



**Northeastern Regional Association
of
State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors Meeting**

**The Admiral Fell Inn – Baltimore, MD
March 13-15, 2017**

Minutes

In Attendance:

Jan Nyrop
Bradley Hillman
Gary Thompson
Mark Rieger
Eric Wommack
Fred Servello
Jessica Leahy
Jody Jellison
Ted Andreadis
Adel Shirmohammadi
Rick Rhodes
David Leibovitz

- 1.) Call to Order and Introductions – Mark Rieger, Chair
 - Meeting called to order by Chair Mark Rieger, introductions from the meeting attendees
 - Agenda modification/approval
 - Agreement to be somewhat flexible with agenda due to low attendance and logistics surrounding Winter Storm
 - **Motion to accept the agenda was seconded and approved**
 - Approval of minutes of the September 20, 2016 NERA Meeting (Jackson, WY)
 - **Motion to approve minutes from Jackson, seconded and approved**
 - Approval of minutes of the January 5, 2017 NERA Conference Call
 - **Motion to approve minutes from conference call, seconded and approved**

- 2.) NIFA Update Questions/Comments – Bart Hewitt, Luis Tupas (both via Teleconference)
 - Still under Continuing Resolution through 04/28/2017. Running at slightly reduced operation until then. Most capacity programs received quarterly payments despite CR.

- RFAs for competitive programs will be released based on estimated 2017 funding level
- Ongoing work: NIFA is working on tactical science programs (IPM, detection/diagnostics, IR4, youth development) – pursuing \$700 million AFRI funding from Congress
- Capacity program evaluation with TEconomy currently undergoing review by office of the Secretary
- Strengthening State liaison program established in 2005. Trying to approve ability to reach out to LGU partners through state liaisons. Each state will have an NPL assigned responsible for: reviewing annual reports for capacity funds, reviewing plan of work, visiting institutions once every 2 years (more often if possible) to partner with state institutions and provide information to them on a regular basis. Info coming soon, you'll know who your state liaison is. Any NIFA questions can be directed to liaison/Luis/anyone at the Deputy Director Level. If you visit Washington, DC contact the State liaison who will host your visit with national program staff.
- State Liaison program will be formalized. Proper documentation will be distributed regarding expectations for the program. You'll know what to expect from them, they'll know how to present expectations to you. Regional representatives (Dr. Qureshi) will collect feedback, recommendations and input on how the liaison program should work.
- New subcommittee under Science + Tech council – National Subcommittee for Sustainable Food and Agriculture. To engage communities on sustainable production; will frame a document for the new administration.
- Food and Agriculture Cyberinformatics and Tools (FACTS) – addresses need for properly managing data in agriculture; integrating big data into food and ag system. Follows work and discussions from Chicago meeting in 2016; will have opportunities for grantees to lead workshops. NIFA Contact person for FACTS – Parag Chitnis.
- NIFA Gateway – provides users a portal for funding data accessible through NIFA Website; data goes back to 2002. Deploying updates to include search functionality. Plan of Work is suspended until 2020. Annual Report still due using the current software. In the revised POW you won't have to do much more in terms of projects. Anticipated release for POW is October 2018, so that 2020 POW can be uploaded in April 2019. The goal is to link projects you have to the planned program areas. You won't need to complete outcomes and indicators any longer.
- *Reminder: Request Prior Approval for purchases over \$5k, with a useful life over 1 year. Implementing this requirement for capacity grantees this year (2017).*
- NERAOC will be held in San Antonio 4/23-4/27 hosted by TAMU Agrilife and Prairie View A&M. Please remind your officers about this.

3.) Hatch Project and McIntire Stennis Project Review by NIFA – Luis Tupas, Bart Hewitt

- **Slides are posted on NERA website**
- Slide 3 (Proposal Outline) - you may have work in a competitive grant related to a Hatch proposal, but it's important to distinguish between the two. One of the reasons to reject a proposal is because it could be a verbatim copy of the proposal on the capacity/competitive side. It's important that we aren't duplicating work.

- Slide 4 – important with regard to proposals you provide – NIFA has to provide certification that you’re in compliance with the Hatch Act
- Slide 7 – be aware of the classification fields even if Sponsored Programs office decides this for you
- One of the reason Hatch proposals have been returned is because one of these aspects may need clarification, further explanation, or needs to be presented in a way that is readable and understandable in our database system. In the NIFA Gateway you will find a complete listing of the Hatch proposals. NIFA wants to ensure congressional staff/stakeholders can find and read work clearly that is going on in respective states.
- Classification fields are very important because of how much money is spent on lots of different topic areas. They are also used for searches on large numbers of projects. Classifications also determine how the system automatically forwards information to NPLs.
- Program leaders have ~30 days (standard) to review each proposal.
- Bart’s office is concerned with tracking proposals in their system to ensure they respond in that timeframe. The system Bart put together has automated some of these processes; new Hatch proposals get distributed to subject matter experts automatically. Competitive programs are distributed to NPLs through Grant Management system.
- Question from Jan Nyrop: One issue that needs clarification is “the intent of the Hatch Act”. Recently a couple of Cornell Hatch projects were turned back (one completely, the other required some ‘gymnastics’ on the rationalization). What constitutes the intent of the Hatch Act? Will read four titles of Hatch projects being reviewed internally at Cornell. Would these pass based on their titles?
 - Evaluation of impact of stressors on declining songbird populations
 - Suburban farm and natural areas as habitats for the monarch butterfly
 - Students engaging the environment, student scientist monitoring fish species using eDNA
 - Oyster restoration for resilient estuaries overcoming constraints
 - Follow-up from Luis: Definitions of research areas under Hatch are very broad. A past problem was the presentation of a proposal to show it’s a research endeavor. Based on titles, the student proposal’s emphasis was not on research, but on the students’ methodologies. The other three examples would work but must be clearly presented as a *Research Problem*. Identification of the Knowledge Area and SOI ensures the NPL will be able to provide proper analysis of the way it was presented.
- Question from Rick Rhodes: What drives which proposal goes to which NPL? Title? KA? SOI?
 - Follow-up (Luis): Combination of all of that. First look at the title, then determine what the proposal is trying to achieve. Then use the correct KA and SOI, really a combination of these factors.
 - (Bart): The software is pretty simple. Topics are assigned to NPLs and if it’s outside their expertise, NPLs can go into the software and transfer to other NPLs
- Comment from Fred Servello: Lots of variation between what NPLs are saying. Types of projects that have been approved for decades have taken a sharp turn in a particular

area. Emails circulate – e.g., if a fisheries proposal is not aquaculture, it will be rejected. Directors end up going to faculty to do ‘gymnastics’.

- (Luis) The liaison program will help. All NPLs at NIFA should be able to provide faculty better guidance. Large turnovers of NPLs and Division Directors recently. Division directors ensure that when NPLs leave, projects handled by that person will be transferred accordingly and provide continuity. We may not have provided those transfers accordingly with recent turnover. Worth discussing with NPLs and State Liaisons.
- Luis - One thing that would be helpful for submissions – under “Previous Work” section, ensure previous work was supported by Hatch funds

4.) Budget and Legislative Update Questions/Comments – Hunt Shipman

- **Slides posted to NERA website**
- Cabinet not yet in place (Typically set within first 100 days). 4-5 week process to confirm Sonny Perdue as Secretary of Ag.
- First presidential cabinet that doesn’t include a member of another party.
- Obamacare repeal/replace underway. House proposal unclear so far, unclear if it will gain support of all House conservatives, and/or support of Senate as a whole.
- Tax reform – border adjustment tax similar to Value Added Taxes used worldwide
- Infrastructure bill – trillion dollar proposed infrastructure bill; will be hard to come up with that amount of money.
- Operating on CR of FY16 dollars; expiring on 04/28. Bills beginning to move again, starting with Defense. FY17 will be level funded on all APLU BAC Priority areas.
- BAC taking a “single ask” approach – unified system, one requested \$200m lump increase to be allocated using FY16 proportions. This would yield a ~19% increase; special research grants in Hatch will receive the largest increase in some time.
- Jay Akridge will testify on behalf of APLU (Biotechnology and Research subcommittee) for Farm Bill Hearing. Chairman Conaway wants to pass it “on time” – Hunt anticipates “on time” as spring/summer 2018.
- President embarking on government reorganization process. Potentially moving some USDA programs to other departments. Secretary Zinke has an eye on USFS to move to Dept. of Interior. Busy year ahead.
- Question (Gary Thompson) – We need everyone pulling in the same direction. “One-Ask” was the goal in doing that. At PSU, Government Affairs council was not on board with the “one ask”. What are opportunities for us to have better communications with our Government Affairs counsel and Cornerstone through the BAA and BAC channels? Seemingly there’s a disconnect between Gov’t Affairs, Cornerstone, and the BAC.
 - (Hunt) This underscores a perennial problem with the Gov’t Affairs group within APLU. Different marching orders from different places presents a challenge in connecting people. We can do a better job of encouraging ESS/CES/AHS members to have these conversations with campus CGA Groups. Hunt personally doesn’t know how it matters—CGA groups hadn’t been good at advocating for priorities beforehand.

- Question (Rick Rhodes) – On the infrastructure bill, \$1 trillion on the table. Is there an opportunity to slip a couple billion dollars in to support the Sight Lines group?
 - (Hunt) We've done a few things to support that. Congress is looking at public/private partnerships, innovative ways to fund the \$1 trillion. What is in the realm of possibility on the business side of the equation? Cornerstone is still waiting on some guidance on if some of those things will really work. Will look to chairman Conaway for priorities on the farm bill, infrastructure bill. We'll ask for as much cash as we can get, but what's unknown is/are there things we could do/changes to the law that would enable a private entity or quasi private entity like Farm Credit to make an investment?
- Question (Gary Thompson) - Are there things Experiment Stations / Directors could be doing to help with that process?
 - (Hunt) – probably discussing the effective structure that the BAA operates in to vet some of those ideas. Worth sharing any ideas with Cornerstone.
 - **Gary will try to get this into the upcoming PBD meeting agenda in early April.**

5.) ESCOP Update

- Gary Thompson is on ESCOP Chair's Advisory Committee as Chair-Elect. Bret Hess (U WY, Chair) is taking on the Strategic Alliance Initiative. Held 30 agency meetings in DC surrounding CARET/AHS meeting in early March '17. Looking for: Opportunities, commonalities, integration and cooperation. Delivering the ESCOP message to the various agencies.
- Breakthroughs 2030 Study (<http://nas-sites.org/dels/studies/agricultural-science-breakthroughs/>) – involves public/private research forums, roundtables. Came as a result of the PCAST report, to facilitate public and private interaction. 15 members would serve on the forum.
- ESCOP Website – in process of migrating website from NC State to Clemson hosting. The NIMSS team at Clemson is involved in development. Mockups are released to review the site design. Inventory of all docs has been taken by NC State. David Leibovitz will initially populate the website; regional staff will be able to populate by committee going forward.
- National Land-Grant Impacts Database – Institutions are paying to write impact statements to upload to the database, and it is not valuable in its current state. No jury process to determine quality of what's hosted. Restricted to users with a password granted on an individual level.
 - Should the NE Region have its own impacts database?
 - Impacts should perhaps follow a one-pager format: here's the issue, here's what we did to address the issue, here's the impact.
 - Multi-State Impacts Database – successful. More devoted time and resources compared to national LG database. No QC for National Impacts. Quality is not consistent between national database and multistate database.
 - (Jody) – No incentive to providing materials to the national database until it's clear who is using it effectively.

- Encouragement from directors to spend time catering to our “best” audience – the local audience.
- (Jan) – Over the next year, every project that is terminating will receive a template for an impact statement, requiring one associated photo. **Jan will share the one-pager template, and provide an update on the success of that format next year.**
- Gary Thompson will be chair of ESCOP next year. If the NE has issues to address, we have someone listening to our priorities with a head seat at the table. **Think about something you’d like to push on next year’s agenda and communicate to Gary Thompson.**
- (Rick) Communications and Marketing Committee held its annual meeting at CARET/AHS. Kglobal pivoted from growth phase to engagement phase of the AgIsAmerica platform. We engage by aligning with BAA initiatives, and supporting the one-ask \$200m increase. If the increase were to come through, we declare a win for the CMC.
 - (Jody) What if we’re faced with a 20% *decrease* rather than the requested increase? Is there a way for the NE to address a 20% decrease? Some from smaller states operate with no margin of error on the capacity side. We could face layoffs. In advocating more generally for more funding rather than emphasizing “don’t touch the capacity funding”, we could perhaps face a decrease across all lines.
 - (Rick) would argue the full court press is out against decreasing Capacity lines. How protective the initiative will be is still up for debate. President’s wishlist includes a \$54b increase in Defense and an equivalent decrease ‘across the board.’ Agriculture is the smallest allocation by 2.5x. Our “egg” is small enough to ensure we don’t get cut. Cornerstone is advocating to protect Capacity lines.
- (Gary) Science + Technology – discussion on Big Data to come at ESS Fall meeting in Philadelphia. Currently being refined for adoption by the ESS planning committee.

6.) Multistate Activities Committee Report

- **Spring 2017 MAC report is posted on NERA website**
(<http://www.nerasaes.org/agenda-minutes>)
- Requests to write: All approved
 - NE_TEMP1962, a renewal. Three subject areas in need of research in Outdoor Recreation: community resilience, environmental resilience, health. **Approved request to write.**
 - NE_TEMP1231, a renewal. Participation is national, ~9 universities coordinated in the program. **Approved request to write.**
 - NE_TEMP1020, a renewal. **Approved request to write.**
- Request to approve peer-reviewed projects: All approved
 - NECC_TEMP1701, a coordinating committee in its early stages who would like to get together on a regular basis and explore possible collaborations on food safety technologies. Received all excellent reviews with no comments. **Unanimous approval.**

- NE_TEMP1227, a renewal of an award winning multistate “repro” project. Impressive proposal with a bulleted list of knowledge gains. Long-standing project, originated as NE1. **Unanimous approval.**
- **Motion introduced by MAC Chair Fred Servello to approve all five as a block. Seconded by Jody Jellison, all in favor.**
- Administrative Adviser Assignments (Replacements for Susan Brown)
 - **NE1710 – Don Viands**, previous AA expressed interest in becoming AA. NERA Reviewed request to write, sent peer reviewed project to NIFA, NIFA returned it for edits, currently being edited and will be returned to NIFA.
 - **NRSP8 – John Kirby has agreed to become AA**
 - **NE1336 –Chris Watkins (Extension director)** recommended as AA by Jan Nyrop.
 - **NE1231 – Fred Servello volunteered to serve as AA.**
 - **NE 9 – Jan Nyrop will serve as AA.** A very “Geneva-based” project. May need an advocate from Geneva.

7.) Revisions to the Northeast Multistate Operating Guidelines

- Preface: Previous discussion held on NERA teleconference about who should / should not serve as Administrative Advisers. NE Guidelines had specified “SAES Directors/Assistants/Associates only” can serve as AA’s. Rick made changes to the guidelines, both procedural and editorial. Changed language defining what an AA does and who they should be.
- Changes now open the pool for AAs by allowing SAES Director designees serve. Some directors have up to 7 projects for which they serve as AA.
- MAC Chair Fred Servello concerned that for AAs who don’t sit on NERA/MAC, Directors need to provide oversight, guidance and representation for their designees.
- Suggestion made to discuss regional guidelines with other Regional EDs
- Any NIMSS feedback should be communicated to RSA David Leibovitz who will forward to Julian Brinkley (NIMSS technical lead)
- Directors supported changing review process for Coordinating Committees
 - Under Rick’s leadership, CC reviews have been assigned/completed
 - CC’s commit resources for potential travel
 - Prevents redundancy in proposals
 - Energy of activation for CCs remains low
- **Proposed Edits to the Guidelines (to be edited by Rick per the Directors’ request. Final guidelines will be reviewed for approval at the Summer Session):**
 - **SAES Director Designees may serve as AAs**
 - **Directors are obligated to provide oversight, guidance, and representation at NERA Meetings for designee AAs**
 - **NIMSS Mechanics transferred off of AA and onto RSA (David Leibovitz)**
 - **RSA will send national calls for participants in NIMSS**
 - **Language changed to reflect NIMSS; e.g. NIMSS uses “Draft Proposal” rather than “Pre-proposal” or “Request to Write”**
 - **Coordinating Committees now *require* peer review (not a detailed form)**

- **“Official Representative” is the sole voting member from a particular institution**
- **AAs are responsible for monitoring “Official Representation”**
- **“Official Representatives” no longer have the delegated authority to commit resources**

8.) NRSP1 Proposal / Review Form

- **Rick will communicate to Jeff Jacobsen that NERA provided no negative comments and support the continuation of NRSP1.**
- **Dave will sit on calls for NRSP1 going forward and can provide a progress report at the summer meeting if anything has happened.**

9.) ESS Award for Excellence in Multistate Research

- If multistate research is successful, it will likely be nominated by the region during its life
- Evaluation criteria should be more transparent; perhaps scorecard/rubric could be provided
- Suggestion to nominate the NE1231 (Potato Group; AA Fred Servello, formerly Susan Brown)
- Suggestion to nominate NE1336 (Postharvest group; suggested AA Chris Watkins, formerly Susan Brown)
- Deadline for OED to submit nominations is May 30, 2017
- **ESS Multistate Nominations should be submitted to OED, who will forward to ESS award group**

10.) Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices (Gary Thompson)

- [PowerPoint Slides available on NERA Website](#)
- Consult a professional to handle Diversity and Inclusion – we think we’re doing a better job than we are at being inclusive
- Leadership in Ag schools is not diverse – very white, very male, very old.
- ESCOP Diversity in Leadership Task Force established to address concerns with enhancing Diversity and improving Inclusion.
- Task Force drafted a Whitepaper with actions:
 - Create a permanent ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee
 - Enhance Regional EDs and Ads to enhance skills and build capacity
 - ESCOP Leadership should collectively participate in D&I Training
- We need to develop a more inclusive environment, work toward a more multicultural organization
- Diversity Catalyst Committee used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess cultural competencies of ESCOP
- Three training sessions for Diversity Catalyst committee:
 - IDI
 - MCOB (Multicultural Organizational Development)
 - Diversity and Inclusion practices training

- Takeaway from trainings
 - Concept of Diversity -> Inclusion -> Intercultural Competence
 - IDI Group Profile: Most fall under “Minimization” (Minimizing/ignoring differences and focusing on similarities between groups)
 - We need to broaden our definition of Diversity; our resources are targeted toward specific dimensions of diversity

11.) NEED Update (Mike O’Neill)

- Agreement with NEED Executive Director Nancy Bull ended 12/31/2016
- NEED ED search opened, no agreement on a candidate yet
- NEED Directors will meet with a facilitator in Baltimore to review appropriate expectations for an ED, needs for the Northeast, skill/qualifications required for ED
- Mike scanned the regional institutions, found lots of variety in staffing and resources
- NEED and NERA have not yet fully explored sharing resources / combining expertise
- NEED has come together to handle institutional needs in absence of ED
- No one is driving collaborative NEED activities
- Sentiment in the region is that National Extension interactions are not as critical as National Offices perceive them to be
- NEED has not reviewed the ED structure of Extension. Having someone in the National ED Role ensures that opportunities for Extension are always discussed.
- Mike does not believe Regional EDs need to contribute as much to the national effort if there’s a national ED in place at APLU
- NERA example: Dan Rossi’s activities over past 5 years were 60% National / 40% Regional

12.) NEED-NERA Planning Grant Discussion

- Rick and Nancy Bull determined interest from both NEED and NERA in continuing joint planning grants
- Currently \$20k devoted to NERA Planning Grants
- Suggestion to fund a \$20k NEED-NERA Joint Planning Grant RFP
- Intent of these is to create collaborative opportunities across institutions: multi-institutional, multi-investigator grants
- Mike O’Neill confirmed NEED’s commitment to the joint RFP
- RFA should be written to clearly show research and extension aspects. Past submissions have been extension oriented, without robust research components
- Groups that could utilize planning grant, mentorship, and constructive criticism are typically stronger on one side (research or extension)
- Suggestion for groups “Not ready for prime time” to submit proposals, to receive feedback as a learning experience
- A rubric will be developed: Awards should be contingent upon meeting certain expectations, and evaluation methods should be consistent
- **Rick Rhodes and Mike O’Neill will visit the previous RFP, revise as needed, develop a rubric and send to NEED/NERA Directors for consideration at the Summer Meeting**

13.) Northeast Foodsystems Whitepaper

- In Jackson, Jody suggested developing a “Big idea” whitepaper from the Northeast
- Cameron charged Rick with developing the whitepaper
- Northeast Food Systems working group: Rick Rhodes (NERA ED, lead), Stephan Goetz (NERCRD), Lisa Chase (Vermont), Bill Hare (UDC)
- Lisa Chase already wrote a book: *Food, Farms, and Community*
- Whitepaper started based on a template from NE Climate Hubs to advocate for funding
- Development occurred via conference calls, email correspondence
- Whitepaper underwent peer review by 15 reviewers
- Reviewers encouraged NERA to “Think Big” and audaciously about what the whitepaper could represent to the region
- Whitepaper could frame what an RFP could look like in the future for the Northeast
- Counterpart is the “Southern / North Central / Western Agenda” – this paper could grow into “The Northeast Agenda”
- Northeast can be a model for multistate research – not “big commodity” states but can integrate across state lines more easily than any other region
- Northeast has largest interface between rural and urban populations
- Suggestion from NERA Directors to consider pursuing publication, perhaps in a peer review journal or elsewhere
- **After revision, Rick will circulate the whitepaper to NERA Directors for further reviews**
- **Whitepaper discussion to continue at Summer Meeting in West Virginia**

14.) Northeast Foodsystems Whitepaper Feedback and Further Discussion

- What’s interesting and almost counterintuitive – we don’t necessarily think about how agriculture evolves over time to influence peoples’ eating habits. The Northeast is almost a generation ahead of the rest of the country because of the diversity in international groups becoming a piece of how we eat on a day to day basis.
- The Rural-urban interface involves water quality. Estuary quality, aquaculture, ag-energy nexus, water-energy nexus. Almost all of them are linked to Lake Champlain, Great Lakes, or the Coast. A unique part of the NE is our coastline. To catch USDA/NIFA’s attention – we need to define what makes us different. Currently there’s a reliance on the reader to draw that conclusion on their own.
- Think about production systems; Northeast’s very unique production systems compared to California, Beef in Nebraska, corn in the Midwest. What are the northeast’s unique production systems?
- We should determine what NERA wants to do with this paper. Can this be informative in crafting an RFP? We should make the case for a regionalized research program on NE food systems, whether it’s NIFA, or a coalition of states that support it.
- We have lots of programs who meet state, local, national needs. Hard to determine how to support needs on a Regional level.
- Our strength is what makes Northeast production systems unique. E.g. Dairy is quite different in the Northeast than it is elsewhere. Something in the paper that’s “there”

but hidden/embedded—food processing technologies/food safety is not emphasized the way it should be. That’s a real strength in the Northeast. Proximity to a huge consumer base is a distinguishing characteristic of our region. We should focus on food safety/food science programs in the Northeast.

- DARPA is newly interested in agricultural science and is struggling to find expertise. We should consider target audiences more broadly; beyond NIFA.
- If you can create food security in food insecure areas, you can reduce the potential of future conflict. Are we more subject to the regulatory environment as a high rural-urban interface? Perhaps the executive summary up front should be more ‘in your face’ defining the unique characteristics in the Northeast.
- We could work with kglobal to move this into the spotlight. AgIsAmerica campaign could position the Northeast as a region alongside “Big ag” states. Rick took an invitation from the Naval War College to participate in the Military Humanitarian Assistance discussion; they needed help with the ‘handoff’ during international disasters from Military to Non-Governmental Organizations.
- This paper could be important in providing us guidance at our own institutions on how to bring people together and build relationships to discuss these issues.
- Our role in agriculture does not end when the truck leaves the farm. Our role extends to the consumer: eating food and feeling good.

15.) Report of the Office of the Executive Director

- [Report is posted on NERA Website](#)
- Suggestions for ED’s Campus Visits and discussions with institutions
 - Institutions want to share the things that NERA isn’t yet aware of. Centers/capacities/etc; some of the more unique aspects of each institution.
 - Discussion of institutional-specific policies. We all have policies surrounding our programs; we often scour websites for these policies, websites are not navigable, policies may or may not exist or be readily available. Lots of time is spent mining websites for documents, e.g. F&A policy on various stations’ sites.
 - Could be valuable to attend an administrative meeting at each institution; many administrators have an ‘entry level’ understanding of APLU/Hatch multistate/National activities.
 - Institutions develop internal rules/regs associated with handling interaction with USDA, Hatch, etc. Institutions could streamline operations by understanding what’s driven by compliance vs layers of oversight that have piled up over the years that institutions think are required, but they’re really not. What does the USDA consider proper compliance?
 - Many organizations are thin; institutions don’t necessarily value their experiment stations.
 - Directors tend to all have that one pivotal person in our organization that if they leave, a Director would resign.
 - Directors would love a bulleted list of consistent, national ‘you must do’s...’ – coordinated with the other ED’s.

16.) 2017 Upcoming Meetings

- **The Northeast Joint Summer Session will be held June 12-14 at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia**
- **The ESS/SAES/ARD Meeting will be held in Philadelphia September 25-28**

17.) Social Media, Federal Policy and Communicating in the Digital Age: A Discussion (Rick Rhodes)

- [PowerPoint Slides available on NERA Website](#)
- Presentation about institutional social media policies, federal policies, and individual engagement with social media
- Talks about social media were inspired by USDA “Gag order” events in January 2017 following the Presidential inauguration of Trump
- Free discussion between the Directors followed
- Social media seen as an issue of academic freedom – faculty feeling constrained with expressing opinions or views treads on academic freedom
- Once a university logo is applied to a post or profile, it becomes an extension of the university
- Social Media is about best practices. People who often cross lines on social media want to add credibility by highlighting their affiliation with their institution
- Penn State discusses with faculty – before posting, is it a personal opinion? If so, don’t use the university’s identity to convey message. If it’s academic or in the realm of your *university business*, credit the university
- Rutgers has a person who is big into raw milk. He generated content which is at odds with the Rutgers station administration. (Brad) Director won’t be the one to muzzle him; if the person uses the Rutgers identity, so be it.
- CAES scientist gave a presentation discussing climate change and portrayed Trump with borderline negative comments. (Ted) Director received calls from attendees who were vegetable growers in the state, upset with the scientist’s comments on Trump
- People tend to be risk-averse. New concerns we didn’t have 4 years ago arise with self-editing of content
- Social media is relevant today. Instant access to news-level op-eds, ability to get into the conversation has increased
- Working in an academic institution rather than directly in federal government, some see this is a “stand up and fight” moment; e.g. academics should be defending against anti climate change arguments
- At UMaine, students were discouraged from continuing a Facebook group which became a complaint forum
- At Rhode Island, a student managing a pharmacy club social media page started to post vitriol against the college of pharmacy and particular faculty members
- A Facebook page was branded with UMass Extension and 4-H logos without their knowledge. This was done by a rogue volunteer with radical political views, but was difficult to track down and monitor. A byproduct of having official logos available for download.
- Consider the delivery of Social Media content; e.g. “climate variability vs climate change”. Farmers will believe “variability” over “change”

- Are we walking on eggshells so much that we aren't saying anything meaningful? Lots of Twitter content is boring. Is there a backlash effect of being so nervous about what we're doing that it's boring?
- How do we avoid just becoming part of the cacophony? It's really hard to get peoples' attention about *what's important*.
- Think about people in the Northeast who are champions of delivering meaningful messages. Example: Kevin Folta, on non-GMO topics

18.) Best Practices: Engaging with 1890s Institutions (Mark Rieger)

- Big problem in past four years has been interactions with 1890s
- 1890s tend to be more racially diverse than 1862s
- Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Delaware each have 1890s and aren't interacting often with 1862s
- Mark's example – he interacts more with UMD or Rutgers than even Delaware State
- 1890s in the Northeast: WV State, Del State, Maryland Eastern Shore. All in the 'south' of the Northeast
- 1890s presence in the south rooted in Jim Crow laws; "separate but equal" – but not when it comes to funding
- We need to interact better with our geographic neighbors, who convene separately from our regional group
- UDelaware identified 5 critical research areas in the college's master plan. Faculty are asked to identify which of the research areas their work aligns with. These research areas don't necessarily align with Delaware State; they follow the same format but the research areas are tweaked
- Research Goals are aligned with NIFA
- Intent of the Plan of Work is to share commonalities, find a way for institutions to complement each other in a meaningful way
- Extension is more engaged between UDel and Del State. They hold a joint annual conference to discuss strategic plans for Extension
- Where are the intersections? Between budget lines, priorities in research programming
- Different priorities: Chicken is 75% of the Delmarva ag. UDel focuses on Commercial growing, Del State focuses on smaller scale
- Need to consider integration vs complementary strategies. Complementary priorities are often as valuable as integrated ones
- For UDel, racial diversity in faculty is a pipeline issue. Summer Scholars could take rising seniors who are engaged in science, get them doing summer research, perhaps get them enrolled into a Master's program.
- Could there be a mini sabbatical program where a faculty from an 1890 goes to work at an 1862? More symbolic than anything but could create some research interaction.
- Grassroots program between UDel and Del State where faculty came to work at the other respective institution
- Nationwide, the presence of Alton Thompson as 1890s ED changes the dynamics at the table. We now hear that voice in ESCOP when it historically wasn't always heard.

- Why don't we include 1890s institutions in NERA?
- If we did invite 1890s, would they just be coming to talk? Or would we explore a mechanism (assessments or otherwise) to incorporate them into our structure?
- Considering 1890s are paying members of ARD, they may not want to pay twice to formally join NERA
- Low energy of activation would be to invite 1890s without considering assessments or pooled resources up front. Could start the discussion with them
- We need to consider not excluding 1890s based on outpricing what they can afford. We can start by inviting them to a meeting
- Can't assume there are wholly shared interests between NERA and 1890s institutions. We need to start with a conversation about what we and they both see as opportunities. An invitation is that first move outside the box.
- Does the regional structure of the BAA impede greater collaboration between 1862s and 1890s?
- Is an elected/appointed liaison within NERA enough to foster best outcomes?
- This best practices session was set in September '16. At CARET/AHS March '17, Marikis Alvarez asked Rick why 1890s hadn't been aware of / invited to the NERA Spring Meeting?
- We could extend an inclusive invitation to the NERA Spring Meeting to 1890s directors. You won't be "treading on our ground", you'll feel truly welcome.
- At URI, Rick applied for a grant through the Foreign Ag Service to serve as a monitoring and evaluation agent for USAID programs in West Africa. Needed folks who spoke French, had knowledge of local institutions in West Africa. Brought in Delaware State participants who are indispensable collaborators.
- Concern – 1890s institutions are acutely aware of tokenism
- **Think about 1 or 2 action steps for NERA to improve relationships, foster engagement with 1890s**
- **Contact Dan Rossi about how interactions with 1890s has been handled in the past**
- **Contact Eric Young about how SAAESD interacts with 1890s**
- **Involve 1890s with Northeast Whitepaper; avoid tokenism by addressing the issue up front rather than waiting and 'tacking it on' (Mark knows Dalrymple and Moses at Delaware State; Rick knows folks at West Virginia State)**
- **Consider inviting the 1890s institutions, at least those in the Northeast, to the NERA Spring Meeting**
- **Rick will discuss with Alton Thompson creating ARD Liaisons to NERA and NERA Liaisons to ARD**

19.) Nominations Committee Report

- Is NRSP on rotation or appointment? Fred is on the approval committee for NRSPs. If it's a rotation, we'll add it to the list of NERA positions.
- Nominations / positions Discussion to follow at Summer Meeting
- **Ask Eric Young about NRSP committee positions – rotations vs appointments**

- **For summer meeting, NERA will determine the rotation of positions – voluntary / involuntary, length of terms**
- **Rick will clean up Nominations worksheet for summer meeting**

20.) Discussion: Allocation Formula/Million Dollar Table

- Inspired by a question of how Multistate allocation is calculated – is it given out using the same formula as Hatch?
- Asked USDA for an accounting of the \$5.5m annual amount used to regulate the Hatch allocation
- Asked for the basis of “Rural” and “Farm” population numbers
- Need to determine: is there a discussion in advocacy to put a mechanism in place to increase budgets with inflation? If the \$200m “One-Ask” fails, can an inflation increase be built into capacity funds?

21.) Northeast Climate Hubs (Curtis Dell)

- Climate Hubs are a cross-agency effort controlled by USDA
- Cornell and Penn State are working on additional Climate Hub surveys; have higher funding than the rest of the Northeast institutions
- Key contacts: Dave Hollinger and Erin Lane of Durham, New Hampshire. They coordinate all hub activities. 4 co-directors sit on the hubs from ARS/NRCS/USFS
- Climate Hub emphasis is on Outreach; getting products out there.
- Curtis Dell’s lab diverted some funding to Cornell and Penn State, USFS has diverted some funding to other institutions.
- Is there a new type of messaging that has come out since the election? Does the USDA website still have messaging from the Obama administration?
 - Within the hub that’s (Curt’s) feeling – the need for a new type of messaging. Leadership at the Hub’s national level is to let the department know, that’s what our emphasis is. Trying to emphasize adaptation rather than causes and mitigation. USDA website was just updated and to their relief, the Climate Hubs are still present. A hopeful sign that they won’t be going away.
- Because there’s been a low level of funding, there’s a sentiment that pursuing Climate Hubs funding is not worthwhile. The Hubs understand that at this level of funding, it’s hard to do much.
- Starting relationships with university partners is helpful for the Climate Hubs