula Agudelo, NRSP1 Chair**

<b>NRSP1 Management Committee Members</b>
Paula Agudelo (Chair and AA), SAAESD Bret Hess (AA), WAAESD Jeanette Thurston (lead AA), NCRA William Miller (AA), NERA
Chris Hamilton (NIMSS lead), NCRA Rick Rhodes, NERA Gary Thompson, SAAESD David Leibovitz, NERA Cindy Morley, SAAESD Jennifer Tippetts, WAAESD Alton Thompson, ARD Julie Estrada (NIMSS User), Purdue University Robin Williams (NIMSS User), Clemson University Sara Delheimer (ESS Program Coordinator), Ex-officio Faith Peppers (NIFA Director of Communications), NIFA Liaison Alexis Nazario-Negron (NIFA PARS Director), NIFA Liaison
Email list: <a href="mailto:nrsp1@escop.info">nrsp1@escop.info</a> Committee Page: <a href="http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-1-management-committee/">http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-1-management-committee/</a>

The NRSP-1 management committee oversees the activities of the NRSP1 project, which includes NIMSS, led by Chris Hamilton and the Clemson Youth Learning Institute (YLI) NIMSS development team, and the Impact Writing program (<https://www.mrfimpacts.org/>), led by Sara Delheimer. The current incarnation of NRSP1 was approved for renewal at the Fall ESS meeting in September 2022 and officially started on 10/1/2022 and will expire on 9/30/2027. The current NRSP1 proposal and budget can be found at <https://www.nimss.org/projects/18866>.

The Committee meets quarterly to discuss any updates or issues with NIMSS, presented by NIMSS lead Chris Hamilton, as provided by the Clemson University development team. Occasionally, the Clemson YLI developers join the calls, as well. Sara Delheimer presents the quarterly Impact Writing Program update and Alexis Nazario-Negron and Faith Peppers provide NIFA reporting and communications updates.

Call notes, quarterly reports, and all other materials are posted in NIMSS and at <http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-1-management-committee/>. Meetings are well-attended by committee membership.

**Agenda Brief: National Research Support Project (NRSP) Review Committee (RC)**  
(<http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-rc/>)

**Date:** July 19, 2023

**Presenter:** Mark McGuire

**Action Requested:** For Eventual Vote by 1862 SAES Directors

**Committee Members:**

**Chair:** Mark McGuire (WAAESD)

**Executive Vice Chair:** Bret Hess (WAAESD ED)

**Members:**

Steve Lommel (SAAESD, incoming chair)

Gary Thompson (SAAESD ED, incoming executive vice chair)

Blair Siegfried as proxy for Matt Wilson (NERA)

Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (NCRA)

Erdogan Memili (ARD)

Robert Mattive (CARET)

Tom Bewick (NIFA)

Mike Schmitt (ECOP)

**Ex-officio:**

Jennifer Tippetts (WAAESD Administrative Management, Recording Secretary)

**Meeting:** An in-person business meeting was held at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, NV on June 1.

**Meeting Attendance:** Committee members- Steve Lommel, Mark McGuire, Bret Hess, Blair Siegfried (proxy for Matt Wilson), Bob Mattive, Tom Bewick, Mike Schmitt, Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Gary Thompson, and Jennifer Tippetts (recording secretary). Virtual guests- Noelle Cockett presented on NRSP8, Deanna Osmond presented on NRSP\_TEMP\_11, and Brad Gaolach presented an intent to submit a proposal to establish an NRSP on a National Urban Research and Extension Center.

**NRSP RC Accomplishments/Upcoming Plans**

- [Funding commitments from 2021 through 2027](#) would suggest that there is room to fund the existing NRSPs and consider new proposals.
- The proposal to renew NRSP8 (NRSP\_TEMP\_8: National Animal Genome Research Program) along with the proposed budget will be recommended for acceptance at the agInnovation annual meeting. The project's title will be changed to convey the new focus of the project. The project will be notified that an evaluation or impact analysis will be expected at midterm review.
- The proposal to establish a new Emerging Innovation NRSP (NRSP\_TEMP\_11: Building Collaborative Research Networks to Advance the Science of Soil Fertility: Fertilizer Recommendation Support Tool (FRST)) has been provisionally accepted. The writing team has been asked to respond to NRSP RC's concerns about managing expectations with the proposed tool. The response must address social, regulatory, environmental, and industry issues. The project's intent for future funding must be included in the response that is due August 15. Assuming acceptable responses to NRSP RC comments, NERA will need to appoint a representative to serve as AA.
- The presentation on an intent to submit a NRSP proposal to create a National Urban Research and Extension Center was delivered with more of a psychological lens instead of a data driven perspective. NRSP RC encourages drafting a proposal that involves more research and includes how Extension can be leveraged to support research activities. The 2025 submission deadline was recommended to allow sufficient time to

prepare a proposal that has a better chance of being accepted by NRSP RC and the Section.

- The midterm evaluation of NRSP4 was very positive. NRSP-RC commends NRSP4 for the extraordinary and tremendously impactful work being done. Unfortunately, NRSP RC requested a plan for transitioning off OTT rather than a description of the great work performed by NRSP4. NRSP RC requested that the proposal to renew NRSP4 include a budget that shows a reduction in reliance in OTT from NRSP, especially since IR4 received an additional \$4 million from NIFA and fewer fields are expected to be enrolled in the program due to regulatory pressures. NRSP RC recommended starting with a 15% reduction in OTT in the business plan that will be submitted with the proposal to renew.
- In addition to evaluating NRSP9's progress, the midterm review included consideration of the NRSP RC request to conduct an evaluation of NRSP9 and to demonstrate progress on development of an alternative business model that would lead to less reliance on OTT funding. The independent evaluation of the project's accomplishments was very thorough. The creation of a 501(c)3 non-profit was a tremendous step toward demonstrating NRSP9's commitment to developing an alternative business model and decreasing future reliance on OTT. Therefore, NRSP RC had no reservation with recommending continuation of NRSP9 through the current five-year cycle.
- [Revisions to NRSP guidelines](#) under consideration largely reflect NRSP RC expectations since creating two tracks. For example, contracts for services should be re-evaluated at each renewal and an impact analysis is required as part of the midterm review. agInnovation was included where appropriate throughout the document. Lastly, the reimbursement policy was updated to reflect that agInnovation will cover expenses while attending the in-person meeting.
- Recommendations to accept the proposal to renew NRSP8 and to create NRSP11, including the proposed budgets will be presented at agInnovation for a vote by 1862 SAES directors. A vote on the proposed revisions to the guidelines will also be included on the ballot.

## **Agenda Brief: Policy Board of Directors**

**July 19, 2023**

**PBD Representative: Mark McGuire and Marty Draper (alternate)**

The BAA Policy Board of Directors (PBD) convened three meetings held on July 21, 2022; November 7, 2022; and February 7, 2023. The following are highlights of the discussions and decisions of the PBD at those meetings. Marty Draper as the alternate for Mark McGuire represented the ESS at the February 7 meeting.

### **July 21, 2022 - Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington DC**

#### **Election Results – Nominations for BAA policy Board of Directors’ elections**

- 50% of BAA voting members are required to elect new PBD members (6 voting members/institution)
- New PBD members transition at the end of the APLU Annual Meeting
- New Members
  - Susan Sumner (member) & Amy Wright (alternate), APS
  - Michelle Rodgers, ECOP (ECOP will determine an alternate)
  - Cindy Ackers, Non-LGUs
  - Vonda Richards, 1890s
  - Raul Perez (member) & Tom Zimmerman (alternate), Insular Institutions
  - Jennifer Kushner (member) & Jose Cisneros (alternate), IAS
- Proposal for future consideration: sections bring forward candidates for approval rather than go to the full BAA membership to vote (requires Rules of Operations change)
- **Vote to accept to accept slate of new members passed.**

#### **Advocacy Overview**

- Action Items for next 5 months were discussed including ongoing actions for appropriations and Research Facilities Act (RFA)
- FY25 need to be thinking about opportunities (Extension and Health)
- September BAC deadline for sections’ priorities and justifications for One Ask

#### **Communications and Marketing Committee**

- Highlights of activities were presented including the NIDB subcommittee proposal.
- CMC membership structure change: PBD gave permission 2 years ago to structure appropriately.
- CMC new operational guidelines align with the BAC and CLP

#### **Institutional Assessments**

- Mid-term FY23 BAA budget was reviewed and “endorsement” from PBD was requested.
- **Vote of endorsement for the FY23 proposed budget passed.**

#### **BAA Rules of Operations (revisions discussed)**

- Rules of Operations last amended in Oct 2008 to reflect the new name “APLU”.
- Need to review:
  - 6 votes for each institution (Tribal colleges joined as consortium get single vote)
  - Processes for conducting business.
  - Incorporate the CMC
  - 2/3 membership to amend or change Rules of Operations

### **November 7, 2022 – Hyatt Regency, Denver, CO**

#### **Communications and Marketing**

Update on CMC activities and content/outreach materials

- Changes – added 5 regional communicators to advise and contribute content (starting as of this meeting) as well as an ESCOP regional representative and international section representative.
- NIDB transition to CMC will be effective April 2023, support incorporated into the CMC budget.

### **2023 BAA Assessments**

- 2022 collection rate is 92% to date - 100% achieved for the last 4 years.
- 2023 there will be no increase in the percentage paid for the assessments.
- Overall BAA budget proposal has increased but the percentage is based on amount of NIFA funding at institutions, which has increased.

### **Policy Board of Directors Election Process**

- Recent experience with the CMC vote to be a standing committee of the Policy Board brought to light the difficulty of making changes to the rules of operation that requires a supermajority (2/3) of the membership rather than those voting.
- Elections are overseen by the Policy Board of Directors
  - Challenge is determining the actual voting members of BAA.
  - Proposed to send an annual survey of Administrative Heads to verify who is responsible for research, Extension, academics, and international programs.
- Consider the process for the election of Policy Board members and alternatives.
  - Propose that the sections represented elect rather than an election involving all the BAA membership for each PB member.
- Policy to elect PBD chair is unclear as there is no formal rotation process.
  - Consider forming a nominating committee from the Policy Board members.
- During the July 2023 Policy Board meeting will vote on membership voting requirements.
- **Action Item - Policy Board of Directors “Rules of Operation” Rules Committee to be appointed.**

### **Review and Action: 2023 BAA Budget**

- PowerPoint version of the budget was presented for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 budget years.
- **Motion to adopt the 2023 BAA budget passed.**

### **Review and Action: 2023 CARET Budget**

- **Motion to adopt the 2023 CARET budget passed.**

### **BAC Recommendations FY2024**

- PBD is required to pass the BAC recommendations before taking to the hill at CARET/AHS
- **Motion to approve the BAC draft passed.**

### **Policy Board of Directors chair transition from Tom Coon (Ok State) to Ernie Minton (K State)**

### **February 7, 2023 (Members-only meeting)**

#### **CLP - Farm Bill**

- For Review, Discussion and Vote: 2023 Farm Bill Research Title VII Recommendations - [Long-form document](#)
- Recommend consideration of an overall funding request of \$8 billion for Farm Bill Title VII over the five-year life of the authorizing legislation. Research, Extension, and facilities would be core themes of any related advocacy. Mandatory Funding Request - [Research Facilities Act](#)
- Review and discuss support for Education Grants Programs for Hispanic-Serving Institutions

#### **BAC – Annual Appropriations Request – FY2024**

- For Review, Discussion and Vote: [Table of BAC recommended appropriations requests.](#)

**The next PBD meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2023, at the Joint COPs Summer Meeting in the Loew’s Kansas City Hotel, Kansas City, MO.**

**Agenda Brief: Science and Technology Committee** (<http://escop.info/committee/stc/>)

**Date:** July 19, 2023

**Presenter:** Bernie Engel

**Action Requested:** Presentation of Excellence in Multistate Research Award

**Committee Members:**

<p><b>Chair:</b> Bernie Engel (NCRA) <b>Past Chair:</b> Jody Jellison (NERA)</p> <p><b>Delegates:</b> Alton Thompson (ARD) John Yang (ARD) Frank Casey (NCRA) Shibu Jose (NCRA) Indrajeet Chaubey (NERA) George Criner (NERA) Nathan McKinney (SAAESD) Nathan Slaton (SAAESD) Gene Kelly (WAAESD) Chris Davies (WAAESD)</p> <p><b>Executive Vice Chair:</b> Bret Hess (WAAESD ED) Jennifer Tippetts (WAAESD Recording Secretary)</p>	<p><b>Liaisons:</b> Tara McHugh (ARS) Vacant (ECOP) Kevin Kephart (NIFA) Alejandro Calixto (NIPMCC) Tim Killian (SSCC)</p>
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**Meetings:** Virtual meetings are scheduled 1-2 pm PT/2-3 pm MT/3-4 pm CT/4-5 pm ET the first Monday of the month. Zoom connection information is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88134284585?pwd=enF0NmFIY25teUNKN3k5WUVoYUI2UT09>

Meeting ID: 881 3428 4585; Passcode: STC

**S&T Committee (STC) Accomplishments/Upcoming Plans**

- The STC prepared a two-year work plan (<http://escop.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ESCOP-Prioritiesand-Chair-Initiatives-2022.pdf>) that was approved by the ESCOP Executive Committee.
- Implementation of the work plan started with asking agInnovation members to help update and localize ESCOP Grand Challenge Briefs utilizing a standardized set of templates. Templates are available for State/Regional use as the first hyperlink under the Links on the STC main page (<http://escop.info/committee/stc/>) at: <http://escop.info/grand-challenge-templates/>.
- Regional associations have assisted STC with making changes to an [interactive map of branch experiment stations](#) by asking their members to send revisions.
- Per STC's request, each regional office has completed a [crosswalk](#) of their portfolio of multistate committees against emerging NIFA priorities and the ESCOP Grand Challenges.



- The agInnovation website has been launched and STC will be considering how to contribute content.
- In addition to submitting input to the Blue Ribbon Panel before the report on [Enhancing Coordination and Collaboration Across the Land-Grant System](#) was published, STC has begun to explore development of a matrix to evaluate successful collaborations among Land-grant Universities.
- The STC continues to seek opportunities to engage in the Climate Summit/Climate Horizon Scan process.
- Nominations for the Excellence in Multistate Research Award were reviewed and scored by voting members of STC. The winner of the 2023 Excellence in Multistate Research Award is NCERA137: Soybean Diseases. The request by STC is to present the award at the annual agInnovation meeting.

### **National Integrated Pest Management Coordinating Committee (NIPMCC)**

<http://escop.info/committee/nipmcc/>

NIPMCC held a virtual update meeting on Wednesday, May 10th, from 2 – 3:30 PM (EST). The committee continues to work on refining the Public IPM Enterprise Strategic Plan. A survey of IPM coordinators has been released that provides a sense of current infrastructure to take advantage of upcoming opportunities. The next steps are to complete the analysis of the infrastructure survey results and publish an article in the Journal of Integrated Pest Management. NIPMCC is developing links with Climate Smart Agricultural Systems to use multiple decision support systems for collaboration within that program. There was discussion about strategies to work with the LGUs to seek support in the next cycle of the Farm Bill. Examples include support (research and extension) for emerging invasive species (i.e., Spotted lanternfly), prevention, early detection, eradication, and management - Regenerative Agriculture /Climate Smart Agriculture initiatives. The fall meeting will be held at the University of Puerto Rico - Rio Piedras - San Juan/October 17-19, 2023. The NIPMCC Executive Committee will need a replacement for Marty Draper.

### **Social Sciences Subcommittee (SSSC)** <http://escop.info/committee/social-sciences-subcommittee-sssc/>

The subcommittee has struggled to gain traction over the last few years, which is largely a result of significant turnover amongst members. However, a subset of volunteers participated in a fruitful meeting with the NIFA liaison to STC regarding inclusion of social sciences in the climate sciences efforts. Alton Thompson agreed to co-advise SSSC along with Jeanette Thurston. An initial scoping meeting was held in which restructuring and retooling were discussed. SSSC also decided to hold an in-person meeting this coming fall.