2021 ECOP Virtual Spring Meeting Minutes
March 23-25, 2021

Presiding – Chris Watkins, Chair

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Tuesday, March 23, 3-5:30 p.m. ET ......................................................... pages 2-5
4-H Reputation Management Q & A (pp.117-124), Introduction to the
Updated Framework for Health, Farm Bill Nutrition Program Task Force,
Collegial Reception Hosted by the Extension Foundation Board

Wednesday, March 24, 3-4:30 PM ET.......................................................... page 6-7
Work Plans by each Standing Committee

Thursday, March 25, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM ET.................................................... page 7-10
ECOP, CES and NIFA Partnership and Opportunities Dialogue, EDA Team
Responsibilities Q&A

ATTACHMENTS DIRECTORY

Links to Pre-meeting Reading Assignments:
Item 1.0 - Minutes of January 2021 Meeting and ECOP Executive Committee Meeting Minutes,
February 11, 2021

Item 2.0 - National Crisis Communications Playbook for the 4-H System

Item 3.0 - DRAFT: Executive Summary of Cooperative Extension’s Framework for Health Equity
and Well-Being (pp. 63-64); DRAFT: Complete Cooperative Extension’s Framework for
Health Equity and Well-Being (pp. 65-95)

Item 6.0 and 10.0 - ECOP Organizational Chart

Written Reports – For Information Only:
NUEL Update........................................................................................................ pages 6-9
ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee ................................................................. pages 10-13
ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee ..................................................... pages 14-15
Communications and Marketing Committee with ESCOP (CMC) ............... pages 16-55
National Impacts Database Committee ........................................................ pages 15-55
Board on Human Sciences ............................................................................. pages 90-91
Cooperative Extension Section Representative to Policy Board of Directors . pages 92-93
ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) ............................................. pages 94-110
1.0 Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Chris Watkins called the meeting to order. Attendance is recorded on page 11. A quorum was present. The minutes of the last 2 meetings were properly approved (Mark Latimore-motion; Vonda Richardson-second). The agenda was properly approved (John Lawrence-motion; Mark Latimore-second).

2.0 4-H Reputation Management Q & A

*National Crisis Communications Playbook for the 4-H System (slides on pp.117-124)*

Ed Jones, Jon Boren, Andy Ferrin, Ivan Heredia, Chris Glazier


Chris Glaser shared that the roll-out of the playbook is taking place currently. The release occurred within the past week. Playbook is available online for download. A training webinar with 4-H Specialists/State Leaders has been conducted. The process was explained. A very important role of the Extension Director or Administrator is to initiate contact with the Crisis Strategy Team. The team has been trained. The next step is for Leaders to share the resource as part of the process. Council has a list of subject matter experts that is at the Strategy Team – not a public list.

**Crisis Strategy Team Members**

- **Extension**
  - ECOP 4-H Chair(s)
  - ECOP Executive Director
  - ECOP Board Liaison to Council (serving as CST Chair)
  - PLWG Chair
  - APLU Legal Counsel (serving as CST Legal Lead)

- **Council**
  - Council Chief Executive Officer
  - Council Chief Marketing Officer
  - Council Communications Director (serving as CST Comms Lead)

*USDA-NIFA will not be on the CST, but the following roles will liaise with the CST:*

- **USDA/NIFA**
  - NIFA Division Director for Youth and 4-H
  - NIFA Communications Lead
3.0 Introduction to the Updated Framework for Health
Roger Rennekamp: Brought the members of ECOP up to speed of the activities of the Health Innovation Task Force. The core theme of the framework:

**Health Equity** - Centering on health equity involves driving resources to those communities and groups that are experiencing the most significant barriers to achieving optimal health.

**Social Determinants of Health** – Health-related work should include consideration of those factors beyond the influence of an individual such as broadband availability, transportation, food insecurity, and access to healthcare.

**Partnerships and Coalitions** – These are the mechanisms by which the resources of multiple entities are focused on common objectives. There are multiple roles that Cooperative Extension can play to catalyze collective action which advances health equity and well-being.

The model looks the same as the model from 2014 but a few important additions for diversity and equity:
The high-level recommendation:

- Establish health equity as a core systemwide value to ensure that all people have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as they can be.
- Utilize data-driven approaches and community needs assessment to identify and address health inequities through evidence-based education and community-based processes that influence the social determinants of health.
- Invest in the success and visibility of Extension’s health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.
- Position health and well-being as an Extension-wide initiative engaging Extension personnel from all program areas and multiple disciplines.
- Apply a community development model to Extension’s work in health equity and well-being to advance coalition building and collective action.

Jason Henderson made a motion, seconded by Gary Jackson, to adopt the steps listed on right for consideration by ECOP. Motion carried. Ali Mitchell will work with Roger Rennekamp.

Next Steps

- ECOP endorses continued vetting across the Cooperative Extension System beginning with the National Health Outreach Conference.
- Provide your personal feedback to Roger, Ali, and/or Michelle at your convenience.
- Help identify groups who may wish to receive a briefing on the contents and provide feedback on the Framework.
- Approve fully vetted document at a future meeting of ECOP.

4.0 ECOP BLC Farm Bill Nutrition Program Task Force

Jason Henderson – Provide background on how the ECOP BLC Farm Bill Nutrition Program Working Group came into being, explained the charge is to articulate what Extension wants communicated to CLP and elected officials and for talking points that benefit the System.

Threats/Barriers Discussions

- Internal, External, Political
  - Communicating value, telling our story
  - Speaking with one voice
  - Operating as a collective System-need to come together as a valued provider
  - Addressing capacity issues
  - Addressing internal and external relationships
Funding will be needed to build out a public facing website, possibly provided by SNAP-Ed PDT. Also, perhaps leverage the mutual relationship with RWJF. To characterize the issue with the last initiative, Jason believes was the internal diversity and disparities of commitment to advocacy. From the 1890 perspective there is hope that all institutions not receiving SNAP-Ed dollars will have opportunity to participate.

Chris Watkins opened the floor for discussion.

Bev Durgan brought up the role of Cornerstone in Extension farm bill initiatives; are they advocating in the way that Extension would like. Are there alternatives? The PBD is renegotiating the contract held by Cornerstone and will take this message to Policy Board. Michelle Rodgers heard the following recommendations and will respond:

- Will contract include metrics for Extension-related activities, interactions; quantifying engagements with Congress.
- What is accomplished with Capacity Funds and leveraging other agency. The potential for Extension to turn on a dime and respond to specific needs of the public.

More than just Cornerstone will be responding to the RFA.

Rich Bonanno – If questions can be added to this document please let him know.


This issue of providers by state is diverse. Current providers need to maintain confidence and not threatened.

Jon Boren underscored the importance of 1) capacity funding, 2) the advocacy calendar and process, and 3) understanding/supporting the “one ask”.

Rosalind Dale made a motion to ratify the 3 recommendations listed above. Vonda Richardson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ECOP Chair imposed a Recess until the next day. A Collegial Reception was Hosted by the Extension Foundation Board https://youtu.be/5L-vA8y8tOw

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**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

The following meetings occurred with separate agendas.

ECOP Executive Committee Meeting:
Presiding: Chris Watkins, supported by Caroline [Crocoll] Henney

ECOP Program Committee Meeting:
Presiding: Ivory Lyles, supported by Ron Brown

ECOP Professional Development Committee Meeting:
Presiding: Debby Sheely, supported by Albert Essel
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM**

5.0 A voting quorum was reestablished by ECOP Chair Chris Watkins.

6.0 **Standing Committee Reports, Presentation of Work Plans & Q&A**

   A. Executive Committee - Chris Watkins reviewed members of the committee, purpose, new and ongoing of priorities, expected outcomes and impacts. An executive session was held during to establish and begin the process of reviewing the relationships with partnering entities.

   B. ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee –

Jon Boren and Lyla Houglum presented the Work Plan that includes 6 goals. Alignment includes 2 sub-groups formed by 4-H program leaders. For fund development, some of this will be covered in the ECOP BLC Work Plan. Working on establishing a Youth Development Director like the Health Director.

The committee decided to come up with membership and terms of service. Important - Decided to extend terms from 3 to 4 years. This will create a period of transition.

Jon introduced Dorothy Freeman and Aimee Viniard-Weideman (key facilitator of strategic planning process), Iowa State University, laid out the strategic plan.

**What is needed from ECOP?**

- [✓] Endorsement of the 4-H Equity Plan
- [✓] Staff to serve on the national committees (time and resources)
- [✓] Accountability to the plans, which may include a budget
- [✓] A new paradigm for 4-H governance and accountability

**Implementation Teams needing ECOP involvement**

1. Conduct ongoing critical organizational assessments
2. Recruit, retain and develop youth development professionals
3. Clarify and define governance and leadership accountability
4. Develop and strengthen new and existing partnerships
5. Diversify funding streams
6. Incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion principles into programs
7. Develop data governance and measurement principles and infrastructure

Chris Watkins made a motion to adopt recommendations. Bev Durgan gave a second. What is the timeline – There will be pilot first, but a short timeframe. Michelle Rodgers mentioned how valuable the outcomes will be to future funding partners for Extension. The motion passed.

C. Program Committee –

Ivory Lyles, Chair, presented the Work Plan. New people were brought into the process. How to support committees, bring specialists together to put substance around advocacy priorities that are named by ECOP. Small working groups have been identified for the topics found at [advocacy.extension.org](http://advocacy.extension.org). The Program Committee will be asked NIFA to have a person named for each priority.
Chris Watkins posed a motion to endorse and support the recommendations of the Program Committee listed above. Vonda Richardson seconded. Motion was approved.

D. Professional Development Committee - Debby Sheely introduced the committee and presented the Work Plan. She will retire in a few months. John Lawrence will assume Chairmanship.

Chris Watkins posed a motion to endorse and support. John Lawrence seconded. Motion approved

E. Budget and Legislative Committee –

Jon Boren thanked members of the committee. Summarized 2020-21 Activities associated with Work Plan.

Jason Henderson – Program Committee is aligned with Concept Notes

- Concept Note Teams:
  - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
  - SNAP-Ed & The Farm Bill
  - Health (COVID-19, Farm Stress, Mental Health, Nutrition & Food Security)
  - Economic and Work Force Development
  - 4-H & Youth Development
  - Climate Mitigation, Resiliency and Adaption
  - Urban Ag & Urban Extension
  - Broadband Access & Digital Skills

Caroline Henney – Walked ECOP membership through the Advocacy and Education Toolkit. The toolkit has been shared with Program Committee. Cornerstone received the new site well.

Chris Watkins posed a motion to endorse and support. Barbara Petty seconded. Motion approved

7.0 Chris Watkins imposed a recess until the next day.

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM ET –

8.0 A quorum was re-established by Chris Watkins

9.0 ECOP, CES and NIFA-Partnerships and Opportunities Q&A

Chris Watkins/ Parag Chitnis, Associate Director, USDA-NIFA conducted a dialogue with 3 questions.

What does the new NIFA look like, and what does ECOP need to understand about NIFA’s organizational structure?
Parag Chitnis/Mike Fitzner: There are about 220 people instead of 325 before the move to Kansas City. There are more outreach efforts to 1890 and 1994s. There are still some gaps to fill as many are serving in an acting capacity. Focus has been and continues to be “get the money out.” Other additional responsibilities will follow. Programmatically, 4-H will have a national program leader. Another 72 people will eventually be hired. There is hope to return to original staffing levels – 292. Agency-wide, maintain a 1-12 ratio of supervisor to staff. NIFA will need feedback about where gaps occur and where to better serve Extension. There are deficiencies in some areas, i.e. youth development, social sciences, and economics – rural focus. Flexibility is necessary. In terms of Urban Agriculture, a leader will be coming aboard from University of Missouri. For those coming from the research background, an orientation like the North Central Region is working on, Extension and Research working together, might be helpful. An NPL will be assigned to each institution, these people should be invited to participate in Extension activities, like field days, or similar events. International Extension has so far this is not a focus priority for the agency.

ECOP’s current programmatic and advocacy priorities include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Urban Agriculture and Urban Extension; Workforce Development; Climate; Health; Broadband Access and Digital Skills; and 4-H Positive Youth Development.

In what ways can ECOP serve as a resource to NIFA in ensuring support for these priorities?

Parag/Mike: Extension’s role in Climate Hubs is emerging as a priority. Will look for ways for this to be incentivized. Welcomes ideas that can be implemented. The ECOP Program Committee has asked for a contact assignment for each of the Extension System Priorities to help provide leadership. To hash things out, the NIFA points of contact will conduct workshops, funded by NIFA which may eventually lead to funding for CAP awards.

Ivory Lyles: As early as next week he will be in touch with Parag and Mike to form the list of contacts.

As ECOP works to develop new partnerships and resources, what is NIFA’s perspective on the development of future Interagency Agreements for Extension around ECOP and Extension priorities?

Parag Chitnis – Please let us know when these new opportunities. Minimum staffing levels is required to do this. Knowledge gaps and outreach can do this quickly. Some agencies do not have something like Extension, NIFA can become involved. No other federal agency has an enterprise like Extension

Telework policies will be determined as staff transition to a physical location.

Parag asked what ECOP is doing in the area of Workforce Development –
Ivory Lyles: The Program Committee is in the process of standing up a group and do an assessment on existing programs – could be agriculture, could be other areas like broadband. Non-formal education concepts are important to this administration. Retraining people for future workforce is a priority focus. Extension is encouraged to contribute.
10.0 EDA Team Responsibilities and Q&A

Caroline Henney – Provided an overview. The team consists of:

- **Albert Essel**, Executive Administrator, Association of Extension Administrators
- **Ron Brown**, Executive Director, Association of Southern Region Extension Directors
- **Ali Mitchell**, Executive Director, Association of Northeast Extension Directors
- **Robin Shepard**, Executive Director, North Central Cooperative Extension Association
- **Lyla Houglum**, Executive Director, Western Extension Directors Association
- **Caroline (Crocoll) Henney**, Executive Director, Cooperative Extension System/ECOP
- **Sandy Ruble**, Assistant Director, Cooperative Extension System/ECOP

The team meets as least twice a month to vet national appointment, ideas, concepts and coordinate everything that ECOP/Extension is doing nationally.

**In general, the EDA Team...**

- **Offers strategic guidance** for priority work, promoting national coordination.
- **Works in support of chairs** of ECOP committees, task forces and working groups.
- **Advises other EDA members on regional engagement** on policy and process issues of concern to the national system/network.
- **Recommends approaches for national initiatives**, especially related to engagement with directors/administrators at regional levels.
- **Communicates routinely** to assure national initiatives are progressing appropriately.
- **Attends to other responsibilities** as outlined by the chair or lead for the effort.

Comments:

Mark Latimore – During his tenure as chair, he wanted to visit every region and he did not have the opportunity because of the pandemic. But through strong relations with the Team, it all turn out well.

Michelle Rodgers – In terms of the recent Health Task Force, without EDA Team member Ali Mitchell to help coordinate things nationally things would not get done. The EDA’s influence of the relationship with Extension Foundation. The EDA Team is the glue in the System.

Ed Jones – If it had not been for Sandy Ruble and Ron Brown there would have been little movement during his term as chair. There is tremendous continuity required to keep things on track nationally.

Mike Fitzner – The EDA Team is invaluable as a point of contact. He can just call Caroline or Sandy. The agency relies on the informal “red phone” contact - a sign of a strong partnership.

Wendy Powers – The EDA Team both supports and challenges Directors who volunteer for National roles.

Jason Henderson asks how EDA Team relationships plays out with Extension Foundation. Ali Mitchell – Guidance from ECOP will determine how things will play out moving forward.

Michelle Rodgers raised the concern about how full the EDA Teams plates are.
Lyla Houglum raised the possibility of letting go of some things that ECOP Leadership undertakes.

Ron Brown – Appreciates Caroline Henney’s role on the Team and Sandy Ruble, the glue. The ECOP Program Committee engages Extension Foundation for every program discussed during meetings because the skills/strengths they bring to System are invaluable. The uniqueness of Extension mentioned by Parag Chitnis. We are stronger when we can act as a System. It is a challenge to ECOP to strengthen.

Robin Shepard – The understanding of how we juggle Regional and National responsibility. There is finesse required in communicating, a push and pull. The balance is that he works for the Region and helps the national effort. It is sometimes not easy.

Albert Essel – Ali and he were the last 2 before Caroline. We would not be able When the model did not exist at some point. It has really brought us together and understand. The original directors were expected to put 25% of their time. Compliments to Caroline.

Chris Geith – Praises the wisdom and responsiveness of the team. Through the Program Committee to put legs under priorities. Sometimes wonders about a more formal relationship. Maybe Wendy Powers as incoming chair and Vicki McCracken. A written plan of work was developed with Caroline and is seen as a very positive.

11.0 Closing Comments – Chris Watkins thanked everyone for their participation and looks forward to eventually meeting everyone in person.

Adjournment
ECOP Voting Members

☑ Chris Watkins, Cornell University, Chair
☑ Wendy Powers, University of California, Chair-elect (Liaison to ESCOP)
☑ Mark Latimore, Jr., Fort Valley State University, Past-Chair (2021 NEDA Planning Committee)
☑ Beverly Durgan, University of Minnesota Extension (Liaison to JCEP)
☑ Laura Perry Johnson, University of Georgia
☑ Rich Bonanno, North Carolina State University (CES Representative to CLP-farm bill)
☑ Rosalind Dale, North Carolina A&T State University
☑ Brent Hales, Penn State (Vice-chair Program Committee)
☑ Jason Henderson, Purdue University (Liaison to NUEL Steering Committee, Vice-chair ECOP BLC)
☑ Gary Jackson, Mississippi State University
☑ John Lawrence, Iowa State University
☑ Ivory Lyles, University of Nevada (Chair of Program Committee)
☑ Barbara Petty, University of Idaho
☑ Vonda Richardson, Florida A&M University
☑ Debby Sheely, University of Rhode Island, (Interim Chair of Professional Development Committee)

Ex-officio/Non-voting members

● Jon Boren, Chair, Budget and Legislative Committee, Co-chair of 4-H Leadership Committee, New Mexico State University
● Mike Fitzner and Parag Chitnis, USDA-NIFA
● Caroline (Crocoll) Henney, Executive Director, Cooperative Extension System/ECOP
● Roger Rennekamp, Extension Health Director, Cooperative Extension System/ECOP
● Michelle Rodgers, BAA-Policy Board of Directors, Chair of ECOP Health Innovation Task Force, University of Delaware
● Ed Jones, 4-H Leadership Committee Liaison, Virginia Tech

Liaisons to ECOP

● Jo Britt-Rankin, BoHS Liaison, University of Missouri
● Chris Geith, CEO, and Beverly Coberly, COO Extension Foundation
● Bob Godfrey, ESCOP Liaison, University of the Virgin Islands
● Brian Kowalkowski, 1994 Liaison to ECOP and Extension Foundation, College of Menominee Nation
● Ken LaValley, Chair, Extension Foundation Board of Directors, University of New Hampshire
● Andy Ferrin, SVP-CSO, National 4-H Council
● Char Wenham, CARET Liaison, St. Joseph, MI
● Al Wysocki, ACOP Liaison, University of Florida

Executive Director and Administrator Team

● Ron Brown, Southern Region
● Caroline Henney, CES/ECOP National Office
● Lyla Houglum, Western Region
● Ali Mitchell, Northeast Region
● Albert Essel, 1890 Region
● Sandy Ruble, CES/ECOP National Office
● Robin Shepard, North Central Region

Guests

● Doug Steele and Caron Gala, APLU
● Courtney Owens, Kentucky State University
● Gregg Hadley, Kansas State University
● Damona Doye, Oklahoma State University
● Vickie McCracken, Washington State University
● Ivan Heredia, SVP, Chief Marketing Officer and Dorothy Freeman, Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, National 4-H Council
● Aimee Viniard-Weideman, Iowa State University
● Chris Glazier, VP, Porter Novelli
● Marie Ruemenapp, Michigan State University, and Katherine Williams, NC State University, NUEL

Back to minutes
Accomplishments

2020

The NUEL Executive Committee and Steering Committee continue to meet monthly by Zoom. The twice a year NUEL face-to-face meetings were substituted with meetings over Zoom. As a result of NUEL’s work, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy continued to identify Urban Extension as a priority for 2020. The National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) continued to advance the National Urban Extension Initiative Implementation Plan with the specific goals and tasks established in 2018. The “Implementation Plan” approved by ECOP in early 2019 serves as a blueprint for NUEL’s actions for the next two to four years to move the national, and state, Extension systems forward and to enhance Extension’s work in urban/metropolitan settings. The following set of accomplishments address the recommendations and goals set forth in the Implementation Plan:

The National Urban Extension Communication Network:
- In collaboration with ECOP and Extension Directors/Administrators NUEL identify urban coordinators (UC) at 1862 and 1890 land-grant universities (LGU) in 2019. The urban coordinators serve as points of contact between NUEL and LGU. As of January 2021 eighty-seven urban coordinators have been identified. Currently five 1890, two in the Northeast region and one in the Western region LGUs have not identified an urban coordinator.
- Due to the restrictions in travel brought about by the pandemic, outreach to UC was limited to meetings with their respective regional networks and will be invited to participate in upcoming conferences and summits.
- The NUEL website is currently hosted by eXtension and updated by the Communications Action Team. The process of reviewing of success stories on the website was completed, and the process of securing new success stories for the website is underway.

2020 National Urban Extension Conference (NUEC):
- The conditions brought about by the pandemic caused the postponement of NUEC 21. The conference was postponed to 2022 and the venue moved from Atlantic City to Camden, New Jersey.
- In lieu of the conference NUEL and the Conference Planning Committee organized a virtual National Urban Extension Summit for May 2021 to meet and discuss issues relevant to urban Extension, the priority issues project and recognize the winners of the regional urban Extension leadership award.

Building national partnerships:
- eXtension
  - NUEL continues to collaborate with eXtension and to highlight work produced by eXtension fellows. The fellows worked with NUEL and eXtension to gather resources to create an urbanExtension eFieldbook on the eXtension website.
  - The eFieldbook has a considerable number of resources for Extension professionals who work in urban environments.
• **American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Urban County Coalition**
  o NUEL established a strong relationship with the leadership of the AFBF Urban County Coalition (AFBFUCC) built upon the 2019 face to face meeting presentation by AFBFUCC and the second annual AFBF Urban Summit and strategic planning session held in 2019.
  o In January 2020 the NUEL chair was invited by AFBFUCC to be part of a panel to talk about the future of urban agriculture and potential for AFBF to support this type of agriculture at the Annual AFBF Convention in Austin, Texas.
  o An early year meeting with AFBFUCC identified the following cities as partners: San Diego, Miami, Newark, Indianapolis, Seattle, Raleigh, Columbus and New York City.
  o Regular meetings have been established with point persons from various cities in the country to discuss and coordinate efforts to respond to future proposals tied to the Urban Agriculture work described in the 2018 Farm Bill. The efforts of this focus group are focused on gathering information on research of economic and social impact studies, urban agriculture ordinances, and new farmer training programs.
  o At the end of May 2020, NUEL, AFBFUCC and Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research (WCMER), housed at Washington State University, hosted four national virtual listening sessions to gather input from urban, indoor and emerging agriculture stakeholders for NIFA to inform the criteria set for a new RFA that will be releasing $40 million of new grant funding for urban, indoor and emerging agriculture over the next 3-5 years. Input from 136 stakeholders who participated, representing 39 states and U.S. territories, was summarized in a report provided to NIFA. Additional analysis of the input gathered is currently underway by WCMER and Michigan State University School of Planning, Design and Construction.

• **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
  o The pandemic required a rapid pivot from live to remote programming throughout Extension and it exposed the disparity in access and availability of information in social and economically challenged areas, as well as extensionists’ capacity to respond and address these issues.
  o In partnership with the Southern Rural Development Center, NUEL hosted a webinar to discuss race in partnership with the Racial Healing training team. It was a robust discussion with 155 Extension staff from across the country on bias, recruitment, training and diversity/inclusion. Also discussion on the work in some universities. The webinar presented a model and mode of action for NUEL to address diversity, equity and inclusion.
  o In September 2020, NUEL shared the feedback gathered during the discussion with the ECOP Program Committee and each of the ECOP regional Executive Administrators for distribution through the regional Extension director associations.

### NUEL Programmatic Focus Areas

- Strengthen Communities
- Protect the Environment
- Improve our Health
- Enrich Youth
- Feed our Future

**Regional NUEL networks of Extension staff focused on programming:**

- NUEL continued its work to build regional networks of Extension staff working in urban and metropolitan environments around urban Extension programming in the five NUEL program focus areas – Strengthen Communities, Protect the Environment, Improve our Health, Enrich Youth and Feed our Future.
- Virtual regional network meetings of urban Extension staff were held in all five regions during 2020, with most regions meeting on a regular schedule.
Also, as part of NUEL’s regional program networking efforts, and in collaboration with the Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research, work continues on the development of the Leading Edge white papers.

**Urban Priority Project:**

- Within the National Urban Extension Initiative Implementation Plan, NUEL set forth several goals to facilitate cross-state collaboration and the identification and collection of promising programs, operations and leadership success stories or Best Practices within urban Extension. To advance these goals, NUEL worked with the University of Missouri Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) at the end of 2019 to brainstorm and design a process to kick off a national discussion about priorities for Extension’s urban work.
- In 2020 NUEL launched the urban Extension Priority Issue Project (PIP). The PIP Process Outline was reviewed by the ECOP Program Committee in the spring.
- This process will build a more robust national network of urban Extension volunteers and identifies issues that serve as the primary mechanism for cross-state collaboratives and strategic partnerships. and pursue the development of additional resources regionally and/or across the system.
- During the summer, through the NUEL regional staff networks, over 400 Extension staff regionally identified urban issues and then prioritized them. After summarizing the regional issues identified, NUEL identified four - three programmatically focused and one administratively focused - urban issue areas to begin building networks and coalescing Extension resources around.
- The program area issues are: Food Access & Security; Urban Sustainability; and the Social-Emotional-Mental Health Wellbeing of Urban Residents. The administrative issue is: Extension’s Urban Workforce.
- The regional urban priority issues and the four national urban priority issues with shared with the ECOP Program Committee in September and October.

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**Priorities/Goals 2021**

The NUEL Steering Committee approved the following list of priorities or goals for 2021:

**National NUEL LGU urban coordinators:**

- Continue to work with ECOP and regional EDA staff to identify UC from missing LGUs and to keep the list up to date.
- Expand efforts to actively engage state urban coordinators in leadership roles in Regional Networks (RN) and NUEL Action Teams (AT) and encourage them to take leadership roles for achieving RN and AT goals/tasks.
Regional Networks (RNs):
(In the NUEL structure, the role of RNs is to regionally and nationally connect staff and programming across urban areas.)

- Continue to build programmatically focused RNs in all ECOP regions by:
  - Hosting RN meetings in each region during 2021.
    - Include tasks/steps identified in NUEL’s National Extension Urban Priority Impact Project.
  - Creating additional opportunities, including virtual, for Extension programming staff to meet each other and network, share best practices, programmatic curriculum, evaluation strategies and explore potential multi-state programmatically focused projects, funding and partnerships as appropriate.

Action Teams (ATs):
(In the NUEL structure, the role of ATs is to work at the national level on professional development, communications and building partnerships.)

- Continue to explore and expand national partnerships with groups like AFBF, JCEP and Extension professional associations.
- Work to actively engage LGU/state UCs and other potential AT members identified through RNs and encourage them to take leadership roles for achieving AT goals/tasks.
- Each AT will update AT roles and responsibilities information sheet and identify a set of priorities to focus the AT work around in 2020, and into future years.

Enhance NUEL’s communications ability:

- Develop a workable solution to address NUEL’s communication needs identified in 2019.
- More fully active Communications AT to provide leadership for communications solutions identified.

NUEL National Extension Urban Priority Project:

- Finalize white paper outlining the processes and steps for the national Extension urban priorities project. Share the document with ECOP and the regional EDAs to engage them as partners and/or supports.
- Carry out the national Extension urban priorities project as outlined in the PIP Process Outline whitepaper.

Back to attachments directory
Goals:
1. Encourage action on the issues of national importance to 4-H through supporting the development of relationships among committee members and encourage productive dialogue.

2. Discuss current opportunities and actions of the four priority areas identified by this committee – Engaging More Youth, Marketing, Resources, Governance and Alignment.

3. Continue to advance 2019 goals in relation to successful achievement of the 2025 growth and PYD vision.

I. Updates on Existing ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee Projects

A. ECOP 4-H Budget and Legislative Committee
   • Advocacy efforts and support from the 4-H Congressional Caucus on the 4-H at Home platform, OJJDP, and advocacy support for an appropriation of $12M for youth development grants that has evolved from earlier ECOP actions. As part of the ECOP BLC 4-H Subcommittee’s goal to increase funding for Extension including the 4-H Program, partnered with the Co-Chairs of the 4-H Congressional Caucus to support COVID-19 pandemic resources.

   • September 8, 2020 4-H Congressional Caucus briefing on the impact of Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Program. Details were provided on Cooperative Extension structure, diversity of programs, importance of 1890 Extension and Smith-Lever funding, and Opportunity 4All: Access, Equity, and Mobility for American’s youth.

   • Over this past year, the BLC 4-H Subcommittee developed common message points for the 4-H program to be used for advocacy efforts. The 4-H advocacy document was used at Congressional 4-H Caucus briefings, CARET/AHS meeting, and PILD this past year.

   • Legal reform in Congress regarding the 4-H Name & Emblem has been a 3-year effort to contemporize the management of the Name & Emblem to create new funding for Extension. There would be no changes to the management of the 4-H Name & Emblem at the State and local level. At the national level, National 4-H Council would have the exclusive right to use the 4-H Name & Emblem on national or multi-state basis to secure corporate and foundation sponsorships to generate financial support to benefit Cooperative Extension. Led by Cornerstone, language for a legislative solution to Name and Emblem continues to be discussed with relevant House and Senate Committee offices and for their recommendations on best path forward. I am hopeful we finalize these efforts in the near future.

   • In the process of finalizing a concept paper on 4-H & Positive Youth Development to advocate for resources to support 4-H. The ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee provides leadership and sets policy for Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Positive Youth Development Program. To accomplish ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee’s vision to reflect the demographics of the county and to serve at minimum 1 in 5 youth, the Committee has implemented several national initiatives critical to the Cooperative Extension system and 4-H program. However, fiscal resources are needed to provide staffing support for these, and other programs, initiated by the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee that support the 4-H program nationally. Therefore, the 4-H & Youth Development Concept paper
will provide justification and advocacy messaging points for new funding to support an Extension 4-H Director for the 4-H program and to support ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee’s priorities and initiatives that will lead to system-wide opportunities for 4-H and benefit the Cooperative Extension System, our 4-H volunteers, and youth served.

B. Pathways Leadership Institute
   • The inaugural Pathways 4-H Leadership Institute was July 14 and 15. The program has been fully adapted to a virtual format. The institutions participating in the first Cohort were: Virginia Tech, West Virginia, Washington State and University of Nebraska. A second Cohort of five institutions was conducted virtually in September 2020 and there is additional interest to expand the program. Working with National 4-H Council to position the 4-H Pathways Leadership Institute for additional financial support to allow for re-engagement with our nine LGU’s who have participated in the initial two cohorts, and to schedule one or more additional cohorts in the coming months.

C. ECOP 4-H Equity Design Team
   • Dorothy Freeman provided leadership of the ECOP 4-H Equity Design Team. Virtual meetings occur every two weeks. The group focused on team building and exploration of diversity, equity and inclusion education and now moving into the development of specific goals and strategies to implement the approved national vision utilizing the facilitation of Kevin McDonald and incorporation of his Inclusive Excellence Framework. The 4-H Equity Strategic Plan has been completed and shared with the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee and PLWG in February 2021.

II. Joint Meeting with National 4-H Council Board of Trustees

A. 4-H Youth Development During the Pandemic (Theory and Research Base)
   • For the third year in a row, the ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee held a joint conversation with the National 4-H Council Board of Trustees. The topics included an update on 4-H Positive Youth Development theory and research base, with a particular emphasis on the challenges and impacts of the pandemic. Presentations from Dr. Mary Arnold (Oregon State University and National 4-H Council Director for PYD Research) and Dr. Nia Imani Fields (4-H Program Leader and Assistant Director of Extension, U. of Maryland) launched a very lively and productive conversation.

B. Overview of the Purpose Platform Vision
   • Artis Stevens and Jen McIver provided a preview of the work underway to bring the 4-H Value Proposition of supporting economic and social equity for America’s youth to the marketplace. Preliminary concepts and visuals were shared with an opportunity for ECOP 4-H and the Council Trustees to share reactions and make recommendations as the project develops.

III. National 4-H Council Marketing and Communication Updates -
   • Artis Stevens, Jen McIver and Andy Ferrin provided updates on the following topics:
     o 4-H at Home
     o 4-H Grows Update
     o 4-H Crisis Communication Planning
     o Supporting LGU efforts to communicate the importance of 4-H Youth

IV. List of 2020 accomplishments
   • See attached PDF"
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>2020 NUEL Accomplishments</td>
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<td>ECOP 4-H 2020 Accomplishments 11.1...</td>
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Below are significant activities of the ECOP BLC this past year:

- Jason Henderson was elected as BLC vice-chair.
- Members of ECOP BLC provided Rich Bonanno, CLP representative, input on 1) what in the Farm Bill is of most concern, 2) suggestions to strengthening the stakeholders and their relationships with land-grants, and 3) how to address advocacy for authorizations.
- ECOP BLC provided input into the BAC on this year’s federal appropriation request including the importance of capacity lines and needed attention to 1890 Extension and Evans-Allen budget lines.
- Members of ECOP BLC, working with EDA Team, supported the advocacy effort for the $380M BAA COVID-19 Supplemental 4 Proposal.
- ECOP BLC discussed current results of Capacity Funding Working Group and will continue to engage in the discussions.
- ECOP BLC provided input to the BAA Strategic Realignment Committee’s recommendation of NIFA funding lines.
- ECOP BLC has convened expert teams to develop concept notes, messaging, and talking points to support advocacy efforts and education around ECOP priorities.

The current list of concept notes with those providing leadership for their development include the following:

1. Climate Extension - Fred Schlutt, Jason Henderson, Climate Fellows, Chris Geith
2. Workforce Development - Ivory Lyles
3. Health Extension (COVID-19, Farm Stress, Nutrition and Food Safety)-Roger Rennekamp and Michelle Rodgers
4. 4-H Positive Youth Development - ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee/4-H Advocacy Subcommittee, Jon Boren/Andy Turner
5. Urban Ag and Extension - NUEL, Western Center, Brad, Marie, Jason
6. Broadband/Infrastructure (access and literacy) - National 4-H Council, ECOP National Office, Caroline

From these resources, and in collaboration with eXtension, we are in the process of developing a web-based advocacy toolkit for use by ECOP and folks working on budget and legislative issues.

- ECOP BLC established the Farm Bill Nutrition Program Working group with regional representation to establish what the Cooperative Extension System wants regarding the farm bill reauthorization of 2023 around SNAP-Ed and EFNEP and why. Address any threats or barriers to move forward with a plan of action for Congressional advocacy. Present recommendations to ECOP and/or a general Extension Farm Bill Committee for a vote that will ultimately voice the System-supported recommendations for the next farm bill.

- Through the ECOP BLC Sub-Committee on 4-H Advocacy, provided advocacy support for an appropriation of $12M for youth development grants for the National 4-H Council as well as Girl Scouts of the United States of America, the Boy Scouts of America, and the National FFA
Organization, established in 7 U.S.C. 7630(d)(2). In 2018, Congress reauthorized these dedicated youth development grants, but they remain unfunded.

• 4-H and many other mentoring organizations rely on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)’s Youth Mentoring Grant, a competitive grant supporting mentoring to our nation’s most vulnerable youth. Through the ECOP BLC Sub-Committee on 4-H Advocacy, in July we engaged the Congressional 4-H Caucus and encouraged an appropriation of $250 million for DOJ Youth Mentoring Grants. We were successful and additional OJJDP funds became available to 4-H ($4.23 million to National 4-H Council in partnership with Cooperative Extension).

• Through the ECOP BLC Sub-Committee on 4-H Advocacy, on September 8, 2020, we had a 4-H Congressional Caucus briefing on the impact of Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Program. Details were provided on Cooperative Extension structure, diversity of programs, importance of 1890 Extension and Smith-Lever funding, and Opportunity 4All campaign. ECOP BLC continue to work with ECOP CLP on development next Farm Bill, Strategic Realignment process of NIFA funding lines, Capacity Funding Working Group, and development of future concept papers and advocacy strategies, online toolkit, and processes/timelines.

Back to attachments directory
Communications and Marketing Committee with ESCOP (CMC)
Submitted by Karla Trautman, South Dakota State University

The CMC has undergone leadership changes as a result of CMC Chair, Mark Rieger, leaving his current position (Dean, University of Delaware) to take on a new role as the Provost of Florida Gulf Coast University. Karla Trautman assumed the CMC Chair position in January. ESCOP nominated JF Meullenet as the incoming chair of the CMC and the Administrative Heads approved Steve Loring to serve out Mark’s term as the past chair.


The CMC met by teleconference on October 29, 2020 and February 18, 2021.

A working draft of BAA Roadmap is attached to this brief (pp. 42-57). For the system this marks the transition from “how” to “what.” FTP seeks broad-based input from across the system to add content to the plan. Suggestions on roadmap content should be forwarded to FTP at aplu_baa@forbes-tate.com.

FTP has also crafted a toolkit for directors and communicators (pp.17-33) and a proposed calendar of events (34-41). Both of these documents are in draft stage. Comments can be submitted to FTP at aplu_baa@forbes-tate.com.

A position description has been drafted for the expert that will be tasked with implementing the BAA Roadmap. The title of this APLU/FANR position is tentatively set as the “Executive Director, Communications, Outreach and External Partnerships.” Distribution of the position description will made using a multitude of channels including university educator listservs, ACE, online job posting boards, and through the Forbes/Tate network. Importantly, the CMC expects to conduct interviews in mid to late April and have the hire completed by June. To assist with the transition and onboarding of the new position, the FTP contract with APLU has been extended and its timeframe aligned with this goal. Extending the contract with FTP by the APLU was at no cost to the sections."

The CMC requested to the BAA Policy Board of Directors (PBD) that the CMC be appointed as a standing committee of the BAA. On February 19, 2021, the PBD met and is moving forward on the request. According to the BAA Rules of Operation, the PBD need to vote to put the initiative on a ballot for BAA consideration, the PBD needs to review and approve the ballot measure, the PBD must observe a 30-day review process prior to calling a vote and the ballot must be approved by a supermajority of BAA members. The CMC seeks the support of the section on these measures.

Back to attachments directory
Introduction and Overview

This toolkit is designed to support APLU BAA as it works to engage stakeholders and secure additional federal resources to support its critical research, Extension System, and education efforts. By presenting a united voice with a clear ask, BAA and its advocates can use communications tools to their advantage.

The content throughout this guide is part informational and part actionable. Each section contains instructions on how and when to deploy the tactic, along with templates that can be adjusted and used in practice. It is based on messaging from the final Roadmap Plan and a calendar of anticipated BAA-related events, and it can serve as a jumping off point for other topics and situations that emerge in real time.

This toolkit includes the below sections:

- **Messaging**: Overview of the Roadmap messaging frame and how to adapt it
- **Social Media How-To Guide**: General tips and tricks on using social media effectively
- **Social Media Content**: Template posts and graphics available for your modification and use across social channels
- **Paid Digital How-To Guide**: Overview of the different platforms available and how to use them
- **Earned Media How-To Guide**: An overview of op-eds, letters to the editor, press releases, and pitching
- **Earned Media Content**: Template letter to the editor, statement, and pitch for your modification and use

Navigation

*Messaging* .............................................................................................................................................. 24

*Social Media How-To Guide* .................................................................................................................. 26

*Social Media Content* ............................................................................................................................. 30

*Paid Digital How-To Guide* .................................................................................................................... 32

*Earned Media How-To Guide* ................................................................................................................ 35

*Earned Media Content* ............................................................................................................................ 37
**Messaging**

The four core messaging pillars serve as a home base to tie back to in any communications product. While intended to drive toward a unified ask for federal funding, each one of these messages can and should be supported whenever possible by human faces – students, faculty, and community members. Real-world examples will help paint a picture of how the land-grant system is keeping its diverse graduates, and by extension the nation, competitive and prepared for the future.

**CORE MESSAGE 1:** Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System result in safer, higher quality food systems.

Here’s what a quote in a press release might look like on this topic:

> "Even before COVID-19 negatively affected global supply chains, rapid population growth was making issues like hunger, low crop yields, inadequate food storage, and nutrition more complicated – and more important than ever before – to tackle. American land-grant universities must be equipped with the federal funding required to be at the forefront of solving these pressing global problems."

**CORE MESSAGE 2:** Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System make communities stronger and healthier.

Here’s what a quote in a press release might look like on this topic:

> "Cooperative Extension is engaging millions of American youths through 4-H, the nation’s largest youth development organization. 4-H programming brings young people and adults together to create community change and promote civic engagement, healthy living, and scientific understanding. These positive outcomes are directly tied to continued investment in the Cooperative Extension Section found within land-grant universities."

**CORE MESSAGE 3:** Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System address critical challenges facing agriculture and the environment.

Here’s what a quote in a press release might look like on this topic:

> "Investing in groundbreaking work to develop better biofuels seeds America’s success by making sure we can power our economy and protect our climate. Only land-grant universities have the knowledge, research, and Extension reach to deliver these returns for the American taxpayer."

**CORE MESSAGE 4:** Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System are vital to safeguarding America’s status as a global leader in innovation.

Here’s what a quote in a press release might look like on this topic:
“Innovation has always been America’s most important competitive edge. Federal investments that enable land-grant universities to make the next generation of breakthroughs in areas like gene-editing technology, artificial intelligence, and precision agriculture are needed to ensure the US remains a global leader.”
Social Media How-To Guide

Why run an organic social media campaign?

Even if you are running ads on social media, any strategic social media campaign should also include an organic component. Organic posts sent from your handle or other stakeholders ensure the content is seen by your “regular” audience (people already following you) in addition to any paid audience you might be trying to reach through targeting. Your follower audience is familiar with your mission already and is primed to click through to the landing page and learn more information. It also allows whatever content you put out to live on in perpetuity on your feed, unlike an ad.

Social media best practices

Keep character count down
On Twitter, you are limited to 280 characters for every tweet. This includes spaces and links (tip: use free websites like bitly.com or tinyurl.com to shorten links). While you are not so limited on other platforms, it is still best to keep posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and elsewhere on the shorter side. People tend to scroll through social media without taking too much time to pause on any given post, so engaging your audience and getting your point across right away is important. Save longer thoughts for something like a blog post on your website.

Post regularly
When content is posted consistently, it can increase impressions, mentions, and overall online presence. In general, it is recommended that content should be posted at least three times a week across all social media platforms to sustain and increase an account’s engagement rates. Making sure your accounts are fairly active will ensure they are in a better position to be noticed once it’s time to run a campaign.

When determining how to schedule the cadence of an organic social media campaign, start by examining how often your account is posting content under usual circumstances and consider the legislative time frame you have to work with. This will help you determine how much content you want to put out and how often to share it.

Be intentional with clickable items
Tools like hashtags can be useful to build a campaign’s identity, latch onto current events, or get noticed by your target audience. However, when incorporating items that can be clicked into your social content (i.e. hashtags, links, and tags) be intentional. Every clickable item is an opportunity to direct someone’s attention where you want it to go – but they are also an opportunity to drive clicks away from your post (ex. Is now really a time when you want audiences clicking on a general hashtag like “#agriculture” or do you want them focused on the hashtag for a specific campaign or event?).

Consider the purpose of each clickable item:
- Hashtags: When clicked, they allow audiences to see all content (posted by any account) participating in this same conversation. They can also function as a tagline, branding a campaign.
- **Tags:** Tagging an account means that person is notified of your post. These should be used only when you want the tagged entity to see your post, or you want your own followers to see that you are calling this account out (possibly to thank them, admonish them, encourage them to act, or solicit a response).

- **Links:** Links allow you to drive to an outside source. Have a landing page for your campaign or a news article that helps make your case? Great. Link it. Just make sure your accompanying copy is clearly connected to the purpose or summary of the linked item so that audiences know what they’re getting into when they click on it – that will help lower bounce rates away from your site.

A deluge of unnecessary clickable items can muddy the waters. With campaigns in particular stay focused on the specific end goal you have in mind and what your audiences might need to see to achieve that goal. Though not a hard and fast rule, it is generally recommended to limit the number of clickable items to three.

**Reach your audience when they’re online**
There’s not a perfect science to the exact time of day when you should post content to have the most people see and engage with it. Different studies and media companies have come up with slightly different suggestions on this topic, and some even think that each social media platform has its own unique peak time. In general, you should think about it this way: Most people look at their social media accounts during the times when they’re not too busy with their daily lives. That tends to be loosely mid-morning to lunch (9am – 1pm) or in the early evening (4pm – 6pm). Essentially you want to post when people aren’t asleep, getting ready for work or commuting, in the middle of working, or making dinner and taking care of their family. Try out the 9am – 1pm and 4pm – 6pm windows for a few days and make note of any trends in impressions and engagement. Over time, you’ll get a feel for when your followers are most active.

There’s not a hard and fast rule for which days of the week you should post on either, though weekends (especially Sunday) are typically less active. Mid-week (Tuesday through Thursday) is a good range to default to when scheduling posts, but don’t let that stop you from posting on Monday or Friday if you have news to share.

**Repetition, repetition, repetition**
In a campaign, don’t be afraid to post content that is a version of the same thing you’ve said before. The whole point is to get a specific message across, convince your audiences, and inspire them to act. People generally need to be exposed to messages more than once for them to really stick.

Similarly, be consistent with your calls to action. Again, consider the goal of your campaign: What is the one or two things you really want audiences to do? Say that. Say it clearly. Then say it again.

**Create a policy for responding to comments**
How, when, and if you decide to respond to comments (especially negative ones) is ultimately up to you and your organization’s comfort level. The benefits of responding are that commenters might feel more heard, and you have the chance to correct the record or engage in a dialogue that provides your followers with a new way to think about
something. The downside is that commenters could become argumentative or impolite, you could come out of the interaction looking like you’ve “lost.”

Creating an internal policy that’s applied consistently can help navigate these challenges. Many organizations will prefer not to respond to comments at all, and that is perfectly acceptable. Letting your initial post speak for itself ensures you are never dragged off message or pulled into potentially combative situations.

Should your organization choose to weigh in on comments that are misleading or factually incorrect, it is best to stick to neutral, businesslike, explanatory language. Your responses should stick closely to the talking points and might look something like this:

- “It is our position that [X] because [Y].”
- “Hi, [X]. Here is a link to [an article, a website, a one-pager, etc.] that helps explain [Y]. Our stance on this issue is [Z].”
- “Thank you for participating in this important conversation. We support [X] because [Y]...”

When it comes to “trolls” – commenters who consistently seek to undermine what you’re saying and may or may not even be a real person – it is generally not worth your time and energy to respond. Remember their goal is to pull you off message or make you look exasperated – two things you don’t want to be.

**Consider a paid campaign element**

If you are not already running paid ads, it might be worth doing a little bit of targeting in the Beltway, around the state capital, or in key congressional districts. This could help your messaging get seen by stakeholder audiences – whether they follow your account or not. Digital campaigns can range from month-long table setting campaigns to a single-day ad blitz ahead of an important vote.

**Evaluating the success of your posts**

In order to establish whether the content is engaging and reaching the right audience, it’s important to look at the analytics of each organic post. Analytics can give unique insights into what is working by evaluating the engagement rate for each post, followers gained, or likes and retweets. Although each metric of success varies across different social media accounts and organizations, there are some general baselines that should be considered.

First, consider overall engagement rate, which means how many people saw the post then chose to interact with it by either liking, sharing, or commenting on it. Looking across industries, the standard engagement rate on Facebook is about 0.1% and on Twitter it is about 0.045%. But it is also important to understand what the average engagement rate currently is for your own social properties to set proper benchmarks (and then work your way up from there).

Studying weekly or monthly analytics to evaluate the social content will help to determine long-term trends in engagement and website traffic. This will help you understand whether campaign content is more or less successful than your average posts. You might also gain insights that can be folded into the design of a campaign – for example, does
your usual content typically perform best at a certain time of day? Do your followers typically click more on posts with photos, or posts with links? Take what is already working for you and use that knowledge to set your campaign up for success.

Finally, if you are using several different message tracks or images in a single campaign, take note of which performs best. This is an easy way to do free and informal message testing to find out what resonates most with your unique audience.

**How to Put A Week of Content Together**

In thinking through content for the week, BAA could highlight:

- Notable calendar events
- Theme of the week or month
- News stories relevant to your priorities
- Pre-existing resources from APLU or member universities
- Individual institutions and their achievements
- Poll questions for followers (consider first what the poll results might look like)
- Evergreen content that is useful to regularly remind followers
- Trending hashtags or existing BAA hashtags
- Existing photos, graphics, or videos
- Young scientist features
- Undergraduate and graduate student features
- Faculty features
- Extension professional features
- Congressional targets

Using these categories as an outline, begin filling in draft posts.
**Social Media Content**

In all template content, placeholders are marked by brackets and example of how one might fill it in is given.

**For talking about federal legislation and/or happenings in DC:**

1. Why would Congress do well to [Insert action here, ex. “keep the agricultural community at the top of their agenda when appropriating funds for next year” or “pass the XX Act”]?  
   ✓ [Insert brief reason 1, ex. “Power the economy”]  
   ✓ [Insert brief reason 2, ex. “Protect the climate”]  
   ✓ [Insert brief reason 3, ex. “Safeguard public health”]  
   [LINK TO RELEVANT NEWS ARTICLE]

2. Congress must ensure #agriculture, life science research, and Extension remain a priority. [Tag committees with relevant upcoming hearings, ex. “@AppropsDems and @HouseAppropsGOP: Through XX Act, we will put our economy, climate, and public health first.”]  
   [INSERT LINK TO STATEMENT ON THE BILL]

   [INSERT LINK TO STATEMENT]

**For tying into events or theme days/months on the calendar:**

1. Today is the last day of the [Insert name of event here, ex. “National @4H Conference”]. [Insert takeaway here, ex. “From learning about civic engagement to personal development, we hope this served as an invaluable experience for all our 4-H delegates”]. What was your favorite part of the conference? [INSERT EVENT HASHTAG]

2. Did you know September is [Insert name of month, ex. “National Childhood Obesity Month”]? [Insert example of land-grant doing work in this area, ex. “Research made possible by universities like @SouthernU_BR help teach our nation’s children how to garden and offers nutrition-related technology to local schools.”]  
   [INSERT LINK TO THE EXAMPLE USED OR A GRAPHIC FOR THE DAY/MONTH]

**For demonstrating the value of the land-grant system:**

1. What does funding for [Extension/ agricultural research/ life science research] look like in practice? [Insert relevant stats, ex. “+32,000 university- and county-based employees and 2.8 million volunteers nationwide”].
2. [Create a thread starting with the post above by sharing links to specific local examples and stories.]

3. It starts with federal funding and it ends with [insert relevant example from land-grant tied to the core messages, ex. “life-saving research on antimicrobial resistance at @IowaStateU”]. Click to learn about their work that could [insert stat, ex. “prevent 23,000 deaths”]. It’s clear investments in land-grants have a strong return.

[INSERT LINK TO EXAMPLE]
Paid Digital How-To Guide

Disclaimer: Before starting a digital promotion plan, it is highly recommended to check on what is allowable under current guidelines for each platform. One thing they currently have in common is the need to be verified before running ads. Rules regarding how to get verified to run ads and what sorts of political or cause-based ads are allowed differ by platform and have changed often in recent years. The process is slightly different for each, so it is best to check the Facebook, Twitter, and Google websites for the most recent information.

Digital ads will allow users not following your channels to see BAA’s content and increase your online presence. Paid campaigns are a great tool because they can be launched at almost a moment’s notice, run for any length of time from a day to a month and beyond, and they can suit many budgets (effective at as low as $25 - $200 per day).

Online tools also allow the advertiser to target the desired audience wherever they are in the country. Every platform has slightly different categories and ways of doing this, but they generally allow you to target zip codes or the radius around certain locations, types of people, and keywords. So, for example, during a week-long agricultural conference, you could run ads for seven days on LinkedIn targeting those with certain job titles and within a certain distance of the conference center.

The key to a successful campaign targeting and content is thinking through 1) Who needs to see the ad, 2) Why do you want them to see it, and 3) What will they gain from it? Answering these questions at the front end will help you figure out how to design a campaign.

Facebook

When to use: For short-term or lower budget campaigns; to reach a broad audience

Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms out there, so it is a great place to be seen. It has the largest share (besides LinkedIn) of adult users, and (unlike LinkedIn) its purpose and content is broad, making it a versatile place to advertise. There is lots of flexibility in targeting and many types of content look at home on the site.

As a social media platform, Facebook lends itself just as well to shorter, low dollar campaigns as it does to larger ones. Note there can be a slight lag time of a couple hours to a day for Facebook ads to get fully up and running.

Twitter

When to use: For short-term or lower budget campaigns; to reach a D.C. audience

This is the power of digital advertising: In Q1 of 2019, the Ag is America Twitter page garnered 20 retweets, 95 engagements, and a 0.60% engagement rate from 20 organic tweets. Two paid promotions also ran in Q1 2019 (on Agriculture Day and Strawberry Day), resulting in 32,513 impressions, 2,214 clicks, and an 8.50% engagement rate.
Putting a small amount of money behind these short campaigns led to massive boosts in the overall engagement rate with the content.

Like Facebook, Twitter lends itself well to shorter, less expensive spends and offers lots of flexibility in targeting. That said, it can also be used for longer-term, ongoing ads (for example, perhaps you want to devote a small budget to advertising each month to keep visibility consistently high).

Twitter is also home to many active journalists, thought leaders, and policymaking types, so it can be a good place to try to reach a D.C. audience. Though please note that in recent years, Twitter has taken some of the most sweeping steps to reform its political and cause-based ads policies. At the time of writing, Twitter does not allow ads to directly mention legislation or members of Congress, and 501c4 organizations are banned from advertising entirely.

**Google**

*When to use: For longer-term or higher budget campaigns*

Historically, the second most common way visitors arrived at the Land-Grant.org website has been through search engines like Google (13.83%). For the old Agriculture is America website, Google traffic accounted for 32% of visits. Clearly, Google is a place where people are looking for content from BAA and related sites, so advertising there makes a lot of sense and should be cost efficient.

Unlike on social media platforms where your ad will likely appear as an image or video, Google ads appear above (and look just like) search results with a paid disclaimer. You might purchase the keyword “agriculture,” and then someone searching for that term on Google could be shown your ad as a search result. Generally, the broader the term, the more expensive it is to target because there is a higher chance other companies and organizations are also trying to target it. Thinking of specific keywords will help ensure better results. Still, Search campaigns often perform best given a decent amount of time and/or money – this is not the place to do a single day $300 campaign.

**LinkedIn**

*When to use: For events or professional audiences*

Given the nature of the platform, content that does well on LinkedIn typically has some sort of business or professional tie-in. This could be a good place to advertise if you are trying to boost an event or reach only those within academic and industry circles.

**Programmatic Advertising and Other**

*When to use: For more expensive campaigns with broad targeting*

Programmatic ads refer to the types of ads you might see embedded into a news article – the ones that seem to follow you around the internet. This method allows you to get your ads in lots of different places, but it’s not as nimble of a process as advertising on social
media. It is best to approach these campaigns with a bigger budget, bigger goals, and a longer lead time. You will need to work with a digital advertising vendor to do so.

Another option is to work directly with a particular news site to sponsor their newsletter or advertise on their site. This can be useful if you are trying to capture the attention of people within a certain town or district, though again, it is typically much more expensive and time consuming.
**Earned Media How-To Guide**

**Letters to the Editor (LTEs)**
*Use when: It benefits you to respond to an article published by a reporter.*

LTEs make an argument and tell a story. They are some of the best traditional tools for putting a personal touch on an otherwise policy-heavy issue and getting the attention of members of Congress. LTEs are typically no longer than 200 words and respond to an article in a publication by substantiating it or refuting it. For example, a local news outlet might publish an article about a congressperson’s priorities after returning from recess – giving BAA an opportunity to draft an LTE explaining why at this moment, failure to prioritize investments in agriculture is a failure for the community, the state, and the nation.

Like with any opinion piece, the very first paragraph of an LTE should make clear the point you are trying to make. It should be to the point and indicate why you are a subject matter expert or someone whose voice belongs in the debate, and it should be substantiated with statistics and real stories as much as is possible in the limited word count. Whenever factual information is included, it should be sourced through links.

Before starting to draft any opinion piece, check the intended publication’s website for submission guidelines and word limits and work with land-grant university communicators to ensure timing and the topic do not conflict with local issue or media priorities.

**Op-eds and Feature Articles**
*Use when: You want to present a more thorough argument that ties your priorities to current events.*

These are like an LTE, but they can be much longer and do not have to be in direct response to something that was already published by the outlet. Ideally, an op-ed should fall somewhere between 400-600 words.

Think of an op-ed like a news article you are providing to an outlet for them to run: It must be relevant and tailored to their audience, it must be timely, and it must be adequately sourced. For example, if the topic is federal investment in agriculture but the outlet is The State in Columbia, South Carolina, then the piece should call on South Carolina’s congressional delegation and give examples of how federal investment would help the Palmetto State. It should also make clear why you are talking about the issue at this particular moment in time.

Just like an LTE, these longer opinion pieces should indicate why you are a subject matter expert or stakeholder (i.e., Why should people value your opinion?), and it should be substantiated with statistics and anecdotes. Whenever factual information is included, it should be sourced through links.

**Press Releases**
*Use when: You have breaking news to share.*
A press release is a standard method for sharing news with a broad list of reporters and stakeholders. You might use a press release to praise the passage of legislation, announce a new initiative or grant, etc. The goal of a release is that a reporter will include your quote and information in a story they are writing. A press release always follows the basic format of:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Insert Date

CONTACT  
Insert Name  
Insert Email Address  
Insert Phone Number

Headline  
Optional Sub-head

CITY, STATE – Today, insert the thing that happened here. Include no more than three or so sentences relaying the high-level facts (ex. Who was the bill sponsor? How much money is involved?).

“Insert a quote here about why the thing that happened is important to you,” said X.

Insert more background information about the thing that happened and your work related to it here.

About The Organization  
Insert your about here.

###

Statements can be released in a similar format, but with just a brief introduction and quote. A statement is useful in reacting to someone else’s news, like when the president releases a budget or executive order you want to comment on.
Earned Media Content

Sample Statement

Agricultural Universities Urge Congress to Fund President’s Budget Request for Research and Extension

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities’ Board on Agriculture Assembly released the following statement in response to the president’s Fiscal Year 2022 budget. The budget outlines [$$] in funding for the agricultural sector, including [X, Y, and Z key components worth highlighting].

“A president’s budget is an indicator of their priorities, and we are encouraged to see that President X has included the American agricultural community in his vision for the country’s future. Investing in agricultural research, life science research, and the Extension System seeds America’s success. It is through consistent and adequate funding in these areas that we can power the economy, protect the climate, safeguard public health, and rise to the technological moment.

“Congress would do well to follow the president’s lead and keep the agricultural community at the top of their agenda when formulating the budget and appropriating funds for next year. Land-grant universities have a presence in every county in the nation, and the contributions they make through agricultural research and Extension strengthen not only our nation as a whole but the individual states, districts, and constituents these members represent. Congress can play an integral role in addressing the critical challenges their communities face by approving funding increases for federal research programs designed to help farmers and ranchers, protect our environment and our precious natural resources, promote youth-development and academic excellence, and improve our collective quality of life.”

Sample Pitch

To pitch your opinion content to a local outlet, first you’ll need to know who to contact. Try searching “[OUTLET NAME] + op-ed submissions” to find a submissions email address. Alternatively, you can check the outlet’s staff directory on their website for the Editorial Page or Opinion Editor. For letters to the editor, there is often a submission form or email, though you can also search for the Opinion Editor.

Once you’ve found contact information, you can begin drafting a pitch email. You’ll want to highlight what your op-ed or LTE is about and why you’re a credible voice on the topic. Be sure to copy your piece below your signature as well! Your pitch email might look something like:

Subject line: Op-ed: Benefits of agricultural investment in [INSERT STATE]

Hi there,

Given the prominence of agriculture in [INSERT STATE], I wanted to reach out to [INSERT OUTLET NAME] with an op-ed I’ve written about the social and economic benefits of the land-grant system. As [INSERT JOB TITLE/ORGANIZATION], I’ve seen firsthand how Schools of Agriculture contribute to [STATE]’s economy, improve health outcomes, and prepare us for the future. Funding for agriculture is especially important now as [TIE TO SOMETHING HAPPENING IN THE NEWS].
I’ve shared my personal experience as well as what [INSERT LAWMAKER NAME] should do to put [STATE] and the nation at the forefront of agricultural innovation.

Would [OUTLET NAME] be interested in running the op-ed? I’ve copied it below my signature for your review.

Thank you,
Name

Sample LTE

In response to the [INSERT DATE] article titled [“INSERT NAME + LINK TO THE PIECE”], it must be noted that one critical area of funding was omitted: agriculture, life science research, and the Extension System.

Even before COVID-19 negatively affected global supply chains, rapid population growth was making issues like hunger, low crop yields, inadequate food storage, and nutrition more complicated – and more important than ever before – to tackle. American land-grant universities like [INSERT UNIVERSITY NAME] right here in [INSERT CITY] should be equipped with the federal funding required to be at the forefront of solving these pressing global problems.

As Representative [NAME] advocates for our community in D.C., he would do well to remember that [INSERT EXAMPLE OF VALUE ADDED BY THE UNIVERSITY]. We are proud of this accomplishment and are continuing to conduct groundbreaking research in the midst of a pandemic that will safeguard Americans’ future, but we must be supported.
APLU BAA Content Calendar DRAFT

This calendar can be used as a tool to support BAA’s communications planning throughout the year. It is not intended to be prescriptive; it’s a collection of possible starting points to build off of at your discretion. Many of the lighter-hearted items are best suited to social media content, while moments on the congressional calendar offer the opportunity to release a statement or place op-ed’s about the need for federal investment in agriculture.

A sample suggested actions are noted throughout.

**January**

**Suggested action:** On National Milk Day, share stories throughout the day on social media highlighting the impact of dairy farmers and milk related research.

Important Legislative Dates
- 3rd – Start of 117th Congress

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- N/A

National State Days
- 4th - National Missouri Day
- 11th - National Arkansas Day
- 18th - National Michigan Day
- 25th - National Florida Day
- 29th - National Kansas Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 6th - National Bean Day
- 9th - National Apricot Day
- 11th - National Milk Day
- 24th - National Peanut Butter Day

National Health Related Days
- N/A

**February**

**Suggested action:** Release a statement from BAA leadership on the need for the president’s budget to reflect an investment in agricultural research, life science research, and the Extension System. Consider drafting an placing an op-ed in a Beltway outlet on the same topic.

Important Legislative Dates
- White House Fiscal Year Budget typically released this month
- 2nd - Senate Hearing on Nomination of Thomas J. Vilsack as Secretary of Agriculture
- 11th – Joint Session of Congress

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- 12th - NIFA FY 2021 Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification (YFSEC) Program Applications Deadline
- 16th - USDA Publication on Agricultural Projections to 2030
18th - NIFA FY 2021 Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) Application Deadline
18th - NIFA Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) & Agriculture and Food Sciences Facilities and Equipment (AGFEI) Application Deadline
26th - NIFA Applying for the AFRI Food and Agriculture Non-formal Education (FANE) and Civic Engagement Experience for Youth (CEEY) Program Areas

National State Days
- 1st - National Texas Day
- 4th - National Washington State Day
- 8th - National Iowa Day
- 12th - National Georgia Day
- 15th - National Wisconsin Day
- 22nd - National California Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 2nd - National Tater Tot Day
- 4th - National Hemp Day
- 7th - National Agriculture Week
- 13th - National Cheddar Day
- 17th - National Cabbage Day
- 22nd - National Cook a Sweet Potato Day
- 26th - National Pistachio Day
- 27th - National Strawberry Day

National Health Related Days
- Heart Month

March
Suggested action: Using the anniversary of the Affordable Care Act as a hook, place local op-eds in 2-3 key states focused on Extension offices’ essential role in influencing the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health, which can help delay or prevent the need for medical care.

Important Legislative Dates
- 23rd - Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act signing (2010): Opportunity to tie into health and wellness messaging

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- N/A

National State Days
- 1st - National Minnesota Day
- 8th - National Oregon Day
- 29th - National Nevada Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 1st - National Pig Day
- 7th - National Cereal Day
- 16th - National Artichoke Hearts Day
- 18th - National Biodiesel Day
- 19th - National Poultry Day
- 20th - World Flower Day
- 21st - National California Strawberry Day
- 23rd - National Chia Day
- 24th - National Ag Day
- 26th - National Spinach Day
- 31st - National Tater Day

National Health Related Days
- Nutrition Month

**April**

*Suggested action:* Run a paid digital campaign during the National 4-H Conference.

**Important Legislative Dates**
- 15th - Deadline for Congress to pass a budget resolution (Note: this often takes longer or does not happen at all)

**Stakeholder Dates and Events**
- 1st - NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative - Sustainable Agricultural Systems Application Deadline (Program Area Priority A9201)
- 1st - NIFA FY 2021 Food Safety Outreach Program Application Deadline
- 9th - 15th - National 4-H Conference
- 29th - NIFA Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Grants Program (RHSE) Application Deadline
- 20th - 30th - USDA event: National Organic Standards Board Meeting (Virtual)

**National State Days**
- 5th - National Nebraska Day
- 12th - National Colorado Day
- 19th - National North Dakota Day
- 22nd - National Oklahoma Day
- 26th - National South Dakota Day

**National Food and Agriculture Related Days**
- 7th - National Beer Day
- 10th - National Farm Animals Day
- 14th - National Pecan Day
- 15th - National Banana Day
- 16th - National Orchid Day
- 19th - National Garlic Day
- 22nd - Earth Day
- 30th - National Arbor Day

**National Health Related Days**
- 7th - World Health Day

**May**

*Suggested action:* Remind social media audiences about the NIFA Community Food Projects (CFP) Competitive Grants Program deadline, then spend the rest of the month highlighting Schools of Agriculture stories about food and nutrition.

**Important Legislative Dates**
- N/A

**Stakeholder Dates and Events**
- 3rd - NIFA FY 2021 Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP) Request for Applications
- 4th - NIFA Community Food Projects (CFP) Competitive Grants Program

National State Days
- 3rd - National Montana Day
- 17th - National Idaho Day
- 24th - National Wyoming Day
- 31st - National Utah Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 4th - National Orange Juice Day
- 17th - National Walnut Day
- 20th - National Pick Strawberries Day

National Health Related Days
- N/A

June

*Suggested action:* To mark the official start of summer, publish a blog post recapping the last academic school year and notable agricultural research.

Important Legislative Dates
- N/A

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- N/A

National State Days
- 14th - National New Mexico Day
- 20th - National Pennsylvania Day
- 20th - National Virginia Day
- 20th - National West Virginia Day
- 21st - National Arizona Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 1st - National Olive Day
- 3rd - National Egg Day
- 4th - National Cheese Day
- 10th - National Herbs and Spices Day
- 11th - Corn on the Cob Day
- 27th - National Onion Day

National Health Related Days
- N/A

Holidays
- 20th – First day of Summer

July

*Suggested action:* For National Hawaii, Delaware, and New Jersey Days, create and share infographics with facts about the impact of agriculture, the life science, and the Extension System in those states.

Important Legislative Dates
- N/A

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- N/A

National State Days
- 5th - National Hawaii Day
- 13th - National Delaware Day
- 27th - National New Jersey Day
- 31st - National Avocado Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 13th - National Cow Appreciation Day

National Health Related Days
- N/A

**August**

*Suggested action:* Draft and publish local letters to the editor or op-eds targeted at members of Congress while they are in district, focusing on the important economic contributions of in-state Schools of Agriculture.

Important Legislative Dates
- August Recess – Opportunity to engage members while they are in district

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- N/A

National State Days
- 10th - National Connecticut Day
- 17th - National Massachusetts Day
- 24th - National Maryland Day
- 31st - National South Carolina Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 3rd - National Watermelon Day
- 15th - World Honeybee Day
- 19th - National Potato Day

National Health Related Days
- N/A

**September**

*Suggested action:* Run a paid digital campaign relating the new findings from the USDA report to the work being done at Schools of Agriculture.

Important Legislative Dates
- 30th - End of the Fiscal Year

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- 8th - USDA report and statistics released on food security
- 10th - NIFA FY 2021 1890 Institution Teaching, Research and Extension Capacity Building Grants (CBG) Program Application Deadline
- 30th - NIFA FY 2020 NSF - NIFA Plant Biotic Interactions Program Request for Applications Deadline

National State Days
- 7th - National New Hampshire Day
- 21st - National New York Day
- 28th - National North Carolina Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 4th - National Macadamia Nut Day
- 13th - National Peanut Day
- 29th - National Coffee Day

National Health Related Days
- N/A

October

**Suggested action:** To tie into Halloween, share pumpkin related research on social media on National Pumpkin Day.

Important Legislative Dates
- N/A

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- N/A

National State Days
- 5th - National Rhode Island Day
- 12th - National Vermont Day
- 18th - National Alaska Day
- 19th - National Kentucky Day
- 26th - National Tennessee Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 6th - National Pumpkin Seed Day
- 12th - National Farmer’s Day
- 15th - National Cheese Curd Day
- 26th - National Pumpkin Day
- 29th - National Oatmeal Day

National Health Related Days
- N/A

November

**Suggested action:** With both National Rural Health Day and Diabetes Month in November, there is an opportunity to pitch local press in a few key rural areas about the Extension System’s role in helping to bolster the health of communities who are otherwise underserved.

Important Legislative Dates
- N/A

Stakeholder Dates and Events
- N/A

National State Days
- 2nd - National Ohio Day
- 9th - National Louisiana Day
- 30th - National Mississippi Day

National Food and Agriculture Related Days
- 1st - National Cinnamon Day
- 14th - National Pickle Day

National Health Related Days
- November Month-long National Health Observances: Diabetes, COPD, and Antibiotic Resistance
- 18th - National Rural Health Day

Holidays
- 25th - Thanksgiving

**December**

**Suggested action:** Use the anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement to release a fact sheet on investments in research and innovation at Schools of Agriculture that is helping to combat the climate crisis.

**Important Legislative Dates**
- Look out for Farm Bill renewed every five years (current one expires in 2023)
- 12th - Anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement (2015): Opportunity to tie into climate messaging

**Stakeholder Dates and Events**
- 9th - USDA Publication: America’s Diverse Family Farms, 2021 Edition

**National State Days**
- 11th - National Indiana Day
- 14th - National Alabama Day
- 21st - National Maine Day

**National Food and Agriculture Related Days**
- 1st - National Eat a Red Apple Day
- 17th - National Maple Syrup Day

**National Health Related Days**
- N/A

Continue to Roadmap on next 16 pages
Back to [attachments directory](#)
To: BAA Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC)  
From: Forbes Tate Partners (FTP)  
Subject: Strategic Communications Roadmap Plan Outline

Overview

The following memo provides an initial outline for APLU-BAA’s new strategic communications roadmap plan. The outline, informed by what FTP learned during the Phase I assessment, is designed to provide an overview of:

- The plan’s objective and strategic considerations;
- Target audiences and suggested message frames;
- Internal processes, roles, and responsibilities within BAA to support execution; and
- Suggested tactics and an illustrative messaging calendar.

The recommendations below are based in part on message, schedule, and logistical assumptions subject to revision and adjustment and is contingent upon participation by Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP), and the Administrative Heads Section (AHS) representing Cooperative Extension, research, and academic programs. However, the inclusive approach taken to soliciting feedback and shaping these recommendations is meant to help build a foundation for an effort that will ultimately serve and support the entirety of BAA and beyond to embrace existing partners like the Commission on Food, Environment, & Renewable Resources (CFERR). Please note the recommendations are meant to serve as general guidelines for the CMC and participating entities to develop the specific components of a strategic communications plan, and do not include all possible tactics and messaging examples.

We imagine this plan will encompass not only agriculture, but other topic areas including public health, nutrition, youth and community development, and natural resources.

Objective and Strategic Considerations

Objective

The CMC works in concert with other entities in the land-grant university system, including the lobbying team at Cornerstone Government Affairs, Council on Government Affairs, various committee chairs, and individual Extensions, research programs, and institutions to protect and increase levels of federally appropriated and awarded funding. Accordingly, the primary objective of the plan is to help BAA successfully secure additional federal resources to support its critical research, Extension System, and education efforts. A secondary objective is to influence and engage key stakeholders through advocacy communications.

Strategic Considerations
As it pursues this objective on behalf of BAA, the CMC encounters a set of strengths, challenges, and opportunities that can be summarized as follows:

- **Strengths:** APLU has a compelling and popular story to tell about the value of the organization’s work and the work and strengths of individual institutions, students, and graduates who represent a broad network of potential messengers. Furthermore, land-grant universities enjoy broad-based support from the communities they serve and have a unique connection to every county, parish, and sovereign tribal nation throughout the country. They bring hope and opportunity, serving urban and rural populations, first generation students, veterans, and beyond – providing unique value to students through partnerships between community, research, and teaching in a way that only land-grant universities can.

- **Challenges:** BAA’s messaging efforts have been hampered by internal communication and coordination issues that lead to a lack of awareness or confusion about how to tell its story, and what is defined as agriculture, ultimately inhibiting the effectiveness of potential messengers and the message itself. Differences in the ability of individual institutions to participate, or reconcile priorities, have also been identified as a challenge that an overarching communications plan should address.

- **Opportunities:** BAA has the opportunity to revitalize existing platforms and a ready-made bank of achievements that, in combination with improved internal processes, will allow it to reboot, rather than rebuild, an effective communications effort. BAA can lean in on the existing national network it has and the local support those institutions receive.

Based on this assessment, the strategy proposed will achieve the objective by positioning the land-grant system as a unique, high-value resource that not only fulfills an educational mission but also effectively collaborates with national and local stakeholders, and by communicating how investments of federal dollars have, and will continue to, allow institutions and partners to deliver advances in critical fields. The communications plan will play a critical role by maintaining ongoing awareness of BAA activities year-round (as opposed to just around specific asks), and demonstrating broad-based support for, and benefits of, BAA activities. In doing so, the plan is designed to be continuously informed by, and supportive of, members of the Council on Government Affairs and Cornerstone Government Affairs as they make direct asks of policymakers.

**Audiences**

**Audiences**
The plan is designed to speak to three distinct but related audiences. By reaching these audiences with tailored messages consistent with the overarching framework, the plan will create a self-contained echo chamber in which policymakers are being directly persuaded while also hearing from trusted, influential, and reinforcing validators. These audiences include:

- **Decisionmakers:** The primary audience for the plan will be elected and appointed officials and staff who are responsible for making federal funding decisions including those listed below, with emphasis in any given phase determined in conjunction with key internal groups such as the Council on Government Affairs and Cornerstone Government Affairs. This initial list will be reviewed and revised as circumstances change and new opportunities present themselves.
- Congressional leadership
- House and Senate Agriculture Committee members
- House and Senate Appropriations Committee and Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee members
- Additional relevant committees and caucuses
- Secretary of Agriculture
- National Institute of Food and Agricultural (NIFA) Director, budget, and relevant staff (for purposes of persuasion and enlistment as allies in advocacy to Congress)
- USDA Undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics
- Office of Management and Budget

**Amplifiers:** A secondary audience for the plan should be comprised of “end-users” who benefit directly from BAA’s work and other natural allies, including:

- Farmers tied to local land-grant institutions
- Farmers market operators and restaurants
- Research beneficiaries
- State, Extension, and local government officials who will support federal requests
- Agriculture and commodity association advocates
- Local primary educators and civic organizations
- Affiliated agriculture organizations (such as the Farm Journal Foundation)
- 4-H members

**Messengers:** In order to successfully reach these first two audiences, CMC will also need to effectively educate and equip messengers within the APLU-BAA network. Specifically, CMC will need to not only provide CARET, policy committee, Extension, experiment station, and individual institution members with the messages they are intended to convey, but the rationale for those messages.

**Messaging Frame**

Given the Ag Is America account’s broad base of followers and established site, the plan does not envision a full rebranding. However, we do recommend that on these platforms, and across press and advocacy materials, BAA adopt a message frame that rests on these main proof points. We have also identified additional areas that could be built out more over time, including youth wellness, community health, food, and nutrition. While intended to drive toward a unified ask for federal funding, each one of these messages can and should be supported whenever possible by human faces – students, faculty, and community members. These real-world examples will help paint a picture of how the land-grant system is keeping its diverse graduates, and by extension the nation, competitive and prepared for the future.

The following suggested messages are representative examples to be considered for adoption in the final communication plan. Additional message frames may be considered at the beginning of the year, or as events warrant. We would recommend the messages represent the full breadth of BAA activities (including areas such as broadband deployment, non-agricultural innovation, and community investment) as well as highlighting the full geographic reach of the system as a whole.
Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System result in safer, higher quality food systems.

- Example: “The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of a resilient food chain supply – from farm to table. Safeguarding America’s food security relies on robust, predictable federal investments in land-grant university research projects, and in the partnership between farmers and ranchers and local Extension Systems. We encourage policymakers to prioritize federal funding in agriculture and life science research and the Cooperative Extension System to continue bringing cutting-edge discoveries to those who can put them into practice.”
- Example: “Even before COVID-19 negatively affected global supply chains, rapid population growth was making issues like hunger, low crop yields, inadequate food storage, and nutrition more complicated – and more important than ever before – to tackle. American land-grant universities must be equipped with the federal funding required to be at the forefront of solving these pressing global problems.”

Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System make communities stronger and healthier.

- Example: “Land-grant universities make significant contributions to the resiliency of communities. Federal investments in the system generate a strong return for taxpayers by reducing public health costs, offering education and opportunity to their neighbors, and improving the quality of life.”
- Example: “America’s land-grant universities have the knowledge, expertise, and local presence needed to help influence the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health. Land-grant research makes Americans healthier by improving the nutritional quality of food, finding solutions to make food more available, and helping individuals to make healthy food choices. These institutions also contribute to social health by helping people to avoid opioid abuse, tackle learning challenges, or promoting positive youth-development. Federal lawmakers should prioritize investments in Cooperative Extension and land-grant research that have proven to benefit youth, family, and community health outcomes.”
- Example: “Cooperative Extension is engaging millions of American youths through 4-H, the nation’s largest youth development organization. 4-H programming brings young people and adults together to create community change and promote civic engagement, healthy living, and scientific understanding. These positive outcomes are directly tied to continued investment in the Cooperative Extension Section found within land-grant universities.”

Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System address critical challenges facing agriculture and the environment.

- Example: “America’s agricultural sector knows firsthand the devastating impacts brought about by climate change and natural disasters, including fire, drought, hurricanes, and more. That is why land-grant universities, along with the nation’s leading ag researchers and Cooperative Extension leaders, are teaming up with key federal research agencies, farmers, ranchers, and communities across the country to address this national security threat head on. Congress can play an integral role in this effort by approving funding increases for federal research programs designed to help farmers and ranchers – through agriculture and life science research and Extension – protect our environment and our precious natural resources.”
- Example: “Investing in groundbreaking work to develop better biofuels seeds America’s success by making sure we can power our economy and protect our climate. Only land-grant
universities have the knowledge, research, and Extension reach to deliver these returns for the American taxpayer.”

- Example: “When unanticipated crises strike, America needs expertise and ingenuity. Federal investments in land-grant university research help to create a resilient resource that can nimbly focus knowledge, creativity, and problem-solving power to deal with new threats, safeguarding public health and our economy.”

Investments in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System are vital to safeguarding America’s status as a global leader in innovation.

- Example: “Innovation has always been America’s most important competitive edge. Federal investments that enable land-grant universities to make the next generation of breakthroughs in areas like gene-editing technology, artificial intelligence, and precision agriculture are needed to ensure the US remains a global leader.”
- Example: “From undertaking life-saving antimicrobial research and tackling chronic disease through the lens of nutrition, to mapping our natural resources and preparing the next generation of the workforce, the agriculture and life science Extension departments at land-grant universities are essential to seeding America’s long-term success across a wide spectrum of issues and industries – not just agriculture. Federal investments in these programs must be robust and predictable to ensure American innovation continues at its highest potential.”

In addition to weaving these themes into topline messaging and materials, they should be used to guide the message calendar through the use of theme weeks/months that focus tactical execution around a specific land-grant contribution (e.g. food security, food affordability, energy independence, antimicrobial resistance, health and wellness, youth, family and community development, and environment stewardship). While the themes will provide a cohesive starting point for any pre-planned content, they can be coupled alongside relevant topics from the news cycle and emerging critical issues as needed in order to show the collective power of the system to rapidly address changing issues.

Internal Roles, Responsibilities, and Communications

In order to fully engage and mobilize the various entities whose participation will be required to make the communications plan a success, the plan recommends assigning each “communicator” entity within BAA’s organizational chart a specific communications responsibility to establish a regular cadence of internal communications and asks. This cadence of communications should be designed to provide members of the overall communications infrastructure, including those involved with direct advocacy and wider communications efforts (Council on Government Affairs, Cornerstone Government Affairs, APLU Communications), with a combination of standing, formal opportunities to contribute and coordinate as well as open channels to provide situational input.
CMC: CMC responsibilities will include internal coordination, overall management of the strategic plan and message calendar, execution of recurring daily and monthly communications activities (e.g. online platforms, social media content and posting, and clip compilations), and planning for “tentpole” communications activities. In order to create consistent internal engagement, CMC should send a twice monthly update report note throughout the “communicator organization” that includes items such as:

- Notification of the theme of the month, accompanied by talking points and message guidance
- Notable recent postings and clips
- Calls for internal action (e.g. submission of institution-specific coverage, accomplishments, or third-party engagement)

Policy Guides: The roles and internal reporting responsibilities for this group would include guidance on priority setting at the beginning of the year, regular (bi-weekly or monthly) updates on decisionmaker contacts and feedback, and recommendations on specific projects, priorities, or decisionmaker targets to be highlighted during thematic periods on the message calendar including food, agriculture, and environmental resources. Some participant group recommendations for consideration include:
- **Policy Board of Directors (supported by the Budget Advocacy Committee and Committee on Legislative Policy):** Set and communicate policy priorities to be highlighted within the “one ask” supported by the communications plan.

- **Council on Government Affairs:** In order to be effective, policy priority setting and communications efforts should be in sync from the outset of the process, and mutually inform adjustments to advocacy and public affairs activities throughout the year. In addition to providing direct policy input and content contributions for communications materials and engaging in regular coordinating discussions, communicators (represented by CMC) should be involved in the Council on Government Affairs’ initial priority setting discussions. In fact, it may make sense for CMC to have a seat on BAC.

- **Cornerstone Government Affairs:** Provide updates on advocacy needs and message targeting based on interactions with policymakers.

- **Land-Grant University Communicators:** Individual university communicators will play a critical role in shaping the communications strategy and leading its execution. Each institution has active, skilled communicators who will be able to provide real-time input into the plan direction as events unfold. Their expertise should be leveraged to, among other things, lead the development of locally targeted messages and responses to local concerns, while providing critical input on the national strategy and messaging and supporting the compilation and dissemination of communications materials as requested.

**APLU Communications:** The responsibilities of the APLU communications office will be to engage in ongoing message coordination through standing channels of communication including regularly scheduled consultation, provide ongoing technical advice in reaction to CMC updates and message planning, and assistance with planning, executing, and promoting “tentpole” communications activities.

**Local Actors:** Local actors, which would include CARET, the Cooperative Extension Section, experiment station section, AHS, and others, would be responsible for providing updated lists of accomplishments, profiles, and stories on a quarterly basis, as well as engaging with local media periodically at CMC’s request and in partnership with land-grant university communicators. For example:

- **CARET:** As volunteer advocates involved in making policy recommendations to the Policy Board of Directors, helping to coordinate advocacy efforts for ECOP, ESCOP, and others, and carrying messages across institutions, CARET delegates are primed to play a key role in assisting with the communications plan at the local and institutional level. In their new, evolving roles as year-round advocates, they could serve as the primary “managers” of the communications plan at their institution, and assume primary responsibility for interacting with CMC, organizing communications outreach for other groups, reporting up accomplishments, and advocating for land-grant universities. These primary CARET delegates will be identified by working with land-grant universities.

- **Extension and Experiment Stations:** Designees within the land-grant university system (Extension and Research Stations across our 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions) would have a responsibility to help generate primary content.

- **Additional Sections and Committees:** These groups would support general reporting on activities and provide other input as needed.
• Expanded Opportunities for the Commission on Food, Environment, & Renewable Resources (CFERR): We recommend that participation in this plan expand beyond the confines of BAA and extend participation to other APLU committees with a role to play in CMC’s ultimate success.

For each entity, a communications liaison should be identified shortly after strategic plan adoption and trained during capacity development sessions in January within the guidelines of the institutions they represent. As the plan is further developed and implemented, additional participant groups may be added.

Tactics: Overview and Cadence

The tactics recommended in the strategic communications plan are envisioned to rely heavily on social media and online promotion to maintain a manageable, but consistent, daily drumbeat of communications activity, augmented by periodic earned media engagement, and punctuated by major communications pushes around “tentpole” events such as congressional visits or major report releases. Every tactical item also presents an opportunity to highlight student and faculty success stories that bring the land-grant mission to life.

Daily/Weekly

- Daily online posting of news stories featuring land-grant universities, with brief commentary on relevant topics, or promoting/engaging target audiences online
- “Land-Grant Success of the Week” post with picture or graphic highlighting the work of a specific institution, student, faculty member, or initiative
- Twitter/online poll soliciting engagement from target audiences ranging from specific policy questions (e.g. What is the most important thing agriculture can do to combat climate change?) or general questions to spark conversation (e.g. What’s your favorite farm experience?)

Monthly

- Publication of online infographic highlighting BAA’s past and future achievements (including any noteworthy achievements of students and faculty at member institutions) in monthly theme area
- Thematically tied essay authored by BAA member posted on Ag Is America or placed in local news outlet
- Monthly “reporter note” sent to press list of national and local reporters to keep media up to date on BAA developments and lay a foundation for future outreach (local institutions will be BCC’d on notes to reporters they have relationships with)
- Paid online promotion of social posts linking to Ag Is America web copy on issue of the month
- Paid online promotion of BAA “Champions” at the national, state, and local level who have been supportive of BAA priorities

Quarterly

Once per quarter, BAA should actively provide communications materials, promote online, and attempt to secure earned media coverage for a major “tentpole” event that involves multiple stakeholders and topics. For each of these events, CMC should engage APLU communications support in putting together promotional items that could include a press release, localized releases
or content for local communicators to use in engaging media, press availabilities with BAA leadership members, and paid promotions and online advertisements. Examples of “tentpole” events could include:

- Congressional “fly-in” meetings
- Release of a “Seeding Our Success” report building on the accomplishments in the impact database
- National 4-H Conference
- “Call on Congress” mini-campaign during the final stages of the appropriations season

**Tactics: Social Media and Paid Campaigns**

In order to maintain a manageable, consistent, daily drumbeat of communications activity, it is important to understand the value of posting on social media and how it can increase BAA’s communication efforts. By leveraging existing social media accounts, including the Ag Is America Facebook and Twitter accounts, BAA can increase its online presence and reputation, and promote member universities’ research efforts. It is the ideal place to tie together the work undergraduates, individual institutions, and Extension are doing, as well as the collective group, to show congressional targets the value land-grants have in their districts and nationwide.

*Below are some best practices and how to implement them.*

**Post regularly**

When content is posted consistently, it can increase BAA’s impressions, mentions, and overall online presence. Ag Is America’s social media outreach has been dormant for over a year. Varied content should be posted at least three times a week across all social media platforms to sustain and increase engagement rates.

Content can be scheduled ahead of time on the platforms themselves in order to maximize efficiency and a content calendar can be used to plan out content, whether it is around a certain event like a 4-H conference, or a national day of celebration like National Strawberry Day.

**Own the content**

An audit of existing resources found most social content engagement came from being tagged in member universities’ posts. To increase overall content, posting organic tweets with a variety of content (graphics, videos, appropriate and relevant hashtags, quote retweets and more) will increase overall social engagement and allow for more website and social traffic. Posting a variety of content throughout the week will enable followers to see new and engaging posts. *Ex: A tweet posted with just text should by followed by either a tweet with a graphic or video, or even a retweet.*

Additionally, staying in consistent contact with member universities’ communicators and asking them to send new research, announcements, or student successes to highlight will help with finding content to post. Communicators should also be given a heads up about any social media campaigns or hashtags you are trying to amplify so they can help extend the reach of that content to outside audiences.
Graphics or videos can be created by BAA, using free stock photos from royalty-free sites like Unsplash or Pexels, from government agency databases, or member universities can share videos with BAA if permission is granted.

**Be intentional with clickable items**

Tools like hashtags can be useful to drive brand identity, latch onto topics that are trending online, or get noticed by your target audience. However, when incorporating items that can be clicked into your social content (i.e. hashtags, links, and tags) consider their purpose and be intentional. Every clickable item is an opportunity to drive someone away from your post. If you’re driving them to something (or someone) else you want them to see and engage with, that’s great, but a deluge of unnecessary hashtags can muddy the waters. Though not a hard and fast rule, we generally recommend limiting the number of clickable items to three.

**Run paid campaigns**

Paid promotions on Twitter and Facebook generate higher than normal bumps in impressions and engagement. Paid, cost-effective ads on Twitter and Facebook linking back to the Ag Is America website will allow users who do not follow the channels to see BAA’s content and increase its online presence.

Depending on the target audience, budgets for these paid ads can run anywhere between $25-$200/day.

**Evaluating Success**

In order to establish whether the content is engaging and reaching the right audience, it is important to look at the analytics of each paid and organic post. Analytics can give unique insights into what is working by evaluating engagement rate for each post, followers gained, or likes and retweets. Although each metric of success varies across different social media accounts and organizations, there are some general baselines that should be considered.

First, consider overall engagement rate, which means how many people saw the post then chose to interact with it by either liking, sharing, or commenting on it. Looking across industries, the standard engagement rate on Facebook is about 0.1% and on Twitter it is about 0.045%. It is also important to understand how the average engagement rate for BAA’s social properties will be used to set proper benchmarks. For example, Ag Is America’s Twitter account has an average engagement rate of 0.1%, already higher than the industry benchmark. Setting a goal to increase the rate week over week will help create attainable goals.

Studying weekly or monthly analytics to evaluate the social content will help to determine long-term trends in engagement and website traffic. If the accounts are losing followers or dipping below the industry benchmarks, it means the content is not engaging users. To remedy this, switch up the various types of content that is being posted, change the tone of the social copy, and evaluate which previous posts got the most engagements.

**How to Put A Week of Content Together**

In thinking through content for the week, BAA could highlight:

- Notable calendar events
- Theme of the week or month
- News stories relevant to your priorities
- Pre-existing resources from APLU or member universities
- Individual institutions and their achievements
- Poll questions for followers (consider first what the poll results might look like)
- Evergreen content that is useful to regularly remind followers
- Trending hashtags or existing BAA hashtags
- Existing photos, graphics, or videos
- Young scientist features
- Undergraduate and graduate student features
- Faculty features
- Extension professional features
- Congressional targets

Using these categories as an outline, begin filling in draft posts. You may use the same across all of your social media accounts, but keep in mind Twitter has a 280-character limit (including links and spaces) and different platforms may attract different audiences.

**Sample Social Media Content Calendar and Posts**
Below are examples of a full week of social media posts, including a mix of member university highlights and events.

**Monday**
- This week is the National @4H Conference! Delegations of 4-H youth from all over the country are heading to Washington, DC for a week of learning and mentorship. #Opportunity4All 💚

**Tuesday**
- Invasive species like bamboo 🌿 not only throw off the look of your garden or backyard, they can disrupt entire ecosystems. Learn more from @ISUExtension on how they can be controlled 👇 Quote RT: [https://twitter.com/ISUExtension/status/1288938693202501633](https://twitter.com/ISUExtension/status/1288938693202501633)

**Wednesday**
- Wonder how winemakers adapt to short growing seasons? Watch @UNHAlumni’s Annasamy Chandrakala @UNH_GradSchool #3MinuteThesis presentation on how nutrient-packed grapes 🍇 can do just that. Quote RT: [https://twitter.com/UNHAlumni/status/1281341615798460416](https://twitter.com/UNHAlumni/status/1281341615798460416)

**Thursday**
- Poll time! What do you think is the most important way to address climate change? 🌍
  - Reducing emissions
  - Supporting renewable energy sources
  - Implementing a carbon tax
  - Using responsible farming techniques

**Friday**
- Today is the last day of the National @4H Conference. From learning about civic engagement to personal development, we hope this served as an invaluable experience for all our 4-H delegates. What was your favorite part of the conference? #Opportunity4All 💚
Did you know September is National Childhood Obesity Month? Research made possible by universities like @SouthernU_BR help teach our nation’s children how to garden and offers nutrition-related technology to local schools.

**Tactics: Earned Media**

Traditional earned media tactics help BAA tell its story in its own words, not just in a longer form but to a more targeted stakeholder audience, namely reporters who might write about BAA priorities and members of Congress who keep up with Beltway papers and their local media outlets. BAA should work with LGU communicators to ensure the timing and topic of any earned media tactics do not conflict with local issues or media priorities, as well as to identify local voices (students, faculty, community members) whose research and educational successes within the land-grant system help make the case for more federal funding.

**Press Releases**

BAA should send a formal release for every major “tentpole” event or development. Releases can also be used to make statements regarding bill signings, important votes in Congress, and funds allocated for agriculture and life sciences. In addition to a short summary of the news the release calls attention to, it typically includes a quote from the organization’s leader. After a release is sent, the person quoted, or someone well-positioned to talk to media, should be prepared to handle any resulting interview requests. If needed, the request can be handed off to the APLU communications office.

Sending a release will require a press list of reporters who cover the topic. For BAA, this should include certain national reporters covering federal funding and/or agriculture, local reporters in states of relevance, and trade reporters at the types of outlets who exclusively cover these issues. Any reporters who receive regular communications from BAA (like the reporter notes listed below) should also be included in news releases.

**Reporter Notes**
A monthly “reporter note” sent to this targeted list of national and local reporters would help keep this important audience up to date on BAA developments and lay a foundation for future outreach. This tactic is about developing advantageous relationships and thought leadership, so that when news does break, reporters know to go to BAA for comment or background conversations, or if there is a story BAA hopes to place, a degree of familiarity already exists between the group and the reporter.

The note should provide information about BAA’s latest work and help reporters contextualize what is happening in the world of research and Extension that proves the value of federal investment.

**Feature Articles and Letters to the Editor (LTEs)**

Feature articles and LTEs go in-depth or make an argument and tell a story. They are some of the best traditional tools for putting a personal touch on an otherwise policy-heavy issue and getting the attention of members of Congress. Members’ staffs monitor the news daily, so when local voices criticize, praise, or even mention a member of Congress in a local paper, it gets noticed.

These pieces could be used to highlight major achievements – and by extension the return on federal investments – or to call on Congress to get a bill across the finish line. Features go deeper than the news of the day to examine personal stories or highlight examples from member institutions to drive home a clear and consistent message: the need for more federal funding.

Another benefit of getting BAA content published is that it can be reused and amplified across existing social media channels, in alerts to BAA members and members of Congress, or passed on to the government affairs team for their use on the Hill.

LTEs are typically no longer than 200 words and respond to an article in a publication by substantiating it or refuting it. Before pitching any opinion piece, check with the intended publication to establish submission guidelines and word limits and work with land-grant university communicators to ensure timing and the topic do not conflict with local issue or media priorities.

**Tactics: Member Engagement and Advocacy**

**Fly-Ins**

Although it is difficult to know when life might return to “normal,” a fly-in, be it virtual or in-person, is still a useful tool to build and reinforce the BAA brand on Capitol Hill and make members aware of its priorities. To ensure fly-ins are as effective as possible, it is essential BAA members are briefed on the “one ask” and have talking points to support core messaging.

Fly-ins are another opportunity to highlight activities on social media, reach out to reporters – particularly Beltway reporters – and potentially place opinion content immediately before or after to reinforce the importance of federal investment in BAA activities for a public audience.

**Conferences**

If BAA members are already planning to attend certain conferences, like 4-H, encourage them to leverage their participation by engaging in communications outputs, such as using a consistent hashtag at the conference to make their content easier to find and share. Strengthening internal communications will give BAA a better idea of who is already planning to do what (and where and
when), so that members can be encouraged to make use of BAA messaging at these types of events as appropriate, and enable BAA to strategically amplify their content.

**Reports**

The “Seeding Our Success” report would build on the accomplishments outlined in the impact database, tying them together in one place to tell one consistent story about the value of federal investment in agriculture and life science research and the Extension System. The report is an important piece of original, unique content that can be deployed using all the tactics mentioned above. For example, develop a relationship with a national reporter who has shown interest or writes about issues in the BAA policy space, then pitch the story to that reporter as an exclusive. Immediately after the article becomes public, disseminate the report broadly as a press release, amplify it on social media, and urge member institutions to do the same. Finally, write and place an op-ed in an outlet targeting multiple congressional targets, such as *The Hill*, or target an individual member using a local voice in a regional newspaper. That is the beauty of any single communications deliverable – they can often be used across multiple channels to provide more longevity and reach.

**Illustrative Timeline of Activities**

The following illustrative timeline is largely structured to mirror the congressional budget process, in order to sync major activities to key advocacy points. Ultimately, CMC should build a calendar that corresponds with planned conferences, events, announcements, and other key dates. CMC should also stay in constant contact with BAA to determine what individual institutions already have planned, so CMC can be ready to lift up those members and the broader group. Choosing these sorts of events strategically will ensure the main message and goal of these communications activities remain at the forefront.

**Q4 2020**

*November*

- Present roadmap for final adoption
- Incorporate remaining post-adoption feedback into final roadmap
- Specify and brief stakeholders on roles and responsibilities
- Establish internal communications channels, meetings, and calendar

*December*

- Consult on priorities, message frames, and calendar
- Deliver best practices guide
- Deliver collateral (i.e. template press releases, graphics, one-pagers)
- Conduct first capacity building session

**Q1 2021**

*January*
Second capacity building session
Priority, frame, and calendar finalization

**February – Introducing Message Frame in Support of “One Ask”**

- Initiation of daily/weekly activities
- Public release of policy asks
- Themed monthly activities (e.g. infographic, essay/column)

**March – Congressional Fly-In**

- Continuation of daily/weekly activities
- Promotion of fly-in and reports from Washington to local media

**Q2 2021**

**April – Food Security**

- Continuation of daily/weekly/monthly activities

**May – American Leadership**

- Continuation of daily/weekly/monthly activities

**June – “Seeding our Success” Report**

- Continuation of daily/weekly/monthly activities
- Promotion of “Seeding our Success” Report

**Q3 2021**

**July – Climate and Energy Independence**

- Continuation of daily/weekly/monthly activities

**August – Education and Innovation**

- Continuation of daily/weekly/monthly activities

**September – 4-H Conference**

- Continuation of daily/weekly activities
- Promotion of and support for national 4-H convention

**Q4 2021**

**October – Health and Safety**
- Continuation of daily/weekly/monthly activities

**November – “One Ask” Closing Push**

- Continuation of daily/weekly activities
- National and local paid and earned media promotion of “one ask,” targeting key decisionmaker markets

**December – Year in Review**

- Continuation of daily/weekly/monthly activities
- 2022 Planning

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**SCO**

**Updated SCO Analysis**

**STRENGTHS**
- BAA has a good story to tell about how its work is valuable and delivers results.
- BAA has reach with institutions all over the country, making for a broad-based audience of potential champions.
- Research enjoys strong public support and BAA has leaders to elevate it and give it a face.
- LGUs have a strong base of skilled, professional communicators versed in key issues and connected to key media channels.

**CHALLENGES**
- Irregular internal communications limit awareness of activities and the ability to leverage members and assets.
- Priorities and messages must be clear, streamlined, and durable.
- Several internal constituencies need to be addressed and balanced.
- Accomplishments and advocacy are communicated more through individual institutions than as part of a national identity.

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- BAA already has a rich catalog of achievements to raise up.
- Some existing platforms already have large followings that could be revitalized.
- Land-grant universities have a unique identity as accessible public institutions that deliver elite results.
- There are a variety of outside groups and organizations to partner with to raise BAA’s profile.
The NIDB Committee met via teleconference on December 15, 2020 and March 9, 2021.

- Co-chairs Karla Trautman (ECOP) and Steve Loring (ESCOP) reported to the committee that the overall quality of impact statements has improved since the committee implemented a review system. During 2020, 383 impact statements were submitted. Of these, 182 were tagged as having COVID-19 related impacts. They also noted that 966 entries have been submitted to the new database platform in the last two years.

- USDA NIFA’s Director of Communications, Faith Peppers, has reported that the NIDB is an important source of information when USDA administrators (e.g., Secretary, Under Secretary) quickly need high-quality impacts to report. This is especially valuable when showing our institutions have responded (research and Extension programming) to the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty and communicators should be aware that their reporting efforts are noticed, appreciated, and are used by our federal partners to advocate for our needs.

- The Writing Team of the NIDB held its 2021 annual meeting virtually on February 4-5, 2021. Communicators from across the system gathered and reviewed almost 400 impact statement submissions from 2020. The 2020 submissions were crafted into 93 products including 74 web stories, 18 fact sheets, and 1 video that are now posted on the NIDB frontpage at https://landgrantimpacts.org

- The NIDB Committee is anticipating the implementation of the strategic marketing and communications roadmap (now called the BAA Roadmap). As a result, how could/would the NIDB compliment, add or assist the efforts being proposed as a part of the BAA Roadmap? What would integration look like? Therefore, at the next NIDB meeting on April 20, 2021, the committee will be completing a strategic exercise designed to envision the future disposition of the NIDB Committee. The focus will be geared to answering the question, "should the NIDB Committee continue as is or evolve into a subcommittee of the Communications and Marketing Committee, and if so, what does that look like?"

Back to attachments directory
Executive Summary

Cooperative Extension’s Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being

3/15/2021 - DRAFT

Every day, people make choices that impact their health. Those choices have been the focus of health professionals for years. Generations of time, energy, and resources have been dedicated to informing and influencing the choices of individuals through direct education, guidance, and policies. As a result, our public discourse around health has been framed as a personal responsibility where good health is seen as a personal success, ill health a personal failing.

We know now that linking a person’s health outcomes to their individual choices alone tells an incomplete story. Those choices exist within a system of contextual factors that together are more powerful than any one choice an individual can make. Collectively, these factors are referred to as the social determinants of health.

When an individual or community is negatively impacted by the social determinants of health, they are said to be experiencing health inequities. The data currently show that the populations experiencing the greatest health inequities are black, indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) and those who live in rural areas. This reality was laid bare as the COVID-19 pandemic differentially impacted many of these with pre-existing health conditions and as a result devastated many BIPOC and rural communities. In this context, the need for a refreshed roadmap to guide Cooperative Extension’s health related work has never been greater.

Cooperative Extension’s Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being, an updated version of the original framework approved by ECOP in 2014, is that roadmap. It is informed by the events both internal and external to Cooperative Extension that have occurred over the past seven years and is shaped by a review of contemporary literature related to health equity, racism, systems theory, and public health practice.

Core Themes

The updated framework emphasizes three core themes.

1. **Health Equity** - Centering on health equity involves driving resources to those communities and groups that are experiencing the most significant barriers to achieving optimal health. This contrasts with one-size-fits-all approaches that often lack the specificity needed to close gaps in health outcomes.

2. **Social Determinants of Health** – Health-related work should include consideration of those factors beyond the influence of an individual such as broadband availability, transportation, food insecurity, and access to healthcare that ultimately influence individual and community health. Individual work remains important, but changing the context in which people live, learn, work, and play is more sustainable and far-reaching.

3. **Partnerships and Coalitions** – These are the mechanisms by which the resources of multiple entities are focus common objectives. There are many roles that Cooperative Extension can play in collective work to advance health equity and well-being.
The Framework

Light Blue – Societal context for health
Orange – Conditions that influence health
Green – Extension actions to improve health
Navy – Desired health outcome

The graphic above illustrates how an emphasis on the core themes can help ensure that every person has a fair and just opportunity to experience optimal health. The green ring represents what Extension does with and through others to make health a shared value, identify and address health disparities, create community change through collective action, and effectively inform and educate. The work of Cooperative Extension is nested within the powerful influence of societal values, beliefs, norms, policies, and practices as well as the social determinants of health.

High-Level Recommendations

The framework advances five overarching recommendations for Cooperative Extension.

1. Establish health equity as a core system wide value to ensure that all people have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as they can be.
2. Utilize data-driven approaches and community needs assessment to identify and address health inequities through a combination of tailored evidence-based strategies and community-engaged processes that influence the social determinants of health.
3. Invest in the success and visibility of Extension’s health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.
4. Position health and well-being as an Extension-wide initiative which engages Extension personnel from all program areas and multiple disciplines.
5. Apply a community development model to Extension’s work in health equity and well-being to advance coalition building and collective action.
Cooperative Extension’s National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being

3/15/2021 - DRAFT

Introduction

The U.S. spends more on health care per capita than any nation in the world but ranks 49th out of 193 nations in average life expectancy at birth at just under 79 years (Worldometer, 2020). Our depressed global rank in life expectancy results from both personal health behaviors and contextual determinants that place lifelong health and well-being out of reach for many people.

There is much that we as individuals can do to improve our personal health such as increasing physical activity and eating healthier meals. Currently, only 23 percent adults engage in the minimum amount of recommended leisure-time physical activity (HHS, 2018) and only one in ten meet federal guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption (CDC, 2017). Obviously, some people face barriers to implementing these healthy behaviors, making a personal commitment to improve health is an excellent start.

While we must all accept personal responsibility for doing what we can to maintain and improve our own health, we as a nation must act now to eliminate the unfair and unjust policies and practices that differentially impact health outcomes for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and those in rural areas. Disparities in health outcomes were laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic that devastated communities and differentially impacted those with preexisting health conditions. While projections suggest life expectancy in the U.S. will decrease by 1.13 years in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, that decrease may be as much as three or four times greater for Black and Latino populations (Andrafay and Goldman, 2021).

In this context, the need for a refreshed national framework to guide the Cooperative Extension System’s (Extension) efforts to promote behaviors and create conditions which advance health and well-being has never been greater. Extension has civic and moral obligation to address health disparities and an important role to play in ensuring that all people have the opportunity to be as healthy as they possibly can be.
Historical Review of Health and Well-Being in the Cooperative Extension System

Extension has been working to advance population health since its inception. Much of the early work focused on ensuring that the people of rural America were able to be as healthy as their more urban counterparts. These early programs ranged from safely preserving food and basic sanitation to ensuring water quality for the large number of rural residents who obtained their drinking water from private wells.

Over time, the scope of health-related programming diversified, and its audience expanded. For example, Extension’s work to promote the adoption of healthy eating guidelines such as the Daily Food Guide (1956), My Pyramid (1992), and My Plate (2011) was designed to reach into both suburban and urban neighborhoods. In 1969, Extension became responsible for delivering the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) that has helped low-income families and youth achieve nutritional security wherever they may reside. Since its establishment in 1988, Extension has become the nation’s largest provider of nutrition education for individuals and families eligible to receive food assistance benefits through a program called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed) (Yetter and Tripp, 2020).

Beyond nutrition education, Extension’s portfolio of health-related work has evolved to include efforts related to agricultural safety, physical activity, chronic disease prevention and management, mental health, cardiovascular health, substance misuse prevention, stress management, food security, nutrition, water quality, skin cancer prevention, radon education, healthy aging, and more. Today, Extension is actively engaged in addressing environmental health, antibiotic resistant bacteria, and the unique health impacts stemming from the interactions between humans and animals. However, until recently, these activities were not considered or undertaken under a unified banner of “health”. As a result, the magnitude of Extension’s work in health is often understated, undervalued, or unnoticed.

Cooperative Extension’s 2014 National Framework for Health and Wellness

In 2012, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) made a public commitment to supporting Extension’s work in health by appointing a National Task Force on Health. Following two years of work by the task force, Cooperative Extension’s National Framework for Health and Wellness was approved by ECOP in 2014 (Braun et al., 2014) and action oriented teams were established to move forward its priority themes. With that unified banner now established, the Framework and resulting activities
have since been used to raise the visibility of Extension’s health-related work, build
capacity for high quality community engagement focused on improving the health status
of communities, guide the development of new health related programs, and develop
new partnerships.

ECOP appointed a new “Health Innovation Task Force” (Task Force) in 2020 to
investigate, explore, and provide recommendations in support of Extension innovating for
system level change in the area of health. In support of this mission, and in recognition of
Extension’s responsibility to communities, members of the Task Force and subject matter
experts convened to review the 2014 Framework and how it has been used.

This updated Framework is grounded in an examination of (1) major health-related
events which have occurred since 2014, (2) changes within Extension that can be
attributed to the original Framework, and (3) the concept of health equity as it relates to
informing future work of Extension. Summaries of these in-depth examinations can be
found in three Annexes found later in the document.

Stemming from those examinations are three core themes which are introduced in the
sections which follow. The first core theme emphasizes the need for Extension to utilize
an equity lens when framing and designing its work related to health and well-being. The
second core theme expands upon the notion of context as a determinant of the overall
health and well-being of individuals, families and communities. The third core theme
raises up the notion of collective action as means of catalyzing changes in communities
which advance health and well-being.

Core Theme: Health Equity

The 2014 Framework acknowledged the importance of equity in shaping the health and
well-being[1] of individuals and communities but did not name it as a focus area for
Extension’s health related work. By naming health equity as a core theme, this
Framework clarifies that Extension must move from treating health equity as something
that is a tacitly underlying thread within its health-related initiatives to elevating it core
focus area and central goal that activities are designed to achieve.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) health equity exists when
“everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires
removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences,
including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education
and housing, safe environments, and health care. (Braveman et al., 2017, p. 2)”

When a group experiences sub-optimal health because of policies, practices, or
conditions that are preventable, unfair or unjust, the deleterious effects on those groups
are referred to as health inequities. Long-standing inequities, including some that have been introduced and promulgated by federal, state, and local policies, have put some population groups at increased risk of experiencing illnesses, having worse outcomes when they do get sick, and worse overall health. Fortunately, many of these inequities are remediable. When a society is committed to health equity as a common value, people work together to ensure that everyone, regardless of race, neighborhood, or financial status, has fair and equal access to a healthy community of opportunity (PolicyLink, 2020).

Addressing inequities will require that Cooperative Extension approach its health-related work with a disciplined focus on identifying those groups experiencing suboptimal health, calling attention to the inequity, and committing resources toward closing the gaps which exist. This is referred to as “looking at a situation through an equity lens.” The goal of applying this lens is to ensure that no one is disadvantaged in achieving their full health potential because of any social or socially-defined circumstance (Brennan Ramirez et al., 2008).

Extension is well positioned to serve as a catalyst for community-based efforts to address health equity. It is essential that Extension aligns new national and local priorities with existing frameworks that advance equity and justice for individuals, families, and communities. This requires a paradigm shift in Extension’s strategic direction, but it is one that is long overdue and one that is critical to continue growing Extension’s role in community health prevention and promotion. This new direction will require greater flexibility in the traditional Extension model, with greater ability to see and do our work differently than we have in the past.

Consequently, a central and overarching theme of the updated framework is the importance of Cooperative Extension using a health equity lens when framing and prioritizing its health-related work.

**Core Theme: Social Determinants of Health**

In this updated framework, we continue to recognize that individuals live, learn, work, and play in a social system commonly depicted through a social-ecological framework. In general, such frameworks show how the daily lives of individuals are nested within and influenced by interpersonal relationships, families, schools, workplaces, communities, and societal norms and values. Efforts to improve health outcomes for individuals and groups must move away from placing the majority of the responsibility for health on the individual to creating contexts or environments that allow people and communities to thrive. We refer to the factors outside of the individual that have an influence on an individual’s health as the social determinants of health (SDoH). We can
influence the social determinants of health through efforts to change policies, systems, and environments (PSEs) which are standing in the way of individuals experiencing optimal health.

Contemporary population health frameworks draw from a growing, and well documented body of literature illustrating the multiple determinants of health extending beyond individual behaviors and health care. There are numerous models for grouping the many determinants of health into distinct categories. For example, The National Academies (2017) identify education, employment, transportation, social environment, public safety, physical environment, housing, wealth, and health systems as nine areas upon which systems change can focus. Healthy People 2030 groups determinants into health care access and quality, education access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, social and community context, and economic stability.

Community Commons (2020) suggests that meaningful work and wealth, basic needs for health and safety, belonging and civic muscle, lifelong learning, humane housing, reliable transportation, and a thriving natural world are the vital conditions necessary for intergenerational well-being. The County Health Rankings Model emphasizes the factors that determine how long and how well people live.

The 2014 Framework recognized the powerful influence of the social determinants of health but stopped short advocating that Extension engage in efforts to address them and instead identified six broad areas of educational programming that should be emphasized. The updated framework supports the positions of authors who suggest that work to promote the adoption of healthy behaviors across the general population must continue (Koukel et al, 2018) but also suggests that Extension must continually strengthen its capacity to support PSE changes for individuals and communities experiencing health inequities. Utilization of this “twin approach” (CDC, 2015) supports improved health for the larger population while also using targeted interventions to address barriers and challenges implemented through oppressive and discriminatory policies, systems, and environments.

So how might Extension actively engage in more precision-oriented efforts to address health disparities brought about by these contextual factors? First and foremost, it is necessary to understand what groups in a community are experiencing the worst health outcomes. Identifying those groups involves looking at data that is far more granular than that for an entire county. When data for groups that are thriving are included with data for groups that suffering, the overall profile may mask the health disparities experienced by particular groups.

Today collaborative efforts like the Places project have resulted in the production of tools that allow local Extension faculty and staff to access data down to the zip code or census
tract level. According to the CDC (2021), such granularity can help users of the data better understand how health outcomes are distributed within a county and the relative health burdens experienced by certain individuals and groups.

Using this data, Cooperative Extension and its partners can focus attention and resources on those communities and groups experiencing the poorest health outcomes. But education focused on individual behavior change is insufficient to create the type of change needed.

Accordingly, a central theme of the updated framework focuses on how Extension can address the social determinants of health and well-being that are preventing some communities and groups from experiencing optimal health.

**Core Theme: Coalitions and Community Assets**

Extension has a long and rich history of engaging in bilateral partnerships with schools, government agencies, and various community-based organizations to support the delivery of programs. Addressing the social determinants of health will require building and expanding on this history of partnership toward working with many partners simultaneously who are working toward a common goal. The 2014 framework identified partnership development as a key component in advancing Extension’s health-related work and suggested a number of potential partners that Extension might pursue. However, it stopped short of defining Extension’s role in promoting, establishing, and providing support for coalitions that represent the various complex sectors of a community and its diverse assets. It is through these coalitions that Extension and the community together can identify key inequities, and the social determinants of health that underlie them.

By incorporating community development expertise into all Extension health work and incentivizing agents and educators to look beyond their programmatic areas of focus, Extension can leverage its relationships and expertise to act as a community convener. In this role, Extension can promote the establishment of community-based coalitions aimed at improving health outcomes and addressing health inequities.

Coalitions are typically made up of multisector networks of health and human service providers who engage with racially and ethnically diverse communities (Anderson et al., 2015) in meaningful and significant ways. These coalitions can have a range of benefits on individual health outcomes and behaviors, as well as care delivery systems for racial and ethnic minority communities. They can be venues for power sharing, collaboration, and group decision-making, which will strengthen Extension’s commitment to improving health equity.
Extension has experience in helping set up collaborative leadership models for community development and good governance that it can build upon and use to advance positive health outcomes and health equity. Extension can play a significant role in mobilizing community action that creates coalitions that, in turn, impact health outcomes (Buys & Koukel, 2018). The role of Cooperative Extension in coalitions is to leverage partners, organize and facilitate coalitions, and amplify our message; ideally co-leading, with a seat at table, and fostering leadership of others.

When coalition building is done right, Extension is embedded within it and can step back, nurturing the purpose of the coalition, and potentially returning to it as participant. In coalitions, Extension raises issues, convenes and partners, and builds leadership structure. The most effective coalitions arise from ongoing practice and coaching. For Extension, that means moving back and forth between being a teacher and learner, at times serving as a source of expert-based knowledge, but also listening and learning from the other voices at the table. Still, there are other times when we can serve as a connector to campus-based faculty who possess highly specialized knowledge of the issue at hand.

A community coalition, however, differs from an interagency council that only includes representatives of organizations which serve a particular neighborhood or group of individuals. Community coalitions include active participation from individuals with lived experience in that community. Additionally, Extension is well positioned to facilitate an intergenerational dimension to a coalition by bringing young people to the table as full partners in all phases of the coalition’s work.

Unfortunately, some marginalized communities do not find Extension efforts, especially and specifically those that come from predominantly white 1862 Land Grant Institutions, to be deserving of their trust and engagement. This reticence is legitimate and earned given historic and, in some cases, ongoing experiences of exclusion and harm. Within these communities especially, authentic efforts to build coalitions must be coupled with ownership of harms inflicted and a demonstrated commitment to change. Only then can Extension build the trust required to create mutually beneficial relationships where they don’t currently exist. Partnerships among 1862, 1890, and 1994 designated LGU are an ever-present opportunity to demonstrate trustworthiness and build community relationships as part of an overall approach to improve health equity.

Therefore, working through community coalitions to produce profound and lasting community change has emerged as a third central theme of the updated framework.
Cooperative Extension’s Framework for Health Equity and Well Being

The graphic depiction of the framework illustrates how a focus on the core themes can inform Cooperative Extension’s portfolio of work focused on achieving health equity and promoting the well-being of all people (See Figure 1). Some readers will notice the visual similarities to the 2014 model, particularly the utilization of a multi-layered, social-ecological model to show the relationships between the individual and the environments in which they live.

Figure 1. Cooperative Extension’s Framework for Health and Well-Being.

The **light blue** outer ring of the diagram represents the powerful influence that societal values, beliefs, norm, policies, and practices have on the health assets and opportunities experienced by any community and its residents.

The relationships between the three core themes (health equity, social determinants of health, coalitions) of the framework are depicted by the three inner rings of the illustration. The **orange** ring includes the nine social determinants of health as defined by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017). Access to healthy food was added as a tenth determinant because of its centrality to the work of Cooperative Extension. Following the lead of many states, municipalities and the American Public Health Association, racism and injustice was added as an eleventh social determinant of health.
The green ring represents what Extension does with and through others to make health a shared value, identify health disparities, create community change, and effectively inform and educate others. Extension helps create community change by engaging with coalitions and amplifying the voices of residents. Its efforts to inform and educate others is often done in partnership with other organizations who, together ensure that their programs and services are inclusive and available to all.

At the center of the model is a blue ring which represents the overall goal of achieving health equity by ensuring that every person has a fair and just opportunity to achieve optimal health.

**Recommendations**

The Cooperative Extension National Framework for Health and Wellness makes the following *high-level recommendations* to the Cooperative Extension System and its partners:

1. **Advance health equity as a core system value** to ensure that all people have a fair and just opportunity to be as health as they can be.
2. **Utilize data-driven approaches and community driven needs assessment to identify and address health inequities** through a combination of tailored evidence-based strategies and community-engaged processes that influence the social determinants of health.
3. **Invest in the success and visibility** of Extension’s health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.
4. **Position health and well-being as an Extension-wide initiative** which engages Extension personnel from all program areas and multiple disciplines.
5. **Apply a community development model** to Extension’s work in health equity and well-being to advance coalition building and collective action.

These high-level recommendations may be implemented through the following *detailed recommendations*. These detailed recommendations are organized by high-level recommendation and may be structural, relational, or transformational in nature. They are not listed in order of importance.

- **Structural**: Relating to research flows and types, staffing, policy, practice, program delivery, and other similar activity or organizational structure issues.
- **Relational**: Relating to relationships, connections, and power dynamics.
- **Transformational**: Relating to mental models, culture change.
Recommendation 1: Advance health equity as a core system value to ensure that all people have a fair and just opportunities to be as healthy as they can be.

It is essential that Extension align national and local priorities to advance equity and justice for individuals, families, and communities.

1.1 Create and adopt examples of Cooperative work in health that explicitly prioritizes health equity. Provide guidance on adapting those examples for use in more localized settings.

1.2 Adopt perspectives that frame racism as a public health issue which compels organizations and governmental units across the country to address the crisis in the broad, systemic ways similar to those used to address other threats to public health over time. These can include strategic initiatives in policies, practices, enforcement, education, and support services.” (Cornell Health, 2020).

1.3 Prioritize hiring, retention, and development of a diverse and culturally competent workforce.

1.3.1 Evaluate staff retention and recruitment data with an eye to BIPOC, women, gender non-conforming, and people with disabilities. Create and implement clear and transparent plans for how the institution will improve their recruitment and staff retention.

1.3.2 Create opportunities in Extension’s workforce for individuals who do not have advanced degrees, certificates, and credentials but do have valuable lived experience and community knowledge.

1.3.3 Address embedded issues within tenure track processes that disincentivize the creation of a diverse tenured faculty pool.

1.4 Create local and institutional equity action plans (informed by frameworks such as R4P) which communicate strategies and tactics for achieving equity goals.

1.5 Utilize existing frameworks from the field of implementation science(such as RE-AIM and Adaptome) to ensure a balance between program fidelity and contextual adaptations needed to ensure real-world effectiveness.

1.6 Collaborate with the National 4-H Council, 4-H foundations, USDA-NIFA, and other state and federal partners to embed conversations about health equity and the social determinants of health within 4-H positive youth development programs, particularly the Pathways Institute.
1.7 Embed structural mechanisms that drive new resources to chronically under-resourced Extension services and communities.

1.7.1 Appoint and resource a national health equity task force with diverse representation to build from the National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being to identify national applicable measures for progress.

1.7.1.1 Conduct a national audit of Extension professional capacities in health equity.

1.7.1.2 Establish monitoring and evaluation standards that support consistent measurement of reductions in health inequities.

1.7.2 Demonstrate the value of equity and accountability in institutional culture from the top down through the development and use of land acknowledgments, accessibility statements, statements concerning Extension’s responsibility for historical and current harms and the steps being taken to account for them.

**Recommendation 2: Utilize data-driven approaches and community driven needs assessment to identify and address health inequities** through a combination of tailored evidence-based strategies and community-engaged processes that influence the social determinants of health.

To narrow gaps in health disparities, and ultimately achieve health equity, Cooperative Extension must move past a "one-size fits all" model of community engagement to a more precision-oriented approach based on the unique characteristics of communities. Programs seeking to address individual health challenges must contextualize individual accountability, recommendations, curriculum, and lessons with the social determinants of health and efforts to promote policy, systems, and environment (PSE) change.

2.1 Establish and expand upon data sharing agreements so that Extension may access the demographic and health outcome information needed to accurately apply resources and develop programs.

2.2 Work with partners to access and use detailed demographic and health outcome data to map health disparities in consideration of the underlying systems, policies and environments that shape the social determinants of health.
2.3 Encourage and reward data- and community need-driven decisions, program development, implementation, and evaluation.

2.4 Create and distribute professional development, best practices, and learning resources to support effective and responsible use of data for decision making and program development.

2.5 Define Extension’s role in addressing the social determinants of health while supporting PSE change.

2.6 Include discussion and consideration of the social determinants of health in Extension materials/programs alongside treatment of individual behaviors.

Recommendation 3: Invest in the success and visibility of Extension’s health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.

3.1 Increase the number and resourcing of Extension positions explicitly related to health and wellbeing in as many states as possible, phased in over the next 3 to 5 years.

3.2 Develop legislative and appropriations strategies that elevate and seek to resource Extension’s health related work at the local, state, and federal level.

3.2.1 Increase the APLU BAA Policy and Legislative Committee understanding of health Extension and the ECOP Health Task Force priorities.

3.2.2 Focus effort with federal partners, foundations, and others to expand current and develop new funding streams and/or partnership opportunities for new, expanded, and resilient health related programming/staffing.

3.3 Provide sustained professional development focused on

(1) health equity and justice; (2) the importance of intersecting identities (including but not limited to race, gender presentation, socio-economic status, sexuality, religion); (3) the power of biases (including but not limited to those related to ability, anti-fat bias, English language proficiency, colorism, and racism) on individual
and community health access and outcomes; (4) the social determinants of health and Extension’s role in addressing them; (5) coalition building best practices; (6) translational science tools and proficiencies; and (7) data science for health interventions.

3.4 Provide support for the National Health Outreach Conference.

**Recommendation 4: Position health and well-being as an Extension-wide initiative** which engages Extension personnel from all program areas and multiple disciplines.

4.1 Establish and strengthen relationships across Extension program areas.

4.1.1 Embed activities that tie together traditional health work (nutrition, physical activity, insurance literacy) with those that promote PSE change. For example, adding economic and financial dimensions of healthy and safe environments and choices, embedding financial perspectives within health education and outreach (Kiss et al., 2018) and supporting needs assessment processes, grant writing in communities, and communications with coalitions (Smathers & Lobb, 2017).

4.1.2 Integrate the work undertaken through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and SNAP-Ed into state Extension plans so that the activities and personnel from those programs are connected to the broader health Extension portfolio.

4.2 Establish and strengthen relationships within individual LGUs to advance Extension’s work in health. For example: connecting with colleges of public health, medical schools, and social work programs.

4.3 Establish and strengthen relationships amongst LGUs to share expertise, leverage limited resources, and build multistate strategies to advance health equity, precision health practices, consideration of the social determinants of health, and work through community coalitions.

4.4 Establish and strengthen relationships with external partners to foster interdisciplinary and collaborative health related research, teaching and outreach.

**Recommendation 5: Apply a community development model** to Extension’s work in health equity and well-being to advance coalition building and collective action.
Extension’s work in health is ultimately work in community development; every agent should see themselves as both an expert and a convener who has much to learn.

5.1 Learn from and follow the example of Extension services that have historically and consistently prioritized work in coalitions. Many of these will be 1890 and 1994 institutions.

5.2 Build a campus- and community-based workforce that is comfortable stepping away from a single point of contact expert-model pedagogy when working to advance health within a community.

5.2.1 Embed questions that relate to a person's willingness to challenge norms as described into interview and hiring processes.

5.2.2 Adapt position descriptions to attract individuals with expertise in community development and organizing.

5.2.3 Revise annual review processes to consider and value Extension work that goes beyond the delivery of discreet educational products.

5.2.4 Update and improve Extension onboarding activities and materials to demonstrate leadership’s valuation of this competency.

5.3 Build the capacity and cultural competency of local volunteers to utilize Extension resources to support community-based work through the establishment of a health focused volunteer credentialing program like those that exist for 4-H or Master Gardeners. Health focused volunteers fit Cooperative Extension’s traditional past in this way and should be considered part of the future, requiring a paradigm shift with volunteers as a strategy and not a program input or outcome (Washburn, 2017).

5.4 Incentivize and reward convening and coalition building activities that encourage community identification of issues alongside the strategies to address them. Such activities include but are not limited to securing spaces for groups to convene, designing and facilitating community dialogue, working with community leaders to develop partnerships and resources, or providing training and support for grant writing, needs assessments, and program development.

5.5 Compensate community members to partner with Extension as peer champions and community guides.
5.6 Require that Extension educators demonstrate awareness of who constitutes a community before designing an intervention. Educators must be informed by the community’s history of interacting with state and local governments both before and throughout the process of launching health initiatives.
Annex 1: The Changing Health Landscape

Societal and environmental changes and realities have greatly influenced the landscape in which people live their lives. This section highlights key health topics that must inform how Extension evolves to meet current needs. These include the opioid crisis, mental health, coronavirus pandemic, climate change, food insecurity, and raising costs of health insurance and healthcare.

America’s Opioid Misuse Health Crisis

Since 1999, more than 750,000 people have died from drug overdoses in the U.S. with two-thirds of those deaths involving an opioid (CDC, 2020). The opioid epidemic resulted from multiple factors, not the least of which was the over-prescription of highly addictive painkillers to reduce pain associated chronic health conditions. Communities experiencing poverty, joblessness, and low access to educational opportunities are among the hardest hit by the opioid crisis. For people of color, inequitable access to evidence-based prevention and recovery services, reliance on punitive approaches to control drug use, and ongoing economic disinvestment have created even deeper inequities in health-related use outcomes (Kunins, 2020; Donnelly et al., 2020).

Mental Health

During the summer of 2020, 41% of adults in the U.S. reported having an adverse mental or behavioral health condition with younger adults, racial ethnic minorities, and essential workers experiencing disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation (CDC, 2020). Similarly, researchers at Boston University discovered that prevalence of depression symptoms in adults was three times higher during COVID-19 with the highest burden falling disproportionately on those already at increased risk (Ettman, et al., 2020). Evidence suggests that mental issues may even be more prevalent in young people with 81% of teens say mental health is a major issue among young people with 71% experiencing mental health struggles of their own (Harris Poll, 2020). SAMHSA warns that effects are potentially long-lasting and very consequential for individuals and their families.

COVID-19

More recently, the emergence of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) spun the world into a global pandemic that resulted in more than 110 million people being infected by the virus and over 2.4 million deaths worldwide. We
know that those with pre-existing conditions or overall poor health were those hardest hit by the pandemic. In the United States “the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) revealed deep seated inequities in health and healthcare for communities of color and amplified social and economic factors that contribute to poor health outcomes” (SAMHSA, 2020). Most disadvantaged by these social and economic conditions were Black and Latinx individuals (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2020).

Climate Change

The National Academy of Medicine (2020) suggests that climate change will be one the most significant threats to human health in the 21st century and the negative impacts of the change “disproportionately affect the very young and the very old, people who are ill, impoverished or homeless, and populations that depend on the natural environment for survival.” Long-standing racist policies such as racial segregation and locating waste disposal sites near low income communities will exacerbate the impact of climate change on people of color and impoverished communities (Rysavy and Floyd, 2020). Moreover, the United States Global Change Research Council suggests that the adverse health consequences of climate changes are projected to worsen with additional changes to our climate (USGCRP, 2018).

Food Insecurity

According to Feeding America, as many as 54 million people across the country may be food insecure (2020). Those who are food insecure are more likely to experience diet-sensitive chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Young people who are food insecure are also likely to experience significant delays in development. Food security does not exist in a vacuum, rather is it shaped by the unequal distribution of material, social and cultural resources and strengthened by existing inequities in the broader food system. Therefore, food insecurity cannot be changed by feeding people, but by changing the unjust and oppressive social structures, processes, and practices that put the ultimate control of power and wealth in the hands of the few (Borras & Mohamed, 2020).

Health Insurance

On the positive side, the number of uninsured in the U.S. dropped from nearly 46.5 million in 2010 to 28.79 million in 2019 as a result of the Affordable Care Act (KFF, 2020). Still, out of about 30 million uninsured individuals, about half of them are Black. Some of the states with the highest proportion of Black residents were also states that refused to expand Medicaid coverage under the ACA (Kirby & Kaneda, 2010). The rate of uninsured individuals has increased each year since 2016 due to the elimination of the ACA’s individual mandate for coverage.
Annex 2: Cooperative Extension Evolves

This section summarizes a review of published literature since 2014 that used the initial framework and the degree to which the national framework has catalyzed change in Cooperative Extension. That review of literature is followed by anecdotal evidence of such change.

First and foremost, the review of literature revealed numerous examples of how the framework has raised awareness of key concepts of public health practice and healthcare including the influence of social systems on human health, the triple bottom line in healthcare, and the notion of building a culture of health (Andress & Fitch, 2016; Parisi et al., 2018; Rodgers & Braun, 2015; Smathers & Lobb, 2017). The release of the framework also sparked an increased focus on the six programmatic priorities identified by the authors as evidenced by a special issue of the Journal of Health Sciences and Extension in 2018 devoted exclusively to programming and scholarship emanating from the work of the Health Implementation Action Teams.

Extension Engagement with the Health Care Community

Several published works also emphasized the importance of establishing closer working relationships with the health care community. New models of health extension (Dwyer et al., 2017; Kaufman et al., 2017) advanced innovative strategies for creating closer working relationships with academic medical centers and primary care providers. It was pointed out in these articles that Cooperative Extension has a wealth of research-based programs that can help patients implement recommendations of physicians and other healthcare practitioners. Such programs can increase self-efficacy, help people improve their self-management of chronic conditions, and enhance the daily lives of adults as they age. Another study found the need to grow familiarity and understanding of Cooperative Extension among practicing physicians and allied healthcare providers (Khan et al., 2020) to facilitate future clinical practice-community connections.

Engagement with Clinical and Transformational Science

The literature review also revealed a growing interest across Cooperative Extension in working with the institutions that receive Clinical and Translational Science Awards (Gutter et al., 2020; Savaiano et al., 2017) to assist scientists in speeding up treatment innovations to reach patients sooner. Through such involvement, Cooperative Extension can leverage existing connections with academic health entities to establish new private and public partnerships for addressing large-scale national public health issues together (Rafie et al., 2019). New revenue for Cooperative Extension also looks promising as community-based programs become eligible to receive third-party reimbursement for health education (Contreras & Anderson, 2020).
Capacity Building and Professional Development

Cooperative Extension has turned to hiring many more individuals with formal training in health-related fields, including campus-based Extension specialists with advanced degrees in public health. Many state Extension services now include health as a named priority in their strategic plans; furthermore, every state has the opportunity to include human health initiatives in their annual plan of work for accessing federal Smith-Lever Act funds. This federal funding provides Cooperative Extension with a leverage point upon which other types of state, county, and competitive funding is built.

Additionally, a National Health Outreach Conference (NHOC) provides Cooperative Extension personnel from across the nation with an annual opportunity to engage in professional development sessions and network with others with similar interests. Braun and Rodgers (2018), however, advocate for increased participation of non-Extension speakers and audiences at NHOC. Specifically, Koukel et al., (2018) recommended professional development and training for Cooperative Extension on translation of clinical resources for the public.

The need for Cooperative Extension to engage in efforts that address social conditions and policy issues which influence health has also been identified (Andress & Fitch, 2016). Walsh et al., (2018) recommended an updated framework integrate health-focused work across program areas and policy work suggesting that Cooperative Extension is the multisector, national system capable of informing decision-makers at every level, especially county government and state policymakers.

Anecdotal evidence of this increased visibility of health-focused work across Cooperative Extension includes an increase in the use of the word “health” in the lexicon of Cooperative Extension. In some states, units that were previously referred to by program area names are reframing their work and adopting unit names that better reflect the inclusion of health-related work.

Partnerships and Investment in Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension is engaging more frequently in building strategic partnerships with other health-related colleges and academic medical centers. Today, partnerships between Cooperative Extension and colleges of public health, nursing, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, social work, medicine, and dentistry are commonplace. Jointly funded positions between these colleges and Cooperative Extension have become a way for Extension to obtain needed expertise and the partner college to expand their community outreach portfolio.
External partnerships with government, business, schools, and the nonprofit sector are also becoming more prevalent. In 2014, Cooperative Extension was provided with funding from the CDC to implement strategies in high-obesity communities to increase access to healthier foods and promote physical activity. Today fifteen states are involved in this program. In 2018 and 2019, Cooperative Extension received funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to develop and disseminate training and technical assistance for rural communities on addressing opioid issues. Many of these partnerships were enabled by capacity and competitive funding made available by the USDA-NIFA.

Additionally, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has provided funding to the National 4-H Council for a “Well Connected Communities” Initiative through which Extension staff establish local coalitions that develop and implement action plans to address public health priorities. In addition to supporting coalition-building activities in communities across the nation, RWJF is also investing in systems change interventions across the Cooperative Extension System to support its work aimed at ensuring that all people have “a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.”

Major advances resulting from this initial investment by RWJF include the hiring of an Extension Health Director, identification of institutional contacts for health and well-being at each land grant institution, and the creation of an online professional community to facilitate collaboration and peer learning among Extension faculty and staff. Recently, a private gift from the Molina Foundation is supporting fellowships for two Extension professionals to work with the health director to further advance capacity-building efforts across Cooperative Extension.

Perhaps most important in efforts to achieve health equity are changes in the way that Extension interacts with community residents. The move from an expert model of program delivery to a model based on authentic community engagement is helping community members with lived experience become equal partners with agency professionals in the process of developing strategies and actions for community improvement. These participatory approaches are resulting in significant and lasting change in communities previously experiencing significant health disparities (Strayer III, et. al., 2020; Kidd, et. al., 2016; Ramirez-Andreotta, et. al., 2015; Meister and de Zapien, 2005).
Annex 3: Health Equity

Equity is an active term. It can only be achieved by clearly seeing and openly acknowledging the ways a person’s lived reality is (1) informed by a web of interesting individual identities that include race, class, ethnicity, ability, gender identity and expression, sex, weight, veteran, marital, and documentation status, and more; and (2) shaped by a system of laws, policies, norms, and expectations that intentionally or unintentionally allow differing access to resources and opportunities. In this context, Extension’s work to address individual and community health outcomes is incomplete when not coupled with the acknowledgement of systemic root causes, a recognition of inequity, and a commitment to shaping issue treatments to their broader contexts. This section provides additional context and provides a number of additional resources that you may turn to learn more.

It is important to note that some individuals may view health-oriented Extension programs that are designed to reach under-resourced or non-rural populations as being outside of Cooperative Extension’s core work and mission. Not only is this historically inaccurate, as evidenced by the effectiveness of the chronically under-resourced 1890 and 1994 Land Grant Universities, it also does a disservice to the future potential of the Cooperative Extension System. 1862 Extension Services can and must learn from the robust knowledge, frameworks, and ways of working with marginalized communities that are central to the success of the 1890 and 1994 Land Grant Universities.

Recognizing Inequities

Examining life expectancy at birth across various geographic locales is one way to demonstrate the existence of health inequities. An individual born today in the U.S. can expect to live to 79 years of age (Worldometer, 2020). But life expectancy can vary by as much as thirty years from one ZIP code to another.

Although length of life is an important and easy-to-measure indicator of health, it would be shortsighted, however, to make an assessment of one’s overall health without consideration of the quality of life that an individual experiences across their lifespan. The contextual factors mentioned above influence quality of life as well as length of life. Recent studies have reported that more than 40% of the nation’s population are suffering or struggling to achieve what they would describe as a state of well-being (Well Being Trust, 2020).

Rurality and its Relationship to Inequities

Health trends are showing non-Hispanic white people living in rural areas experiencing smaller declines in deaths from cancers and cardiovascular diseases and larger
increases in deaths from metabolic, respiratory, alcohol-related, mental and behavioral diseases, and suicides as compared to urban areas. But mortality rates for cancer and cardiovascular disease among Black, Indigenous, and Latinx populations have decreased an even slower rate than their white peers (Monnat, 2020). Many people who live in rural areas still lack many of the assets and fairly distributed resources needed to experience optimal health and well-being. These include broadband connectivity, a predictable source of healthy food, a quality education, steady employment, and access to health care.

**Racism as Driver of Inequity**

The National Academies of Sciences (2017) defines structurally-driven health disparities as those brought about by “the dimensions of social identity and location that organize or “structure” differential access to opportunities for health including race, ethnicity, gender, employment and socioeconomic status, disability and immigration status, geography, and more.

More recently, racism is increasingly being elevated as a dimension of social identity that deserves increased attention as this current point in time. At the time of writing, more than 30 states have declared racism as a public health crisis or emergency. However, it is important to frame racism not as a social determinant of health that is randomly distributed, but rather, as a fundamental cause that drives the social determinants of health. That is, many social determinants of health would be less influential if racism were eliminated. According to Hardeman and Karbeah (2020) “structural racism encompasses (a) history, which lies underneath the surface, providing the foundation for white supremacy in this country; (b) culture, which exists all around our everyday lives, providing the normalization and replication of racism; and (c) interconnected institutions and policies, they key relationships and rules across society providing the legitimacy and reinforcements to maintain and perpetuate racism.”

Cornell Health (2020) suggests that “framing racism as a public health issue compels organizations and governmental units across the country to address the crisis in the broad, systemic ways that other threats to public health have been addressed over time. These can include strategic initiatives in policies, practices, enforcement, education, and support services.”

In short, structural inequities, like institutional and systemic racism, and discrimination, drive systemic differences in access to social, economic, and environmental opportunities that influence health outcomes and observed health disparities across sub-population groups. To narrow gaps in health disparities, and ultimately achieve health equity, Cooperative Extension must consider the underlying systems, policies and environments that shape the social determinants of health.
Poverty as a Driver of Inequity

Poverty is a state or condition where an individual does not have the financial resources to achieve a minimum quality of life. Poverty is also associated with a number of other variables used to describe the human condition such as education, employment, housing, racism, and a supportive infrastructure. While the influence of poverty on health is immense, this framework does not include poverty as a social determinant of health. Instead, poverty is represented by a set of more actionable determinants with which it is closely related.
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The updated Framework uses “well-being” rather than “wellness” to align with terminology being used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Healthy People 2030. For example, Healthy People 2030 has chosen to use “well-being” in association with “health” to reflect an individual’s “ability to meet personal and collective needs under changing conditions in society. It entails being accepted into and belonging to a community, providing and receiving support from others, and acting as a legitimate contributor to a common world” (Pronk et al. 2019, page #). Well-being also aligns more closely with the construct of health-related quality of life (CDC, 2018).

Granted some definitions of wellness are broader than others, but few go so far as to include notions of resilience, outlook for the future, realization of personal potential, satisfaction with life, personal agency, and happiness. More typically, the term wellness is “used to refer to services aimed at an individual. For these and probably other reasons, practitioners and researchers working with systems and communities use the term well-being” (Roulier, 2020, page #). As compared to wellness, the concept of well-being also includes such things as how satisfied people are with their lives as a whole, the sense of control they have over their lives, and their sense of purpose in life (New Economics Foundation, 2012). Moreover, well-being focuses on creating equitable opportunities for people to thrive in every aspect of life and to create meaningful futures.

Back to attachments directory
The APLU Board on Human Sciences (BoHS) and the Council for Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences (CAFCS) completed their 2021 Joint Virtual Spring Meeting earlier this month. The theme was *Pandemics and Social Unrest – Role for the Human Sciences.*

Dr. Carrie L. Castille, the new director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) at the U. S. Department of Agriculture, opened the teleconference. Lizabeth (Liz) Self Mullens, President of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) shared some partnering opportunities with the group.

One of the exciting sessions of the meeting included a panel on the *COVID-19 Response in Higher Education -- Now and in the Future.* The panelists were:

- Patricia S. Poulter, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Central Arkansas
- Marshall Stewart, Vice Chancellor, Extension and Engagement and UM System Chief Engagement Officer, University of Missouri
- Nancy S. Niemi, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- Laurel Littrell, Professor, K-State Libraries and Faculty Senate President-Elect, Kansas State University

The group also participated in a workshop on *Coming Together for Racial Understanding* which consisted of:

- Brent Elrod, National Program Leader, Division of Family and Consumer Sciences, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U. S. Department of Agriculture
- Robin Parent, Internal DEI Officer and Director, STEM Education, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
- Dionardo E. Pizaña, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist, Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture, Michigan State University
- Dawn Burton, College of Agriculture and Human Sciences, Prairie View A&M University
- Rachel Welborn, Associate Director, Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University
The final program session, *Exploring Student Success*, was done by Dr. Timothy M. Renick, Senior Vice President, Student Success, and Professor of Religious Studies, Georgia State University. It was a fascinating look at how Georgia State University was helping students succeed.

If interested, you can view and listen to most of these program sessions once they have been posted on the BoHS website at APLU. They will be available at: [www.aplu.org.bohs](http://www.aplu.org.bohs).

The BoHS Board of Directors approved a recruitment and leadership development proposal to cultivate leadership and enhance engagement of the BoHS.

As many of you know, the BoHS Executive Director, Eddie Gouge, will be retiring at the end of this month. So, the BoHS will join with APLU in a search to find a new BoHS Executive Director.

I appreciate being able to submit this report on behalf of the Board on Human Sciences.

Back to [attachments directory](#)
BAA - Policy Board of Directors
Submitted by Michelle Rodgers, University of Delaware

From PBD Meeting held February 19, 2021
Attended by Michelle Rodgers, Wendy Powers

Key Points:

1) FY 22 Unified Ask - Budget Advocacy put forward and increased ask for 100 Million increase or 8%. Rationale: other ag groups advocating for more, NIH and NSR bigger asks, new administration. Motion approved.

2) Infrastructure Proposal - There has been an update of the 2015 Straightline report now 5 years later. New study includes 5 years of inflation and further reports from institutions. Working on this in conjunction with Biden economic dev. Initiative. Working with other organizations for coalition and support including NIFA. Ask is 11.5 billion appropriated for this purpose over the next five year. Pursuing legislative champion. Address inequities of past and items like climate change research, etc. Ask to be put into economic development asks. Encourage us to make it relevant to what the needs are in our institution.

3) Higher Education Challenge Grant Proposals - Asking for 3M increases multicultural scholars (1M) and teacher education (1890) (2 M) for these grants. 3 million authorized but not appropriated so pursuing those funds.

4) Chair Elect Nominations NC region - Ernie Minton KS Research & Extension Ex and Karl Martin Wisconsin. and will be sent out for entire BAA to vote.

5) Communications & Marketing Standing Committee - PBD must approve to put this on the agenda for BAA membership and consider by-law change. Will be out for 30 days prior to ballot (March) and vote in April. Coordinating messaging among all sections will be key role. PBD agreed to develop language to put on the ballot.

6) Bidding Process 2022-2024 Advocacy Contract - Just time to renew contract... keep it open to others. Ad hoc committee to be established. From each region, ask for 3 nominations of individuals AHS, ECOP, ESCOP one nomination for each of these groups. 15 nominees come forward, select 9 for broad representation and 3 at large appointed by chair T. Coon. With new communication and market along with budget and leg, may need new roles for this contract. March committee announced/appointed April develop new RFA, Screen Aug, Interview Sept & Oct, Announce at Nov APLU ACTION NEEDED; Each region put forward a nominee from AHS, ECOP, ESCOP T. Coon will communicate with appropriate Executive Directors for nominations and timeframe.

7) Food & Ag Climate Alliance (FACA) - 9 national organizations extremely diverse (defense, farm bureau etc.). Founders Group appointed Steering Committee. Focus on soil health, livestock, dairy, forest, climate, energy, food use and waste. APLU asked to come on board of the steering committee which has 10 members) D. Steele to chair ag research section. FACA supporting the infrastructure proposal. Our members can be on some of the sub-groups. Great for us to be included in this group.

8) NIFA External Partnership Committee - Doug Steele reached out to see if still interested in this committee started by S. Angle with new director Castille. Hopeful Dr. Castille will continue consider this plan and is meeting 1x1 with VP Steele.
9) Section Sharing

Back to attachments directory
ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC)
Submitted by Brian Raison, Ohio State University

Date: March 8, 2021

Presenter: Henry Fadamiro (Chair), Brian Raison (ECOP DCC member reporting)

1. **Committee Membership** (as of March, 2021): See ESCOP Committee Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC)

2. **Meetings:**
   - The DCC met via teleconference on December 15, 2020.
   - The DCC met via teleconference on February 16, 2021.
   - The DCC will meet via teleconference on March 16, 2021.

3. **Accomplishments/Upcoming Plans:**
   - Since meeting in December, the DCC welcomed new members John Dieffenbacher-Krall (representing NERA from the University of Maine), Majed El-Dweik (representing ARD from Lincoln University) and Nina Bennett (representing 1890 APS programs from the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff.)
   - The 2020 ESS DCC Excellence Award winner, the University of Florida’s Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences (FYCS) Diversity and Inclusion Committee, was profiled in NIFA’s newsletter of November 11.
   - A synthesis report from the ESS Meeting Opening Session, *Inclusive Excellence: Systematic Approaches to System Change Summary Report* (attached) is being used to frame a call to action by the DCC.
   - The DCC has issued the call for 2021 nominations for the National Experiment Station Section Diversity and Inclusion Award (attached). Directors are encouraged to nominate outstanding exemplars.
   - The DCC has moved from meeting quarterly to monthly and is slated to meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 4:00 PM ET. The next meeting of the DCC is scheduled for March 16, 2021.

4. **Action Requested:** For information only.

5. **Attachments:**
   a. DCC_AWARDCALL_20210205
   b. ESS Opening Session Synthesis Report 2020 09 28
National Experiment Station Diversity and Inclusion Award
2021 Call for Nominations

The Call
The Experiment Station Section (ESS) seeks nominations of individuals, teams, or programs for the National Experiment Station Diversity and Inclusion Award. This award recognizes research team efforts that supported the creation of diverse and pluralistic teams at the local, state, regional, or national level. Such efforts could impact one or more of the following areas: administration, advisory and decision-making groups, audiences, coalitions, educational materials and delivery methods, funding, initiatives, policies, programs, staff, and stakeholders.

Background
Beginning in 2015 with the establishment of the ESCOP Diversity in Research Leadership Task Force (now the permanent Diversity Catalyst Committee), the Experiment Station Section (ESS) forged a commitment to increase diversity across its constituencies and foster inclusive environments which empower all groups within organizations to work better collectively. Diversity is defined as differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practices and other human differences. An inclusive organization is defined as having a culture which empowers all members to continually innovate, assess and redesign programs, policies and practices to support the success of the full range of its membership. ESS through its individual and collective efforts aspires to be a futuristic body that consistently and holistically models and practices inclusive excellence. Importantly, the National Experiment Station Diversity and Inclusion Award supports efforts that go beyond simply meeting EEO/AA program requirements.

Award Presentation
Dependent on the pool of nominations, up to two recipients may be recognized with this award. The recipient(s) of the National Experiment Station Diversity and Inclusion Award will be recognized at the annual AES/SAES/ARD Meeting held in September/October each year with a commemorative plaque and $1,000 cash award from ESCOP. Travel reimbursement to attend the awards event will be provided for the primary recipient(s). The recipient(s) will be asked to submit photos and a project summary for the ESCOP websites, the NIFA Update and for integration in the Award Program. The awardees will also be asked to submit an impact statement for the Land-Grants Impacts database which describes research impacts to the public.

Past Winners
2020  Tracy Irani, Jenny Jones, Sharon Austin, Keith Diem, Kelly Moore, Dale Pracht, The Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences (FYCS) at the Institute of Food Agricultural Sciences of the University of Florida

2019  Jeff Jacobsen, North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NCRA)

2018  Levon Esters and Neil Knobloch, The Mentoring@Purdue Team, Purdue University

Eligibility
The nominee can be an individual or a team or organization composed of Experiment Station faculty and scientists, staff, students or post-docs. An Experiment Station faculty or scientist is defined as having at
least 25 percent FTE university AES or ARD appointment as of May 1st of the year of the nomination and responsibility for AES programming for a minimum of four consecutive years.

Criteria for Nominations
Nominations can be submitted from any area of the Experiment Station Section. Nominations can be made by anyone, including self-nominations. When writing nominations, special attention should be given to efforts that have the potential to be sustained over time or can be replicated in other comparable situations.

Six weighted elements will be considered in the review process and should be described clearly in the nomination. These include:

**Purpose:** Why was this effort undertaken? Describe the efforts by a person, group or organization to achieve diversity/pluralism in an experiment station project/program (e.g., Hatch, Hatch Multistate, Evans-Allen, McIntire-Stennis). How does the project achieve pluralism with its advisory and decision-making groups, audiences, staff, and stakeholders? (10%)  

**Basis:** Why is this effort worthy of recognition? (10%)  

**Effort:** Are actions and activities in support of diversity appropriate and fundamentally sound? How do the actions and activities demonstrate impact? (20%)  

**Impact:** Have efforts led to positive, sustainable programmatic and/or organizational change? If so, how? (30%)  

**Scope:** How broadly did (or likely will) this effort affect the success of the operations of the Experiment Station Section? (20%)  

**Innovation:** How did (or will) this effort enhance existing models or create new or models for positive change? (10%)  

Nomination Package Guidelines
Nominations must not exceed word limits below, and must contain the following elements.

1. Name, title, address, phone number and e-mail of nominee(s).  
2. Name, title, address, phone number and e-mail of person making nomination.  
3. A brief synopsis of nomination (30 words or less)  
4. A narrative explaining the six elements in the criteria given above (400 words or less per element).

Limitations
Incomplete applications or applications in excess of size limitations will not be considered. Please do not forward DVD’s, bound publications or other support materials with the nomination. Only electronic submissions will be considered. Nominations can include links to supplemental materials that clearly demonstrate one of more of the nomination elements.
Selection Process
An Award Review Panel is appointed by the ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee to review nominations and may recommend up to two recipients to the ESCOP Chair. The process would be completed by June 1, 2021.

Due Date
The due date for nominations is April 1, 2021. To be considered, nominations must be submitted as a single pdf file to Dr. Rick Rhodes (Executive Vice-Chair, Diversity Catalyst Committee) at rcr3@uri.edu.
Inclusive Excellence: Systematic Approaches to System Change

September 28, 2020 Opening Session to the 2020 ESS/AES/ARD Annual Meeting Summary Report

Session Objectives – Participants will:

- Explore how inclusive excellence can strengthen existing Experiment Station efforts.
- Engage in a series of conversations that will identify obstacles to affect inclusive excellence and strategies to overcome the obstacles.
- Be challenged to implement at least three actionable steps that lead to inclusive excellence at their home institutions.

Survey Highlights

In a survey to ESS members prior to this session, several assets as well as challenges to inclusive excellence were identified. During this session, participants explored potential strategies to leverage assets to address the four top challenges identified. The section that follows documents potential strategies to address these issues:

1. Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce; developing a pipeline to support inclusive excellence
2. Strengthening partnerships among 1862/1890/1994 institutions
3. Addressing funding challenges/disparities across the three LGU systems
4. Reaching/working with underserved populations

Call to Action

This report serves as a summary of thoughtful input on what ESS could do in order to vastly impact Inclusive Excellence. The charge to the reader is this:

How will this input be translated into CONCRETE ACTION that will have the greatest positive impact in Inclusive Excellence in 5-10 years?
Strategies for Addressing Top Challenges

Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce; Developing a Pipeline to Support Inclusive Excellence

- **Internships**
  - Targeted internships
  - Internships leading to permanent positions at slightly better the entry-level salaries (e.g., incentive)
  - Reserve internships for minority serving inst.

- **Mentorships - strong peer-to-peer mentorship for underrepresented groups**

- **Pipeline development**
  - Industry pipeline program (industry scholarships/internship opportunities)
  - Grow the diverse workforce that you want to see by grooming students from freshman through graduate school for those w/ graduate programs
  - Use capacity funds to recruit diverse graduate students (will end up as faculty hopefully)
  - Postdoctoral programs to bridge to faculty
  - Work with your institutions MANRRS groups as a pipeline for employees [https://www.manrrs.org/](https://www.manrrs.org/)
  - Develop a program from diversity scholarships in undergrad and grad.

- **Training**
  - Training own diversity PhD students
  - Identifying unconscious or systematic biases currently causing attrition within the pipeline

- **Start with youth development**
  - Start early with 4H in creating the foundation for a diverse workforce
  - Change the perspective of high school students about what Agriculture is, most of the best talent is going to a pre-med pathway
  - Campus experiences for 3rd graders from URM
  - Target students in 7-12 for scholarships in Ag programs to build the pipeline

- **Exchange programs/shared programs/cross training/collaboration**
  - Graduate student swap between 1862s, 1890s, 1994, like a clinical rotation, for a semester research project.
  - Develop summer experiential exchanges for students between the LGU system
  - Student opportunities to exchange across campus
  - Create regional research exchange programs to provide greater experience for grad students and post docs
  - Station scientists from other organizations at our experiment stations
- Cross training of students from diverse institutions - summer internships at diverse locations - all institutions involved
- Dual degrees from more than one institution/program
- Providing learning opportunities to each other’s students within a region.
- Multiyear faculty exchanges across institutions
- Develop bridge research programs with 3 LG types

- **Incentivize - Incentives for minority faculty and students**
- **Identify successful examples**
- **Examine/reshape recruitment and hiring practices**
  - Aggressive search locally and internationally
  - Reduce the number of non-essential required qualifications in job ads
  - Improve recruitment strategies.
  - Strengthen hiring practices
  - Strong start up packages
  - Reactive and proactive work environment- vetting in hiring for sensitivity
  - Train all personnel involved in any aspect of hiring training in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce
  - Dedicated funding to assist in hiring diverse faculty.

- **Collaboration**
  - Shadow AES/ARD Directors and get them to regional/national meetings
  - Encourage and build through regular monthly/weekly meetings with Admin
  - Build Regional strategic relationships with 1890s and 1994’s to do target hires at faculty or staff
  - Joint travel to relevant sites
  - Change the climate so that different people with different life experiences can feel at home
Building relationships

- Physically visit other institutions
- Faculty exchanges across the three LGU family members.
- More face-to-face get-togethers with faculty working in related areas and administrators across these institutions
- Effective partnerships begin with building strong relationships!
- Regular collaborative sessions
- Faculty "internships" or mini sabbaticals at institutions of different land grant groups
- Virtual exchanges
- University alliance formation among 2-3 other university partners
- Reach out to one of each institution type different from your own and invite to 1) a meeting, 2) a research proposal.
- Specialty listing
- Names of 1862/1890/1994s into a hat and matchmake to outcomes and/or speed dating.
- Partnership building grantsmanship workshops
- Create shared appointments within and across states that have scientists from both institutions at each of the universities
- Hold meetings at more affordable locations for larger participation or meet at an 1890 or 1994 institution's campus for major meetings.

Target collaboration on issues

- Targeted meetings focused on joint challenges or common stakeholders
- Link common interests at grass roots level, not admin.
- Organize mixed research teams around a given area and provide funds
- Targeted special collaborative initiatives
- Think tanks that will connect researchers/expertise with targeted outcomes
- Identify common goals.
- Develop statewide or regional joint research programs to include all types of institutions
- Collaborative projects

Funding/grants

- Dedicated competitive funding
- Seed grants to form or strengthen teams between 1862/1890/1994 institutions and facilitation of these partnerships
- Fund cooperative projects with faculty at other LGU types
- Create grants in AFRI, NSF, NIH, etc. that requires partnerships with 90 and 94
- RFAs that require or at least favor collaborations among LGUs
- Funding that not only rewards diverse granting participants, but also highlights different cultural perspectives in presenting research results
- Expand Hatch Multistate type funding to 1890 and 1994 institutions
- National funding programs requiring programs that include all partners
- Dedicated funding for collaborative projects for mixed research teams
- Require collaborations across institutions for more grant sources.
- Shared grants requiring multiple diverse land grant institutions.
- USDA-funded graduate student and post-doc exchange programs
- Financial Benefit should go primarily to the 1890 and 1994 partners, 1862 faculty should be rewarded internally from the effort and time.
- Dedicated competitive 1890 funding for the 1890 LGUs, and dedicated competitive 1994 funding for the 1994 LGUs that is separate from new and existing dedicated competitive funding for all LGUs

- **Expand leadership opportunities**
  - Invite 1890’s and 1994’s to lead on projects and not just follow
  - Provide funding to 1890s & 1994s to lead the strengthening partnership efforts
  - Allow 1890’s to lead programs with 1862s as participants
  - 1890/1994 lead interdisciplinary proposals
  - Due to external funding having a long history of moving extraordinarily slow at some 1890 LGUs, in some instances, take that into consideration when determining which institution will be responsible for managing external financial resources as it relates to 1890/1994/1862 collaborative partnerships

- **Strengthen multi-state opportunities**
  - Create a program that allows for more participation from the 1890s and 1994s in Multistate projects
  - Take better advantage of multistate opportunities
  - Collaborations are personal - invest in more involvement of 1890/1994 in multistate research projects
  - Multistate research projects / research teams
  - Joint multi-disciplinary research initiatives
  - Joint research and extension programming
  - Encourage faculty to include project partners from these universities

- **Cross institution pipeline development**
  - Joint degree programs and grant program collaborations
  - Automatic adjunct faculty appointments with institutions within each state
  - Building partnerships around recruitment of faculty and staff for 1862, 1890 and 1994
  - Share facilities, human and other resources
  - Co-advise students
• Join together/ collaborate (3) for significant request for all ag research
  o Joint programs/research projects
  o Collective pipeline directed to UG and MS programs at 1890/1994 institutions leading to PhD program at 1862 so all institutions benefit at their strengths.
  o Collaborate to be unified and make a concerted effort on behalf of all.
  o merge the different institution types to reduce segregation in higher education
  o true long-term partnerships. not one-time funding that encourages last minutes request.

• Collaborative grant development
  o public private partnerships
  o grant and project cooperation across 1890/1862/1994
  o Shared grants across diverse institutions with equal sharing of resources.
  o Designated pools of funding (collaborations)
  o develop funding opportunities targeted specifically to joint submissions from the 3 LGU systems focused on developing solutions to meet global challenges
  o Commit to submitting a proposal with at least one other institution AND commit to allowing the minority-serving institution to be the host of the project.
  o set asides in OREI, SCRI and other competitive funding opportunities
  o Partnerships between institutions strengthen research grant applications!
  o funding opportunities that require meaningful roles/budgets for all 3 LGU
  o national initiative stimulating ag research to the level of NIH; all LGU benefit
  o Collaboratively developed research proposals
  o partner across LGU systems to find grants together and foundation support
  o Joint projects/grant programs that require participants from more than one land-grant category: 1862 + 1890 + 1994
  o develop joint grantsmanship workshops and proposal development activities, preferably with accompanying seed funding committed from the institutions
  o build extra power in grants including commodities for partnerships
  o grant subcontracting
  o meaningful participation of 1890s and 1994s with the1862s, not as add-ons
  o collaborative grants with dedicated funding and long-term partnerships

• United approach to funding/advocacy
  o Joint advocacy for more funding
  o All land-grant Universities advocate for equitable funding at the federal level
  o 1890's and 1994's need to have the fully funded match just as the 1862's do.
  o Do the state-based work to ensure equitable match availability
  o Focus on increasing 1890 and 1994 $ BEFORE 1862 after IDing the goal that works.
  o Joint lobbying to minimize competition amongst institutions
- work with state legislatures and Congress to highlight the benefits of leveraging resources across systems
- Better aligned requests to Congress
- Joint efforts in seeking state matching funding.
- Join forces for advocacy as ONE
- Advocacy for funding increases of underfunded programs
- Willingness of 1862 institutions to equitably share increases in funding (based on need) with 1890 and 1994 institutions
- Expand advocacy efforts
- Expand Capacity Funds - and have student and faculty demographics as part of the formula for allocating dollars
- Local and state representation, federal reps in the corner as well - part of this also means a diverse representation to represent a diverse constituency

**Share resources**
- Share AES research stations which some lack.
- Willingness to share resources
- Share resources
- Pooling internal funding across different institutions
- Create opportunities for leveraging
• **Listen and identify needs first; develop true long-term partnerships**
  o Include multiple members of those populations in advisory groups to set priorities.
  o Collaborate on research projects addressing underserved populations to include a needs assessment.
  o intentional outreach and inclusion in advisory groups
  o match making process to identify underserved populations and their needs, then facilitation process to make connections with LGU that have resources and want to assist
  o Use/revise/enhance/change frameworks to engage underserved populations
  o Firstly, define and identify the populations
  o Working with advocacy groups for underserved populations to identify needs
  o Engage the stakeholders directly in setting the research and outreach agenda
  o Get out more and find stakeholders and address their concerns
  o ID some problems and then sign up to do
  o listen first and be there for long haul.
  o Show genuine interest
  o listen to needs, and create intentional collaborations with clear measures of accountability
  o Underserved populations aren't always overlooked, but not considered in the plan. Be interesting and try hard. Nobody wants to partner with you if you are boring and not in tune with culture!
  o Listen carefully to what your target population says is important to them.
  o identify shared issues (e.g., use of public lands)
  o shared stakeholder communication activities- both to gather input into our programs and delivery of results
  o Include underserved perspectives in interpretation of research results and sharing those perspectives as a way to enhance conversations and include diverse audiences.
  o targeted programs in the poorest counties in each state/long-term and intentional

• **Understand, respect and build on the strengths of each other**
  o Working with underserved populations with limited resources is what 1890’s and 1994’s do well. This is a case where 1890s/1994’s could lead the conversation
  o Partner with the experts, Extension, especially 1890 Extension
  o Partner with 1862s, 1890s, and 1994s to deliver instructional and research programs in underserved areas/populations
  o Increased collaborations
  o Use Extension partners to reach out across state/region/nation
  o Build on linkages that have already been established
o collaboration with institutions that focus on underserved populations
o identify the best communicators - then build the team who has the scientific expertise to solve issues

• **Strengthen understanding/training around working with underserved audiences**
  o Special training for reaching the underserved
  o Build a greater understanding to learn how to become more effective.
  o reach out to NGOs and other non-university entities (e.g. advocacy groups) to learn best practices in how they engage underserved populations

• **Grow the pipeline of students and faculty from underserved groups**
  o Dual and joint graduate degrees across all LGUs
  o Provide internships for underserved populations.
  o scholarships
  o Summer camps/interns/faculty sabbaticals for underserved groups
  o recruiting employees/students from the targeted underserved population
  o Create shared internships to focus on this area
  o Create programs and funding for teachers in target schools to develop familiarity.

Match the faculty to the population
  o Student exchanges/mentoring across diverse institutions.
  o scholarships/ internships - multi-year commitments
  o Hire faculty with this as a major job expectation and hold them to this through T&P process. or create an endowed chair with this expectation
  o Student internships that target underrepresented groups within the state and region - do this as a regional/joint activity rotating across universities or joint effort
  o employing a diverse faculty and staff

• **Purposeful inclusion/ prioritization**
  o Make it a priority, rather than an afterthought.
  o Field days that facilitate bringing in underserved populations
  o Increase the focus on urban populations, food islands, linkage of food with health outcomes.
  o Community service/open classes and community events, schools
  o Better funding for these types of programs
Addendum: Participants provided other rich content to the session through a series of related discussion prompts. These are included below for reference.

Discussion Prompt: How would we (ESS) be better if we truly worked under a banner of Inclusive Excellence?

- Then we will value the opinion of others who train of thought is not of the same cannon (our view), from a traditional way
- ESS would produce more innovative programs and products and of more practical value to a larger number of people in our communities
- We will be able to more freely share our resources and truly bring 1862, 1890, and 1894 institutions together.
- Working under a banner of Inclusive Excellence would yield broader perspectives on existing issues.
- We would be better equipped to approach problems (both internal to the university and external) in more meaningful ways, and ultimately provide solutions that are more robust.
- We need to ask our advisory groups, stakeholder groups, and commodity support groups to better embrace DEI as a relevant system of increasing market share and consumer support.
- build more trust and confidence among ourselves
- Bring a broader set of experiences that would challenge our assumptions of “the way” to solve or approach issues
  - also a better set of outcomes for our students and adult learners
  - Fresh, more efficient processes across the board that don't follow, "We do it this way because it's how we've always done it."
  - It would help to enhance inter-institutional cooperativity
  - If we embrace inclusive excellence, we would expand both the diversity of ideas in addressing research questions while also expanding our potential impact.
  - reach more people more effectively
  - Inclusion of different viewpoints and experiences can spark innovation.
  - All voices would be heard and valued, leading to a better working climate, increased productivity, and innovation.
  - Examples of best practices or new programs that work at other institutions that could be modeled at our institutions
  - Through IE, we would be able to more effectively engage stakeholders whose
  - Research questions and answers that address the needs - limitations of all those who live in our borders to ensure safe, food, feed, and fiber
  - If we do wonders with one set of eyes, imagine seeing the world from various other set of eyes.
  - Reach a broader audience
  - It would change the perspectives we all harbor, to open minds to see problems more broadly.
• Chance to hear perspectives you might not consider, or might have misconstrued, and learn issues that are outside your normal thinking.
• Richer experience for all involved.
• Diverse world experiences bring very different ideas on how to approach a problem — both research challenges and institutional challenges.
• We will be able to more freely share our resources and truly bring 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions together.
• Broadened perspectives and horizons.
• In a changing world, a diversity of ideas will better help us find solutions to new problems that are not predictable with past understanding.
• Provide more role models and motivation to strive for leadership positions for marginalized people.
• Problems which ESS aims to address and respond to impact a diverse group, answering these challenges will require a diverse team
• Inclusive Excellence would provide for stronger, more meaningful and impactful multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations: leveraging of resources.
• Empowering and welcoming a diverse community of scholars will improve the quality of everything we do, from teaching to the quality of our research questions and solutions.
• Being inclusive doesn't just make us better, it makes us relevant to more people.

Discussion Prompt: What is ONE THING I could change or do this year that would have the greatest positive impact in Inclusive Excellence in 5-10 years?

• Reach out to other institutions that we have not connected with as yet.
• Work on regional strategies with Alton Thompson and ARD Directors
• I will reach out to 1890s and 1994s to recruit my graduate students.
• Network with people who are not just like me. Build my circle with people outside my box.
• Intentional communication and engagement.
• support shared internships
• Focus on audience when developing materials to report data
• be proactive in reaching out to other groups
• Hire faculty members of color and support them with quality start-up packages.
• Incentivize my faculty to collaborate with 1890 universities on research projects
• Be strategic and intentional about inclusivity
• Recruit faculty from 1890 and 1994
• collaborate with 1890s on internships in agriculture fields
• Try to carve out seed funding for new collaborative efforts between our faculty (1862) with 1890 or 1994 partners
• Try to institutionalize the concept of inclusive excellence with faculty and administration and establish a pilot program to foster interactions between ESS 1862 and 1890s.
I think my "one new idea" is also the answer for this one: Building an advisory committee that will better connect communicators from 1862, 1890 and 1994 institutions so we can benefit from their input and they can benefit from learning about each other, their audiences and their cultures.

- Establish meaningful relationships with other institutional members of the LGU family.
- Reach out to build trust with 1994 institutions.
- Helping others (students, high school teachers, Madea, etc.) to understand all that "Agriculture" is. That is the best way to recruit and will lead to positive change in the years to come. [Madea--the person who is raising those students who should major in agriculture, but because of the view of agriculture, these students are majoring in other areas.]
- Facilitate meaningful conversations among minority and majority students for deeper understanding of challenges and opportunities of DEI.
- This has been an amazing thinking and reflecting time. THANK YOU!
- Our 1862 HSI has some of the same challenges that our 1890 and 1994 institutions are facing, so I will seek ways to collaborate at a higher level.

Discussion Prompt: What are 2-3 action steps I could take in the next 30 days to advance toward this ONE THING?

- Identify funding opportunities to enable these interactions and collaborations to become reality.
- I sure would love to think through how the SRDC could help with these ideas.
- Agriculture can be so much more than its historical image, data sciences, gene editing, innovation and entrepreneurship, we need to embrace those traits.
- Plan for seed funding for collaboration with 1890 universities.
- Talking to everyone I meet about agriculture:
- Flip the narrative that education is the pathway away from Agriculture.
- Pick up the phone and start networking!
- Establish a regular monthly meeting with my counterparts in 1890 and 1994 universities.
- Target faculty from 1890 and 1994 to participate in AFRI grants.
- I love the emphasis on conversation...that's where it starts!
- As was mentioned earlier, I will work with Gary Thompson to plan and implement joint programs, proposals with ARD and the Southern region.

Respectfully submitted by:
• Woody Hughes, Jr., Fort Valley State University
• Brian Raison, The Ohio State University
• Rachel Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center

Back to attachments directory
Why reputation management matters
4-H has an excellent reputation

Boy Scouts

*The New York Times*

**Facing a Wave of Sex-Abuse Claims, Boy Scouts of America Files for Bankruptcy**

The nonprofit group, which counts more than two million youth participants, follows Catholic dioceses and U.S.A. Gymnastics in seeking bankruptcy protection amid sex-abuse cases.

*TIME*

For Boy Scout Abuse Victims, 'It's Not About the Money'

"This is essentially the Boy Scouts pleading guilty in the court of public perception."
Effects of a Crisis

- Negative impact on:
  - Brand reputation
    - Particularly important for 4-H: the trust that alumni, parents and supporters place in the brand
  - Revenue
    - Government support
    - Individual donations
    - Community and corporate partnerships
  - Workforce and volunteers
  - Youth served

Process Overview
Methodology: A 3-Step Process

1. Conduct vulnerability assessment
   - Review existing 4-H background materials and analyze media
   - **Internal:** Conduct interviews with 4-H stakeholders
   - **External:** Complete external audit of other youth-organizations to benchmark industry risks

2. Develop crisis communications playbook
   - Map stakeholders and influencers
   - Create issues management playbook with draft messaging and approach
   - Define response protocols that identify roles, responsibilities and contact information for issues management team

3. Circulate playbook, update and implement nationally
   - Circulate crisis playbook with leaders and stakeholders and gather feedback
   - Update and finalize the playbook based on feedback
   - **Playbook available; 4-H state program directors trained and encouraged to share with relevant state leaders**

Current Status

Engaged with 4-H System over the Course of Two Years

**Stakeholders Engaged...**
- Council Board of Trustees; 4-H Youth Advisory Council
- Kirk Bloir, The Ohio State University
- Jon Boren, New Mexico State University
- Ed Buckner, Alcorn State University
- Caroline Henney (Crocoll), USDA/NIFA
- Lisa Diaz, University of Illinois
- Chuck Hibberd, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Shannon Horrillo, UC ANR/University of Nevada Reno Extension
- Woody Hughes Jr., Fort Valley State University
- Glenda Humiston, UC ANR
- Ed Jones, Virginia Tech
- Todd Kesner, Montana State University
- Jim Lindstrom, University of Idaho
- John Lawrence, Iowa State University
- Kathleen Lodl, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Arch Smith, University of Georgia
- Andy Turner, Cornell University

**Competitive Analysis**
- Boy Scouts of America
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Girl Scouts of the USA
- Future Farmers of America
- YMCA

**Feedback Tours**
- 4-H Alumni Focus Groups
- Youth Advisory Focus Group
- Leadership Engagement:
  - ECOP 4-H Leadership Committee
  - PLWG
- Industry Leaders in Crisis Response (e.g. Bayer, Wal-Mart, etc.)
Purpose & Objectives

PURPOSE
This Crisis Communications Playbook provides a defined approach for how Extension, LGUs, and Council work together to respond to operational and non-operational crises and incidents that have the potential to damage reputation.

OBJECTIVES
• Establish **recommended protocols** for reporting and responding to crises
• Improve communications **response time** and accuracy
• Ensure **consistent messaging** and information flow
• **Specify roles** and responsibilities for national issues management
Process Overview

Local Level
- Flag issues to state 4-H leaders

State Level
- Follow existing Extension / University processes
- Raise national issues to Crisis Strategy Team & coordinate on response

National: Crisis Strategy Team
- Handle national issues following the crisis playbook

Crisis Strategy Team Members

- Extension
  - ECOP 4-H Chair(s)
  - ECOP Executive Director
  - ECOP Board Liaison to Council (serving as CST Chair)
  - PLWG Chair
  - APLU Legal Counsel (serving as CST Legal Lead)

- Council
  - Council Chief Executive Officer
  - Council Chief Marketing Officer
  - Council Communications Director (serving as CST Comms Lead)

USDA-NIFA will not be on the CST, but the following roles will liaise with the CST:

- USDA/NIFA
  - NIFA Division Director for Youth and 4-H
  - NIFA Communications Lead
Scenario Walkthrough

Yellow Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Tactical Response</th>
<th>Owner/Spokesperson</th>
<th>Sample Media Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun rights group protests youth sporting event</td>
<td>Follow steps 1-3 in green section above plus:</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;4-H members have opportunities to explore the sport of shooting, hunting and sportsmanship skills in county, regional, state and national competitions similar to Olympic competition. These sports promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior. They are taught under the guidance of caring and knowledgeable adult leaders who are certified instructors.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>A 4-H shooting sports event is interrupted by protesters from a gun rights group.</td>
<td>1. CST Chair alerts select members</td>
<td>CST owns management of national issue</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. CST consults with state contact(s) to gather facts and align on response</td>
<td>CST Chair serves as national spokesperson if needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. CST convenes to prioritize audience needs (staff, volunteers, board, donors, influencers) and assigns roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>SMEs serve as secondary resource if subject matter expertise is required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. CST Comms Lead prepares materials and secures approvals; defers media to state contacts unless national media reach out</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. CST Chair pulls in select CST members and SMEs on response approach/messaging to share with key audiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. CST Comms Lead provides monitoring report once daily (at 10 AM)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. CST hosts post-incident briefing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Messaging

- Talking points have been developed for specific issues that have the potential to develop into national stories, including the following topics:
  - Diversity and inclusion
  - Sexual abuse
  - Shooting sports
  - 4-H funding
  - Animal rights

SCENARIO - SHOOTING SPORTS

Foundational Statement

The following foundational media statement is to be used as the basis for further messaging around the issue of shooting sports, including holding statements, talking points, etc.

4-H is proud of our research-backed youth development programs, including shooting sports. These programs provide hands-on learning experiences and develop critical life skills under the guidance of a caring and knowledgeable adult mentor.

Shooting sports are a rich part of American tradition. The Olympics, for example, feature over a dozen shooting sport events. 4-H members have opportunities to explore the sport of shooting, hunting, and sportsmanship skills in county, regional, state, and national competitions, all under the supervision of trained mentors.

Like other sporting events, these programs provide young people with opportunities to develop life skills like teamwork, self-confidence, personal discipline, responsibility and decision making. They do not advance a singular point of view, but empower young people to ask questions, think for themselves, create real-world solutions and lead their peers.

Questions?

Back to minutes