

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

April 2023 Agenda- **Members Only**  
Tuesday, April 25, 2023 3pm (CT)/4pm (ET)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://uada.zoom.us/j/99810222789?pwd=cFk2Z0Mrek1YOVNVSmlRSY3ByRjVUUT09>

Password: 030119, Or join by phone: +1 312 626 6799 (US Toll) or +1 646 558 8656 (US Toll)

**Attendees:** Steve Lommel, Alton Thompson, Anton Bekkerman, Vernon Jones, Mat Wilson, Marty Draper, Rick Rhodes, Chris Hamilton, Shawn Donkin, Scott Senseman, Sreekala Bajwa, Gary Thompson, Cindy Morley

**Committee Members:**

<p><b>Chair:</b> Anton Bekkerman (NERA) <b>Past Chair:</b> Glenda Humiston (WAAESD) <b>Incoming Chair:</b> Steve Lommel (SAAESD)</p> <p><b>Members:</b> 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><b>Liaisons:</b> Jason Henderson (ECOP) Katie Frazier (CARET) Caron Gala (APLU) Elizabeth Stulberg (Lewis-Burke, Advocacy) Paula Geiger (NIFA) Laura Jolly (BHS)</p> <p><b>Executive Vice-Chair</b> Gary Thompson (SAAESD ED) Cindy Morley (SAAESD)</p>
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**Meeting Agenda:**

- **Approval of March minutes by acclimation**
- Ag Research Infrastructure (ARI) update –Matt Wilson and Rick Rhodes gave an update on how the ARI group and the BLC can effectively work together.
  - ARI group is having conversations about long-term planning and opportunities for the research infrastructure initiative, which has primarily focused on how infrastructure funding could be made available (not “allocated”) to institutions. Current Research Facilities Act (RFA) language states that grants requiring match will be limited to only one per state. We are assuming a competitive grant structure and it is unclear what would constitute “match.”
    - Alton Thompson and Jeff Jacobsen drafted a working document outlining various scenarios for equitable distribution of funds based on institution size, grant portfolio size, USDA EPSCoR designation, and minority serving status.
    - One idea is to have a competitive program for all applicants where 30% of the funds are set aside for competitive proposals from smaller institutions, EPSCoR-eligible, MSI, etc.
    - How do states with multiple capacity-funded institutions compete for RFA funding?
- BLC discussion summary

- Being at the forefront on infrastructure is important and may present an opportunity for a topics-based advocacy approach that would address how funding is used to enable solutions to issues that will resonate with legislators.
  - Background and information (e.g., 1-page documents) on topics can provide the “why” to build an advocacy narrative in conjunction with the larger advocacy efforts by the BAC, LBA, and FANR.
  - Legislative offices are aware of the infrastructure need and initiative. We need to go beyond developing awareness to focus on agriculture as part of the solution.
  - The relationship of “topics” and “funding lines” needs to be strategically considered when developing materials.
  - Regular reciprocal updates between the BLC and ARI will assist in developing a cohesive narrative.
- FY25 appropriations focus.
  - A new approach was discussed at the April 18<sup>th</sup> BAC meeting.
    - May 1: LBA will send feedback to our groups based on the justification slides presented last November.
    - June 15: each group submit their FY 25 justifications outlining the “why” for the appropriations request. Some groups may not change from the previous year.
    - The feedback will be organized and presented at the Joint COPS meeting in July.
      - How proscriptive does this need to be? Use the feedback to your best advantage in developing the justifications.
      - Any strategy or wholistic thinking in the feedback? Initially unit and group specific that will be put together for the joint COPS meeting.
  - What should we be focusing on in FY 25?
    - A systems level approach encompassing all agricultural research to illustrate the critical role of experiment stations and LGUs.
    - Focusing the strategy from the “what” to the “why” using the topical approach that could encompass more than the top 9 lines.
    - Marketing strategy that addresses what we provide when you invest in us.
    - Reduce competition among the lines by demonstrating the need for the whole system.
    - Build coalitions with our counterparts in the system (include the Board on Health and Human Sciences), considering strategies that other funding agencies (NSF or NIH) use for successful increases. Consider coalitions with our professional organizations.
- Building capacity considerations
  - Regional perspectives on capacity funding
  - Why have previous advocacy efforts not yielded results? This would be a good question to bring up when our liaisons are with us.
- Developing coalitions
  - Building coalitions with our counterparts is considered an important worthwhile activity.
- Action items:
  - Consider inviting Kelly Dalton, Executive Director of the Board on Health and Human Sciences to discuss her thoughts on health-related advocacy.
  - Develop a survey to solicit topic areas and who are primary coalition members.