

STATE EXTENSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE



Agriculture and Life Sciences



Family Resources



Community Resource Development



Four-H

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and September 30, 1977, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Mitchell R. Geasler, Interim Dean, Extension Division, Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061; M. C. Harding, Sr., Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia 23803.

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I

AN OVERVIEW OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The Cooperative Extension Service is people helping people. This statement of philosophy is underscored by seventy-five years of public service throughout America. The section which follows reviews the philosophy of Cooperative Extension work, as well as its history in Virginia. Lastly, the rationale, as well as purpose, for a State Extension Advisory Committee is presented.

The Function and Philosophy of Cooperative Extension

The Cooperative Extension Service was started in 1914 with passage of the Smith-Lever Act by the United States Congress. The act authorized the granting of federal dollars that could be matched, according to various formulas, at the state and local levels for Extension work. The Smith-Lever Act provided the framework for a state and national system of people-oriented education; while the country's land-grant colleges and universities became the vehicles through which the Extension Service organized and offered its programs.

Initially rural and agricultural in orientation, the Cooperative Extension Service focused on service and demonstration programs for farmers and farm families. The philosophy underlying the Extension concept was one of disseminating practical and useful information and, where appropriate, helping farmers and farm families apply the information.

As the American society grew, became more complex, and as the needs of people changed, the Cooperative Extension Service also changed. Today, in addition to offering programs for farmers and farm families, the Cooperative

Extension Service has developed and made available a continuing education program for the general citizenry. This program includes a variety of subject matter. Although the subject matter focus has enlarged as scientific knowledge has accumulated and as the needs and interests of people have changed, the basic tenet guiding Extension remains constant - to educate people and help them apply the education received to their personal situations. In short, the guiding principle for Extension continues to be "helping people help themselves."

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

Cooperative Extension work in Virginia began in 1906 with a farm demonstration project in Nottoway County. Corn clubs for boys and canning clubs for girls followed in 1909 and 1910 in the counties of Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, and Nottoway. Both clubs employed the demonstration method of education. Impressed with the results of this teaching method, school superintendents in Charlottesville, Louisa, Bedford, and Culpeper placed demonstration agents in their respective school systems to plan and conduct similar educational programs. The present system of vocational and technical education in Virginia can be traced to this beginning.

With passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, Virginia Polytechnic Institute was formally designated by the United States Department of Agriculture to conduct Extension programs in Agriculture and Home Economics. In that same year, the Virginia General Assembly passed enabling legislation which endorsed and supported the Department of Agriculture's designation.

During its first half-century of service, Cooperative Extension programs were administered through the College of Agriculture. In 1966, the General

Assembly established within Virginia Tech the Extension Division. The intent of this action was to consolidate all of the university's off-campus and Extension activities under one central administration. This enabling legislation also authorized the commitment of faculty expertise from each of Virginia Tech's eight colleges to Extension programs throughout the Commonwealth. Accordingly, new Extension programs for business, industry, and community clientele were developed and offered in addition to the ongoing programs in agriculture, home economics, 4-H, and rural development.

A history of Cooperative Extension in Virginia is incomplete without reference to Virginia State University. The 1890 Morrill Act authorized the establishment of Cooperative Extension work at Virginia State University in Petersburg. This action was reaffirmed by a 1972 amendment to the Smith-Lever Act and the Agriculture Act of 1977.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Virginia State University work together in providing a single comprehensive Cooperative Extension program for the Commonwealth. Coordination of effort between the two institutions is provided in a memorandum of understanding. This agreement provides for shared administrative leadership, the mutual development of plans of work, reporting of progress, management of funds, and other administrative procedures.

In 1981, the General Assembly reaffirmed the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service's mission in agriculture and natural resources, family resources, 4-H, and community resource development. That same year, the General Assembly acknowledged the contributions Extension has made on behalf of the citizens of the Commonwealth with passage of a resolution of acclaim and appreciation.

Purpose of the State Extension Advisory Committee

Throughout its long stewardship of public service, the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service has endeavored to develop and deliver educational programs that meet the needs of Virginians. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service has utilized a variety of methods to identify the concerns and needs of the people it serves. Since its creation in 1906, Extension's strength has been derived from the involvement of people in planning educational programs that meet their individual and community needs.

To retain its position of leadership in serving the educational needs of Virginians, it is essential that Extension continue the practice of obtaining input from the people to be served. It is in this spirit that the State Extension Advisory Committee has been created to support Extension leaders in their efforts to plan, evaluate, and publicize Extension programs throughout the Commonwealth. It is anticipated that the successful involvement of the people who are served by Extension programming will build both interest and enthusiasm, as well as greater accountability, for the Virginia Cooperative Extension program.

II
FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE EXTENSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The ability of the State Extension Advisory Committee to effectively discharge its duties will be considerably enhanced if there is clarity among members regarding their functions and responsibilities. A review of these functions and responsibilities follows.

State Advisory Committee Functions

The State Extension Advisory Committee has three major functions from which specific committee responsibilities can be identified. The initial function served by the State Extension Advisory Committee is program planning. Two components highlight this function. The first is the identification of appropriate long- and short-term Extension programming priorities for the Commonwealth, and the second is the identification of resources needed to conduct the identified Extension programs.

The next generalized function of the State Extension Advisory Committee is program evaluation. The key component of this function is the annual evaluation of Extension Service programs from an accomplishments and financial standpoint.

The final functional area addressed by the State Extension Advisory Committee is program publicity. The key component of this function is keeping the various publics of the Commonwealth appropriately and accurately informed of Extension's mission, functions, and programs.

State Advisory Committee Responsibilities

1. Serve as an active advisory committee that helps the administrative leadership of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service identify the educational needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

2. Help establish program priorities that reflect Commonwealth needs and that provide for program balance.
3. Help evaluate annually the impact of Extension programs in the Commonwealth.
4. Help locate resources (financial, facilities, equipment, etc.) needed for Extension educational programs.
5. Help provide information to the general public about the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service - its purpose, organization, educational programs, operational procedures, needs, and achievements.
6. Serve as a sounding board for new program ideas and organizational concerns.
7. Provide a two-way flow of communication with other committees concerned with Extension programming.
8. Help assure that a broad-based Extension program will be available to the citizens of the Commonwealth and that the programs comply with prevailing Civil Rights, Equal Employment, Affirmative Action, and Public Notification policies.
9. Help develop and implement workshops (state, district, local) designed to better equip citizens for more effective participation in Extension activities.
10. Serve in a support capacity for communicating Commonwealth concerns in Extension policy development at the regional and national levels.
11. Assume other responsibilities that may become necessary in the interest of quality Extension programs. (Note: Such responsibilities will be determined by mutual agreement between the administrative leadership of the Cooperative Extension Service and the committee membership.)

III
STATE EXTENSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Numerous factors contribute to committee operational effectiveness. Some of the more important considerations committee members should be aware of are noted below.

Committee Membership and Size

State Extension Advisory Committee members are selected to represent a cross section of the Commonwealth's active and potential program clientele. In order to obtain geographical balance, each Extension District nominates persons for membership. In addition, nominations are also sought from Extension program directors, as well as from campus-based Extension faculty at both Virginia Tech and Virginia State. A total of sixteen members constitute the State Extension Advisory Committee.

Committee Officers

The State Extension Advisory Committee has a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and other officers as needed. All committee officers serve one-year terms and are eligible for a second consecutive term in the same office. All officers, except for the initial chairman, are popularly elected by the committee membership. (The initial chairman will serve a term of six months and then a popular election will be held to fill that position.)

The Dean of Extension, in consultation with the State Extension Advisory Committee Chairman, is responsible for calling meetings and preparing meeting agendas. The committee chairman will preside at committee meetings and guide discussions toward appropriate objectives.

The major duties of the secretary involve taking, preparing, and distributing committee minutes. The committee secretary is assisted by a staff person from the office of the Dean of the Extension Service at Virginia Tech and will have access to secretarial services therein.

Term of Office

Committee members serve three-year terms. Staggered terms of office are used in order to avoid having more than one-third of the membership new to their tasks at any one time.

Retention and Vacancies

As their terms of office expire, committee members will be eligible for reappointment. However, no committee member will be allowed to serve more than two consecutive three-year terms on the committee. When committee vacancies occur that represent a particular district, appropriate districts will be asked to nominate individuals for consideration. The Dean of Extension will select and make the appointment. At-large member representation vacancies will be selected and appointed by the Dean from a list recommended by the district chairmen, program directors, and advisory committee members.

Committee Business

All committee business will be conducted on the basis of one vote per committee member.

Committee Meetings, Frequency, and Location

Committee meeting times, as well as frequency, is left to the discretion of the committee. It can be reasonably anticipated that

the State Extension Advisory Committee will meet at least twice a year. Once the meeting cycle is established, meetings will be scheduled a year in advance, thus enabling committee members to plan their schedules accordingly.

Committee Remuneration

Committee members will be reimbursed for travel, food, and lodging costs while on approved advisory committee business. No other compensation will be provided.

Committee Bylaws

As deemed appropriate, bylaws may be developed to provide guidance to the State Extension Advisory Committee.

Role of Extension Personnel

Extension personnel work in a facilitative and coordinative role with the State Extension Advisory Committee. Extension personnel have ex officio status as members of the committee. Accordingly, Extension personnel have the same rights, duties, and responsibilities as committee members except they do not hold office or vote.

IV YOUR JOB AS A COMMITTEE MEMBER

Since you will be working with other committee members, it is extremely important that you get to know them. To assist you, individual biographical data sheets have been prepared and will be shared with each committee member. It is also important that you know how to be an effective committee member. The following will assist you.

Committee Meetings - Making Them Work

In athletic team competition, the objective is to win. All members of the team prepare for the athletic event, participate in the event, and follow-through on their assignments so that the combined efforts of team members achieve the objective. The productive committee member, like an athlete on a team, must prepare for the meeting, participate in the meeting, and follow-through on assignments and other responsibilities if the committee is to be successful.

Before the Meeting - Prepare

Have you ever attended a meeting when you did not really know what would take place? When you were asked for your opinion, were you prepared to give a good answer? When a committee meeting is called, make sure you understand the purpose of the meeting so that you can be prepared to participate in the discussion and decision making. You should:

- .Review the agenda in advance.
- .Review the past meeting's minutes.

- .Determine when and in what manner you will actively participate in the meeting.
- .Identify any item not on the agenda which needs to be discussed.

At the Meeting - Participate

Advance planning enables committee members to participate in the business of the committee. Key points to be considered include:

- .Arrive on time for all meetings.
- .Allow yourself to be enthusiastic about your appointed task.
- .Participate in committee discussions, decisions, and committee actions.
- .Respect the rights of fellow members to express their ideas and suggestions.
- .Work to achieve committee goals and objectives.

After the Meeting - Follow-Through

Committee work is incomplete without follow-through. To follow through, you should:

- .Support the plans made or actions taken by the committee.
- .Carry out any postmeeting assignments or duties assigned to you or accepted by you.
- .Inform interested clientele about plans and actions of your committee.
- .Inform other interested groups or organizations about the committee plans and the parent organization.
- .Help conduct major activities or events planned by the committee.

