

LOCAL DEPARTMENT HEAD
EXPECTATIONS,
ACCOUNTABILITY, REWARDS,
AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Recommendations: April 15, 2014



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Table of Contents

Introduction: Background and Department Head Issues	1
Recommendations: Philosophical Approach	3
Recommendations: Priority Options for Consideration	4
Recommendations: Department Head Roles	6
Recommendations: Potential Measures of Success	7

Appendices

Appendix A: Issues Identified in County Leader Conversation	11
Appendix B: Department Head Timeline Sample	13
Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions	15
Appendix D: Great Start Document	19

Introduction: Background and Department Head Issues

The 2013 County Leadership Conference and “County Leader Conversation” (Appendix A) brought several key issues to light in the evolving role of the local department head. These issues included the following needs: clearly and consistently defined expectations and accountability; strengthened resources for department heads to work effectively and efficiently; orientation and training; and increased compensation. As a result, Dean Richard Klemme charged a workgroup co-chaired by Jennifer Erickson, co-department head and community resource development educator in Sauk County and Tom Schmitz, regional director in the North Central region to determine appropriate and reasonable expectations, accountability, rewards, and support systems for department heads.

Personal:

With few exceptions, local department heads were hired as educators and become department heads. They are often selected because of their success at building programming and collegial relationships. Once they become department heads, it is difficult to balance and maintain these relationships and programming roles with department head roles.

Interpersonal:

It can be difficult to coach, guide, and supervise colleagues, especially when a local department head has little or no authority.

Confusion may exist between department head and WNEP coordinator roles, specifically in reporting relationships with nutrition educators. In some counties, nutrition educators see themselves as reporting to department heads and in others, coordinators.

Organizational:

There are many different local department head “models” ranging from counties where a single leader has, for all intents and purposes, adopted the “direct report” style of the county – to counties where colleagues in the office share the department head role. While not one, or even a few, models will fit all 72 counties, there is some expressed desire to streamline models.

The shift from five districts and the Quad Counties to four regions has caused concern and a lack of clarity about human resource development, regional director, and department head expectations and roles. Because of this, communication channels aren’t clear.

Department heads have numerous expectations placed on them, often with inadequate communication, resources, or professional development support to be successful at meeting those expectations.

Compensation is inadequate for the amount of expectations and time required to perform the role effectively. While inadequate, in some instances the additional compensation has created some unintended consequences: local department heads may be reluctant to give up or share the role.

There is a perceived lack of institutional accountability for ineffective or disruptive local department heads.

Increased amounts of temporary assignment of duties for local educators, especially those which result in job-sharing, have placed greater demands on local department heads especially in the areas

of hiring, orientation, supervision of short-term hires, and resource/support procurement (technology, mentoring, etc.).

Cultural:

Department heads serve many masters with conflicting expectations and often find themselves in the “middle” of these masters: counties, tribal government, Cooperative Extension, programming constituents, colleagues, and academic departments. It can be difficult to translate the needs and expectations of one group to another group.

In terms of leadership styles, there is a cultural mismatch between counties and tribes (direct report style) and Cooperative Extension (collegial, responsibility-based style). Cooperative Extension moved to the department head (and in some cases director) model in the late 1990's to accommodate the style and structure of county departments. However, Cooperative Extension's adoption of the model has been on a surface level, it operationalizes the model differently than county/tribal departments. County/tribal department heads and directors serve as reporting authorities for those they supervise. Local department heads in Cooperative Extension have little to no authority and supervision “over” their colleagues, especially tenured faculty.

Key Issues to Address

1. In order to mitigate the cultural differences that exist within Cooperative Extension and with counties, how can we define the purpose and role of local department heads in a way that is commonly understood for colleagues, county/local, and programming constituents?
2. Given local and institutional needs, how can we set realistic expectations for local department heads?
3. How can we clarify roles and areas of responsibility, especially in relationship to the department head, regional director, nutrition coordinator, human resource development, office colleagues, governance, and administrative support?
4. How can we build accountability and reward systems into the role?
5. How can we adequately compensate department heads?
6. What support systems do local department heads need to successfully perform their roles and how can Cooperative Extension make sure they receive this support?
7. How can we align the role in the context of comprehensive colleague support improvements like performance support and professional development?

Recommendations: Philosophical Approach

The recommendations set forth for the local department head expectations, accountability, rewards and support in order to be fully realized must be accompanied by a significant philosophical shift – to clearly delineate the roles and the responsibilities of local department heads. The organization continues to emphasize an inclusive and responsibility-based culture which embodies certain language and underlying principles. The inclusiveness and collegiality in the minds of many equates to an egalitarian atmosphere where all are solely responsible for themselves and not necessarily responsible to any local leadership and/or management. This mindset is not merely evident among the academic staff and faculty but also exhibited in the behaviors of many department heads. Any recommendations set forth must be supported by a philosophical shift to the notion that they are responsible, accountable local administrators charged with many management-based functions to support a comprehensive educational program. There needs to be a firm foundation of orientation for the entire organization relative to the specific roles of the local department head or co-department heads in the case of shared leadership.

Recommendations: Priority Options for Consideration

Expectations

- a) Standardize and implement guidelines for selecting local department heads.
- b) Develop single-leadership and shared leadership models of “best practice” to guide colleagues and partners.
- c) Annually review each local department head model. This should include expectations, and/or roles/responsibilities and could be done in conjunction with the annual performance review process.

Accountability

- d) Draft and provide guidelines for developing high performing department heads. Define performance.
- e) Develop, provide, and consistently follow guidelines and metrics for appointing, reviewing, improving, and removing ineffective and/or disruptive department heads. Define “ineffective” and “disruptive.”
- f) Academic departments, department heads, program area liaisons and WNEP advisors should engage in regular and ongoing conversations about supporting the programmatic and relational effectiveness of colleagues, especially during the annual review process and prior to promotion.
- g) Make the “chain of accountability” clear for all colleagues and the county/tribal partner.
- h) Once expectations are clarified for department heads identify areas of duplication and gaps that are not being met by other roles (regional director, human resource development, nutrition coordinator, program area, academic departments, etc.). Decide on and document roles and responsibilities for fulfilling these functions.
- i) Clarify the integration of WNEP coordinator roles into county/local office operations.
- j) Periodically (e.g. semi-annually), regional directors should visit each local office to provide department heads, colleagues and partners an opportunity for feedback and suggestions for improvement.
- k) Regularly review the implementation of these recommendations as well as department head expectations, accountability, rewards, and support systems.

Rewards

- l) Increase single-leader department head compensation to a minimum of \$6,000 each year. In counties with a shared leadership model, the division of functions, roles, responsibilities, and estimated percentages of time for each individual must be outlined and agreed upon by office colleagues, the regional director, and local partners. For counties with two department heads the minimum stipend should be \$7,000 total, for three department heads the minimum stipend should

be \$7,500 total, for four department heads the minimum stipend should be \$8,000 total. The stipend could be increased for some or all of the following reasons: number of county staff, performance, etc.

Support

- m) Determine and provide guidelines for competency development aligned with expectations and accessing resources/funding specific to the department head role.
- n) Develop a system to support department head(s) in their roles. This could include a Google+ community for local department heads, a current list of all department heads, quarterly “lunch and learns”, and/or “leader’s circles” or peer learning circles for department heads to problem solve and share resources, etc.
- o) Whenever possible, Cooperative Extension should avoid having probationary (non-tenured) faculty serve in department head roles. When unavoidable, regional directors and academic departments should work together to negotiate the percentage of appointment dedicated to the role and potentially extends the tenure clock. Academic departments should address implications and impacts of non-tenured faculty serving in a department head role. How is this accounted for in the tenure process? Likewise, faculty governance and the organization should support non-tenured faculty serving in a department head role by documenting and providing potential scholarly approaches for leadership, administrative and relationship building functions so candidates for promotion may include department head work in their promotional materials.
- p) Provide a system of orientation for new department head(s) and their local offices (this system could include one-on-one visits, video clips, cohort groups, etc.).
- q) Decision Tree: Formalize regional director, Peer Support Network, human resource development, programming (program areas, academic department chairs and liaisons) and other protocols to specifically assist department heads with finding resources and making decisions.
- r) Incentivize succession planning by allowing later-career department heads (or transitioning mid-career department heads) the opportunity to retain their additional compensation while mentoring and sharing leadership with newer department heads.
- s) Provide a timeline (see Appendix B for an example) for consistently anticipated department head activities.
- t) Provide and post responses and guidelines for ongoing FAQ’s (see Appendix C for an example).
- u) Provide an updated intranet-based “one-stop-shop” for department heads.
- v) Develop a mentoring system for the next department head within an office and for new department heads.

Recommendations: Department Head Roles

The community-building work of Cooperative Extension, including the practical educational programs that respond to local needs, ensures access to the research and resources of the University of Wisconsin System. We are successful in our mission, in part, because Cooperative Extension offices are located where people live and work in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties and in 3 tribal communities. The overall responsibility for leadership, administration and relationship building in each of these offices is assumed by a local department head, a local department head team or in our most urban counties, a county director.

Because the localities served differ in size, complexity and type of administrative structure, the specific time demands and complexity of the department head's role varies. Department heads and leadership teams are appointed in joint agreement by Cooperative Extension and county/tribal government and report directly to the regional director. The department head serves as a leader, administrator and relationship builder in support of a responsive, relevant, engaged, well-communicated educational program.

As a leader, the department head is responsible for helping to create a positive and effective work environment, team building, communications, programming support and professional development.

As an administrator, the department head is responsible for key (and frequently shared) roles related to hiring, orientation, performance support, evaluation and budgeting.

As a relationship builder, the department head is responsible for ensuring political effectiveness, and positive working relationships and communication between the local office, Cooperative Extension, and various partners. Many of these skills are important in the department head(s) educational programming.

Recommendations: Potential Measures of Success

Working collaboratively with all office colleagues, department heads are self-directed individuals accountable for sharing responsibility for leadership of the local Cooperative Extension program with all colleagues. Consistent with a responsibility-based culture, this includes leadership, administration and relationship building functions. In shared roles, each individual sharing the role should be evaluated on all three functions. Depending on local need, the following list of *potential measures of success* may be modified through coaching and evaluation of the department head role with the regional director.

Leadership:

As a leader, the department head is responsible for helping to create a positive and effective work environment, team building, communications, programming support and professional development.

- Takes appropriate steps to create work environments marked by high levels of trust, which in turn, foster creativity, innovation, excellence, team work, inclusiveness, scholarship, shared leadership, collegiality, personal responsibility for outcomes and a sense of enthusiasm for achieving Cooperative Extension's purpose.
- Models Cooperative Extension's values and takes steps to ensure alignment between these values and ensure that the ways in which the work of Cooperative Extension is carried out is consistent with our strategic priorities, program priorities, purpose, vision and values.
- Seeks to ensure accurate organizational information is disseminated to office colleagues in a straightforward, clear and timely manner through regularly scheduled office meetings and other appropriate means.
- Models behaviors that encourage colleagues to demonstrate honesty and behavior that builds trust.
- Models behaviors which encourage colleagues to demonstrate openness and to speak up when standards and expectations are not being met; ask questions or ask for assistance to ensure commitments will be met; and share information, opinions and emotions without fear.
- Models behaviors which encourage colleagues to demonstrate a willingness to listen and to be receptive to feedback.
- Recommends procedures for resolving disagreements.
- Models accountability and, with colleagues, co-creates office systems and structures which hold the team accountable for local office expectations.
- Take steps to ensure the local office provides an appropriate Cooperative Extension program based on local concerns, local educational needs, and constituent input.
- Model behaviors that encourage colleagues to demonstrate inclusiveness and recognition, understanding and appreciation of differences.
- Supports all colleagues in their programming efforts through the collaborative efforts of the department head and program area colleagues.

- Encourages colleagues to seek out and secure resources to support and expand innovative programming.
- Encourages interdisciplinary work between program areas.
- Engages the Faculty Governance Unit (FGU) chair to provide feedback for colleague promotion and tenure procedures.
- Sustains ongoing dialogue with the regional director regarding leadership of the county/tribal office.

Administration:

As an administrator, the department head is responsible for key roles related to hiring, orientation, performance support, evaluation and budgeting.

- Takes necessary steps to ensure compliance with affirmative action, equal employment opportunity and civil rights laws, regulations and policies.
- Work collaboratively to seek support for all office colleagues with regard to the office space, fiscal and human resources necessary to be successful in their positions.
- Work to encourage opportunities for all office colleagues to achieve personal effectiveness, political effectiveness and professional growth through participation in Cooperative Extension's performance support systems.
- Ensure accountability and accurate reporting to federal, state, tribal and local partners.
- Focuses on Cooperative Extension's values: Community, Discovery, Inclusiveness, Relationships, and Respect through annual review and performance support efforts of local colleagues.
- Effectively serves as the primary administrative contact for county/tribal government.
- Through implementation of university and county/tribal human resource and fiscal policies, seeks to ensure office operations are followed, managed efficiently and effectively.
- In cooperation with the regional director and relevant university partners, seeks to ensure local coordination is provided for recruitment, hiring, orientation and support of new colleagues in accordance with the "Great Start" model (see Appendix D).
- In accordance with county/tribal policies, supervises county/tribal support employees within the Cooperative Extension department.
- Provides support for colleagues by referring them to appropriate resources and keeps the regional director informed.
- Seeks to ensure appropriate local government and university records (e.g., personnel, fiscal, meeting minutes, etc.) are maintained by office colleagues in accordance with public records policies.

- Seeks to ensure the local office budget is created through an inclusive process and is advocated by the department head.
- Provides effective administration, oversight and accountability of the local budget.
- Ensures that 133 or traditional contracts are processed and kept up to date.
- Seeks to ensure that colleagues are aware of available professional development resources.
- Provides ongoing feedback for office colleagues in accordance with Cooperative Extension's performance review process. Annually provides the regional office with signed copies of the performance summary document.
- Collaborates with the regional office to securely maintain appropriate employee personnel documents.
- Sustains ongoing dialogue with the regional director regarding administration of the county/tribal office.

Relationship Building:

As a relationship builder, the department head is responsible for ensuring that political effectiveness, positive working relationships and communication between the local office, Cooperative Extension, and various partners occurs.

- Communicates to office colleagues an expectation that they demonstrate and promote a positive image of the local office and Cooperative Extension.
- Takes steps to build and maintain positive working relationships and open communication with county/tribal departments, elected officials, local administrative staff and other critical stakeholders.
- In communications with external stakeholders, conveys the breadth of the local office's programming and shares the impacts of colleagues' programs. Supports and represents all program areas to external stakeholders.
- Works collaboratively with office team to provide ongoing communication and reports of Cooperative Extension's value and program impacts from the local office to local, state and federal stakeholders.
- Informs other local government departments and agencies of how Cooperative Extension can add value to the services they provide.
- Maintains regular communications and takes appropriate steps to build relationships with local elected and non-elected officials.
- Communicates partnership expectations between Cooperative Extension, local partners, and local office colleagues, seeking to ensure that the local office has the resources it needs to carry out its work.

- Takes appropriate steps to secure fiscal and human resources needed to carry out departmental work from the county/tribal partners and other avenues to appropriately diversify our funding base.
- Supports UW-Extension efforts to build and enhance relationships with state, federal and tribal funding partners.
- Sustains ongoing dialogue with the regional director regarding relationship building for the county/tribal office.

Appendix A: Issues Identified in County Leader Conversation

County Leadership Conference
From Good to Great: A County Leader Conversation
Responses - 2/28/13

Based on our conversation, what is the one big thing that Cooperative Extension (CE) needs to do to move county leadership from good to great?

Resources:

- Resources and everything that entails
- Position description that better reflects and documents why we program less
- Department head and/or nutrition coordinator community on Google+
- Better or new department head webpage with resources
- Clearly define department head and nutrition coordinator duties and work discussion about that into a formal department head/nutrition coordinator orientation and mentoring program (*make orientation materials continuously available*)
- Timeline/framework of department head duties
 - o Developed at breakout session at County Leadership Conference
 - o Survey of all department heads to assess how much time annual/routine tasks take
 - o Distributed during orientation session for new department head held day prior to leadership conference
- An information source that is easily accessible where department head and nutrition coordinators can give and receive
- The “Go to Place” for department head/nutrition coordinator resources: Skill building (management functions), comments, virtual, Facebook, YouTube, tutorials, etc.
 - o Recycle retired leaders, regional director’s, program director’s, nutrition coordinator’s to lead the project
- Website organization

Guidelines/Expectations/Effectiveness:

- Uniform guidelines and boundaries for the state
- Cooperative Extension administration needs to wear their big pants to assist in specific situations (problem staff, professional development, etc.)
- *Clearly define department head and nutrition coordinator duties* and work discussion about that into a formal department head/nutrition coordinator orientation and mentoring program (*make orientation materials continuously available*)
- Determine consistent boundaries for department head role
- Clear expectations and communication of policies
- There needs to be intention! Consistency
- Revisit and clarify real and perceived expectations of department head’s and nutrition coordinator’s from Cooperative Extension and county government
- Streamline department head role/duties

Orientation/Training:

- Better department head training
- New department head orientation: Core skills, budget, conflict, professional time off, county support staff, and types of leadership/followership
- Human resources training and support
- Clearly define department head and nutrition coordinator duties and work discussion about that into a *formal department head/nutrition coordinator orientation and mentoring program* (make orientation materials continuously available)
- Opportunities to build leadership skill sets and tools to evaluate and reflect on where we are at as leaders, where we want to be, and how we can get there
- Core competencies around department head/nutrition coordinator duties
- A standardized process to address the varying components of conflict that is objective and safe and nuanced
 - o Process needs to be well known and thoroughly understood

Structure:

- Cluster of offices, learning circles – self-directed, but expected
- One size doesn't fit all and there shouldn't be 72 sizes, have just a few options
- Don't pass down another "thing"
- Realize there is no 1 big solution because we are 73 (Madison is different) different counties

Compensation:

- \$ Appropriate compensation
- \$
- More \$ or no money for department heads
 - PAY – the other issues we can address ourselves with minimal support (RBC)

Appendix B: Department Head Timeline Sample

January

- Beginning of calendar/county fiscal year
- Planning and results success stories due
- Civil Rights charts & annual plan completed
- Annual and multi-year plans of work due
- Staff and department head performance reviews conducted
- Winter Regional Department Head meeting
- Return signed calendar year traditional contracts to regional office
- Planning meeting for Spring WACEC East-Metro Region Meeting

February

- ECRT filing begins
- Staff and department head performance reviews conducted
- Market request letters due
- East-Metro Regional All-Colleague Meeting?
- Regional resource management budget sheets, signed by extension office & county budget office, due to regional office by February 28th

March

- Department head report any unsuccessful performers to regional director
- Department heads send staff performance reviews to regional office
- Statewide Leadership Conference (Dept. Head +)
- 133 Contracts – spring bill mailed (or April)

April

- Cut off dates begin for current year state spending
- Statewide Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP)
- State WACEC Conference in Madison (every other year)
- Spring Regional Department Head meeting
- Outside activity reports due
- WACEC Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference, Virginia
- ECRT filing ends
- New Colleague Orientation

May

- (When available) Regional Resource Management Grants must be invoiced by mid-month
- WNEP Grants are submitted by mid-month
- WACEC East-Metro Region Annual Meeting

June

- State WACEC Conference (when not in Madison – every other year)
- Salary letters and/or reappointment letters are sent to staff
- State Travel Expense Report (TER) forms (from state fiscal year funds) – must be submitted by mid-month

July

- Beginning of State Fiscal Year
- Usually beginning of county budget process

August

- ECRT filing begins
- Summer Regional Department Head meeting
- County budget process continues
- Receive 133 contracts from Budget Office, get county signature, and forward to regional office (might receive in September or October)
- Any missing leave forms (from the previous fiscal year) are due to UWEX payroll office by August 15th

September

- WNEP staff receive appointment letters
- East-Metro Regional All-Colleague Meeting?
- Ohio Leadership Assessment Conference
- County budget process continues

October

- Beginning of federal fiscal year (WNEP)
- New Colleague Orientation
- County budget process continues
- 133 Contracts – fall bill mailed (or November)
- ECRT filing ends

November

- County budgets adopted
- Department heads go to the website below and complete the following 3 forms and return to Budget Office
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/budget/forms.cfm>
 - County Budget Form
 - Checking Account & Authorization Form
 - Grant Survey Form
- Fall Regional Department Head meeting
- Civil Rights Reviews (after Thanksgiving)

December

- Office & department head feedback collected from county staff
- Calendar year traditional contracts to county
- (When available) Regional resource management grants completed, or must have received prior approval to continue past end of December

East-Metro Regional Meeting Schedule: www.uwex.edu/ces/dist/eastern/meeting.html

UWEX Calendar: www.uwex.edu/ces/calendar/

As of March 2013

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions (DRAFT)

1. How do we determine who the department head will be and what if no one is willing or appropriate for the role?

Department heads are jointly appointed by the regional director and the local partner based on the recommendation of the regional director. The regional director determines the process used to engage colleagues in making the recommendation.

2. Newer educators may not have a full understanding of the political environment, historical knowledge of an issue or have the relationships in the community to fully understand and explain the broader issue to their program office. What happens if the program office provides advice to an educator in the office regarding an issue, but does not seek out additional information from the department head?

The “Great Start” effort should provide the foundation to mitigate these potential conflicts. Through the “Great Start” effort the department head and program area liaison are encouraged to work together and stay in close contact as the new colleague progresses, thus allowing for a collegial resolution to the issue.

3. What happens if the department head role becomes primary and educational programming becomes secondary? Will academic department and program office understand?

At times the department head role will become primary especially when addressing a budget or performance issue. The work will ebb and flow. Colleagues are encouraged to keep the academic departments and program areas in the loop.

4. Who does the department head report to?

The department head reports primarily to the regional director who conducts the annual performance review.

5. If the department head is having an issue with another educator’s performance, who do they go to- the regional director, human resource development?

As the hiring authority for all colleagues in the region, the regional director is the first point of contact. It is better to approach the regional director as soon as issues begin to appear so that support for a colleague’s success can begin right away. Depending on the situation the regional director will coach the department head on possible strategies and resources to engage.

6. If a department head is having an issue and seeks the advice of a regional director, will this be held against the department head during the Regional Director’s annual performance review of the department head?

No, the regional director’s role is to coach and support department heads and come to a course of action they can agree on. In this situation, performance is based on the department head’s implementation of their duties under the agreed upon action plan.

7. What happens if a department head disagrees with the course of action of a regional director? Who does the department head go to- dean, associate dean, HRD, another regional director...?

Building the relationship with the regional director who represents the Dean is an important role for the department head. Hopefully discussions on courses of action can be collegial and give and take. Concerns over the actions of a regional director should be directed to the associate dean.

8. What type of reporting mechanism should there be from the department head to the regional director? Is no news good news or should there be periodic updates provided? In what form should this take?

Ongoing updates should be part of the department head and regional director working relationship. Periodic updates are encouraged and the form these take should be worked out between the department head and regional director.

9. How are performance issues with the department head dealt with? Is there a Performance Improvement Process for department heads?

Support for performance is provided to all colleagues. Depending on the nature of the situation the regional director will work with the department to support successful performance.

10. If the county administration contacts the regional director or the dean's office directly regarding an issue in the county extension office, how is it handled? How will the department head be notified? What is the procedure and is it consistent across the regions? What happens if the issue is the department head?

Concerns regarding local extension offices are taken seriously and regardless of where the concern was originally directed, the regional director will first seek to understand. Depending on the concern, the regional director may choose to meet with local officials to better understand the issue and eventually determine how best to address the concern. In all likelihood the department head will be engaged by the regional director regardless if the issue is with the Department Head specifically or another colleague in the office. Our goal is to be responsive and to strengthen the effectiveness of the office.

11. What happens if a county staff person in the office calls the regional office directly regarding an issue in the office? How is this handled?

Here again the regional director will seek first to understand. Depending on the issue, the regional director will coach the colleague on how they may resolve it and engage the department head.

12. In extension, you can ask the same question to five colleagues and get five different and sometimes conflicting answers. Whose advice should the department head follow?

This is a dilemma all extension professionals eventually face. It is the responsibility of the professional on the ground to make the best decision based on a multitude of factors. If it involves the functioning of the office and the expectations of the department head, it would be important to discuss the course of action with the regional director.

13. Does the department head have to follow the advice of the regional director? What happens if they don't?

Hopefully the department head and the regional director will work to develop a relationship where honest discussions about the strengths and limitations regarding potential courses of action take place. It would also be wise to raise this question with the regional director before embarking on a plan of action that is not supported by the regional director.

14. What happens if the department head has an issue with a county employee in the office and the county is unwilling to do anything about it?

Bring the issue to the regional director and see if there is an alternative course of action.

15. What happens if there is a department head that does not operate in an inclusive environment and does not seek input from office colleagues? How is this monitored?

Office environments are monitored through the annual office environment survey, through observations by the regional director and through discussions between colleagues and the regional director. As regional directors we use these information points to help department heads pursue opportunities for growth.

16. Should the department head stipend be the same for all counties or should offices with larger staff get larger stipends?

This is a question we need to answer as a group. For most offices the stipend is the same.

17. What are the core competencies needed to be an effective department head?

The competencies needed are tied to the expectations. This is an area that we need to study more.

18. What happens if there is strife in the office and the department head is unable to handle it? Who do they turn to?

The regional director is the point of contact for issues in the office. The regional director can help develop a course of action and identify resources to help resolve the issue.

19. Is there peer support for department heads? Who is it?

There is no formal "peer support" for department heads though there are department heads on the Peer Support Network.

20. Where do department heads get information regarding 133 contracts and fringe benefits?

The Budget Office through Howard Fenton is the resource for 133 contracts and budget issues.

21. What type of professional development support is there for department heads? Is there funding available? Who do they ask?

There is support for department heads professional development through the regional office. Colleagues should explore their professional development goals with the regional director through the annual performance review process.

22. What happens if two educators in the office do not get along? Who does the department head turn to?

The regional director is the point of contact for issues in the office. The regional director can help develop a course of action and identify resources to help resolve the issue.

Appendix D: Great Start Document

Great Start Proposals for Consistency across Regions Approved by Regional Director's

4-15-14

Proposal – Right Place

These proposals contribute to the following desired results:

- County government leadership, county office department head and members, regional director and program area leadership, have a common vision, purpose, expectations, and qualifications for the position;
- Relationships among stakeholders are characterized by mutual respect and trust;
- Position is sufficiently funded and politically supported by all partners

The regional offices agree to similar approaches in the determining how to move the position towards posting. Steps will include:

- Regional directors agree to engage the program area and department head as partners in the decision making and planning process and agree to engage the Human Resource Department early in the process.
- Regional director and department head connect with local partner to explore how best to address vacancy and to assess level of county support.
- Regional director works with program area and liaison to determine if visioning session is needed.
- Regional director coordinates and leads the visioning planning process (phone conference, e-mail, other communication).
- Program area provides lead for content and materials for visioning (*A library of materials is currently available at the Visioning SharePoint site. The plan is that regional director's liaisons and department heads can be added to this to continuously update the site with examples*). Materials include sample agenda, sample letters and PowerPoint's, sample reports.
- There is a range of ways visioning can happen and expected outcomes can vary.
- Department head or designee writes up the visioning report.

Proposal – Right Person - Providing Consistency in the hiring roles

These proposals contribute to the following desired results:

- Successful candidate is employed in a position that addresses career goals and has the potential for long term professional growth;
- Support and excitement, on the part of hiring team members, in the selection of the person for the position;
- Increased number of diverse employees

The regional offices agree to similar approaches to roles in the hiring process. These include:

- Leaving the paper screening of the resumes to the program areas and Human Resources Development Team. This takes the responsibility off the plate of the department head. The department head can be included in the paper screening process if the regional director agrees.
- Scheduling dates for preliminary and final interviews to allow ample time for notification of candidates.
- Explore using virtual technology for preliminary interviews for candidates and interview team.
- Having the program area draft the questions for the preliminary interviews. This allows the program area to develop questions relevant to any further information needed as discovered in the paper screening process. Prior to the interviews in the pre-interview discussion, the regional director, the program area and the department head will review the questions and jointly decide on the questions to be used that day.
- In the post preliminary interview discussion, the preliminary interview team will develop the presentation topic.
- The regional director will conduct the reference checks via phone except in rare situations where the reference might be out of country. . In situations where a reference(s) is out of country, email or other methods of gathering information from references will be utilized.
- The regional director agrees to draft questions for the final interview committee. Prior to the interviews in the pre-interview discussion, the regional director will review the questions and jointly decide with the interview committee the questions to be used that day.
- Following the signed contract the regional office agrees to send an e-mail following the receipt of the signed contract to the program director, associate program director, academic department chair, department head and Human Resources Development Team.
- *We need further discussion on the role of academic department chairs in this process for faculty positions.*

Proposal – Great Start Phone/Hangout Conference

Contributes to the following desired results:

- The new colleague is competent, confident, and satisfied with work; feels at home and supported in her/her new role, office setting and work environment; has a plan for professional development that addresses areas for growth; successfully addresses the expectations for the position;
- The new colleague is prepared to contribute to the county office team and works with colleagues to enhance local programming by effectively addressing emerging issues and needs;
- The new colleague understands expectations and is motivated to learn and apply the skills necessary to build a workplace characterized by trust, one that is united, engaged, supportive, open and stable.

Following the receipt of a signed contract and prior to the beginning of the new hire start date, the regional office agrees to schedule a conversation (via phone, hangout or other method) with the department head, the program liaison and regional director. These conversations are for core positions (4-HYD, Ag, CRD, FL and WNEP Coordinators/Administrators) and would focus on:

- Plans for orientation including the [Department Head Checklist for Orientation of New Colleagues](#), plans for day one when the colleague arrives and program liaison plans and how the regional director will engage in the orientation process.
- A review of the strengths and limitations of the new colleague as revealed through the interview process.
- Life work balance opportunities and challenges
- Key events to get on the new colleague's calendar.
- Review of items that need to happen to help the new colleague get up to speed as soon as possible, items here might include Nexus tablets.
Emphasizing the need for the regional directors, program liaison and department head to work as a team to address challenges and opportunities as the new person comes on board and begins making contributions.
- *Feedback from the liaison group was do we want to come to agreement on how to work with interims, backfills, short-term hires and others?*
- *With regard to the Department Head Checklist for Orientation of New Colleagues, Human Resource Development has asked whether regional director's want to update this as part of their responsibility for leading orientation of new colleagues. Sharon is okay with us doing this and would hope that we would consult with Human Resource Development as we update the list as there may be some institution orientation items from an Human Resource Development perspective that would be beneficial to have on the list, that regional director's might not be aware of. My sense is that as matter of course, we should engage all concerned areas in the updating of this document if we take this on as a responsibility.*