



2022 ESS Business Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2022, 1:30 pm – 5:00 pm ET
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD

In attendance: Chris Pritsos (Chair), Bret Hess (Executive Vice-Chair), David Leibovitz (Recorder), Matt Wilson (Incoming Chair), Jenn Tippetts, Usman Adamu, Tala Awada, Sreekala Bajwa, Anton Bekkerman, David Benfield, Olga Bolden-Tiller, Walter Bowen, Frank Casey, Wendie Cohick, Chris Davies, Shawn Donkin, Anne Dorrance, Susan Duncan, Leslie Edgar, Richard Elrod, Bernie Engel, Henry Fadamiro, Cory Gallo, David Gang, Caron Gala, Joleen Hadrich, Debora Hamernik, Christina Hamilton, Scot Hulbert, Glenda Humiston, Jeff Jacobsen, Gene Kelly, Kevin Kephart, Brou Kouakou, Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Christopher C. Mathis Jr., Mark McGuire, Nathan McKinney, David Monks, Cindy Morley, Saied Mostaghimi, Gary Pierzynski, Lara Prihodko, Rick Rhodes, Hector Santiago, Scott Senseman, Blair Siegfried, Ami Smith, George Smith, Margaret Smith, Puneet Srivastava, Doug Steele, Jurgen Schwartz, Alton Thompson, Gary Thompson, Jeanette Thurston, Kumar Venkitanarayanan, Eric Webster, Hongwei Xin

Agenda Item	Topic and Presenter(s)
1.0	<p><u>Call to Order – Chris Pritsos, ESS Chair</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of meeting Agenda and Minutes of September 29, 2021 ESS meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An agenda modification for this meeting was suggested to include a NIFA update. ○ The agenda with modification, and last year’s ESS Business meeting minutes were approved by electronic vote. (40-yes, 1-no) • Chair’s Interim Actions & Appointments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris Pritsos had the opportunity to join each regional spring meeting in 2022. ○ Introduced “Experiment Station Foundation Concept” to each regional Executive Committee, to explore the establishment of a 501c3 non-profit organization in support of national and regional activities of the Experiment Station Section. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional Ex Comms were supportive of the concept, and an ad hoc Foundation Concept committee was established. Membership: Chris Pritsos (Nevada, Reno), Gene Kelly (Colorado State), Puneet Srivastava (Maryland), Marty Draper (Kansas State), Jose Toledo (West Virginia State University), Alton Thompson (ARD), Jeff Jacobsen (NCRA), Bret Hess (WAAESD), Rick Rhodes (NERA), Gary Thompson (SAAESD)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Established an ESS Brand and Digital Marketing committee to explore rebranding and revitalize our digital marketing ○ Visited stakeholders and partners in Washington, DC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ American Farm Bureau Federation (supportive of ag research infrastructure effort) ▪ National C-FAR (recommended we set our infrastructure funding ask higher) ▪ USDA-NIFA and ERS, APLU BAA (CMC, FANR, ECOP, CARET, ACOP) ○ The Chair’s report of interim actions and appointments was approved by electronic vote. (38-agree, 2-abstain)
2.0	<p><u>Climate Summit Discussion – Gene Kelly</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have been tasked as a community to create a climate change roadmap and action plan. • A call for nominations for climate scientist has been released nationally and to each of the regional associations • 69 Nominations have been received from 15 universities • We underestimated the impact of climate change 20 years ago and have to engage in this work. • Letter of intent was sent to NIFA seeking approval for the summit • Four major areas where scientists are coming from: Soil Science, Plant Science, Social Science, Economists
3.0	<p><u>Foundation Concept Discussion: +Developing an ESS 501(c)3 – Chris Pritsos</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background: WAAESD established a 501(c)4 to provide flexibility in being able to conduct business (e.g. enter into contacts, host meetings) while avoiding university bureaucracy. • Cost of hosting a national ESS meeting ranges from \$75k-100k • Can an ESS 501c3 support an ESS or regional association activities? • The concept is being introduced to the full ESS membership. There is not a decision being made on <i>forming</i> a 501c3, but rather we are determining whether or not exploring the concept is a good idea. • Role of a 501(C)c3: fundraising in support of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ESS meetings with the goal of minimizing costs such as registration/membership fees ○ Regional association meetings ○ Other ESS activites<u>activities</u>/conferences (e.g. water network, climate change workshops, etc) • Universities are less inclined to help out if there is not direct benefit to their institution
4.0	<p><u>Ag Research Infrastructure (ARIA) Discussion – Chris Pritsos</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Momentum on the ARIA effort initiated by Past Chair Moses Kairo continues under Chair Chris Pritsos. • An ad_hoc committee was created to explore ARIA. Membership: Matt Wilson, Glenda Humiston, Chris Pritsos, Bernie Engel, Steve Lommel, Alton Thompson, Jeff Jacobsen, Bret Hess, Rick Rhodes, Gary Thompson. The

	<p>committee will seek to establish leadership within its membership as well as incorporate representation from APLU BAA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to identify both short-term and long-term strategies for addressing our infrastructure needs – we can't afford to wait and react to problems that arise. If we want to make an impact, we need to increase our ask. • The initial ARIA effort has been proactive already, but we do need a long-term strategy.
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>NIFA Update – Deb Hamernik</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIFA relocated from DC to Kansas City, MO in 2019. Today 334 staff at NIFA (~20 in DC) • Senior Executives must telework (in the office 2 days per pay period) • NIFA Staff have been working remotely since March 2020. • At this time, all new NIFA hires work remotely • REE personnel updates: Chavonda Jacobs-Young (Under Secretary), Josh Stull (Stakeholders Affairs Officer) • NIFA personnel updates: Dr. Dionne Toombs (Acting Director, 4/10/2022), Drenda Williams (Acting Senior operations and policy director), Davida Tengey (Chief of Staff), Gary Mayo (Legislative Affairs) • ESS is encouraged to volunteer on review panels or promote volunteering on review panels. • Training/Onboarding happening for over 250 new hires: AFRI Management, Capacity Management, NPL Orientation, Best Practices for Peer Review, Webinars with regional Executive Directors, Webinars with Extension Foundation, LGU2U program for NIFA staff to learn more about how LGUs administer grant funding • Next NIFA Listening Session to inform Science Priorities: November 2, 2022 • FY2023 Capacity RFAs have new language asking for project/performance site location(s) as well as a project abstract form describing how funding will be used. Deb Hamernik provided guidance on these forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site Location – List your state or AES office address ○ Abstract – Use Executive Summary language from the Plan of Work (Critical issues, high-level goals) – don't reinvent the wheel
<p>6.0</p>	<p><u>ESS Brand Vote and Digital Marketing Strategy Discussion – Erica Mirich, Pivot Creative and Consulting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erica Mirich (Pivot) walked through the entire ESS brand and digital marketing Initiative process as a follow-up to Joint COPS discussion • Bret Hess and Chris Pritsos approached Erica asking for help to strengthen ESS identity to external audiences, positioning ESS as the global leader in agricultural research innovation and discovery. • Deliverables will include: Digital assessment, Brand development, new Website design/implementation • The idea of this work is to gain inertia and momentum for change so ESS can explore and experiment with what works to define who we are and what we do. • Both Internal and External audiences frequently don't know what

	<p>ESS/ESCOP stands for or does. The ESCOP logo has unknown origins and resembles different things to different people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys were distributed to gain feedback on ESS mission and vision. Mission is “what you do”, vision is “what you want to be” • Keywords and values from committee comments were blended to create some new brand name suggestions. (winner: AgInnovation) • Purpose and vision statements were refined to create a tagline: <i>Science that feeds the world</i>. A clear callout to Science is important in this policy environment, we must be unapologetic about the work that we do. • Logo concepts were shared with the committee. Logo concepts cannot graphically represent 100% of what we do as a system, but they seek to generally represent us well. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Erica presented the two final logo concepts which will be voted on <u>today at this meeting</u>. • The new front facing website is under development and will be hosted on the Wix platform. The site will match the aesthetic of our logo. • Search engine optimization can help us become the #1 Google result for AgInnovation. • Logo concept #1 was chosen by the ESS directors in attendance by electronic vote (34-option 1, 6-option 2). <p>Directors also voted to explore the concept of filing for a trademark of AgInnovation and our logo (28-yes, 10-no, 1-abstain)</p>
7.0	<p><u>NRSP RC Recommendations Vote – Mark McGuire</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation on NRSP-1 renewal: this NRSP supports NIMSS and the MRF Impacts program. The proposal was well-received in peer review <u>and</u> by AAs and NRSP RC members. The annual funding request includes a nominal increase over time to support typical maintenance and minor NIMSS funding increases. The overall funding decreases in this cycle due to the MRF Impact Writing no longer hiring a social media manager. The NRSP RC’s recommendation of NRSP1 renewal will be voted on by ESS at this meeting. • Recommendation on NRSP10 budget modification and termination: this project team has not been submitting annual reports. To catch up, AAs pushed NRSP10 leadership to submit a report which covered the previous 3-year period (the report was brief). NRSP10 AAs recommended funding the project that was already approved, but cutting funding in half in 2024 because the project’s response to AA review was minimal. The NRSP RC recommends termination of NRSP10 at the end of its current project cycle. The NRSP RC’s recommendation of NRSP10 budget modification and termination plan will be voted on by ESS at this meeting. • (Informational item) There is a new NRSP proposal in development: Building Collaborative Research Networks to Advance the Science of Soil Fertility: Fertilizer Recommendation Support Tool (FRST). • The NRSP RC’s recommendations of NRSP1 renewal and NRSP10 budget modification/termination were voted on electronically by 1862 Directors at the ESS meeting. The vote on NRSP RC’s recommendations passed unanimously.

<p>8.0</p>	<p><u>AG-NGINE Concept Vote – Matt Wilson</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural National Graduate Institutional Name Exchange – a database meant to help with recruitment and placement of prospective graduate students to programs • AG-NGINE was initiated by the Southern region and is now being advertised nationally for participation. • Institutions would approach students and encourage them to self-enter data for AG-NGINE. Self-entered student data is compliant with FERPA. • The concept is modeled after ENGINE, an engineering college database which was successful in increasing the pool of high-achieving students, domestic students, and historically underrepresented students. • There would be an annual process of collecting student data, uploading to AG-NGINE database, and preparing the data for download by participating institutions. • Incoming Chair Matt Wilson is seeking approval from ESS to explore the AG-NGINE concept. The concept might include a 3-year commitment from ACOP and ESCOP to establish the database, implement working documents, grow institutional contacts and communications channels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A single host institution would manage the database and overall initiative. University of Florida is interested. ○ A ~\$60k annual commitment would split between ACOP/ESCOP. ○ Beyond year 3, maintenance phase would cost ~\$20k/annually • The Incoming Chair’s ESS budget proposal will include a \$50k line item to support the launch of the AG-NGINE concept. • There could be an opportunity to follow AG-NGINE students beyond their graduate programs, into their careers. • At this meeting, an electronic vote was held on whether to explore AG-NGINE by ESS as a concept. Directors voted to approve this exploration process. (34-agree, 1-disagree, 4-abstain) • An electronic vote was held on the host institution (University of Florida) for the AG-NGINE Database. Directors voted to approve UF as the host institution. (30-yes, 3-abstain)
<p>9.0</p>	<p><u>2021 & 2022 ESS Financials – Chris Pritsos</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESS budget closeout does not happen until the end of the calendar year. Projected 2022 figures were presented. • In CY2021, ESS closed with a net balance of \$206k. • CY2022 is the final year of ESS paying its obligation to CMC as a section. Several ESS budgeted lines in CY2022 were not fully spent. Projected ESS net balance of \$136k at the end of CY2022. <p><u>2023 ESS Budget Proposal – Matt Wilson</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100k commitment to CMC goes away in CY2023. • Communications and advocacy line (\$15k, new 2022) and AG-NGINE line (\$50k, new 2023) were included in the Incoming Chair’s ESS budget proposal. • A ballot will be distributed electronically to approve this budget 30 days beyond this presentation. No budget decisions are being made at this

	meeting.
10.0	<p><u>ESS Chair Nomination Vote – Hector Santiago</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Smith (Michigan State University) was nominated by NCRA to serve as ESS Chair in 2023-24. • Directors voted electronically on the nomination of George Smith as incoming ESS Chair. The vote was approved unanimously. (35 votes-yes) • George accepted the nomination and invited ESS Directors to attend the 2023 meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
11.0	<p><u>Changing of the Guard – Chris Pritsos/Matt Wilson</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Pritsos thanked Directors for the opportunity to meet with and interact closely with each of the regional associations. The Executive Directors were recognized for the work that they do – helpful, instructional, friendly. • As Executive Vice Chair, Bret Hess was thanked for making Chris’s term effective and easy to work through. • Chris presented the gavel to Matt Wilson-WVU who assumes the role of ESS Chair.
12.0	<p><u>What to Expect on the Hill in November and Beyond – Doug Steele, APLU and Bridget Krieger, LBA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMC is now a standing committee of the BAA. This is an exciting opportunity to engage ag communicators in the process of promoting our activities and raising our profile as LGUs. • APLU is excited to continue working with ESS on the Climate Summit. • We need to make the public care about and find enthusiasm around Capacity funding. • Bridget Krieger from Lewis-Burke Associates addressed ESS on current activities in DC. Political votes on a continuing resolution will be happening soon. No government shutdown is expected. LBA is actively working with the BAC to get the 2024 budget priorities drafted this fall. • Farm Bill materials are anticipated for release this fall. New members in congress are expected to arrive in either political direction after November elections, especially in the House. • ESS Directors are encouraged to educate legislators on farm bill priorities, particularly on capacity funding – no one else is playing that role in Washington.
	<i>The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm ET.</i>