FROM DOUG’S DESK
Doug Steele, Vice President

During the 2024 Board on Agriculture Assembly Summer Leadership Meeting (formerly known as the Joint Council on Organization and Policy, “JCOPs”) in Providence, Rhode Island on July 15 – 17, three “big ideas” were made “public” for the first time to create awareness and engagement as the initiatives move from development to implementation.

**AgInnovation Research Roadmap:** Under the leadership of George Smith, agInnovation Chair, there was an update on the AgInnovation Research Roadmap. This is a 10-year research strategy to provide direction to three major pillars of Water Resilience, Climate Solutions and Sustainable Food Systems. This roadmap is intended to address long-term research needs and federal funding support.

**Decadal Vision:** The Decadal Vision is being developed to see beyond the annual appropriations process and:

“Envision a future where American agriculture provides the nation with improved personal, financial, and environmental health and prosperity. American agriculture squarely occupies the nexus of food, energy, health, and community. In the future we envision, America’s farms, fields, ranches, forests, and fisheries will supply the food, fuel, feed, and fiber Americans need without reliance on foreign inputs, investments, or products. In this future, agriculture is a vital part of the solution to improving water and soil quality and environmental, ecosystem, and forest health while driving innovations that spur economic vitality and prosperity for America and beyond.”

More details will be shared with BAA members via a Zoom webinar to outline the process and receive feedback on the document.

**Capacity Building Awareness Campaign:** The BAA entered into a consulting contract with Tripp Umbach to help develop a Capacity Building Awareness campaign that would be a major funding priority for FY26. Two primary goals of this work are to:
1. Advocate for the continuity and stability of federal capacity funding, emphasizing the importance of long-term commitments to support ongoing research activities, infrastructure maintenance, and capacity-building initiatives. Highlight the risks associated with funding fluctuations or uncertainty, which can disrupt research programs and impede progress.

2. Tailor the messaging to resonate with policymakers, funding agencies, and other stakeholders involved in decision-making. Use language that emphasizes the strategic importance of agricultural research capacity to national priorities such as food security, public health, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness.

All of these initiatives will be shared in detail during the months leading up to the APLU Annual Meeting (November 10 – 12, Orlando FL) at which time in-depth updates will be provided to BAA members.

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Washington Update

*Prepared for the Board on Agriculture Assembly by Lewis-Burke Associates*

With the House adjourning and the Senate headed into August recess, now is a great time to connect with your Representatives and Senators while they are back in state.

This is especially true while we wait for Congress to navigate major differences in the fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations bills and the Farm Bill. Ensuring your Representatives and Senators understand what you care about and what specific priorities mean for your campus and community will help keep our issues on their radar.

This update provides states of play for both Farm Bill and FY 2025 appropriations as well as simple messages to use when engaging with your delegation. As always, we strongly encourage you to connect with your campus's government relations office to coordinate any meetings, visits, or other events that might involve your delegation. Thank you for all your efforts, it is making a difference!

READ THE FULL REPORT

APLU Seeks New President

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is seeking a new president to provide leadership for a multi-faceted, dynamic, Washington, DC-based organization with a large public research university and university system membership, a staff of more than 60 people, and an annual budget of nearly $20 million.

APLU is a membership organization that fosters a community of university leaders collectively working to advance the mission of public research universities. The association's membership consists of nearly 250 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations spanning across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, six U.S. territories, Canada, and Mexico.

The successful candidate will have served as a president/chancellor of an APLU member institution and have a demonstrated record as a team-first leader with exceptional leadership and management skills, and successful experience building and maintaining supportive, diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environments.

See the full description and apply.

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Call for Nominations: Justin Smith Morrill Memorial Lectureship

The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) are seeking nominations to honor Justin Smith Morrill - the U.S. Senator primarily responsible for enactment of the historic legislation establishing the Land-grant University System. The Justin Smith Morrill Memorial Lectureship is awarded to honor outstanding contemporary leadership in teaching and significant contributions as an educator.

We are seeking an insightful topic and a dynamic speaker, who can provoke discussion among meeting participants and prepare a formal lecture to be presented prior to the APLU annual meeting. While we seek recommendations from those within the land-grant university system, we also would encourage you to share this memorandum with colleagues outside of the research, education, and Extension system, including stakeholders, foundations, public interest groups, or international organizations. Nominations are encouraged from all sources.

Please submit your potential topic and/or presenter on or before August 23, 2024. Recommendations should be forwarded electronically using this form. A committee will review submissions and narrow the scope of the recommendations to make a final decision.

See more information and apply here.

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1890 Land-grant Universities Impact Report

A new publication from the 1890 Land-grant Communications Committee spotlights the education, research, and Cooperative Extension at the 1890 Land-grant Universities, historically Black universities that were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. These 19 universities, located in the southern region of the United States, provide innovative, research-based programs that empower, uplift and educate diverse students and underserved communities.

This publication was created with support from the the Association of Extension Administrators, Association of 1890 Research Directors, Council of 1890 Deans of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/1890 Task Force.

Read the full impact report.
The Aspen Institute Releases Higher Ed Climate Action Plan

On August 1, 2024, Higher Ed Climate Action, an initiative of the Aspen Institute’s This Is Planet Ed, released the Higher Ed Climate Action Plan (Action Plan) to support the higher education sector in advancing a holistic and systemic approach to climate action. The report highlights ways for institutions to integrate climate considerations into all aspects of campus operations, research, education, and community engagement, emphasizing that isolated efforts are insufficient for meaningful impact and seeking effective actions to drive progress.

The action plan offers recommendations to ensure that the nation’s nearly 4,000 institutions of higher education, enrolling 19 million students, can leverage their strengths in building knowledge, fostering innovation, engaging communities, and modeling solutions to create a sustainable, resilient, and equitable society.

Read the full action plan.

Higher Ed and Climate Revisions in the Inflation Reduction Act

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has extensive funding for clean energy projects for higher education institutions. IRA incentives enable higher education to more affordably step up as climate leaders, save money on energy costs, and empower students. Read more details on how your institution can benefit. Watch this webinar to learn about the opportunity and University of California’s experience leveraging IRA funds.

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National Agricultural Library's Rural Information Center (RIC)

The National Agricultural Library's Rural Information Center (RIC) provides information, research, and referral services to stakeholders who support America's rural communities. The Guide to Funding Resources is an example of a new information product RIC can provide to Agricultural Research Service and USDA staff. RIC can create similar products on any topic relevant to supporting rural communities. RIC also offers this service to non-USDA stakeholders, as time permits.

Contact RIC to request your information product.
AWARDS & OPPORTUNITIES

APLU Board on Health and Human Sciences Award Nominations

Nominations for the APLU Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) Ellen Swallow Richards Public Service Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award, the Outstanding Engagement Award, and Undergraduate Research Mentor Award are being accepted from July 9, 2024 through August 23, 2024.

For additional information please contact bhhs@aplu.org.

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2025 NAS Prize in Food and Agriculture Sciences

The NAS Prize in Food and Agriculture Sciences recognizes research by a mid-career scientist (defined as up to 20 years since completion of Ph.D.) at a U.S. institution who has made an extraordinary contribution to agriculture or to the understanding of the biology of a species fundamentally important to agriculture or food production. For the purpose of the prize, areas of science with applications to agriculture include plant and animal sciences, microbiology, nutrition and food science, soil science, entomology, veterinary medicine, and agricultural economics. The recipient will be awarded a medal and a $100,000 prize. All nominations must be submitted by October 7, 2024.

See more information here.

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USDA Invests $4.5 Million to Build Nutrition Hub Network
The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced $4.5 million in funding to establish three additional USDA Nutrition Hubs in communities across the country. The new Nutrition Hubs will provide tailored and scalable approaches to equitably advance food and nutrition security and help prevent diet-related chronic diseases, especially in historically underserved communities. Applications for this new competitive award program are being accepted through October 3, 2024.

See more information and apply here.

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Call for Applications: AAVMC Annual Conference Abstract Reviewer

The American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges is currently seeking reviewers for the 2025 Annual Conference. The review timeline is September 9 - October 7, 2024. Volunteering as a reviewer is your opportunity to help shape the future of veterinary medical education! Any employee of an AAVMC member institution is eligible to serve.

See more information and apply here.

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WEBINARS

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Leveraging Extension and University Engagement: Developing and Implementing Novel Projects Using Transdisciplinary Approaches

September 9, 2024 | 1:00pm ET | Virtual

You're invited to a webinar series highlighting opportunities and challenges of transdisciplinary approaches within agricultural research. Presented by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the National Agricultural Library, the seminar series will examine strategies for implementing transdisciplinary approaches, team-building and overcoming challenges to encourage the adoption of and training in transdisciplinary systems.

Speakers:
• **Marshall Stewart** (Moderator)  
  Kansas State University  
  Senior Vice President for Executive Affairs, University Engagement and Partnerships, and Chief of Staff

• **Chancellor Robert Jones**  
  University of Illinois  
  Chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

• **Wendy Powers**  
  Washington State University  
  Dean, College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences

• **Jay Akridge**  
  Purdue University  
  Trustee Chair in Teaching and Learning Excellence and Professor of Agricultural Economics

See more information and register here.

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**MEETINGS**

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**2024 agInnovation Fall Meeting**  
September 22 – 25, 2024 | Raleigh, North Carolina

Hosted by the North Carolina Agricultural Research Service (NCARS) at North Carolina State University.

Please join us for a stimulating and engaging experience with colleagues from around the country as we explore this year’s theme: *Reimagining the Land-grant University – Industry Relationship*. The goal is to engage with industry thought leaders outside of academia, providing new perspectives on societal challenges.

Our keynote speaker, Phil Taylor, Open Innovation Lead for Crop Science R&D at Bayer, will kick off our meeting followed by panels with progressive industry leaders. On day two, we will
turn our focus to Ag Research Infrastructure, featuring leaders who have taken innovative steps to execute facilities projects.

See more information and register here.

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2024 APLU Annual Meeting: Our Public Purpose

Join us at the 2024 APLU Annual Meeting on November 10-12 in Orlando, Florida for an unparalleled gathering of thought leaders and innovators in public higher education. The theme of this year’s meeting is Our Public Purpose, which will celebrate and explore the value proposition and mission of public research universities in a moment filled with vast challenges and opportunities.

Together we will discuss the issues facing public research universities across North America while reaffirming our commitment to serving the public good through education, research, and engagement.

See more information and register here.

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Save the Date: BHHS | CAFCS Spring Meeting 2025
February 11 – 13, 2025 | Auburn, Alabama

"Unveiling Excellence: Integration, Innovation, Impact”
In an exciting shift, the Board on Health and Human Sciences (BHHS) and Council of Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences (CAFCS) spring meeting will now be hosted by
member institutions, showcasing innovative work in the health and human sciences. 2025 will be hosted at Auburn University. The Keynote Speaker is Horst Schulze, one of the founding members of the Ritz Carleton Hotel Company and author of Excellence Wins.

PARTNER EVENTS

First American Land Grant Consortium (FALCON) Conference
October 11 – 13 | Minneapolis, MN
The annual FALCON conference is the premiere for 1994 (Tribal Colleges & Universities) land-grant administrators, extension directors, faculty, researchers, students, and partners. The conference provides training, professional development, and networking opportunities among the 1994s and their strategic partners, including USDA NIFA, other federal agencies, the 1862 and 1890 land grants, and the nonprofit sector.

See more information and register.

Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC)
November 17 – 19 | Montgomery, Alabama
The Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC) is a forum committed to a world that values and promotes equal opportunity equitable access to information and technology for sustainable development of communities and natural resources. The conference began in 1942 mainly with Tuskegee University and local and state support and participation. It is now national in scope including representatives from the national land grant community, and from the state, federal, and private sectors.

See more information and register.

Save the Date: JCEP 2025 Conferences
The Joint Commission of Extension Professionals (JCEP) provides learning opportunities for Extension professionals. Details will be posted at www.jcep.org.

- Extension Leadership Conference (ELC) will be held February 19-20, 2025 in Savannah, GA.
- Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) will be held April 7-9, 2025 in Arlington, VA, with April 9 reserved for Hill visits.
RESOURCES

Public and Land-grant University Job Board

The APLU job board is a free resource available to member institutions. Post your own job or find open positions at public and land-grant universities across North America.

FOCUS is an update from the Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources office of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) to provide timely, relevant information and actions items to the membership of the Commission on Food, Environment, and Renewable Resources (CFERR) and its member boards and sections. Join the FANR Focus Mailing List.

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