

May 31, 2017

Dear USAIN Members,

Today marks the end of another USAIN year (June 1, 2016 – May 31, 2017). I am pleased to submit the following annual report on behalf of the USAIN Executive Council (EC). For an entirely volunteer-driven organization, we have had a busy and productive year.

I am honored to have served as the President of USAIN this past year, and I look forward continuing on as Past-President under the leadership of incoming President, Leslie Delserone.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah C. Williams
USAIN President, 2016-2017

USAIN Highlights, 2016-2017

Action Plan Goal 1: Strength membership and increase participating in USAIN by members and other food and agricultural information professionals.

- USAIN membership remains strong, with 148 current members including all nine Honorary Members. Previously, only a few Honorary Members had been recorded in the USAIN membership roster, so our Membership Committee co-chairs, Amy Shannon and Natalie Waters, gathered contact information for the missing Honorary Members and worked with our management firm to have them added to the membership roster.
- The USAIN Action Plan is reviewed and revised every three years to ensure that it remains an effective roadmap for the organization. An Action Plan Working Group, led by Kristen Mastel, reviewed the plan and gathered input widely. In March 2017, the EC voted to approve the revised Action Plan, which will be in effect from June 2017 through May 2020. The new Action Plan is available on the USAIN website.
- In fall 2016, the EC conducted the annual membership survey. This year's survey included a variety of questions, because the EC wanted to gather as much input as possible on various USAIN initiatives. A membership survey summary was shared via USAIN-L, and complete, individual responses were shared with the chairs of relevant committees and groups for their planning purposes.
- The EC took decisive action on the development of a new USAIN website.
 - The EC voted to set and adhere to a final deadline for our former web development firm (JesseJames Creative), and when that mid-August deadline was missed (after three years of work), the EC sent the firm a project cancellation notice.
 - In anticipation of this outcome, the EC had already formed a small group of EC members to explore alternative website systems.
 - That small exploration group morphed into the larger USAIN Website Team, chaired by Val Minson, which was charged with reviewing four potential systems, making recommendations to the EC and implementing the selected system. In December, Wild Apricot was selected as the new website and membership management system, and since then, the Website Team has been working diligently to implement the system, with the goal of making the new site live in summer 2017.

Action Plan Goal 2: Advocate for public policy, legislation, and institutions which support agricultural research and information communities.

- In January, with the new U.S. presidential administration, concerns were raised about the future of public access to scientific information, especially EPA and USDA information. The Legislative and Government Relations Committee, co-chaired by Leslie Delserone and Ashley Shea, took the lead on monitoring the situation, keeping USAIN members informed, and suggesting actions and responses.

- Given the concerns above and given USAIN's mission to take a leadership role in the formation of a national information policy as related to agriculture, the EC crafted and approved a USAIN Statement of Support for Public Access to Scientific Information and Data, which was released on March 9, 2017. It was distributed via USAIN-L, added to the USAIN website, and posted to USAIN social media accounts.

Action Plan Goal 3: Provide educational and professional development opportunities for members and others.

- Planning is underway for the 16th Biennial USAIN conference, which will be hosted by Washington State University in May 2018. Conference Planning Chair, Lara Cummings, has joined a couple of USAIN EC monthly calls to provide updates.
- The USAIN Project Ceres Subcommittee, in collaboration with CRL and AgNIC, has continued to manage the Project Ceres grants. In spring 2016, five awards were announced for Round 4, and those funds are to be expended by August 31, 2017. The deadline for Round 5 proposals was February 17, 2017.
- The 15th Biennial USAIN conference, hosted by University of Florida, produced a significant profit for USAIN. Wishing to return some of this profit to USAIN members, the Budget Committee, chaired by Treasurer Jessica Page, proposed budgeting some money for two pilot programs: (1) \$5000 for a Project Ceres matching fund and (2) \$500 for a research scholarship fund. CRL gratefully accepted the proposal of a pilot Project Ceres matching fund, which the USAIN Project Ceres Subcommittee will award along with the regular CRL funding. A responsible group and a process still need to be identified for the pilot research scholarship fund.
- As a sponsor of the Ithaca S+R Agriculture Research Support Services project, USAIN made a conscious effort to track the project through Amy Paster, our representative to the project's advisory group. Amy reached out periodically to Danielle Cooper, the Ithaca S+R Senior Researcher on this project, and the EC invited Danielle to one of our monthly meetings. A list of the publicly-available institutional reports was shared via USAIN-L in March. An announcement will be made when the Ithaca S+R report is available, and we also plan to organize a webinar for Danielle to share the highlights of the Ithaca S+R report.

Organizational Business

- Coming into 2016-2017 Committee cycle, outgoing President Philip Herold anticipated significant turnover, because many committee chairs and members had served four or more consecutive years on the same committee. Thanks to the great response on the committee volunteer sign-up sheets at the 2016 conference, Philip was able appoint new committee chairs and fill committee rosters. Interest Group (IG) convener positions also had turnover. To help support new committee chairs and IG conveners, the EC liaisons reached out quarterly to their committees and IGs to inquire about activities, respond to questions or concerns, and pass along relevant information. The EC liaisons also shared the IG convener guidelines that were developed in 2016.
- The Director of the National Agricultural Library (NAL), Paul Wester, participated in much of the March EC meeting at NAL. We had a good discussion regarding collaboration and engagement between USAIN and NAL, which we hope will lead to benefits for both organizations.
- Val Minson submitted the report of the 15th Biennial USAIN conference, hosted by University of Florida. The EC thanked the conference team for a well-organized and detailed report, which should be extremely helpful for future conference planners, and commended the team for their creativity and initiative to pursue the Visit Gainesville Grant, which increased the conference profit.
- The Nominations and Elections Committee, chaired by Philip Herold, conducted an effective 2017 election, with a strong slate of candidates and over 68% of eligible voters participating.

Executive Council Members, 2016-2017

President: Sarah C. Williams

Past President: Philip Herold

President Elect: Leslie Delserone

Secretary: Claudine Jenda

Treasurer: Jessica Page

Directors: Cristina Caminita, Peter Fernandez, Megan Kocher, Kristen Mastel, Necia Parker-Gibson, Amy Paster

NAL Representative: Chris Cole (June 2016-January 2017), Jill James (February 2017-Present)

Outgoing Executive Council Members: Philip Herold (Past-President), Cristina Caminita (Director), and Peter Fernandez (Director)

Incoming Executive Council Members: Kristen Mastel (President-Elect), Florian Diekmann (Director), Melody Royster (Director), and Suzanne Stapleton (Director)

Committee Chairs, 2016-2017

Awards and Honors: inactive year

Budget: Jessica Page

Bylaws: Philip Herold

Communications: Inga Haugen & Jim Morris-Knowler

Conference Planning: Lara Cummings and Jodee Kuden

Legislative & Government Relations: Leslie Delserone & Ashley Shea

Membership: Amy Shannon & Natalie Waters

Nominations & Elections: Philip Herold

Preservation & Digital Library: Michael Cook

Professional Development: Kiri DeBose & Lara Cummings

Interest Group Conveners, 2016-2017

AERIE: Innocent Awasom & Linda Eells

AgNIC: Rob McGeachin & Brad Brazzeal

Animal Health: Kiri DeBose & Sandra Weingart

Collection Management: Jodee Kuden & Emily MacKenzie

International Agriculture: John Cruickshank & Julie Kelly

Social Issues/Rural Information: Randa Lopez Morgan

Technology Trends: Luti Salisbury & Netta Cox