

ESCOPE Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC): <http://escop.info/committee/blc/>
Combo November/December BLC Call NOTES
Tuesday, December 13, at 4 pm ET

Attendees: Scott Senseman, Marty Draper, Anton Bekkerman, Cindy Morley, Gary Thompson, Steve Lommel, Bret Hess, Vernon Jones, Jennifer Tippetts, Gary Pierzynski, Jeff, Mark McGuire (for PBD), Puneet Srivastava, Rick Rhodes, Sreekala Bajwa, Vernon Jones, Matt Wilson, Jeanette Thurston, Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton (recorder)

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Anton Bekkerman (NERA) Past Chair: Glenda Humiston (WAAESD) Incoming Chair: Steve Lommel (SAAESD)</p> <p>Delegates: Alton Thompson (ARD) Vernon Jones (ARD) Gary Pierzynski (NCRA) Marty Draper (NCRA) Puneet Srivastava (NERA) Steve Lommel (SAAESD) Scott Senseman (SAAESD) Sreekala Bajwa (WAAESD) Shawn Donkin (WAAESD)</p> <p>Executive Vice-Chair Jeff Jacobsen (NCRA ED); Gary Thompson (SAAESD ED) effective 1/1/2023 Chris Hamilton (NCRA AD; Recorder); Cindy Morley effective 1/1/2023</p>	<p>Liaisons: Jason Henderson (ECOP) Katie Frazier (CARET) Doug Steele (APLU) Caron Gala (APLU) Elizabeth Stulberg (Lewis-Burke, Advocacy) Paula Geiger (NIFA) Laura Jolly (BHS)</p>
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ACTION ITEM: Anton requested that Marty, Gary P., and Vernon with Alton Thompson set up conversations by mid-January with their trusted CGA contacts, collect feedback on this possible new thematic BLC approach, and then provide feedback for the next directors only BLC call.

Meeting Agenda/Notes:

1. Welcome and introductions – Anton
 - Anton also led introductions around the Zoom room.
 - Please refer to the attendee list above.
2. Approval of the 10/25 meeting notes (see: http://escop.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BLC_MIN_-_20221025.pdf)
 - Approved as distributed by consensus.
3. Approval of Today's Agenda – Anton
 - Approved as distributed by consensus.

4. Discussion on Potential Approaches to Themes/Areas of Impact – Anton

- Gary T. and Jeff have been working with LBA and Caron Gala for more regular advocacy updates to ESCOP leadership.
 - Background: A few weeks ago, Caron/Bridget discussed a potential ask of BLC to develop key themes/talking points, such as “Food Security = National Security.” BLC wonders where outputs from such asks are going/how these are used and would like more information on their impacts through more regular LBA updates.
 - Could BLC co-opt the development of these themes? Perhaps develop guiding principles or a roadmap on how these discussions and response to these asks are structured, making BLC more proactive rather than reactive. For instance, how is infrastructure a part of food security = national security.
 - Perhaps also think about how to align BLC more with other standing ESCOP committees and their themes and efforts. ESS would ultimately provide more leadership rather than responsive to LBA/FANR requests.
 - Also, could we provide such themes for how capacity, competitive, and infrastructure all combine and work together and move forward together, under common themes.
 - All this would require discussion and collaboration across committees. Is this theme approach too limiting? Do we want to try this new idea and at least see where it goes?
 - Group discussion main points:
 - Thematic-based approach is a good idea and easier for stakeholders to understand and relate to, however we still will need to be strategic to positively affect our three funding buckets (capacity, competitive, infrastructure).
 - More regular LBA/FANR updates are indeed warranted.
 - This idea will give us an opportunity to advocate for all buckets under one theme, but we also need to be clear on how we will do the work. Must also keep expectations clear for how states use their existing and new individual funds and how they relate back to main themes.
 - We want to keep our existing funding, but also be better positioned to justify new money.
 - Will money come through NIFA via the mechanisms of capacity and competitive budget lines or to individual states? Perhaps clear wording from Congress is needed to best execute funding distributions and for the intentional research funding of projects. Individual states might secure directed funds (via USDA ARS) or through other directed language. Congressional intent is provided in narratives that USDA NIFA then implements via capacity/competitive funds.
 - Vernon likes the idea for ARD system, noting though that it’s still very early to know for sure how ARD would be affected.
 - Nice to have different ways to ask the hard questions and request more funding. Good to be proactive, too.
 - Perhaps we should discuss the approach with a focus group of university government affairs (CGA) personnel to see if this approach would resonate with them. Just use a small group of trusted individuals for now, might be good to reach out to, then bring back for a future BLC discussion? Overall, the BLC group likes the idea, but still feels tentative about this wants more feedback and information before formally moving forward. A new way of thinking sounds good though.
 - Can we take this to our regional associations now? No, let’s get just a few people’s input first on whether this would work.

- Would this cause confusion around CLP themes? Hopefully not, this would be a re-organization of past efforts in a broader set of priority areas.
 - Jeff asked Vernon to discuss with Alton and a key advocacy person for more information around if this would work for ARD/1890s.
 - **ACTION: Anton requested that Marty, Gary P., and Vernon set up conversations by mid-January with their trusted CGA contacts, collect feedback on this possible new thematic BLC approach, and then provide feedback for the next directors only BLC call.**
 - Overall, let's indeed investigate this approach and see if it will work, otherwise, we'll try something else.
 - Something else to consider, even just rhetorically: Why don't we advocate for the full AFRI authorized amount?
 - There are concerns that it would adversely affect other NIFA funding lines across the LGU family.
 - Unsure if that's true; there are other sources across other USDA departments that wouldn't impact us. There is room to move money around.
5. Status of Future BLC Calls
- January 24 and beyond – Gary/Cindy take over BLC administration with the new Zoom link: <https://uada.zoom.us/j/99810222789?pwd=cFk2Z0Mrek1YOVNVSmRSY3ByRjVUUT09>, Password: 030119. Or join by phone: +1 312 626 6799 (US Toll) or +1 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 998 1022 2789
6. Other business, as needed
- Anton thanked Jeff for all his work and leadership with the BLC and wished him well.

Call adjourned at 3:58 pm CT.