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

**02.10.2025**

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

**Zoom:** https://unr.zoom.us/j/89964267384?pwd=ZJzijlRc4tbJa8uJwCOP7z9GQ3tUDQ.1

Meeting ID: 899 6426 7384; Passcode: west

**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)  Tom Zimmerman (SAAESD)  David Monk (SAAESD)  Gene Kelly (agInnovation- West)  Greg Cuomo (agInnovation- West)  **Executive Vice Chair:**  Bret Hess (agInnovation- West ED)  Jennifer Horton (Recording Secretary) | **Liaisons:**  Tara McHugh (ARS)  Kevin Kephart (NIFA)  Roger Magarey (NIPMCC)  Tim Killian (SSCC) |

**Agenda:**

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Nathan welcomed members.
2. **Roll Call** – Nathan Slaton, Frank Casey, Jason Hubbart, Shibu Jose, David Monks, Alton Thompson, Matt Yost (for Greg Cuomo), Bret Hess, Kevin Kephart, Tom Zimmerman.
3. **Approval of January Minutes** – Shibu motioned to accept the minutes as submitted, Jason seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
4. **Progress on developing validated talking points in support of the Roadmap** – Bret contacted Gary Thompson to get clarification about how STC could support the effort and to request the information that the working groups utilized to develop the three pillars. Bret noted that STC’s involvement in rolling out the roadmap has been put on hold for now. There have been revisions made to the documents, and with the inclusion of Extension, a Roadmap Governance Committee has been created to provide oversight of the joint effort. The STC recommendation to compile a list of experts for the science focus areas then have the experts engage in a series of surveys similar to a delphi process was shared with Gary. It is uncertain if this process is necessary until the resources utilized by the working groups are reviewed by STC. It is also possible that STC’s involvement will be delayed until a communications firm is hired to help develop talking points. Release of the agInnovation part of the roadmap is expected to occur at the agInnovation membership meeting on March 5th, but the exact content is still under development. The consensus among STC was to wait for more information, which should be available at the next STC meeting.
5. **Liaison Reports-**

**Kevin, NIFA**- Kevin has been serving as the Acting Deputy Director for NIFA since January 19. Kevin mentioned the administration’s plans to have people return to work in federal offices, and there is uncertainty surrounding the situation. The NIFA RFAs, like RFAs posted by other funding agencies, were removed from the NIFA website for review by the new administration. NIFA is waiting on guidance regarding what to do with the RFAs. It is anticipated that some sections may be removed or modified. Kevin also noted that funding recommendations that had not been processed prior to inauguration day are on pause. He advised against taking information from media sources at face value and clarified that the OMB memo that put active projects on pause was later rescinded, allowing most projects to resume work and draw down funds. He also mentioned that the monthly shutdown of ASAP occurred during the same week, causing confusion. Regarding the current status of NIFA's operations, Kevin emphasized that they are still processing post-award work, such as no-cost extensions and progress reports. Transferring awards from one institution to another, however, is paused because it would involve reopening the award at the new institution. New funding is paused, particularly for projects funded by the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure and Jobs Act. Kevin also noted that they are waiting for guidance on how to proceed with existing projects. Frank raised a concern about the risk of incurring expenses that may not be reimbursable and Shibu inquired about revising Hatch projects with certain keywords. Kevin advised them to wait for guidance. Regarding Shibu’s inquiry about F&A rates, Kevin mentioned that NIFA's F&A rates range from 0 to 30% depending on enacted legislation of the agency’s multiple funding line. He also mentioned that NIFA has not received any questions from OMB or OBPA about NIFA grants. Nathan asked about the status of proposals submitted last year that are in the review process, to which Kevin confirmed that these have been paused. Kevin also mentioned that they have stopped convening panels, processing recommendations, and providing technical assistance due to the uncertainty surrounding changes in their RFAs.

1. **Excellence Awards Update** –A message sent on behalf of STC through the regional offices to make all of the Excellence Awards nominations due on February 28 was very well received. Some regions had already extended their regional deadlines and others noted that the extra time would help with receipt of more quality nominations.
2. **Open access and publishing datasets presentation recording:**

[Public Access to Scholarly Publications and Digital Scientific Research Data- STC Fall 2024](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LZIQ5BxD2s)

Matt raised an issue with reporting on NIFA competitive grants. It seems that REEport has been revised to require submission of data. Following discussion, it was decided to reach out to the new PARS director at NIFA for clarification.

Additional discussion centered around how managing the risk of funds that require regular drawdowns varies among universities and efforts to “sanitize” reports and newsletters by changing words to make the content less politically charged.

1. **Zoom meetings: 2nd Monday each Month (1 pm PT/2 pm MT/3 pm CT/4 pm ET)**
2. **Adjourn**