Thursday, February 23, 2006

Following a chili and salad luncheon in the Eastland Suites Hotel and Conference Center Commons, Julie Pangrac, Chairman, extended welcome to all Extension State Advisory Council members and guests. The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

Introductions of staff and council members:

Staff: Dr. Ryan Hobson, Westcentral Regional Director; Stu Ellis, Decatur; Dick Warner, Interim Assistant Dean for Program Coordination; Glenn Seeber, Assistant to the Associate Dean; Dr. Denny Campion, Associate Dean; Jananne Finck, Field Staff Advisory Committee; Martina Mohrbacher, Visiting Project Coordinator.

Council: Jacquie Eddleman, Union County; Lynn Curry, Pike County; Diane Taborn, Saline County; Art King, University Park, close to Cook County; John Sutton, Logan County; Betty Johnson, Cook County; John Flaherty, Rock Island County; Michael Lager, Winnebago-Boone County; and Julie Pangrac, Macon County.

Glenn Seeber gave information about the facility and details about the evening meal at Kennedy’s Restaurant. He also gave some feedback regarding the November 2005 minutes:

- The CED group truly appreciated the session with ESAC.
- Academy on Extension Excellence is going great.
- Officers were confirmed.
- We are looking for an ESAC representative for an on campus meeting in October in the ACES Library.
- Federal Bankruptcy involvement is moving ahead with workshop planning.

Dick Warner updated members:

- Market Maker and Web-based tools: These programs are very complicated. Market Maker is initially focusing on the food and ag segment.
- Caufman Foundation from Kansas City: Mr. Caufman was thoroughly committed to entrepreneurship. U of I Extension is a location for an Academy for Entrepreneurship and is working with the Caufman Foundation to propose Extension as a vehicle for the Caufman Foundation to pursue their goals. The Foundation is impressed with U of I Extension and has given a verbal commitment and is in the talking stage of cooperation.

Denny Campion shared information.

- Referred to a map handout on the location of Community and Economic Development staff in the state. Ryan shared on this topic at the last meeting.
• Extension Educators are going to be placed in some identified target groups, including NIPC, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and City of Chicago Departments – Department of Natural Resources (park districts, high school training, student internship opportunities) and Department of Environment (the greening of the city)
• This is an exciting time for Illinois Extension because we have great staff and great programs. The future looks very good, despite budget challenges.
• ESAC was successful with the legislative liaison action plan, which needs to continue.
• Extension Partners – FY07 Extension Funding Fact Sheet was shared. The funding requests are County Board Match in the Illinois Department of Agriculture Budget ($12,800,000); Youth Development, Statewide to fully fund a Youth Development Educator in each of the 77 Extension units ($4,674,300); Programmatic Funds in University of Illinois Budget ($300,000), and Cook County Extension Service ($5,150,000).
• Three new campus based faculty were hired this year through the Chancellor’s efforts.
• CFAR – Council for Food and Research – The funding had decreased to $3.5 million and is only at that level in the current Governor’s budget proposal.
• Using money better by stretching funds through web information availability, grant funding, and new sources of funding.
• Local budgets are growing because of the awareness of the value of Extension.
• Adding market value to programming to maintain quality, etc.
• PSEP – Pesticide Safety Education Program – 17,000 people have taken the training over the last 3 years. The cost to participants across the state has been inconsistent from between $0 - $10. Discussion is taking place to set a consistent level of value with brand recognition of U of I Extension.

November 10-11, 2005 Minutes were approved as written on a motion by John Flaherty, seconded by Michael Lager. Motion carried.

Jane Scherer and Chris Tidrick presented information on the new Extension Web Site. Clickable Advantage:
• We are an organization that never sleeps – 24 hour service.
• A whole new way to establish rapport with customers.
• Speed of response to customers has gone from days and weeks to hours and even minutes.
• Online education – serving hundreds of classrooms at one time.
• Our networks have expanded.
Urban Programs – 153 million hits (pages viewed)
En Espanol – Spanish site – 15% of the hits are to Spanish site
Urban Programs Resource Network (210 sites available today) – examples:
• Hort Corner – Tropical Punch – Launched after Chicago Flower Show a year ago
• Perennials – available both in English and Spanish
• The Great Corn Adventure for 3rd-5th graders to learn about corn.
• Dr. Arbor Talks Trees – 3rd in a series about trees – for 6th-8th graders
• Dr. Arbor’s Laboratory – Twigs Tell the Tale – identification section
• All-Star River Explorers – how rivers and streams are created plus the history component talks about America’s early river explorers.
• At least 50 school teachers write every week about their use in the classroom.

New State Website – “Your Doorway to the University”. Details:
• County sites customized and updated by local county - includes staff, directions, etc. The last few counties will be brought on line by April 1.
• News releases – statewide offices, campus based and educator based news releases.
• Subject matter content – 210 web sites accessible through the subject matter content section, Ag news releases
• Links to Extension, the College and the University from any location.
• Publications to order
• Research Centers
• Careers Section – Job listings
• Calendar of Extension events around the state.
• Newsletters from across the state and from departments and teams.

Current Projects:
• Credit card on-line registration is being developed.
• EZregs – Making Sense of Illinois Farm Regulations – a way for agriculture businesses to have a centralized place for all regulations which apply to them. Worked with campus Ag Engineering department (Ted Funk) to develop site which can be individualized to each user and information saved for future reference. Commercial Hort operations will also have a section.
• Hort Answers collects many sources of information placed together. Searches give you all the information in many areas from the data base. Release goal is May 1.
• Internal staff usage – Photo Reference Library – Extension Website Manager site allows county offices and centers to manager their own photos on their website.

Future Projects:
• E-mail – The Communication tool of the 21st century
• Reminder Services
• Access Buttons (direct access to author, etc.)
• View Messages – answers to questions and answers viewable by all
• Marketing is Crucial – publications, t-shirts, CD’s, mouse pads
• Sites listed in Google (currently #1 listing in 42 keywords)
• National Recognition – have appeared in national magazines and newspapers

Extension learns about the clientele from site visits – 188 countries have been served, 50% visits are after hours, 60% of e-mails are from Illinois, teacher inquiries state where
they are from. Extension is used because of the credibility of Extension (trusted because we have no agenda). Alumni are a huge fan club.

Marketing has been to public libraries through local counties, e-mail, and workshops for librarians.

Urban Extension – [www.urbanext.uiuc.edu](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu)  
Extension – [www.extension.uiuc.edu](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu)

Statistical reporting is done monthly on all 210 current sites.

**Other issues:**  
John Sutton – “With the move toward the campus and centers for programming and teaching, are we loosing the personal touch and feel of local control as seen by the public we serve? Does the public feel they have a direct link to the info?” Question of centralization came up when talking to people at the Legislative Connection. Possibly the local people feel and perceive they have lost the local touch. Others members shared thoughts they have heard on the subject. True customer service (human touch) is the most important aspect to avoid this perception problem. The age of the customer and interest is important to take into consideration. Julie summarized by asking Denny to continue to keep customer service as a high priority when training staff.

Stu Ellis asked if ESAC wants a Website? After explanation of what might be included and how it could be used, Michael Lager moved and John Flaherty seconded for ESAC to have a Website. Motion carried. Stu offered to work with Jane Scherer to implement this project.

Next meeting dates were set for November 13-14, 2006, February 19-20, 2007.

**Dean Robert Easter joined the meeting to talk about the State-Federal Partnership in 2006 initiative which is currently being developed and will be proposed.**

Extension Legislation – 3 acts: Morrill Act, Land Grant Universities established, Hatch Act

A USDA Agency - Cooperative State REES – CSREES

The President’s 2006 Budget recommendations included dramatic changes in formula-based funding. This was a wake-up call to land grant universities.

NASULGC, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, is the organization that coordinates a lot of our activities, as well as coordinating budget issues. Within NASULGC, is CFERR, Commission on Food, Environment, and Renewable Resources and then, the Board on Agriculture Assembly Administrative Heads Section.
The new initiative being researched and developed is being called “CREATE-21” Creating Research, Extension, and Teaching Excellence for the 21st Century. The Policy Board of Directors appointed a “Think Tank” with the charge to design a new USDA-university partnership as if we were building it today and create a partnership more responsive to 21st Century realities.

Fundamental Questions:
- Are we positioned to expand the portfolio?
- Are we integrated and organized for the 21st Century?
- Are we able to move half the speed of industry?

Base funding lines for research and extension at USDA-CSREES have not grown in 10+ years. National Research Initiative funding has increased. Special funding has increased by 120%. In fact, measured in constant dollars, CSREES base funding lines have actually declined with the impacts of inflation factored in. Also, compared to other federal science efforts, CSREES base funding lines have not fared well.

Addressing the Opportunities:
- A problem/solution-centered funding approach is needed.
- Approach must respond to clear messages sent by OMB.
- Formula funds are viewed as long-term entitlements.
- Excessive duplication in the land-grant university system.
- Competitive grants are the preferred distribution method.

Core Values were identified and listed.

The proposal is to create a National Institute for Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources.

Objectives of Proposal:
1. Enhance the partnership’s relevancy
2. Increase integration of the partnership’s programmatic activities
3. Independent agency under the administrative leadership of the Sec of Ag
4. Incorporate current elements of USDA’s research, education and extension
5. Designed to find solutions to critical food, etc. problems
6. Lead by distinguished Director (Chief Scientist) appointed by the President, approved by the President, approved by the Senate, under administration leadership of Secretary of Agriculture to be guided by stakeholders.
7. Comprised of intramural programs, extramural programs, land-grant and university programs, director charged with integrating into a cohesive organization.
8. Better Balance – Structured such that intramural and extramural activities complimented by state and local support, authorized to conduct intramural research when such research is in national interest. Authorized to provide grants and agreements for extramural research, awarded competitively, open to all U.S. universities.
9. Seamless and efficient
10. Funding and reporting
11. Enhanced accountability

Dean Easter talked about advocacy from ESAC being important. CARET, Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching, is the organization U of I works with. Each state can have 3 members. In Illinois the U of I representative advocates are John Huston, Past President of National Livestock and Meat Board, and Alan Puzey, Chairman of C-FAR and Past President of the Illinois Soybean Association. These representatives will take local state initiatives to CARET.

There are currently four 2007 member initiatives in ACES: IL-MO Biotechnology Alliance, Soybean Disease Biotechnology Center, Future Foods Initiative, and Livestock Genome Sequencing Initiative.

CARET also engages a lobby firm to help them sort through the best strategy for advocating. At the end of their spring meeting, a recommendation will be established. This recommendation will be what ESAC members will advocate for when visiting with legislators.

It was requested to have Dean Easter’s presentation for members to review and digest. Stu Ellis offered to put it on the ESAC website, if Dean Easter deems it appropriate.

Dean Easter extended his thanks to ESAC members for their volunteer support. He sees the role of ESAC members with the congressional representative to be very important as voting citizens volunteering for a cause with personal relationship to Extension.

**Friday, February 24, 2006**

Vice Chair, John Flaherty, opened the meeting at 8:15 a.m. Additional attendees joining the group today were Council members, Bill Minnis from Paris and Brian Basting from Bloomington plus Extension personnel, Tom Ward and Dr. Pennie Crinion.

**Tom Ward shared information about Extension’s revamped web presence on the Unit Web Pages.** Staff is now managing their own sites. A template is used for continuity across the state. The pictures are individual. There are links to the Urban and En Espanol websites. The search box is not a Google search; it is only from Extension, use College and University’s websites, for a more dedicated search. This is a modular based management tool. Individual units have options to use modules that are specialized for that unit.

The area called, “Today’s Features” is unique. Also, there are management options for telling a start and end date for adding information. There is a “News and Updates” module which includes news releases and links to newsletters plus blogs are an option.

The website gets republished each night. This is when the “kill” date is processed. The overnight update also updates calendar items. There is also a Photo Gallery available for
each county to use. Each page has a logo on the bottom of the page for U of I, ACES and Extension. In the center of the website are links to the program areas. The layout and design of the program area sites are consistent. Staff members are encouraged to frequently change their website in order to continue to attract repeat visitors. The process is relatively simple.

The Volunteers tab is to encourage volunteerism and give credit to the human resource sector.

The local staff member needs to log in to the Website Manager to make changes to the Website. There is a “Publish” button for the staff member to immediately update the Website as changed, or the overnight update can be used to publish the new information. Often times, updates are just a matter of cut and paste (i.e. newsletters, news releases) or clicking on the new web link to feature. To change modules, there is a form to complete; html information is not needed.

There is also a button for accessing “Local Links” on most units’ websites.

Some of the future new modules are for Annual Reports and a Picture Library.

**Update on 4-H Legislative Connection Update** – Betty Johnson and Art King gave an update on the day. 22 young people and 9 adults from the Chicago area visited their Senators and Representatives. Training for the young people was prepared and presented on the bus ride to Springfield. Betty, as well as Art King, John Sutton and Lynn Curry attended the event on February 7 at the Springfield Capitol. The day was a huge success for the 4-Her’s, Extension Partners, and the congressional representatives.

**Public Issues Leadership Development Conference** – “Capital Steps Towards Leadership”, Crystal City Marriott, Arlington, VA, April 23-27, 2006 – Stu Ellis presented PILD Trip Planning. This conference is the same conference Council attended last year. This year there is a meeting scheduled for volunteers. A registration packet was distributed. Extension will take care of registration. Participants will make their own travel and room reservations. Reagan International Airport is the best airport to use. Beginning at noon on Sunday, the Illinois Extension delegation will caucus to go over the details for the Capitol Hill visit on Wednesday.

Stu will forward periodic updates on pertinent legislative issues to prepare for the upcoming trip. Also, a detailed briefing book will be mailed about a week before the Conference.

Stu handed out information on Federal Budget line items of special interest to Extension, pointing out information especially on the Smith Lever Act, 1890 Institutions (Land Grant University for African American students), EFNEP (Food & Nutrition Education), and New Technologies (eXtension). Another chart of Appropriations for Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) was referenced. Talking Points handouts on these topics were also provided.
Jananne Finck handed out copies of the new Extension in ACTION. This publication will be available to include in packets to be presented on the Hill. Members are also encouraged to take local items of interest to show the positive impact of Extension in the legislators’ home districts.

$5 million initiative in Cook County. – Betty Johnson and Art King updated the Council on the Cook County initiative:
- There are 5.4 million people in Cook County, representing 44% of the state’s population, and 71% of the state’s minority population.
- 46% of the revenue generated in the state, 52% of the state’s poverty and 29% of the region’s estimated population growth over the next 25 years.
- The staff has tripled by hiring more than 30 Educators. More than 8 languages are spoken by the new hires and each has at least a Master’s degree. The Educators were hired to address needs in the county including: entrepreneurial/small business support; career education and workforce preparedness for at-risk and formerly incarcerated individuals; early college outreach beginning at the pre-kindergarten level; community health outreach; and programming to help immigrants settle into their communities.
- Young people and the at-risk groups are being targeted.
- Programs are being established and started to provide services to the population.

Michael Lager’s agenda item – The future use of proper staffing at the Centers and possibly Units as the demographics keep changing and growing into the rural areas. With urban sprawl and changes in the communities, Extension needs to continue to change Educator staffing to meet the needs of the changing populace. Denny indicated Extension does work toward changing needs, with the challenge being that the state has been providing less funding for the Center-based educators. Therefore, it is difficult to add positions and it takes time for openings to occur in order to make changes. Opportunities will be through foundations, grant-writing, and through avenues with business plans to cover the cost of the position long-term. Strategies are in place.

Jacquie Eddleman – Could we go over the Internet listings of Extension sponsored events – program schedules – forthcoming activities, etc. as they are announced, scheduled and marketed?” Jacquie was glad for the information received earlier in the meeting. Jacquie also talked about getting the Web information to location libraries. It was suggested the units ask the libraries about placing their website as a link and therefore, opening the door for discussion about use of the Extension website.

Dean’s Advisory Committee – Julie Pangrac volunteered to be the Council representative to attend the October meeting. Back-up volunteers were John Flaherty, Michael Lager and Art King.

Denny extended thanks to all in attendance.
At noon, Don Wall moved and Michael Lager seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Curry