**ESCOP Science & Technology – CALL MINUTES  
March 23, 2015 @ 4 pm ET  
215-446-3656, ACCESS CODE: 1442561**

**Committee Members:**

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Chair:** John Russin (SAAESD) | | | |  |  |  | | **Delegates:** |  |  | | Larry Curtis (WAAESD) | | | | David Thompson (WAAESD) | | | | Joe Colletti (NCRA) | | | | Deb Hamernik (NCRA) | | | | Cameron Faustman (NERA) | | | | Adel Shirmohammadi (NERA) | | | | Nathan McKinney (SAAESD) | | | | Harald Scherm (SAAESD) | | | | Teferi Tsegaye (ARD) | | | | Marakis Alvarez (ARD)\* | | | |  |  |  | | **Executive Vice-Chair** | | | | Jeff Jacobsen (NCRA) | | | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Liaisons:** | | | | | Terry Nelsen (ERS) | | | | | Cliff Gabriel (OSTP) Adrianna Hewings (ARS) | | | | | Frank Zalom (Pest Mgmt Subcom) | | | | | Edwin Price (ICOP) | | | | | Scott Loveridge (Social Sci Subcom) | | | | | Bob Holland (NIFA) | | | | | Muquarrab Qureshi (NIFA) | | | | |  | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | | | | |  | | | | |  | | | |   **\*Chair elect** |

**Participants:** David Thompson, Deb Hamernik, Adel Shirmohammadi, Nathan McKinney, Bob Holland, Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton (recorder)

**Action Items:**

1. Approve first addition to the 2/23/2015 notes; see details in topic 2.a. below.
2. Disapprove second addition to the 2/23/2015 notes; see details in topic 2.b. below.
3. Approval of 2/23/2014 minutes.
4. Disapprove conducting a survey on faculty survey on low rates of grant applications
5. ESCOP/S&T should evaluate the NAREEE board and provide suggestions on improvements to NIFA.
6. Approve scheduling a half day face to face meeting during the Fall ESS/AES/ARD Meeting and Workshop, 9/28-30, 2015 in Charlotte, NC
7. Next call Monday, April 27 from 4-5 ET at same call-in number.

**Call Notes:**

1. **Roll call:** David Thompson, Deb Hamernik, Adel Shirmohammadi, Nathan McKinney, Bob Holland, Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton (recorder)
2. **Potential Additions to 2/23/2015 Minutes:**
   1. Joe Coletti (S&T member, but cannot join calls at this time due to scheduling conflict) suggested to Jeff via phone conversation, which in turn Jeff paraphrased on page 2, under Recommendation 2: Important to reinforce the unique nature of NIFA with inquiry-driven research AND mission-driven research. This uniquely distinguishes the NIFA research mission from other federal agencies.
   2. A second element was paraphrased on page 3, 2-D: The NRC Review evaluated ‘early period’ CAP grant performance and does not necessarily reflect the performance of the most recently awarded CAP grants. These recently awarded CAPs are now fully operational and are generating their own levels of outputs and outcomes.
      1. Disapprove this addition: We need data to support this change to the notes/recommendations and we don’t have the information to measure these yet. Their productivity still needs to be examined.
      2. Perhaps we should wait until they are over, since some have only had 5 years of activity so far.
      3. Conversation Summary: CAP grant performance/productivity should be evaluated across all CAPS awards (past and current) and, most importantly, after the entire award term is complete.
   3. Without the 2.b. addition, the 2/23/2015 minutes are approved.
3. **Discussion Items on AFRI Review**
   1. Faculty Survey (*Recommendation 2C*)
      1. Do we need a survey? Would it even be useful to ESCOP or NIFA? Comments:
         1. Perhaps we already know the reasons for low application rates (some programs have such narrow priorities, priorities change year to year, award rate is so low).
         2. Human subject issues would be involved for a true scientific survey triggering a IRB review. Develop questions, obtain formal approvals, etc.
         3. General impression, will vary from year to year, so many different reasons and interpretations may exist.
         4. Informal communications might be the most valuable for developing recommendations.
         5. Unclear if this information would even help NIFA in the end.
         6. We might learn something, but it’s probably not worth the effort
         7. Overall: No, let’s not do a formal survey.
      2. Comment: NIFA is adding new programs (Exploratory Research) and increasing funding amounts (CARE program, from $150,000 to $200,000 upper limit) to help increase the number of applications and the quality.
   2. Interagency Collaborations (*Recommendation 3A*)
      1. We don’t have a good sense on how NIFA leads on these collaborations and what can ESCOP do to assist with these efforts.
         1. These collaborations come in different formats, official mutual funding (i.e. robotics, plant seed stock genomics, etc.) with committed NIFA and other agency funds. $25-28 million committed to interagency programs, want to leverage 4-5x this amount, details are outlined in specific RFAs (watch for these on the NIFA website)
         2. Other Interagency programs which are not as formal:
            1. NIFA and Food and Nutrition Service, via regional nutrition centers
            2. Food Safety with NSF and NIFA (IL Institute of Technology website) is a good program to review
            3. NIFA Deputy Director Luis Tupas ([ltupas@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:ltupas@nifa.usda.gov)) is a good contact for NSF and water collaborations
         3. What input can ESCOP have on these collaborations?
            1. Let NIFA know about important topics for interagency opportunities.
            2. Communicate this information through NPLs and/or deputy directors.
            3. Same for international research opportunities – NIFA cannot fund these, but can work through agencies that do have an international component.
   3. Scientific Advisory Council (*Recommendation 3B*) – NIFA discussion are occurring at this time on this topic. One existing mechanism is forESCOP to engage with the NAREEE board and offer suggestions. In addition, ESCOP could offer additional insight into this recommendation.
4. **Face to Face S&T Meeting Discussion** 
   1. Yes, a face to face would be good. Various options were discussed.
   2. Fall ESS/AES/ARD Workshop in September 28-30, 2015, Charlotte, NC would be the best option.

Call adjourned at 5 pm ET.