

Southern Region AHS and AES “Single Ask” Advocacy Strategy Conference Calls

Notes

Call dates and times: January 9, 2017, 3:00 – 4:00 pm, and January 11, 2017, 3:00 – 4:00 pm

In attendance Jan 9:

- John Russin- LSU
- Saied Mostaghimi- VA Tech
- Greg Bohach- MS State
- Alan Grant- VA Tech
- Jack Payne- FL
- Sam Pardue- GA
- Keith Owens- OK State
- Gary Lemme- Auburn
- Rich Linton- NC State
- George Hopper- MS State
- Mark Cochran- U of AR
- Tom Coon- OK State
- Gary Jackson – MS State
- Bill Brown- UT

In attendance Jan 11:

- Mark Hussey - TAMU
- Craig Nessler - TAMU
- Joe Culin – Clemson
- Clarence Watson – U of AR
- Paul Patterson - Auburn
- Nancy Cox - UKY
- Rick Bennett - UKY
- Henry Fadamiro - Auburn
- Bob Godfrey - UVI
- Chris Rey - Clemson
- Bob Shulstead - UGA
- Bill Brown – UT
- Eric Young - SAAESD

Overview

- Option A - One pager; front and back.
 - Overview of FY18 fiscal request on front of page
 - Program lines on back page
- The proposal is a single ask, not a consolidation of lines; a single ask for the five capacity lines and the one AFRI line
- Main reasons for the single ask is that it streamlines and coordinates the ask and sends a unified message across the entire land-grant family.
- There have been questions about the security of individual lines using a single ask. The situation is that report language will be used as it has in the past to appropriate actual funding to each of the lines. This represents the same process as in the past with regard to Congress allocating funding to the NIFA lines. Advocacy will play an important role during the allocation process.
- The land-grant family will have to work with NIFA, professional organizations and commodity groups during the process to help move the single ask process forward.
- Timeline
 - Comments and suggestions from each of the regional meetings across research and extension will be carried forward to the BAC calls on January 19 and February 16.
 - Policy Board of Directors will ratify BAC decision at their February meeting
 - Discussion at AHS/CARET meeting in March, 2017.

Discussion

- Greg Bohach reinforced that this effort is not a consolidation and that a high level of trust must be established among all the partners. He reinforced that the six lines are protected.
- Question was asked as to how this effort was related to the Farm Bill discussion on consolidating small lines? Answer is that it is both related and not related. We were asked not to take both actions together. They are linked, but also separate.
- The spreadsheet that has the calculations and distributions for \$100M, \$200M and \$300M is an internal document.
- Do other agencies ask with a single sum?
 - Yes, other agencies, such as NIH and NSF ask with a single sum
 - This ask allows us to advocate for a single fund.
- How was the proposed \$200 M number derived? Answer is that it was developed through Cornerstone as a number that was not too small as to not be meaningful but also not so large that it would be judged to be impossible. \$200 M increase represents an approximate 20% increase in NIFA's overall budget.
- The FAQ sheet is intended to be an internal document within the land-grant community. Timeline is also included on that sheet. Document will not be distributed widely.

What are the positive aspects of this strategy?

- Much simpler for appropriators to do the NIFA budget, they don't have to think or debate about individual lines if they accept the overall increase and just plug in our distribution.
- All the proposed "single ask" amounts are a lot more than recent years' increases in NIFA's budget, so regardless of distribution, we'd end up better.
- Letters of support from Congressional members would presumably be for the "single ask" amount, which should increase support for lines that don't normally get many letters.

What are the concerns of the group?

- How long has NIH used the "single ask" model and what has been the overall impact on their budget? At least 15 years and increases have been relatively large
- Does percent need to be applied equally across each line? The model presented is a starting point with all percentages equal, but those percentages could be changed in the future and may result in division within the family on the distribution scheme.
- Biggest problem is seen as getting all LGU's and most of our supporters to buy into the "single ask" strategy, it may take one or two years of success to convince everyone.

Suggestions for an additional FAQ

- Why is a "single ask" model advantageous over the current approach of each group putting in an "ask"?
- How are priorities (funding levels) across the 6 lines determined?
- Does the "single ask" open the door for appropriators to allocate funds away from any of the capacity lines to others or AFRI?

Overall thoughts?

- Overall, the group is supportive of the “single ask” strategy
- Not a lot to lose, the current strategy has not been successful at increasing capacity lines
- 1890’s have asked for a higher percentage increase for two reasons:
 - Both lines have the lowest initial funding levels
 - Have taken on additional schools without additional funding
 - In FY15 to FY16, did 1890’s receive an additional increase to help offset the cost of additional schools? If not, should consider a differential for 2018 budget.