

**Extension Committee on Organization  
and Policy (ECOP)**

Chicago, IL  
May 23-24, 2017

**DRAFT WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

*Final Version*  
*May 31., 2017*

with assistance from  
Lighthouse Consulting Group  
Warren, RI

# **Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) DRAFT WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

## **SUMMARY OF MAJOR DECISIONS:**

### **Through an open and honest conversation, we made the following decisions:**

1. That our next Executive Director will:
  - a. Be a credible and strong face and the voice of the organization, with an emphasis on being the Executive for the entire Extension system.
  - b. Implement the strategic agenda created by the Executive Team and membership. The Executive Director will not be an Executive Secretary.
  - c. Be a mid-level or higher professional with some executive (or associate level) experience with or without an Extension background. Sources of additional contacts may include the American Society of Association Professionals, Federal partners, and Extension's Directors/Administrators and associate Directors/Administrators.
  - d. Be primarily located in Washington, DC, though we would be open to telecommuting several days a month from within the DC metro area.
2. If an ideal candidate is found, but they require a more expensive package, we would consider partnering with another organization such as ESCOP to share the director's time and/or finding expenses that could be cut to free up the necessary resources.
3. If a candidate cannot be found in this round, we would
  - a. Explore combining the executive director and administrative assistant's salaries into pool and soliciting an Association Management Company.
  - b. Re-opening the conversation with ESCOP or another partner about sharing an Executive Director.
4. We would have a preliminary conversation with ESCOP about sharing a position, but unless the split of time between the two organizations heavily favors ECOP (75/25), we would not pursue it further.
5. We need to improve our engagement with the membership; our institutions need to be treated like members.
6. We need to revise and refocus our priorities. We have too many and these shift too frequently. Each member of the ECOP Executive Team should be able to list ECOP's five priority result areas.

## **ECOP's VALUE PROPOSITION**

ECOP brings value to my program by providing a forum and venue for:

- Advocating and providing national leadership for the Extension system.
- Creating and implementing a strategic agenda that prioritizes Extension's needs and delivers value added initiatives.
- Shaping and building the future of Extension by creating a big vision
- Delivering professional development and access to mentors
- Networking and providing a learning network for idea sharing and collaboration.

- Providing a voice for the national system by communicating and marketing our successes.
- Creating new partnerships and funding opportunities.
- Bringing a broader perspective and opinions to the Extension system.
- Ensuring a collective impact and mechanism for national decision making.
- Strengthening our national identity and providing us status within the broader community.

## **ECOP's PRIORITY RESULTS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS**

The group was asked what the specific results are that need to be achieved to make progress on the value statements. These were grouped into four categories. The bolded items were selected as priorities. It was noted that most of these results did not include those activities listed in ECOP's 2017 Emphasis Areas and Ongoing Priorities document.

### Strengthen organizational functioning

- **Set long term priorities in a way that creates buy-in.**
- **Finalize Extension's core values, describe learner engagement (e.g., Extension's value proposition) and develop a national logo and/or tagline for optional use by Extension Services.**
- Decide how to create a national Extension Foundation.

### Enhancing leadership and professional development

- **Provide opportunities for directors/administrators to improve personal, organizational and system leadership skills, including annual conference and webinars to enhance peer-to-peer learning.**
  - **Comprehensive review and revision of directors and administrators professional development opportunities, with a focus on new directors and administrators. Consider providing national cutting-edge webinars.**
  - **Strengthen our existing network.**
  - **Build better relationships between directors/administrators.**
- Review committee structure and liaison assignments to ensure the support the agreed upon priorities and ECOP's operational needs.
- Support aspiring leaders through existing programs such as LEAD 21, regional leadership development programs, Epsilon-Sigma-Phi, and JCEP.

### Increase strategic marketing and communications

- **Strengthen communication across system to communicate issues and success. This needs to go across system, including APLU.**
- Advocating our identity as a valuable, national system that serves and promotes extension.

### Building partnerships and acquiring resources

- **Engage with USDA-NIFA and expand strategic alliances with national partners to increase extension value in federal landscape.**
  - **Continue advocacy approach to USDA**
  - **Increase funding for Extramural initiatives**

- Increase Smith-Lever funds and 1890 Extension funds.
- Increase funding from other titles in the farm bill.

**CHALLENGES THAT ECOP FACES AS IT IMPLEMENTS THESE PRIORITIES AND FOCUS AREAS**

The group was asked what challenges are keeping ECOP from achieving these results. The replies were sorted under three categories. For each, we discussed possible solutions to these problems.

Capacity

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Possible Solution</b>
Multiple directions and priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many priorities</li> <li>• Spread too thin</li> <li>• Lack of focus</li> </ul>	Re-prioritize efforts down to 5-7 concrete results under the for core themes. The results should be verified with the membership and adjusted as necessary. The Executive Team should be able to easily explain the focus areas and the related results.
ED/A team responsibilities and unrealistic expectations	Set priorities for ED/A Team, re-assess where their time is being spent and cut those activities that are not contributing to the results and core themes.
No criteria for selecting projects	Create criteria for deciding if a project or initiative is worth pursuing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is capacity (dollars and people)</li> <li>• It fits one of the four focus areas</li> <li>• There is system wide buy in</li> <li>• There is a champion and adequate staffing to support champion.</li> <li>• Creates opportunity for additional/new resources.</li> <li>• Does good things.</li> </ul>

Organizational design

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Possible Solution</b>
Not acting like a national system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 107 units</li> <li>• Do not value strength of all components</li> <li>• Turn over</li> <li>• Minimal communication</li> </ul>	Act like a membership association/engage membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate a system wide conversation around ECOP’s strategic agenda using surveys and face to face meetings</li> <li>• Connect to regions differently; ECOP members bring key questions to regions and vis-a-versa.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mechanism to establish priorities with buy-in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about the Extension System, not ECOP as an organization. ECOP is a board of directors of national Extension system.</li> <li>Create the next generation of big ideas</li> <li>Create and disseminate a consistent message for funders, government officials and partners.</li> </ul>
Rotating leadership	Institution via Executive Director holds the strategic agenda. Executive Director is the face and voice of organization capable of talking about the agenda.
Political issues at home	Strengthen and support System directors and administrators. Offer advice on and models on succession planning. Understand where institutions are in terms of capacity, ensure that ECOP's programming supports institutions.

Approach

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Possible Solution</b>
Too many liaison positions to fill, number of organizations that want a liaison	Re-think committees and liaison appointments.
The need to have a meaningful partnership within the APLU system	Physical proximity is valuable, needs to be leveraged. Act as a partner.
The need to have a meaningful partnership with NIFA.	Act as a partner.
Adjust meeting agendas; ECOP meetings need to be more deliberate. Too much focus on process, need more action	Revise agendas to focus on decisions/action items first, save updates and reports for last, if there is time.
Too busy to be truly imaginative or strategic, not able to focus on the big issues.	Engage membership to set a limited set of priorities. Re-design meeting agendas so that there is time to focus on strategic issues. Submit short written reports when reporting is required; note highlights only during meeting.
Time commitments for national assignments	Leader has to be supportive. Involve more members. Bring associates to meetings when possible.

## STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL CHANGES REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

### Liaisons, assignment and appointments

The group reviewed the list of organizations that request an ECOP appointment or where ECOP wishes to have representation. The number of organizations exceeds thirty.

The challenges associated with this are:

- Too many to be effective
- Some liaisons are not members of ECOP
- Liaisons want to report out at face-to-face meetings, creating significant scheduling pressure.
- There are no clear roles or expectations defined by ECOP.
- Difficult in some instances to find liaisons.

Possible solutions:

- Review list of organizations and prioritize by:
  - Priority focus areas –is representation on a certain group key to making progress on ECOP's results.
  - Where *must* ECOP be represented to be successful
- For those priorities, appoint ECOP representatives (i.e., from board or regional bodies). If not a priority, expand the pool of possible candidates to include directors/administrators and associate directors/administrators instead of ECOP directors. ECOP would still make the recommendation for these individuals to be appointed and would still expect an annual written report from the appointee.
- Develop a set of expectations and responsibilities for all liaisons and appointees.

### Committee Structure

The group discussed challenges created by current committee system:

- Too many people on some committees, hard to get a quorum.
- Not sure if they line up with focus areas.
- Names don't capture what they do.
- Should 4H leadership committee be a standalone or report to Programs Committee.

Possible solutions:

- Rename committees, where appropriate, to align with focus areas (i.e, personnel as professional development/recognition).
- Move towards time bound task forces instead of standing committees.
- What committees are needed to best serve the membership (i..e, looking into the future committee).
- Review committee structure and assignments annually to make sure they are still needed and that the right people are on them.

- Review the purpose of the EDA “backup” system for committees; is it still necessary to have a formal backup assigned and if so, decide if it is necessary for all committees and groups.

### ECOP’s name

The group discussed how ECOP could be renamed or present itself differently to ensure that it is clear that it represents the national Extension system. As currently presented, ECOP can be/is construed as a standalone organization instead of a membership organization. Options discussed include:

1. Intentionally talk about ECOP differently by using as a tag line: Board of Directors of the National Extension System. Use this tag line in all communications, both written and oral, coming from ECOP
2. Ask membership to consider if this tagline change be codified in ECOP’s by-laws. (this is already the case)
3. Explore the option and possibility of creating a new URL so that the members can more easily access ECOP’s online materials, which would stay housed on the APLU’s web site.
4. Work with APLU to create an official name change; this is a lower priority.

### Business Meetings

There are several types of ECOP meetings:

1. Weekly meeting of the chairs
2. Monthly meeting of the Executive Committee
3. Three face to face meetings of the Board.

For all of these meetings, the group suggested that the agendas be re-organized to focus first on decision/action points. These are the items wherein the group needs to collectively be informed and direct specific action. The chairs and Executive Committee are already doing this.

For the face-to-face meetings, the group suggested incorporating an additional element: Using the consensus approach wherein all the standard business (accepting minutes, financial reports, standing reports) are presented in a package beforehand and approved all together with one motion at the meeting. This would require that committees, liaisons, etc submit *short* reports ahead of the meeting to be included in the package.

For the ExCom and face-to-face meetings, explore methods for ensuring that regional issues/concerns/questions are making it onto the agenda. Conversely, ensure that ECOP’s issues/concerns/questions are making onto regional agendas.

Finally, the group expressed a desire for members who attend meetings –especially face-to-face meetings-- stay for the full meeting, but recognize that each member will make the best choice for him or herself.

## **DESCRIPTION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SERVICES**

### Attributes of the Executive Director

- Be a credible and strong face and the voice of the organization, with an emphasis on being the Executive for the entire Extension system.
- Implement the strategic agenda created by the Executive Team and membership. The Executive Director will not be an Executive Secretary.
- Be a mid-level or higher professional with some executive (or associate level) experience with or without an Extension background. Sources of additional contacts may include the American Society of Association Professionals, Federal partners, and Extension's Directors/Administrators and associate Directors/Administrators.
- Be primarily located in Washington, DC, though we would be open to telecommuting several days a month from within the DC metro area.
- The executive director could come from the Extension system, but this isn't a requirement.

### Skills of the Executive Director

- Communicate and implement a long term vision and strategy
- Ability to build and sustain partnerships both within and outside of Extension.
- Strong executive leadership and organizational management experience.
- Strategic marketing and communications experience.
- Ability to develop funding opportunities for Extension.
- Knowledge of the Cooperative Extension system and related Congressional authorizations.
- A thorough understanding of contemporary Cooperative Extension philosophy.

### Hiring Steps

1. Revise job description to ensure it is focused on mid-level professionals, strip out requirements aimed at seasoned Extension Directors. Add attributes that capture the qualities of a high performing associate director.
2. Revise cover letter to specifically ask applicants to compare their skills and experience with the job requirements.
3. Explore sources of possible candidates:
  - a. Introduction to American Society of Association Professionals
  - b. Doug explore where Federal partners post and look for applicants (i.e., Government Jobs Board)
  - c. Letter from ECOP chair to Extension Directors, Program Directors and Administrators.
  - d. Regional Directors follow-up with personalized contact soliciting candidates
4. Have approximately \$185,000 plus benefits for position, could rise to \$200,000.
5. If an ideal candidate is found, but they require a more expensive package, we would consider partnering with another organization such as ESCOP to share the director's time and/or finding expenses that could be cut to free up the necessary resources.
6. If a candidate cannot be found in this round, we would
  - a. Explore combining the executive director and administrative assistant's salaries into pool and soliciting an Association Management Company.
  - b. Re-opening the conversation with ESCOP or another partner about sharing an Executive Director.





## FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

<b>What is action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>when</b>
Finalize workshop document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To Executive Team</li> <li>• To Full Board</li> </ul>	Mark Fred Fred	By June 15
Combine workshop documents with previous reports (Value of being part of National System, Task Force on private resource mobilization, Task Force on Innovation, 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Extension) to identify common threads and themes and bring those together into one document. Post individual reports and combined report online when done.	Mark with ExComm	Start in June, complete by July 30.
Staffing plan (see hiring process for details) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review job description</li> <li>• Post job Description               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ASAE</li> <li>○ Federal partners job list</li> <li>○ Ltr from ECOP chair to directors/administrators</li> <li>○ Association directors/administrators</li> <li>○ Personalized regional follow-up</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Doug & Mark  Mark and Fred Doug Fred  Fred Regional EDs	June 7  June 20 June 20 June 20  June 15 June-July
Design process for engaging membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12-24 month plan</li> </ul>	Chuck	
Next Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated ECOP and Regional Leaders Meeting to vet priority areas and results at November APLU, e.g., Monday after speaker but before dinner. Expect 40 people, need four hours.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Initial questions                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When during meeting</li> <li>▪ Where</li> <li>▪ Fees/cost</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Should anything be done at NEDA meeting?</li> <li>• Section meeting for all members of ECOP</li> <li>• Should anything be done at Epsilon-Sigma-Phi meeting?</li> </ul>	Fred  ExCom ExCom ExCom	November 2017  October 2017 October 2018
Explore an URL for ECOP that uses an intuitive name and points member to existing material on APLU.	ED/A	September
Liaison/appointment review (see <u>Liaisons, assignment and appointments for more details</u> ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ED/A review and make recommendations</li> </ul>		End of July

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directors consider recommendations/approve or modify</li> <li>• Implement</li> </ul>		<p>August-Sept</p> <p>October</p>
<p>Committees review (see <u>Committee section for more details</u>).Run concurrent with Liaison work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ED/A review and make recommendations</li> <li>• Directors consider recommendations/approve or modify</li> <li>• Implement</li> </ul>		<p>End of July</p> <p>August-Sept</p> <p>October</p>
<p>Annual, purposeful review of committees and members</p>	ECOP	Annually
<p>NIFA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move 4H Emblem conversation forward</li> <li>• Meeting with NIFA – are there strategic partnerships that we should be jointly pursuing (i.e., health)</li> </ul>	Ed Doug	June
<p>APLU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate soft conversation with APLU regarding structure, our people, and how money is collected and disbursed.</li> <li>• Visit and assess UDC campus</li> </ul>	Fred/Ed	August
<p>Review the timing of appointments and leadership change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed the leadership change happen at end of NEDA meeting in October instead of at APLU.</li> <li>• Consider how this affects liaison appointments</li> </ul>	ED/A make recommendation to ECOP	August
<p>Receive proposal from Lighthouse to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combine workshop documents with previous reports</li> <li>• Review proposed Job Description, facilitate process to finalize</li> <li>• Facilitate ECOP’s next face-to-face meeting in October and/or regional leaders meeting with ECOP.</li> <li>• Help facilitate the short term implementation of this report and follow-up actions.</li> </ul>	Mark	June 7