

# SAAESD Spring Business Meeting 2024 notes

Lexington, Kentucky, March 26-28, 2024

**SAAESD Attendees:** Usman Adamu, Paula Agudelo, John Andrae, Jeffrey Dean, Darrin Dodds, Jerry Fankhauser, Gregory Goins, Kurt Guidry, Amir Ibrahim, Steve Lommel, Nathan McKinney, JF Meullenet, David Monks, Cindy Morley, Tim Rials, Michael Salassi, Scott Senseman, Nathan Slaton, Bob Stougaard, Michael Stout, Harshavardhan Thippareddi, Gary Thompson, Scott Willard, Hongwei Xin, Amy Grunden, Kang Xia, Lesley Oliver, Tom Hannah, Jamie Matthews

**Liaisons and Guests:** Gregory Goins, Marthious Clavier, Frances Gould, John Green, Lyndall Stout, Kevin Kephart, Bob Godfrey

## Action Items:

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agenda-<b>Approved by Acclimation</b></li><li>• Minutes from September 25/26, 2023-<b>Approved by Acclimation</b></li><li>• Interim Actions <b>Approved by acclimation</b></li></ul>
2	<p><b>Multistate Research Committee Report</b> – David Monks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MRC updates and seeking volunteers for multiple projects.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Amy Grunden- SERA17</b></li><li>• <b>Loren Fischer- S1085, SCC33</b></li></ul></li><li>• 2024 Award Nomination for Excellence in Multistate Research- <b>TBD after MRC Meeting</b></li><li>• S9 update &amp; budget presentation –<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Vote unanimous to approve budget recommendation.</b></li></ul></li></ul>
	<p><b>Executive Session Debrief</b> –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Approved a name change</b> from SAAESD to agInnovation South with a vote of 12-1 in favor. Official name will continue as Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and will do business as agInnovation South.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Since this impacts everyone, we will seek consensus from the entire membership before implementing.</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>Approved-</b> higher salary increases than were included in the proposed budget pending approval of University of Arkansas administration.</li><li>• <b>Approved FY 24-25 budget</b> with the recommended changes pending approval of salary increase.</li></ul>

## Agenda and Discussion

**Tuesday, March 26 1:30 – 5:00**

1	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b> – Hongwei Xin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review/Approve Agenda<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Approve by Acclimation</b></li></ul></li><li>• Review/Approve minutes from September 25/26, 2023<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Approve by Acclimation</b></li></ul></li><li>• Approve Interim Actions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Approve by acclimation</b></li></ul></li><li>• Meeting Schedules (<a href="#">See Slides</a>)</li><li>•</li></ul>
---	---

2	<p><b>Multistate Research Committee Report</b> – David Monks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MRC updates (<a href="#">See Slides</a>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking volunteers for multiple projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amy Grunden- SERA17</li> <li>• Loren Fischer- S1085, SCC33</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2024 Award Nomination for Excellence in Multistate Research- TBD after MRC meets in person.</li> <li>• S9 update &amp; budget presentation – Bob Stougaard (<a href="#">See Slides</a>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vote unanimous to approve budget recommendation.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• NRSP3 renewal discussion – Kang Xia (<a href="#">See Slides</a>)</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>IR-4/NRSP-4 Update</b> – Jerry Baron (<a href="#">See Slides</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be asking NRSP RC to consider proposal of instead of cutting \$75K from next renewal (as was recommended last year), we should increase by \$95K.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Liaison Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S-SARE Report – Jeff Jordan (<a href="#">See Slides</a>)</li> <li>• NIFA Report – Kevin Kephart <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NRS financial module in development. The due date is postponed pending new module review.</li> <li>○ LGU should be ensuring that all involved in financial reporting should have access to NRS and are collecting data</li> <li>○ NIFA plans to provide users with 60 days for data entry once the financial module is live. PARS team will offer training in the module.</li> <li>○ Grants modernization initiative- switching to what NIH uses. Will be into FY 25 for development. Will implement the ERA on a pilot within certain programs within NIFA.</li> <li>○ Please make sure the official NIFA identifier is used in publications/press releases/posters etc.</li> <li>○ Civil Rights Reviews- There is a new EEO officer- Vidal Gray. He will answer all questions about this going forward.</li> <li>○ MacIntire-Stennis errors made in calculations. Some received less and some received more than they should. Those corrections will be made. If you have questions, get in touch with Kevin.</li> <li>○ Similar errors were made in calculations for Evans Allen funds.</li> <li>○ Presidents proposed FY25 budget – Good news on the 2.8% increase. Includes \$29.8M increase in AFRI, \$8M increase in 1994 institutions, \$2M increase in SARE, \$1M for RFA. Reduction side- \$2M reduction in MacIntire-Stennis. \$24M overall increase for Extension funds. 11 programs targeted for elimination. Hatch level funding.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Liaison Reports continued</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARD Report – Gregory Goins (see Agenda Brief) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Farm Bill priorities- submitted to BAA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reauthorization of Evans Allen. Looking for tuition and fee remission. This is a hinderance for a lot of their students.</li> <li>▪ Reauthorization of 1890 Extension program with an increase to 40% from 20%.</li> <li>▪ Reauthorization of Centers of Excellence.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ 1890 Scholars program- allows students with high needs to get a scholarship.</li> <li>○ If you aren't on the 1890 newsletter, let Alton Thompson know.</li> <li>○ \$100 M ask for infrastructure funding.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SRDC Report – John Green (See Agenda Brief)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SRDC Plan of Work included in Agenda Briefs.</li> <li>○ Last year, SRDC did a study on Collaboration that Works in Extension between 1890 and 1862 institutions. This was a survey followed up by interviews. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eager to do a similar study with Research.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Heirs Property, Broadband and Digital Access are collaborations they want to highlight. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SERA49 started this year dealing with Heirs Property</li> <li>▪ Broadband- There is an AFRI program to develop training in a Digital Volunteer Program (like the Master Gardeners program). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves collaboration with ECOP</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SRDC. Housed at Mississippi State during that entire time.</li> </ul> <p><b>ESCOPE Committee Reports:</b> (written reports included in Agenda Briefs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget &amp; Legislative Committee Report – Steve Lommel</li> <li>• Communication &amp; Marketing Committee Report – JF Meullenet</li> <li>• Science &amp; Technology Committee Report – Nathan McKinney</li> <li>• Diversity Catalyst Committee Report – Jamie Larson</li> <li>• Cotton Winter Nursery Report – Don Jones</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Director Topics and Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaborative projects to build 1862-1890 bridges in the region</b> – Kang Xia (<a href="#">See Slides</a>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delmarva Land Grant Institution Cooperative Seed Grant Program- between 1862 and 1890 institutions.</li> <li>○ During the pandemic this disappeared. They would like to revitalize it.</li> <li>○ Does anyone have a project that they can duplicate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The SRDC survey would be a good one.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Hongwei Xin- what you have outlined is on track. The president has been wanting to collaborate more with TSU and UT. Expanding into the research arena. In the past 5 years, \$40M project and \$60M impending. 2 Joint research summits have occurred and Tim Rials organizing a 3<sup>rd</sup> one.</li> <li>○ Tim Rials- homed in a couple of specific topics and aligned faculty from each institution who have natural collaboration opportunity. Hope to begin to see additional collaborative projects. Third workshop will focus on natural resources which is a priority to grow resources for TSU. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The key is University level support. Starts with President and VPR. Strongly supported, top-down effort.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ How to get the attention of upper administration? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Other campuses have similar issues. They need to recognize the footprint that Ag has.</li> <li>▪ Hongwei Xin- We can't afford to treat Ag as a stepchild. Ag is the largest industry in the state.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Greg Goins- A&amp;T- to do a joint project off campus you have to work jointly on your campus. Must be nimble. Who is getting the credit? That is hard for joint projects. They created a Center to help make things easier to join with 1862. Helps with faculty buy-in.</li> <li>○ Amy Grunden- what is the long-term goal? What do you want to build towards that has sufficient funding that encourages faculty involvement. That \$20K is not enough inducement for faculty to want to write a grant. If there is sufficient funding to allow a faculty member to generate data, that would be useful. \$100K budget? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Common goal to build a pathway to success</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Steve Lommel- have had some unsuccessful attempts working with other institutions. It is usually obvious that there is no history of collaboration. It</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

isn't authentic. Need to build those collaborations and work together. Must have trust. All the back-offices must work together. They need to know who they are working with and trust each other.

- Must be led by faculty. Need champions.
- Hongwei Xin-TN has had collaborations going on before they created the summit.
  - Structure can take forever to get a subcontract processed.
- John Green-Extension PLN network helps groups work together.
- Usman Adamu- the airport meeting with ARD and SAAESD was very important to start developing relationships. Get together, get in a room and begin networking.
- **Research/Teaching balance in animal sciences** – Hongwei Xin
  - What would you do at your institutions?
  - Steve Lommel- The issue for him is Research/Extension and less with Research/Teaching
    - NCSU-Non-tenure track is the route a lot are going. Make promotion through the ranks an option too.
    - NCSU-Where it gets complicated is interdisciplinary teaching- who gets credit?
  - Graduate side- doing more team teaching. Cutting edge is often interdisciplinary. Financially assigning credit as well as Tenure.
  - Budget Allocation Model
- **Mike Salassi- out of the blue, LSU ag stations got subpoenas in relation to the use of paraquat.** Did anyone else get the same thing?
  - The deadline for attorneys to send out request was in March is why so many went out at once. Legal councils for many institutions all met to decide what to do.
  - They wanted data from 1964- present in most cases.
  - LSU looking for everything digitized and put in a file. All paper files they are saying the lawyers can come and look at it.
    - GA-The subpoena wasn't delivered correctly since it wasn't delivered in person.
  - Their office is spending an inordinate amount of time pulling the information together.
    - NCSU- their legal office is pulling all that information together, not the Ag office. They go into university records to find the information.
  - ED's in other regions report that they didn't hear anything from their folks. Seems to be an issue with the Southern Region schools.
  - VT- any proposal will go through a check going forward to make sure the companies aren't blacklisted.
  - Take-away-Remind faculty to always cover their bases so they can defend that faculty are doing things in the appropriate way.
- **Florida is in a state of transition-** Will be sending some documents to Cindy on "seed funding for faculty development". Would like input on your thoughts. This is in relation to start up packages. Is internal seed funding route more effective than front loading a standard start up package? Seed funding has been effective in FL.
  - How does that work with recruiting faculty? FL has seen that some faculty are challenged to spend that start-up money effectively within the first three years.
  - Florida has a combination of start-up funding-\$150-250 start up packages currently. Some have been higher for AI.
- **Florida- Please send your org chart** to John Davis or Jerry Fankhouser. They are in the process of restructuring and there have been some comments about the number of

administrators. Fact Finding to see how the Experiment Station Offices are structured. Looking to effectively structuring our workload.

- **Circular Bio Economy Systems (CBS)**- Strategic Roadmap team has identified a regional initiative. A small group thought a virtual workshop would be a great start. This model worked for AI. Start to decide what we need to do on a regional basis.
  - Small group has identified some leaders from NCSU, VT, FL
  - All agreed that a regional effort would be effective but linked to the national effort. CBS is very local.
  - ASABE (engineers) is conducting a series of workshops on CBS.
  - To be effective will need to focus not just on ASABE, but on a broader level.
  - These ideas jumpstarted in Europe. Would be a good idea to involve some of them.
  - CASA Bio came about because of an Executive Order. CBS was a small part of it. Will take a while for this to be impactful since it is so large.
  - Secretary Vilsacks white board talk- there is a video of that on the APLU website. There are a lot of thoughts about how these puzzle pieces fit together.
  - The virtual workshop looking to be in May, but that will possibly change.
    - Who should we be contacting from your institutions to take part in this?
- **SRDC Collaboration discussion-**
  - The SRDC conducted a survey and follow-up study for Extension and AEA. Was funded from a grant from the Walmart Foundation. Should we do something similar with Research and ARD?
  - The Extension document hasn't been out long enough to judge if it is a value.
    - We need to reach out to our Extension counterparts to see the merit.
  - Gary to ask Doug if there would be any funding from APLU to support this.
  - Would we use it and if so, how?
  - Can we use the Extension report for us or are the issues too different? No, it is too different.
  - Is the report being socialized with our communication network?
  - We are not voting to accept this right now. To move forward, questions to answer:
    - Need feedback from extension group.
    - Have a plan on what would we do with the implementation.
      - Example, at the Mini Land Grant in 2025, have a report on the findings. Organizing a panel that will include examples of collaborations would be valuable.
  - If ARD moves forward and approves funding this, we should as well. SRDC has offered to also contribute funding.
- **AgInnovation South** - Discussion of changing the name from SAAESD to agInnovation South was approved with a vote of 12-1 in favor. Official name will continue as Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and will do business as agInnovation South.
  - Post-meeting discussions made it clear that this should be brought before the full membership for further discussion and vote.

Thursday, March 28 8:30 – 11:00

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See handout- SRCC Update for Spring meeting (<a href="#">See document</a>)</li> </ul>
7	<b>Executive Directors Report</b> – Gary Thompson ( <a href="#">See Slides</a> )
8	<b>SAAESD Budget Presentation</b> – JF Meullenet ( <a href="#">See Slides</a> )
9	<p><b>Nominating Committee</b> – Scott Senseman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAAESD Excellence in Leadership Award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Congratulations Steve Lommel, NCSU</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SAAESD Agricultural Research Innovation Award of Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Congratulations Michael Strand, UGA</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Susan E. Duncan Meritorious Service Award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Congratulations David Monks, NCSU</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Resolutions</b> – Lesley Oliver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you for your years of Service! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nathan McKinney, AR</li> <li>○ Angus Catchot, MS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Break</b>
10	<p><b>Executive Session- ALL COOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FY 22 SAAESD Budget Discussion and Vote</li> <li>• Executive Director Performance Review</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Executive Session Debrief</b> – Hongwei Xin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Directors are pleased with ED’s performance. Directors would like to include more best practices type sessions moving forward and recommend Gary be more insistent when seeking input since everyone gets busy.</li> <li>○ Directors approved a higher salary increase for both Gary and Cindy than what was included in the budget. JF will seek approval from the UA administration.</li> <li>○ Directors approved the budget with the recommended changes to salary increases.</li> </ul>
	<b>Adjourn Business Meeting</b> – Hongwei Xin