ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC): http://escop.info/committee/blc/
September 26 2023 Agenda- In Person Meeting
Tuesday, September 26, 2023, 2:10-4:30 Room H

Attendees: Scott Senseman, David Monks, Gary Thompson, Jeanette Thurston, George Smith, Anton Beckerman, Sreekala Bajwa, Derek McLean, Shawn Donkin, Gary Pierzynski, Elizabeth Stulberg, Bill Hoffman, Alton Thompson, Cindy Morley

Committee Members:

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

Meeting Agenda:

- Welcome – Anton
- Approval of the August meeting notes – **Approved by Acclamation**
- **Charge from incoming agInnovation Chair George Smith**
    - George thanks the committee for the work they have done. Rather than delivering a charge, he believes in collaborative leadership and wants to hear input from the committee about challenges and opportunities. How do we come together to tackle some of these challenges, and what advice does the committee have for the incoming Chair?
    - Comments:
        - The two compelling initiatives will enable us to focus more deeply.
        - Capacity and infrastructure funding is linked.
            - Infrastructure is both physical and human capital.
            - What are the tangible impacts of poor facilities? We must show those negatives that have happened due to lack of capacity funding increases.
        - Rebranding as agInnovation should attract funding and supporters.

        - NIFA is foundational but we need to expand our umbrella and be more proactive to engage with other groups.
        - Promote interagency programs between NIFA and NSF, etc.
    - We most often operate from the "ask" side of advocacy but seldom operate from the "influence" side. Are there opportunities to influence the influencers who will be introducing legislation?
        - More proactive interactions.
        - University/Industry Consortium (UIC) - companies who interact with us know how they are impacted by our funding difficulties.
        - Interact with organizations who have paid lobbyists.
        - Leverage activities of our professional societies
    - Infrastructure: State appropriations for SAESs may be the source of matching funds for federal infrastructure funding. Possibly lay the groundwork by compiling state funding information across the system.
        - State support is variable across the system.
        - Continue the message of "Food security is national security" to advocate for federal support.
- How can we support the chair in the coming year?
    - Joint effort of the BAC will be a collaborative process. The path forward isn't totally figured out yet, however, the BAC effort can't go forward without the BLC involvement.
    - Identifying stakeholders for focused and targeted efforts. What connections do you have that can be leveraged?
    - Joint meetings with Extension.
    - Office of the Chief Scientist wants to hear from us.
    - Be ready to respond to Op Eds about agricultural research.

- **Discussion with LBA and possible questions/topics for starting discussions – Elizabeth Stulberg**
    - In what way does the agInnovation and BLC currently bring value to LBA and what other ways can we bring value to LBA?
        - Her charge is to be responsive to us, but not in a vacuum as LBA provides a balanced response to research/Extension/academic programs.
        - Agribusiness Association (from an advocacy standpoint) has never put research in their top 10 priorities however, the word "innovation" energizes them.
        - Farm Journal Foundation would be a good partner as they value research.
        - We must be aware that we can't advocate at cross purposes from the larger APLU/BAA organization.
        - **Preparation and opportunity. Preparation is knowing the players and leveraging relationships. Opportunity is when something happens in Congress, to leverage that preparation. When LBA sees opportunity, they need us to be prepared. Have the numbers ready. If you already have those numbers for your state legislature, sharing with LBA would be useful at the federal level.**

- Does Congress view SAESs as state organizations or a national-level public research network?
    - If we are talking to a state or district level person, we portray it as a state level issue.
    - If going to an ag committee, we talk it about as a national organization but give those state examples.
    - They care about their own state and their own districts.
- NSF Success: how is NSF pitching impacts and what is holding us back with USDA? Is there tension between competitive and capacity funding?
    - Funding from NSF comes from a different committee with different norms and different pressures. NSF has 2 things that USDA doesn't: (1) funding that goes into science does not come out of farmers pockets or food for women and children (NSF doesn't have budgetary push-pull of competing priorities), and (2) there is a huge amount of buy-in from the community of researchers for NSF and NIH. They have science policy boards that are made up of scientists. USDA advisory board (NAREEE Board) only has one scientist on it (agribusiness people in spots for the scientific community).
- Can we do something to make change occur, even if it is in the long term?
    - It has never been a major priority to fix the NAREEE board. The NAREEE board is written in the Farm Bill and is designed to be responsive to agribusiness.
    - Is there another way to do this without fixing the NAREEE board?
        - We may not want to put our political chips behind restructuring USDA's advisory board.
        - Professional societies have positions on the board and LGUs have 1 seat.
- Opportunities exist with the Department of Energy ARPA-E committee that has a budget higher than AFRI and could be a source of significant funding to ag research. Can we leverage our community to fill chair positions in ARPA-E and DARPA?
- What should the BLC ask for or expect from its relationship with LBA?
    - Quarterly meetings are reasonable.
    - Building a national picture is useful especially if you are already preparing it for State legislatures.
    - Need to engage scientific societies, commodities, and others as to the importance of capacity funding. Prioritize communicating that message among your professional societies.

- **Adjourn**