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THE ROLE AND PROCEDURES OF LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCILS
IN PLANNING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
WITHIN THE ALASKA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This study was undertaken to determine the differences and relationships between current and ideal advisory councils of the Cooperative Extension Service in Alaska, as perceived by council members and Extension agents. Responses to a written questionnaire were compared to determine differences in perceptions between the groups, with conclusions generalized only to the population of council members and agents in Alaska.

Data were gathered and analyzed on both current and ideal advisory councils in three areas; roles of councils, operational procedures affecting councils, and attitudes of members and agents. These areas were divided into a total of 12 categories based upon information from a review of the literature.

Council members and agents differed in their view of current councils, however, both agreed that orientation and training of councils was limited, as were resources allocated for council use. Members revealed a need for clarification of roles and authority of current councils. Agents indicated a division of opinion in attitudes about current Extension advisory councils, with less than half of agents having positive attitudes.

Advisory council members and agents perceived ideal councils encompassing all categories covered in the study. Attitudes about ideal councils were positive with both groups.

When matched against a model council drawn from the literature, current Alaska Extension advisory councils fell short. Alaska CES councils were seen as functioning, but not as closely to the ideal as perceived by members and agents, or as suggested in the literature. An improvement in council/staff shared decision making in all roles and operational procedures identified in the study would lead to more positive attitudes and to increased involvement in program planning by advisory councils.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

One of the foundation principles of democracy is the concept that every citizen has a right to participate in decision making processes affecting his personal and family welfare. Achievement of this right is a matter of personal choice. However, proponents of the democratic process advocate involvement in decision making as advantageous to both the collective whole and the individual (Rosenbaum, 1978).

As a particular endeavor in a democratic society, participant involvement for planning education is one of the most widely held principles in adult education. This view has been espoused by numerous adult educators and other scholars dealing with adult learning phenomena. Boyle (1958) has stated that "active participation by people in program development is essential for the effective planning of education programs" (p. 10).

Over the past few years new opportunities for citizens to participate in all levels of government and institutions, including education, have been created. A major opportunity for public input is through participation in advisory councils and committees. These advisory groups can

offer an agency or organization insight into concerns of local citizens, with a desired ultimate result being improved organizational efficiency and better service delivery. In addition, studies have shown that participation by clientele in educational and business endeavors increased the participant's interest, sense of "ownership" and overall commitment to the parent organization (Cole & Glass, 1977; McLoughlin, 1971, Semberger, 1972).

Programs which receive federal funds, such as Cooperative Extension Service and adult basic education, as well as vocational education programs, espouse the concept of community involvement through advisory councils. The federal government, in an attempt to involve the citizenry, has mandated advisory councils for agencies receiving special federally authorized funding (Trecker, 1970). State agencies have followed this leadership by authorizing advisory boards and councils to communicate local needs to state officials.

Cooperative Extension Service in Alaska

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is an educational agency of the University of Alaska "extending" agricultural, homemaking, community development, energy, and fisheries information of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the University of Alaska and its research institutes, to rural and urban families. The program is concerned with improving living by means of practical, out-of-school teaching applying

science to real life situations on a learn-to-do-by-doing basis, and providing subject matter information in a wide range of publications (CES Mission Statement, 1983).

The primary function of the Extension Service is education. Extension educators work through an informal educational system by which interested adults and young people may be involved in practical learning experiences. Classes or workshops offered by Extension are non-credit in that they lead to no degree or diploma.

The Cooperative Extension Service's primary mission is to provide, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies and other units of the University, a program of outreach designed to bring University of Alaska resources to bear upon the needs and problems of the people and institutions of the State.

Specifically, the mission of the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska, is to interpret and extend relevant and current knowledge in agriculture and natural resources, fisheries and marine resources, community development and home economics to Alaskan adults, youth, families and community leaders in an understandable and useable form and to encourage the application of this knowledge to solve problems and challenges that face the people (CES: Planning for Program Development, 1984, p.1).

Extension education is a cooperative partnership between the federal government, the state land-grant university and the people in local communities, providing educational services which are responsive to local needs and priorities (Warner & Christenson, 1984). Nationwide in scope, the Cooperative Extension Service was founded on the principle

that the program belongs to its participants, and those most affected by Extension educational efforts need to be deeply involved in program planning. One of the ways that this may be accomplished is to have participants actively involved in program advisory committees or councils.

Advisory Councils in Alaska Extension Service

In 1976 an Extension advisory council was organized on the state level to give input to the Alaska Cooperative Extension Director and other administrative staff. Citizens, appointed to the council represented various interest groups and geographical areas throughout the state. This group has been meeting on a regular basis since its formation.

During 1985 a statement of policies and regulations for any statewide advisory council within the University of Alaska system was approved and adopted by the Board of Regents. However, this statement applies specifically to councils dealing only with statewide concerns. Issues before the Extension state advisory group affect the entire state Cooperative Extension operation, and generally are not issues of local area educational program planning.

Alaska Extension Districts

In the state of Alaska there are no political divisions designated as counties, with a county seat of government. Local divisions called districts have been set by state CES administration, with the district office being in the main

town or city of that area. Several district offices have only one Extension agent, while others may have three to five. At the time of the study there were 15 Extension district offices in Alaska (CES Directory, 1985).

Although the concept of local advisory councils had been discussed by Alaska Extension staff and administration for some time, not until the late 1970s was any major effort made to have advisory councils active in each Extension district within the state.

An October 27, 1978 memorandum (see Appendix A) from the state Extension director to all district coordinators laid out guidelines by which advisory councils should be established on the district level. These guidelines stressed the importance of council membership representing the population served, the consideration of how information is gathered from clientele and the establishment of by-laws for each council. The memorandum also addressed the need for councils to be involved with program development on a broad basis, and that information from CES concerning program matters should be regularly provided to council members.

Prior to this memo, one district had begun organizing an advisory council, first meeting in 1977. A second district council was organized in late 1979. By the fall of 1980 two other districts in Alaska Extension had begun the process of setting up program advisory groups within their respective

districts. Agents drew up lists of prospective members, determined those most representative of clientele or interest groups, and contacted them about serving. After these persons consented to serve CES on an advisory council, organizational meetings were held and officers chosen.

Program Plans of work

Procedural regulations within the Cooperative Extension Service stated that actual plans for educational programs within each district were to be written by Extension agents (CES:Planning Manual, 1984). Traditionally, these plans seldom were viewed by anyone other than professional staff. Program plans were made for a four year period, with updates and specific objectives added yearly. Extension agents were responsible for carrying out the educational programs in an efficient and effective manner that would meet the needs of clientele.

Although not specifically mandated, planning manuals of the Alaska Extension Service indicated that program planning should include input from local clientele. "District level advisory groups for total program delivery is our expectation in every district" (CES: Planning, 1980 draft, p. 5). At the time of the study, there was no written statement from state administration outlining philosophy, policy or guidelines for district advisory councils in Alaska. However, 12 of 15 districts had some type of advisory process. Some were

overall program planning councils and some were specific to one program area such as fisheries or youth work.

For client input in program planning to be most effective, the literature suggests that input is more effective if certain roles are performed by councils; if there are well defined operational procedures; and if attitudes are positive toward council involvement. Assessment of current perceptions by both agents and council members, and how council members and agents would like them to be (the ideal roles, procedures and attitudes) was the focus of this study.

Statement of Purpose of Study

The Cooperative Extension Service evolved as a partnership of local people, state land-grant universities and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. These partners shared in planning Extension programs, each contributing input leading to delineation of program topics (A People and A Spirit, 1968). Input was from any level within the organization, however, Cole and Cole (1983) note that the "ultimate responsibility for programming rests with the agent - the professional educator. But given appropriate knowledge and skills, councils have an important role to play...so that Extension programs are, indeed, the people's programs" (p. 65).

Purpose Statement

The use of advisory councils in all facets and levels of Cooperative Extension occurs nationally. Extension program development specialists had advocated for many years use of advisory councils as one means of involving recipients of education in the planning of educational programs presented for them (Boyle, 1958, Chandler, 1984). In the past decade Alaska Extension joined other states in promoting the advisory council process. Furthermore, many governmental agencies in Alaska made advisory councils an integral part of their organizations so that the public came to expect that type of involvement to be available.

Information concerning the role of Alaska CES advisory councils in educational programming was limited or nonexistent. Roles that local councils played in program planning, how operational procedures and attitudes of those involved affected those roles as well as other facets of Extension operation had not been defined.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate and assess (a) perceptions of local district CES advisory council members in Alaska concerning the roles, operational procedures and attitudes of current and ideal advisory councils in Extension educational program planning, and (b) perceptions of district Extension agents in Alaska

concerning the current roles, operational procedures and attitudes of current and ideal advisory councils in Extension educational program planning. A suggested ideal model for councils in Alaska was developed based upon a combination of prescriptive and data based literature and an ideal council as identified by members and agents.

Research Questions

Research questions addressed by the study were:

1. What perceptions do advisory council members have of current roles, procedures and attitudes of councils in program planning?

2. What do council members want roles, operational procedures and attitudes of councils to be (ideal)?

3. What perceptions do Extension agents have of current roles, operational procedures and attitudes of councils in program planning?

4. What do Extension agents want the roles, procedures and attitudes of councils to be (ideal)?

5. What relationship is there between council members perceptions of current and ideal roles/procedures/attitudes of councils in program planning?

6. What relationship is there between Extension agents perceptions of current and ideal role/procedures/attitudes of councils in program planning?

7. What differences are there between the perceptions of members and perceptions of agents regarding current roles, procedures and attitudes of councils in program planning?

8. What differences are there between members and agents regarding ideal roles, procedures and attitudes of councils in program planning?

9. What differences are there between council members perceptions of current roles/procedures/attitudes of councils and the ideal roles/procedures/attitudes as seen by agents?

10. What differences are there between the perceptions of members regarding current roles/procedures/attitudes of advisory councils in Extension program planning and those prescribed as an ideal model?

11. What differences are there between the perceptions of agents regarding current roles/procedures/attitudes of advisory councils in program planning and those prescribed as ideal?

Hypotheses

Research questions 1-4 were answered using descriptive information and thus no hypotheses were tested. Differences noted in research questions 10 and 11 were identified through statistical procedures, and on the basis of comments and other available information about the current roles of Alaska Extension advisory councils.

To more clearly determine answers to research questions 5 through 9 these following general research hypotheses were formulated (up to 12 specific hypotheses were tested for the various roles/procedures/attitudes):

1. There will be a relationship in perceptions of council members between current roles/procedures/attitudes and ideal roles/procedures/attitudes of councils in CES program planning.

2. There will be a relationship in perceptions of Extension agents between current roles/procedures/attitudes and ideal roles/procedures/attitudes of advisory councils in CES program planning.

3. Council members and Extension agents will have different perceptions concerning the current roles/procedures/attitudes of advisory councils in Alaska CES program planning.

4. Council members and Extension agents will have different perceptions concerning the ideal roles/procedures/attitudes of advisory councils in CES program planning.

5. There will be a difference between the perceptions of council members regarding current roles/procedures/attitudes and perceptions of Extension agents regarding ideal roles/procedures/attitudes.

In addition to data for statistical analysis, other information was gathered to allow a more complete description of Alaska Extension advisory councils. Some of this information was demographic in nature, the remainder was descriptive of council involvement by members as a whole. The descriptive information includes respondent answers to specific items and respondents' unsolicited comments.

Limitations

The following limitations were noted.

Generalization

The small population in this study, by its nature, limited the findings and conclusions to be directly applicable only within Alaska, and only to advisory groups for Cooperative Extension Service.

Instrumentation

Data collection and analysis were conducted with as little investigator bias as possible. However, the instrument used was not previously validated in another study; it was constructed by the investigator. Although reviewed by a panel of experts in the field and pretested before final revision, it is possible that the instrument itself contributed to differences found.

Other Factors Influencing Study

Advisory councils may be influenced by other people

and/or group interactions over which they have little control or knowledge. The following three factors were identified as possibly affecting the outcomes of the study, however, they were not included in the investigation due to the necessity of keeping the total scope of the study within workable boundaries.

Administrators of Cooperative Extension (CES) in Alaska

Five persons made up the administrative staff on the state level for Cooperative Extension Service in Alaska. One of these was the Director of Extension who had ultimate responsibility for CES. The other four served as chairmen of each of the designated educational divisions of the organization: Human Resources; Land and Natural Resources; Marine/Fishery Resources; and Alaska Native Rural Development Program.

Administrators were at the state office level and had minimal or no involvement in the local advisory process. Although their beliefs and attitudes were important, and at times critical, in directing the overall development of the advisory council system, they were not dealing directly with local councils. Therefore, they were not included as part of the population for this study. It should be recognized, however, that statements or impressions given by administrators prior to the time of the study may have influenced attitudes of agents and/or council members about the advisory process.

State Extension Advisory Council

The state Extension advisory council represented the population of the state in providing input to administrators in Alaska CES. This group met quarterly, either by audioconference hookup or on-site meetings. According to their bylaws (1983) the purpose of the council is to "maximize citizen input into the planning and budgeting process of the Cooperative Extension program and to assist in developing program direction and priorities" (p.1). Since this council did not deal specifically with local district programming, they were not included in the population of this study.

Group Process

According to Cole (1980), three components are present in an advisory council framework: structural, programming skills and group process skills. This study did not deal with the group process aspect of council makeup. Group process skills were recognized as being an essential component of any group. However, data on group process are best collected through direct observation of the groups in question which was neither practical for this study nor was it within the scope and purpose of the study.

Significance of the Study

The literature dealing with adult education and the Cooperative Extension Service detailed the necessity of

public involvement in program planning for meaningful educational outcomes. One means of gathering citizen ideas was through advisory councils whose members represented the population being served. A limited amount of research was available in the adult education and Cooperative Extension areas concerning the influence of advisory councils have in determining the direction of the educational program. The major portion of the literature on advisory councils was found in vocational-technical, public school, community college and community education areas, and information on boardmanship for various organizations. Much of the literature in all areas was prescriptive in nature, detailing recruitment, organization, group meeting techniques and professional leadership.

A significant outcome of this study is a descriptive overview of community residents involved in advisory councils for planning educational programs in Alaska CES districts, as perceived by council members and Extension agents. This information could be used by state administration in review of directives for advisory council involvement at the district level. Since written policy from the state level concerning local Extension advisory councils have not yet been developed, results of the study could guide development of such a document.

This study can assist council members, agents and

administrators in clarifying their perceptions of the advisory process, particularly concerning roles of councils. Results of the study emphasized roles perceived by members and agents to be functions of councils, providing a basis for district bylaws or policy guidelines. People need to know what is expected of them in any position, and particularly when acting in a volunteer capacity. Clear expectations generally raise the involvement of those concerned (Doughlah, 1970).

Included in the study was an examination of operational procedures noted in the literature which can affect program planning via the council process. Knowledge and awareness of these procedures can assist the organization in providing adequate support for advisory councils and can also help councils in arranging their deliberations in order to most effectively complete their advisory roles.

One area investigated was orientation and training of council members. The literature suggests that newly appointed council members often feel inadequate in this position (Fisher, 1979). An additional outcome of the study can be the design and implementation of a training program for all council members, with attention to identified needs. Training for agents can be designed to address their concerns about working with advisory councils.

Another area considered in the study was that of agency

commitment to the council process, demonstrated through the budgeting of funds for council use, agent time specified for council matters, and staff help or supplies set aside for council business. Of significance are the conclusions suggesting reallocation of resources to support local advisory councils.

Since the study pointed out expectations staff and members had of the council process, findings can be used to clarify these expectations within an advisory group. Examination through discussion by agents and local councils to reach agreement on desired procedures can lead to closer working relationships among all participants. This study provides a reference point from which council members and staff can move toward a realization of an ideal council and enhance the advisory process in building meaningful educational programs for Cooperative Extension districts in Alaska.

Definition of Terms

Terms used in this study were defined as follows.

Advisory council: a group of citizens appointed to serve as advisors to professional staff members in a local Alaska Extension district. Appointment may be made by staff or the council itself (Cole and Cole, 1983).

Agents: persons hired by the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service to serve as district agents

responsible for presenting educational programs and generally supervising educational delivery of various programs within their district.

Attitude: a predisposition to behave in a certain way toward a particular referant, either positively or negatively.

Community relations: actions by members which provide a relationship with the community through dissemination of information and contacts with individuals and other organized groups.

Current roles: actions or behaviors which advisory council members and Extension agents perceived as presently taking place in district program planning.

Educational programs: non-credit programs presented by agents or trained volunteers through workshops, seminars, home visits, publications, media delivery, one-on-one contact and other teaching methods (CES Planning Manual, 1984).

Evaluation: a systematic review and critique of programs planned and presented to clientele.

Extension district: an area of the state of Alaska for which a particular group of staff members is responsible on the local level. Districts are not a middle management level, but are a designation for the local area served. Since Alaska has no counties to help determine local boundaries, the size and area of each district is set by state administration. Some districts cover as much 180,000 square miles served by a

single Extension agent, while others may be located in an urban area of more limited boundaries but with only three agents to serve 250,000 people.

Ideal roles: actions or behaviors which advisory council members and agents considered should be taking place in program planning.

Meetings and structure of council: those gatherings of the council for decision making purposes, including provision or agenda and minutes of meeting; officers chosen to lead the group.

Membership of council: a process by which geographic regions, ethnic groups, and various agencies within a district are represented on the council.

Needs assessment: an act of gathering information to assist in setting priorities, goals and objectives for Extension programming.

Operational procedures: actions of the council or agency which may directly enhance or detract from the ability of the council to function in a positive manner.

Orientation: a process by which advisory council members are introduced to Extension philosophy, policy and planning procedures as well as responsibilities of councils.

Perceptions: those ideas, concepts and/or impressions held by people concerning how program planning was handled within Cooperative Extension Service in Alaska.

Planning specific educational programs: a process of direct involvement by councils in planning and approving individual programs to be included in agents' plans-of-work.

Policy advisement: a process of development of statements outlining the mission and goals of Cooperative Extension Service, and steps to be taken in performing services that assist in achieving these goals at both state and district levels.

Priority Setting: a process by which program needs are determined in order of their importance.

Program planning: a process by which educational programs were chosen and refined in order to meet the needs of clientele. This process included activities such as conducting needs assessments, setting program goals and objectives, legitimizing plans made by agents and evaluating previous programs (Cole, 1980).

Resources provided to councils: those resources specifically designated for advisory council purposes. Basic resources were time of agents, funding support from state and/or district levels and other support including such things as a recording secretary for meetings, typing and mailing of agendas or other information, or providing a small desk for council officers to use.

Training: a process by which advisory council members study policies, operation and expectations of performance in their duties, and practice skill building in order to operate

competently in matters relating to duties within CES.

Organization of the Study

The report of the study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter covers the introduction to the study, the purpose and goals of the study, and objectives for the research. Limitations of the study, definition of terms and what significance the research may have are also found in chapter one. Discussion of the theoretical basis for the research, with citations from the literature noted, are included throughout the sections.

Chapter two is a review of other research and writings related to the problem being studied. Within Chapter three the methods and procedures to be followed for conducting this research are presented. The population to be examined, the design of the study, instrumentation for gathering data along with methods for such data gathering are the main focus of this chapter. The last major section of the chapter is an explanation of the methods of data analysis to be used.

Chapter four presents a report of the data gathered in the study, including charts and tables which assist in explaining data. The final chapter, number five, consists of two main sections. The first section addresses conclusions reached from the data analysis. These conclusions and/or implications are drawn directly from the data itself. A second section includes any recommendations made for Alaska

Extension advisory councils, along with suggestions for additional research. The chapter concludes with a final summary of the study.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Cooperative Extension Service nationally holds the philosophical point of view that those receiving educational assistance should also be involved in the program development process (Sanders, ed., 1966, Warner & Christenson, 1984). One method of involving participants is through local program advisory councils.

The focus of this study was to determine the current roles and procedures of Extension program advisory councils in Alaska as perceived by both council members and agents, as well as to determine how members and agents would like the councils to be (ideal roles). Literature on advisory councils and participation in educational program planning was reviewed in order to determine various facets making up council roles. Within the literature, both empirical studies and prescriptive information were studied.

Literature reviewed covered several main topics. Presented first in this chapter is information on citizen participation in planning, and particularly through the advisory council process. Following is a section covering the literature regarding advisory council roles and operational procedures which affect those roles, both

positively and negatively. The next section notes literature concerning attitudes of agents toward councils. In the final section, a model against which Alaska advisory councils could be measured is described.

Participation in Planning

As an endeavor in a democratic society and specifically adult education, participant involvement in planning that education is one of the most widely held principles. This view has been espoused by numerous adult educators and other scholars dealing with adult learning phenomena (Houle, 1969; Sanders, 1966; Knowles, 1980).

Boyle (1958) has stated that "active participation by people in program development is essential for the effective planning of education programs" (p. 10). Bergevin (1967), Doughlah (1970) and Knowles (1980) have all indicated that student involvement in program planning is important to both learning of new information and satisfaction with the course offered. Additionally, other studies have shown that participation by clientele in educational and business endeavors increases the participants' interest, sense of ownership and overall commitment to the parent organization (Coch & French, 1948; Mueller, 1979).

A summary of basic rationale for involvement in planning has been made by Benne (1955) as: (a) decisions and actions are enriched by the knowledge, insight and imagination of

many different people; (b) the plans made are more likely to meet all the varied needs of the people involved and to fit the unique features of the situation; and (c) interest and concern is heightened when people play a part in making decisions. Boaden, Goldsmith, Hampton and Stringer (1980) voice the opinion that "people participate because their interest in something is sufficiently great for them to want to be involved" (p. 86).

Various empirical studies have been conducted concerning the participation of adults in planning educational experiences in which they were actively involved (Cole & Glass, 1977; McLoughlin, 1971; Semberber, 1972; Rosenblum and Darkenwald, 1983). Although the study by Rosenblum and Darkenwald indicated planning participation might not be as valuable as once believed, educators generally hold to the theory that participation of learners in the planning process increases satisfaction and learning in the educational activity.

Planning via Community Groups

Program planning of some kind is essential in education. Cole and Cole (1983) state that the "fundamental purpose of all educational agencies is to serve the people through a planned program" (p. 8). Building upon the participation ideal, many agencies delivering educational programs to adults have incorporated into their planning process the

involvement of a community participant group. These groups have been identified by a variety of names, such as advisory council, people involvement committee, and program planning committee.

The federal government, in an attempt to involve the citizenry, has mandated advisory councils for agencies receiving special federal funding. Projects now required by law to form parent-advisory committees include Follow-Through, Parent-Child Centers, Head Start, and ESEA Titles I, III, V and VII (Greenwood, Breivogel & Jester, 1977). Adult basic education programs as well as vocational education programs, both receiving federal funds, espouse the concept of community involvement through advisory councils. The Cooperative Extension Service, also federally supported, endorses advisory councils or committees as an effective means of involving clientele in educational program planning decisions (Boyle, 1965). Warner and Christenson (1984) note that "...no other government agency has as extensive an involvement of local citizens in the program development process as does Extension" (p. 38). States have followed federal leadership by requiring advisory boards and councils for many agencies receiving public funds.

Council Roles and Participation Levels

Implicit in the definition of advisory groups is the act of giving advice on some designated topic. This advice may

be directed toward program or policies within an organization. Review of the literature, both prescriptive and empirical, reveals differing views of council roles and participation levels within the advisory process.

Participation Levels

The level of participation in advising, or the amount of advice sought by decision-makers, directly affects the role of citizens in the advisory capacity. One view is presented by Kaplan and Tune (1980) through their five level pyramid model of citizen participation in education. Citizens at level 1 serve largely a supportive role for decisions made by professional staff or boards. Decisions made by staff are supported by citizens verbally, with additional support given through donation of time and talent to help as aides or resource persons to the agency. Rarely does this level involve "making decisions or determining policy" (p. 15).

At level 2 citizens have the opportunity to voice opinions, concerns and ideas, but not make final decisions. Citizen input at this level is usually considered by staff and often used in developing educational plans or policies.

Level 3 finds citizens sharing in some decisions, with participation directed toward certain specific issues. These could include selection of educational materials, selection of new staff, or helping determine priorities for budget needs. Kaplan and Tune (1980) note that participation at

this level may cover only certain issues rather than all that affect the organization.

Sharing in all decisions is found at level 4, where citizens have the same power as professional staff. At this level, administrators and board members responsible for development of educational policy may resent intrusion by citizen advisory groups. At level 5, citizens have the final authority for decision making, while professional educators are responsible for implementing the decisions.

Kaplan and Tune (1980) further found that many advisory councils studied operate at level 2, with some participation found at level 3. They conclude that rare would be an advisory council involved in decisions at level 4 or 5 status.

Arnstein (1971) describes levels of citizen participation as a ladder with 8 rungs, the lowest being (a) manipulation and (b) therapy. Subsequent rungs are (c) informing, (d) consultation, (e) placation, (f) partnership, (g) delegated power, and (h) citizen control. The three top rungs represent degrees of direct citizen power and control. How far up this ladder people are allowed to climb within the participation process is often determined by the attitudes and actions of the agency personnel and/or the policies of that educational agency.

Advisory groups can be given a great deal of responsibility and/or power, operating at level 3 or above (Kaplan and Tune, 1980) or levels 6, 7, and 8 described by Arnstein (1971). Their advice would lead to meaningful decisions, with an input of technical expertise from the community guiding program improvement and implementation (Trecher, 1970).

Full participation in the advisory process means shared decision making as noted above. Some agencies and administrators may view this action as a reasonable responsibility for an advisory group to assume. In these cases, the council has the authority to recommend final decisions, or to see that the decision maker acts as directed. However, Kaplan and Tune (1980) noted that empirical evidence suggests that this level of authority and power seldom occurs within advisory councils.

Council Roles

Regardless of how the functions of a council are specified, it is imperative that council members be aware of their role(s) as an advisory council. Bible (1959) defines role as "a set of expectations regarding behavior applied to an individual or a group of individuals who occupy a particular position in the structure of a social system" (p. 82). A clear outline of the role(s) for councils will

facilitate and enhance participation in the advisory process, expediting acceptance of level 2 and leading councils toward functioning at levels 3 and above.

Studies have shown that many advisory groups are unclear about their role. Florida advisory members felt they lacked necessary knowledge and experience to participate effectively (Fisher, 1979). Hull (1959) found that 4-H state advisory committee members felt barriers to effective functioning were lack of sufficient information for sound decisions, and a poor understanding of the advisory role.

Carlson (1967) found that advisory committees for junior college vocational programs in California perceived their most important roles to be those concerned with the needs of the community and perspective employers. Of lesser importance was interpreting programs to the community to gain public understanding and support.

Members of state 4-H advisory committees indicated that roles most frequently carried out by them were to assist with program planning and policy formation, to assist in planning 4-H events and to increase communication (Hull, 1959). Sacks (1976) reported that of advisory councils serving Home Economics programs in Northeastern states the 5 roles considered most important by those surveyed were problem identification, priority setting, planning of special events, fact finding and program evaluation.

Literature of a prescriptive nature indicates varied opinions on roles for advisory councils. In some cases, the literature defines specific roles for advisory councils. Marlow (1969) emphasizes that the role of a council is strictly advisory. Members should not receive the impression that the council has more authority than it actually does. NSPRA (1973) further states that "advisory means just that!" (p. 9). The part-time and limited involvement of a council member may contribute to this lack of clarity in role. Also, professional personnel may assume that members on the local level will know their roles, providing little training (Bible, 1959). As stated earlier, members need to know what they are supposed to do as well as limits of their participation (Carpenter, 1975).

An identification of roles for a council would also outline the purpose of the group. Hartley (1980-81) listed 17 different roles of an advisory council, including assisting in program evaluation, expanding program visibility, recommending program policy and guidelines, and suggesting priorities for program direction and development. Sanders (1966) has summarized the role of an advisory council in terms of four principal functions: advisement, interpretation, legitimation and communication. Cole (1980) lists the functions of program delivery councils as (a) conducting needs assessments, (b) setting goals and

objectives, (c) planning appropriate tasks, (d) evaluating, and (e) disseminating information.

Sumption and Engstrom (1966) suggest that the primary purpose of these groups is to advise on policies and problems, while Tropman (1979) sees the main charge of the council to be developing a set of recommendations. Knowles (1980) outlines a broader scope for the council, including identification of current community problems, establishing priorities and goals, interpreting program needs and providing linkages with target populations, institutions and community agencies.

Adams and Morgan (1976) concur, suggesting that important roles of an advisory council include "formulation and evaluation of policy statements," providing program support through "sharing program information...with key citizens in the community," and evaluating the total product of the agency, an educational program (p. 60). Garrity (1984) notes that an advisory council must maintain a close liason with the community it serves and keep abreast of changes that occur.

Tropman (1979) recommends that council members need to be aware of resources of the agency they serve as well as problems faced by the agency. However, if the council's main goal is program planning and evaluation, then concern with agency administration and operation is not properly within

its jurisdiction (Trecker, 1970).

Thus, the main general roles of an advisory council, as outlined in the prescriptive literature, include (a) advising on setting goals and objectives, (b) advising on program policy and/or guidelines through recommendations, and (c) providing a relationship with the community through gathering and dissemination of information. Additional roles may be (d) evaluation of programs and plans, (e) conducting needs assessments and (f) planning specific tasks or teaching assignments. Councils taking these roles would be functioning at participation level 3 identified by Kaplan and Tune (1980) or on the top rungs of Arnstein's ladder (1971), although not all authors agree that advisory councils should participate to this extent.

Empirical evidence indicates that advisory councils generally participate no higher than level 2. Councils who function regularly at level 3 or above are the exception.

Factors Affecting Roles

An advisory council can provide structure in which educational planning, evaluation and community input takes place. Council roles within this structure are affected by a number of factors which may enhance or detract from effective council operation. These factors are defined, for this study, as operational procedures, which include membership selection, orientation, training, and resource support. As

councils become more proficient in managing councils affairs, some operational procedures conducted by the agency may be handled by the council itself.

Council Structure and Membership Selection

A good council offers people opportunities for involvement in the development of educational programs relevant to them and others in their community. However, a council must be representative of the community in its overall membership (LeTarte, 1973).

When selection of members takes place, an effort should be made to involve poor and minority citizens. Davies (1977) notes that experience with public school councils has shown that unless substantial outreach efforts are made, representation of minority citizens will not be adequate. In fact, empirical evidence has supported charges of unequal representation on school councils by minority groups both in Canada and the United States (Sullivan, 1979; Underwood, et. al., 1978). Thus, qualifications sought in council members should be carefully delineated to provide broad representation from the community involved.

Trecker (1970) suggests that it is the responsibility of the sponsoring agency to outline the qualifications being sought in members. Thus, CES must take steps to insure that agents use appropriate procedures in forming councils and in seeking replacement members when necessary. (Chandler, 1982).

Orientation

In order for members to know their duties and responsibilities, orientation and training are recommended (Boyle, 1965; Adams & Morgan, 1976). Fisher (1979) notes that advisory members in Florida felt they lacked the necessary knowledge and experience to participate effectively.

If the council's purpose is planning and evaluation of programs and making decisions on other matters, an understanding of council roles and the organization served is important. Having this information available to council members at the onset of their service, plus providing a time of training in the advisory process, will lead to more effective action and open communication among all concerned. Information provided to councils about their roles within the organization would also indicate the maximum limits of council responsibility in making decisions, or which level of participation they could obtain. In addition, members need to know when and where meetings are generally held (Trecher, 1970).

In-service Training

Once an advisory group is chosen and assembled, it is essential that training in their duties be facilitated. Citizens may lack experience with these types of groups. In many instances participants on councils may have served only

a public relations or opinion giving function. Training and background in civic affairs is limited, and civic abilities are reduced or atrophied (Davies, et. al., 1977). Hull (1959) also noted that member's lack of understanding and information led to poor decisions by councils.

Lack of training may also lead to an impression that the council is ineffective or not really reaching its goals. When citizens are not provided with adequate training that build skills in decision making processes, participation may well seem unsuccessful (Parson, 1982). Cole (1980) emphasizes that "unless the council is given the necessary information and training to carry out its duties, its potential for community improvement won't be realized" (p. 9). Several of the areas training should cover are suggested by Parson as communications skills, goal setting methods, problem solving methods, holding effective meetings, decision making and conflict resolution.

Training develops group skills which lead to effective decision making. Pigg (1978) notes that within Cooperative Extension Service personnel must work closely with inexperienced members until these skills are developed. Consistant in-service training leading to a clear understanding of purpose, plus open communications with the sponsoring agency will lead to a successful advisory council (Warden, 1977).

As Fisher (1979) states, "Educators must take extra steps of providing advisory bodies with training appropriate to their areas of expected involvement" (p. 254). This training should include group process skills, group dynamics or sensitivity training, possibly led by a trainer other than regular agency staff members (Marshall, 1971).

Sugar and Nance (1973) suggest that communication and leadership skills be basic for all training. Thus participants will have more chance to acquire tools necessary for effective leadership within the council and community. Training of this sort is one way to strengthen council representatives in their ability to serve in this role.

Council Organization and Meetings

In order for an advisory council to function effectively, some structure must be provided for it. A process for choosing leadership within the council and handling council business would need to be used. Seay (1974) recommends that the council "must function on the basis of lay leadership" (p. 181). This leadership should be decided from within the council, with all members having a good understanding of the scope and nature of responsibilities (Engelking, 1980; Laney, 1984). The chairperson is responsible for scheduling and running the meetings (Goetsch, 1982).

A study by White (1983) has shown that effective ways to increase council or committee effectiveness include pre-set

meeting agendas, rotating terms for members and officers as well as increasing involvement for all members in the meeting procedures.

As the council continues to function, there needs to be close coordination between the council chairperson and any staff member working with the council (Laney, 1984). Setting of agendas and providing information to members prior to the meetings should be a joint responsibility of staff and chairperson.

Concern arises over written delineation of roles for council members, often spelled out in council bylaws. Specific delegation of responsibility can result in higher quality program planning (Knowles, 1980). Although many organizations operate under bylaws, advisory councils may be lacking such rules. A survey of Cooperative Education programs has shown that less than half of participants responding had advisory councils with a written statement outlining responsibilities (Hartley, 1980). When the objective and purpose of the council is clearly defined, particularly in writing, then the council will be able to assemble, appraise and disseminate facts to clarify directions for educational programming (Folley, 1974).

Members considered for appointment to an advisory body should have a clear idea of what is expected of them. A statement is needed which outlines length of term, how often

council will meet, items likely to be considered by the group and any other commitments members may be asked to make (Trecker, 1970). A written job description and policy statement may be helpful in outlining expectations for new members (Chandler, 1982; Engelking, 1980). Clearly stated role expectations also help the council members understand the limits of their scope of activity.

Written statements of policy and guidelines for procedure could be included in an advisory handbook available to each member. This handbook might also include general functions of the council, names and addresses of members and agency staff, term of service and method of replacing members (Marlow, 1969; Helms, 1977).

Agency Commitment of Resources

Building and maintaining effective advisory councils will necessitate a commitment of time as well as other resources (Parson, 1982; Kaplan & Tune, 1978-80). When a council is first organized, time allocations are extensive on the part of personnel working directly with council activities (Letarte, 1973).

Pigg (1978) emphasizes that "we all agree the local groups are capable of planning for themselves if sufficient time, money...are provided so the process is more than superficial" (p. 17). Support for the council in the form of a modest budget with secretarial help when needed is

necessary in order for the council to continue to function effectively over a period of time (Davies, 1977).

Attitudes of Agents

An attitude may be defined as an emotional predisposition or tendency to behave or react positively or negatively toward a particular referent (Allport, 1935). The attitudes held by the professional educator can make a measurable difference in the effectiveness of citizen participation in educational program planning (Kaplan & Tune, 1980). Negative attitudes dampen citizen enthusiasm, often leading to apathy. Conversely, educators with positive attitudes find the citizen input helpful and rewarding.

Administrators of adult education programs hold the key to promoting, or sabotaging, the community participation or people involvement process. The attitude held by the administrator directly reflects upon the effectiveness of any advisory or decision-making body (Fried, 1978). Carpenter (1975) notes that the leadership of the administrator is vital, with no one else being in a position to make as many important decisions or exert as much influence. In reporting on hearings by the Commission on Educational Governance, Weinstein and Mitchell (1977) note that citizen councils would be influential only to the extent administration permitted or encouraged them.

Some educators fear community involvement in educational

planning, and approach it with great apprehension (Saxe, 1975). Participation by citizens offers them power, which some educators may not want to relinquish. In fact, one view holds that professional educators have become so deeply entrenched in their own bureaucratic system they view any innovation as a threat (Gittell, 1971). Others feel that only those trained for the professional role should be involved in educational decision-making (Labaron & Royster, 1974). Some professionals resent advisory councils, seeing them as threats to their freedom of operation (Hahn, 1979).

Adams and Morgan (1976) suggest that administrators working with advisory councils should carefully examine their own philosophy "with respect to citizen involvement" (p. 57). The administrator needs to be aware of personal feelings about involvement of others in making decisions, representation promoting democratic ideals, beliefs on citizen ownership in public education, and the ability to accept and use the advice of non-professionals. Positive attitudes in these and other philosophical issues connected with citizen involvement in educational decisions will enhance cooperation, while negative reactions to the advisement process may well spell doom in that situation (Greenwood, Breivogel & Jester, 1977).

Controversy Over Role Definition

Throughout the literature reviewed, differing opinions were evident concerning the levels of decision making for advisory councils. Some views held that councils should be strictly advisory, while others prescribed greater involvement in actual decisions made. Empirical studies noted that generally councils voiced opinions and ideas but rarely made firm decisions. The level of participation in advising, or the amount of advice sought by decision-makers directly affects the involvement of citizens in the advisory capacity.

Full participation in the advisory process means shared decision-making. Some agencies and administrators may view this action as a reasonable responsibility for an advisory group to assume. In these cases, the council will have the authority to recommend final decisions, or to see that the decision maker acts as directed. This level of authority and power seldom occurs within advisory councils, as administrators and policy making boards view it is an "infringement on their territorial responsibility for the development of educational policy" (Kaplan & Tune, 1980, p. 16).

Although advisory councils offer advantages in strengthening relations with the community, educators and administrators are often quick to point out obvious

disadvantages. These include loss of authority, an increase in politics, possible public opposition, and an increase in time needed between making a decision and following through to completion of a task. Sullivan (1980) has stated that an administrator "will have to adjust to the fact that shared decision-making will reduce his or her individual freedom to make decisions" (p. 23).

Some educators and administrators feel that the average citizen is not knowledgeable or astute enough to be involved in contributing toward decisions affecting an agency or institution. When these attitudes are present, citizen involvement is ignored or relegated to a non-functional position. A study by Jenkins (1974) has indicated that administrators see themselves as decision-makers, with the advisory council only a representative of community opinion which provides support for professional staff. Many administrators and educators fear involvement of citizens in an advisory capacity as leading to diminished power from within and adding a broader scope of community control.

A major goal in community involvement is the sharing of power in educational decision-making, power now largely monopolized by professional educators (Fried, 1978-80). Allowing advisory councils to participate in planning educational programs "involves the delegation of power and authority in the constructive pursuit of common goals" (Van

Antwerp & Sexton, 1980, p. 25). In fact, Cohn & Pusset (1971) state that "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process..." (p. 72).

Model for Alaska Advisory Councils

Review of related literature, both prescriptive and empirical, revealed a number of common concerns and recommendations. These recommendations were in three main areas, (a) roles of advisory councils, (b) operational procedures and (c) attitudes affecting these roles.

Using these main areas as guidelines, a model for effective advisory councils was constructed. The area of roles includes these activities or functions: (a) setting goals, priorities and objectives, (b) advising on program policy and guidelines, (c) providing an open relationships with the community, (d) evaluation of programs and plans, (e) conducting needs assessments and, (f) planning specific educational programs or tasks.

Operational procedures which affect council roles include: (a) orientation, (b) in-service training, (c) member selection, (d) meetings, (e) agency commitment of resources. A third area, attitude of members and agents, also affects advisory councils. Thus, a model of an ideal advisory council would encompass the 12 areas in the broad categories noted above: roles, operational procedures, and attitudes.

Chapter III
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

District advisory councils for Cooperative Extension Service (CES) in Alaska were formed in the late 1970s. Since then, new districts have been defined and additional local advisory councils formed. At the time of the study, 12 of 15 district offices had advisory councils, with individual group membership numbers ranging from 5 to 12 depending on population level in the district.

Population

The population for this study was all members appointed to advisory councils of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service districts and all Extension agents serving the local districts. The total population of 114 local advisory council members and 28 Extension agents was surveyed.

Survey Design and Data Gathering

A mailed questionnaire was used to gather data for the study, with the same questionnaire sent to both members and Extension agents. Pretested and revised, the questionnaire was printed in small booklet form. Size was such that a folded booklet would fit into a regular business envelope for mailing. One questionnaire (see appendix C) with cover

letter of explanation printed on appropriate letterhead (see appendix B) and a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope were sent to each CES district advisory council member and all district Extension agents.

All questionnaires were coded with a number to differentiate between agents and council members. Since identical questionnaires were used for both groups, numbers 01-28 designated agents, while number 30 and above designated council members. The coding system also assisted in follow-up procedures for those not immediately returned. Code numbers were written on the cover of each questionnaire and the back of the return envelope. An explanation of the use of the coding system was included in the cover letter.

Allowing for the possibility that mail delivery could take as long as two weeks between some points within the state, the time frame for sending and initial receipt of questionnaires was 4 weeks. One week following the initial mailing a postcard reminder was sent to all subjects, thanking those who responded and asking others not to forget return of the questionnaire (see Appendix D). Considering possible postal service difficulties, the card also requested a collect phone call from the recipient if they did not receive the original questionnaire. A second questionnaire was then sent out.

Persons who had not returned the questionnaire by 4 weeks from initial mailing were sent a follow-up letter and a replacement questionnaire. This letter (see Appendix E) informed the recipient that their questionnaire had not been received, and asked for completion and return. Seven weeks after the original mailing, each non-respondent was sent a final follow-up request by certified mail.

As questionnaires were returned, the code numbers were checked off against a master list. Completed questionnaires were placed into two groups; council members and Extension agents. Data were compiled and analyzed within each group, with no attempt made to look at data received from within an individual district.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data gathering in this study was a mailed questionnaire. This type of instrument was chosen as the most practical because face-to-face or telephone interviews would have been unreasonably expensive due to high costs of air travel. (Many communities can be reached only by air.) Long distance telephone rates within the state are also prohibitively expensive.

Since no instrument was found that would meet the objectives of this particular study, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was

constructed according to guidelines recommended by Dillman (1978) and Minnesota Measurement Services Center (1978). The items on the questionnaire provided data needed to answer the research questions.

After the first draft was completed, the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts in order to establish content validity. These experts were Dr. Irv Skelton, CES Natural Resource Chairman, University of Alaska; Dr. Richard A. Krueger, Extension Leader, Program Evaluation, University of Minnesota; Dr. Michael Chandler, Community Development Specialist and Dr. Steve Parson, Community Education Specialist, both at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The panel selection was based on expertise in advisory council management in a Cooperative Extension setting and a working knowledge of mailed questionnaires.

After review and revision the questionnaire was pilot tested. This pilot test was conducted with 12 persons who were members of advisory councils for community education and other extended education programs. Final revision of the instrument followed.

To insure various facets of program planning were covered in the questionnaire, items were constructed in each of 3 main groups, council roles, operational procedures and attitudes. Within these groups were the 12 categories being studied.

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections (see Appendix C). These sections were planning educational programs, experiences related to councils and personal information.

Items in the first section were constructed to ask for responses on both current and ideal councils. Values for current councils, placed to the left of each item, were response choice 1 for no, response choice 2 for yes and zero (0) indicating do not know. On the right side of each statement was a 7 point Likert type scale. Response choice 1 was labeled strongly disagree, while response choice 6 was labeled strongly agree. Only response choices 1 and 6 were labeled, intermediate values (2 through 5) were unlabeled and were set at equal intervals between 1 and 6. Response choice 7 was set slightly apart and was labeled do not know.

The second and third sections gathered information on advisory experiences and personal characteristics which was included in the general description of Alaska Extension advisory councils. Information gathered from the concluding open-ended questions was recorded in separate statements with no attempt made at quantitative analysis. Qualitatively, statements relating to general themes were grouped together for reporting purposes. These comments

were valid and important in that they conveyed concerns, ideas or special needs of participants not easily identified in the other parts of the questionnaire.

Nonrespondents

Although expectations were for 85% or higher return, an appraisal of the literature indicated that realistically the return would most likely be less. Ignoring nonrespondents would limit the generalizability of the results (Kerlinger, 1973).

Subjects not returning the survey instrument were nonrespondents for analysis purposes. The known demographic data for this group was reviewed to determine if they were similar to respondents. It was determined that nonrespondents were demographically similar to respondents and the study would be generalized to the total population concerned.

Data Analysis

Data gathered were grouped in three general sections. The first section contained information on perceptions advisory council members and agents had of both the current situation and their view of an ideal situation. Sections two and three included data which were descriptive in nature.

First Section: Questionnaire

Data from this section were analyzed using two statistical procedures. The first procedure compiled information to answer research questions 1-4 concerning perceptions of current councils and ideal councils as seen by both council members and agents. Within each of 12 categories scores were aggregated to determine mean scores for each category.

For current roles, an aggregated mean score ranging from 1-1.49 in each category indicated that activity was perceived as not being a part of current advisory councils. A mean score in each category in the range of 1.51-2 indicated that activity was perceived as being part of current councils within Alaska Extension Service. For ideal councils, a mean score in the range of 5-6 indicated that category was judged by respondents to be ideal for advisory councils. A mean score in each category near 1-2 indicated the category was not seen as ideal for advisory councils. Mean scores near the mid-point for both current and ideal councils indicated respondents were divided in their perceptions.

Correlations

In order to test hypothesis 1 and 2 and answer research questions 5 and 6 the Pearson product-moment correlation

coefficient was used. Correlations were calculated using aggregated scores in each of the 12 categories.

Positive correlations of .55 and above were taken to indicate that current practice tended to be perceived as similar to the ideal for advisory councils. A correlation coefficient of .9 or above indicated that perceived current practice was very close to ideal practice. The higher the positive coefficient, the more closely perceived current practice met the ideal.

A correlation coefficient of 0.0 to .30 (.0 to -.30) indicated little or no correlation between the two variables. Thus, perceived current practice would not be the same as the ideal for advisory council involvement in program planning.

Relationships between current and ideal councils were tested using the Pearson correlation at a probability level of .05.

T-tests

The second part of analysis tested hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 to answer research questions 7, 8 and 9. T-tests using the mean aggregated scores reflecting perceptions of agents and members about current councils and also ideal councils were made, with a probability level of .05.

Remainder of Questionnaire

Data gathered in the second and third sections of the questionnaire were of two types: information on amount of involvement in CES advisory councils and personal characteristics. This information was compiled and reported for both members and agents to assist in an over-all description of Alaska Extension advisory councils.

Model of Councils

In order to address research questions 10 and 11, a model was developed, drawn from the literature and perceptions of ideal councils noted in the study. Following analysis, inferences were made from the statistical data about the relationship of perceived current advisory councils to the model. Some categories matched the model, while others did not.

Levels of Participation

Although not included in the research questions, the literature suggested that advisory councils might function at a certain level of participation in decision making for Extension educational program planning. After drawing conclusions and inferences about the relationship of Alaska Extension advisory councils to the suggested model, an attempt was made to infer a level of participation for these councils. Since guidelines for participation levels are not

tightly structured, only inferences were made. Strong conclusions were not possible. Speculations were made, as were suggestions for continued research.

Chapter IV
RESULTS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the roles and functions of Cooperative Extension district advisory councils in Alaska as perceived by council members and Extension agents. Selected data gathered in the study are presented in this chapter, as are results of the statistical analyses.

Data Collection

Subjects for this study were the entire population of district advisory councils in Alaska and district Extension agents throughout the state. Lists of council members were obtained from each Extension district office. A master list was constructed for mailing and recording purposes.

Questionnaires were sent to 114 district advisory council members and 28 Extension agents. Questionnaires were returned from 94 members and 23 agents, a 117 total. Overall response rate was 82.39%. Response rates for members and agents were essentially equal, 82.45% and 82.14% respectively.

Of 94 member returns, 9 were unusable; 3 were partially completed and 6 were returned blank. All 23 agent returns were usable.

Thus, returned questionnaires used in data analysis represent 75% of members and 82% of agents included in the population of the study.

Non-Respondents

Of the total number of subjects, 20 members and 8 agents did not return a questionnaire after three mailings requesting their participation. In order to assess the extent of comparability between respondents and nonrespondents, an analysis of non-respondent descriptive features was made. The analysis showed that member non-respondents closely matched member respondents in terms of sex and residence. Member respondents were 44% male, 56% female, while non-respondents were 50% each sex. Thirty five per cent of member respondents lived in urban areas; 40 % of non-respondents resided in these areas.

Among agents, respondents were matched with non-respondents on descriptive features of length of residence in and type of community. Thirty five per cent of agent respondents had lived in their community for 5 years or less; 40% of agent non-respondents had done so, all living in different rural Extension districts. Thus, non-respondent agents were somewhat like agent respondents in these characteristics. Conclusions from the study were generalized to the entire population of current advisory council members and Extension agents in Alaska.

Description of Members

Demographic information was requested on the questionnaire. Not all respondents completed each item.

More females responded than males; 56% and 44% respectively. Sixty five per cent of members were between the ages of 31 and 50. However, the mean age of Alaska residents is 26 years (State of Alaska Census, 1980). On current councils, younger residents appear to be under represented when compared with the general population.

Members had widely varied annual income. Over half (80%) reported incomes in categories above \$31,000.00, compared to an \$18,187.00 average per capita income for Alaskans (State of Alaska, Nov, 1986). Although per capita income cannot be directly equated with average personal income, these figures lead to the inference that on current councils, members appear to have much higher income than the general population.

Eighty per cent of council members were Caucasians, 13% were Indian/Alaska Native, with 1% each for Asian or Black members. This ethnic representation on CES councils is relatively comparable to a state population of 80% Caucasian, 16% Indian/Alaska Native, 3.4% Black and 2% Asian (State of Alaska Census, 1980). Table 1 provides a summary of council members in terms of descriptive characteristics.

Extension offices are distributed across the state, with many in small rural communities. Members were fairly evenly

Table 1

Descriptive Information - Members

Characteristics	Number (n=85)	Percentage
Sex		
Male	37	43.52
Female	48	56.47
Age		
Under 20	3	3.53
20-30	3	3.53
31-40	26	30.58
41-50	29	34.12
51-60	7	8.24
Over 60	7	8.24
No answer	10	11.76
Income		
Under 10,000	9	10.59
10,000-20,000	9	10.59
21,000-30,000	10	11.76
31,000-40,000	17	20.00
41,000-50,000	13	15.29
51,000-60,000	4	4.70
61,000 and above	16	18.82
No answer	7	8.25
Ethnic Background		
White	68	80.00
Black	1	1.18
Hispanic	0	0.00
Indian/Alaska Native	11	12.94
Asian	1	1.18
Other	0	0.00
No answer	4	4.70

(table continued)

Table 1 (con't.)

Characteristics	Number (n=85)	Percentage
<hr/>		
Present Residence		
On a farm	10	11.76
In rural area, not farm	13	15.29
Town of less than 2,500	11	12.95
Town of 2,500-9,999	18	21.18
City of 10,000-30,000	13	15.29
City over 30,000	16	18.82
No answer	4	4.71
Length of Residence		
5 years or less	16	18.82
6-10 years	10	11.76
11-15 years	16	18.82
16-20 years	12	14.13
over 20 years	28	32.94
No answer	3	3.53
Lived in Other State		
Yes	64	75.29
No	18	21.18
No answer	3	3.53
Participate Extension Advisory Council in Other State		
Yes	7	10.93
No	56	87.50
No answer	1	1.57

distributed between rural/small town areas and urban centers. Approximately 40% lived in rural areas or very small communities, 36% in urban areas of 10,000 or more population, while 22% were in towns of moderate size. Membership distribution of respondents was representative of the population being studied.

Of those responding, 75.29% of the members had lived in a state outside Alaska at some time. This percentage is consistent with the high Caucasian membership; an ethnic population that generally has moved to Alaska from another part of the country.

Members indicated that only 10.93% had previously been on an Extension advisory council in another state. However, 63.53% had participated in Extension activities prior to coming to Alaska. Therefore, a majority of members were familiar with Extension activities, which may have increased their willingness to serve as a council member.

Volunteer Activities of Members

Members indicated various facets of their involvement in an Extension advisory council. They were also involved in volunteer activities outside Cooperative Extension. Data on volunteer activities are presented in Table 2.

Of those council members responding, 63.53% indicated having served as an advisor to CES for 2 years or less. An additional 36.47% had served as advisors to Extension for 3 years or more. Information about length of appointed terms

Table 2
Volunteer Activities - Members

Activities	Number (n=85)	Percentage
Length participation in council		
Less than 1 year	15	17.65
1 year	11	12.94
2 years	19	22.35
3 years	12	14.12
More than 3 years	19	22.3
No answer	9	10.59
Currently officer		
Yes	20	23.53
No	46	54.1
No answer	19	22.35
If Yes, Positions		
Chairman	15	75.00
Secretary	2	10.00
Treasurer	2	10.00
Other	1	5.00
Member of other community groups		
None	16	18.83
One	15	17.65
Two	13	15.29
Three	17	20.00
Four	10	11.76
Over four	11	12.95
No answer	3	3.52

(table continues)

Table 2 (con't.)

Activities	Number (n=85)	Percentage
Membership in CES group helped involvement in other groups		
None	10	11.76
Very little	7	8.24
Some	25	29.41
Very much	15	17.65
No answer	28	32.94
Time spent on CES business per month		
Less than 2 hours	46	54.12
3-5 hours	20	23.53
6-10 hours	6	7.00
More than 10 hours	8	9.40
No answer	5	5.88
Orientation given		
None	46	54.12
1 hour	17	20.00
2 hours	3	3.53
1/2 day	5	5.88
More than 1/2 day	0	0.00
No answer	14	16.47
Been volunteer before present council duties		
Yes	40	47.06
No	32	43.50
No answer	8	9.41
Participated in Extension prior to Alaska		
Yes	54	63.53
No	24	28.23
No answer	7	8.24

on councils was not available. However, since 58% of members had served two or more years, this may indicate a need for more frequent turnover in membership on advisory councils to allow for broad public representation over time.

Sixteen respondents (18.8%) did not belong to any other community group outside Cooperative Extension, while 13 (15.29%) participated in two other community groups and 38 respondents (44.7%) participated in three or more other community groups. Having members involved in other community groups enhances community relations. However, time available for members to engage in work for Extension may be limited.

When asked about orientation to the advisory process, 46 respondents (54.11%) indicated they had received none. Of these, 26 (57%) had been on a council 2 or more years, while 43% had been a council member 1 year or less.

Seventeen (20%) indicated they received 1 hour orientation to CES advisory councils. Ten of these members had been on a council 2 or more years. Only 8 members (9%) were given 2 or more hours orientation. The literature indicates that orientation is an important introduction to council membership. Lack of orientation may contribute to confusion of new members about council responsibilities. Information on the type of orientation was not requested on the questionnaire. However, two items did ask if handbooks for members were available, and if responsibilities were explained.

Over half the respondents reported spending less than 2 hours per month on Extension business, although 8 (9.41%) indicated spending over 10 hours per month. This may indicate some groups are not meeting frequently, or some members consider CES advisory councils a low priority activity. In addition, little time spent may indicate that councils handle few meaningful tasks. On the other hand, those spend much time may be officers of councils.

Program Areas

Members were asked to indicate which program areas were the responsibility of their advisory group. The largest number of members, 63%, reported dealing with 4-H and youth programs. Other program areas included home economics, agriculture/natural resources, marine/fisheries and community development. Program areas noted under "other" included fair activities, leadership programs and symposiums. Table 3 shows the program areas as reported.

Description of Agents

From the population of 28 agents, 23 (82.14%) usable questionnaires were returned. Of those agents reporting, 13 were female and 10 were male. This was fairly representative of the agent population, which was 14 male and 14 female. Among responding agents 2 (8.6%) were Indian/Alaska Native and 21 (91.3%) were Caucasian. This roughly corresponded to a general population of 80% Caucasian and 16% Native. Table 4 outlines the descriptive information for district Extension agents.

Table 3

Program Areas Represented as Noted by Members

Programs	Number	Percentage
4-H and youth	58	63.00
Ag/natural resources	52	57.00
Home economics	42	46.00
Community development	39	41.00
Marine/fisheries	20	23.00
Other	7	7.00

Table 4

Descriptive Information - Agents

Characteristics	Number (n=23)	Percentage
Sex		
Male	10	43.47
Female	13	56.52
Age		
Under 20	0	0.00
21-30	3	13.04
31-40	7	30.44
41-50	5	21.74
51-60	3	13.04
Over 60	0	0.00
No answer	5	21.74
Income		
Under 30,000	0	0.00
31,000-40,000	4	17.39
41,000-50,000	8	34.78
51,000-60,000	5	21.74
61,000 and above	3	13.04
No answer	3	13.04
Ethnic Background		
White	21	91.30
Black	0	0.00
Hispanic	0	0.00
Indian/Alaska Native	2	8.69

(table continues)

Table 4 (con't.)

Characteristics	Number (n=23)	Percentage
Present Residence		
On a farm	3	13.04
In rural, not farm	1	4.35
Town less than 2500	2	8.69
Town of 2500-9,999	8	34.78
City of 10,000-30,000	3	13.04
City over 30,000	3	13.04
No answer	3	13.04
Length of Residence		
5 years or less	8	34.78
6-10 years	7	30.43
11-15 years	2	8.69
16-20 years	1	4.35
over 20 years	1	4.35
No answer	4	17.39

Perceptions of Councils

All respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions concerning current roles and operational procedures of an Extension district advisory council as well as their perceptions of an ideal advisory group. Perceptions of current roles and operations were recorded as "no", "yes", or "don't know", respectively valued numerically as 1, 2, and 0.

Perceptions about how an advisory council should be if conditions were ideal were recorded on a 6 point scale. Descriptive labels for end points on this scale were 1 "strongly disagree" and 6 "strongly agree". Between these two points numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 indicated varying degrees of perception. Category 7 was labeled "don't know".

The questionnaire contained 47 statements, grouped into 12 categories which were the independent variables of the study. These categories, selected from the literature, were divided into three main groups: council roles, operational procedures which affect councils, and attitudes. Categories under council roles were: (a) setting priorities, goals and objectives; (b) advising on program policy; (c) providing community relations; (d) evaluating Extension programs and plans; (e) conducting needs assessments; (f) planning specific educational programs for agents's plan of work. Categories under procedures were; (g) membership representative of area served; (h) orientation to council

activities; (i) in-service training for councils; (j) meeting procedures; and (k) agency resources available to councils.

The third group was attitudes toward advisory councils. Included in this group were statements concerning the importance of councils in setting program goals and priorities, influence of councils in planning and approving programs, and cooperative efforts of staff and councils. Although necessarily limited in scope for this study, this information gave an indication of how members and agents felt about advisory councils for Extension.

For testing and analysis, variables were labeled as priorities, policies, community relations, evaluation, needs assessment, specific programs, membership, orientation, training, meetings, resources and attitudes. The first 11 categories contained 3 to 5 statements placed together in sets, although not labeled as such. The remaining category, attitudes, included statements numbered 4, 25, 46 and 47 (See appendix G for list of categories and the numbers of those items associated with each category).

Each statement was answered for both current and ideal perceptions. Scores in each category were aggregated for analysis purposes. Means of aggregated scores indicated perceptions respondents had of current and ideal district advisory councils within Alaska Cooperative Extension Service.

For current perceptions, an aggregated mean score ranging from 1-1.49 in each category indicated that, on average, respondents perceived advisory councils did not participate in activities within that category. Mean scores in the range of 1.51-2 indicated respondents perceived advisory councils did participate as described within the category. Mean scores of 1.5 indicated that respondents were evenly divided in their perceptions for that particular category. Unanswered items and those marked as "don't know" were treated as missing scores.

Perceptions of ideal advisory councils were scored on a six point scale, as previously noted, using the same categories. Mean scores in the range of 1-2 indicated, on average, respondents perceived advisory councils should not take actions as noted by the statement. Mean scores in each category near 5-6 indicated respondents perceived advisory councils should follow actions of the statements. Mean scores near the mid-point indicated respondents were equally divided in perceptions of an ideal advisory council. Scores left blank or marked as "don't know" were treated as missing scores for purposes of analysis.

Table 5 presents means and standard deviations within each category of the study for both member's and agent's perceptions of current and ideal advisory councils.

Table 5

Member and Agent Perceptions of Current and Ideal Advisory Councils

Category	Members				Agents			
	Current Mean	SD	Ideal Mean	SD	Current Mean	SD	Ideal Mean	SD
Roles								
Priorities	1.65	.42	4.82	1.09	1.41	.40	4.83	.79
Evaluation	1.66	.31	4.56	.95	1.52	.33	4.47	.55
Needs Assessment	1.69	.37	4.95	1.04	1.63	.29	5.10	.65
Specific Programs	1.58	.38	4.72	1.01	1.46	.29	4.91	.66
Community Relations	1.62	.37	4.73	1.06	1.51	.35	5.08	.76
Policy	1.58	.43	4.47	1.36	1.33	.40	4.06	.95
Procedures								
Orientation	1.45	.35	4.94	1.09	1.41	.52	5.43	.67
Training	1.42	.37	4.76	1.14	1.36	.47	4.83	.94
Membership	1.68	.35	4.61	1.28	1.57	.29	4.48	.90
Meetings	1.73	.33	5.02	1.11	1.72	.34	5.37	.83
Resources	1.54	.36	4.54	1.24	1.48	.32	4.44	.97
Attitudes	1.65	.43	4.38	1.14	1.42	.37	4.25	.86

Current Council Roles - Members

Members were somewhat divided in their perception of current advisory council roles in two categories: specific program planning and policy advisement. Mean scores for these categories were slightly above mid-range, each with a mean score of 1.58. Members also indicated that needs assessment, evaluation, setting priorities and community relations were perceived as roles of current advisory councils (mean scores 1.69, 1.66, 1.65 and 1.62 respectively). Thus, members perceived that current councils were performing in all six roles.

Current Operational Procedures - Members

Mean scores for two categories, orientation and resources available, were 1.45 and 1.54 respectively, close to the mid-point. This indicated perceptions of members differed on whether or not these procedures occurred. Greatest agreement among members (mean score 1.73) indicated they perceived meetings were held according to generally accepted standards, e.g., agendas and minutes were sent before and after meetings, officers were elected to conduct council business.

Current Attitudes - Members

A majority of members had a positive attitude toward current councils, as indicated by a mean score of 1.65. Members indicated that current councils were setting goals and priorities for educational programming, and were

influencing decisions within their Extension district. They also felt councils were involved in a cooperative effort with the local Extension agent.

Current Council Roles - Agents

Most agent mean scores were near the mid-point in three categories: evaluation, specific program plans, and community relations. Some agents perceived councils taking these roles while others did not. Mean scores in these categories were much lower than those of members.

Agents perceived that councils were currently not involved in the roles of setting priorities and policy advisement, with mean scores of 1.41 and 1.33 respectively. These scores were also much lower than those of members.

Current Operational Procedures - Agents

A mean score of 1.72 indicated agents had highest agreement in their perception that meetings were conducted in a businesslike manner. Agents agreed with members that orientation and training were limited for councils, and that resources provided were less than desirable.

Current Attitudes - Agents

Agents' perceived attitudes toward current councils were low (mean 1.42). Many agents may have felt current councils were not functioning, or on the other hand, felt councils were usurping traditional agent roles.

Differences in Perceptions

Wide differences between agents and members in perceptions of operational procedures affecting current councils were noted in several categories. Members felt they were involved in all roles, and were lacking only orientation and training in procedures affecting councils. On the other hand, agents felt that councils did not participate in the roles of policy advisement, setting priorities or planning specific programs. Agents were divided in their view of community relations and evaluation, but mean scores were still lower than those of members.

Agents and members disagreed widely on one role for councils; policy advisement. Members indicated more involvement in policy decisions than agents perceived. Agents were in less agreement about membership being adequate than were members. Agents indicated that resources were less adequate than perceived by members.

Although members and agents agreed that most current councils did not have orientation and training, agents were more negative in their perceptions of lack of training than were members, shown by the low mean score of 1.36 for agents as compared to 1.42 for members. Member scores indicated a more positive attitude toward councils than agents.

Ideal Councils - Members

Members perceived that all categories should be included

in the ideal advisory council, as indicated by mean scores well above 3.51. Members indicated the most agreement on needs assessments (4.95) as a role for councils. Policy making had a mean score of 4.46, indicating the least agreement on this as a role for ideal advisory councils.

Member respondents had one category with a score above 5.00, meetings, (5.02), indicating agreement by most members that statements on the questionnaire adequately described how meetings should be.

All other member scores for procedures of ideal councils ranged from 4.46 to 4.94, indicating these areas were also seen as important. Although attitudes had the lowest mean score of any category, they still scored above the mid-point of 3.5, indicating members generally felt these positions expressed in the four attitude statements were desirable of advisory councils.

Ideal councils - Agents

Agent respondent mean scores in two role and three operational categories of ideal advisory councils were above 5.00: needs assessment, community relations, orientation, training, and meetings. All remaining categories had means of 4.06 or higher, indicating that agents agreed that these were roles and procedures appropriate for ideal councils. Policy making, a role of councils, received the lowest mean score (4.06) for agents.

For half of the categories, mean scores of agents were

higher than those of members. Higher scores do not designate degree of importance for that category, but merely indicate agents were more emphatic in their agreement of perceptions that some categories were a part of ideal councils. Overall, both agents and members perceived all categories to be appropriate roles and/or operational procedures for ideal councils. Both agents and members also indicated positive attitudes toward ideal advisory councils.

Correlations

As stated in Chapter I, research questions 5 and 6 asked about how perceptions both members and agents had of current council roles and procedures related to their perceptions of ideal roles and procedures. In order to answer research questions 5 and 6, two general hypotheses were posed. In the null form, these general hypotheses were:

1. There is no relationship between council members' perceptions of current roles/procedures/attitudes and ideal roles/procedures/attitudes of councils in CES program planning.

2. There is no relationship between Extension agents' perceptions of current roles/procedures/attitudes and ideal roles/procedures/attitudes of councils in CES program planning.

Hypotheses were tested in each of 12 categories using the Pearson correlation coefficient. A two-tailed test was used with the level of significance set at .05.

Overall, with the exception of one category, correlation coefficients for both agents and members were found to be no higher than .455, with most much lower. There were some differences noted between perceptions of members and agents in various categories.

Members' Perceptions

There was little or low correlation between current and ideal scores in all categories for members. Table 6 gives complete review of this data.

When testing hypothesis 1, correlation coefficients in 8 of 12 categories were significant. Thus, for these 8 categories the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant relationship between member perceptions of current and ideal roles in the categories of needs assessment, specific program planning, community relations, setting priorities and policy advisement. There was a significant relationship between member perceptions of current and ideal procedures in the categories of meetings, resources provided and attitudes.

Those members who perceived current councils were involved in these roles/procedures also felt that ideal councils should be involved. In the remaining 4 categories there is not enough evidence to support the hypothesis of a relationship between perceived current roles/procedures and attitudes and ideal roles/procedures and attitudes for Extension advisory councils in Alaska.

Table 6

Correlations Between Perceptions of Current and Ideal Councils

Category	Members			
	df	r	r ²	probability
Roles				
Priorities	73	.207	.043	.038*
Evaluation	69	.178	.032	.068
Needs Assessment	70	.300	.090	.005*
Specific Programs	70	.310	.096	.004*
Community Relations	67	.455	.207	.000*
Policy	67	.338	.115	.002*
Procedures				
Orientation	70	.089	.008	.229
Training	68	-.001	.000	.498
Membership	64	-.048	.002	.352
Meetings	70	.198	.039	.048*
Resources	62	.292	.085	.010*
Attitudes	75	.478	.229	.000*

*significant at .05 level

Agents' Perceptions

Correlation coefficients of agent scores were analyzed to test hypothesis 2. Results are shown in Table 7.

One category, community relations, had a significant negative correlation coefficient. For this category the null hypothesis was rejected. Agents perceived a relationship between current and ideal councils for the role of community relations. In essence, agents generally perceived councils were currently not involved in community relations but indicated ideal councils should have this role.

In all other categories, no relationship was found. Agents perceived current councils were not like their perception of ideal councils.

t Tests

As stated in Chapter 1, research questions 7 and 8 addressed the differences between the perceptions of members and agents for both current councils and ideal councils. In order to answer research questions 7 and 8, hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested for all categories. These general null hypotheses were:

3. Council members and Extension agents will not differ on perceptions concerning the current roles/procedures/attitudes of advisory councils in Alaska CES program planning.

4. Council members and Extension agents will have no different perceptions concerning the ideal

Table 7

Correlations Between Perceptions of Current and Ideal Councils

Agents				
Category	df	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> ²	probability
Roles				
Priorities	18	.083	.007	.363
Evaluation	18	-.152	.023	.261
Needs Assessment	18	-.300	.09	.099
Specific Programs	18	-.311	.097	.091
Community Relations	18	-.411	.168	.036*
Policy	18	-.086	.007	.360
Procedures				
Orientation	19	.076	.006	.372
Training	19	.076	.006	.371
Membership	19	.081	.007	.364
Meetings	19	-.025	.001	.458
Resources	19	.029	.001	.451
Attitudes	20	.042	.002	.360

*significant at .05 alpha level

roles/procedures/attitudes of advisory councils in Alaska CES program planning.

These hypotheses were tested through use of two-tailed t-tests with significance level set at .05. The dependent variable for hypothesis 3 was current perceptions. The dependent variable for hypothesis 4 was ideal perceptions.

Perceptions of Current Councils

Analysis of the data showed that t-values in three of the 12 categories testing perceptions of members against agents for current councils were significant. Data are presented in Table 8.

Null hypothesis 3 was rejected in two role categories; setting priorities and policy advisement. There was a significant difference between perceptions of members and agents concerning current councils in these categories. Members thought these things were happening and agents did not.

There was also a significant difference between perceptions of members and agents concerning attitude. Members had a positive attitude toward current councils while agents did not. In all other categories the difference between the agents' perceptions and members' perceptions of current councils was not large enough to reject the null.

Perceptions of Ideal Roles

Analysis of the data showed that in only one category was a t-value statistically significant when testing scores of

Table 8

t Tests - Members vs. Agents

Current Roles			
Category	df	t value	probability
Roles			
Priorities	84	2.18	.03*
Evaluation	87	1.77	.08
Needs Assesment	86	.61	.55
Specific Programs	87	.33	.19
Community Relations	84	1.03	.31
Policy	80	1.10	.04*
Procedures			
Orientation	84	.41	.67
Training	80	.48	.63
Membership	82	.70	.49
Meetings	84	.14	.89
Resources	81	.65	.52
Attitudes	91	2.45	.02*

*significant at .05 level

member's perceptions against agent's perceptions for ideal advisory councils. The analysis is presented in Table 9.

The category "orientation" had a t-value significant at .05 alpha level for a two-tailed test. Thus, the null hypothesis for research question 8 would be rejected in this category, indicating members and agents had a significant difference in perceptions of ideal councils concerning orientation. Both felt councils should receive orientation, however agents felt more strongly concerning this procedure. For all other categories, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of members and agents concerning ideal roles or operational procedures of advisory councils.

Members-current and agents-ideal

Research question 9 asks "What differences are there between council member perceptions of the current roles, procedures and attitudes of councils and ideal roles, procedures and attitudes as seen by agents?" In order to answer research question 9, general null hypothesis 5 was formulated.

5. There will be a difference between the perceptions of council members regarding current roles/procedures/attitudes and perceptions of Extension agents regarding ideal roles/procedures/attitudes.

This hypothesis was tested by use of a t-test with level of significance set at .05 for a two-tailed test. In order to conduct a valid test between disparate scoring systems,

Table 9

t Tests - Members vs. Agents

Ideal Roles			
Category	df	t value	probability
Roles			
Priorities	100	-.06	.95
Evaluation	104	.46	.65
Needs Assesment	102	-.69	.49
Specific Programs	102	-.86	.39
Community Relations	99	-1.50	.14
Policy	96	1.32	.19
Procedures			
Orientation	100	-2.05	.04*
Training	97	-.26	.80
Membership	98	.54	.59
Meetings	94	-1.42	.16
Resources	95	.38	.71
Attitudes	104	.52	.61

*significant at .05 level

scores for agent ideal perceptions were collapsed to a 2 point scale to match a similar scale for current members. All items for ideal councils with a score of 3 or below were collapsed to number 1. Items with a score of 4 or above were collapsed to number 2. Analysis of this data is shown in Table 10.

In 11 categories there was a significant difference between member perceptions of current roles/procedures and attitudes for councils and agent perceptions for ideal councils. Agents felt that what councils should do does not conform with what members thought councils were doing, i.e., members said "no, we don't do that" but agents said "yes, councils should be doing it."

There was no significant difference between members perceptions of current councils and agent perceptions of ideal councils in the category of membership. In this category, agents and members both felt that current council membership was like their perceptions of an ideal council.

Written Response Review

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked for general comments on Extension advisory councils (See appendix H for complete listing). An analysis of these written comments identified several broad themes.

Orientation

The need for orientation to council participation and an

Table 10

t TestsMembers - Current Roles vs. Agents - Ideal Roles⁺

Category	df	t value	probability
Roles			
Priorities	86	-2.01	.04*
Evaluation	91	-2.90	.00*
Needs Assesment	92	-2.70	.01*
Specific Programs	95	-4.23	.00*
Community Relations	91	-3.70	.00*
Policy	87	-2.25	.03*
Procedures			
Orientation	89	-6.48	.00*
Training	86	-6.58	.00*
Membership	86	-1.88	.06
Meetings	89	-2.79	.01*
Resources	86	-2.24	.03*
Attitudes	95	-2.87	.01*

⁺ Scores for agents-ideal roles were collapsed to a two-point value for this particular test.

* significant at .05 alpha level

explanation of member duties was expressed by several member respondents.

Each new member should have orientation. Given bylaws and guidelines as to what kinds of input to give or receive. Sure would make our meetings more productive if I knew what were supposed to be doing especially when I first started.

I am unclear re: the role of the advisory council at this time.

The council's roles must be carefully defined and explained

When agents are first establishing a council, it would be very helpful if the state had a sample of some sort of guidelines for establishing a workable council.

Membership

Both agent and member respondents stated that representation of all clientele and areas of the district was important, but often seemed impossible to achieve due to costs of travel and distance from meeting site.

It's unfortunate that revenues are declining in order to have more village participation to cover travel and expenses. (agent)

Audio conferencing can offset travel, but there is need to acquaint villagers on the use of such alternatives. (agent)

Advisory Role

Several member respondents expressed a concern that council advice was not listened to or used by staff. Members stated roles were unclear and they felt unsure of their usefulness to the organization.

More attention should be given to the recommendations of the council.

As an advisory council I am not sure that our recommendations are considered BEFORE making decisions. Many times I feel the 'central administration' makes decisions and then informs us. These do not always reflect previous actions and recommendations of the board.

.....for any real direction and purpose (particularly with administrative decisions, planning and direction) the current council has no real authority or say.....CES administration uses the advisory council for things they want, ignores them when the council is contrary.

I would say our council makes important recommendations to agents. Some times these priorities are axed at the state level.

In our case, we must get much more involved in the basic decision making process for the organization and various programs.....

Some agents also indicated a concern for role definition.

The council roles must be carefully defined and explained and then they must be given a chance to do their job. If the CES administration or the staff is not going to use or follow council advice they should not establish them.

Councils must be made to feel that their advice is important to CES and that it will be taken seriously.

Communications

Suggestions were made by some that the talents of members should be more fully utilized. However, communication between agents and council members should be improved, as one member noted "agents have difficulty telling council members what happened to the recommendations made by council" Another stated there should be "more communication between

staff and volunteers of Extension programs" in order to lessen misunderstandings. And another suggested members did not always feel adequately informed about the purpose and directions of the group.

Rewarding Experiences

Respondents were also asked to note any rewarding experiences they had on the advisory council. Comments included these:

Working with the councils has broadened my experience, interest and capabilities with the CES programs.

Meeting with other council members and discussing matters which most concern our community and the surrounding villages.

Helping address problems in the community and realizing results.

...advisory councils are very important as they can bring the need and wants of the communities to the CES agents.

Conversely, one respondent stated that the experience was not very rewarding, but in fact "was very frustrating." However, most member comments about experiences were positive.

Agents also noted rewarding experiences with councils.

Helping other grow in their leadership and group process skills.

Seeing a member really get involved in Extension.

Gaining valuable perspectives on controversial topics.

Improved communications with local community members.

Over all, although members and agents felt current councils to be functioning in some roles and procedures, outcomes of the study indicated that Extension advisory councils currently in place for local districts in Alaska did not fit perceived standards for an ideal advisory council.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

Conclusions drawn from this study, with recommendations for Extension advisory councils in Alaska and further research, are covered in this chapter. The conclusions address the research questions posed for investigation. Based upon research findings, current Alaska advisory councils as perceived by members and agents are shown in relationship to a model council drawn from the literature. A summary concludes the chapter.

Conclusions

This study investigated the perceptions of Extension advisory council members and Extension agents regarding roles and operational procedures for local advisory councils, and attitudes toward these councils. Data were gathered from members and agents on perceptions held of current and ideal councils in order to determine relationships and differences between these perceptions in a number of categories. Conclusions are generalized only to the population of Extension agents and advisory council members in Alaska.

Member perceptions of current councils

1. Current council roles were defined as priority setting, evaluation, needs assessments, specific program

planning, community relations and policy advisement.

Although advisory council members felt they were definitely involved in all six roles, they perceived council advice was not necessarily listened to or acted upon. Council actions were principally on participation level 2 (Kaplan & Tune, 1980), supporting staff decisions and voicing opinions.

Current Alaska councils, as perceived by members, were on the same participation level as many citizen group noted by Kaplan and Tune. Thus, Alaska councils were similar to advisory councils in general concerning participation in educational decision-making, as portrayed in the literature.

2. Orientation of new members was not general practice among many Alaska CES advisory councils, nor was on-going training for all members. The literature (Adams & Morgan, 1976; Boyle, 1965; Trecher, 1970) suggests that orientation is important for councils to operate effectively. Low levels of orientation and training could account for the feelings of inadequacy and poor role definition among Alaska Extension advisory council members. Concept of orientation and methods of procedure for handling this process were not well defined by CES. Since agents would most likely be the staff personnel conducting orientation for council members, a lack of policy statements, materials to use and directions for use could contribute to poor orientation.

3. Members were somewhat unaware of resources allocated

for council use, if any. The literature (Parson, 1982; Kaplan & Tune, 1978-80; LeTarte, 1973) indicates that councils should have both monetary and staff resources provided in order for councils to adequately conduct business. Budgeted funds and other resources for council business evidently had not been outlined by administration. Agents may have felt unsure of state resources available, or the amount of responsibility districts should take in supporting councils with district funds, and therefore could not readily inform councils about them.

5. Council meetings were being conducted in accordance with standard meeting procedures. However, members with low attendance or participation might change this behavior if changes were made in some meeting schedules. Arranging meeting times in order to facilitate members getting to meetings during bad winter weather or to avoid conflicts with other schedules might improve attendance. In addition, members may feel ambivalent about attending meetings when expectations of them are not clearly stated. Foley (1974) and Trecker (1970) indicate that having a written statement of council responsibilities, including meetings, strengthens member commitment to council deliberations.

6. Ethnic representation on councils is comparable with the general population. However, persons below age 30 and above 60 were under-represented, There is a growing

population of senior citizens in Alaska, many of whom are Native elders regarded by their communities as leaders. These citizens should be included as council members where appropriate. Persons in lower income groups were also under-represented. These findings lead to the conclusion that Alaska Extension has made a real effort to involve all ethnic groups in councils, but has paid little attention to other types of population breakdown. Alaska councils in general tend to be of middle age, higher income representation.

7. Attitudes of council members toward current Extension district councils were fairly positive. These attitudes might have been affected by previous knowledge members had of Extension, as 11% had served as council members and 64% participated in Extension programs in other states. Previous positive experiences with Extension may have had a carry-over effect for members working with Alaska groups.

Agent Perceptions of Current Councils

1. Some agent perceptions of current council roles and procedures agreed with those of members. However, there were differences. These differences may be due to agents having previous experience with councils in other states. These agents would tend to have a clearer definition of roles, thus feeling Alaska councils are not doing them. If councils themselves have no specific role definitions, a council may

perceive it is functioning in an area when in fact it is not.

Agents perceptions were almost evenly divided concerning evaluation and community relations. Since, in most cases, each agent was working with an individual council, it is possible that some councils did these things while others did not. This could be further indication that CES had not defined roles or expectations of councils, either to agents or to the council members. Some agents may have had prior experience with advisory councils which guided them in working with the council in these areas. If councils as a whole are to meet certain role expectations, then agents will need training in procedures leading to council involvement.

2. Resources for council use, whether money, supplies or staff time, had not been delineated by CES. This does not meet recommendations of the literature (Parson, 1982; LeTarte, 1973) which indicated that councils should have resources provided in order to adequately conduct business.

Statements by administration indicated that advisory councils are important to Extension, however, resources had not been allocated to support council involvement. It is possible that CES supported the concept of advisory councils, but not to the extent that resources would be specifically allocated for them. If this is so, CES needs to either revise its stand on involvement of advisory councils, or review carefully resource allocations for this purpose. If

resources had been allocated by administration for councils, agents were unaware of them.

3. Not all agents had positive attitudes about councils. It was apparent that Extension agents in Alaska did not agree on the value of district advisory councils nor on their involvement in program planning or other facets of the organization. Without administrative direction for working with councils, or a statement of policy and philosophy concerning councils, many agents may continue to hold negative views which are detrimental to promoting citizen involvement (Greenwood, Breivogel & Jester, 1977).

The literature (Jenkins, 1974; Fried, 1978-1980; Van Antwerp & Sexton, 1980) suggests that staff members in organizations often feel their authority threatened by advisory councils, view councils as more bother than help in agency business, and do not want to deal with them. This may have been the case with Alaska CES agents. It is also possible that agents with little training felt so uneasy about working with councils that their attitudes tended to be negative. These agents could see no real value to council involvement or how the council could provide assistance in district programming.

Member and agent perceptions of ideal councils

1. Members and agents agreed that an ideal advisory council would be involved directly in program planning and

priority setting at the district level, providing policy direction to the Extension staff. Thus, all concerned are in favor of an advisory council setting priorities and determining policy for program direction in districts. This conclusion agrees with many views found in the literature that these roles are appropriate for advisory councils (Cole, 1980; Sanders, 1966; Adams and Morgan, 1976).

2. Members and agents agreed that ideal councils should be involved in needs assessments within districts and also act as a strong community relations arm for Extension. The literature (Cole, 1980; NSPRA, 1973; Hartley, 1980-81) concurs with this perception, indicating that involvement by councils in these areas helps members increase "ownership" of the council. The upper limits of involvement for advisory councils could be set by administration policy.

Agent comments indicate some negative views toward organized councils now in place. Lack of specific role definition for councils and the need to involve councils more is noted. Training of agents specifically in working with councils could lead to increased positive feelings, and a willingness to help councils develop that sense of "ownership."

3. Ideal councils would include orientation and training for new and continuing members in order for the council to be a fully functioning body. Agents also would receive

in-service training, perhaps yearly, to enhance their skills for working with councils.

5. An ideal council would feel their advice was listened to, acted upon and would receive appropriate feedback from staff. Comments from members indicated that knowing advice was used increased their sense of usefulness and being part of the organization. Both members and agents agreed that ideal councils would be actively involved in planning and evaluating Extension district programming. This involvement would most adequately take place as shared decision making, a level 3 participatory action.

Member perceptions of relationships between current and ideal councils

In 8 categories members felt current councils were functioning or that operational procedures which affected their councils were adequate and that current councils were similar to ideal councils in these areas. Members felt 4 categories, orientation, training, membership selection and evaluation, were part of an ideal council, but were not being done in current councils. In order for current councils to be similar to the ideal in all categories, these 4 areas would need improvement.

Agent perceptions of relationships between current and ideal councils

Agents felt that current councils were like the ideal in

only one category, community relations. However, divided opinion even in this category may indicate that those agents who perceived councils as not having a role in community relations think they should, while those who perceived it was being done felt councils should not be involved in this role.

Again it is possible to conclude that council roles have not been well defined for agents nor for CES as a whole. The division of perceptions may be also be an indication of the necessity of training agents in the relationship of councils to CES and the community, and defining roles expected of councils on the district level.

Differences between member and agent perceptions regarding current councils

Agents and members did not agree on the role of current councils in the categories of setting priorities and policy advisement. Members felt that councils were functioning in these roles, while agents had the opposite view. This difference may be due to lack of clear definition of roles for council involvement in setting priorities and policy. As noted previously, orientation and training with some emphasis on council roles and responsibilities would clearly outline agency expectations for councils.

Differences between perceptions of members and agents regarding ideal councils

The one difference in perceptions of ideal councils was in the category of orientation. Both groups indicated

orientation should be a part of ideal councils, but agents felt much stronger about this than did members. It could be concluded that agents were more aware of the need for council members to receive orientation when first becoming part of the group. Agents also might feel they have a clearer idea of what orientation should consist of than members would, and thus would express the need for such action more emphatically.

Differences between perceptions of current councils by members and ideal councils by agents

Differences were noted between perceptions of current councils by members and ideal councils as seen by agents in 11 categories. Members may have felt current councils were functioning in these roles and procedures, but not up to the ideal perceived by agents. Thus, even regularly operating councils needed to make changes in order to raise their functioning level to match that perceived by agents as ideal.

Summary of conclusions

Overall, it can be concluded that lack of orientation and training is affecting the operation of current district Extension advisory councils in Alaska. Both members and agents indicated a need for orientation and training. The literature also recommends that members receive orientation before beginning service (Boyle, 1965; Adams & Morgan, 1976), and training during membership on the council (Cole, 1980, Parson, 1982). Although not noted specifically in the study,

training for agents prior to their proceeding with orientation for local councils is imperative.

Lack of resource allocation for council use is also impeding council actions and development. Although Alaska CES administration has stated councils are important, reticence in providing resources for council tends to negate this statement. An additional drawback to council involvement in district program planning is negative attitudes by agents, although adequate training and staff development concerning advisory councils may change agent feelings.

An ideal council would have a clear definition of its roles and responsibilities within the agency, which Alaska district councils do not have. Agents and members alike would know what is expected of advisory councils, what is the role of agents, what level of participation is expected from councils in decision-making, and how best to further the mission of CES through the continued involvement of advisory councils.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, recommendations have been formulated for advisory councils in Alaska and for further research. These recommendations are based on the literature and on what was learned from analysis of data collected for this study.

Alaska council recommendations

1. Central CES administration must develop and publish a

policy statement regarding advisory councils and their roles. Agents and council members need to be made well aware of this policy. This statement should, in general terms, define roles for councils and determine the maximum level of participation expected in council decision-making, particularly in matters of direct program planning.

2. Orientation of new council members must be a regular part of council procedures. An orientation package should be produced for use state-wide by agents and existing council members. Any orientation needs to include clarification of roles and responsibilities for councils to lessen ambiguity concerning tasks of councils.

3. Training of council members to improve council effectiveness must become an on-going process within councils. A training package should be developed to compliment and follow orientation, and help councils grow into effective groups for CES program planning. If training of councils is to be done by agents in the various districts, then agents will also need special training for this task.

4. Resources must be made available to advisory councils for use in conducting their business. Administration needs to clearly outline its position on resource allocation, and from which budgets council resources are to be drawn. Directives from administration should indicate that expectations are for an amount of staff time to be allotted for supporting advisory council involvement, and that staff

will be evaluated annually in this aspect.

5. Staff needs to improve communication with councils, particularly in providing feedback on advice given. Councils want to know how their advice is used and what actions were taken or not, and why. Staff should make sure councils feel they are listened to as an important part of Extension program planning.

6. Membership balance on councils should be sought to better represent clientele served in various age and income groups. More youth and young adults, and senior citizens, must be involved in advising on programming for their age groups. Persons from lower income groups should be included when appropriate to that area of population served.

7. Although meetings were considered adequate by both agents and members, regular review by councils of procedures for business meetings and council bylaws would contribute to continued effective meetings. Individual councils without bylaws for conducting business must develop and adopt such a document.

Recommendations for further research

A review of the literature prior to this study indicated a limited amount of research concerning the influence of advisory councils in determining educational programs for adult education and for Cooperative Extension Service. Additional research could add to the literature concerning how advisory councils generally function, their levels of

participation in decision-making at various stages of development, and which operational procedures affect councils most positively and negatively.

Data gathered in this study indicates that agents had mixed attitudes about advisory councils for Extension districts. Further research into why agents had positive or negative attitudes is warranted, along with investigation of how past experiences with councils contributed to these perceptions. Research might also be conducted to determine how attitudes of agents, and also administration, affect council functioning by setting the tone for that district's advisory council.

Orientation and training of councils has been recommended. If these processes were introduced and used for at least a year, further research should be conducted to determine if members and agents feel orientation and training has changed Alaska CES advisory councils' involvement in program planning. This research could also reveal if orientation and training had facilitated advisory councils in moving higher on the level of participation scale than level 1 or 2, as outlined in Chapter 2.

For optimum shared decision-making, councils should be participating mainly on level 3, with agents and councils taking joint responsibility for program planning. However, it is possible that within various roles and operational procedures, councils would participate on different levels

depending on that particular function. An example is membership selection. Initially the council would select membership on level 1, with the agent making the selection decision. After training and functioning as a council for a time, the group could eventually proceed to handle membership selection on level 5, with the council making the total decision. However, this same council may find that program planning decisions are best handled at level 2, 3 or 4 depending on the case at hand. Further investigation and research into which roles and procedures are most likely to be functioning at which participation level would add to the literature concerning advisory councils and could also indicate training for members and agents leading to more effective council functioning.

Further research is recommended into council effectiveness in supporting CES throughout their communities. This would be principally a market research study, including data on community attitudes toward Extension, how well known Extension is within a community, support given Extension by the community and perceptions of benefits Extension offers to the public. This research information could benefit Alaska Extension in promoting better community relations within each district, and add to the literature concerning how Extension relates to their varied publics.

Model of Councils

Research questions 10 and 11 addressed the differences between perceptions of current councils by both members and agents and recommendations for ideal councils. These recommendations had been molded into a suggested model, as outlined in chapter 2. This model encompassed three areas for effective councils. The area of roles included (a) setting goals, priorities and objectives, (b) advising on program policy and guidelines, (c) open relationships with the community, (d) evaluating program and plans, (e) conducting needs assessments and, (f) planning specific educational programs or tasks.

Procedures enhancing council roles are (a) orientation, (b) in-service training, (c) member selection, (d) agenda and meetings, (e) resource commitment. The third area of interest is attitude toward councils.

The present model of Alaska Extension advisory councils, as determined by this study, does not match that suggested by the literature. Council members and agents responding to the survey were in agreement that their perceptions of current Extension advisory councils were not the same as that suggested in the literature. However, both member and agent perceptions of an ideal council matched that suggested by the literature in all categories. Therefore, Alaska Extension should take the steps necessary for current councils to

assist councils in moving nearer the perceived ideal. These steps are suggested: (a) councils should become more involved in setting program policy, determining goals and priorities and planning specific programs, (b) procedures should be implemented to enhance this involvement, including an increase of resources available for councils, additional orientation/training programs for members, and (c) agents should be encouraged to embrace a more positive attitude concerning CES advisory councils.

Participation Levels

As outlined in chapter 2, councils can also be evaluated on levels of participation (Kaplan and Tune, 1980). Analysis of the data indicates that Extension advisory councils in Alaska currently operate most often on levels 1 and 2, being supportive of staff decisions and voicing opinions, concerns and ideas but having little impact on final decisions. Study results indicate decisions in some programs are taking place on level 3, where decisions are shared between council and staff on certain issues which may include setting priorities, evaluation and budget considerations.

Level 4 and 5 are those of shared power, with council having more and/or ultimate authority for primary decision making. These may be reached in very specific cases, such as established councils deciding on appointment of new members or setting guidelines on a specific program within the

district. However, this study did not reveal these levels to be a consistent practice among current councils. Perceptions of both agents and members concerning ideal councils placed effective advisory processes on level 3 and above, a goal toward which Alaska CES advisory councils should be striving.

Summary

This study was undertaken within the state of Alaska to determine the differences between current and ideal Extension advisory councils as perceived by council members and Extension agents of the Cooperative Extension Service. Responses to a written questionnaire were compared to determine differences in perceptions between the groups. Conclusions were generalized only to the population of Alaska Extension agents and Extension advisory council members.

Advisory council members revealed a need for clarification of roles and authority of current councils. Advisory councils were perceived as being primarily for giving advice which may or may have been acted upon by staff. Orientation and training of councils was limited, as were resources allocated for council use.

Current membership was fairly representative of the general ethnic population, however greater representation of Blacks, Asians and Indians/Alaska Natives was indicated. Council membership also needs to include more members in the age groups under 30 years and over 60, and those from lower

income audiences. Both agents and members felt meetings were conducted according to general standards.

Agents indicated a division of opinion in attitudes about Extension advisory councils. Less than half the group had positive attitudes, while others indicated councils were not necessary. Both agents and members perceived ideal councils encompassing all the categories covered in the study.

Members felt that current councils were different from ideal councils only in the areas of orientation and training. However, agents found differences between current and ideal councils in several categories; priority setting, policy advisement, specific program planning, resources available, orientation, training and attitudes toward councils.

Council members and agents differed in their view of current councils. However, their perceptions of the ideal council differed only in the category of orientation.

Recommendations for Alaska Extension advisory councils included providing orientation and training for members, making resources available for council use, and improvement of communication between staff and councils themselves.

When matched against a model council drawn from the literature, current Alaska Extension advisory councils fell short. Alaska CES councils were seen as functioning, but not as closely to the ideal as perceived by members and agents or suggested in the literature. An improvement in council/staff

shared decision making in all roles and operational procedures, as well as shared power for decisions, would lead to more positive attitudes by all involved and to increased involvement in program planning by advisory councils.

This study pointed out the perceptions advisory council members and Extension agents in Alaska have of the roles and operational procedures of an ideal advisory council, as well as attitudes toward ideal councils. It also revealed perceptions members and agents had of current Extension advisory councils and attitudes toward them. The researcher hopes that findings of this study will help local district advisory councils for Cooperative Extension Service in Alaska move more readily toward the ideal council model.

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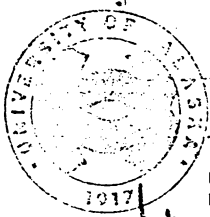
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Memo from Alaska CES Director



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
FAIRBANKS ALASKA 99701

October 27, 1978

TO: All CES District Coordinators

Several districts have reflected that serious planning is underway to develop and/or broaden Advisory Council processes. Several broad general guidelines need to be considered as planning and action proceeds.

- 1) It is very important that membership be broadly representative of populations being served. In addressing this principle, it is particularly useful to consider many criteria, including age group, ethnic background and linkages, geographic location, leadership visibility, and credibility.
- 2) It is important to consider informal leadership patterns. Persons occupying formal leadership roles very often are only spokesmen for more substantive leadership strengths existing in the clientele group.
- 3) It is important to establish a modest set of by-laws that define the roles of Advisory Councils as they contribute to priority setting and program directions. The basic function of Councils is advisory, but in the process, two-way flow of information and education is an important ingredient in building an effective advisory process.

A systematic means of establishing and maintaining membership is also important. Terms of membership should be staggered to provide continuity. Length of membership as a three-four year term is important in building understanding and perspectives. It is usually a good idea to limit membership to a stated length such as two successive terms.

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District Coordinators
October 27, 1978

- 4) It is important that Advisory Councils focus on broad general program priority setting in developing adequate resources, rather than becoming identified on a continuing basis with special interest issues. In this respect, it is important to identify persons who have broad perspectives and are willing to express views in Council interaction. It is also important for Extension staff to be open and willing to explore seriously previously unperceived areas of programming concerns.
- 5) It is important to view the development of the advisory process as an educational process. In addressing this guideline, it is very useful to plan systematic educational experiences for council members that help them to understand their role and provide a broader understanding of Extension missions as well as resources and potential for redirecting efforts. Council members will need to feel actively involved. This need challenges all Extension staff to facilitate opportunities for interaction. This guideline also suggests that design of the educational setting should receive careful and continuing attention.
- 6) It is important to establish a regular flow of information to advisory members specific to their roles in the process. This process is particularly challenging when members may be scattered across broad areas, such as is the case in most Alaska Extension districts. It reflects the need for a long-term view and continuing attention to informational needs of council members.
- 7) Finally, careful attention should be directed to assessing what barriers might exist for potential advisory member participants. One important consideration is that of time and expenses involved in travel. We have some ability to provide assistance this year as part of the University's long-range planning process. This ability will not extend into FY'80. Consequently, considerable flexibility is important in developing an advisory process that is realistic in different district settings across Alaska.

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District Coordinators
October 27, 1978

Best wishes for success as you address a broad educational challenge, but one that appears to have substantial implications in building broader and more effective Extension educational programs.

Several articles you may find useful relate to this process. These are noted below.*

Sincerely,

Director

JWM:at

- *Articles:
- 1) "Helping Committee Members Become More Effective," - Journal of Extension, January/February 1976
 - 2) "Toward Better Program Development," - Journal of Extension, November/December 1977
 - 3) "The People Have Power," - Journal of Extension, March/April 1978
 - 4) "Philosophy of Leadership Development," (pp. 101-112), Heritage Horizons - Extension's Commitment to People - 1976 Bicentennial Special Edition, Journal of Extension.

cc: Program Leaders

Appendix B

Cover Letter - Members

Dear _____ :

The Alaska Cooperative Extension Service advocates citizen involvement through advisory councils for planning of educational programs. However, we have only a sketchy idea of the impact advisory councils are making on local Extension programming.

During the past few years you have been a part of the advisory process as a member of a district council or program planning group. We are requesting a few minutes of your time in filling out the enclosed survey to let us know how you feel about advisory councils and their work in your district.

Answers to all questions will be kept confidential, and will not be used for other than statistical purposes. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so we may check your name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will never be placed on the questionnaire. Also, the information you provide will not be published in such a way as to identify you personally.

We really appreciate your assistance and hope to hear from you soon. Please use the enclosed stamped envelope to return the completed questionnaire.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Patricia Barker
Survey Director

Cover Letter - Agents

Dear :

The Alaska Cooperative Extension Service advocates citizen involvement through advisory councils for planning of educational programs. However, we have only a sketchy idea of the impact advisory councils are making on local Extension programming.

During the past few years you may have participated in the advisory process as an Extension agent working with a district council or program planning group. We are requesting a few minutes of your time in filling out the enclosed survey to let us know how you feel about advisory councils and their work in your district.

Answers to all questions will be kept confidential, and will not be used for other than statistical purposes. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so we may check your name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will never be placed on the questionnaire. Also, the information you provide will not be published in such a way as to identify you personally.

We really appreciate your assistance and hope to hear from you soon. Please use the enclosed stamped envelope to return the completed questionnaire.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Patricia Barker
Advisory Council
Survey Director

Appendix C

Questionnaire**PLANNING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
THROUGH ADVISORY COUNCILS**

The Alaska Cooperative Extension Service advocates citizen involvement through advisory councils. Actions of all persons involved in educational program planning for Extension districts affects those plans.

We need your help in determining how local advisory councils are utilized in Extension program planning, and what areas affect their effectiveness.

Please answer all of the questions or statements. There is room on the last page for your comments and ideas. Be assured that this information will be confidential, and will not be used for other than statistical purposes.

Thank you for your generous assistance.

Sincerely,

Patricia Barker
Survey Director



PLANNING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Actions of all persons involved in educational program planning for Extension districts affects those plans. Statements on the next few pages cover some areas in which advisory councils are currently involved.

READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY. In terms of your perception of the situation at the present time (CURRENT or what is), circle the number on the left-hand side of each statement to register your response. **READ THE ITEM AGAIN.** Circle a number on the continuum on the right hand side of each statement to register your response in terms of what you what you think ought to be (IDEAL).

<u>CURRENT</u>			<u>IDEAL</u>								
No	Yes	Don't know	DISAGREE <-----> AGREE								
1	2	0	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	strongly agree	don't know
1	2	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	7	
1	2	0	1. The advisory council establishes Extension educational goals and objectives for the district.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	2	0	2. Priorities for district educational programs are set by the advisory council on a yearly basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	2	0	3. The advisory council recommends specific educational programs to be presented in the district.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	2	0	4. Setting goals and priorities for educational programming is an important task for advisory councils.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	2	0	5. The advisory council identifies potential solutions to programming problems that emerge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	2	0	6. Evaluation of district extension programs is conducted jointly by council and agents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

No	Yes	Don't know		Disagree<----->	----->Agree
1	2	0	7.	Evaluation of current or completed programs is an important part of the advisory council role.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	8.	Evaluation of programs is conducted by the agent alone with a final report to the advisory council.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	9.	The advisory council serves as a sounding board for new programs or program ideas.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	10.	Extension educational programs are determined from input through community needs assessments.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	11.	The advisory council analyzes data from needs assessments and determines problems to be addressed.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	12.	Advisory council members assist with needs assessments or surveys within the district.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	13.	The council provides feedback to Extension about the effectiveness of programs presented.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	14.	Written program plans are made by the agent after direction from the advisory council.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	15.	The advisory council reviews all district program plans on a yearly basis.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1	2	0	16.	Programs are planned to meet the varied needs of people in all parts of the district.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No Yes Don't Know			Disagree<----->Agree							
1	2	0	17. Changes in the agent's plan-or-work are recommended by the advisory council.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	18. The advisory council acts as liason with the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	19. Advisory councils improve public relations between community and district Extension office.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	20. Advisory council members officially represent Extension to the public.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	21. The advisory council assists in securing financial support from sources outside Extension.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	22. The advisory council recommends program policy and guidelines for the district.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	23. Budget recommendations for district activities and programs are made by the advisory council.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	24. Council bylaws state policy and guidelines set through advisory council input.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	25. Advisory councils have a great deal of influence on district program decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	26. New members of the council receive orientation before their first council meeting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	27. Handbooks about the local council and its operation are available for each council member.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

No	Yes	Don't Know		Disagree						Agree
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	28. The duties and responsibilities of council members are clearly explained to new members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	29. Council members know how often they will be meeting when they first take the position.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	30. Council members participate in on-going training throughout the year.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	31. Council bylaws are periodically reviewed for operating guidelines and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	32. Training during meetings improves skills of council members for program planning tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	33. Policies and philosophy of Cooperative Extension are reviewed for all members from time to time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	34. The advisory council has representatives from all geographic areas of the district.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	35. Council members are selected and appointed as a joint action of council and agent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	36. Members serve the council on a rotating basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	37. Membership on the council is determined by the Extension agent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	38. The agenda and backup materials are sent to each member before the meeting starts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

No	Yes	Don't Know		Disagree						Agree
1	2	0	39. Agendas for council meetings are prepared by the council chairman jointly with an Extension agent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	40. Members receive copies of minutes following meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	41. The advisory council elects officers who conduct council business.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	42. Funding is provided to cover travel/meals for council meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	43. Secretarial help is provided for council meetings for taking minutes, keeping records, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	44. A desk or other space is provided in the Extension office for council members to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	44. The council president confers with Extension agents frequently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	45. Extension programs are conducted only with approval by the advisory council.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	0	46. Program planning is a cooperative effort of agent and advisory council.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

COUNCIL EXPERIENCES

We are interested in knowing the kinds of experiences you have had with advisory councils.

CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST ANSWERS EACH QUESTION

1. How long have you participated in an Extension advisory council (program planning group)?

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 LESS THAN 1 YEAR | 4 3 YEARS |
| 2 1 YEAR | 5 MORE THAN 3 YEARS |
| 3 2 YEARS | 6 DOES NOT APPLY |

2. Are you currently an officer of the council (or group)?

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 YES _____ | |
| 2 NO | |
| 3 DOES NOT APPLY | |

3. (If YES), which position(s) do you hold?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 CHAIRMAN | |
| 2 SECRETARY | |
| 3 TREASURER | |
| 4 OTHER (describe) _____ | |

4. How many other community groups have you been a member of within the last year?

- | | |
|--------|------------------|
| 1 NONE | 4 THREE |
| 2 ONE | 5 FOUR |
| 3 TWO | 6 OVER FOUR |
| | 7 DOES NOT APPLY |

5. Has CES council membership helped you to participate more fully in other groups to which you belong?

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1 NONE | 4 VERY MUCH |
| 2 VERY LITTLE | 5 DOES NOT APPLY |
| 3 SOME | |

6. How much time do you spend on Extension business each month?

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 LESS THAN 2 HOURS | 3 6-10 HOURS |
| 2 3-5 HOURS | 4 MORE THAN 10 HOURS |

7. Indicate orientation you had after being appointed to the advisory council.

- | | | | |
|---|---------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | NONE | 4 | 1/2 DAY |
| 2 | 1 HOUR | 5 | MORE THAN 1/2 DAY |
| 3 | 2 HOURS | 6 | DOES NOT APPLY |

8. Had you been an Extension volunteer in any capacity before serving on the CES advisory council (program planning group)?

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|----------------|
| 1 | YES | 3 | DOES NOT APPLY |
| 2 | NO | | |

9. Had you participated in Extension programs prior to serving on the advisory council?

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|----------------|
| 1 | YES | 3 | DOES NOT APPLY |
| 2 | NO | | |

10. Your council works with these program areas: (circle all that apply)

- 1 AGRICULTURE/NATURAL RESOURCES
- 2 HOME ECONOMICS
- 3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- 4 MARINE/FISHERIES
- 5 4-H AND YOUTH
- 6 OTHER (describe) _____

11. Have you lived in a state other than Alaska?

- | | | |
|---|-----|-------|
| 1 | YES | _____ |
| 2 | NO | |

12. (If YES), did you participate in any way with an Extension Advisory council?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1 | YES |
| 2 | NO |

OTHER INFORMATION

Please tell us a little about yourself. Circle the number next to the answer that best applies.

13. Where do you presently live?

- 1 ON A FARM
- 2 IN A RURAL AREA, NOT ON A FARM
- 3 IN A TOWN OR VILLAGE OF LESS THAN 2,500
- 4 IN A TOWN OF 2,500 to 9,999
- 5 IN A CITY OF 10,000 to 30,000
- 6 IN A CITY OVER 30,000

14. Your sex?

- 1 MALE
- 2 FEMALE

15. How long have you lived
in your community?

- 1 5 YEARS OR LESS
- 2 6-10 YEARS
- 3 11-15 YEARS
- 4 16-20 YEARS
- 5 OVER 20 YEARS

16. What is your age?

- 1 UNDER 20
- 2 20-30
- 3 31-40
- 4 41-50
- 5 51-60
- 6 OVER 60

17. What is your yearly income range?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 UNDER \$10,000 | 5 \$41,000 - \$50,000 |
| 2 \$10,000 - \$20,000 | 6 \$51,000 - \$60,000 |
| 3 \$21,000 - 30,000 | 7 \$61,000 AND ABOVE |
| 4 \$31,000 - \$40,000 | |

18. What is your cultural background?

- 1 WHITE
- 2 BLACK
- 3 HISPANIC
- 4 AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE
- 5 ASIAN
- 6 OTHER

What has been your most rewarding experience while participating in the advisory council process?

If you have comments or concerns about district advisory councils for Cooperative Extension, please feel free to express your ideas below.

Appendix D

Postcard Followup

Last week a questionnaire asking your opinion about Extension advisory councils was mailed to you.

Thank you very much if you have already completed and returned it. If not, please take a few minutes to do so today. Because of the limited number of councils in our state it is extremely important that your ideas be included in the study to give us an accurate view of council activities.

If for some unknown reason you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please call me right away, collect _____ and I will get another in the mail to you.

Sincerely,

Pat Barker
Survey Director

Appendix E

Followup Letter No. 1

Bethel, AK 99559
June 15, 1986

Mrs. Grace Stranger

Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Mrs. Stranger:

About four weeks ago I sent you a survey asking for your opinion about local Extension advisory councils. As yet we have not received your completed questionnaire.

I am writing to you again because each questionnaire is important in this study. Since you participate in an advisory group concerned with planning of educational programs for Cooperative Extension on the local level, we do need your input.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed. Please return it quickly.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Patricia Barker
Survey Director

Appendix F

Follow-up Letter No. 2

Bethel, AK 99559
June 30, 1986

Mr. John Sourdough

Anchorage, AK 99517

Dear Mr. Sourdough:

I am writing to you about our study of advisory councils and planning groups serving Cooperative Extension in Alaska.

The large number of questionnaires returned is very encouraging. But, whether we will be able to describe accurately how members feel about advisory councils depends upon you and the others who have not yet responded. This is because past experiences suggest that those of you who have not yet sent in your questionnaire may hold quite different ideas about council than those who have.

This is the first statewide study of this type that has ever been done in Extension. Therefore, the results are of particular importance to Extension agents, program planners and administrators now considering how to best meet the needs of council members like yourself.

It is for this reason that I am sending this by certified mail to insure delivery. In case our other correspondence did not reach you, a replacement questionnaire is enclosed. May I urge you to complete and return it as quickly as possible.

Your contribution to the success of this study will be appreciated greatly.

Most sincerely,

Patricia L Barker
Survey Director

Appendix G

Categories on Questionnaire

Item Number	Category Title
1-3	priorities
5-8	evaluation
9-13	needs assessment
14-17	specific program plans
18-21	community relations
22-24	policy advisement
26-29	orientation
30-33	training
34-37	membership
38-41	meetings
42-45	resources available
4, 25, 46, 47	attitudes

APPENDIX H

Statements from Members*
(in no particular order)

Rewarding experiences --

Learning more about the Extension Service and making recommendations on types of services provided by the Extension Service in this region.

Hearing the plans and events planned by the agent for 4-H clubs.

Contact with community educators.

Getting a community college and a Extension home economist.

Meeting new people and seeing how the advisory process works.

1. Decision making process - team effort. 2. Variety of activities the Coop. Ext Office is involved in. 3. Sense of humor.

Meeting other Alaskans. Getting a better understanding of CES programs.

Working with and meeting other adults interested in 4-H and their children's future.

Getting changes made in the programs offered to farmers locally.

Working with the Cooperative Extension (local) agent, and promoting/encouraging an interest in all ages for gardening, beautification of our city.

Being able to meet with other area representatives, and sharing ideas to improve community services for our people is the most beneficial experience I got from the local advisory council.

PR workshop presented to CES staff.

* Note: Some statements have been paraphrased in order to control confidentiality.

When people ask me to contact Extension services on what they want in their villages.

Support and consultation in establishing community gardens.

Developing self confidence in myself and others.
Improving communications skills. Learning how to plan and implement a training program.

A feeling like we have had impact into helping the agents meet community needs.

We have a new council president and it is rewarding to hear her ideas for improving the council's effectiveness and then helping carry the ideas to the finish. We will be able to evaluate this year because we have clarified some of our goals.

Development of ACT and funding for it to happen and be repeated yearly.

Helping to insure adequate staff positions for our area.

The give and take with those who attend demonstrations, workshops, etc.

Seeing more and more students enroll in classes and seeing increased usage of natural resources.

Assisting with gardening education program.

The most rewarding has been seeing such programs as the 3-Wheelers have an impact on people's lives. To see what works in other districts and share that at home.

Can't say. They meet during the day so I can't attend. Most farmers have 2 jobs to make it in farming so the meetings should be in the evening.

A better understanding of Extension.

Probably what I enjoy seeing the most is teens and young people maturing and accepting more adult responsibility and participating alongside adults, helping younger children.

To be able to look at the problems and meet the challenges to help CES be a better program for everyone involved.

To watch an awakening awareness of the broad range of subject offered by the Extension in my particular community.

The people who saw me during gardening course I helped teach, remember I was there and ask me questions about gardening even a year later.

1. Participating in on-going training for the youth.
2. Educating the community about CES. 3. To have input in planning new programs for the community.

Becoming involved with the pulse of CES.

Over-all knowledge of 4-H educational program and how it can affect area. Chance to help line up some projects and plan fairs.

I do not believe my experience has been rewarding - it's been very frustrating.

Helping address problems in the community and realizing results.

We were served fresh donuts and coffee at last meeting. They were good donuts and they were free.

Working with dedicated people.

Working with the councils has broadened my experience, interest and capabilities with the CES programs.

Being able to teach to community, and being able to participate as a student in Master Gardener classes.

Helping 4-H.

I enjoy very much working with people and I grew up in the 4-H program in Anchorage and it has done a lot for me.

Meeting with other council members and discussing matters which mostly concern our community and the surrounding villages.

Watching the council grow as it attempts to learn more about what it should be doing.

General comments or concerns

I feel that advisory committees provide some direction to the Cooperative Extension Service in this region, as long as CES can afford to have them (time, funding, etc.)

Community education committee is the major council for Coop. Ext. Service input. It needs a separate group to carry out your program planning functions. The agent is in need of direction, but is improving the number of groups involved with 4-H. Motivation is good.

I feel our Coop Extension Council really is not a very functional group, and I'm not sure it needs to be. We have very fine agents who assist people on an as-needed basis. We've been really pleased with the programs they have presented, and they work closely with the groups which step forward for assistance. I'm sure if I had a concern I could go and talk with our agent and it would be well taken care of. He is really doing an excellent job.

Council is a good deal for future Alaskans.

1. Orientation/expectations 2. Look at 2 yr. committments if a requirement doesn't already exist to give continuity.

Each new member should have orientation. Given bylaws and guidelines as to what kinds of input to give or receive. Sure would make our meetings more productive if I knew what we were supposed to be doing especially when I first started. Current chairperson seems to know what direction to go, plus Alaska delegate gives us input when he returns from statewide meetings.

I am unclear re: the role of the advisory council at this time. Due to personal workload I have not attended meetings lately, although I do continue to receive information from the Coop. Extension. I am not sure if the board is still in existence.

Wish 4-H materials were more widely used by public schools in their educational program - there is such good material available.

My district does not have a formal, organized advisory council as considered here. Informal advisory groups from several activity interests meet as needed. If may be difficult to find suitable persons willing to contribute the amount of time required for the formal advisory council to function as suggested by the ideal view.

We have no status or power as far as I know. The extension council is only to allow the extension agent to avoid learning about gardening in our area. But it doesn't stop the agent from talking lots about work in another state and how it's better than here.

When an agent(s) are first establishing a council, it would be very helpful if the state had a sample of some sort of guidelines for establishing a workable council. Am afraid too often one is established for the records only.

I feel Extension agents and employees who deal with farm problems, should periodically visit these farms, even if people are not involved presently with Extension. Some additional questions and concerns might be surfaced with these visitations.

Need more members from villages.

Comment about survey - I haven't been involved much in CES this year because I've been busy with other volunteer projects, so my input in this survey is necessarily limited - that's why I'd been avoiding repoding, but you are very determined to have this back, so here it is.

Additional reason for lack of involvement is location of meetings - in town at night - I greatly dislike driving into town at night - particularly during cold and icy or dark and wet conditions.

The primary purpose of the area advisory council to the extension service seems to be to sign letters drafted by University personnel supporting continued funding of their ag bureacracy. The response of the University, particularly certain personnel, to the concerns expressed by the farmers at these meetings has been quite disappointing. They seem to attribute all shortcomings of the University to budgetary constraints. However, I feel the failure of the extension service and the University to address the needs of farmers in this area is due to reluctance on the part of some personnel to prioritize the University's efforts. The University seems preoccupied in the pursuit of abstract scientific trivia for publication in scientific journals and travel and presentation at international symposiums in exotic places. Yet these individuals fail to recognize the need to print a listing of currently available publications, to publish research progress reports, to reprint publications when needed, etc. There remains very little dissemination of University results to the user group....farmers. The result

has been a growing lack of interest in participation on the council, a growing lack of political involvement and support, and hopefully this bureacracy will have its funding out further.

This area advisory council has no chairman to my knowlege, fails to address issues listed on agendas, does not reflect a well balanced crosssection of the farm community but rather is dominated by local vegetable and potato farmers. This domination of the council is to such an extent that scheduled meetings are canceled and rescheduled at their request. Since participation in the advisory council is by invitation only and public notice is not given of these meetings (as required by Alaska Open meetings act) it is doubtful that the actions of this council would ever reflect the true attitude of the farm community toward the University. Rather the council will only be used by the bureacracy as a political pawn to show "grass roots support" and be involved in those political activities the bureacracy is not permitted to do itself.

We need to be more involved with the different area school districts to have more input in their educational policy making boards. The local area high schools are not working out well - a lot of the graduates come out not having the skills to provide for themselves, and often are not ready to enter the college or vocational level schools (institutions). They spent too much time on extra curricular activities, and not enough time on necessary basic elementary skills.

I feel the council should take a stronger role with CES and use more fully the talents of the members. Often I wonder why I'm there.

I am pleased on what they are doing, it involves in our community and the area villages.

I don't believe that council members have the expertise to plan programs or make up budgets.

Advisory councils are one of the most important parts of CES as far as I am concerned if the people on it are willing to share their view points and ideas with the agents.

There should be more communication between staff and volunteers of Extension programs. Lack of this has caused misunderstandings and is directly opposed to one of our principle goals.

Our council is open to all 4-H leaders. All are invited and encouraged to attend, but few do. I think the idea of an appointed or elected board suggested in this questionnaire might work well here in our area.

As an advisory council I am not sure that our recommendations are considered BEFORE making decisions. Many times I feel the "central administration" makes decisions and then informs us. These do not always reflect previous actions and recommendations of the board. Since we are advisory this may be the way it is meant to be. If so, please tell us so we don't have to "worry" so much about our deliberations and decisions.

The advisory council in which I participate is very loosely organized. This is fine in some respects, but I do not always feel adequately informed about the purpose and directions of our group. As well, it does not represent a broad enough cross section of the potential user group. On the other hand, the "rewards" of involvement in advisory boards are not tangible (or numerous).

They need to meet in the evening!!! I have told them this but they don't listen.

More attention should be given to the recommendations of the council.

I am still not sure of our general purpose and extent of authority over other groups.

I think advisory councils are very important as they can bring the need and wants of the communities to the CES agents. And also make agents aware of problems.

I would say our council makes important recommendations to agents. Some times these priorities are axed at the state level. My answers say I agree or disagree with statement, not that I agree or disagree with what is being done. The relationship between agents and council is good.

An advisory council group for agents' programs are useful. But for any real direction and purpose (particularly with administrative decisions, planning and direction) the current council has no real authority or say. The current administrative position is as long as the council sticks to things like giving cursory input to agent or district program, that's OK; but you (the council) have no business getting involved in administrative planning, direction, etc. If advisory council statements and positions happen to agree

with CES administration, fine. If not, CES administration will do what they want anyway. CES administration uses the advisory council for things they want, ignores them when the council is contrary. This will continue so long as there are not real local funds in the CES budget. When there, the local hard-earned dollars in the district CES budget, then a local advisory council can give some meaning and authority, direction and input into CES programs. Until this happens, advisory councils can give some useful, cursory input, but will have no real effect on anything that needs to be changed and will be business as usual.

A major problem I have experienced as a council member is that agents have difficulty telling council members what happened to the recommendations made by council members at last meeting. The council needs feedback too.

Agent Comments

Rewarding Experiences -

Gaining valuable perspectives on controversial topics.

In our Alaska program, it has been the expanding role the officers have taken in meeting between general meetings, responsibility for development of meeting agenda, and running the meeting.

Helping others grow in their leadership and group process skills.

Contacting individuals and the willingness to be participating in program process to the best interest of client needs.

Improved communications with local community members.

Improved support for community program.

Meetings - people are very willing to help.

Seeing a member really get involved in Extension.

General Comments -

I am concerned about the strict and rigid formalization of advisory councils. Organizations often become power bases

for community members and a major hindrance to the work of teachers, etc. Stress should be placed on informal advisory services.

In our case, we must get them much more involved in the basic decision making process for the organization and various programs, i.e. budget development, staffing and restaffing for the anticipated future of District, and concentrate more on the analysis of target audiences based on broad issues or specific problem areas.

I'm not sure for question 34 that geographic area representation is as important as getting people who represent a group of people or a point of view. You could be a voice for the teen-age single mothers, the fishing industry, or what ever. That would be more effective in my mind than being a representative from one town.

It's unfortunate that revenues are declining in order to have more village participation to cover travel and expenses.

Audio conferencing can offset travel, but there is need to acquaint villagers on the use of such alternatives.

Difficult - almost impossible to maintain a council that covers a large geographic area.

The council roles must be carefully defined and explained and then they must be given a chance to do their job. If the CES administration or the staff is not going to use or follow council advice they should not establish them.

Need to have some budget and autonomy - too dependent on CES staff.

Councils must be made to feel that their advice is important to CES and that it will be taken seriously.

**The vita has been removed from
the scanned document**