

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

June 2023 Agenda- **Members Only**
Tuesday, June 27, 2023 3pm (CT)/4pm (ET)

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In attendance: Anton Bekkerman (Chair), Steve Lommel, Vernon Jones, Gary Pierzynski, Derek McLean, Scott Senseman, Sreekala Bajwa, Jason Henderson, Shawn Donkin, Jeanette Thurston, Bret Hess, Rick Rhodes, Gary Thompson (Executive Vice-Chair), David Leibovitz (Recorder)

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Anton Bekkerman (NERA) Past Chair: Glenda Humiston (WAAESD) Incoming Chair: Steve Lommel (SAAESD)</p> <p>Members: Alton Thompson (ARD) Vernon Jones (ARD) Gary Pierzynski (NCRA) Derek McLean (NCRA) Puneet Srivastava (NERA) Steve Lommel (SAAESD) Scott Senseman (SAAESD) Sreekala Bajwa (WAAESD) Shawn Donkin (WAAESD)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Jason Henderson (ECOP) Katie Frazier (CARET) Caron Gala (APLU) Elizabeth Stulberg (Lewis-Burke, Advocacy) Paula Geiger (NIFA) Laura Jolly (BHS)</p> <p>Executive Vice-Chair Gary Thompson (SAAESD ED) Cindy Morley (SAAESD)</p>
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Meeting Agenda:

1. Approval of the May meeting notes – **Approved by acclamation.**
2. Approval of today’s agenda – **Approved with one modification to include introductions and change the date to June. The agenda was later modified by the Chair to combine items 6 and 7.**
3. Welcome and Introductions – Anton
 - The group went through a series of introductions and the committee welcomed Derek McLean (UNL / NCRA) as its newest member, replacing Marty Draper.
4. Highlights from the Kansas City fly-in meeting – Anton
 - This ad hoc meeting was called on behalf of the BAC and CLP Chairs, and Doug Steele (APLU FANR VP). The intent was to bring leadership groups together with APLU and Lewis-Burke to discuss gaps in strategy and how to overcome them.
 - APLU provided context about how these groups have worked together in the past. Together they would like to have a more collaborative approach to advocacy strategy.
 - The ad hoc group moved to create an advisory group of leaders for Doug Steele, separate from the Policy Board of Directors. This group would be able to provide quick feedback on ideas to

put on the table and opportunities to pursue for FANR. The group would also explore crafting a 5–10-year strategic roadmap for collective advocacy efforts between BAC and CLP.

- Proposed representation on advisory group: CLP chair, BAC chair, PBD chair, BLC chairs, ECOP and ESS, representation from 1890s and 1994s.
 - The ad hoc group recognized that some units within FANR (e.g. Experiment Stations, Extension) have taken initiatives to coalesce around long-term strategy, and the national group cutting across these sections has fallen behind.
 - The focus of the meeting was to determine if the advisory concept was a good idea. Further discussions will be held at Joint COPs and a future engagement in the fall (TBD).
 - A component of the 5-10 year plan could be expanding the scope of advocacy beyond the USDA – what other federal agencies / sources of funding need to be in play? Historically there has been pressure from APLU to FANR to focus on USDA only; other APLU commissions focus on other agencies.
 - Concerns from the BLC:
 - It may be challenging to have a 5-10 year plan that can successfully balance consistency in messaging with the potential for our message becoming outdated.
 - 1890 and 1994 institutions have missions that are much more local. How can a national advocacy strategy be inclusive of everyone in the family, even those with a deeply local focus?
 - There is a concern that asking for increased NSF/NIH funding might not be our best option.
 - Seeing out 5-10 years might be difficult; it might be better to build off what we have rather than create something entirely new.
 - How does APLU already work with other organizations advocating for NSF/NIH funding? If there is no partnership, APLU should consider identifying its counterpart organizations and collaborating in its advocacy for NSF/NIH.
 - NIH has advisory councils composed of scientists who are the primary drivers of strategy. How can APLU engage with these groups?
 - Areas of increasing importance: Infrastructure, climate impacts, human health
 - Need to think big: what's the next multi-year AFRI initiative we want to pursue?
5. FY25 Advocacy Priorities Framework submission – Anton and All
- The submission explains what Agricultural Experiment Stations are and provides context to the ask we are handing off to APLU FANR / LBA for research advocacy.
 - There is an ask for increased capacity funding, and a re-framing for our AFRI ask: the authorized amount is \$700M and we have not gotten there. How quickly do we want to get there? And what will we do with the \$700M?"
 - BLC members proposed we leverage our competition with China on public investment in agriculture as part of this ask.
 - A communications effort is important: we need to be able to explain the impact of innovative, technical science (e.g. gene editing) in a consumable manner.
 - Communications example: Oklahoma State University produced a 90-second video to define what the experiment station is and explain how it interacts with extension and academic programs. Great for use at field days/events, easy to repurpose for staff and administrators at all levels.
 - Some congressional delegations don't believe in climate change and won't receive our messaging as helpful to the agricultural community. We need to be sensitive of audiences who believe in anti-science rhetoric and consider re-framing our message to approach those groups.

- The layman doesn't necessarily know about how agriculture impacts daily life. It's not just "Cows and plows"; agriculture impacts packaging, produce, food safety. "Food security/national security" message framing is more productive than "Climate change/sustainability" framing. In the wake of COVID-19, market shock and food security are important and top of mind for all Americans.
 - How can the Research Facilities Act be linked to the national security message framing? NCRA is working on examples of how the current state of facilities are affecting the ability to do research.
 - The document identifies five main topic areas of focus for ESS/agInnovation:
 - Food security is national security
 - Climate resilience
 - Advanced technology agriculture
 - Food systems' effects on nutrition and health
 - Global innovation leader
 - As the BLC's representative on the BAC and CLP, Anton would like to move forward in conversations viewing our asks through the lens of the five determined areas of focus. The group was generally supportive.
 - This framework will be discussed with the BAC and CLP groups at the Joint COPs meeting in Kansas City in July.
6. Strategies for developing coalitions with BAC partners and Joint COPs BAC session (Thursday, July 20) – Anton and all
- BAC partner groups include CARET, AHS, CGA, Extension, and 1890s
 - We should be intentional about creating conversation-based agendas when we meet. Set up discussions around long-term strategy, eliminate reporting/updates and transactional business. BLCs of both research and extension have been successful at doing so.
 - Investment in internal communication is important. Having a mutual understanding of where we're coming from by the time we get into a room together is important to prevent knee-jerk responses in advocacy strategy.
 - Institutional Government Affairs representatives may have strong relationships established with VPRs – this could be our way into engagement with upper administration.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm CT / 5:00 pm ET.