



I appreciate that everyone is back in the office and calendars are quickly filling. I'd ask that you place the NERA Spring meeting on that calendar, we could use your intellectual horsepower.

As a heads up, David Leibovitz had surgery this past Friday to repair a ruptured Achilles tendon, the result of a spectacular wipeout in Big Sky, Montana. I'm holding the fort down while David recovers. I'll share your good wishes for a speedy recovery.

“What makes the best teams and the best leaders great is that when they make mistakes, they acknowledge them, take ownership, and make corrections to upgrade their performance.” - Jocko Willink and Leif Babin (2018) in *The Dichotomy of Leadership*, St. Martin's Press, New York.

Action items:

- We've posted the [agenda](#) for the March meeting on the NERA website: check it out. In the next several weeks each station director will receive a copy of Pamela Newkirk's *Diversity, Inc.* We're using Newkirk's suggestions as a jumping off point to discuss our efforts to promote diversity and inclusion. We look forward to seeing you in Philadelphia.
- John Dieffenbacher-Krall (Maine) has asked if any of the NERA stations have made substantive changes in REEPort to their Multistate Coordination project. The reason for asking is that Maine (and I suspect many stations) have not updated the project in REEPort and may have incomplete fields for Expected Outcomes, Target Audiences, and Non-Technical Summary. If you've updated your Multistate Coordination Project would you please share with [me](#) the entries that you made in REEPort? We'll be working with John to develop common language that could be used by all NERA stations when updating their legacy multistate project.
- Last week, Scott Angle and Lynn Khadiagala sent out emails sharing an update on changes to the Plan of Work, Annual Report and the OGFm Supplemental Forms. In short, NIFA is retiring the current POW system and using a word-template for the Annual Report and an Excel spreadsheet for the OGFm reporting. In doing so, a number of "traditional" fields are being eliminated. Additionally, the submission date for the Annual Report has been pushed back to May 1, 2020. I've heard anecdotes of dissatisfaction with this approach and now seek NERA's reflections of submission of the Annual Report and OGFm spreadsheet. Please send to [me](#) comments and suggestions on how to improve the process.

Reminders/Updates:

- On the good news front, Scott Angle announced that NIFA informed Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) applicants that for FY 2020, in accordance with General Provision 762 of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Pub. L. 116-94), NIFA will be waiving the match requirement for recipients of grants under SCRI. The deadline for SCRI full applications remains the same of March 13, 2020.
- We've posted NERA's updated suggestions for "[Reimagining NIFA](#)." Check these out!
- Items previously circulated in past newsletters:
 - The [FY 2020 NERA Funding Support for Grant Applications: Request for Proposals](#) is now open. This rolling opportunity supports costs associated with development, writing, and submission of grant proposals. Please share widely! Remember, team leaders that submit proposals will be submitting their proposal to their host AES director: that might be you.
 - The room block for the NERA Spring Meeting (March 23-25, 2020) is now open. Click [here](#) to reserve your room.
 - ESCOP's Diversity Catalyst Committee has released [a call of nominations](#) for the National Experiment Station Diversity and Inclusion Award. Please consider nominating a deserving person, group or program from your station.

Informational items:

- You might have seen that Bob Stougaard (Georgia) is interested in investigating the extent to which colleges of agriculture have implemented user fees to help fund shared research facilities. As background, in 2015, the APLU funded a survey to assess capital infrastructure and deferred maintenance issues at schools of agriculture. The total deferred maintenance costs were estimated at 8.4 billion dollars. Click here to [take the survey](#). (Survey takers will receive the survey results.)
- Check out the editorial, [We want better agricultural research, but who will take the lead?](#) in The Hill written by Gale Buchanan (former USDA chief scientist and undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics).



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NERA and its member institutions are committed to the principles of affirmative action, diversity, and inclusion.

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