I recently ran across an article in the Harvard Business Review about “6 Strategies for Leading Through Uncertain Times” (Zucker and Rowell). It was published in April 2021 as we started emerging from the pandemic and were striving for some type of “normal” rhythm around our professional lives as leaders. That article referenced another study that explored the value of “Zooming Out” or taking a step back to see the big picture.

The premise is that leaders often get stuck as they face their challenges because they are too immersed in them. “Zooming out,” or moving from “the dance floor to the balcony,” as described by Ron Heifetz, Marty Linksy, and Alexander Grashow in *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, provides a broader perspective and a systemic view of the issues. This can shine a light on unexamined assumptions that would otherwise not be visible. From this “balcony” or elevated vantage point, interdependencies and larger patterns become observable, potentially revealing unforeseen obstacles and new solutions. This more holistic perspective allows for greater adaptability and course correction, when needed.

By making a regular practice of conducting this dance floor-balcony shift, you can build your capacity to see the bigger picture and become more agile.

It seems that any given week provides ample reminders that leaders cannot control the degree of change, uncertainty, and complexity that we face. However, adopting new strategies such as those mentioned above can improve our ability to continually learn, grow, and more effectively navigate the increasing complexity of our world.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Washington Update

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

*House and Senate Make Progress on FY 2025 Appropriations*

This week the House and Senate Appropriations Committees are marking-up their versions of the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. At the time of this writing, we only have details of the House bill and anticipate additional information from the Senate later this week. A full appropriations summary will be in the next FANR Update. Highlights from the House bill, which was approved by a vote of 29-26, follow below.

Per the report accompanying the House Agriculture Appropriations bill, the House would reject most of the proposed eliminations in the President’s FY 2025 budget request for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). However, the House would once again propose no funding for the following NIFA programs:

- Secondary and 2-year Post-Secondary Education
- Sun Grant Program (*there is also no funding for Sun Grant in the budget request*)
- Global Change/UV Monitoring
- Food & Agriculture Service Learning Program
- New Technologies for Agriculture Extension
- Research Facilities Act
These programs were similarly proposed for elimination by the House in FY 2024, but ultimately received funding.

Funding for capacity programs are held flat with the exception of several 1994 programs that would receive $1 million increases. The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) would lose $2 million in the House bill.

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.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Sandy Ruble

Sandy Ruble is retiring in early August after serving the Cooperative Extension System and the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) for the past 10 years. Sandy started at APLU in 2014 by providing administrative support to the National Office Executive Director. She quickly progressed to Program Assistant and then to Assistant Director by taking more initiative
for key roles and strategic communications. Sandy enjoyed devoting herself to the technical integrity of Cooperative Extension Section/ECOP’s member-driven communications and activities. Her efforts helped new and emerging leaders with seamless transitions into national roles in a complex system.

APLU expresses our deep gratitude for her hard work, dedication, and contributions to the land-grant university system. As Sandy wraps up her 42-year career, please join us in congratulating her.

Cooperative Extension System Unveils Climate Action Plan White Paper

In partnership with the Extension Climate Program Action Team, the Extension Foundation, with support from the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute on Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Iowa State University, leaders from the Cooperative Extension System (CES) have released a Climate Action Plan white paper. This white paper outlines innovative solutions uniquely tailored to combat the climate crisis. This initiative follows a significant gathering of Extension leaders in early 2024 to identify and strategize on effective climate action pathways. Read more.

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.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) recently launched a global challenge to advance scientific research that will produce major breakthroughs for nutrition security while mitigating climate change impacts and advancing equity for underserved communities. The "Nourishing Next Generation Agrifood Breakthroughs" (Innovation Challenge) funding opportunity will fund transdisciplinary teams led by early-career scientists (those who have received a Ph.D. within the past ten years) to catalyze new discoveries and mobilize transformative research that simultaneously tackle our most important societal challenges. Read more.

MEETINGS

2024 Regional Summer Meetings
The Regional Summer Meetings present opportunities for the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) and Administrative Heads Section (AHS) to conduct regional business, engage with one another and other BAA members, and go on tours to see the activities of local research and Extension offices. We encourage you to attend.

Southern Regional Meeting: July 26-28, Lexington, Kentucky

- Registration
- Hotel

North Central Regional Meeting: August 4-6, East Lansing, Michigan

- Registration
- Hotel
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
November 10 – 12, 2024 | Orlando, Florida

Join us at the 2024 APLU Annual Meeting 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.

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PARTNER EVENTS

Webinar: “What Happens When Animal Diseases Cross Boundaries?”
July 11, 2024 | 1:00 PM ET | Virtual
This webinar will discuss what can be done to protect against highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and other zoonotic diseases that have the potential to disrupt not only our food supply but the entire agriculture economy. The panel will discuss how federal policies like the farm bill’s National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank and vaccine research being done by the U.S. Department of Agriculture are critical to protecting livestock and safeguarding the world’s food supply both now and in the future.

See more information and register.

North Central Agriculture and Climate Conference
July 31 – August 1 2024 | Peoria, Illinois

The North Central Agriculture and Climate Conference will be a unique event, connecting research, Extension, outreach, farmers and ranchers, ag advisors and technical service providers. This conference will bring together the best of applied research, extension and outreach for climate and agriculture in the region. The program is designed for participants to learn from peers, share their successes, and expand their network. The topics will focus on climate-smart agriculture, including adaptation and mitigation strategies and Extension or outreach best practices, that work in the North Central region.

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.

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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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