

**ESCOP Social Sciences
Subcommittee Meeting**

**February 27-28, 2025
Washington, DC**

Location

National 4-H Council
655 15th Street NW, Suite 220
Washington, DC 20005

Attendees: Kristina Hains, Kevan Lamm, Erica Irlbeck, Mike Retallick, Curtis Friedel, Emily Buck, Rebecca Lawver, Bryan Hains, Neil Knobloch, Daniel Tobin, Shannon Norris-Parrish, Terrence Thomas, Corinne Valdivia (virtual), Matt Fannin (virtual)

- Called to order: 9:21am February 27, 2025
- Introductions, Review of Agenda

Presenter: Jocelyn Richgels and Keith Mueller (Virtual). *The Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)*

- Limited updates at the moment, focus on reconciliation bill
- Developed Comprehensive Rural Wealth framework (based on Community Capitals Framework)
 - o Collaborating with private insurance partner to implement
 - o Have, or planned, to implement in Indiana, Iowa, and Michigan
- Three major focus areas:
 - o Health – rural health value
 - o Policy – analysis and input
 - o Research Center – RUPRIHealth.org
- Previously hosted a summit on rural health
 - o New vision: community focus, message matters, build from assets, address gaps (public health, workforce, payment reform, long term care)
 - o Actions:
 - Financial and payment reform, sustainable funding models
 - Strengthening the workforce
 - Enhance leadership and collaboration
 - Improve technology and data (e.g. broadband)
- Other notes:
 - o Housing (HUD Funding)
 - o Center for local and state policy
 - o Medicaid is very important to rural
 - o Farm Bill has a large impact on rural

Presenter: Wendy Naus, Executive Director COSSA. *The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)*

- Advocacy organization
- Currently federal funding is under a continuing resolution – expires March 14
- COSSA.org has analysis of all Executive Orders available
- Focus areas: Science funding, conducting research, scientific workforce, place of science in society
- Recommendations to engage in personal communications with policy makers

Presenter: Wendy Fink, *APLU Associate Vice President Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources*

- Very dynamic situation, policy and directive shifts happening rapidly
 - o In general, it is important to relay specific impacts from efforts and policy changes through professional societies
 - o Recommendation is to work through government relations/affairs offices as appropriate – preparation is important
- Land-grant.org – available to provide APLU information and requests
 - o Some indication of both House and Senate to support Farm Bill in 2026
- The National Land-Grant Impacts Database is a powerful way to demonstrate the value of social science. A recommendation is to coordinate with local contacts to ensure social science is represented in impacts which are sent to APLU from the institution.
- <https://ag-ngine.cals.ufl.edu/> - program to address recruitment within higher education and agriculture.
 - o According to USDA employment outlook report there were approximately 58K roles available and 38K graduates.
 - o A new outlook report is upcoming, expectation is for the need gap to expand

Review & Discussion of 2024 Action Items

- Review and approval of Minutes
 - o Moved to approve by Mike Retallick, second by Bryan Hains
 - o Motion passed, minutes approved
- The committee will need to elect a new S&T Committee representative
- NSF CASA-Bio grant – the committee did not participate in the public comment process
- Previous suggestion to engage with successful grant writers – Emily Buck indicated an interest in continuing to pursue this action if it was of interest to the committee
- General discussion
 - o Suggestion to focus on “translational research” processes to describe typical social science efforts. For example, connecting potential users with new technology early in the process.
 - o Suggestion to share findings from the ESCOP meeting with local institutions as well as professional associations – perhaps in the form of a position brief, not a full white paper

- Suggestion to proactively communicate the value of social science
- Open discussion regarding the goal and need for the committee
 - Important to develop stories to better capture the impact and importance of social science work
 - Challenges with access issues – need to interface with Extension

Presenter: Laura Wood (Virtual). *National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR)*.

- Advocacy organization (focus on Congress)
- Focus across REE – attempt to increase funding (Build Back Better program)
- Food is the third largest sector of GDP
- A current challenge is the speed at which change is occurring – proactive vs. reactionary
- When communicating with policy makers, impacts and good examples are powerful
- Mixed insights regarding continuing resolution and mid-March effects
- Reminder that all politics are local and it is important to know local representative

Presenter: Joshua Stull, *USDA Stakeholder Affairs Officer*

- RFAs currently under review for compliance with Executive Orders, expect to be re-released when aligned
- Secretary of Agriculture is in place, Chief of Staff also in place
- Offer to assist facilitating tours of the USDA Whitten Building in Washington D.C.

Presenter: Dr. Jeanette Thurston, Executive Director, *agInnovation North Central Region*

- Current grants from USDA NIFA are under review, there may be the need to edit objectives and/or plans of work
- The 10 year organization road map has been drafted, under discussion with other stakeholders. For example, Extension is working to develop additional pillars for the broader framework. (<https://www.aginnovation.info/research-roadmap-2025>)
- Top focus areas:
 - Research facilities act, associated with the Farm Bill
 - Capacity programs
- Continue to monitor administration priorities

Review & Action Items

- Nominations for committee Chair-Elect/Secretary were opened
 - Curtis Friedel nominated to serve as Chair-Elect/Secretary
 - No further nominations were made
 - Nominations were moved to be closed by Neil Knobloch, seconded by Bryan Hains, and approved unanimously
 - Curtis Friedel was elected unopposed
- S&T Committee representative nominations were opened, no nominations were made, will be rediscussed Friday February 28.
- Action Items for next year:
 - Meeting date for 2026
 - Possibilities to connect to the agInnovation roadmap

- Potential to develop a paper to capture the importance of social science for different audiences
 - One-page preferred over white paper
 - Case-studies? Impact?
 - Developed a shared working document for team collaboration
- Adjourned 5:07pm
- Called to order 8:33am, February 28, 2025

Review & Action Items

- Nominations for committee S&T liaison were opened
 - Kris Hains self-nominated to serve
 - No further nominations were made
 - Nominations were moved to be closed by Shannon Norris-Parrish, seconded by Neil Knobloch, and approved unanimously
 - Kris Hains was elected unopposed
- Dates for 2026 meeting
 - Mid-February through end of March discussed
 - Considerations: COSSA overlap? AgOutlook Forum? Congress in session (pricing)? Costs (lodging, travel, etc.) a consideration.
 - Leadership team (Kevan Lamm and Curtis Friedel) will investigate and provide timing recommendations to the committee ASAP.

Presenter: Bernard Burrola, *APLU Vice President, International, Community & Economic Engagement*

- LGU and Community engagement highly connected
- Focus on Talent – Innovation – Place overlap
- Studies have shown a decline in perceptions regarding the value of higher education in general
- Developing the perception of an engaged institution
- 1999 Kellogg Report still used extensively
- Based on metrics there are strong indications of commitment to engagement
- June 29 – July 1: CECE Conference, New York (Cornell University Roosevelt Island)
- In general, the more touchpoints with communities the better
- Exemplars? Winners for the W.K. Kellogg award(<https://engagementscholarship.org/grants-and-awards/the-w-k-kellogg-foundation-community-engagement-scholarship-award/recipients>)

Presenter: Dr. Marisol Morales, *Executive Director, Carnegie Elective Classifications & Assistant Vice President American Council on Education*

- Opportunity to connect knowledge and resources of institutions with the needs of communities

- It is important to build partnerships thoughtfully including needs and limitations
Important to think about policies and structures to honor the time and effort of communities as well as faculty, staff, etc.
- Seek to ensure alignment between institutional mission and actions
- Creating a co-learning space is important
- Suggestions to improve:
 - Faculty development is key
 - Institutions should provide resources for faculty to learn
 - Make trained facilitators available to assist – move away from one faculty contact with communities to institutional contact with communities
 - Should develop an appreciation for engaged scholarship
 - Dedicated offices at institutions can help provide support and serve as single point of contact for communities and university personnel
 - Onboarding for community partners is important
- Classification process:
 - Evolves from cycle to cycle – intended to be completed by practitioners at the institution
 - “the process is the prize” – focus on process not outcome
 - Will begin to provide individualized feedback
- Resources:
 - <https://www.chancellor.pitt.edu/people/lina-dostilio>
 - <https://compact.org/>
 - <https://www.iarslce.org/>
 - <https://imaginingamerica.org/>
 - <https://engagementscholarship.org/>
 - *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* by Ernest Boyer

Review & Action Items for 2026

- Continued discussion regarding agInnovation framework
 - Coalesce around the importance of social science – what can social science do to support?
 - Suggestion to add, “Collaborative, social, technical & workforce” to the base of the model. Committee confirmed endorsement for the proposed modification.
 - Action items:
 - (1) Provide proposed adjustment to model
 - (2) Provide feedback regarding narrative to ensure social science is integrated
 - (3) Develop a 1-page summary regarding the value of social science
 - Set up a working folder for action items
 - Kris Hains volunteered to coordinate efforts with Jeannette, Kevan Lamm and Bryan Hains also volunteered to participate

Meeting adjourned at 11:50am