



Administrative Council Handbook

- Process
- Roles
- Responsibilities

www.southern.sare.org

Updated February 2026

Welcome

Welcome to the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Administrative Council. With your involvement in the SARE program, you are playing an important role in the process, goals, operations and implementation of SARE in furthering sustainable agriculture production and marketing efforts across the Southern region.

Your contributions to SARE have an impact on your agricultural community. Whether you are a farmer/rancher, researcher, extension agent, community leader, agribusiness, government entity or a nonprofit, your participation on the Administrative Council means that the most sustainable farming approaches put forth through SARE-funded research are focused on long-term profitability, environmental stewardship and quality of life for individuals and communities.

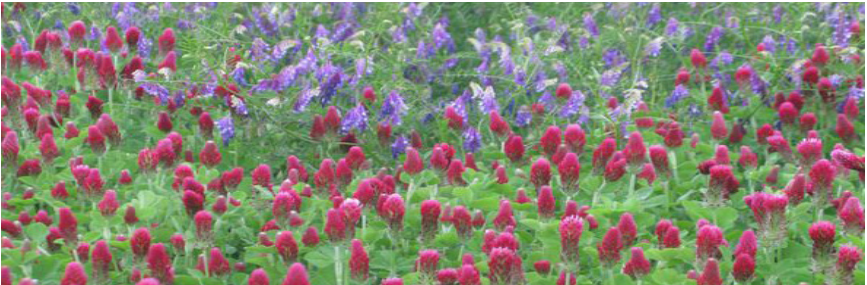
The most obvious reward for people who join the SARE leadership is the satisfaction of having a say in how our agricultural tax dollars are spent; it must be added, a little immodestly, that even though SARE is a small program, it has consistently had an impact out of proportion to its budget. This is because the emphasis is on applied agriculture research and education projects with measurable results that translate quickly into practical support for farmers and on projects that test new ideas.

Another reward comes from the program structure itself. The SARE mandate requires that people with many different skills and backgrounds: Farmers, conservationists, lenders, university faculty, extension, people from the nonprofit sector, and a surprising range of others converge around the SARE mission and have interesting, at times urgent, conversations about the funding opportunities on the table. These discussions tend to be productive because they are project-driven and specific, and a great deal of knowledge is exchanged.

One final aspect of SARE is its ability to place a high value on innovation, which translates into proposals and projects that are intrinsically interesting. This means that, even if a project does not turn out as planned, it still retains its value. Participating in the selection process and following up on the results often brings with it new insight into barriers and opportunities.

This handbook is designed to provide a snapshot of the SARE program: How it works, grant programs, leadership structure, and your role and expectations as an Administrative Council member.

SARE was formed in the style of a grass-roots operation; the success of the program leans on knowledge and contributions of a cross-section of agricultural stakeholders. No matter your station, you serve the interests of your institutions, businesses and communities. Through your involvement in SARE, you are ensuring continuing efforts of sustainable agriculture across the region. You have a voice.



What is SARE?

Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grants and outreach program. The goal of SARE is to support farmers/ranchers, researchers, educators and community organizations as they explore and implement sustainable agriculture production and marketing practices. There is a national SARE office that coordinates overall direction, but program grants and services are delivered through four regional offices: South, West, North Central and Northeast.

The overall objective of SARE is to position agricultural communities so the most sustainable approaches available permeate U.S. agriculture. The result is food, fiber and animal products are sustainably produced in healthy communities in an environment where farmers are respected, rewarded, and encouraged to innovate. We also seek partnerships with universities, NGOs, government agencies and other community organizations so sustainable agriculture becomes the focus of their message.

SARE was authorized as part of the 1985 Farm Bill and first funded in 1988 as the Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture (LISA) program. The name changed to SARE in the early 1990s to reflect the broader principles of sustainable agriculture and to express the dual mission of research and education.

Competitive research grants, offered annually, are the primary tools of the SARE program. SARE seeks out innovations in sustainable agriculture, and rewards grant applicants who offer interesting and potentially workable ideas. SARE also emphasizes outreach and the dissemination of project results so the grant programs will have the widest possible benefits. SARE funds are subject to Congressional approval. In 1988,

Southern SARE shared a very small portion of the \$3.9 million that Congress appropriated for the entire SARE program. Twelve grants were awarded in that inaugural year. Today, Southern SARE has allocated more than \$10 million to administer its grants programs from the \$50 million Congressional appropriations for the entire SARE program. In its 30 plus year history, the regional program has awarded 1,905 grants totaling over \$112 million.

The national SARE office has representation on the regional governing bodies, known as the Administrative Councils. In turn, the regional Administrative Councils send representatives to the national governing body, known as the Operations Committee. Each region also sends a representative to the annual SARE Outreach Steering Committee meeting to discuss publishing and outreach priorities.



SARE in the Southern Region

SARE is divided into four regions, with the Southern SARE program operating under the cooperative agreements of University of Georgia, Fort Valley State University (Georgia) and the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture (Oklahoma). Southern SARE supports sustainable agriculture efforts in 13 states and two U.S. territories. The states include: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Grant Programs

Southern SARE funds several different competitive research grant programs, with each type benefiting a specific audience. These grants can be divided into two broad categories.

Southern SARE's flagship grant program, Research & Education, and its Professional Development Program Grant, make up what are known as the "big grants", because of the size of the funding available.

Research & Education Grants (R&E) focus on both research projects and education activities. Research Grants may be funded for up to three years and have budgets up to \$400,000 that accommodate system-scale projects. These grants are specifically targeted to university and government agency researchers, although nonprofits and agribusinesses are also invited to apply.

The **Professional Development Program Grant (PDP)**, known as the "train-the-trainer" grant program, also accommodates larger scale training activities. Funded projects generally fall within the \$100,000 range. PDP grants are open to researchers, nonprofits, community organizations, agribusinesses and other professionals in the ag industry.

Both grant programs have a two-step application process that

involves screening pre-proposals before submission of full proposals. The funding selection process is guided by specific, outcome-driven criteria.

Smaller grant programs are also available: Education Grants, Producer Grants, On-Farm Research Grants, and Graduate Student Grants.

Education Grants are specifically targeted to NGOs, although university and government agency researchers are eligible to apply. Nonprofits are particularly encouraged to apply for Education Grants, since their focus is more on outreach activities rather than research. Education Grants have a maximum funding level of \$50,000 for up to a two-year project.

Producer Grants are specifically targeted to farmers, ranchers and farmer groups who are interested in conducting research in sustainable agriculture on their farms. Producer Grants are funded for two years, with \$20,000 available for individual farmers and \$25,000 available for farmer groups.

On-Farm Research Grants are similar to Producer Grants in scope but they are intended for researchers, government agencies, and Extension educators who work directly with farmers on research projects. On-Farm Research Grants are funded for two years, with \$30,000 available in funding.

Graduate Student Grants are targeted to Master's and PhD students, with \$22,000 in funding available for two-year projects.

These smaller grants have no pre-proposal requirements, nor are applicants asked to demonstrate specific outcomes in an intensive way.

Proposals submitted for any grant project must be relevant to sustainable agriculture and align with Southern SARE's vision, mission, and program objectives.

Southern SARE's **vision** is an enduring American agriculture

of the highest quality. This agriculture is profitable, protects the nation's land and water, and is a force for a rewarding way of life for farmers and ranchers whose quality products and operations sustain their communities and society.

Southern SARE's **mission** is to advance—to the whole of American agriculture—innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.

Program objectives include:

- Strengthen the family farm system, regardless of size, to position farmers and ranchers and their future generations for long-term profitability and stability.
- Promote effective stewardship of the nation's natural resources by providing site-specific, replicable, and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs; maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of the soil; conserve and protect wildlife habitats; and improve the quality of surface and groundwater.
- Improve quality of life through efforts that strengthen rural communities and further urban agricultural endeavors by fostering partnerships, long-term economic stability, new technological innovations and business enhancement and advancements.
- Protect the environment through conservation strategies that advocate adaptable agriculture through innovative, ecologically sound, mitigative, holistic, and sustainable methods for short-term and long-term farmer profitability.
- Address the needs and promote the successes of all farm audiences.
- Promote long-term, whole systems approaches to farming strategies that support crop, livestock and enterprise diversification, and the well-being of animals.

Southern SARE Leadership Structure

Southern SARE has a leadership structure intended to encourage each member to contribute fully, while at the same time allow tasks to be distributed as appropriately as possible. Southern SARE's organization consists of the Administrative Council, Technical Reviewers, State Coordinators, and regional staff.

The Administrative Council

The Administrative Council, often referred to as the AC, is the regional governing body for SSARE. The AC drives the funding of grant projects, oversees the general budget, guides programming, and makes sure that the regional program stays on point with its mission, vision, and objectives related to sustainable agriculture production and marketing efforts. The AC meets twice a year: winter (February) and summer (August).

The Southern SARE AC is a cross-section of ag professionals across the region, composed of 28 members, appointed by partner agencies or selected through an open nomination process.

Members include:

1862/1890 research and extension land-grant institutions;
State Departments of Agriculture;
USDA Agricultural Research Service;
USDA National Agroforestry Center/Forestry Service;
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service;
Environmental Protection Agency;
U.S. Geological Survey;
Producers;
Non-governmental organizations;
Agribusiness;
Quality of Life;
Food Sovereignty;
The National SARE office; and
Two state ag coordinator representatives serving one-year appointments.

Compensation for AC Duties

Southern SARE pays travel, lodging, meal expenses, and meeting time for Producer and NGO AC members as they discharge their duties. All expenditures must be filed within 20 days of the completion of the event. Reimbursement requests will not be accepted after 20 days. Producer and NGO representatives on the AC are compensated for the following:

- For Winter and Summer AC meetings: **\$300 per day per meeting** (including travel days) plus expenses;
- For General AC support, including proposal reviews: **\$300** twice a year, paid in conjunction with AC meeting reimbursement;
- Grant Committee support: **\$300** per year for each grant committee served, paid out following the summer meeting.
- Zoom meetings (including Executive Committee calls): **\$100** for calls lasting up to 2 hours; **\$200** for calls over 2 hours and under 4 hours.

Introduction to Subcommittees

The Southern SARE AC conducts its business through a structure of committees. All AC agenda items originate with one of the six current standing committees: Operations/Nominating, Project Review, Producer Grant, Professional Development Program, Equity and Prosperity, and Communications.

Operations/Nominating Committee

The role of the Operations/Nominating Committee is to develop and recommend budgets and policies for the AC. The committee recommends a list of candidates to serve as officers of the AC. The committee also solicits and recommends new members of the AC as vacancies occur. Membership on this committee is on a volunteer basis.

Usual business to be conducted:

1. The committee considers each year's budget to be submitted as part of the USDA Cooperative Agreement.
2. The committee reviews and recommends revisions to the By-Laws of the AC, including changes in the Conflict of Interest Policy.
3. The committee monitors memberships and recommends to the AC committee chairs based upon the vote within each committee.

4. The committee reviews and recommends changes to the National SARE Operations Guidelines.
5. The committee solicits new members for the AC and for the Technical Review Committee.

Project Review Committee

The task of the Project Review Committee (PRC) is to establish goals and criteria for the evaluation of proposals and the funding of projects. The PRC is constituted to reflect the composition of the AC. As outlined in *How It Works*, the Project Review Committee has the following responsibilities:

Usual business to be conducted:

1. Review, change, and recommend to the AC the yearly Calls for Proposals for the Research and Education and Graduate Student Grants. If the Calls are revised after an AC meeting, the (PRC) makes its recommendation to the Executive Committee (EC).
2. The PRC first reviews all pre-proposals submitted under the R&E grants program. The members recommend approximately one-third of the pre-proposals to be submitted as full proposals.
3. The full proposals are then sent to the Technical Review Committee (TRC) for scientific review. After the outside TRC has provided the PRC with its review of the full proposals, the PRC recommends to the full AC those projects to be funded from the entire list of proposals.
4. The PRC is responsible for providing project investigators a constructive and explicit review of their proposal. The PRC is also responsible for the Graduate Student awards and recommends to the AC those to be funded based on input from the Graduate Student Grant Technical Advisory Committee.

In addition to the yearly selection of grants, the PRC also performs related jobs:

1. Review and recommend to the AC any new grant programs to be added to the Southern SARE portfolio.
2. Consider new methods to evaluate projects and report assessments.
3. Set the grant-cycle calendar each year.
4. Recommend changes and updates to *How It Works*.
5. Assist in solicitation of TRC members.

Producer Grant Committee

The Producer Grant Committee's (PGC) task is to establish goals and criteria for the evaluation of proposals and the review of Producer Grants. In addition,

the PGC is also responsible for the On-Farm Grants program. Membership on the PGC includes the seven farmer members of the AC. As outlined in *How It Works*, the PGC has the following responsibilities:

Usual business to be conducted:

1. Review, change and recommend to the AC the yearly Call for Proposals for both the Producer and On-Farm Research grant programs.
2. The PGC conducts the technical reviews of the Producer Grant proposals. An outside TRC reviews the On-Farm Research Grant proposals. The PGC then meets in person to consider the grant proposals of both grant programs. The committee presents its slate of funding recommendations to the full AC.

In addition, the PGC is responsible for all activities, new grants programs, and issues related directly to farmer participation in the Southern SARE program.

Professional Development Program Committee

The work of the Professional Development Program (PDP) Committee is to establish goals and criteria for the evaluation of proposals, the review of PDP projects, and to make recommendations to the AC regarding grant funding. Membership on this committee includes two AC members, the Extension director, and Extension administrator on the AC.

In addition to having the responsibility of reviewing and recommending PDP grants for funding, the PDP Committee is also charged with the following:

1. Produce the yearly PDP Call for Proposals.
2. Oversee and strengthen the State Coordinators program, as well as review and approve the Model State Programs/State Plans of Work.
3. Advise PDP staff on where grant writing workshops are needed.
4. Develop any special Calls for Proposals as needed.

EPIC Committee

The purpose of the EPIC Committee is to establish goals and programs to support farmers/ranchers and the ag organizations that serve them. Membership is on a volunteer basis.

In pursuing its goals, EPIC has conducted workshops addressing the needs of farmers in the South and supported workshops and conferences organized by other groups through scholarships for farmers and ranchers.

EPIC has also discussed ways to increase participation by farmers/ranchers in the SARE Producer Grant program.

The committee also recommends to the AC ways to increase the participation of land-grant institutions in the Southern SARE program, as well as of the involvement of NGOs' work with farmers and ranchers across the region.

Communications Committee

This committee facilitates the communication of SARE projects and outreach success stories to promote sustainable agriculture and SARE in the Southern region. It is also a link to other regions and the national office to inform the dialogue about sustainable issues. Membership is on a volunteer basis.

Usual business to be conducted:

1. Represent AC on SARE Outreach Steering Committee. Each region appoints a representative to sit on the steering committee. The Southern SARE Outreach representative is to report to the Communications Committee on any issues related to SARE Outreach and other national communication issues. He/she also reports from SARE Outreach to the AC.
2. Prepare information and/or handbooks. The Communications Committee will consider types of resources or handbooks that need to be produced by Southern SARE. For example, consider when to update, reprint, or discontinue any materials.
3. Examine new communications techniques. The committee will evaluate new methods for communication and whether to change or discontinue current techniques.
4. Assist in issues related to the publication of annual reports and final reports.
5. Produce any new brochures and communication media, including web-based material.
6. Consider ways to best market and communicate issues relating to all annual Calls for Proposals.
7. Establish and conduct public workshops, as needed, for grant preparation.

Every AC member serves on one of the three review committees (Project Review, PDP, Producer Grant), as well as one of the other committees. Some producer members will serve on two review committees. Each committee elects its own chair. At each AC meeting, the committees meet prior to the full AC

convening to discuss their agendas. For each agenda item to be discussed, the committee chair is required to submit an “agenda brief” to be sent to the committee members before the AC meeting. The agenda brief provides information on the issues to be discussed. These can include an information-only item or a request for a motion to bring an item to the AC where a vote will be taken by the full AC. Any items passed by the AC are carried out accordingly.

In addition, the AC has authorized an **Executive Committee** made up of the AC Chair and Vice Chair, as well as the chairs of each subcommittee. The Executive Committee, or EC, meets monthly by conference call to discuss on-going Southern SARE business. If AC decisions are required between the two meeting dates, the Executive Committee is authorized to make those decisions. The Executive Committee is primarily the place where new issues facing the AC are first discussed prior to the full AC meetings.

Technical Reviewers

Technical Reviewers are researchers, farmers, Cooperative Extension, NRCS personnel, nonprofit representatives, and a wide variety of other agricultural professionals. Technical Reviewers are recruited to review grant proposals based on their area of expertise. They offer skill and support to the grant reviewing process through the reviewing and scoring of grant proposals via the online SARE Grant Management System.

Becoming a grant reviewer is voluntary, but there are several reasons supporters of sustainable agriculture should consider investing in reviewing proposals.

- New to SARE? Being a grant reviewer affords those interested in the SARE program the opportunity to learn how the program is structured and how the grant process works. This experience helps new grant applicants more easily navigate through the grant application process.
- An old hat with SARE? Researchers, Extension specialists and other profes-

sionals in the ag industry who are veteran grant awardees of the SARE program are strongly encouraged to review SARE proposals. Past grant recipients, particularly those who have received numerous SARE grants, are knowledgeable about the SARE granting process and have the expertise and experience to give back to the program. No one understands the importance of SARE funding better than our own project investigators.

- Young researchers, fresh to the world of academia, are encouraged to review SARE grant proposals. The small size of the SARE program, coupled with the ease of our grant application process, easily introduces young, new researchers to the world of grants and the funding process, whether it'd be SARE grants or grants from another federal agency.
- Being a SARE grant reviewer introduces researchers, Extension specialists, and others in the ag industry to sustainable agriculture and expands their portfolio of knowledge through the myriad of projects that SARE supports. In turn, a range of disciplines from technical reviewers is important to providing strong, applicable feedback for those applying for SARE grants.

Once the proposal deadline of a particular SARE grant passes, outside technical reviewers are solicited, generally via e-mail, to review grant proposals. This is done on an annual basis. Depending on the type of grant being reviewed, technical reviewers answer criteria questions and rank the proposals as either high priority, fundable with revisions, marginal funding, or nonfundable. They also write review summaries for each proposal.

Once the reviews are completed, they are handed down to the appropriate review committee on the Southern SARE Administrative Council, which reviews the rankings and comments and selects proposals to be recommended for funding. The Administrative Council ultimately votes on the slate of proposals put forward by the review committees and approves proposals to be funded. Although the Administrative Council makes the final funding decisions, its decisions are informed by the initial work of the technical reviewers.

The Granting Process

AC members are expected to read, comment on, and score a

portion of the grant applications each year, and to also attend the two yearly meetings to make grant award decisions and conduct other business.

Grant review for the Research & Education Grants begins in June with pre-proposals. The AC assumes responsibility for screening these pre-proposals. The top submissions are invited to submit full proposals after the August AC meeting. Full proposals are due in November and are evaluated by both AC PRC members and Technical Review Committee members. Based on the reviewers' rankings and remarks, the AC Project Review Committee recommends a slate of Research and Education proposals to the full AC for funding.

The AC also screens pre-proposals for the Professional Development Program grant, which begins in August. The top submissions are invited to submit full proposals in October. Full proposals are due in November and are evaluated by both the AC PDP members and Technical Review Committee members. Based on the reviewers' rankings and remarks, the PDP Committee recommends a slate of proposals to the full AC for funding at the February AC meeting.

The Education Grants are reviewed by the PRC each fall. Selected projects for funding are presented to and voted on by the full AC during the winter AC meeting.

The smaller grant programs are reviewed by outside Technical Reviewers: In the summer for Graduate Student Grants and the winter for On-Farm Research Grants. Producer Grants are not reviewed by outside technical reviewers; those are reviewed by the AC Producer Grant Committee members. The AC Producer Grant Committee reads and scores the Producer Grant proposals, then meets by conference call to discuss them. The results of the On-Farm Research Grant technical reviews are discussed by the AC Producer Grant Committee at the February AC meeting. Based on the reviewers' rankings

and remarks, the Producer Grant Committee recommends a slate of proposals for the Producer and On-Farm Research Grants to the full AC for funding during the February meeting. The Project Review Committee reviews Technical Reviewer scores and comments for the Graduate Student Grants and recommends the slate for funding to the AC during the August meeting.

State Coordinators

Within each state, agricultural educators work directly with farmers and ranchers to further sustainable agriculture production and marketing practices. Through a program called the Professional Development Program (PDP), SARE state coordinators provide support for sustainable agriculture education and outreach strategies. Begun in 1994, PDP supports Cooperative Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff, mentor farmers, and other agricultural educators.

Each land grant institution in the region names a representative to serve as the State Sustainable Ag Coordinator: one from the 1862 land-grant institution and one from the 1890 land-grant institution. The role of the state coordinators is critical, since they are responsible for the integration of the concepts of sustainable agriculture into daily outreach and extension practices at the local level. SARE offers an annual appropriation to each land-grant for developing sustainable agriculture curricula for their extension staff. SARE state ag coordinators oversee the professional development plan within their state and the SARE money that is attached to it.

In working toward this broad goal, day-to-day activities would likely include these main areas:

- Training program development and delivery appropriate for both new and current personnel. SARE State Coordinators should make use of SARE grantees, particularly producer cooperators, and partner with

NGOs and farmer organizations for activities such as farm tours and field days. Training topics are open to anything that will help farmers transition to a more sustainable agriculture. They can include technical assistance in areas such as water quality, nutrient management, whole-farm systems, marketing or understanding farm policy.

- Promotion, networking and coordination of SARE grant opportunities, training activities, and educational materials. These could be provided by SARE Outreach, Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (AT-TRA), the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG) and other NGOs. SARE State Coordinators will get input from field staff and other educators about their sustainable agriculture training needs and share program opportunities.

- Communication, reporting and evaluation. SARE PDP strives for a minimum of paperwork but annual reports are due to the regional PDP office to document training efforts in each state.

State ag coordinators normally attend a regional meeting in conjunction with the August AC meeting and educational tour. This tour is normally planned by the state coordinator or AC member where the meeting is held. The goal of the tour is to highlight successful farm practices, educate both the AC and the state coordinators, and open up new avenues of discussion.

Regional Staff

The staff in the regional office provides support by managing meeting logistics, travel, mailings, conference calls, and general communications, and by supporting the work of committees and subcommittees. Other staff functions include report and project monitoring, contracts, outreach, publications, coordination with the national office, record keeping, and administrative support.



The staff includes the program director, assistant director, an associate accountant, a communications specialist, a grants coordinator, a grants assistant, and administrative associates; an outreach staff coordinator located at Fort Valley State University; an 1862 scientist-at-large; and staff for the Professional Development Program based at the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in OK.

Jeff Jordan: Program Director
jjordan@uga.edu

Jeff Jordan is the director of Southern SARE and is also a professor in the Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics at the University of Georgia's Griffin campus. As the SSARE director, Jeff oversees the entire program, but is especially involved in coordinating the Research and Education Grants. He develops the budgets for the overall program, represents the Southern region at the national level and coordinates the activities of the Administrative Council and the SSARE staff.

David Redhage: PDP Manager
dredhage@kerrcenter.com

David Redhage, the agricultural economist for the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Oklahoma, is the program coordinator for the Professional Development Program. David oversees the state ag coordinators and their model state programs in the implementation of sustainable agriculture efforts within each Southern SARE state.

Candace Pollock-Moore: Assistant Director
cpollock@uga.edu

As Assistant Director, Candace Pollock-Moore manages the Producer, On-Farm Research and Graduate Student Grant programs. In addition, she maintains the projects database, approves annual and final reports of grant projects, and works with grantees on the progress of their grant project. She also assists the program director and regional staff where appropriate.

Brennan Washington: SSARE Outreach Coordinator
washingtonb@fvsu.edu

Brennan Washington works in close liaison with historically underserved farmers and organizations, including NGOs, community groups, and cooperatives across the Southern region, as well as 1890 land-grant insti-

tutions in promoting SSARE grants programs, providing sustainable ag educational resources, enhancing quality grant recipients, networking with regional partners, and building new relationships.

Sandra Blackwell, Grants Coordinator
sblackwell@uga.edu

Sandra Blackwell provides a variety of grant coordinator support functions, including but not limited to: Preparing and submitting annual Cooperative Agreements to the USDA for budgeting for approved projects; working on the SARE Professional Development Program; overseeing the on-line proposal system for five grant programs; answering inquiries from various applicants; and tracking each proposal, ensuring they follow UGA and USDA requirements from the time they are awarded until all budget requirements are met and the subcontract has been signed and received.

Denise Quick, Associate Accountant
denise.quick@uga.edu

Denise Quick provides accounting support for the management of the program with project investigators, accountants in the various universities, and the Kerr Center. She is responsible for the daily accounting operations of the award management for the SSARE budgets.

Tydaisha White, Grants Assistant
tydaisha.white@uga.edu

Tydaisha White provides a variety of administrative support functions, including but not limited to: Reviewing the Graduate Student, On-Farm Research, Producer, and Model State Program Grants to make sure all elements are included; reviewing grant budgets and budget justifications for accuracy and to make sure they are following USDA-NIFA and UGA regulations; processing No-Cost Extension Requests, Budget Revision Requests and PI change requests; the point of contact between newly awarded SARE grants and SPA to check the status of the sub-award contracts; manage UGA internal sub-awards; and communicate with UGA CAES Contracts and Grant's office to submit grant proposals for processing.

Keileah Fears, Administrative Associate
keileah.fears@uga.edu

Keileah Fears provides a variety of administrative support functions, including but not limited to: Coordinating all accommodations for Administrative Council meetings and Technical Review Committee meetings; scheduling and attending monthly zoom meetings/conference calls of the

AC Executive Committee; and providing support for the AC.

Kayla Martin, Administrative Associate
kayla.martin2@uga.edu

As Administrative Associate, Kayla Martin processes check requests and travel expense reimbursements. She also maintains equipment inventory, makes copies, files and distributes mail. She supports SSARE staff as needed.

Reighly Hendrix, PDP Program Assistant
mtempleton@kerrcenter.com

Reighly Hendrix serves as the SARE Professional Development Program (PDP) program assistant, based at the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Poteau, OK.

AC Member Transition

Administrative Council members serve a three-year term. A member may be reappointed to one additional three-year term and can serve a third, three-year term in a Leadership position (AC Chair, Vice-Chair, or Standing AC Sub-Committee Chair) after a vote of the Administrative Council.

When the reappointment for a second term or third term for Leadership position comes due, the Operations/Nominating Committee of the AC reviews the recommendation for renewal and presents to the full AC for a vote. The full AC then votes on the renewal.

If a member of the Administrative Council is unable to complete his or her term of appointment, or misses two consecutive meetings (or three meetings in two years), the member's seat shall be determined to be open and a new member will be appointed.

New AC Members

When a member's service on the AC comes to an end and he/she rotates off the Administrative Council, the following member transition process takes place:

1. AC members at the February (winter) AC meeting review the membership rotation list and release the call for AC nominations to fill vacant seats.
2. AC nominations are solicited via press release, the SSARE website, the monthly e-newsletter Common Ground, social media, staff and AC members, state ag coordinators and grantee list serves. Nominees are asked to submit their information via an online application form by a specific due date.
3. The nomination applications are collected and submitted as an agenda item on the Operations/Nominating Com-

- mittee at the summer AC meeting.
4. The Operations/Nominating Committee of the AC reviews applications and recommends new members to the full AC at the summer AC meeting. The full AC then votes in the new members.
 5. New members are contacted via email of their selection to serve on the AC. Each new member receives a SARE Welcome Packet (includes SARE resource materials and AC Handbook).
 6. New members join the AC after the summer meeting to be involved in the grant review process where voting will take place the following February (winter) meeting. However, the new member's official first three-year term begins at the next February (winter) AC meeting.
 7. From the summer meeting to the following February (winter meeting), new members are mentored by the members rotating off the AC.
 8. New members take part fully as voting members at the February (winter) AC meeting.
 9. Exiting members will be invited to attend the February (winter) AC meeting as mentors, but will not have voting rights.

Mentoring New Members

Incoming members are introduced to the SSARE program in the following ways:

- Between the summer and February (winter) AC meeting, an initial Zoom meeting is conducted with new members, the SSARE Director, and the current AC Chair (with support from SSARE staff) for introductions. Discussions include:
 - o Overview of SSARE and its grants;
 - o Overview of the AC member duties, responsibilities, and expectations (taken from the AC Handbook).

- o Process for reviewing SARE grants based on the seat being filled.
- o Overview of a typical AC meeting.
- Training of the SARE Grant Management System (with support from SSARE staff).
- Members rotating off the Administrative Council mentor incoming members to help ease them into the SARE program, the governing process, and grant proposal reviews. Efforts include:
 - o Being a source of contact for new members for questions leading up to the first AC meeting for the new member.
 - o Supporting of new members in the grant review process leading up to the February (winter) meeting.
 - o Supporting of new members at their first AC meeting. After the first full AC meeting, mentoring ends.
- SSARE staff support of new members continues throughout the first year of the new member's AC term.
- Incoming AC members are encouraged to collaborate with state ag coordinators, specifically with those located in their respective states. The list of state ag coordinators can be found here: <https://southern.sare.org/sare-in-your-state/state-coordinators/>

New Subcommittee Chairs

New sub-committee chairs appointed at the summer AC meeting will assume their role on the Executive Committee (EC) immediately following the summer meeting. Exiting sub-committee chairs are encouraged to participate in EC calls as mentors, but will not have voting rights.

The Role of the Subcommittee Chair

Chairs of each subcommittee conduct the following tasks:

- Put together an agenda for subcommittee meetings in conjunction with Southern SARE staff where applicable. Make sure this is submitted to the Southern SARE office in time to be included in the Administrative Council meeting notebook.
- Run the subcommittee meeting in an efficient manner and stay on task.
- Call for motions/votes.
- Ensure the subcommittee meeting starts and ends on time.
- Be prepared to report results (discussions and decisions) of the subcommittee meeting to the full Administrative Council.
- Participate in monthly Executive Committee calls as a voting member.
- Help identify a subcommittee vice-chair to take over the chair duties when no longer the chair. A nomination must be submitted to the Nomination/Operations Committee for review and brought before the full Administrative Council for approval.
- Subcommittee chairs may attend, with prior approval of the Southern SARE Program Director, SARE-funded trainings/workshops/conferences as a Southern SARE AC representative, and should report back to the full Administrative Council the results of the event.

New Subcommittee Vice-Chairs

Each subcommittee of the Administrative Council elects its own vice chair, along with a chair. The vice chair becomes the new chair when the current chair rotates off the AC. The vice chair is a current member of the subcommittee being represented.

At the time the vice chair assumes the role of the chair, the subcommittee brings forth a nomination for a new vice chair. The full AC votes in the new vice chair from a recommenda-

tion of the submitted nominations from the Operations/Nominating Committee, either at the winter meeting or the summer meeting.

Program Evaluation of Outgoing AC Members

Members rotating off the AC are asked to evaluate their time with the SARE program. Program evaluations are used internally and are designed to capture the experiences of serving on the Administrative Council, collect suggestions and recommendations for improvement, and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Administrative Council.

Program evaluations are conducted at the last AC meeting the member is attending to fulfill his/her term, or immediately following the AC meeting via email if the member is not present.

Program Evaluation questions include:

1. What are your overall impressions of the SARE program in fulfilling its mission and vision as a grants organization and in providing resources to its intended audiences?
2. Provide a few comments regarding your experiences serving on the AC.
3. What recommendations/suggestions (if any) would you provide to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Administrative Council's governing process?
4. If you wish to stay involved with SARE, in what ways would you like to participate? How can the regional office support your efforts?

To help widen the recruitment pool of incoming members, outgoing AC members are asked to provide one potential nomination from colleagues or stakeholders, or from their organization, institution or community.

Past AC Member Involvement

SSARE strives to keep past AC members involved in SARE. Such individuals can participate in SARE in the following ways:

- They may volunteer to serve as technical reviewers on grant proposals.
- They may provide grant reviewer recommendations.
- Through invitation, they may attend the summer farm tour of the AC meeting if it is hosted in their locale.
- Keep past AC members on SSARE mailing list/obtain new resource materials and publications for use in their community.
- Encourage them to continue promoting SSARE grants in their community.

By-Laws

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be “Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Administrative Council.”

The organization shall also be known as “Southern Region SARE Administrative Council.”

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Administrative Council is to promote, encourage and assist in the development of sustainable agriculture in the Southern Region by fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in Title XVI, Subtitle A, Sec. 1621. Sustainable agriculture, as defined by Title XVI, Subtitle A, Sec. 1603, is “ an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term: satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends; make the most use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources, and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; sustain the economic viability of farm/ranch operations; and enhance the quality of life for farmers/ranchers, and society as a whole.”

ARTICLE III - RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific responsibilities of the Administrative Council are:

1. Appoint a Host Institution and Coordinator, subject to the approval of the USDA;
2. Appoint a Professional Development Program management team, subject to the approval of the USDA;
3. Make recommendations to the USDA concerning research and education projects, PDP projects, producer projects, graduate student awards, and all other grant programs that merit funding;
4. Promote Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Programs in the Southern Region;

5. Establish goals and criteria for the selection of projects within the Southern Region;
6. Establish a Technical Advisory review system for the evaluation of proposals for projects to be considered for funding.
7. Review and act upon the recommendations of the Technical Reviewer's and coordination of its activities with the Host Institution, review and act upon the recommendation of the PDP Committee and coordination of its activities with the Management Team; and
8. Prepare and make available an annual report concerning Southern Region activities in sustainable agriculture.

The Host Institution and Coordinator are responsible for the management of the SARE Program, on behalf of the Administrative Council, and in conjunction with the USDA. The attached organization chart provides the conceptual framework of the Southern Region SARE Program.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

The Administrative Council membership and appointing authority shall be the following:

-- Seven (7) farmers/ranchers using systems and practices of sustainable agriculture. Appointments should include farmers/ranchers representing Best Utilization of Biological Applications and representing Integrated Management Systems. Members shall be elected by the Council.

-- Three (3) nonprofit organizations with demonstrable expertise in sustainable agriculture. Appointments should include organizations representing Best Utilization of Biological Applications and organizations representing Integrated Management Systems. Members shall be elected by the Council.

-- One (1) agribusiness person with demonstrable expertise in sustainable agriculture. Member shall be elected by the Council.

-- One (1) member knowledgeable about sustainable agriculture and its impact on the environment and rural communities possessing quality of life expertise. Member shall be elected by the Council.

-- One (1) urban agriculture representative. The representative shall be a farmer with emphasis on urban production and community. Member shall be elected by the Council.

-- One (1) military veteran representative. The representative shall be a farmer with emphasis on the intersectionality of military service, farming, and physical and mental health and wellbeing. Member shall be elected by the Council.

-- One (1) food sovereignty representative. The representative shall focus on farming, food and nutrition access, land access, farmer and farmworker welfare, and the wellbeing of community and food systems. Member shall be elected by the Council.

-- One member each from the following federal or state agencies. Members are appointed by the following respective agency or agency association:

- USDA Agricultural Research Service
- USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- State Agency representing sustainable agriculture
- State Agricultural Experiment Stations-1862 Institutions
- State Agricultural Experiment Stations-1890 Institutions
- State Cooperative Extension Services-1862 Institutions
- State Cooperative Extension Services-1890 Institutions
- U.S. Geological Survey
- National Agroforestry Center/USDA Forest Service

Total membership of the Administrative Council shall be twenty-six (26). Other members may be appointed as deemed appropriate by the Council. Currently two state ag coordinators serve on the Council for one-year appointments, bringing the current number of AC members to 28.

The Administrative Council shall solicit nominations for vacancies on the Council for which the Council has appointing authority from the appropriate groups, organizations or public which are represented on the Council and shall elect members from those who are nominated.

The Administrative Council shall also notify each federal and state

agency appointing authority when a vacancy occurs or term expires and solicit the appointment or reappointment of their respective agency representative on the Council.

If, at the end of a term, a replacement cannot be appointed, the term will be extended one-year to continue the search.

ARTICLE V - TERM OF OFFICE

The Administrative Council member's terms shall be three years. A member may be reappointed to one additional three-year terms.

Leadership of the Administrative Council (Chair, Vice-Chair, Standing Committee Chairs) can serve a third, three-year term after a vote of the Administrative Council. If a member of the Administrative Council is unable to complete his or her term of appointment, or misses two consecutive meetings (or three meetings in two years), the members seat shall be determined to be open and a new member will be appointed. Members elected by the Council and members appointed by the appropriate federal or state agency shall be selected in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired term.

The terms of office shall be established by the Administrative Council on a three-year rotational basis. Any member of the Administrative Council can be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Council at any point during a term.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers. The officers of the Administrative Council shall be a Chairperson and one Vice-Chairperson. The officers shall be members of the Administrative Council.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office. The officers shall be elected at the summer meeting of the Administrative Council for the following year, to serve for a three-year term and until their successors shall have been elected.

Section 3. Removal and Vacancies. Any officer elected by the Administrative Council may be removed by the Council whenever in its judgment the best interests of the organization would be served

thereby. A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the Administrative Council for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 4. Duties of the Chairperson. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Administrative Council and also serve as Chair of the Executive Committee. The Chairperson shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Administrative Council and perform all acts and duties usually incident to and required of an executive and presiding officer, as well as such other duties as may be required of the Council. The Chairperson may sign any contracts or other documents the Administrative Council have authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Council, such as to the host institution, or by these bylaws; and in general shall perform all duties as may be prescribed by the Council from time to time.

Section 5. Duties of the Vice-Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson or in the event of his or her inability or refusal to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him or her by the Chairperson or the Administrative Council. Upon the expiration of the Chairperson's term, the Vice-Chairperson shall be appointed Chair.

ARTICLE VII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Administrative Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the following members:

- Chair, Administrative Council
- Vice-Chair, Administrative Council
- Chair, Communications Committee
- Chair, Operations/Nominations Committee
- Chair, Project Review Committee
- Chair, Equity and Prosperity Committee
- Chair, Producer Grant Review Committee
- Chair, PDP Committee

These members of the Executive Committee are designated as the Leadership of the AC under the terms of Article V – Term of Office.

The Chairperson of the Administrative Council shall serve as Chair and presiding officer of the Executive Committee.

The function of the Executive Committee is to handle matters that arise between regularly scheduled Administrative Council meetings, and more particularly to include:

1. Dealing with emergency situations that arise when it would be impractical to present the issue(s) to the full Administrative Council.
2. Provide leadership to the Host Institution on important matters between Administrative Council meetings.
3. Perform fine tuning of mandate of the full Administrative Council. The Executive Committee and the Council may call upon others to provide information on issues before the Council. In the case of external consultation, the person who is providing the needed information will not be considered as an ad hoc member of the Council unless voted upon by the entire Council.
4. The Executive Committee will perform all other duties that the Administrative Council so designates by a vote of the AC.

The Administrative Council will be given reasonable notice of Executive Committee meetings or conference calls and will be provided, in a timely fashion, minutes of Executive Committee meetings or conference calls. The Executive Committee will meet once a month by conferencing technology unless the meeting is cancelled by the Chair.

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

The Chairperson is authorized to appoint from members of the Administrative Council, or others, such committees as the Chairperson may deem necessary or as the Council deems necessary for the expeditious handling of the affairs of the Council. These committees shall be in addition to the Standing Committees approved by the Council. No committee, nor any member thereof, shall have authority to commit the Council, except as been duly authorized by the Council.

ARTICLE IX - STANDING COMMITTEES

The Administrative Council shall have six (6) standing committees, whose membership shall be composed only of Council members. The committees and their general responsibilities are:

1. Communications Committee. Facilitate the promotion and communication of sustainable Agriculture Research, Education and Training programs and outreach success stories so as to promote Sustainable Agriculture and SARE in the Southern Region and link with other regions to inform the national dialogue about sustainable issues.
2. Operations/Nominating Committee. Develop and recommend policies for the Administrative Council. The Operations Committee shall also serve as the Nominations Committee to recommend a list of candidates to serve as Officers and Standing Committee Chairs of the Council, as well as the solicitation of new members.
3. Project Review Committee. Establish goals and criteria for the evaluation of proposals and the review of projects.
4. EPIC Committee. Establish goals and programs to support farmers and ranchers across the Southern region.
5. Producer Grant Committee. Establish goals and criteria for the evaluation of proposals and the review of producer and on-farm research projects.
6. PDP Committee. Establish goals and criteria for evaluation of proposals, review PDP projects, and make recommendations to the Administrative Council, conduct yearly PDP workshop and all other PDP activities.

Each standing committee shall have a Chair elected annually by the Council at the same meeting as the election of officers. Committee membership shall be equally divided, as much as possible, among the members based upon their expressed interest.

Specific responsibilities of each standing committee shall be determined by the Council.

ARTICLE X - TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Administrative Council shall appoint a Technical Advisory Committee for the evaluation of proposals for projects to be considered for funding. The Technical Advisory Committee shall be subject to oversight by the Project Review Committee.

Technical Advisory Committee membership shall consist of researchers, extension professionals, producers and others who have demonstrable experience and expertise in the area of sustainable agriculture.

Responsibilities of the Technical Advisory Committee are determined by the Administrative Council, however, the primary role of the committee is to provide guidance concerning the technical merit of proposals and projects to the SARE program and provide recommendations for funding through the Project Review Committee, the Producer Grant Committee or the PDP Committee to the Administrative Council based upon technical merit.

ARTICLE XI - CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Section 1. Meetings. The Administrative Council shall have two regularly scheduled meetings each year. The date and location of each meeting shall be determined by the Council. Administrative Council meetings shall be open to the public.

Public notice of regularly scheduled Council meetings shall be included in the SARE Newsletter. Council members will keep the agenda briefs as part of the minutes.

Section 2. Attendance & Voting. Attendance of two-thirds (2/3) of the Administrative Council membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Once a quorum is declared present for the transaction of business, it will be considered in place for the remainder of the scheduled meeting dates. All official actions of the Council shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting. All votes by roll call and secret ballot shall be announced and recorded in the minutes.

Section 3. Proxies. The Administrative Council shall not allow an alternate or proxy to serve on the Council and vote on behalf of a member who is absent.

Section 4. Reimbursement. For AC members who are Producers, self-employed or NGO's, compensation is as follows:

- For Winter and Summer AC meetings: **\$300 per day per meeting** (including travel days) plus expenses;
- For General AC support, including proposal reviews: **\$300** twice a year, paid in conjunction with AC meeting reimbursement;
- Grant Committee support: **\$300** per year for each grant committee served, paid out following the summer meeting;
- Zoom meetings (including Executive Committee calls): **\$100** for calls lasting up to 2 hours; **\$200** for calls over 2 hours and under 4 hours.

Section 5. Funding Requests. Any request for funds must be made through the appropriate committee and must have its budget and its justification prepared at least six weeks in advance of the Summer or Winter AC meeting so that it is included in the agenda briefs, and all members of the Administrative Council have had the opportunity to review the request.

Section 6. Conflict of Interest. According to the legislation, a member of an AC or technical committee may not participate in the discussion or recommendation of proposed projects if the member has, or had, a professional or business interest in the organization whose grant application is under review. (7USC 5812(c)). This language is interpreted and operationalized as follows.

To avoid any conflict of interest, a member of the Administrative Council (AC), Technical Committee, or any AC-appointed committees or panels, or staff may not review or participate in the discussion or recommendation regarding any competitive grant proposal with any of the following characteristics:

1. From PI's home institution or organization; relationships with Co-PIs from the member's home institution or organization is acceptable.
2. From institutions or organizations for which he/she acts as a paid consultant, or board member;
3. From applicants for whom he/she has served as a thesis advisor (or advisee) or a postdoctoral advisor (or advisee) within the past five years;
4. From applicants with whom he/she has served as a collaborator on a

research proposal or publication within the past five years;

5. From applicants for whom he/she has acted as a paid consultant within the past five years;

6. From applicants for whom he/she will be a project participant during the current grant cycle;

7. That Administrative Council, Technical Committee members, any AC-appointed committees or panels, or staff may not be listed as participants on competitive grant proposals and/or other funding requests under consideration by the committee or panel on which the person serves where they could potentially gain monetary benefits to themselves or other program they represent (benefits do not mean compensation for travel or per diem). AC members will recuse themselves from votes regarding possible funding for their institution or for any organization they represent;

8. The statement applies to current members. Those wanting to submit proposals must resign their memberships;

9. During the discussion or recommendations of proposed projects, any members with a conflict of interest must leave the room. This applies to the regional coordinators and senior staff;

10. Discussion and recommendation should involve individual projects. When a large slate of projects (for example, the farmer grants) is being voted upon – and individual projects are not being discussed – members with a conflict of interest do not need to leave the room.

Section 7. Parliamentary Procedure. The Administrative Council, Executive Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and Standing Committees when in session, shall be governed in their deliberations and in the transaction of their business by these Bylaws. Any matter of procedure not so covered in the Bylaws shall be governed by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS¹

1Bylaws Adopted 2/13/96.

Amended 4/3/97; 3/22/2000; 8/19/2011; 8/20/2014; 8/10/2016; 7/31/2019; 3/28/2023; 9/2023; 4/30/2024

The Administrative Council may amend these Bylaws at any meeting at which there exists a quorum, upon two-thirds vote of the Council. Provided, however, at least ten (10) days notice shall be given to all members, and the intent of such amendments to be considered shall be made a part of the meeting notice.

Conflict of Interest Policy

If you are considering serving on the SARE AC or TRC, it's likely you already have ties to a group that submits proposals to SARE, and you may be wondering if that disqualifies you from serving. Southern SARE realizes that disqualifying such individuals would prevent the most knowledgeable segment of our audience from serving, so the AC drafted a Conflict of Interest Policy to channel ethical participation and input from such individuals.

The 10-point Conflict of Interest Policy protects the process in two ways: it prohibits members of the AC /TRC/Staff from participating in a grant proposal that, if funded, would benefit them financially, and it excuses an AC/TRC /Staff member from the discussion of any proposal submitted by an organization, institution or individual that they have collaborated with in the past five years.

According to the legislation, a member of the AC or TRC may not participate in the discussion or recommendation of proposed projects if the member has, or had, a professional or business interest in the organization whose grant application is under review. (7USC 5812(c)). This language is interpreted and operationalized as follows.

To avoid any conflict of interest, a member of the Administrative Council (AC), Technical Review Committee (TRC), or any AC-appointed committees or panels, or staff may not review or participate in the discussion or recommendation regarding any competitive grant proposal with any of the following characteristics:

- From PI's home institution or organization; relationships with Co-PIs from the member's home institution or organization is acceptable.

- From institutions or organizations for which he/she acts as a paid consultant, or board member;
- From applicants for whom he/she has served as a thesis advisor (or advisee) or a postdoctoral advisor (or advisee) within the past five years;
- From applicants with whom he/she has served as a collaborator on a research proposal or publication within the past five years;
- From applicants for whom he/she has acted as a paid consultant within the past five years;
- From applicants for whom he/she will be a project participant during the current grant cycle;
- That Administrative Council, Technical Review Committee members, any AC-appointed committees or panels, or staff may not be listed as participants on competitive grant proposals (including Producer Grants and PDP proposals) under consideration by the committee or panel on which the person serves where they could potentially gain monetary benefits to themselves or other program (benefits do not mean compensation for travel or per diem);
- The statement applies to current members. Those wanting to submit proposals must resign their memberships;
- During the discussion or recommendations of proposed projects, any members with a conflict of interest must leave the room. This applies to the regional coordinators and senior staff;
- Discussion and recommendation should involve individual projects. When a large slate of projects (for example, the Producer Grants) is being voted upon – and individual projects are not being discussed – members with a conflict of interest do not need to leave the room.



AC Members Quick Contact List

Julia Asherman
Ph: 617-777-0117
ragandfrassfarm@gmail.com

Kristy Borrelli
Ph: 301-405-9912
kborrelli@sare.org

David Champagne
Ph: 404-562-9028
champagne.david@epa.gov

Meghan Cole-Jones
Ph: 828-772-4206
kalunafarmretreat@gmail.com

Bonita Clemons
Ph: 803-521-5397
bonitaclemons@gmail.com

Damona Doye
Ph: 40-744-5398
damonda.doye@okstate.edu

Carrie Furman
Ph: 310-961-8691
cfurman@uga.edu

Dan Glenn
Ph: 229-457-1136
dan@deepgrassgraziers.com

Sanjun Gu
Ph: 804-524-5480
sgu@vsu.edu

Logan Hess
Ph: 615-218-0128
logan.m.hess@tn.gov

Taylor Holenbeck
Ph: 785-840-6424
taylor@happydirt.com

Amber Kennon
Ph: 840-213-6937
info@forwardtothebasics.org

Brittany Kordick

Ph: 336-351-5186
cheers@kordickfamilyfarm.com

Amanda McWhirt
Ph: 501-671-2229
amcwhirt@uada.edu

Cashawn Myers
Ph: 678-760-1252
info@habeshainc.org

Ralph Noble
Ph: 803-928-4293
rnoble3@scsu.edu

Hope Ostane-Baucom
Ph: 704-925-5840
hopeslovegarden@gmail.com

Keisha Rainey
Ph: 803-319-8933
keisha@rootsrain.org

Vance Owens
Vance.owens@usda.gov

Terrance Rudolph
706-546-2272
terrance.rudolph@usda.gov

Raymon Shange
Ph: 334-724-4967
rshange@tuskegee.edu

Nathan Slaton
Ph: 479-502-9804
nslaton@uark.edu

Maurice Small
Ph: 216-849-8224
55smallfarmz@gmail.com

Cee Stanley
Ph: 919-656-4967
cee@greenheffafarms.com

Dominique Villanueva
206-419-6189
MDV@fountainheightsfarms.com

Southern Region SARE Administrative Council Membership Rotation

CATEGORY		2026	2027	2028	2029
Producer 1	Amber Kennon	1	2	2	2
Producer 2	Dan Glenn	3	3	3	1
Producer 3	Cee Stanley	1	2	2	2
Producer 4	Julia Asherman	3	3	1	1
Producer 5	Meghan Cole-Jones	1	1	1	2
Producer 6	Marie Villanueva	2	2	2	3
Producer 7	Brittany Kordick	1	1	1	2
NGO 1	Cashawn Myers	1	1	1	2
NGO 2	Keisha Rainey	1	1	1	2
NGO 3	Bonita Clemons	2	3	3	3
Quality of Life	Carrie Furman	2	2	2	3
Agribusiness	Taylor Holenbeck	1	2	2	2
Urban Ag	Maurice Small	1	1	2	2
Veteran Farmer	Vacant	1	1	1	2
Food Sovereignty	Hope Ostane-Baucom	1	1	2	2
1890 Extension	Raymon Shange	3	3	3	
1890 Research	Ralph Noble	2	3	3	3
1862 Extension	Damona Doye		1	1	1
1862 Research	Nathan Slaton	2	3	3	3
State Dept. Ag	Logan Hess	1	1	1	2
1890 Ag Coord	Sanjun Gu				
1862 Ag Coord	Amanda McWhirt				
USDA-ARS	Vacant				
USDA-NRCS	Terrance Rudolph	2	2	2	3
Agroforestry	Vacant				
EPA	David Champagne	1	1	2	2
USGS	Vacant				
USDA-NIFA	Vance Owens; Kristy Borrelli				

AC Members serve a three-year term and may be reappointed for one additional term.

1 = First 3-year term; 2 = Second 3-year term; Third 3-year leadership term

1 = First year of new members terms 2 = Replace or reappoint member for second 3-year term. This then is either the first year of member's second term or the first year of a new AC member. 3 = Third 3-year term possible for chair positions.

2026 Committees

Executive Committee

Dan Glenn, Chair
Vacant, Vice-Chair
Julia Asherman
Bonita Clemons
Raymon Shange
Nathan Slaton
Cee Stanley
Dominique Villanueva

Communications

Cee Stanley, Chair
Vacant, Vice-Chair
Kristy Borelli
Carrie Furman
Amber Kennon
Keisha Rainey
Maurice Small

Operations/Nominating

Nathan Slaton, Chair
Dominique Villanueva, Vice-Chair
Bonita Clemons
David Champagne
Damona Doye
Dan Glenn
Ralph Noble
Terrance Rudolph
Cee Stanley

Project Review

Julia Asherman, Chair
Amber Kennon, Vice-Chair
Kristy Borrelli
Carrie Furman
Ralph Noble
Vance Owens
Nathan Slaton
Maurice Small

EPIC

Bonita Clemons, Chair
Carrie Furman, Vice-Chair
Julia Asherman
Taylor Holenback
Ralph Noble
Hope Ostone-Baucom
Raymon Shange
Dominique Villanueva

Producer Grant

Dominique Villanueva, Chair
Taylor Holenbeck, Vice-Chair
Julia Asherman
Bonita Clemons
Meghan Cole-Jones
Dan Glenn
Brittany Kordick
Amber Kennon
Cashawn Myers
Cee Stanley
Hope Ostone-Baucom

PDP

Raymon Shange, Chair
Terrance Rudolph, Vice-Chair
David Champagne
Damona Doye
Sanjun Gu
Taylor Holenback
Amanda McWhirt
Cashawn Myers

Glossary of Terms

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE-Specific Abbreviations)

AC Administrative Council – The governing body of each regional SARE program. The AC drives the funding of grant projects, oversees the general budget, guides programming and policy, and makes sure that the program stays on point with its mission, vision and sustainable agriculture objectives.

CFP Call for Proposal – The term used for a grant application. Also known as RFA (Request for Application) or RFP (Request for Proposal).

EC Executive Committee – The Executive Committee meets monthly by conference call and discusses on-going SSARE business, making decisions on topics that arise between each AC meeting.

NGO Non-governmental Organization – A non-profit organization that operates independently of any government.

OFRG On-Farm Research Grants – A grant program for ag professionals who work directly with farmers to conduct on-farm production and marketing sustainable ag research.

Ops Operations Committee – The national group that has representatives from each of the SARE regions and allocates funding to SARE Outreach or other national initiatives before dividing remaining funds among the four regions.

PDP Professional Development Program – A program that

supports sustainable agriculture at the state level through designated sustainable ag coordinators. The designation is also used to refer to one of SSARE’s Administrative Council subcommittees, as well as a grant program, whose funding trains extension educators and service providers who work directly with farmers on sustainable ag techniques.

PGC Producer Grant Committee – One of SSARE’s Administrative Council subcommittees.

PI Principal Investigator – The primary researcher on a grant project. Also known as the “grantee” or “project coordinator”.

PRC Project Review Committee – One of SSARE’s Administrative Council subcommittees.

R&E Research and Education – SSARE’s flagship grant program focuses on a systems approach to sustainable agriculture.

SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education – The name of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s sustainable agriculture grants program.

TRC Technical Review Committee – Outside professionals recruited to review grant proposals. Based on their area of expertise, technical reviewers offer skill and support to the grant reviewing process.

Southern SARE Grant Program Abbreviations

Each funded grant project has a letter/number combination that identifies the type of grant, the year it was awarded and the grant award number. The first two letters in grant identifiers designate the type of grant and the region. The first two numbers after the letters indicate the year the grant was awarded and the number that follows is the grant award number. For example, GS20-321 indicates a Graduate Student Grant in the Southern region, awarded in 2020 and is the 321st award made under the Graduate Student Grant program.

ES The grant designation for the Professional Development

Program Grant. The “E” stands for “Extension”, the original target audience for this program.

FS The grant designation for the Producer Grant. The “F” stands for “farmer”, the target audience for this program.

GS The grant designation for the Graduate Student Grant.

LS The grant designation for the Research and Education Grant. The “L” stands for LISA (Low-Input Sustainable Agriculture), which was the original name of the SARE program when it was first created. The Research and Education Grants were the first grant programs offered by the program, so carry the LISA designation.

OS The grant designation for the On-Farm Research Grant.

YES The grant designation for the Young Scholar Enhancement Grants.

Abbreviations for Key Agencies and Organizations

1862s 1862 Land-Grant Institutions -- The 1862 land-grants were established by the first Morrill Act of 1862. There is a land-grant in every state. The 1862 land-grants in the Southern region include: University of Georgia, University of Florida, Auburn University, Mississippi State University, Louisiana State University, Texas A&M University, Oklahoma State University, University of Arkansas, University of Tennessee, University of Kentucky, Virginia Tech, North Carolina State University, Clemson University, University of Puerto Rico, and University of Virgin Islands.

1890s 1890 Land-Grant Institutions -- The 1890 land-grants are historically black universities that were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. 1890s in the Southern region include: Fort Valley State University, Florida A&M University, Tuskegee University, Alabama A&M University, Alcorn State University, Southern University, Prairie View A&M University, Langston University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Tennessee State University, Kentucky State University, Virginia State University,

North Carolina A&T University, South Carolina State University.

1994s 1994 Land-Grant Institutions -- The 1994s are Native American tribally controlled colleges and universities that were granted land-grant status under an Act of Congress in 1994. The Southern region has one 1994 land-grant: College of the Muscogee Nation in Oklahoma.

AEA Association of Extension Administrators – Represents the 1890 Cooperative Extension System.

AFRI Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – USDA-NIFA’s flagship competitive grants program.

AFSIC Alternative Farming Systems Information Center – A program within the USDA National Agricultural Library that specializes in resources about sustainable food systems and practices.

AMS Agricultural Marketing Service – A USDA agency that provides resources on local and federal markets.

APLU Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities – APLU is a research, policy and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S. APLU undertakes a wide array of projects and initiatives along with its members and provides a forum for public higher education leaders to work collaboratively and better meet the challenges and opportunities facing public universities.

ARD Association of 1890 Research Directors – The federation of 19 1890 land-grant universities that provides coordination of research initiatives among member 1890 institutions.

ARS Agricultural Research Service – The USDA’s chief scientific in-house research agency.

ASRED Association of Southern Region Extension Directors – A coalition of Directors of Extension that seeks to promote collaboration among the Southern member states and territories in ways that strengthen individual member Extension

programs by reducing duplication and increasing cooperation and sharing of expertise and resources for mutual benefit.

ATTRA **Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas** – A national sustainable agriculture information service, managed by NCAT, that answers questions about specific farming practices and innovative marketing approaches, including organic production.

EPA **United States Environmental Protection Agency** – An agency of the U.S. government tasked with environmental protection matters.

ERS **Economic Research Service** – A USDA agency tasked with research and analysis of a broad range of economic and policy topics in agriculture, food, the environment and rural America.

FSA **Farm Service Agency** – A USDA agency that serves farmers by implementing agricultural policy, administering credit and loan programs, and managing conservation, commodity, disaster and farm marketing programs.

IPM **Integrated Pest Management** – A term used to identify sustainable agriculture techniques for managing diseases and pests. Each region houses a USDA-funded IPM center that drives research, development and adoption of IPM practices.

MANNRS **Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences** – A non-profit organization that promotes academic and professional advancement by empowering minorities in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences.

NACAA **National Association of County Ag Agents** – The organization for county ag professionals.

NAL **National Agricultural Library** – A USDA library that houses one of the largest collections devoted to agriculture and its related sciences.

NASS **National Agricultural Statistics Service** – A USDA reporting agency that conducts surveys and other

statistical methods on every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

NCAT National Center for Appropriate Technology – A national nonprofit with a mission of promoting sustainable agriculture.

NCAT manages ATTRA – its resource hub of sustainable ag information.

NIFA National Institute of Food and Agriculture – A USDA agency that provides leadership and funding for programs that advance agriculture-related sciences. The SARE program is funded through cooperative agreements with NIFA.

NRCS National Resources Conservation Service – A USDA agency that provides technical assistance to farmers interested in implementing conservation practices on their farm.

NSAC National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition – An alliance of grassroots organizations that advocate for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, foods systems, natural resources, and rural communities.

RMA Risk Management Agency – A USDA agency that serves farmers through risk-management tools to strengthen the economic stability of farmers and rural communities.

SAAESD Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors -- The Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD) is one of five regional associations with responsibility for facilitating cooperation of regional and national research. The research is supported in part by the Multistate Research Fund (MRF), which is a federal appropriation authorized by the Hatch Act.

SBDC Southern Business Development Center – Provides assistance, counseling and training to start, run, or grow a small business.

SRDC Southern Rural Development Center – One of four regional federal centers addressing rural issues by coordinating rural development research and Extension programs with the land-

grant institutions.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture – A federal department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, food, and rural economic development.

USGS United States Geological Survey – A federal scientific agency that studies the landscape, its natural resources and the natural hazards that threaten it.



Published by the Southern Region of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. Funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Southern SARE operates under cooperative agreements with the University of Georgia, Fort Valley State University, and the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture to offer competitive grants to advance sustainable agriculture in America's Southern region. This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, through Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. USDA is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

