# NCRALogo.JPGNorth Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

## 227th Meeting Monday, September 25, 2023, 3:30-5:30 pm ET & Tuesday, September 26, 8-10 am ET Ballroom D, Devos Place, Grand Rapids, MI

## Meeting AGENDA ([Notes below](#_MEETING_NOTES))

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Item #** | **Topic** | **Presenter(s)** | **Action Needed** |
| *Monday, September 25* | | | | |
| 3:30 pm | 1.0 | Welcome and roll call | Gary Pierzynski, NCRA Chair | Attendees briefly introduce themselves (name, title, institution) |
| 3:40 pm | 2.0 | Approval of Spring and Summer NCRA Meeting Minutes, posted in NCRA MS Teams and at <https://www.ncra-saes.org/agendas-minutes> | Gary Pierzynski, NCRA Chair | Approval of the minutes as posted |
| 3:45 pm | 3.0 | Approval of Today’s Agenda | Gary Pierzynski, NCRA Chair | Approval of today’s agenda, as distributed |
| 3:50 pm | 4.0 | Introduction of Venu (Kal) Kalavacharla, with NIFA Update and Q&A/Discussion | Venu (Kal) Kalavacharla, Acting Director-Institute of Food Production and Sustainability | Discussion, Q&A |
| 4:50 pm | 5.0 | APLU update, NC CARET delegate/Mini LGU Meeting, Advocacy | Doug Steele, APLU | Discussion, Q&A |
| 5:30 pm | *Adjourn for the day* | | | |
| *Tuesday, September 26* | | | | |
| 8:00 am | 6.0 | ARS Update and Discussions | Larry Chandler, Rosalind James | Discussion, Q&A |
| 9:00 am | 7.0 | Reading of the Resolutions | Jeanette Thurston, Resolutions Chair | For information, celebration |
| 9:15 am | 8.0 | Review [agInnovation/ESS Business Meeting](http://escop.info/event/ess-2023/) Agenda and Votes | Jeanette Thurston, George Smith, Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (NRSP-RC NCRA Rep) | For information, discussion |
| 9:35 am | 9.0 | NCRA Spring Meeting 2024 Planning Update | Jeanette Thurston, Chris Hamilton | Discussion |
| 9:45 am | [10.0](#perf_review_temp) | NCRA Office Performance Review Template and Process | Gary Pierzynski, Jeanette Thurston, Chris Hamilton | For information, discussion |
| 9:55 am | 11.0 | Other Business, as needed | All | TBD |
| 10:00 am | *NCRA Business Meeting Adjourns – Break until 10:30, then move to agInnovation/ESS Business Meeting* | | | |

## MEETING NOTES

**Attendees:** Gary Pierzynski (NCRA Chair, OH), Kal Kalavacharla (USDA-NIFA), Shibu Jose (MO), Dierdre Chester (USDA Office of the Chief Scientist), Dionne Toombs (USDA-NIFA), Lynwood McDaniel, Jr. (USDA-NIFA), Jeff Jacobsen (former NCRA ED), Derek McLean (NE), Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (IA), Jane Schuh (KS), Hector Santiago (NE) Joleen Hadrich (MN), Tala Awada (NE), Frank Casey (ND), Lingying Zhao (OH), Troy Runge (WI), James Averill (MI), George Smith (MI), Ron Turco (IN), Dana Infante (MI), Doug Steele (APLU), Larry Chandler (USDA-ARS), Rosalind James (USDA-ARS), Germán Bollero (IL, via Zoom), Bernie Engel (IN, via Zoom), Jeanette Thurston (NCRA), Chris Hamilton (NCRA)

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| **Item #** | **Topic** | **Notes** | **Action(s) Taken** |
| 1.0 | Welcome and roll call |  | Gary Pierzynski called the meeting to order.  Attendees briefly introduced themselves. See list above. |
| 2.0 | Approval of Spring and Summer NCRA Meeting Minutes, posted in NCRA MS Teams and at <https://www.ncra-saes.org/agendas-minutes> |  | Approved as posted. |
| 3.0 | Approval of Today’s Agenda |  | Approved as distributed. |
| [4.0](#Slides) | Introduction of Venu (Kal) Kalavacharla, with NIFA Update and Q&A/Discussion | * Kal presented his [slides](#Slides) to the group. He is our new NIFA representative. His background: Plant biologist/broad background in ag, molecular genetics (plants) PhD at NDSU, Postdoc in wheat (NDSU), worked in industry for a few years, Drexel University in a faculty position, then Delaware State University faculty and Associate Dean, before moving to NIFA to serve as the in the Institute for Youth Family and Community as Deputy Director. Emphasized integration of research and extension. * OCS—Deirdra Chester * Provided OCS overview—her office provides science strategy, provides leadership to scientific integrity for department, and recently completed the USDA science and research strategy. FFAR is partners with OCS for stakeholder engagement—"OCS listens” (7 virtual, some in-person--see Federal Register). * [AgARDA](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/agarda-strategic-framework.pdf)--will be led out of OCS, asking for high risk/high reward research ideas for new program, 1000 stakeholders-- will directly reach out to stakeholders. * How to help NIFA: Sign-on letters are very important for supporting NIFA budget and policies. NCRA directors noted that sometimes these take a little time to go through university approval processes, so if there’s a rapid turnaround time needed, some universities might not be able to sign on. * Discussion around retention and degree completion rates and challenges. * Data collection/management/security was discussed, along with the data science programs available at our universities, especially around ag data. NASS and ERS connections might be helpful with this, as well. | None taken, discussion only. |
| [5.0](#Slides) | APLU update, NC CARET delegate/Mini LGU Meeting, Advocacy | * Doug just heard of a possible amendment for 14% reduction in NIFA lines. Probably unlikely to pass, but it still will be a matter of record. * Farm Bill is likely to be held off until next year due to the looming government shutdown. * First ever Leadership Advocacy summit in DC 11/1-11/3/2023 with 10 slots still available. Agenda posted on APLU site. * CARET-AHS (AHS=Administrative Heads Section, members are typically deans, but often many non-deans attend) spring meeting in DC. Considering a name change for this meeting, maybe “BAA-CARET Washington-Focused Meeting”, stay tuned on this. Hill visits would continue and focus will be on carrying our message to Congress. * Doug reviewed the APLU structure, based off the [CFERR Org Chart](https://www.ncra-saes.org/_files/ugd/4081a5_f1fe99103d9e402388481c9ee05f48a0.pdf). FYI that BAC makes annual appropriations priority recommendation to the Policy Board of Directors (PBD). Committee on Legislation and Policy (CLP) is responsible for farm bill recommendations and reports to PBD. ESCOP BLC Chair (Anton Bekkerman) is our rep to CLP and BAC. CLP and BAC are now working together and plan to continue to hold strategic discussions (including farm bill discussions throughout the 5-year period). l APLU is working on videos to better explain its organization. * Doug also discussed federal budget advocacy briefly, authorization versus appropriations, as well as some of the current issues in our government right now. * One-Ask/Unified Ask: Encompasses our seven budget lines under one umbrella ask. Putting together a Capacity workforce with ECOP to help spread the message better. May hire an external firm for this effort. Probably will put in place in 2025/2026. * CARET and regional summer meetings: CARET reps’ role is to send our LGU message to legislators in DC, usually at the spring CARET-AHS meeting. Caron leads the group, and they now have a formal CARET workbook/Strategic plan (on [www.land-grant.org](http://www.land-grant.org)). APLU does not plan or interfere with the summer CARET-AHS/Mini LGU regional meetings, but they will likely do a virtual meeting prior to next summer for better planning and to hopefully provide better clarity on the role to the CARET reps. Reach out to Caron to report out on how communications with CARET have been going. Doug will reach out to AHS members on ideas for a better CARET Mini LGU experience. * Q: What is CARET’s goal for our NC Summer Mini LGU? We don’t have much engagement with AHS, it’s mainly research and Extension getting together. As such, there’s been on-going ambiguity on the purpose of the summer Mini LGU. Perhaps there’s a need for a national level discussion. | None taken, discussion only. |
| [6.0](#ARS) | ARS Update and Discussions | Larry Chandler and Rosalind James joined the NCRA meeting for an ARS update and discussions around ARS and LGU staff working together on campuses. They both introduced themselves and gave some brief background information. Rosalind began recently and is Alberto's replacement as the Midwest Area Director (MWA). Career ARS--TX and Logan, UT--entomologist--bee health. Beltsville NPL for 5 years, then Associate Area director in Beltsville and now the Midwest, based in Peoria, IL. Larry is also an entomologist. Started in 1982 as a Research Leader in Fargo, then MWA Area director in Peoria, IL, now the Plains director in Fort Collins since 2012.  **Shutdown question**— what happens to access to building and collaborative projects?   * Critical work that continues during a shutdown is research for long term experiments and animal /greenhouse care. * ***SUGGESTED from ARS to Directors—***Send your list of critical items to local ARS leadership from LGUs. * Grad student question--research programs and graduation path may be impacted. * No new science can be started during a shutdown--ARS policy. * Don’t have answers to all our questions on access to federal buildings yet.   **Priorities/LGU and ARS Collaborations:**  FY23--collaborative passthrough funds--  **Plains region:**   * AI, machine learning--broad answer--look at what they provided funding this year (mark ups for congressional actions for FY24). Plains area--big livestock focus--based on states--3 climate hubs 6 LTERs, plant genetics Fargo, ND; Brookings, SD; Lincoln, NE, and some at Manhattan, KS, etc. * NUTRITION--how incorporate ag into nutrition—ASCEND for Health initiative (USDA-wide)   **Midwest region**--climate hubs--LGU collab--esp. extension, C-Seq, PFAS, AI, expanding other computational efforts/identifying opportunities for these resources.  **How can we leverage ARS efforts--how better collaborate**?   * Initiatives that go with collaborations--e.g., Develop initiatives together--ARS and LGUs…ex., UNL--new facility and programmatic regenerative/restorative ag and data efforts (ask Tala/Derek/Hector for more info on this) * Need to be engaged in advocacy--2022 and 2023--collaborative funding in appropriations. * IA State and ARS - MOU from 1955—beginning update process on these MOUs.     **Q: Can ARS have Faculty roles?** Some tensions exist around being treated like faculty--ARS cannot sign off on grad student--cannot vote. Confusing as other federal scientists, e.g., USGS--allowed to serve on grad committees. Please provide examples like this for ARS to discuss with USDA Ethics office. Our region should consider providing input to ARS on allowing ARS scientists to serve in a more formal grad student committee member role.    **Q: How best to mentor students for ARS positions?** Need to be aware of opportunities (<https://www.usajobs.gov/>)**,** discipline area needs include ag engineering, computational biology. New PhDs come in as Category 1 scientists--GS12. Need to be mindful of how applications are developed. For e.g., it’s important to use the key words in the position description. | Discussion, Q&A |
| [7.0](#resolutions) | Reading of the Resolutions | Germán Bollero and Bernie Engel, former NCRA members, joined the meeting via Zoom. Jeanette read aloud the prepared recognition resolutions and members in attendance applauded their service to the NCRA. | For information, celebration |
| [8.0](#Slides) | Review [agInnovation/ESS Business Meeting](http://escop.info/event/ess-2023/) Agenda and Votes | Jeanette reviewed the information in her slides on the agInnovation business meeting topics and votes that will take place during the afternoon agInnovation fall business meeting.  Additional NRSP information: Currently at $2.6M --not all committed (1% off the top funding--FED DOLLARS). Reach out to NRSP-RC on new project ideas since there is funding available. NRSP-RC led by Gary Thompson and Cindy Morley in FFY24, but reach out to Bret Hess, as well. | For information, discussion |
| 9.0 | NCRA Spring Meeting 2024 Planning Update | Chris briefly reviewed the plans for our spring NCRA meeting, to be held at the SpyGlass Inn, Pismo Beach, CA. The MRC meeting will take place the afternoon of Monday, 3/25. Business meeting on 3/26 for the full day. Jeanette is working with local contacts on tours for 3/27. Plan on at least a half day for tours on 3/27, if not close to a full day. Chris will post the registration and share the hotel booking information soon. | For information only. |
| [10.0](#perf_review_temp) | NCRA Office Performance Review Template and Process | We ran out of time for a full discussion on this, so will table this item for one of our monthly NCRA calls. | Please review the performance review template and process presented below and share your feedback and/or suggestions for edits with Jeanette and Chris via email or during our next NCRA call. |
| 11.0 | Other Business, as needed | Chris informed the group that we have a volunteer to fill the open MRC member position. The group was asked for other nominations. None were given, so Troy Runge was approved as our new MRC member, effective 10/1/2023. | Please review the updated [FFY24 NCRA officer list](https://www.ncra-saes.org/_files/ugd/4081a5_58aed0aec41a40019b4d8f07069339d3.pdf) and let us know if you have any questions. |

**Reminders:**

Nominations for 2024 Excellence in Leadership award and Excellence in Multistate Research Awards (please note that the 2024 call hasn’t been released and may have different requirement than last year. [Link to 2023 award calls](http://escop.info/about/))

BAA Leadership Advocacy Summit, November 1-3, Washington DC (registration, meeting details forthcoming)

APLU Annual Meeting, November 12-14, Seattle, Washington ([Conference site](https://web.cvent.com/event/91d11caf-866f-4dca-bad3-4c22c2f4d6b6/regProcessStep1))

NCRA Spring Meeting 2024, March 25-27, SpyGlass Inn, Pismo Beach, CA (registration, meeting details forthcoming)

**NCRA Fall Meeti****ng Slides:**

**From Jeanette (APLU information, ARS Discussion, agInnovation Business Meeting votes)**

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**From Venu (Kal) Kalavacharla (USDA-NIFA Update)**

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**Item 6.0: ARS Update** **and Discussions  
Presenters: Larry Chandler, Rosalind James  
Action Requested: None, for information and discussion**

ARS LGU On-boarding Document DRAFT 5-2023 LDC RRJ Sept 21 2023:



**Item 7.0: Reading of the** **Resolutions  
Presenter: Jeanette Thurston, NCRA Resolutions Chair  
Action Requested: For celebration**

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**Item 10.0: NCRA Office P****erformance Review Template and Process  
Presenters: Gary Pierzynski, Jeanette Thurston, Chris Hamilton  
Action Requested: For information, discussion.**

**A map of the united states

Description automatically generatedNCRA OFFICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

**FOR: EXECUTIVE/ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name and title** |  | **Evaluation period:** | **[Start date] – [End date]** |

**GOALS, OBJECTIVES, SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THIS EVALUATION PERIOD**



**OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES (list 3-5 highlights)**

**CHALLENGES FACED THIS PERIOD**



**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING RECEIVED**



**committee PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP**



**Publications and PRESENTATIONS (AS APPLICABLE)**



**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT EVALUATION PERIOD**

1.

2.

3.

**evaluation *(completed by NCRA Chair, with input from NCRA members)***



**STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**Suggested Career Progression Plan/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, AS NEEDED**

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE RATING** (OUTSTANDING, EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS, MEETS EXPECTATIONS, OR DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS)**:**

**ed/ad and NCRA Chair signatures**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signature (ED/AD) |  | Signature (NCRA Chair) |  |
| Name | [Employee name] | Name |  |
| Date | [End date] | Date | [End date] |

**PERFORMANCE TIMELINE**

* Calendar year evaluation of performance (January 1 to December 31).
* ED/AD will draft and provide their Annual Performance reports to the EC no later than December 15th.
* Performance Review meetings to be conducted in January.
* Final Performance review and rating due to host Universities no later than mid-February.

**SUGGESTED FLOW FOR ANNUAL EVALUATION MEETING:**

1. Step 1, Call #1 with ED/AD and full NCRA membership (scheduled by NCRA chair with assistance from AD):

* 15 minutes each for ED and AD to highlight:
  + Previous year’s activities and accomplishments of note.
  + Review past year’s goals, which were met, which were not and why.
  + Challenges faced and how these were handled/what could have been done better, if applicable.
  + Goals for the next year and path forward.
* ED and AD log off for NCRA directors’ discussion time.
* NCRA EC, as led by NCRA chair, prepares the formal performance review for ED and AD.

1. Step 2, Call #2 with NCRA EC and ED/AD (scheduled by NCRA Chair with assistance from AD):

* NCRA chair presents final performance review to ED and AD.
* Discussion on what’s working, what’s not.
* Suggested changes to goals and path forward.

1. Following Call #2, the NCRA Chair prepares and shares the final written performance reviews for the ED and AD. The ED and AD then share these with their host institutions to meet local review obligations. This final review should also include any pay adjustments, as applicable.
2. Midterm review point in July, either at the NCRA Summer Business Meeting or monthly call, ED and AD spend about 10 minutes giving a brief update on the first six months of the calendar year.

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