

Northeast Administrative Heads Call

January 16, 2026 (via Zoom)

In attendance: Linda Prokopy (Vermont-CALS), Diane Rowland (Maine), Laura Lawson (Rutgers), Troy Ott (Penn State), Carol Thornber (UMass Boston), Anthony Davis (New Hampshire), Wendy Powers (Maryland), Kumar Venkitanarayanan (UConn), Jorge Atilas (West Virginia), Peter Newman (Vermont-Rubenstein School), Jason Hubbart (West Virginia), Rick Rhodes (agInnovation Northeast), David Leibovitz (agInnovation Northeast)

Welcome and Meeting Administration

- The group went through a series of introductions.
- Northeast Joint Summer Session (June 1-3 in Burlington, VT) will have space for the Administrative Heads to meet.

Open Floor – What’s on your mind and what keeps you awake at night?

- USDA priorities for the new administration: what are our common goals, what are some shared areas of interest that we can identify and work toward together. What can we do better together?
- Comparison of institutional structures: it would be helpful to make a peer comparison of institutional organizational structures and discuss the challenges our structures pose to colleges of ag.
- Research Facilities Act: when and how will that funding be delivered? What institutions have “shovel-ready” construction projects?
- AI Decision Support Tools: Penn State just launched one, Tilva™, built on a platform that has been in development for a decade, and it will be rolled out internationally. Place-based accuracy is important – the priority is for the system to be perfect for Pennsylvania first.
- AI in instruction - would be a helpful discussion.
- Non-traditional sources of funding – philanthropic, other sources.
- Sharing graduate courses – online course models, resource sharing across institutions. Looking at the landscape of graduate offerings, what’s missing? What are the strengths of our individual institutions?
- What are the emerging issues and who should we collectively respond? Fire in the Northeast was provided as an example. Could this bring institutions together to grow capacities in addressing fire issues?
- International student recruitment and international applications, how will new rules and regulations impact our goals and operations?
- Graduate unionization process in an era of decreased funding and declining enrollment
- Study Abroad and international activities: how to rebuild international partnerships, what to do with Study Abroad in the current political climate.

- Faculty workload best practices and peer sharing – how do we manage them? What are the expectations? What is worth effort across our universities? What support systems are in place that help faculty to succeed?
- Best practices for NIFA reporting.
- Infrastructure – declining infrastructure at our college poses challenges in the face of pressure from upper administration to maintain R1 status.
- Junior faculty – how do we best support them?
- What factors affect how we are organized and how we do business? Unionized environment, responsibility-centered management practices
- What if Deans spent a day or two on each other’s campuses?

CARET/AHS/BAA Leadership Discussion: How many CARET delegates come from your state? How do you work with them?

- Vermont and WV each have 1, Pennsylvania has 2
- While the CARET engagement will continue, Pennsylvania has identified there is more value in creating intentional opportunities for engagement with representatives in their home district, rather than in DC.
- New Hampshire created a handout to provide for staff during hill visits. This helps to seed and promote shared talking points for staff both on capitol hill and representatives’ home districts.

Northeast Computational Research Initiative (Jason Hubbart, WVU)

- agInnovation NE proposed this initiative, which could provide a strategic umbrella for our institutions.
- There is potential for incorporation into graduate and undergraduate courses.
- Workforce generation and developing the “smart worker”
- Universally applicable across our science disciplines.
- Regionally and nationally, it can decrease the time required for us to address complex problems.
- Opportunities for education to external audience (state agencies, others).
- Development of a shared platform is complicated.
- Institutions have different enterprise AI systems.
- **agInnovation NE will collect a list of interested participants on this initiative.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 am ET.