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Self-Study Report: 08 Cooperative Extension Component

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION COMPONENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PAST HISTORY	179
PRESENT PRIORITIES	179
PROGRAM RESULTS	180
EXISTING/FUTURE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS	181

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The Department of Agricultural Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has only .37% FTE Professional extension staff and .27% clerical FTE, with meager operating dollars. Dr. Blezek, Department Head is .12% and Dr. Horner, State Specialist in Staff Development is .25% extension. Additionally, Drs. Robert Florell and Kay Rockwell, Extension Program Evaluation Specialists and Gary Gerhard, 4-H and Youth Development Specialist, hold courtesy appointments in Agricultural Education. Drs. Florell and Gerhard currently serve on the Departmental Graduate Committee.

Past History

Prior to 1963, within the College of Agriculture, were separate Departments of Extension Education (Undergraduate only) and Vocational Education (BS and MS) -- each with home economics and agricultural education components. After extensive study, it was decided that agricultural extension agents and vocational agricultural instructors would be prepared in a Department of Agricultural Education, while extension home economist and vocational home economics teachers would be prepared in a Department of Home Economics Education (within the School, later named College of Home Economics). Two undergraduate extension courses "Orientation" and "Field Experience" were carried over into the AgEd program.

For two or three years the two extension education staff members remained fiscally and physically with the AgEd Department. One left the University and was not replaced. The other left and was replaced by Dr. Florell, charged with Extension Studies and Training. For greater access, coordination and control, he was moved into the extension administrative area.

In the mid-1960's, a major thrust toward requiring MS degrees for extension as well as secondary teaching personnel, caused a surge of enrollments in graduate courses, upwards of 75 different people per year. Several courses were modified to accommodate extension staff, either on separate sections or jointly with teachers.

Present Priorities

The fraction of one FTE assigned within the AgEd Department has been utilized as consultant on committees, developing extension induction training programs, leadership programs such as Leadership Education/Action Development (LEAD) and Family Community Leadership (FCL) and more recently to assist with staff development in such areas as personality, leadership, communication and team-building, including "Managing Mainstreet Businesses (MMB) and other extension clientele groups.

Based on a national study conducted to ascertain the "Professional Needs of Extension Agents," two courses were developed and have been provided annually. AgEd 890D/832, "Administration of Agricultural Agencies and Organizations," has attracted both domestic and international students. AgEd 433/833, "Planning and Implementation of Cooperative Extension Programs for Domestic and Foreign Audiences," in the current semester involves 18 students (2 Undergraduates) -- 6 are women, 6 are foreign students -- representing these majors: Adult Education, Agricultural Education, Agricultural Engineering, Agronomy, Consumer Science and Education, Horticulture and Meteorology.

Within the past year, an undergraduate course for orientation to employment in extension was developed and approved.

Ag Ed 233 - "Extension Education"

This course is an overview of extension education within the community, state, national and international settings. Emphasis will be placed on the principles and procedures of developing and conducting extension programs for agriculture, home economics, community resource development and 4-H youth development, along with the study of extension's relationship to other public and private agencies.

Also, within the past year, at the Masters Degree level an "Extension Emphasis" was developed and implemented.

Extension Emphasis

Students who desire a Master of Science in Agricultural Education with an Extension Emphasis are required to include the following courses in their program: Agricultural Education 805 or 805A, 833, 845, 890D/832, and 899 (Option I) or 996 (Option II). Other suggested courses offered in Agricultural Education or Vocational and Adult Education for students with an extension emphasis are: Agricultural Education 806, 812, 890B, 896; and Vocational and Adult Education 821, 822, 824, and 921.

Ag Ed 890D/832 - Administration of Agricultural Agencies and Organizations

The purpose of this course is to have participants acquire knowledge of effective administration of agricultural agencies and organizations and to acquire or increase participants' skill in applying that knowledge in a practical manner. Students will be exposed to administrative-management theory and research, and see how this applies to real life situations. This course applies to agencies in both the domestic and international settings.

Ag Ed 833 - Planning and Implementation of Cooperative Extension Programs for Domestic and Foreign Audiences

This class focuses on the planning process as it is used in the Cooperative Extension System of the United States. Students will understand the unique features of Cooperative Extension, as well as the steps in program planning, community assessment, and evaluation. Participants will learn to write a plan of work and develop problem solving techniques relevant to a long-range plan. This course applies not only to Extension education but to non-formal educational programs in many agricultural settings.

Program Results

Considering the meager extension staffing and austere budgets within the Department, considerable success toward delivering the message seems evident, as reflected by these brief highlights extracted from the annual report of last year:

Extension Activities Conducted During Past Year

- Participated in 60 meetings involving 900 contacts, (including direct teaching and leader training). Worked with Family Community Leadership, the Leadership Development Center, and Rural Revitalization, but primarily Staff Development and training. (e.g., Managing Main Street Business, 4-H leaders, Extension Council and CES Boards across the state).
- Developed and presented 6 radio programs and 2 T.V. programs.
- Prepared 6 news articles and 6 newsletters.
- Served on 2 "New Seeds for Nebraska" Task Forces.

Existing/Future Cooperative Efforts

Strategic plans submitted by the five Extension District Offices clearly point to the imperative need for increased emphasis in the area of leadership/human resource development through the Center for Leadership Development. Likewise necessary, are joint efforts in Leadership Education/Action Development (LEAD), Family-Community Leadership (FCL) and Managing Mainstreet Businesses (MMB) and others.

Priority Initiatives

The Cooperative Extension Service has issued new priority initiatives for the next 3 to 5 years. Success will require the collaboration of external groups as well as several divisions within the University of Nebraska in order to respond to the problems and concerns of Nebraskans.

The enclosed Cooperative Extension publication, "Priority Initiatives," lists these priority initiatives. The Ag Ed Department/Center For Leadership Development will be particularly involved in three of these initiatives: "Youth at Risk," "Revitalizing Rural Communities," and "Strengthening Individuals and Families."

A list of Center-affiliated faculty, must be developed, along with their areas of expertise related to extension (specific areas of leadership, communication, human relations, teaching improvement, personal and professional growth, etc.). This list will serve as a base from which to encourage the participation of additional faculty from Ag Ed and from other Departments, Centers and Colleges to meet the growing needs of a dynamic extension program.

It is anticipated that promotion of the aforementioned emphasis, graduate and undergraduate course offerings and non-credit inservice education will be accelerated, as will the utilization of courtesy extension appointees within the Department.

With the rapid trend toward "Issues Programming" of extension educational activities, certainly more dynamic inservice training and retraining of extension staff and clientele will be required. One growth area, so far as extension staffing is concerned is extension "Aides" at the Bachelors degree level. Their need for graduate level courses and Professional services is predicted, perhaps through the learning centers being developed across the state.

In other departments such as Agronomy, where teaching, research and extension staff members are administered and housed by area of specialization. In contrast, the various areas of expertise such as instructional improvement,

leadership, youth and staff development are scattered among Agricultural Education/Center For Leadership Development/Improvement of Instruction, 4-H and Youth, Agricultural Communications and others. It must be hoped that in the future these functions might be consolidated, with greatly increased funding to meet the ever expanding needs of a dynamic extension program.