

NERA

Accomplishments Report of the Office of the Executive Director

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

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 Twitter (now X) presence for NERA (@nerasaes), promoted institutional, regional, and national content.
- Continued improvement of operational efficiency.
- David Leibovitz participated in and completed his LEAD21 (Class 18) educational opportunity.
- Secured promotion for David Leibovitz, from PSA grade 9 to PSA grade 11.
- Closed out FY '23 NERA financials; these were aligned with the approved budget.
- Developed the FY'24 NERA budget.

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.
- Second full year that 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 December 12, 2022, February 7, 2023, April 3, 2023, and May 31, 2023.
- 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 December 15, 2022, and August 10, 2023.
- Initiated development of the NE Agenda. Contracted PIVOT Creative and Consulting to assist the creations, development, and drafting of the [Northeast Agenda](#).
- Continued to hold conversations with Northeast communicators about “Creating a Regional Voice”. Led NERA and other regions to support a post conference workshop at the Association for Communications Excellence (ACE) to engage regional communicators in the development of a regional communications network.

- Crafted nomination for the NE Leadership Award. Coordinated and assisted in selection of nominee.
- Planned and assisted in executing a planning meeting for the development of an urban agriculture multistate research project. The workshop was hosted by the University of the District of Columbia.
- Supported the 2023 face-to-face Northeast Joint (NEED/NERA/CARET) Summer Session (Annapolis, MD) 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 NECC1700 *Equine Clinical Studies*, NE1501 *Harnessing Chemical Ecology to Address Agricultural Pest and Pollinator Priorities*, NRSP9 *National Animal Nutrition Program*, and NECC1812 *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. Hosted NERCRD annual meeting in Newport, RI, October 27-28, 2022.
- Worked in collaboration with Ali Mitchell Dunigan (NEED) on closing out the NE regional ecosystem services landscape evaluation. The report developed by NEED/NERA supported post docs Dr. Alicia Coleman and Dr. Mario Machado is available here, “[Ecosystem Services in Working Lands Practice and Policy of the U.S. Northeast: Successes, Challenges, and Opportunities for Producers and Extension](#)”. We are planning a follow-up educational session in conjunction with the Northeast Climate Hub.

National Activities

- Distributed national messages and calls to action on behalf of the ESS/ESCOP Chairs Chris Pritsos (2021-22) and Matt Wilson (2022-23).
- ESS/CES-NEDA Annual Meeting Planning; supported ESS chair Chris Pritsos in monthly planning Zoom calls, development of agendas, securing speakers, and associated activities. Provided on-site assistance during the meeting at Baltimore, MD.
- Supported ESS/ESCOP chair Chris Pritsos in conducting and keeping record of the ESS Business Meeting, Fall 2022.
- Provided SurveyMonkey support to ESS and National 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 ESS (now 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 ESS Executive Director Administrative Representative and Executive Vice Chair. Assisted in scheduling, planning, and agenda development for full committee Zoom calls. Prepared monthly reports for ESCOP CAC calls and agenda briefs for the ESCOP/ESS and ECOP/CES meetings. Provided strategic direction to the CMC. Crafted and maintained a list of BAA institutional communicators at LGUs across the country on behalf of the CMC and BAA.
- ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee; served as the Executive Vice Chair. Assisted in scheduling, planning, and agenda development for full committee Zoom calls on October 25, 2022, November 22, 2022, January 24, 2023, February 23, 2023, March 23, 2023, May 25, 2023, June 22, 2023, July 27, 2023, and August 24, 2023. Developed strategies for integrating the recommendations of the Diversity Catalyst Committee into the “system.” Participated in diversity and inclusion excellence training. Presented the ESS Diversity and Inclusion Award. Conducted the year six Diversity and Inclusion Award review; identified recipients. Collated and developed report in response the ESS DEI Call to Action. Assisted ESS by providing regular, systematic, and strategic diversity and inclusion training for directors. Crafted and maintained a list of diversity, equity, and inclusion personnel at LGUs across the country on behalf of the DCC and ECOP DEI Program Action Team.
- 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 ESS-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 ESS.
- Collaborated with Robin Shepard, NCCEA Executive Director to plan and participate in meetings in Washington, DC on behalf of CES chair Bev Durgan and ESS chair Matt Wilson. Offices visited included APLU: Doug Steele, Vice President, Food, Agriculture, & Natural Resources; USDA: Sanah Baig, Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics; Hubert Hamer, Administrator, NASS; Spiro Stefanou, Administrator, ERS; and Josh Stull, Senior Advisor, Stakeholder Engagement and Congressional Affairs; 2022 AAAS Charles Valentine Riley Memorial Breakfast: Host Dan Robison, Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Iowa State; moderator Andy LaVigne, CEO, American Seed Trade Association (ASTA); panelists Robert Bonnie, Undersecretary of Agriculture for Farm Production and Conversation; Randy Feenstra, House of Representatives, Iowa 4th District; and Dave Gagner, Senior Director, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; Lewis-Burke Associates: Bridget Krieger, Senior Principal; Elizabeth Stulberg, Principal; and Christian Laridaen, Senior Associate; NCFAR: Laura Wood Peterson, Executive Director, National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research; FFAR: Saharah Moon Chapotin, Executive Director; Sarah Goldberg, Communications and Legislative Affairs Director; and Julie Reynes, Chief Operating Officer
- Met monthly with the regional agricultural experiment station Executive Directors and the Director of NIFA.
- Met monthly with Ali Mitchell Dunigan, NEED Executive Director, NIFA Chief of Staff, Bill Hoffman and Northeast NIFA liaison, Mark Carter. Continued to meet with NIFA leadership following NIFA liaison changes to Rubella Goswami and Kevin Kephart.
- Met monthly with regional association administrative staff.

- Assisted and supported other ESCOP Committees including Science and Technology, National Research Support Project Review Committee, and Budget and Legislative.
- Assisted ESS/ESCOP 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.
- Supported ESS/ESCOP ad hoc Ag Research Infrastructure committee.
- Drafted changes in the ESS/ESCOP Rules of Operation to include a new standing committee, the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee oversees the ESS budget and the TD Wealth Account. Served as the executive vice chair for the committee.
- Supported BAA, ESCOP, 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.
- Drafted response on behalf of the Experiment Station Section to the USDA on issues associated with the federal COVID-19 vaccination mandates.
- Drafted and submitted comments in collaboration with NIFA in response to NIFA Listens (November 28, 2022).
- Signatory on behalf of NERA to multiple letters supporting initiatives that best serve NERA and the ag experiment station system.
- Oversaw ESCOP website; provided support for adding content.
- NERAOC; NERA represents the Experiment Station Section on the planning committee.
- NIFA Programs; monitored through teleconferences and webinars 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.
- Worked with Experiment Station Directors on the rebranding initiative of the Experiment Station Section to agInnovation.
- Served as the webmaster and primary point of contact for the agInnovation website. Made edits to the website as needed, promoted institutional, regional, and national content.
- Held monthly meetings with regional association counterparts and NIMSS technical support team at Clemson University Youth Learning Institute.

Travel

- ESS/CES Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, September 26-28, 2022.
- LEAD21 Class 18 Session 2, Englewood, CO, October 3-6, 2022.
- NERCRD Board of Directors Meeting, Newport, RI, October 27-28, 2022
- NMCC and ESS/CES chair visits, November 28- December 1, 2022.
- NRAC Board of Directors Meeting, Baltimore, MD, January 17-18, 2023.
- LEAD21 Class 18 Session 3, Alexandria, VA February 20-24, 2023.
- NERA Spring Meeting, Washington, DC, March 15-16, 2023.
- NCFAR Board of Directors and Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, April 17-18, 2023.

- UMass Cranberry Station Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Wareham, MA, April 21, 2023.
- Urban Agriculture Multistate Research Project Planning Meeting, University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC, May 22-23, 2023.
- Joint Summer Meeting, Annapolis, MD, June 5-7, 2023.
- Association for Communication Excellence, Asheville, NC, June 11-13,2023.
- West Virginia University Reymann Memorial Research, Education and Outreach Center, June 13, 2023.