

Support Department Heads Receive from Cooperative Extension Administration

Department heads work in a complex environment. Working for two levels of government, department heads must identify and negotiate the shared interests of local government with the state partner. Department heads provide leadership for staff who may work for either local or state government, or some combination. In this complex environment, department heads represent both the dean and the district director, and serve as the lead contact with the Extension Education Committee and the County Administrator's office.

What can department heads expect from Cooperative Extension administration?

Administrative Support

Wisconsin is fortunate to have a group of capable and committed district directors who view coaching and supporting department heads as their highest priority. District directors are available for planning strategy, collaboration in problem solving, and supportive coaching and counseling. Program directors and program area liaisons provide assistance to department heads to develop new programs or redirect existing programs. Program area staff work with county faculty and staff to plan, implement, and evaluate local programs and encourage cross-program area cooperation. The dean and associate dean value the work department heads do, understand the complexity of the work and the stress of the role. To the extent possible, they provide the human and financial resources to enable all department heads to succeed, encouraging risk-taking and providing training.

Training and Professional Development

Cooperative Extension is committed to helping all department heads develop the skills needed to provide effective leadership for county offices. This includes conferences designed by and for department heads, on-line web-based professional development and management resources, and opportunities for in-depth learning through participation in various leadership experiences. Department heads are encouraged to develop a professional development plan and work with their district director to identify strategies for implementation.

Technical Assistance and Support Services

Cooperative Extension staff are fortunate to have a number of excellent resources to help with the challenges all administrators face:

- District directors provide the first point of contact for issues and concerns.
- Sharon J. Klawitter (sharon.klawitter@ces.uwex.edu or 608-265-3372) provides assistance for personnel, personnel-policy-related concerns, employee hiring and orientation processes.

- Mike Hallenbach (mehallen@wisc.edu or 608-265-5127) provides employee assistance.
- Dan Malacara (malacara@ces.uwex.edu or 608-263-7941) and the budget office help with budget questions and concerns.
- The CE Technology Services help desk (608-265-3895 or 800-760-7610) provides quick and effective assistance with computer and technology problems.
- Program directors help with program development, evaluations and access to specialists and other campus resources.
- Pamela Seelman (pamela.seelman@ces.uwex.edu) provides support in communicating value to stakeholders, working with the media and strategic communications.
- Larry Jones (larry.jones@ces.uwex.edu) supports your efforts in program development and evaluation.

Role Modeling

District directors, program directors and representatives of the dean's office serve as good role models for you and our faculty and academic and classified staff. They model our organizational values and provide good models for work/life balance.

Assistance with Role/Workload Negotiation

You may need assistance negotiating the time commitment of the role with personal or external expectations for subject-matter programming. District directors and program directors will work with you and your county partners to ensure a manageable set of expectations and a reasonable workload.

Feedback and Support for Department Head

As a department head, feedback about your performance helps you know that the organization supports and appreciates your work. District directors are committed to providing you with formal and informal feedback through the performance review process and through less formal, ongoing coaching and mentoring. Another great way to determine how well you are carrying out your responsibilities is through 360° feedback, a tool that you can use to gather data about your leadership performance. This tool is found online at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/admin/sipr.htm>

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