

SAAESD Fall 2022 Business Meeting notes

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront hotel September 28th, 2022

Attendees: Paula Agudelo, Rob Gilbert, Hongwei Xin, Scott Senseman, Mike Salassi, David Monks, Henry Fadamiro, Nathan McKinney, Saied Mostaghimi, Susan Duncan, Corey Gallow, Usman Adamu, Brent Elrod (NIFA), Kal Kalavachala (NIFA), Kevin Kephart (NIFA)

Action Items:

1	<p>Agenda- Approved by acclamation</p> <p>Meeting Minutes from Mini Land Grant – Approved by acclamation</p> <p>Interim Actions – Approved by acclamation</p>
2	<p>Michael Salassi is appointed to the MRC and SERA Review Committee replacing David White.</p>
3	<p>ARD-SAAESD Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAAESD and ARD EDs will work together to organize a joint “fly-in” meeting. • SAAESD and ARD chair-elects will serve as liaisons to the respective associations
5	<p>Southern Research Communicators Consortium (SRCC) Discussion – Representatives from the communicators and the directors will meet for a more in-depth discussion toward developing a coherent communications strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled for November 1, 2022. • COOs will be invited to meet with the SRCC Steering Committee members.
6	<p>Cotton Assessment Discussion – Gary presented the Cotton Assessment Report as requested during the Executive Session at the Spring 2022 meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be discussing further at the Spring 2023 meeting during the budget session. • Homework- (everyone): ask “what is the value and what does the CWN and CottonGen bring to our individual stations.” • Gary will have a conversation with Don Jones to assess impacts on the two respective cotton assessments. • Gary will put together several budget models to discuss at the Spring 2023 meeting.
12	<p>Nominating Committee Report – Paula Agudelo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 ESS Chair will be from the Southern Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin thinking about who would like to serve. Need to identify nominees for Chair-elect no later than our Spring 2023 meeting. • SAAESD Chair-elect - Call for nominations and election <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomination of Henry Fadamiro was confirmed with a unanimous vote.

Agenda and Discussion

1	<p>Welcome and Introductions – Paula Agudelo (Rob Gilbert was unable to attend the business meeting due to Hurricane Ian making landfall in Florida)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed and approved the agenda• Reviewed and approved the minutes from 2022 Southern Mini Land-Grant Meeting• Approved Interim Actions• Discussed the schedule for future SAAESD meetings and host institutions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to consider nominations for the ESS/ESCOP Chair for 2024. Nominations for the chair-elect need to be completed by the 2023 Spring SAAESD meeting.• The ESS/ESCOP chair-elect will be announced at the 2023 ESS meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Southern region will host the 2024 ESS meeting.• 2023 Spring SAAESD meeting will be hosted by Mississippi State University and convened in Starkville, MS. Possible dates for Spring 2023 meeting in March or April were discussed. The week of April 17-20, 2022, was subsequently selected.
2	<p>Multistate Research Committee Report – Nathan McKinney and David Monks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Approvals, Renewals, and 3rd Year Reviews- See Agenda Briefs<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All projects are on schedule to be renewed this cycle except for SDC102.• Four new proposals were submitted this cycle.• AAs are encouraged to reach out to the project members to complete the Appendix E to formally join the project.• We have 14 projects renewing this next cycle, so early submissions will be crucial.• Several projects are scheduled for mid-term reviews in the upcoming year.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MRC wants to see MEASURABLE progress towards at least one of the objectives during the mid-term reviews.• SERA Review Committee Report- See Agenda Briefs• ESCOP Crosswalk Analysis and SAAESD Multistate Portfolio Analysis- See Agenda Briefs<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ESS Science & Technology Committee developed the crosswalk document to evaluate the national multistate portfolio against NIFA and ESS priorities.• SAAESD Multistate Portfolio Analysis – Reviewed the quantitative distribution of projects across our multistate portfolio in terms of new vs total projects in different multistate categories over the past 5 years. The distribution of different types of projects (S-, SERA, SCC, SDC) appears to align with other regions. Also reviewed the distribution of MS projects relative to Hatch multistate funding received by members across the regions. The Southern region receives the highest level of funding and was third in the overall number of projects among the regional associations.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This information does not reflect the number of faculty who are participating in projects across the regions.• General discussion around the benefit of having more multistate projects originating from the Southern region? While national level participation is encouraged, regional projects typically have primary focus on regional issues.• Encourage faculty to initiate projects as appropriate and participate where their best interests are served.• MRC can continue to review the portfolio to identify gaps where new projects can be initiated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Salassi (LSU) is appointed to the MRC and SERA Review Committee. • Southern IPM Center Representative- Gary will reach out to identify an SAAESD representative to the Southern IPM Center Steering Committee. • S1076- Gary will reach out to the directors to identify an AA • Cindy will be conducting a zoom Q&A session on October 4, 2022, for project AAs and NIMSS editors outlining NIMSS processes involved in multistate projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Kephart would like to invite the NPLs. • Cindy will send a reminder to the entire listserv.
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Strategic Roadmap Implementation Updates – Gary Thompson- See slides regarding details of the Annual Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S1090 <i>AI in Agroecosystems: Big Data and Smart Technology-Driven Sustainable Production</i> is a model for Collaborative Discovery initiatives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First annual meeting held on August 4-5, 2022, hosted by UF/IFAS in Gainesville • Next annual meeting at LSU on May 25-26, 2023 (<i>Thanos Gentimis (LSU), chair</i>) • 2nd SE AI Conference is being planned for March 2023 hosted by UF/IFAS • Developing a publishable white paper “<i>Southern Regional AI Needs and Applications</i>” as a justification for the NSF Regional Innovations Engines Program (NSF Engines) • ALLIANCE (Artificial intelligence for southern agriculture) is seeking resources to conduct coordinated data collection (preliminary data) • ARD-SAAESD Initiative is an ongoing activity in Strategic Alliances with the goal of creating stronger partnerships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was proposed that the chairs-elect from each association serve as liaison to our respective organizations. • It was proposed that initial meetings between the two associations be organized as 2-day “fly-in” meetings at a hub airport hotel. • Action item for the respective EDs to begin developing the meeting. • AG-NGINE proposal was an outcome of the Strategic Alliance meeting with the S-APS held during the Southern Mini Land-Grant Meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proposal to establish AG_NGINE as a national initiative was discussed and approved during the ESS Business Meeting. Funding was included in the ESS budget proposal to be voted upon 30 days after the meeting. • Honorifics Module 1 (agenda brief) is the first E-notebook module from the Enhancing Reputation focus area.
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	<p>New Research Initiatives Discussion – Scott Senseman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion centered around identifying topics that could be developed as collaborative regional research initiatives. We can develop topics as workshops during the SAAESD Spring meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate smart agriculture/carbon sequestration • Science communication • Food production and nutrition • LSU has been asked to identify 3-5 focus areas where they could go after funding: soil and water management, crop breeding and plant health, invasive species, precision ag, biofuels and bio processing. • Invasive species is a big topic in the Southern region. Related to climate issues.

- Feral Hogs
- Coastal ports bring a lot of invasive species
- Virgin Islands- Soil and Water are topics. Invasive species and Precision Ag are all important.
- **Nutrition-based plant breeding-** breeding for nutritional quality
 - Related to human health (NIH funding opportunities)
 - LSU rice breeder developed a low glycemic rice. Received a lot of attention so now their rice board is interested.
 - VT- south has an opportunity to fill a gap
- Fisheries, seafood, and aquaculture is capturing a lot of attention. 93% of all seafood we consume is imported from China and SE Asia. This also touches on invasive species and nutrition and health.
- **Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)-** This area is booming. Many companies are moving into Virginia and Tennessee. Google and Amazon are engaging in this. Aligned with urban agriculture and vertical agriculture. Areas to explore within this topic:
 - Local food, food security, climate change, precision ag
 - Pandemic disrupting supply chain has led to more interest/development from industry
 - Could lead to a multistate project
 - There have been a lot of hires in the last three years in this area
 - Workforce development as well. We are creating jobs that don't have the people to fill them.
 - Aquaponics fits with this topic
 - Engineering, breeding, limited number of crops appropriate, water resources issues, AI/precision technology, energy
 - ARS is investing millions in CEA. Their next handful of hires will be in this area. They have partnered with Amplified AG to buy containers and grow all sorts of vegetables and fruits.
 - It is scalable
 - Our Spring meeting will be in MS, and catfish is huge there
 - Industry is already ahead of us. Our contribution will be workforce development. Critical role will be getting the students prepared to take these jobs.
 - Virgin Islands is developing some certificates and associate degrees for work in aquaponics
 - Soil and lighting can change various components in the plants such as flavor and nutritional content
 - Look at this at a system level: economics/lighting/energy/cyber security. Not just horticulture being grown in a different way.
 - Transportation and distribution get into "carbon". What crops work best? We are a specialty crop region, so we have a lot of adaptability
 - Federal funding programs in this area? What about DoE, DoD, etc.
 - Walmart had interest in the past in developing a vegetable hub in the SE. The concept is still alive, and they are willing to invest in supply chain efforts. This time next year it may be possible to get someone from Walmart to discuss this but is a little premature now.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is currently going on right now at our institutions and in the industry? • Look at publicizing that through our communications efforts in advance of the meeting.
5	<p>Southern Research Communicators Consortium (SRCC) Discussion – Gary Thompson & Cindy Morley- See letter from the communicators (agenda brief)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the communicators would like to meet with the directors for an in-depth discussion toward developing a coherent communications strategy. • Eight questions outlined in the letter are intended to help focus the discussion. • Our goal today is to familiarize ourselves with the questions and discuss some ideas. <p>Representatives from the communicators and the directors will meet for a more in-depth discussion November 1, 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is our audience? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated Legislators is our primary audience! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means we need to simplify and focus our message. • Consider retraining our people to think in “Extension” terms regarding communicating research. • Audience also depends on the “issue”. Sometimes it is the legislators, federal agencies, funders or private industry and advocacy organizations. Private industry will look to the region to see if there is workforce support in the area. • Extension communicates down to the farmer level, but that isn’t what we need to do be doing. • We also have Internal audiences. Does our President/Provost etc. know what we do? • Communicators need to be convinced why they should work for the “region” instead of just their institutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes our southern region unique? What commonalities are there where we can collectively do powerful things? • What is the role of the regional communications group? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help us come up with some best practices • Show how to communicate to university administration. • Create templates for a concise messaging. • Communicate consistent message across the region. • We don’t have a place for stories to live. Is it time to develop external website? • What is the potential impact for the communicators coming together? • Role as a state liaison to the regional level. • Could use Multistate projects as topics to develop collaborative stories. • What resources are available to move the SRCC forward? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we are asking our communicators to just promote the stories they are already doing (minor tweaks to show regional focus) that is one thing. If we are asking them to develop entirely new content JUST for the regional effort it is another. • Could fund travel so they could meet or fund the development of projects (software needs etc.) and allow them time to do these things.

- Directors are supportive of giving the communicators resources, but **Communicators need to tell what the needs are...**
 - The Directors would like some idea of the financial needs and time commitments along with expected deliverables.
 - If we are going to invest additional resources, it needs to show value. We often put a lot of effort into things that we don't get much out of.
- Some communicators are more engaged in the regional effort than others. To engage others, ask each communicator to lead one story each year (collaborative story). This will help spread the focus around and give each institution a chance to shine.
- Recommends as many Directors as possible to attend the communication meeting.
 - Should there be a couple who act as the lead spokesman and the others attend?

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- Cotton Assessment Discussion** – Gary Thompson (see PowerPoint slides and agenda brief)
- Gary presented the Cotton Assessment Report as requested during the Executive Session at the Spring 2022 meeting.
 - The report contained the history of the assessments for the CWN and CottonGen, emails from CWN users, examples of other public winter nurseries, and update slides for CottonGen from Dorrie Main at WSU (a written report was requested but not delivered).
 - Henry Fadamiro (Texas A&M) had conversations with Soil and Crop Sciences faculty, and they value and use the resources.
 - Ryan Kurtz at Cotton Inc. stated in an email that funds from SAAESD are crucial to keeping the CWN running.
 - Cotton Inc is the individual checkoff. Why do we provide additional support?
 - The CWN is run very efficiently and is a bargain. It is a good structure.
 - Separate the two components (CWN & CottonGen) of the assessment when discussing continued funding (all agreed).
 - It's not an all-or-nothing... we can decide to decrease funding and not just do away with it.
 - The answer to why we are supporting cotton and no other commodities at this level needs to be more than "it is historical".
 - Extension uses these resources too.
 - **Further discussion will take place at the Spring 2023 meeting during the budget session.**
 - **Homework- (everyone): ask "what is the value and what does the CWN and CottonGen bring to our individual stations."**
 - **Gary will have a conversation with Don Jones to assess impacts on the two respective cotton assessments.**
 - **Gary will put together several budget models to discuss at the Spring 2023 meeting**
 - If funding is used for different purpose, need to remove the "levels" and equalize assessment across our institutions.

	<p>Weather Data Systems – Nathan McKinney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather Data collection archival and accessibility- Arkansas has 12 places that collect weather data, and each has slightly different hardware. Some stations post data online. All weather data is funded out of local M&O. This model is not working for Arkansas. What are better practices? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSU Mesonet (mesonet.org) is exceptional and the detail is phenomenal. Started as a marriage between OSU and OU with support from the governor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Widely used by faculty. ▪ There is a fire-hazard component that is updated hourly. • NCSU the state climate office located on campus in the College of Science. They have a site on every research station. Data is collected automatically. Faculty use it all the time. Funding is supported by ag, extension and others. • Virginia Tech pays a fee to access other weather stations. Stakeholders want to know this data. There is an app for each experiment station and stakeholders can access each of those apps. Cost is ~\$100K per year. • UT is in the process looking at weather station upgrade. SDS Weather is company that they are going with. Hardware and software. Central administration will cover the software. Each station will cover the hardware. • Extension in Clemson requested funds from the state for at least one station in every county and to hire one person to manage the data. Addition stations at the RECs. Funded by the state, initiated by Extension. • LSU the state climate office is on campus but not in the college of Ag. Weather stations at most of the experiment stations. Looking at the mesonet system. • What is the gold standard? Recommended to look at compatibility that exists in your state. Use compatible databases within the state. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campbell and Hobo. Campbell is more expensive but a little better quality and not as user friendly.
8	<p>S-AHS Data Sharing – Hongwei Xin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Sharing Committee will meet again on October 5th. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial discussion from SAAESD members was supportive. Key will be data definitions to obtain meaningful information. Add the following in addition to expenditure data previously included in the document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research faculty FTEs. • Number of peer-reviewed journal publications. • Is this worth doing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic group is not very supportive as they already have FAEIS. • Extension had mixed reviews. • AES: is this useful data TO YOU? Yes, it is useful. • Annual Salary Survey - use and expand upon. • Information on graduate students and postdocs might be useful. PhD students per faculty FTE for example.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define “faculty” as the ability to be a PI on a proposal? • 3-4 bullets for definitions in addition to text. <p>Send any thoughts to Hongwei by October 5th.</p>
11	<p>Resolutions – Paula Agudelo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allen Moore • David White • Saied Mostaghimi • Rob Gilbert, as outgoing SAAESD Chair
12	<p>Nominating Committee Report – Paula Agudelo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 ESS Chair from the Southern Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin thinking about who would like to serve. Need to identify someone by the Spring meeting. • SAAESD Chair-elect - Call for nominations and election <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomination of Henry Fadamiro (Texas A&M) with unanimous vote.
13	<p>Passing of the Gavel – Paula Agudelo, SAAESD Chair 2022-2023</p>
	<p>Adjourned the meeting</p>