**agInnovation Science & Technology:** <http://escop.info/committee/scitech/>

**4.01.2024**

**4:00-5:00 pm ET**

NEW Zoom Link for 2024 <https://unr.zoom.us/j/81036274718?pwd=OHlHYXhkWlEyekI3NjcwREZ1dDJpZz09> Meeting ID: 810 3627 4718 Passcode: STC

**Committee Members:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Chair:** Nathan Slaton (SAAESD)  **Past Chair:** Bernie Engel (NCRA)  **Delegates:**  Alton Thompson (ARD)  John Yang (ARD)  Frank Casey (NCRA)  Shibu Jose (NCRA)  George Criner (NERA)  Jason Hubbart (NERA)  Vacant (SAAESD)  David Monk (SAAESD)  Gene Kelly (WAAESD)  Greg Cuomo (WAAESD)  **Executive Vice Chair:**  Bret Hess (WAAESD ED)  Jennifer Horton (WAAESD Recording Secretary) | **Liaisons:**  Tara McHugh (ARS)  Kevin Kephart (NIFA)  Roger Magarey (NIPMCC)  Tim Killian (SSCC) |

**Attendance:** Jason Hubbart, Kevin Kephart, Nathan Slaton, David Monks, Gene Kelly, George Criner, John Yang, Bret Hess, Greg Cuomo, Roger Magarey, Shibu Jose, Tara McHugh, Jenn Horton (recording secretary)

**Agenda:**

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Nathan welcomed members.
2. **Supporting the agInnovation Chair** –
   1. **NSF CASA-Bio Responses –** There was a series of questions in five areas, many of the areas had an overlap with agInnovation research priorities identified in the Science Roadmap. The responses were drafted and reviewed by the committee; updates were made. There were two responses that needed to be reduced to fit the character limit. The responses included all comments from STC members.



* 1. **Research Strategy Framework Working Group Meeting-** This meeting took place in Chicago with representatives from each region. The goal is to present the strategy document at the joint committee meetings in July and to complete the document by January 2025. The Chair is also presenting at an NCFAR Lunch-N- Learn in DC this September. Full details are in the document below. 

1. **Approval of February 5 and March 4 Minutes-** Shibu moved to approve the February minutes as presented. George seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Shibu moved to approve the March minutes as presented. John seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

1. **Discuss Ideas for 2024-2025 Workplan** 
   1. **Capacity Funding Acknowledgement-** Nathan shared that this is two parts; one to make sure we are acknowledging our capacity funding and our referee journal article and two to make our scientists aware of the benefits of open access and data sharing and data publication.
   2. Something that Nathan recently learned is that that USDA will make all peer reviewed scholarly publications and digital scientific research data assets arising from unclassified scientific research supported entirely or in part by the USDA accessible to the public. If the document is open access, then there is no issue. However, if it is not open access then you cannot take a copy and publish the document without infringement. If it is not open access, then a DOI must assigned to the publication.
   3. Jason asked what the incentive is to submit? How can it be marketed to faculty? If this process is improved this would be mutually beneficial to the researcher and NIFA. Kevin shared this is a requirement for competitive and capacity. Kevin questioned what level are people in compliance with this requirement? The objective is to have everyone come into compliance. The committee agrees that on the competitive side researchers are generally aware and in compliance.
   4. Tara shared from an ARS perspective; ARS is working on implementing the fairly new regulations. This is a period of transition and ideally the research will be more widely utilized.
   5. Discussion ensued regarding incentives to publish data sets and the benefits. It was recommended that Paul Wester from NAL join a later meeting to help answer questions and provide further information.

<https://submit.nal.usda.gov/>

* 1. **Open Access/Data Commons**



1. **Liaison Reports** –

**ARS-** Tara shared that the budget was passed. Getting the appropriated funds to each location is in process. The Annual Research Planning process has just begun. Bret noted at the recent spring meeting many directors are concerned about the ARS 2025 budget that includes several cooperation agreements that may be at risk. Tara said they are waiting for 2024 before they can roll out 2025, but 2025 is being called the “skinny” budget. Tara will share once they have finalized the 2024 budget. Bret noted that the 2025 ARS budget indicates many cuts are going to be made because the work is already being completed by universities, however, the work would not be possible without the joint cooperation.

**NIPMCC-** Rodger shared NIPMCC will be completing their strategic plan later in 2024. The hope is to use some of the grand challenge templates in the rollout. Roger questioned if the research strategies roadmap could be a tool in completing the strategic plan? Nathan shared that the primary session in Chicago was discussion regarding updates. agInnovation would welcome any specific information regarding the roadmap. Bret shared that the three topic areas were identified by the members of the working group completing a survey. As the document continues to be developed it would be helpful to include information from committees like NIPMCC. Gene agreed there is an effort not to duplicate work being completed by national committees, but it continues to be developed.

**NIFA-**

**NIFA reporting system** is still under development as REEport is being phased out. The financial module is still under development, with anticipation of completion in the next few months. Please make sure that the financial people have access are collecting the required material. There will be a webinar for training, Kevin will share once he has the information on the webinar.

**Grant Modernization**-There is a big effort around grants modernization – phasing out the old system (grants.gov) to an ERA system. In FY25 there will be a transition to the new eRA system. In the later part of FY25 is to be fully utilizing ERA.

**Communications-** the communication staff want to work with faculty and staff to ensure official NIFA logos and citations are being used. Please use the updated logo. Bret recommends having Faith send a notice regarding the logo through the regional offices.

**Civil Rights Reviews –** with any questions, please speak with Vidal Grey. He is the primary point of contact.

**Allocated Funds Error-** Letters recently went out regarding errors in the allocation of funds. NIFA is working on making updates and reconciliations.

**Federal Budget-** Kevin shared that NIFA is implementing the budget. The proposed budget for FY25 has some increases, as well as a decrease for McIntire Stennis.

**Additional updates are included in the attached file:**



1. **Meeting Times Reminder** – 4-5 pm ET the first Monday of each month
2. **Currently scheduled meetings: May 6, June 3, ~~July 4,~~ August 5, ~~September 2~~**
3. **Adjourn**