Cooperative Extension

Defining Excellence among Integrated Cooperative Extension Specialists in Wisconsin

*This document helps define excellence in Extension programming in the context of work performed by individuals with **integrated** appointments as specialists in various departments within colleges in the UW-System[1]. The criteria listed may be used for a variety of purposes, including mentoring, professional development and planning, performance reviews, promotion and tenure decisions within the specialist's home Department and College, post-tenure evaluation, and hiring.*

All integrated specialists serve as an important link between campus and county-based Extension colleagues, stakeholders, partners, and the residents of Wisconsin, regardless of the type of appointment. ***The general theme here is that the work of specialists should have a clear, programmatic focus. Priorities must be centered on topics appropriate to the department in which the specialist is based, their College, the state of Wisconsin, the region and/or the nation, and, at all times, be tied to the purpose, vision, and values of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension.***

The work of specialists involves identifying issues and solving problems important to the state of Wisconsin and its residents. Specialists generate, translate, and apply research-based knowledge and methods to issues and problems, integrating research and educational activities over time into a coherent body of work. Specialists are expected to provide leadership in the design, development, and implementation of educational programs and to document the impact of these efforts.

Specialists should demonstrate evidence of excellence in Extension activities in three areas:

1. **Applied research and education:** Applied research and extension programs are based on documented needs of the state and its residents, and integrate research and education into a coherent body of work.
2. **Significant Impacts:** Programs have a documented impact and are shared in an effective manner with stakeholders, the general public, and professional colleagues**.**
3. **Commitment to Extension:** Specialists demonstrate commitment to the well-being of Wisconsin and its residents, and to the purpose, vision, and values of Cooperative Extension.

To facilitate the evaluation of the degree to which a Specialist attains excellence in the designated areas, the following criteria are provided. It is not expected that any one Specialist will meet all criteria, but will be able to identify areas of strength, and areas for improvement, in the criteria outlined.

1) **Applied research[2] and education:** A Specialist should demonstrate excellence in applied research and educational programming. Among the indicators of excellence are:
   a) A focus on identifying, framing, and solving problems of importance to the state of Wisconsin and its residents.
   b) Engagement of partners, stakeholders, communities, and/or county-based colleagues in research and educational activities.
   c) Development of, planning for, and/or adaptation of research and educational activities to address emerging needs and issues.
   d) Integration of research and educational activities over time into a coherent body of work.
   e) Leadership of programs that are sustained by a variety of external and internal resources.

2) **Significant Impacts:** A Specialist should demonstrate excellence in communicating that work performed has a documented impact and is shared in an effective manner with stakeholders, the general public, and professional colleagues. Among the indicators of excellence are:
   a) Publication of a sufficient quantity of original, applied-research articles, in a timely manner, and in peer-reviewed journals.
   b) Publication of scholarly work with a clearly identifiable and focused programmatic theme.
   c) Development of, authoring, or reviewing materials directed at Extension audiences. This can include newsletters, fact sheets, websites, blogs, books/handbooks, audio-visual materials, and/or software that are of demonstrated utility and appropriate to the needs of the intended audience.
   d) Engagement in a comprehensive evaluation of Extension programs in order to demonstrate impact and value.
   e) Assumption of leadership in efforts to effectively communicate the public value of the work of Cooperative Extension and the partner UW campus, including the work of the Specialist.

3) **Commitment to Extension:** A Specialist should demonstrate a commitment both to the well-being of Wisconsin and its residents, and to the success of Cooperative Extension and the partner campus. Among the indicators of excellence are:

   a) Demonstration of effective, timely, and responsive interaction with Extension colleagues, partners, and stakeholders.
   b) Leadership in service to a team/department/program area and in addressing priority needs of Wisconsin and its residents.
   c) Engagement in service to Extension and within the Specialist's academic field through leadership in appropriate professional organizations; serving as an occasional resource to governmental agencies and/or decision making bodies; participation on non-profit boards; etc.

[1]UW-Extension's Cooperative Extension Division supports integrated specialists in numerous UW-System universities. These include UW-Madison, UW-River Falls, UW-Platteville, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-Superior. The individual expectations and focus of each of these units may vary slightly, but the three categories of expectations apply to all units.

[2]It is clearly understood that not all integrated Extension faculty will have a formal research appointment. But all programmatic work of integrated Extension Specialists' work is assumed to be based on current research whether it is the original research of that individual or the synthesis, analysis, communication, and/or adaptation of the work of other research colleagues and peers.

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