

ARD UPdates

ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

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DR. VERNON JONES

Message from the Chair

These are difficult times, and the uncertainty that the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has imposed upon our families, students, faculty, staff and the people of the communities we serve is unprecedented. Our hearts and thoughts go

out to the people who have been affected by this challenging and unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the healthcare workers, local communities and governments around the world who are on the front line working to contain this coronavirus.

Following the prudent, science-based policies and guidelines for COVID-19 developed by the 1890 presidents and chancellors, the ARD directors and deans are implementing these continuity plans in their colleges/schools and research/experiment stations. In so doing, our deans and research directors have scheduled weekly virtual meetings to discuss best practices for approaching research in the food, agricultural, environmental and life sciences during COVID-19 health and accompanying challenges. The safety of our families, students, faculty, staff and people of the communities we serve are our highest priority.

First, it should be pointed out that the 1890s have limited significantly the number of people allowed on our campuses

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KSU professor authors COVID-19 article

Dr. Alexander Lai, a Kentucky State University associate professor of biology, recently co-authored a peer-reviewed article, "COVID-19: Epidemiology, Evolution, and Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives," with collaborators in China and Germany. The paper is published in Trends in Molecular Medicine.

Lai said there were three major findings in this paper. First, he said, "this novel coronavirus was from bats, but it was likely a recombinant virus involving a pangolin virus. Therefore, it was a rare event, and most likely from a 'point source,' the wet market in Wuhan where different wildlife species were kept in close proximity."

Second, Lai noted there was a higher mortality rate at the initial phase of the pandemic. "Third, a short peptide, by interfering virus binding to the host receptor, could be used as a potential antiviral drug," Lai said.

Lai said observing a lockdown for a period could be crucial in defeating the virus.

"This virus could be defeated because asymptomatic virus carriers would be cleared," Lai said. "If there were no further importation of virus to our community, we could resume normal activities. However, we need to remain vigilant: good personal hygiene by washing our hands often and keep social distancing." [Read Lai's paper here.](#)



DR. ALEXANDER LAI

NIFA COVID-19 GUIDELINES

NIFA recently published a set of [frequently asked questions](#) regarding new agency flexibilities to help partners cope with current social distancing efforts taking place across the country. The document says awardees are authorized to continue to charge salaries, stipends and benefits to currently active USDA NIFA awards consistent with the recipient's policy of paying salaries (under unexpected or extraordinary circumstances) from all funding sources, federal and non-federal. This includes both "[competitive](#)" and "[capacity](#)" funds. Further, it provides instructions to project directors if a project cannot work towards its science objectives during this time and what they should do if a competitively awarded project cannot be completed within its original time frame or budget. We will publish additional guidance as future questions arise and events unfold.



Visit us online at www.umes.edu/ard

USDA seeks nominations for teaching excellence awards

The USDA has announced its call for applications for the National Awards for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences. The [guidelines and nomination form](#) are linked here.

The deadline for submitting applications is **5 p.m. (EDT) on April 25**. The 2020 guidelines and form are identical to the 2019 guidelines and form. Because of that, please note that many individuals had questions because the guidelines and form do not match one another. When they are in conflict, **follow the guidelines** and not the form.

Here are some tips that may be useful in preparing award nominations:

- Under Teaching Quality Assessment, the Academic Programs Section (APS) of the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) strongly recommends that individuals document their teaching quality by providing evidence such as: peer evaluations, self-reflection, supervisory evaluations, teaching awards,

student evaluations of instruction, assessment of student learning, etc. If student evaluations cannot be provided, please explain why.

- Under Philosophy of Teaching and Teaching Methodology, APS suggests that you think of this as "What is my philosophy of teaching and how do I put it into practice?" Describe high-impact practices you use, such as hybrid, blended, or flipped classrooms; case studies; problem-based learning; experiential learning; Socratic method; active learning; and, etc. Under Nomination Submission, you will note that the page numbers given for the endorsement and nomination letter from the administrator overlaps with the endorsement letters from other sources (alumnus, student, or colleague). APS recommends that you use one page each for these letters. That will keep your packet to 12 pages and within the guidelines.

If you have any questions, please contact [Wendy Fink](#) at APLU.

USDA launches agriculture innovation agenda

In February 2020, the USDA launched [the Agriculture Innovation Agenda](#), a department-wide initiative to align resources, programs and research to position American agriculture to better meet future global demands. This agenda is a strategic department-wide effort to better align USDA's resources, programs, and research to provide farmers with the tools they need to be successful.



USDA AGRICULTURE INNOVATION AGENDA

USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue said that "we are also continually mindful of the need for America's agriculture industry to be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable to maintain our position as a leader in the global effort to meet demand."

Certainly, land-grant universities will be a great resource for this effort, but also a collaborator and leader in the development and implementation of this ambitious agenda. In response to Secretary Perdue's announcement, APLU President Peter McPherson and Doug Steele, vice president for Food, Agricul-

ture, and Natural Resources, sent a letter of appreciation for the agenda and offered the support of the nation's LGUs as this initiative is rolled out from USDA.

On April 1, 2020, to further the USDA work on the [Agriculture Innovation Agenda \(AIA\)](#), USDA today announced it is seeking public and private sector input on the most important innovation opportunities to be addressed in the near and long term. Using input provided, USDA will identify common themes across the agriculture customer base to inform research and innovation efforts in the Department, the broader public-sector, and the private sector.

"Bold and transformative innovation is needed to meet future agricultural production demands," said Deputy Under Secretary Scott Hutchins, who leads USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area. "We intend to work collaboratively with both the agricultural community and the broad innovation community to align on the most important opportunities. By working together, we can transform our nation and leave our world in a much better state for generations to come."

USDA is currently accepting public comments and written stakeholder input through its [Request for Informa-](#)

[tion \(RFI\)](#) through Aug. 1, 2020 following its publication in the Federal Register.

Respondents are asked to identify transformational innovation opportunities for the next era of agriculture productivity and environmental conservation and propose approaches to these opportunities with an eye to the public and private sector research needed to support them. Input from the agricultural and scientific community will help inform research goals with the intent of aligning applications and technologies to best address the goals of the Agriculture Innovation Agenda for the next 10 to 30 years.

Based on stakeholder input from the RFI, USDA will develop a comprehensive U.S. agriculture innovation strategy that it intends to release by the end of this year.

This effort, led by Dr. Hutchins, is a core part of the Agriculture Innovation Agenda, a department-wide initiative to align resources, programs and research to position American agriculture to better meet future global demands. Specifically, USDA will stimulate innovation so that American agriculture can achieve the goal of increasing production by 40% while cutting the environmental footprint of U.S. agriculture in half by 2050.

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to essential staff only. These authorized employees are instructed to adhere to social distancing and other health precautions to prevent transmission. Most researchers, however, in our food and agricultural sciences programs are working remotely to self-quarantine during this coronavirus pandemic.

Consistent in most programs in the food, agricultural, environmental and life sciences are precautionary measures related to research continuity at our research farms and wet/experimental laboratories. As we experience the further spread of the coronavirus, our research farms are engaging in the following preventive measures, including but limited to, all 'non-essential employees' will follow their respective university plans for faculty and staff; principal investigators, in consultation with their directors, are making decisions about graduate assistants/students relative to involvement in their research (*decisions are evolving quickly*); and farm unit coordinators and essential employees, including the superintendent, are operating on a limited work schedule to assure daily husbandry and in some cases, production needs are met. Further, the research in our wet or experimental labs is temperature and time sensitive; and is being monitored consistently on a pre-determined schedule. All research projects that can be shut down during this emergency period without affecting research outcomes will cease operation.

I would like to underscore ARD's commitment to the health, safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and everyone in the communities where we work and serve.

In terms of research administration, other precautionary measures related to travel and business meetings are being taken. Briefly, business travel has been limited and research directors and their staffs have strongly encouraged leveraging technology to hold business meetings whenever possible. In addition, whenever possible, directors and scientists are permitted to work from home or another remote location. The research directors are acutely aware that if access to our campuses remains limited for an extended time, it will create major challenges for researchers. And about \$100 million in capacity and competitive research funding is invested in hundreds of projects involving hundreds of graduate students.

Although these are challenging times for all of us, I would like to underscore ARD's commitment to the health, safety and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and everyone in the communities where we work and serve. ARD continues to work closely with our legislative champions, the Council of 1890 Presidents and Chancellors and APLU to include the 1890s in the COVID-19 supplemental funding bills, including the bipartisan passage of the \$2 trillion economic aid passage known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Phase 4 supplemental funding for COVID-19 is being crafted now. The 1890 system has significant and immediate operational needs.

Finally, I am confident that our directors will continue to implement our respective research continuity plans to respond to the novel coronavirus as we seek to find answers to the many questions that arise each day. I would like to thank our colleagues in the North Central Regional Association (NCRA) of the Agricultural Experiment Stations Directors for sharing their expertise, best practices and other very helpful information on their website on COVID-19.

Take care everyone and don't forget to exercise.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

**University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff,
Department of Human Sciences/
Assistant/Associate Professor Human
Sciences** (Hospitality & Tourism Management. Start Date: July 16). Application Deadline: April 20.

Qualifications: Earned doctorate in hospitality or closely related area. Competence in subject matter as evidenced by relevant course work, research, computer skills, college/university teaching experience and online experience preferred:

Application: Submit letter of application, curriculum vita, copies of official transcripts for undergraduate and graduate work, statement of teaching philosophy, research agenda, and contact list of three references to: Department of Human Sciences Search Committee; c/o Human Resources Department; University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, 1200 North University Drive; Mail Slot 4942; Pine Bluff, AR 71601; uapbjobs@uapb.edu

**Department of Human Sciences/
Assistant/Associate Professor Human
Sciences** (Food Service Restaurant Management). Start Date: July 16). Application Deadline: April 20.

Qualifications: Earned doctorate in food service, restaurant management, nutrition or closely related area. Competence in subject matter as evidenced by relevant course work, research experience, computer skills, college/university teaching experience and food service work experience are required for the position. reference will be given to candidates with food production teaching experience at the college level.

Application: Submit letter of application, curriculum vita, copies of official transcripts for undergraduate and graduate work, statement of teaching philosophy, research agenda and contact list of three references to: Department of Human Sciences Search Committee; c/o Human Resources Department; University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, 1200 North University Drive; Mail Slot 4942; Pine Bluff, AR 71601; uapbjobs@uapb.edu

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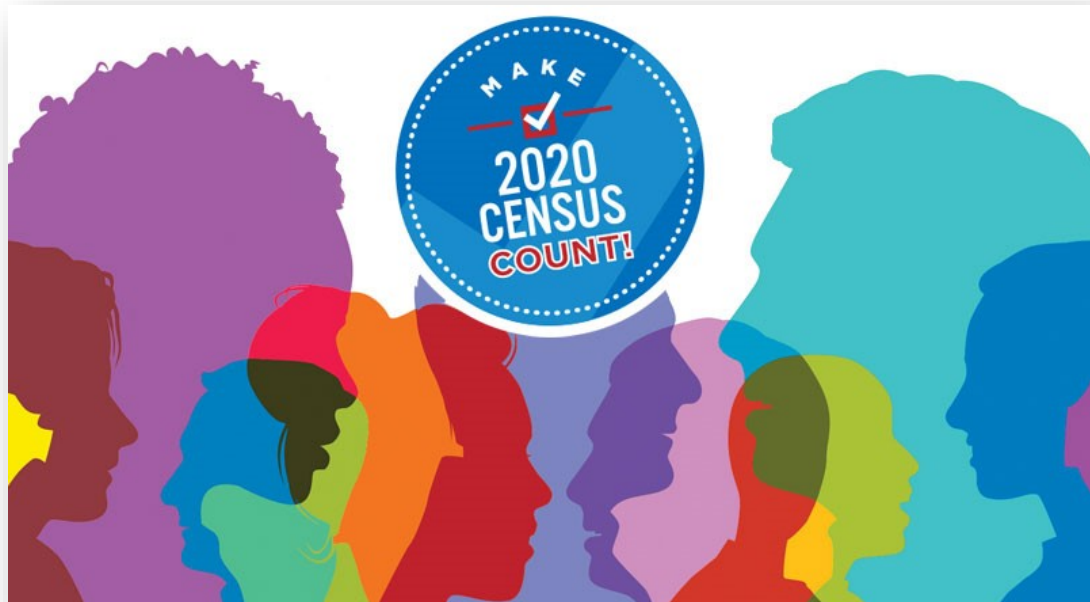
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1890 Land Grant Universities

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[Alcorn State University](#)
[Central State University](#)
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[Florida A&M University](#)
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ARD Updates is published monthly by the Association of Research Directors. To suggest articles, contact Dr. Alton Thompson at athompson1@ncat.edu



U.S. Census extends deadline to August

The U.S. Census Bureau is delaying the deadline for counting everyone in the U.S. by two weeks because of the spreading novel coronavirus, officials said Friday.

The 2020 census had been scheduled to stop at the end of July, but the deadline has now been extended to mid-August, said Tim Olson, an associate director for field operations at the bureau.

NIFA JOB OPPORTUNITIES

NIFA Director Scott Angle has requested that the current listing of NIFA position openings and vacancies be shared with the national system of land-grant universities and related institutions. There are a number of positions, both scientific and support, that are now advertised for application. Not all positions will be located in the Kansas City area and each posting may be seeking a number of individuals to fill vacancies. Please distribute this information within your networks.

For interest in other positions, please go to the [NIFA Career Opportunities](#) page and [NIFA's LinkedIn](#) site for a current listing of current career opportunities. These sites should be checked frequently as new jobs will be posted in the coming days, weeks, and months.

ARD CALENDAR

2020 AEA SYSTEMWIDE CONFERENCE

June 21-25, 2020, Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld, Orlando, FL

The conference's goal is to provide a forum for Extension educators, specialists, administrators, research professionals, public and private partners to learn, share innovative ideas, best practices and explore collaboration opportunities for advancing impact-driven extension programs in the 1890 Extension System. Professional development workshops, exhibits and presentations on innovations and best practices will dominate the three-day conference.

SAVE-THE-DATES

2020 JOINT COPS MEETING – July 20 – 23 in Kansas City

2020 ESS-SAES-ARD FALL MEETING - Sept. 28-30 at the Baltimore Waterfront Marriott