NCAC-24 Annual Meeting Minutes

Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Applied Behavioral Sciences January 6-7, 2025

University of Tennessee

Knoxville, TN

Monday, January 6

Hotel Lobby pickup – 1:40

Crowne Plaza Knoxville, Downtown

401 West Summit Hill Drive

Knoxville, TN 37902

2:00

Welcome and Introductions/Program Updates

**Present:** Tracy Rutherford (VaTech), Mike Retallick (Iowa State), Brian Myers (Florida), Becki Lawver (Utah State), Mark Balschweid (UNL), Robert Strong (TAMU), Christopher Stripling (Tennessee), OP McCubbins (Mississippi State), Dusty Perry (Montana State), Daniel Foster (Penn State), Scott Burris (Texas Tech); **Virtually** - John Tummons (Missouri) and Kris Boone (Ohio State - Wooster)

Presentation by **Dr. Liz Eckelkamp, Associate Professor of Animal Sciences – Director of the Center for Dairy Advancement and Sustainability**  
Dr. Eckelkamp has secured over $34 million in funding over the past six years, with contributions from ALEC faculty. She can provide insights into her decision to involve ALEC faculty in her dairy projects and discuss potential collaborations between ALEC and animal science departments for research and extension.

5:30 p.m. Welcome Dinner (not included in registration)

[Calhoun's On The River](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcalhouns.com%2F&data=05%7C02%7Ctrutherford%40vt.edu%7C0e884aa712a648008dc108dd1bb83f11%7C6095688410ad40fa863d4f32c1e3a37a%7C0%7C0%7C638697200328745201%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=lcmKNoPnvtSL0Sxc%2FXorXn%2FLEu7cqt1HYRRfkvhQ0do%3D&reserved=0)

*Midterm review team meeting:* NC1189 Understanding and managing scale and connectivity in inland and marine fisheries as coupled human and natural systems

Jennifer Waldeck, Becki Lawver, Kalynn Baldock

Tuesday, January 7

Hotel Lobby pickup 8:30am

9:00 a.m.

1. Welcome from Dr. Tim Rials, Associate Dean of UT Ag Research
   1. Introduction to the Institute of Ag, specifically UT Ag Research
2. USDA-NIFA update/impact statements - Margaret “Maggie” Lawrence, USDA Writer on Faith Pepper’s Team
   1. Presentation on why impact sharing matters
3. Measuring Success– how are programs meeting the metrics, what metrics are you using?
   1. Revisiting the NCAC-24 Indicators of Success
      * Discussion on how this document is used locally; individual faculty vs using it as a communication tool for unit portfolio
      * Assist with positioning the department and looking at relevance
      * ACTION ITEM: Committee will look at updating the document - Brian Myers, Mark Balschweid, and OP McCubbins
   2. Academic Analytics - Tracy Rutherford
      * Julie Wilson always available to for updates or custom reports
      * A custom report for Ag Education is available per Julie; reference “Tracy’s report”
      * ALE has been “unlocked” so that it shows up in AA
   3. [AAAE Salary Survey](https://www.aaaeonline.org/Salary-Reports) input
      * The discussion focused on potential criteria to improve the usefulness
        + Carnegie Level of degree-granting (PhD, MS, BS), AAU status, start-up packages, interactive dashboard, appointment percentage, trend data, external validity with other similar sources (see Oklahoma example).
      * It is helpful to the profession, how is it being used, accuracy given the response rate
        + Junior faculty use it for retention and salary negotiation for lateral moves
   4. Other resources
      * Dashboards to track metrics?
        + TexasTech is working on it but it’s a homegrown spreadsheet done internally by the dept
4. Enrollment challenges in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Applied Behavioral Sciences
   1. Discussion around individual university admission caps/limits, SCH/Budget Modeling
   2. Teacher certification enrollments - wide annual enrollment swings are occurring
5. Professional service
   1. The topic was mentioned but tabled due to time constraints. At issue are the challenges and varying attitudes toward professional service - e.g., free labor or valued contributions (Journal reviewing, grant reviewing, leadership roles)

Lunch – catered

1. **Dr. Jamie Greig, ALEC Assistant Professor – Information Technology**  
   Dr. Greig leads the AT&T 5G in Turfgrass Science and Education project, which is linked to research for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. A tour of one of the climate-controlled turfgrass research buildings funded by FIFA. Additionally, Dr. Greig will discuss his work on data security and privacy concerns in precision dairy management systems. Followed by tour of UTIA facilities.
2. Open discussion on research priorities
   1. [Dear Colleague Letter: National AI Research Resource (NAIRR) Pilot seeks datasets to facilitate AI education and researcher skill development (nsf25018) | NSF - U.S. National Science Foundation](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2025/nsf25018/nsf25018.pdf?)
   2. [Blueprint for the Use of Social and Behavioral Science to Advance Evidence-Based Policymaking](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Blueprint-for-the-Use-of-Social-and-Behavioral-Science-to-Advance-Evidence-Based-Policymaking.pdf)
   3. [S1090](https://nimss.org/projects/18868?search=S1090), AI in Agroecosystems: Big Data and Smart Technology-Driven Sustainable Production
   4. Next rendition of “The Green Book” of [Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education | The National Academies Press](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/766/understanding-agriculture-new-directions-for-education) (1988)
   5. Representation and Support of Teacher Education within 1890institutions
   6. Serving Term/APT(Academic Professional Track) faculty within our profession, professional associations, and professional develop
   7. Need for continued conversation with NIFA regarding language in RFPs
      * continue to have conversations and get an update from Carlos or an equivalent representative
      * invite NPLs to our 2026 meeting
3. Identifying Next Steps
   1. Recommendation for Administrative Advisor
      * Kris Boone will be the new College of Agricultural, Life and Physical Sciences dean at Southern Illinois University

We can have input in selecting the new AA, they just need to be at the level of senior faculty or higher (dept head, chair, assoc dean/director, etc.) at an NC Land-grant. Christina Hamilton can then train that person and introduce them to the group, as needed.

The AA role shouldn't be too burdensome, it's mainly about attending the annual meeting, reminding members to do the required tasks by certain deadlines, and sharing information to the members.

b. Consider dean or associate dean of research from UW-Madison, University of Illinois, Michigan State, or Ohio State. Tracy will work with Christina Hamilton to request a new advisor.

11. 2026 Meeting - Virginia Tech Innovation Campus at Potomac Yard (Washington, DC) Dates TBD

5:30 p.m. Depart for Dinner (not included in registration)

[World Headquarters Abridged](https://www.abridgedbeer.com/worldheadquarters)

* Thank you to Tracy, Jennifer, and Mike for planning the meeting.
* Special thank you to Christopher Stripling and his colleagues for hosting at UTIA

Wednesday, January 10 - **Safe Travels**

These minutes are respectfully submitted by:

Michael S. Retallick