



*Driven by Science. Communicating for Change.*



# 2021 Virtual Conference

June 21-23, 2021  
Via Zoom Webinar

update April 23, 2021

# BREAKOUT SESSION DETAILS

**TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM (EST) | 30 MINUTE SESSIONS – CHOOSE ONE**

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## **Conducting Online Focus Groups**

**Audrey King, Oklahoma State University**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unending list of problems, but every cloud has a silver lining. While people were not able to convene in person, we had to adopt methods of engagement online. One of the benefits was many people becoming more comfortable with online meeting technology, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. This session focuses on conducting online focus groups using those platforms. While focus groups have long been recognized for their value for informing communication and marketing efforts, one of the most difficult parts of conducting focus groups is getting everyone into the same room. While online focus groups have been an option for years, people were not always comfortable with the technology required to facilitate them. Now online focus groups are a more viable option, even after the pandemic ends. We will discuss recommendations, best practices, and benefits of online focus groups. Participants will get tangible tips and a few laughs from the lessons learned from a series of online focus groups conducted last summer.

## **A COVID-Era Solution that Could Stick: The Virtual Press Conference**

**Kirsten Romaguera, UF/IFAS Communications**

It's May 2020. Many lockdown orders are still in place, and seeing virtual interviews on the nightly news no longer causes a second thought. The UF/IFAS Communications team has a strong COVID-focused, statewide-interest story just about ready for launch, and an idea hits. We've become a virtual society; Why not bring the media straight to our Cloud? After sharing the idea with the researchers to host a virtual press conference, they are excited by the prospect of one set interview time instead of fielding multiple media inquiries. We pitch the media opportunity throughout the state, opening it to broader coverage than would be possible without the virtual format. Was it a matter of perfect timing, or could this be a useful tool going forward? This session will cover what worked well and what could be done differently next time, as well as thoughts on the potential to harness this technology for future media relations efforts.

## **Serving Users with Virtual Labs in a Time of Distance Learning**

**Amy Smith Muise, Matheus Cezarotto, Barbara Chamberlin, and Pamela Martinez, New Mexico State University - Learning Games Lab**

When physical lab space isn't an option – or when learning from home during a pandemic – virtual labs can engage learners and stimulate career interest in lab science. During 2020–2021, the Innovative Media Research and Extension team at New Mexico State University saw an explosion of interest in its virtual laboratory modules online. The design and production studio has created more than fifteen online virtual labs, focused on laboratory techniques and concepts important in agricultural science. Each module functions as a standalone exercise online and/or as an electronic lab manual that can be used in preparation for carrying out procedures in a physical lab. Using virtual labs, learners can turn the focus dials on a microscope, use droppers and pipettes, sample bacteria and grow them in an incubator, light Bunsen burners, look at samples under UV light, calibrate pH meters, test surface water, and much more. Presenters will share their experience meeting learners' and instructors' needs, describe the educational niche filled by these digital educational materials, and explore the technical challenges to creating and keeping interactive materials online. The team will address the decisions made to keep virtual labs online through the transition from Flash to HTML5, focusing on priorities for accessibility and interactivity. An overview of the design, development, marketing and distribution process will follow. Learn how NMSU designed, developed, and maintained these tools to serve users' needs during COVID and onward.

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## TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 11:35 AM – 12:05 PM (EST) | 30 MINUTE SESSIONS – CHOOSE ONE

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**Syngenta** sponsor session

### **2021 Professional Grant Report - Diversity Learning Community "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" Webinar Series**

**Tim Bowman, The Ohio State University, Latasha Ford, Fort Valley State University**

The Diversity Learning Community presented three webinars in January, March and May 2021 for Association for Communication Excellence (ACE) members to better understand diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the communications environment. Two of these webinars were made possible through an ACE Professional Development Grant. Attendees can look forward to a 30-minute session where the Diversity LC chair and vice chair will report the results of these webinars featuring three speakers who specialize in DEI and support diversity programs and initiatives.

### **Our Health is in Our Hands: Early COVID-19 Crisis Communications Strategy**

**Tobie Blanchard, Wenqing Xu, LSU AgCenter**

When COVID-19 began spreading in Louisiana in March of 2020, The LSU AgCenter Communications team quickly began strategizing how to release fact-based safety information about the virus. The communications team turned to AgCenter microbiologist and food safety expert Dr. Wenqing Xu to create a communications strategy that would include a series of messages across different platforms to amplify safety information about COVID-19.

## TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 12:10 PM – 12:55 PM (EST) | 45 MINUTE SESSIONS – CHOOSE ONE

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### **Using Social Media as a Tool to Growing a Successful Brand**

**Anna Ribbeck, LSU AgCenter**

As the first-ever social media strategist for the LSU AgCenter, the goal of this presentation is to share my experience using social media to grow the LSU AgCenter brand. In this presentation, I will present a general overview of the LSU AgCenter's social platforms and the growth experienced throughout the 2020 year. I will provide examples of strategies that worked well, successful campaigns, useful analytic data, along with social media tools that have helped to grow the brand. In 2020, the LSU AgCenter grew by over 23K followers on social media with over 170K link clicks to the AgCenter's website. Participants will experience strategies for driving engagement, brand awareness and audience growth. They will also gain insight into helpful social media tools used for content management and scheduling.

### **Strengthening Professional Communication Through Intelligent Disobedience**

**Lori Greiner Eric Kaufman, Virginia Tech**

Have there been times when you felt you went along with a program or request from an administrator or supervisor that defied common sense or your personal values? Or maybe you have seen others react in a similar manner and wondered why they didn't speak up? Examples can be seen from politicians to religious groups, law enforcement officers to educators, federal agencies to sports organizations, and health care to food production. No segment of society is immune, and communication professionals have the added challenge of framing crisis communication that may be related. So what can you do to change this? The frameworks of Courageous Followership and Intelligent Disobedience provide guidance on how communication professionals can respond. Courageous Followership offers followers a new model that provides dynamic support for leaders but does not hesitate to constructively speak truth to power. Similarly, the concept of Intelligent Disobedience

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provides guidance for conscious decision making when faced with an order that may be inappropriate. At the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to (1) Identify the five behaviors of a courageous follower, (2) Outline the formula appropriate for intelligent disobedience, and (3) Recognize resources for guiding others toward intelligent disobedience.

## TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 1:00 PM– 1:55 PM (EST)

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### Keynote Speaker - Closing the Diversity Gap in Design

**Jacinda Walker**

Scholars, employers, organizations, and design professionals have been acknowledging the lack of diversity in the design profession. Yet, representation hasn't significantly increased in more than 50 years. Culturally insensitive advertising and messaging are on the rise, and diversity-building initiatives are minimal. What's behind this disparity? Join Jacinda Walker, founder of designExplorr, to learn more about the contributing complications and the need for more strategic solutions to close the diversity gap in design professions.

## TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 2:00 PM– 2:45 PM (EST) | 45 MINUTE SESSIONS – CHOOSE ONE

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### Great Email Marketing in 2021 and Beyond

**Jessica Best**

Email marketing (yes, STILL) rocks the highest return on investment of any medium, garnering on average \$38 for every \$1 you invest. That is, if you do it right. In this overview of email marketing best practices in today's world, Jessica will share the top things you should always and never do when creating your email marketing strategy. Not only will the session help you to avoid accidentally breaking the law, but it's designed to teach you email marketing strategies that nurture your customer relationships and help drive more sales. She'll also incorporate real companies' stories of those who have done it well and those who... could have used some advice. Even those familiar with email marketing will learn something new in this high-energy presentation! What you'll learn in Jessica's session:

- The anatomy of healthy email marketing design and layout
- A common content mistake even savvy email marketers (still) make
- 3 ways to use data to drive response and, in turn, revenue
- A peek at trends that work in email marketing in today's inbox

### Perfect Positioning: Applying a public relations approach to position the Extension brand at a state level

**Ashley McLeod-Morin, Anissa Zagonel, Lauri Baker, Angela B. Lindsey, UF/IFAS, Cheryl Boyer, Kansas State University**

While Extension communication units have seen success in implementing brand strategies to raise awareness of Extension, the public value and need for Extension programming continues to be misunderstood. Public relations strategies can be used to build relationships between Extension and diverse stakeholders, including students, industry stakeholders, and elected officials. Public relations indicators can also be used to measure the impact of public relations strategies and the relationships developed by Extension. The Center for Rural Enterprise Engagement has applied this approach to its own programming and will share what they learned. Presenters in this workshop will provide data collected by the team to support the need for applying public relations to Extension and will provide recommended strategies for adopting this approach.

### Supporting Health Equity and Nutrition Education through Social Marketing in a Digital World

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### **Kelsey Armstrong, NC A&T; Kelsey Hall and LaCee Jimenez, Utah State University**

The USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) uses social marketing as a population-wide strategy to promote healthy eating and physical activity among communities with high percentages of households with low income. COVID-19 has impacted how programming can be implemented, ultimately eliminating in-person education. However, mass media and social media have helped reach low-income families when educators are unable to provide in-person classes. The SNAP-Ed programs at Cooperative Extension at North Carolina A&T University and Utah State University Extension have implemented social marketing campaigns using formative research to understand their campaigns' target audiences better and determine the ideal strategies for influencing nutrition and physical activity knowledge and behavior. These campaigns used multiple marketing channels in English and Spanish, including social media, digital marketing, mailers, posters, television, mass transit advertisements, and radio.

Learn to create a social marketing campaign focusing on health and nutrition messages directed toward individuals with low income. Discuss how to identify the best platforms for how to deliver content, how to adapt messaging to various audiences by conducting formative research, and how to leverage Extension resources. Prepare to walk away with tips and free resources for how you can create social media content and start implementing in your own Extension social marketing campaign.

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 2:50 PM– 3:20 PM (EST) | 30 MINUTE SESSIONS – CHOOSE ONE**

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### **How to Curate Your Blog Content & Encourage New Bloggers**

**Danyel Boudreau, University of Florida**

How to curate blog content for increased browsing and usability and tips to encourage new bloggers to contribute new content. Audience: blog managers / anyone who serves as administrator for a blog.

### **Communicating with Latino/Hispanic Audiences Through Music**

**Victor Villegas, Oregon State University**

Victor Villegas will present two music communication examples he co-created to reach Latino/Hispanic audiences regarding COVID-19 messaging.

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 3:25 PM– 4:25 PM (EST)**

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### **C&A Awards**

**LaRachelle Smith**

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021 | 4:30 PM– 5:30 PM (EST)**

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### **Networking & Celebrations**

# WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 11:00 AM– 11:30AM (EST) | 30 MINUTE SESSIONS – CHOOSE ONE

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## Lightning Round Sessions (3)

### **Quisto Settle, Oklahoma State University; Tobie Blanchard, LSU AgCenter; Lesa Vold, Egg Industry Center at Iowa State University**

(1) Since 2017 the Ferguson College of Agriculture's communication team has been working with an undergraduate class to develop short videos (about 2 minutes each), with a focus on telling the stories of the diverse perspectives within the college. The goal of the project is to give students a real-world outlet for their projects while also producing work that is usable for the communication team. This session will provide a quick overview of the structure and focus on lessons learned the past few years for fostering collaboration between a class and a communication office. (2) A cadre of faculty and staff well-trained in communications techniques is a valuable asset to any institution. LSU AgCenter Communications has long prioritized providing training to researchers and agents and hosted templates and tips on an internal website. As work moved virtual in early 2020, the communications team was inundated with requests for training. A plan for an expanded tips and training site was already in the works. The new site launched in May 2020 and has been a helpful resource for faculty and staff members navigating more online meetings and fewer in-person presentations. This lightning round session will consist of a show and tell of the site, which continues to grow and evolve. Tips and advice for more tools to add to the site are welcome! (3) Many campuses have Writing & Media Centers that are part of their institutional fabric. Each center's mission and audience can vary slightly based on the directive of the institution they serve. This session highlights the Writing and Media Center atmosphere across various campuses, how they serve their institutional customers, and how to work with a writing and media center to develop practical solutions for your campus communication efforts.

### **Work in progress: Integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion in Extension communications**

#### **Jennifer Alexander, Chris Branam, Victor Villegas-Oregon State University**

Oregon is one of the least diverse states in the U.S., based on race. But we have pockets of diversity in both metro and rural areas. Our Extension faculty and staff are responding to the needs of those communities. How should we as a communications unit tell that story? In this discussion-based session we will share mini case studies framed in terms of our challenges, lessons learned, and changes we are making to our processes and products. We'll pose questions to the group to share approaches we can all use to do better going forward.

### **Accessibility framework: understanding and integrating accessibility concerns into your design process**

#### **Barbara Chamberlin, Matheus Cezarotto, Pamela Martinez, New Mexico State University, Learning Games Lab**

This session presents an approach of how design teams can prioritize accessibility in the design of educational media, integrating accessibility concerns into their design process. Design teams can make their digital media better for all users by addressing accessibility demands, enabling as many people as possible in the widest range of capabilities and circumstances to access and use it. Almost all users fall somewhere on a continuum of need: any given user's vision may range from good to poor or have issues with contrast or color; their hearing range could vary or they may use the media in a location where they are unable to enable sound; their cognitive skills may be different from those the media was initially created for; and their motor skills may cause them to seek ways to remap the way to interact with the virtual and physical interface. Presenters will provide a detailed description of a research-based accessibility framework, designed by the NMSU's Learning Games Lab. The framework covers four areas (i.e., visual, hearing, cognitive, motor) as a way to: 1) provide an overview picture of the main types of disabilities; 2) identify the user's barriers faced in the media interaction cycle; 3) and recognize the existence of a large range of user's needs and variability. In this session, participants will interact and learn a practical process, which they can implement in their review process of existing products and their design conversations of newly developed digital media.

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 11:35 AM– 12:05 PM (EST) | 30 MINUTE SESSIONS – CHOOSE ONE

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### **Clubhouse - What it is and how to use it**

**Victor Villegas, Oregon State University**

Clubhouse is one of the latest social media platforms that everyone is raving about. Join this session to hear more about what it is, how it works and how you can benefit your work.

### **Seeing the world through other people's eyes**

**Edwin Remsberg, University of Maryland; Lena McBean, Remsberg Inc.**

Creating inclusive visual content requires more than just diverse subjects. It requires a sensitivity to different viewpoints and outlooks. In this session we will showcase how we try to achieve that while working across cultures and communities around the globe.

### **2021 Professional Grant Report – Where do underserved Californians get their news?**

**Pam Kan-Rice, Ricardo Vela, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources**

The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, led by Pam Kan-Rice and Ricardo Vela, conducted a survey asking Spanish-speaking and Black people in California where they look for information about nutrition, COVID-19, food safety, gardening and pest control. The survey includes questions about sources such as news media, social media, websites, friends and family and community organizations, as well as credibility and clarity of the information.

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 12:10 PM– 12:55 PM (EST) | 45 MINUTE SESSIONS

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### **Best Practices to Communicate Extension's Relevance and Credibility**

**Elizabeth Gregory North, Mississippi State Extension Agricultural Communications; Michelle Olgers, Virginia State University/Virginia Cooperative Extension; Suzanne Street, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore**

In 2018, Extension directors and administrators in the Southern Region asked the communications leaders to develop best practices for communicating Extension's relevance, credibility, and impact to key audiences, especially those audiences who are underserved and whose stories are often unheard. After creating, sharing, and refining these recommendations in the Southern Region, we are ready to elevate the conversation to the national level. We welcome the input of communicators around the country who are interested in building meaning for the Extension brand through intentional and effective messaging. Participants will receive the complete recommendations we developed and, we hope, many more great ideas from our shared discussion.

### **A Dozen Ways to Tell a Tale: Taking Print Digital and Vice Versa**

**Miranda Reiman and Nicole Erceg, Certified Angus Beef LLC**

Gone are the days when a magazine story only appears in print or an Instagram story only has one life to live. If you've ever filed a feature and wished you could tell more, or done live coverage only to long for more characters—that's what this session is about. Our team looks at every tale we tell and analyzes: where will this fit best? Often the answer is, "Nearly everywhere!" Does that mean we run with the same visuals, words and even tone across all mediums? Of course not! We will give you some tangible tools, thoughtful questions to ask and strong examples to get your print stories going digital and your social stories providing print content.

### **agComplish- Creating a Magazine for Agriculture Alumni from Scratch**

**ChaNae Bradley and Latasha Ford, Fort Valley State University**

Learn how a small communications department turned a passion project into an award winning, highly anticipated agricultural alumni publication. Leaning on diversity, uniqueness and strategy, this group of writers, photographers and graphic artists discovered ideas and launched multimedia projects, while simultaneously boosting interaction on social media platforms. The goal is for the ideas expressed to leave attendees encouraged, enlightened and excited. Join us as we share tips and best practices for incorporating diversity in more ways than one. These methods helped the team earn the ACE 2020 Diversity Award for Publications for Targeted Audiences. Attendees can look forward to a 45-minute virtual session incorporating videos and engagement through polls and more.

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 1:00 PM– 1:45 PM (EST)

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### Hermance Speaker

Tristan Ahtone - Writer, Reporter, Rabble-Rouser

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 1:45 PM– 2:05 PM (EST)

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### Honor Awards

Becky Koch – ACE Fellow

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 2:05 PM– 2:15 PM (EST)

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### Honor Awards

Kelli Anderson, Ana Iverson, Ashley McLeod-Morin, Stacey Stearns - Rising Stars

Lisa Lundy, Award of Excellence – Academic & Research Learning Community

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 2:15 PM– 2:45 PM (EST)

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### Honor Awards

Reuben Brigham Award

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 2:50 PM– 3:35 PM (EST) | 45 MINUTE SESSIONS

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### Communicating to and with your state department of agriculture: A conversation with COSDA and NASDA

Sarah Fowler, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), Corinne Gould, Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture (COSDA)

State departments of agriculture hold the potential to be valuable allies in the dissemination of our content. Fowler and Gould will talk about what their organizations do and the tools they use to communicate to both members and to the public. They can highlight successful examples of how they have worked with land-grant communications professionals, but more importantly they want to start a conversation of how we can collaborate more often and more effectively.

### Communicating Science post COVID-19: What have we learned?

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### **Ashley McLeod-Morin, Lauri Baker, Angela B. Lindsey, and Ricky Telg UF/IFAS; Shelli D. Rampold, University of Tennessee**

Communicators learned valuable lessons related to crisis communication during COVID-19. These lessons should be applied as communicators plan to communicate during and after future natural disasters, public health outbreaks, or other crises. Lessons were also learned related to how people responded and made decisions during COVID-19. The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources collected public opinion data throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to better understand the American public's opinions, attitudes, and beliefs related to the pandemic, disease mitigation practices, vaccines, and more. Presenters in this workshop will discuss findings from these studies and how to apply these findings to future crisis communication plans.

### **Elastigirls: Integrating Flexibility into Your Online Course**

**Kenna Kesler, Michelle Burrows, Utah State University**

The word "flexible" has been used a lot as we've adapted to all the changes presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift to online has introduced an unprecedented amount of freedom into the college classroom. This workshop will explore tools and methods for integrating flexibility into online courses to provide students autonomy and control over their learning. Focusing on the experience of two agriculture educators (Elastigirls), attendees will join an engaging virtual workshop that presents ideas, examples, and discussion as participants ponder ways to extend the principles into their own higher education classroom. Topics covered will include the importance of intrinsic motivation and student choice, incorporating flexibility into classroom assessments and projects, and how to make the learning environment an enjoyable space for many, including those from underrepresented or nontraditional student backgrounds. By the end of the workshop, attendees will walk – or fly (no capes) – away with ideas on how to make their online course, well, incredible.

## **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 3:40 PM– 4:10 PM (EST) | 30 MINUTE SESSIONS**

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### **Navigating the Grocery Store Aisle: Gamification of Extension Education**

**Stacey Stearns, UConn Extension**

Have you ever picked up an item in the grocery store and wondered what the food marketing label on it means? Research shows that this is a situation consumers frequently face. Our team of Extension educators was selected as a New Technologies in Agricultural Extension (NTAE) project by the eXtension Foundation. We are using communication and gamification to help our Extension audiences navigate the grocery store aisle. The game will help consumers identify and understand food labels, leading to better informed purchase decisions. A virtual shopping process helps consumers learn about non-GMO, organic, and natural labeling techniques in the game. Choices within the game dictate the products participants see. The game is available in English and Spanish. This project adds a consumer focus on food literacy to our respective Extension programs. It builds on novel online gaming technology to create an enhanced learner engagement experience. Online games are a relatively new technology in Extension that help engage audiences in an increasingly digital world. We are comparing the efficacy of the game with content on a website in our project evaluation to determine why games might be more effective in creating knowledge and behavior changes. This session will focus on the innovation and communication resources that can help Extension programs advance their programs and reach more audiences. Gamification is a communication tool that can help us engage new audiences with the research and educational outreach from our universities.

### **Media Relations by Region: A case study for doubling down on PR**

**Chris Vivian and Brad Buck, University of Florida IFAS**

In an era when news outlet staff are shrinking and small papers are closing their doors, does it make sense to invest in PR? In late 2018, UF/IFAS invested in "on-the-ground" writer/media relations specialists and placed them in Extension regions around the state. Their goal: more earned media hits and spark a better overall public relations presence in Florida's largest.

### **APLU and ACE: Linking land-grants' communications**

**Doug Steele, David Edelson, APLU Office of Food, Agriculture, & Natural Resources**

Most of us in ACE are also linked through our institutions' membership in the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, or APLU. What does that mean for land-grant communicators? Hear from APLU leaders about ways we can share content, what platforms APLU offers for disseminating news and how we as individual members can help land-grants.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 | 4:15 PM – 5:30 PM (EST)**

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**Networking & Celebrations**

