

Program Planning Initiative

Description

Cooperative Extension, in partnership with its key stakeholders, will complete a multi-year plan by the spring of 2004. Both the planning process and the plan itself will provide the basis for bi-annual review and refinement.

Situation

Every four years, UW-Extension engages in a comprehensive program planning process to identify statewide issues and educational priorities. The proposed planning initiative addresses the current context of extension programming and the results of an evaluation study on the 1999 planning process. Extension conducts its program planning process in a context of:

- an increasingly diverse state population;
- budget constraints at all levels of government;
- a complex local environment of county boards, administrators and executives.

In light of this planning context, an evaluation of the 1999 planning process took place.

Among its findings:

- County offices valued and want to continue the opportunity to choose the planning procedure to suit their situation, including the use of existing data and/or assessment, rather than starting anew or duplicating the efforts of others.
- Local planning resulted in a variety of benefits including: opportunities for interaction with key local stakeholders; changed or refocused programs; increased visibility of Extension's unique contribution at the county level; and new programming partnerships and audiences.
- Submitted data were difficult to use and interpret for statewide planning and priority setting. Both county and state staff called for greater clarity in terms of what data are needed and how it should be reported back to the state: type of data, level of specificity, format and agreed upon vocabulary.

Given Extension's current context, and the need to maintain local flexibility, while enhancing the quality of statewide planning, it is proposed that a multi-year planning cycle be implemented with subsequent bi-annual review and refinement.

Outcomes

Institution-Wide:

- Cooperative Extension effectively communicates its mission, vision, and values to key stakeholders.
- Cooperative Extension strengthens and diversifies its support base.
- Cooperative Extension articulates a multi-year plan, with bi-annual review/revision.

County Extension Faculty and Staff:

- County offices articulate, in summary format, a coherent plan that addresses local priorities and encompasses the work of all staff members.
- Individual plans, including those funded through external sources, communicate their respective contributions to the county plan, based on local priorities.

State Extension Leadership:

- The new Dean is informed on local priorities and their implications for overall state direction.

- Program area leadership complete plans that are based on county priorities and address regional and/or statewide trends.
- Institution-wide task forces and initiatives complete plans, based on county priorities and address regional and/or statewide trends.
- Program support units complete plans that enhance the capacities of the institution to accomplish its goals and strategies.

Guidelines

- The program planning process and product:
 - consistently applies Cooperative Extension's mission, vision and values.
 - address the planning requirements of county, state, federal, and other funding partners.
 - reflect diverse involvement from both traditional and non-traditional stakeholder groups.
- Cooperative Extension's program development model is the conceptual framework for the program planning initiative.
- Completed plans provide the basis for future resource decisions, accountability, evaluation, and subsequent refinement beginning in the fall of 2005.
- County offices have flexibility in their planning methods so that they can tailor their effort to the local context.
- Program Leaders and statewide program teams articulate themes, planning criteria, and the type and format of information to be submitted by county faculty and staff for statewide planning purposes.

Oversight

The oversight committee will include the state program leaders, a district director, members of the program support units, and county-based faculty and staff. They will conduct their work through existing infrastructure charged with completing specific tasks related to the planning process and products.

Timeline

- Program areas define themes and criteria for program planning and complete trend analysis (March-June, 2003).
- Program areas and program support units develop county planning resources based on the 2000-2004 guidelines (March-June, 2003).
- The oversight committee will provide a statewide overview of the planning process and products (June 2003).
- Counties conduct local planning and submit information to the state for statewide planning purposes (July-October, 2003).
- Program Leaders and statewide program teams use county data to identify state priorities (November-December, 2003).
- Faculty and staff members develop their individual plans based on local needs and knowledge of statewide program area priorities (January, 2004).
- County offices articulate, in summary format, a coherent plan that addresses local priorities and encompasses the work of all staff members (January, 2004).
- Program Leaders, program teams, and institution-wide task forces complete statewide plans (February, 2004).