



The FY 2020 NERA Funding Support for Grant Applications: Request for Proposals is now open. Please share this NERA planning grant opportunity with your scientists! The good news is that this is a rolling application. See the first “Action Item.”

On a personal front, David and I both extend our heartiest holiday greetings: peace, joy and love to you all!

“Our life is what our thoughts make it.” - Marcus Aurelius (circa 121-180 AD) from [Meditations: A New Translation](#), 2002, Marcus Aurelius translated by Gregory Hay, Modern Library.

Action items:

- The [FY 2020 NERA Funding Support for Grant Applications: Request for Proposals](#) is now open. This rolling opportunity supports costs associated with development, writing, and submission of grant proposals. Please share widely! Remember, team leaders that submit proposals will be submitting their proposal to their host AES director: that might be you.
- Book ‘em Danno. The room block for the NERA Spring Meeting (March 23-25, 2020) is now open. Click [here](#) to reserve your room.
- The minutes for the December 6, 2019 NERA teleconference are now posted, [check them out](#). Please [forward](#) any corrections or modifications.
- We continue to compile thoughts on “reimagining NIFA.” If you haven’t shared your thoughts, please [forward](#) those. As means to frame your thoughts, you’ll recollect that we were seeking suggestions on the following four questions:
 - How can NIFA improve its delivery of capacity programs for supporting research and extension?
 - What changes will improve NIFA’s implementation of its competitive programs?
 - How can NIFA increase transparency and effectiveness of its organizational structure?
 - What steps NIFA should take to enhance its customer experience?

Reminders/Updates:

- Say good-bye: Sabine O’Hara (UDC) has stepped down as Dean and both Fred Servello (UMaine) and Jon Wraith (UNH) recently announced that they would be retiring at the end of June, 2020. Please join us in thanking Sabine, Fred and Jon for their years of service to their institutions and NERA. One of the issues that we’ll be discussing at the NERA Spring Meeting is leadership change in the Northeast and how to ensure that we have a seat and voice at the national table.

- We continue to gather data on untoward issues as a result of the NIFA move and workforce reduction. If you've run into issues please forward those to [me](#), I'll aggregate on the part of the region. The good news is that NIFA is filling positions. The early November jobs fair in Kansas City attracted over 600 attendees. NIFA is currently bringing on 5 to 7 new people each pay period; orientation and training are currently limiting factors.

Informational items:

- West Virginia University invites nominations and applications for an innovative and charismatic leader as Dean and Director of the [West Virginia University Extension Service](#). Greenwood/Asher and Associates has been retained to assist the Search Committee.
- The Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD) is actively searching for its next Executive Director. Applications must be received electronically (PDF) by January 31, 2020. [Click here to view the position description](#).



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