

NERA

Accomplishments Report of the Office of the Executive Director

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

NERA Operations

- Administration of NERA business practices.
- Cooperated and collaborated with business offices of NERA members.
- Regularly updated content on the NERA website.
- Kept up-to-date contact lists for NERA News, NERA Listserv, and NERA website directory.
- Wrote and delivered regular bi-weekly NERA News, all archived on the NERA website.
- Maintained X (formerly Twitter) presence for NERA (@nerasaes), promoted institutional, regional, and national content.
- Continued improvement of operational efficiency.
- Closed out FY '24 NERA financials; financials were aligned with the approved budget.
- Developed the FY'25 NERA budget (approved by NERA on June 28, 2024).

Regional Activities

- NIMSS, served as RSAs. Oversaw all NIMSS functions in the Northeast. Successfully routed all project renewals recommended by the MAC and approved by NERA.
- Conducted regional and national NIMSS training sessions in partnership with other regional associations via Zoom.
- Held one-on-one NIMSS training sessions on an as-needed basis.
- Guided final approval of multistate research projects was ascribed solely to the region.
- Conducted quick-response regional surveys to facilitate NERA Business (voting), gather feedback on priorities, and inventory communications resources.
- Supported the MAC and MAC chair in planning, developing agendas, compiling materials, and running MAC Zoom conferences held on August 9, 2023, March 15, 2024, and May 20, 2024.
- Assisted multiple multistate technical committees working through issues associated with requests to write, project re-write/revisions, project reports, and project peer reviews.
- Communicated regularly with the NERA Executive Committee on issues of importance to NERA.
- Assisted the NERA chair in planning, developing agendas, compiling materials, and executing NERA Zoom calls held on August 10, 2023, and December 7, 2023.
- Assisted the NERA chair in planning, developing agendas, compiling materials, and executing face to face NERA meetings held on September 25-26, 2023 (Grand Rapids, MI), March 25-27, 2024 (Washington, DC) and June 5, 2024 (Providence, RI).
- Continued development of the [Northeast Agenda](#) through collaboration with NEED and an external contract with PIVOT Creative and Consulting.
- Continued to hold conversations with Northeast communicators about “Creating a Regional Voice”. Led NERA and other regions to support conference workshops at the Association for Communications Excellence (ACE) to engage regional communicators in the development of a “national voice” (*From Many Voices, One*).
- Crafted nomination for the NE Leadership Award. Coordinated and assisted in selection of

nominee.

- Continued leadership of the development of an urban agriculture multistate research project. (The project grew from a brainstorming session supported by NEWRA at the University of the District of Columbia in May 2023.)
- Supported the 2024 face-to-face Northeast Joint (NEED/NERA/CARET) Summer Session (Providence, RI) planning committee including drafting versions of the meeting program and securing speakers. During the meeting, served as speaker and moderator.
- Participated in monthly conference calls with NE Climate Hub/University partnership.
- Assisted NERA Directors on an “as needed” basis.
- Worked closely with Ali Mitchell Dunigan to coordinate activities of NERA and NEED.
- Served as AA for NECC1901 *Integrating Genomics and Breeding for Improved Aquaculture Production of Molluscan Shellfish*, NRSP9 *National Animal Nutrition Program*, and NECC2312 *Northeast Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing*.
- Served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center (NRAC). Provided guidance in the overall operations and mission of NRAC.
- Served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD). Provided guidance in the overall operations and mission of NERCRD.
- Invited Keynote speaker, NAPA 2024 4th Biennial International Scientific Conference, Baltimore, MD, May 24, 2024. Topic: “Can Agriculture Save the World?”
- Invited Keynote Speaker, Cornell Agritech Symposium, Geneva, NY, June 12, 2024. Topic: “Seeding Success: The Legacy and the Future of agInnovation”.
- Attended Northeast Management Officers (NEMO) meetings on December 4-5, 2024 (virtual) and April 8, 2024 (Wilmington, DE). Served on planning committee for NEMO engagements and communicated regularly with northeast Land-grant Administrative Officers throughout the year. Hosted and maintained a web page for NEMO.

National Activities

- Distributed national messages and calls to action on behalf of the agInnovation Chair Matt Wilson (2023).
- Supported agInnovation chair Matt Wilson in conducting and keeping record of the agInnovation Business Meeting, Fall 2023.
- Provided SurveyMonkey support to agInnovation standing committees and BAA standing committees on an as-needed basis including gathering feedback on priorities and gauging willingness to travel and meet face-to-face.
- Served as the Executive Vice Chair to agInnovation Chair Matt Wilson.
 - Met weekly with agInnovation Chair.
 - Supported ESCOP (now agInnovation Executive Committee) Chair’s Advisory Committee (CAC), contributed to monthly CAC Zoom calls.
 - Developed agendas and contributed to agInnovation meetings (Zoom and face-to-face) and agInnovation Executive Committee meetings (Zoom and face-to-face).
 - Assisted in the implementation of the priorities of the Section and the initiatives of the Chair.
- BAA Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC); served as the agInnovation Executive Director Administrative Representative and Executive Vice Chair. Prepared

monthly reports for agInnovation CAC calls and agenda briefs for the agInnovation and ECOP/CES meetings. Provided strategic direction to the CMC.

- agInnovation Diversity Catalyst Committee; served as the Executive Vice Chair. Assisted in scheduling, planning, and agenda development for full committee Zoom calls on July 27, 2023, August 24, 2023, September 28, 2023, October 26, 2023, December 14, 2023, January 25, 2024, February 22, 2024, April 25, 2024, and June 27, 2024. Developed strategies for integrating the recommendations of the Diversity Catalyst Committee into the “system.” Presented the agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award. Conducted the year eight Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award review; identified recipients. Collated and developed report in response the agInnovation Call to Action. Assisted agInnovation by providing regular, systematic, and strategic diversity and inclusion training for directors.
- Coordinated promotion and hosting of “The Lived Experience” agInnovation Diversity Catalyst Committee webinar series. Webinars were held on November 16, 2024 (Jennifer Ballinger, USFS) and February 24, 2024 (Jackie Mosley, University of Arkansas).
- National Impact Database: served on the committee dedicated to revising and reviving the National Impact Database. Assisted with transition of the NIDB as a free-standing agInnovation-CES committee to a subcommittee of the CMC.
- Participated and contributed to National Multistate Coordinating Committee (now called APLU/ED&A Team meetings.) Coordinated and collaborated with regional executive directors from CES and agInnovation.
- Met monthly with the regional agricultural experiment station Executive Directors and the Director of NIFA.
- Met monthly with Ali Mitchell Dunigan, NEED Executive Director, and NIFA liaisons, Rubella Goswami, Susan Moser, and Kevin Kephart.
- Met monthly with regional association administrative staff.
- Assisted and supported other agInnovation committees including Science and Technology, National Research Support Project Review Committee, and Budget and Legislative.
- Assisted agInnovation in ongoing deliberations on Climate Change. Served on the Core Group of the National Climate Change Roadmap. This group oversaw the nomination of the working group charged with performing the Horizon Scan and drafting the national roadmap.
- Served on the core team that drafted the agInnovation 2025-2035 Research Roadmap. This effort outlines a bold and innovative research strategy that seeks to an added investment of \$1.9 billion annually to support agricultural R&D.
- Supported agInnovation ad hoc Ag Research Infrastructure committee.
- Drafted changes in the ESS/ESCOP (currently in revision to agInnovation) Rules of Operation to include a new standing committee, the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee oversees the agInnovation budget and the TD Wealth Account. Served as the executive vice chair for the committee. Oversaw the drafting and approval process for an agInnovation Budget and Investment strategy, which was approved on June 28, 2024.
- Served as manager, webmaster, and primary point of contact for all agInnovation digital assets and websites. Oversaw ESCOP website (an internally facing website) and the new agInnovation website; provided institutional, regional, and national content to both.
- Worked with communications staff from all regions to gather stories for the agInnovation website.

- Supported BAA, agInnovation, and regional offices in response to the APLU/Lewis-Burke “Unified Ask (increase to the NIFA budget to support the six priority areas: Hatch, Evans-Allen, Smith-Lever, 1890’s Extension, McIntire-Stennis, and AFRI) and the Research Facilities Act (investment in agricultural facilities at capacity eligible institutions, including 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions.)
- Participated in Joint COPS meetings, BAA membership meetings and BAA Policy Board of Directors meetings.
- Served as co-Chair with Ali Mitchell Dunigan of the New Administrators’ Orientation program in Kansas City, July 2024.
- Signatory on behalf of NERA to multiple letters supporting initiatives that best serve NERA and the ag experiment station system.
- Attended NERAOC 2024 in Wilmington, DE. Co-delivered a NIMSS session in partnership with NCRA and agInnovation-West. Represented the agInnovation brand in common spaces and throughout the event.
- Monitored NIFA programs through teleconferences and webinars including developments on the NIFA budget, competitive grants program, reporting requirements, and Hatch MRF.
- Participated in the ongoing NIFA Research Working Group, representing the Regional Associations and NIMSS system.
- Held monthly meetings with regional association counterparts and NIMSS technical support team at Clemson University Youth Learning Institute.
- Served as the Administrative Adviser for the NRSP1 review committee (David Leibovitz) and engaged in quarterly meetings. Participated in re-drafting of the NRSP1 rules of operation.
- Continued to participate in the agInnovation rebranding initiative. Rebrand webinars were held on September 7, 2023 (AES faculty/staff/leadership) and October 19, 2023 (Communications professionals).
- Served on the LGU2U Collaboration Coffees Steering Committee with colleagues from research, extension, and NIFA. The LGU2U initiative is intended to enhance partnership between Land-grant Universities and NIFA.
- Served on the agInnovation Nonprofit 501(c)(3) Board of Directors and was elected Treasurer, effective May 28, 2024.
- Facilitated all operational transactions on behalf of agInnovation, serving as sole liaison between agInnovation vendors and APLU (payment processor).

Travel

- Joint COPS, Kansas City, KS, July 18-20, 2023
- agInnovation Annual Meeting, Grand Rapids, MI, September 24-27, 2023
- Northeast Climate Hub Meeting, Matamoras, PA, October 16-18, 2023
- National Multistate Coordinating Committee, November 28-November 30, 2023
- Investing In America (White House Visit), Washington, DC, January 10, 2024
- NRAC Board of Directors Meeting, Baltimore, MD, January 17-18, 2024
- NERA Spring Meeting, Washington, DC, March 25-27, 2024
- National Extension and Research Administrative Officers’ Meeting (NERAOC), Wilmington, DE, April 7-11, 2024
- NCFAR Board of Directors and Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, May 6-7, 2024

- NAPA 2024 4th Biennial International Scientific Conference, Baltimore, MD, May 24-25, 2024
- NEED/NERA/CARET Joint Summer Meeting, Providence, RI, June 3-5, 2024
- Cornell Agritech Symposium, Geneva, NY, June 11-12, 2024