

**DEFINING THE MISSION OF VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:
AN INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
Educational Administration

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March, 1998
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Land-Grant University, Smith-Lever Act, Cooperative Extension
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(ABSTRACT)

The study is an interpretative analysis of Virginia Cooperative Extension that examined the mission of the agency, as defined through its history and enabling acts of legislation. The study investigated how the mission has evolved during the eighty-four years of its existence. The study used the intent and context of the federal Smith-Lever legislation of 1914 as its benchmark to discover what the desired and anticipated outcomes were for Cooperative Extension by the original patrons of the legislation. Subsequent legislative acts at both the state and federal levels, as well as actions by the executive branch of government, were studied to discover if and when the mission of cooperative extension has changed and to identify the political, economic, and social factors that influenced the changes.

The study incorporated accepted methods of historical research and included the review and analysis of both primary and secondary sources of information. Interviews of key leaders who have influenced the policy position of Virginia Cooperative Extension over the past thirty years were conducted.

The data gathered by the study were analyzed and presented to highlight major themes that could have influenced critical policy issues that have confronted Virginia Cooperative Extension. The conclusion is that the mission of extension is two fold: (1) to provide education that could lead to increased economic opportunity and, (2) to enhance the quality of life enjoyed by Virginia's citizens.

Three critical attributes are identified that relate to the ability of Virginia Cooperative Extension to fulfill its mission: (1) access to research-based information, (2) a strong presence in local communities, and (3) a capacity to provide timely responses to emerging issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sir Isaac Newton is credited for once saying, “I stand upon the shoulders of giants.” There have been many times in my life in which I have shared that sentiment, possibly none have been more poignant than what I feel with the completion of this research project. It is with this sense of humble gratitude that I wish to acknowledge the giants who have provided much needed support and help.

First of all, I would like to thank my advisors and committee co-chairs, Dr. Glen Earthman and Dr. David Parks for their encouragement and gentle coercion to get the job done. They always provided good counsel and helped me “contain” my research. I want to give Dr. Earthman special accolades as he adopted me early in my masters program and has walked me through both degrees. His contributions will always be valued.

The four other professors who have served on my committee are also giants. It has been an honor to have had my good friend, colleague, and mentor, Dr. Courtney Schwertz, work with me on this project. Possibly no one individual has had a more profound influence on my understanding of extension than Dr. Schwertz. Dr. Richard Salmon was always available to help shape ideas and to direct my thinking. Dr. Tom Hunt, who unfortunately left Virginia Tech in the midst of the project, was also a treasured mentor, inspiring teacher, and eminent scholar. I am especially grateful that Dr. Jerome Niles was willing to replace Dr. Hunt on my committee. I value greatly Dr. Niles’ professional and scholarly advice.

Recognition must also be given to the support that has been ever flowing from my many friends, colleagues, and co-workers at Virginia Tech and with Virginia Cooperative Extension. Three folks in particular deserve special attention: Dr. Clark Jones, Dean Janet Johnson, and Dean Andy Swiger. Their interest and sustained confidence in this work has been most motivating.

Most importantly, I want to thank the great big giants in my life—my family. To my dear wife Lisa, whose patience and understanding throughout this project has been unflinching, I want to say this degree is as much hers as it is mine. She is the one who kept things together while I was off to class or at the library or in seclusion writing at the office. To my daughters Nikki, Stacy, and Becky, who have had to sacrifice time with daddy, I wish to say you are jewels. They had their doubts at times whether it would ever come to an end, but your constant love provided an extra push that was very important.

I also want to thank my mom and dad, who were the first great giants in my life. It was my mother who first introduced me to extension through her membership in a Home Demonstration Club. She also was the first inspiration behind my thirst for learning. I regret that my dad didn’t live to see the completion of this project. Nevertheless, his pride in all that I did and how important to the finishing a started project has sustained and inspired me.

Finally, I thank God daily for the many shoulders he has given me to stand upon. I recognize that it is upon His shoulders that all others stand.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the giants, past and present, who have made extension work their chosen vocation and Virginia Cooperative Extension the wonderful organization it is today. This dissertation is in many ways a record of their vision, their passion to extend value-added education to the citizens of Virginia, and their ability to generate hope. I feel privileged to be able to stand along with them in an important work.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the closing hours of the 1995 session of the Virginia General Assembly, a conference committee given the charge to negotiate differences in the Senate and House versions of the state's budget, added specific language to an amendment restoring funding to Virginia Tech's cooperative extension programs:

It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Cooperative Extension Service give highest priority to programs and services which comprised the original mission of the Extension Service, especially agricultural programs at the local level. As part of Virginia Tech's restructuring efforts, the University shall conduct a review of the programs and administrative operations of the Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station Division. The University shall ensure that the division utilizes information technology to the extent possible in the delivery of programs. Virginia Tech shall propose specific alternatives for significantly increasing nongeneral fund revenues in the Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station Division. A plan for increasing nongeneral fund revenues shall be submitted to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees by October 15, 1995. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995, p. 157)

The inclusion of the wording original mission of the Extension Service assumed that the mission of extension is well clarified and that this mission was universally understood and accepted. It also suggested that agricultural programs at the local level are the most important programs offered in support of this mission.

Obviously, agriculture, in the broadest of terms, involves all the population. Everyone is a consumer of agricultural products--all eat and all wear clothes. However, it appears the writers of the 1995 appropriations legislation did not have such a broad intent. Depending upon how narrowly agricultural programs are defined, such a specific mandate can be interpreted as limiting the programs and services of cooperative extension to an increasingly select group within the population. For example, if agriculture is defined as only those involved with food and fiber production, Virginia Cooperative Extension programs would be offered to less than three percent of the population of the state. Paradoxically, access to cooperative extension programming becomes discriminatory based upon a person's chosen vocation.

In Virginia, the debate over this question has been waged for the past three state biennial budgets and has spanned the administrations of two governors. Under the administration of Democratic Governor L. Douglas Wilder (1990-94), cooperative extension was taken to task for

remaining too programmatically focused on traditional program areas, which meant production agriculture. The Executive Summary of a 1993 Department of Planning and Budget report concluded:

A large proportion of its resources remain committed to traditional program areas which serve a much smaller audience than in previous years. Both faculty and field staff remain concentrated in the program areas which serve primarily production agriculture. However, Virginia's farm population and the number of farms in the state have decreased dramatically over the past 30 years. Over the same period, Virginia has become increasingly urbanized, and like other states, has experienced the effects of a number of family and community issues not seen in the past. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993, p. viii)

Just eighteen months later, a Democratic-controlled General Assembly, in a compromising act to restore a \$7 million budget reduction proposed by Republican Governor George Allen, Virginia Cooperative Extension was given what could only be interpreted as directions substantially contradictory to those given by the Department of Planning and Budget (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995). Had the agency responded so quickly that it required a correction? Not quite. Internal budget documents reveal that practically no resources were redirected to non-agricultural programs from October 1993 to April 1995 (Virginia Cooperative Extension: 1995a).

So why the significant shift in focus from the state partner? One explanation is that the change in the priorities reflected the change in the state's political leadership. Democratic Governor Wilder saw the need for a cooperative extension that was more responsive to emerging societal issues (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993). On the other hand, Republican Governor George Allen, riding the wave of the national conservative movement, wanted no part of a cooperative extension program that conducted what he perceived to be social programs. Based on his budget recommendations, the mission of cooperative extension was to provide the technical expertise to the three percent of the state's population that was generating sixteen percent of the state's share of the nation's gross domestic product (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995). Obviously, there is a contradiction between the emphasis enumerated by the two administrations.

The problem is there is no universally accepted or understood mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension. Thus, the mission is subject to political and personal interpretation. This leaves the agency vulnerable to shifting political environments and ideologies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to interpret the current mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension, as developed through its history and enabling acts of legislation, both at the state and federal levels. The assumption was made that any interpretation of the original mission of

extension must be made in context of the intent of the legislation and not just a literal reading of the law. The intent wording of the 1914 Smith-Lever enabling legislation was interpreted along with other historic, economic, social, and political considerations to provide a definition as to what the mission of cooperative extension has been in Virginia. Particular attention was given to how the mission may have changed over the past thirty years. Influences to those changes, as well as their outcomes, were examined.

Research Questions

The research question was: What is the mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension? Fundamental to this question was an interpretation of how the mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension has evolved during the eighty years since its creation. However, the focus was on changes that have occurred in the thirty years that have spanned the four most recent administrations of Virginia Tech. Those presidents are T. Marshall Hahn, William Lavery, James McComas, and Paul Torgersen.

An ancillary research question was: In those incidences in which the mission of cooperative extension was altered, what were the social, economic, and political conditions that may have influenced the change? Finally, outcomes of major changes were examined to discover any impact on the agency's program development and delivery.

Objectives

There were two objectives for the study:

- 1) To develop an interpretative analysis of the mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension based upon a historical study. The extension enabling legislation, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, served as the foundation of the mission statement. State and university administrative actions and legislation were researched to discover if the original intent of the enabling legislation had been altered.
- 2) To analyze social, political, and economic conditions that led to the changes in the mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Scope of the Study

The research primarily focused on Virginia Tech's historical role with Virginia Cooperative Extension despite the fact the cooperative extension is a program jointly sponsored by both Virginia Tech and Virginia State. Prior to 1965, the state's two land-grant universities had separate extension programs (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). Due to a discriminatory feature of the Smith-Lever Act, which is discussed in Chapter Two, Virginia Tech has been the dominant partner in determining program priorities and sustaining the policy venue with public funders particularly on the state and local levels. A product of its preferred status with the Virginia

General Assembly is evident in budget allocations to the two universities in support of the partnership. For example, in fiscal year 1997-98, Virginia Tech received state general fund allocations totaling \$23,168,355, while Virginia State's total state appropriation was \$564,160 (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1997). It should also be noted that the Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension is and has always been an administrator at Virginia Tech.

Even though the study included a review of the entire history of cooperative extension at Virginia Tech, major emphasis was placed on examining the social, economic, and political factors that appeared to influence the agency's mission and policy position with the Commonwealth of Virginia over the past thirty years. There was no attempt to correlate and analyze each societal, political, or historical event of the 20th century to the programs and administrative activity of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Need for the Study

The 1990's have ushered in unusual political times. The economic downturn of 1989 through 1992 initiated a massive political reexamination of public investment in practically every area of government services and programs. In Virginia, higher education shouldered much of the brunt of this evaluation.

As the Commonwealth retreated from its commitment to higher education by slashing public support, many university-based educational programs were subjected to unprecedented scrutiny and study. Institutions were called upon to initiate in-depth self-evaluations under the guise of restructuring. In addition, as the executive branch and legislative panels began a scramble to secure resources, programs were being reclassified as whether or not they were central or peripheral to the institutions' missions. All governmental agencies were forced into a discussion as to the relevance of continued public investment for the public good.

Virginia Cooperative Extension became an issue for such a discussion. Decisions were made at the executive level that were based on a belief that extension was at best an educational service to the farmers of Virginia and at worst a farm subsidy program. Apparently the debate failed to fully examine the how and why extension had been started over eighty years before.

This discussion and debate continues today. The before-mentioned language employed in the 1995 state budget is an illustration of this discussion. Both the 1996 and 1997 sessions of the Virginia General Assembly revisited the debate when Delegate Robert Orrock proposed a budget amendment that would eliminate the wording "especially agriculture at the local level" (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995, p. 157). Both times the amendment passed in the House of Delegates, but failed to make it out of the budget conferee committee. In 1996, Delegate Orrock appealed to Governor Allen (R. Orrock, personal communication, March 20, 1996) to amend the budget for a broader interpretation, but the Governor refused to respond affirmatively (P.W. Timmreck, personal communication, April 18, 1996).

This study is important to the people and organizations that rely upon the programs of Virginia Cooperative Extension. If policy-makers and key political decision-makers continue to comprehend the mission of extension to be solely about production agriculture, cooperative extension could again face erosion of its budgets. The dawning of the information age provides farmers immediate access to the latest information via technologies. Additionally, the private sector is becoming more sophisticated in exploiting customers' needs for information as a means of marketing products. This transfer does not always come unbiased or supported by the research embodied in the land-grant system, but nevertheless it sometimes puts extension in a competitive situation. With this private sector activity and the continued downsizing of people involved in production agriculture, some policy maker will soon raise the hypothetical question: If Southern States Farmers' Cooperatives can provide that information to less than three percent of the people, why should the state also expend its resources? In other words, with an increased capacity of the private sector's ability to serve the needs of the agricultural community, does the state any longer need to fund the programs provided by Virginia Cooperative Extension?

Limitations

The federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914 is the defining legislation from which cooperative extension emerged. Nevertheless, extracting an original mission for extension from the wording of this singular act outside the context and conditions of its enactment could prove to significantly limit the intent of the legislation. This study also examined the social, economic, and political conditions that were to be addressed through the creation of the national extension system. The debate that was waged in the United States Congress preceding the enactment of the 1914 legislation was studied to provide insight into the intent of the legislation.

With the Smith-Lever Act as its foundation and a review of a reasonably stable agency in its first fifty years, the primary attention of the study was on major shifts that have taken place within Virginia Cooperative Extension in the past thirty years. The study was limited to cooperative extension in Virginia. There was no attempt to make comparisons of the mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension to extension programs in other states. The study was not intended to be a comprehensive history of Virginia Cooperative Extension, but an interpretative analysis that involved a historical review of the agency's mission.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided to explain major concepts that were used in the study:

Land-grant college or university: A land-grant college or university is an institution of higher education that has been designated by its state legislature or the United States Congress to receive the benefits of the First Morrill Act of 1862 (United States Statutes at Large, 503, 7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) or the Second Morrill Act of 1890 (United States Statutes at Large, 417, 7 U.S.C 321 et seq.). The original purpose of these institutions, as

set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so that members of the working class could obtain a liberal, practical education (Morrill Act of 1862).

1862 Land-grant institutions: The colleges or universities (one per state) that were designated by state legislators to receive the financial benefits of the land grants provided by the First Morrill Act (1862). It was the intent of the First Morrill Act that the designated colleges and universities would provide a broader segment of the population with a practical education that had direct relevance to their daily lives (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, 1995). Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in Blacksburg is Virginia's 1862 land-grant university. It was founded in 1872.

1890 Land-grant institution: The Second Morrill Act (1890) sought to extend access to higher education by providing additional endowments for the land-grant universities. However, the distribution of resources to states that made distinctions of race in admissions was prohibited. The legislation had a provision that allowed for the southern states to establish a separate land-grant institution for blacks. Institutions that, as a result of this act, were founded or designated as the land-grant colleges for blacks in each of the then-segregated southern states came to be known as the 1890 land-grant (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, 1995). Hampton Institute was designated as Virginia's first 1890 land-grant institution, but in 1929 this designation was transferred to Virginia State University in Petersburg.

1994 land-grant institution: It should be duly noted, even though this study does not give attention to a 1994 land-grant college since there are none in Virginia, that the United States Congress enacted additional legislation in 1994 that even further extended land-grant status to 29 Native American tribal colleges. The purpose of this legislation, which is titled the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, is to provide greater educational opportunity for constituents normally served by these institutions (Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994). With the addition of the 29 1994 land-grant institutions, the United States land-grant system now has 105 colleges and universities (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, 1995).

Cooperative extension: Established by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, cooperative extension is the educational component of the land-grant college or university that "extends" the research of the institution to persons not attending the college or university (Smith-Lever Act of 1914, 1914). The term cooperative signifies the involvement of three levels of government in funding the educational programs: federal, state, and local. The federal partnership is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture through the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). The Smith-Lever legislation requires states, through a federal-state matching fund, to administer cooperative extension programming through their land-grant institutions.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is the cooperative extension educational program in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is administered by the state through a partnership between Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and Virginia State University. In addition to program administrators and faculty working on the campuses of the two universities, Virginia Cooperative Extension currently has local offices in 95 counties and 11 cities. It also operates programs at six 4-H educational centers and 12 agricultural research and extension centers across the state (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1996b).

Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR): Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources programs are those that are focused on developing, serving, and utilizing commercial agriculture, home food production, home horticulture, the environment, and natural resources (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1995b).

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS): Virginia Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programs provide individuals and families the latest in research to prevent or solve health, human relations, and home-based problems. These programs were formerly grouped under the name of home economics. The programs include the disciplines related to human health, nutrition, foods, family and child development, housing, and financial management (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1995b).

Four-H (4-H): Four-H is the comprehensive youth development program of Virginia Cooperative Extension. Youth between the ages of 5 and 18 engage in hands-on learning experiences under the guidance of adults or teen 4-H volunteers trained by 4-H agents. Four-H programs use experiential learning opportunities to teach the latest research-based subject matter knowledge and to foster skill development in effective citizenship, leadership, and other life skills. Four-H has both a school-based delivery model and a community-based delivery model so maximum access to Virginia's youth is provided (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1995b).

Community Resource Development (CRD): Virginia Cooperative Extension Community Resource Development programs are fairly specialized initiatives that include providing specialized information, research results, and knowledge from different disciplines to local governments, planning commissions, civic clubs, and community associations (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1992).

Local Government: In Virginia, local government can mean either county, city, or town. A unique feature of Virginia government is the statewide practice of city-county separation. All cities and counties are entirely separate from each other as governmental entities. They are mutually exclusive, territorially, and governmentally. Towns, however, remain a part of a county (Morris & Sabato, 1990).

For the purpose of this study, local government, as pertaining to the local partner with Virginia Cooperative Extension, means either the county or city that cooperates financially with the state and federal governments in providing cooperative extension programming to the citizens living within that governmental unit. Currently, there are 95 counties and 11 cities that have a Memorandum of Understanding with Virginia Tech to maintain a local extension program (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1996b).

Methodology

The methodology for this research project included an extensive review of both primary and secondary sources. Historic documentation that was available through Virginia Cooperative Extension supported the research. Strategies that were engaged to maximize the utilization of primary sources included:

1) A review of original documents, including budget and resource materials held at the Virginia Tech administrative offices of Virginia Cooperative Extension and historic archives in Newman Library at Virginia Tech. Documents included are:

- The Extension Division of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: A Decade of Development, 1965--75 (a staff summary report to the Dean of Extension, August 15, 1975.)
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: The Extension Division (a report prepared for the Extension Budget Guidelines Task Force, October, 1978).
- United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Work Administrative Handbook (December 31, 1953).
- A Review of Virginia Cooperative Extension (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, October, 1993).
- Review of Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, June, 1979).

2) A review of personal letters and original documents of William Skelton, Dean Emeritus, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, and Dr. William Flowers, Professor Emeritus, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech.

3) A review of the hearings, reports, and debates leading up to the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 as recorded by the Congressional Record (January, 1914,--May, 1914).

4) A review of the Code of Virginia and the record of legislative actions of the Virginia General Assembly.

5) Personal interviews with individuals who have played key roles in shaping the recent history of Virginia Cooperative Extension including university presidents William Lavery (1974-1987) and Paul Torgersen (1993-present), William Skelton, Dean and Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension (1964-1976), and Mr. Ralph Byers, Director of Governmental Relations, Virginia Tech (1990-present).

6) Telephone interviews with former Virginia Tech president T. Marshall Hahn (1962-1974); Senator George M. Cochran, who was the patron of the 1966 legislation creating the Virginia Tech Extension Division; Delegate Frank Slayton, who led efforts to have the Extension Division studied by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission; and the two legislators, Delegates Morgan Griffith and Watkins Abbitt, who voted against the 1994 legislation that rescinded the 1966 legislation.

Research strategies that used secondary sources of information included:

1) A literature review to ascertain perspective on the research question by others in the field.

2) A review of publications developed by the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

Interview Questions

The following matrix was used to illustrate the relevance of the interview questions to the three research questions:

Interview questions for T. Marshall Hahn, President, Virginia Tech, 1962--1974:

<i>QUESTION:</i>	<i>MISSION</i>	<i>INFLUENCES</i>	<i>OUTCOMES</i>
1) Reflecting back on your twelve years in the presidency of Virginia Tech, what did you see as the mission of Virginia Tech?	X		
2) What did you try to achieve during your Presidency?			X
3) How did Virginia Cooperative Extension fit into this mission?	X		
4) What actions did you take in pursuit of your vision for the university and cooperative extension?		X	

5) What were the factors that influenced you to act in such a direction? Please specifically address social, economic, and political variables that were considered.		X	
6) What impact did these actions have upon the extension mission of the university?			X

Interview questions for William Skelton, Dean, Extension Division, Virginia Tech, 1964—1976:

<i>QUESTION:</i>	<i>MISSION</i>	<i>INFLUENCES</i>	<i>OUTCOMES</i>
1) As Dean and Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension, what did you perceive to be the mission of extension?	X		
2) While you were director of extension, the university requested and received authorization from the Virginia General Assembly to create an Extension Division. What led to this action? Please specifically address social, economic, and political variables that were considered.		X	
3) What was the impact of the new administrative structure upon extension?			X

Interview questions for William Lavery, President, Virginia Tech, 1974—1987:

<i>QUESTION:</i>	<i>MISSION</i>	<i>INFLUENCES</i>	<i>OUTCOMES</i>
1) Reflecting back on your fourteen years in the presidency of Virginia Tech, what did you see as the mission of Virginia Tech?	X		
2) What did you try to achieve during your presidency?			X
3) How did cooperative extension fit into this mission?	X		

4) During your presidency in 1978, Virginia Tech's Extension Division was the subject of a study by the Commonwealth's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, which resulted in the Virginia General Assembly giving specific guidance on how the university should spend state resources programmatically. What were the factors that influenced this action by the state partner? Please specifically address social, economic, and political variables that were considered.		X	
5) What were the outcomes of these directives by JLARC?			X
6) How did these directives alter the mission, goals and objectives for the Extension Division?	X		
7) In your opinion, did the directive provided by JLARC change the cooperative extension mission of the university? Please explain.	X		X

Interview questions for Paul Torgersen, President, Virginia Tech, 1993--present:

<i>QUESTION:</i>	<i>MISSION</i>	<i>INFLUENCES</i>	<i>OUTCOMES</i>
1) What do you see as being the mission of Virginia Tech?	X		
2) What are you wishing to achieve during your presidency?			X
3) How does Virginia Cooperative Extension fit into this mission?	X		

4) In 1994, Virginia Tech initiated legislation with the Virginia General Assembly to rescind 1965 legislation that created the Virginia Tech Extension Division and refocus the work of cooperative extension in conjunction with the work of agriculture research. What were the factors that influenced you to lead in such a direction? Please specifically address social, economic, and political variables that were considered.		X	
5) What have been the outcomes of this change within the university?			X
6) How has this action altered the mission, goals, and objectives of extension?	X		X

Interview questions for Ralph Byers, Director, Governmental Relations, Virginia Tech, 1990—present:

QUESTION:	MISSION	INFLUENCES	OUTCOMES
1) In your position as Director of Governmental Relations, you were given the charge to develop and implement legislative strategies that would lead to amending the 1965 legislation that created the Virginia Tech Extension Division. Please explain why this legislation was proposed and talk about the strategies you used to get the legislation enacted.		X	
2) How did you represent to legislators the need and anticipated outcomes of the proposed legislation?			X
3) From your perspective, how has the legislation changed the mission of cooperative extension?	X		

Table 1.1 Defining The Mission Of Virginia Cooperative Extension: Interpretative Analysis -- Interview Questions

Analysis of Data

The data gathered through the research project were analyzed to satisfy the knowledge requirements defined in the study's three objectives. The original Smith-Lever legislation of 1914 served as the theoretical base and defining keystone of cooperative extension. The wording and the intent of the original Smith-Lever legislation served as the foundation of a mission statement for Virginia Cooperative Extension. Subsequent actions were analyzed to discover if and when the mission of cooperative extension was either broadened or narrowed.

The social, political, and economic conditions that may have influenced alterations in the mission were considered. An attempt was made to identify the needs or issues that were being addressed when a change to the mission occurred.

Additionally, the outcomes of each change were interpreted. Outcome analysis included a look at how the change may have altered the scope of programs, the audiences served, and the resources made available in support of program development and delivery.

Finally, the data were also interpreted to discover major themes that could influence critical policy issues that may confront Virginia Cooperative Extension in the future.

Presentation of Data

Data are presented in a manner that follows the development of Virginia Cooperative Extension chronologically. In Chapter Two, the study is framed with a description of the Smith-Lever Act and an analysis of its intent as interpreted by the debates and conditions that were antecedent to its enactment.

The first fifty years of Virginia Cooperative Extension is the focus of Chapter Three. Important moments in which the program expanded and its organizational position within Virginia Tech are included. This was a time in which its political posture within the state remained relatively stable. The creation of Virginia Tech's Extension Division in 1966 during the administration of President T. Marshall Hahn is the major focus of Chapter Four. The twenty-five years of internal and external struggles that eventually led to the 1966 legislation being rescinded are featured in Chapter Five.

In Chapter Six, the discoveries of the study are summarized. Based on the historic interpretations contained in the preceding chapters, this chapter includes insight into what the current mission of cooperative extension is and captures reoccurring influences upon the evolution of the mission. Finally, the concluding chapter suggests how Virginia Cooperative Extension should be framed in context of Virginia Tech's land-grant mission.

CHAPTER TWO

SMITH-LEVER ACT: CHANGING THE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSITY

On May 14, 1914, landmark legislation was signed into law by then President Woodrow Wilson that forever changed the landscape and character of higher education in America. This legislation, commonly known as the Smith-Lever Act, established the Cooperative Extension system, and by doing so significantly broadened the mission of the nation's developing land-grant institutions.

Upon the occasion of his signing the legislation into law, President Wilson recognized the gravity of the act and called it "one of the most significant and far-reaching measures for the education of adults ever adopted by any government" (Rasmussen, 1989, vii). In the shaping of contemporary higher education, President Wilson's words have proven prophetic. Few pieces of legislation or governmental action can equal the complete transformation of the centuries' old concept of university as precipitated by the Smith-Lever Act. It was an achievement, uniquely American, that held as its fundamental premise that universities were not just meccas of knowledge to which the chosen few would pilgrimage for study and recitation, but they must be considered vital instruments of economic and social change for all Americans. From this premise, the idea of *student* was converted to citizen and campus was bounded only by the jurisdiction of the state.

It is most important to interpret specific actions within the social and historic context of the time. Obviously, the social environment and the economic circumstances of the turn of the century gave genesis to a debate that crafted such revolutionary legislation. In this chapter, the political conditions and the mobilization of forces that reframed the venue of higher education and compelled the philosophy of taking the university to the people as the trademark of the land-grant university system will be explored.

Political Precedent

It would be fair to assert that the Smith-Lever Act had its roots in President George Washington's call for the establishment of a national university, in which "there should be a chair of agriculture entrusted with the responsibility of diffusing information to farmers" (Brunner, 1949, p. 2). Despite President Washington's passionate argument on behalf of the national university, the federal government did not consider it a priority in the formative years of the nation and did not enter the arena of public higher education in a meaningful way until the enactment of the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862. This momentous legislation granted each state public land in the amount of 30,000 acres for each of its Senate and House members. Since most of the existing states did not have much unsold public land within their boundaries, they were given scrip to the public domain in states and territories having excess unclaimed acres (Brunner, 1949). The scrip was basically a promissory note guaranteeing the state its rightful

share of federal land. Each state was to use the money it received from the sale of their land grants as a trust fund to endow a college where practical education in agriculture and engineering would be emphasized. Most of the states sold their scrip to land dealers at prices of between fifty cents and one dollar an acre and used the proceeds to establish new agricultural and mechanical colleges (Rasmussen, 1989).

It is important to note that the same Congress in the same year passed legislation that created the United States Department of Agriculture. In the midst of the tragedy of a war that challenged the very existence of a people and a nation, national decision-makers were engaged in speculative judgments as how to best provide for the basic needs of food and clothing for the survivors of that war. In essence, these two Congressional acts, signed into law by President Lincoln, created the primary entities that would be partnered 52 years later as the structure through which the Smith-Lever legislation would be founded.

In 1887, 25 years after the Morrill Act, Congress again made education and the agricultural colleges established by the act the focus of its attention. A new law that provided for a yearly federal grant to each state for the support of an agricultural experiment station was enacted. The legislation, named for its sponsor William H. Hatch of Missouri, provided the initiative for higher education to expand its agricultural research activity. The body of knowledge in all aspects of agriculture grew rapidly (Brunner, 1949).

Another outgrowth of the Hatch Act of 1887 was the creation of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations. Minutes of its initial meeting, which was held in Washington, DC, October 18-20, 1887, reflect an immediate recognition that the experiment stations must also engage in the dissemination of their research:

The work of the experiment stations should enlarge on those practical points, such as the improvement of or restoration of the soil and the breeding of stock, when suggested by the work done, even to the extent of repeating well-known principles and facts where these need to be taught. (Bliss, 1952, p. 25)

This dual concept of the experiment station as both a research organization and a teacher of practical agriculture would characterize the work of the stations until the realization of the Smith-Lever Act. However, the Hatch Act did not include resources for the dissemination of the newly discovered knowledge, thus seriously impeding the capacity of the land-grant institutions' efforts to widely disburse the fruits of their research. The Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations would later play a pivotal role in the debate that would yield the Smith-Lever Act.

Three years later, 1890, Congress enacted the Second Morrill Land-Grant College Act. The significance of this legislation was two fold. The 1862 Morrill Act gave lands (or scrip), but no funds, to the states for annual support of the land-grant universities. The 1890 Morrill Act provided direct annual appropriations to the land-grant universities. Just as importantly, the 1890

Act prohibited racial discrimination in admissions to the colleges receiving appropriations. However, states could escape this provision by establishing separate institutions for white and black students if the funds were equitably, but not necessarily equally, divided between the institutions (Rasmussen, 1989). The southern states responded by establishing black land-grant institutions. Nevertheless, this complementary bill to the original Morrill Act strengthened the federal role in public higher education. It also established a non-discriminatory criterion by which federal support must be invested. As we will see later, this measure would become a major point of contention in the debate over Smith-Lever.

The Case for Assistance for American Agriculture

The dawning of the twentieth century heralded a significant period of change for American agriculture. The percentage of the labor force involved in farming was in decline--dropping from 50 percent to 30 percent in just the thirty-year period between 1875 and 1910. Farm production made up 50 percent of the nation's exports and the number of people using farm products domestically continued to expand. These changes meant that fewer farmers were required to produce more farm products (Kelsey, Lincoln, & Hearne, 1963).

On the surface, this looks like a favorable market situation, but the influence of cheap private land and free public land, overproduction, high costs of transportation and taxation, and the printing of paper currency (and ensuing deflation) caused prices and wages to decline. By 1894, the price of wheat had fallen to 64¢ per bushel, causing an enduring depression for many of the country's farmers (Fox, 1982). In 1910, people living on farms averaged \$139 a year in income, while people not on farms averaged \$482 (Rasmussen, 1989). Many believed that the American farmer and rural America were at risk. The continued decline of a productive agricultural structure would have significant and lasting effects on all Americans. Thus, the focus of the nation was again directed to their plight. The question became "What could the federal government do to elevate the economic status of farmers and sustain some quality of life for the rural people?" In a pre-welfare America, direct subsidies were not considered a viable solution.

The Country Life Commission

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt, a leader of the national Progressive movement and a champion of the concerns of rural America, commissioned a comprehensive study of the problem. In his charge to the Country Life Commission, President Roosevelt expressed his grave concern about the current economic condition of agriculture:

No nation has ever achieved permanent greatness unless this greatness was based on the well-being of the farmer class, the men who live on the soil, for it is upon their welfare, material and moral, that the welfare of the rest of the nation ultimately rests. The social and economic institutions of the open country are not keeping pace with the development of the country as a whole. (Bliss, 1952, p. 87)

But, possibly even more consequential, the president also poignantly expressed his concern about the predicament of the farm family:

It is especially important that whatever will serve to prepare country children for life on the farm and whatever will brighten home life in the country and make it richer and more attractive for the mothers, wives, and daughters of farmers should be done promptly, thoroughly, and gladly. There is no more important person, measured in influence upon the life of the nation, than the farmer's wife, no more important home than the country home, and it is of national importance to do the best we can for both. (Bliss, 1952, p. 89)

The five members of the commission, which included two of the great agricultural educators and leaders of the era--the Commission's chair Professor L. H. Bailey of the New York State College of Agriculture and President Kenyon L. Butterfield of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, could not have fully appreciated and understood the implications of the broad directions given them by the president. Not only were they to study and bring forth recommendations that would cast economic enhancement, but they were also charged with developing social proposals that were to be directed at the very nucleus of rural living--the farm family.

The report of the Country Life Commission, issued in January, 1909, just six months after its appointment, made an impression on the president, the Congress, and the country at large. Its principal theme and proposition held that education was the answer to rebuilding rural America:

The consideration of the educational problem raises the greatest single question that has come before the Commission.... Education has now come to have vastly more significance than the mere establishing and maintaining of schools. The education motive has been taken into all kinds of work with the people, directly in their homes and on the farms, and it reaches mature persons as well as youths.

The arousing of the people must be accomplished in terms of their daily lives, or of their welfare. For the country people this means that it must be largely in terms of agriculture. Some of the colleges of agriculture are now doing this kind of work effectively, although on a pitifully small scale as compared with the needs. This is extension work, by which is meant all kinds of educational effort directly with the people, both old and young, at their homes and on their farms; it comprises all educational work that

is conducted away from the institution and for those who cannot go to schools and colleges.... (Brunner, 1949, p. 12)

The significance of this observation--that education was the solution to both the economic and social woes of a rural people and that the country's colleges had a legitimate mission beyond their campuses--was nothing short of remarkable. Obviously, in the course of its considerations, the Commission had been influenced by the experiences of at least two of its members and enthralled by the outreach efforts of several of the colleges of agriculture. Both Chairman Bailey and member Butterfield had been advocates of extension education. To some degree, college and state sponsored extension programs had existed since the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The first publicly sponsored extension programs were the farmers' institutes. The idea behind farmers' institutes was to provide educational programs locally at places farmers could reach. The farmers' institutes had developed through state initiatives, and by 1899 all but one state were involved in providing assistance to institute work. In 1899, over 2,000 institutes were held around the country, with a total attendance of over 500,000 farmers (True, 1928).

The recently introduced concept of demonstration work also played strongly on the Commission's recommendations. The chief proponent of demonstration work was Seaman A. Knapp, former president of Iowa State College. His concept of taking education to the people featured the establishment of community-based demonstration farms, which under his guidance and direction would employ the latest in farming techniques and practices. Knapp's first community demonstration farm was launched in 1903 near Terrell, Texas. With the financial backing of the local Chamber of Commerce, which put up \$900 to guarantee the farmer against loss providing he adhered to the directions of Knapp. The experiment was a huge success with the farmer reporting a net gain in excess of \$700 more than if he had engaged in his usual farming practices (Brunner, 1949).

Knapp's idea drew immediate wide publicity and great public attention. The State of Texas, confronted with ruin of its cotton industry due to the growing menace of the boll weevil, acted swiftly to contract Knapp to set up small demonstration farms across the state to prove that cotton could be grown despite the pest if improved methods were used. An appropriation of \$40,000 was allocated for the employment of special agents, who were to help Knapp cover the state in giving demonstrations and instructions.

Other states, intrigued with the success of Knapp's program, moved quickly to employ agents and to recruit farmers, who were willing to cooperate with the demonstration program. In the five-year period between the establishment of the Terrell, Texas, farm to the work of the Country Life Commission, Knapp's demonstration work had expanded into eleven states and 157 agents (Brunner, 1949).

Farmers were not the only beneficiaries of the early state-sponsored extension activities. As early as 1896, Commission chairman Bailey had used funds appropriated by the State of New York to his college of agriculture to disseminate a series of nature study leaflets to rural schools.

He tried to impress on school children and teachers that the natural environment around them was a classroom worthy of exploration (Wessel & Wessel, 1982). Other colleges of agriculture (Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas) had success in working with farmers' institutes to hold similar institutes for youth (Rasmussen, 1989). In rural Clark County, Ohio, the superintendent of schools A.B. Graham initiated, with the support of the State's agricultural college, the first boys' and girls' agriculture club (McCormick & McCormick, 1984). In just two short years, Graham's work had expanded to the point where Ohio boasted a federation of rural boys' and girls' agricultural clubs, all of which used materials from Ohio State. Superintendent Graham is generally acknowledged as the first 4-H youth agent, as his model was replicated throughout many states. It is important to note that the club concept not only taught the youth valuable skills, but also provided an additional means for social interaction.

The girls' clubs became the precedent for the beginning of extension work with rural women. Mothers of the girls' clubs members were intrigued with the new concepts in canning and gardening being introduced to their daughters and sought out ways they too could become engaged in extension work. Women's clubs were organized for the purpose of home demonstrations. But, just as important as the sharing of new ideas, like the boys' and girls' clubs, the home demonstration clubs furnished the rural women positive opportunities to interact socially with others who shared in their dilemmas.

The Commission saw great value in these educational efforts, but it also recognized that there were vast state and regional differences in both the quantity and quality of the existing extension programs. The call for nationalized extension work was the hallmark of its final report to the president:

Each state college of agriculture should be empowered to organize as soon as practicable a complete department of college extension, so managed as to reach every person on the land in its state with both information and inspiration. The work should include such forms of extension teaching as lectures, bulletins, reading courses, correspondence courses, demonstrations, and other means of reaching the people at home and on their farms. It should be designed to forward not only the business of agriculture, but sanitation, education, homemaking, and all interests of country life. (Bliss, 1952, p. 90)

President Roosevelt enthusiastically received the report of the Commission in 1909 and immediately submitted it to Congress with his endorsement. In doing so he wrote:

The commission points out, and I concur in the conclusion, that the most important help that the government, whether national or state, can give is to show the people how to go about these tasks of organization, education, and communication with the best and quickest results. This can best be done by the collection and spread of information. (Bliss, 1952, p. 107)

His words embraced the philosophy that the proper role of government was to help people help themselves. This same philosophy was to become the theme of the Cooperative Extension movement.

The Congressional Debate

The history of congressional efforts to pass a bill fulfilling the Country Life Commission's call for a national extension service is a record steeped in frustration, riddled with political maneuvering, and delineated by the competing interests of many factions. But, it is also a tribute to the staying power of an idea and the perseverance and tenacity of its champions.

President Roosevelt's report to Congress came in the waning days of his administration. In many ways it was the crowning moment of his presidency. However, his successor, William Howard Taft, supported the concept of a national extension service, but chose not to make it a priority of his legislative agenda, despite being from Ohio--an early leader in the extension movement (Bliss, 1952). Nevertheless, others came to the forefront to shepherd the legislation through the political process.

Congressman James C. McLaughlin of Michigan, on December 15, 1909, became the first to introduce a bill requesting federal appropriations and authorization to create a Cooperative Extension Service. The draft of his bill was shaped and written by a committee on Extension work of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations. Not surprisingly, the chair of the committee was Kenyon Butterfield of the Country Life Commission (Rasmussen, 1989). The bill requested that the federal government grant each state \$10,000 for extension work providing the state fund an equal amount. Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver of Iowa followed McLaughlin's lead in the House and introduced a similar bill three weeks later on the Senate side. Both bills were referred to their respective Committees on Agriculture for debate (Rasmussen, 1989).

During the course of the hearings on the proposed legislation, its supporters maintained that the bill was necessary to sustain the growing demands on the national food supply by providing farmers the access to the latest in technological advances and by enhancing the quality of life for rural families through special educational initiatives for the wives and children. These values were never argued as not being germane to national investment. Ironically, the initial bill became bogged down when other educational special interests--particularly vocational education and teachers' colleges--were attached to the legislation. The bill became so watered down on behalf of the extension interests that its initial supporters lost their enthusiasm for it and it never came to a vote.

For the next two years, the vocational education issue would plague the efforts of other Extension proponents. Between 1911 and 1913, thirty different bills were introduced to grant federal funds for Extension work. All foundered on the question of combining vocational education and extension work (Fox, 1982). However, in 1911, a revised version of the initial

McLaughlin bill sponsored by Representative Asbury Lever of South Carolina came awfully close to passage--it won the approval of the House, but lost in the Senate by one vote.

Compromise with the proponents of the vocational education movement was eventually reached through political manipulation and the assurance that the question of vocational support would be treated separately. The Smith-Hughes Act, providing matching federal aid to schools for vocational education in agriculture and home economics, was enacted in 1917, three years after the Smith-Lever Act.

Finally, on September 6, 1913, Representative Lever reintroduced his 1911 bill in the House, while Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia submitted the same bill in the Senate. In his report that accompanied bill H.R. 7951 from the House Committee on Agriculture, Representative Lever focused on what he perceived to be the mission of the Cooperative Agriculture Extension Work:

In practical effect it undertakes to provide such machinery as will bring to the attention of the farmer, the farmer's wife and children, in the most striking manner such demonstrated truths and practices of successful agriculture which, lived up to, make rural living desirable and profitable as an occupation. It provides the connecting link between the sources of information in matters relating to agricultural life and the people sought to be reached with such information. (United States House of Representatives, 1913, p. 1)

Basically, Representative Lever was suggesting that through the delivery of research-based information from the land-grant colleges, all rural people (the farmer, as well as his wife and children) would enjoy an enhanced quality of life (more desirable) and greater economic opportunity (profitability). In the same report, Lever further illuminated this point:

Earnest scientists every day are discovering useful truths, methods, and processes which if known by the farmer and applied by him would mean financial independence and social progress; but the farmer does not know what the scientist is doing and has no way of learning of his discoveries. (United States House of Representatives, 1913, p. 2)

From his perspective, the proposed cooperative extension system would provide the machinery--the delivery method--of getting the information to the people.

As noble as the intent of such legislation may appear the politics of the day would again hold the proposed Extension system in jeopardy. Without the vocational education issue a major contention, the discussions centered on other aspects of the proposed legislation. The principle of cooperation was challenged by some legislators fearing that cooperation between the United States Department of Agriculture and the states would usurp the federal authority of USDA (Bliss, 1952). The method of how to distribute the federal funds that were to be matched by the

states was also debated. The view prevailed that since the work was educational, the funds should be allotted in accordance with the number of rural people to be reached (Rasmussen, 1989).

A third point of debate--the perceived discriminatory nature of the proposed legislation--deserves greater attention. As noted earlier, the Second Morrill Act addressed the issue of race, which had been completely ignored in the debates over the First Morrill Act and the Hatch Act. From the view of the young, black, land-grant institutions given birth by the Second Morrill Act, the Smith-Lever legislation, as written, would exclude them and their clientele from its benefits. The provision for management of the federal funds read:

That in any State in which two or more such colleges have been or hereinafter may be established the appropriation made to such State shall be administered by such college or colleges as the legislature of such State may direct.
(Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, January 16, 1914, 1760)

At that time in our history, southern legislatures were predominantly white and had not been overtly supportive of the 1890 institutions with state appropriations. The "as the legislature may direct" (Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, January 16, 1914, 1760) clause would have only one result: that all the funds going to the state would be used by the white college. Senator Wesley L. Jones of Washington adamantly took up the cause of the black land-grants and introduced an amendment to Senator Smith's bill that would provide "a just and equitable division of the appropriation ... between one college for white students and one institution for colored students..." (Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, February 5, 1914, 2929).

Senator Smith resolutely led the rebuttal stating that it would be a "very unfortunate condition of affairs if the negroes were permitted to manage their own affairs" (Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, February 5, 1914, 2945). The argument over the discriminatory nature of the bill raged for several days. Finally, Senator Smith threatened to kill the entire effort if "a single dollar is appropriated in Georgia to undertake to do extension work from the negro agricultural and mechanical school. It would be a waste..." (Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, February 7, 1914, 2949). The Jones amendment failed. The debate was the first time that educational discrimination had been openly discussed in the Congress, and, thus brought out into the open for the virulent racism which infected the nation (Seals, 1991).

Three months later, on May 5, the Smith-Lever legislation was sent on to President Wilson for his signature. Unfortunately, the exclusion of the black land-grants from its provisions would limit its full potential to all rural Americans.

The Legacy of Smith-Lever

Despite its discriminatory fallacy, the Smith-Lever Act is a momentous piece of legislation worthy of inclusion in any study of higher education. It was an extension of the

benefits provided under the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Land Grant acts. It complemented and strengthened the Hatch Act by providing a uniform, federally supported structure through which research achievements could be widely dispersed to practitioners. The notion of an expanded role for higher education is discovered in the purposeful nature of the act providing for a Cooperative Extension work through the land-grant colleges "in order to aid in the diffusing among the people of the U.S. useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage application of the same" (Eddy, 1957, p. 140).

Its major provisions included:

- 1) The land-grant colleges and the USDA were to establish a cooperative working relationship and joint responsibility for implementing and administering the Cooperative Extension Service.
- 2) The audience was to be persons not attending or resident in a land-grant college.
- 3) Educational programs could address a practically unlimited array of subjects. It stated that funds were for "giving instructions...in agriculture, home economics, and subjects related thereto" (Smith-Lever Act of 1914, 1914).
- 4) The educational services should include demonstration work, as pioneered by Knapp.
- 5) Each state would receive its federal appropriation only when matched by the state or local funds raised within the state (Brunner, 1949).

Noteworthy within the context of these provisions is the fact that, for the first time in the history of United States federal legislation, the bill called for matching funds from the states. In addition, it provided no money for college buildings and expressly forbade utilization of funds for teaching courses that were part of the formal curriculum of the college (Fox, 1982).

Smith-Lever changed the meaning of university. It marked the beginning of a partnership among federal government, state government, and higher education in working cooperatively towards the solution of social and economic problems. It elevated the posture of higher educational institutions as social actors accountable to the social systems they helped to produce. It changed the view of university as a training ground for the elite by expanding its mission to the public domain.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS: SHAPING A MISSION

Virginia Responds

In anticipation of the pending enactment of the Smith-Lever legislation by the United States Congress, the Virginia General Assembly, on March 27, 1914, passed legislation that set the ground work in motion to formally establish demonstration work as an outreach of Virginia Agriculture and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech). The legislation, which was known as Senate Bill 176 and signed into law by Governor Henry Stuart, repealed a 1910 law that had created a state coordinating board for the purpose of promoting demonstration work and legally reassigned the work to the state's 1862 land-grant college. The new law read:

An Act to repeal an act of the general assembly of Virginia approved March 17, 1910, entitled an act to constitute a united agricultural board to co-ordinate the Virginia college of agriculture and polytechnic institute and the Virginia agriculture experiment station, the commissioner and the State board of agriculture and the State board of education, in co-operation with the United States department of agriculture, for the betterment of agricultural experimental and demonstration work, and generally to advance the agricultural interests of this State, and to authorize the boards of supervisors to appropriate county funds for experimental and demonstration work in their respective counties, as amended and re-enacted by an act approved March 12, 1912, and enacting certain provisions in lieu thereof, and making appropriations to the Virginia agricultural and mechanical college and polytechnic institute for demonstration work, and to authorize boards of supervisors to appropriate county funds for demonstration work in their respective counties, in co-operation with the Virginia agricultural and mechanical college and polytechnic institute and the United States department of agriculture, and providing for co-ordination of certain agricultural activities within the State of Virginia. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1914, Ch. 353, p. 710)

As prescribed by the federal legislation, the Virginia law contained provisions that facilitated the cooperative financial partnership among state, federal, and local governments. Local boards of supervisors were allowed to appropriate dollars to support demonstration work and to employ county agents. However, the law also demonstrated a strong commitment for the academic integrity of the demonstration work as it reserved the duty of hiring county agents to Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute:

It shall be the duty of the Virginia agricultural and mechanical college and polytechnic institute, in co-operation with the United States department of

agriculture, to exercise great care in the selection of demonstrators or county agents qualified to do the work, and to supervise their work and see that it is properly done through the State and district agents. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1914, Ch. 353, p. 711)

The bill also contained language that defined the work to be performed by the county agents as being to assist farmers in every possible way by teaching them improved methods of agriculture, embracing all crops made in the state, improved methods of horticulture, stock raising, and everything for the advancement of the agricultural interests of the State, by conducting demonstrations on farms, instructing and advising farmers on all technical agricultural subjects, and in all possible ways assisting them by carrying information from the agricultural college, the experiment stations and all other sources to the farmer (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1914).

It wasn't just farmers, however, who were identified to be the beneficiaries of the work of the demonstration agents. The law went on to connect their efforts to the youth of the state:

The said county agents may be authorized to conduct boys demonstration clubs and assist in the organization and conducting of girls canning clubs, if deemed wise by the Virginia agricultural and mechanical college and polytechnic institute, and in such work the State board of education is hereby authorized to make such cooperative arrangements with the president of the Virginia agricultural and mechanical college and polytechnic institute as it may deem wise for coordination for such work with the county schools of the state. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1914, Ch. 353, p. 711)

There are two critical points to the charge given by the new law that are worthy of attention. First, it was clear that the demonstration agents were to be educators. They were to be carriers of the knowledge being generated at the agriculture college and its experiment stations to the farmers and youth across the state. They were to be extended faculty (agents) of the college teaching out in the state where the people needed to apply the knowledge in their farming activities.

Secondly, the law added a new dimension to Virginia's higher education venue, as the land-grant college was to provide educational programs to a whole new set of students--citizens who had not matriculated on the Blacksburg campus. In addition to the farmer, who in most situations had no formal higher education experience, the law also specifically authorized the agents to work with boys and girls through demonstration and canning clubs. This activity would become the precedent to 4-H club work.

Consistent with the federal Smith-Lever legislation, the Virginia act was an economic development strategy that recognized the value of the land-grant university for the economic

vitality of the state. Agriculture was the predominant economic enterprise of the time (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941).

It may be important to note that the farmer's wife was not mentioned as an audience of the programs to be delivered. However, the demonstration programs would have a profound effect on rural women. The ultimate beneficiary would become the rural family, and the well-being of their families and homesteads was the primary focus of the farm wife. The programs that were to come as a result of the legislation would become a valued resource to the farm wife, too.

Getting Started

An important player behind the passage of the Virginia legislation and the movement of the farm demonstration work to Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute was its president Joseph Dupuy (J.D.) Eggleston, Jr.. Eggleston, who served as president of the College from 1913-1919, was formerly the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Chief of Field Service in Rural Education in the United States Department of Education (Kinnear, 1972). He had become a staunch advocate of the demonstration work believing that it would add dollars to the state's economy and dignity to rural living (Kinnear, 1972).

Eggleston also recognized that adding demonstration work as part of the college's venue significantly broadened the mission of the college. In an address to the faculty of the college to report actions of the recently adjourned legislature he celebrated the legislation as an opportunity "to make the state of Virginia the campus for the Virginia Polytechnic Institute" (Kinnear, 1972, p. 229).

Upon the request of his friend David F. Houston, Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, Eggleston dramatically proved his advocacy for the new demonstration and extension work by appointing himself as its first director (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941). He maintained these leadership responsibilities, in addition to the duties of the presidency, for two years.

World War I

The early work of Eggleston's extension service was indeed focused on the development of the important agriculture industry of the state and to enhance the quality of life enjoyed by rural Virginians. Demonstration work quickly flourished across the state. The timing couldn't have been better, because the country, and much of the civilized world, found itself facing an international calamity later to be known as World War I.

The international conflict created unprecedented market demand for agricultural products. Before the United States entered the war effort in 1917, many of its allies were becoming more dependent upon the production of American farmers to replace their loss in

production due to the transformation of their farmers to soldiers and their fertile farm lands to battle fields. Extension workers across the state helped farmers intensify and increase their production. It was a time of good profitability for the farmer who could keep his production costs low (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941).

When the United States entered the war in 1917, nationalism became as important a stimulus for greater agricultural production as the opportunity to realize greater profits. Eggleston wrote the United States Food Administrator Herbert Hoover offering him the services of the entire extension agency in work that had to be done to increase the production, preservation, and conservation of essential foods (Kinnear, 1972). He believed the “war would probably be won or lost before a new field organization could function” (Kinnear, 1972, p. 241).

With the support of President Eggleston and the state’s director of the Federal Food Commission Elijah B. White, extension farm demonstration agents were mobilized to promote increased production as a key to success with the war effort. “Corn, wheat, and meat would win the war” (Wallenstein, 1997, p. 112) was the message the agents carried across the state.

Their efforts reaped results that were recognized across the state. In his book recording the first one hundred years of Virginia Tech, Kinnear (1972) wrote:

The resulting activities of the extension workers in promoting food production and conservation received unstinted praise from the press in the state. One paper closed its tribute with the observation that ‘the people of Virginia should be very grateful to VPI for what it is doing for them as well as for America’. (p. 241)

It wasn’t only the farm demonstration agents who were involved in engaging citizens in the war effort. Home agents, who had been hired to develop and support the girls’ canning clubs, also mobilized to do their part in support of the war effort. Well before the United States’ entry into the war, home agents had expanded their outreach beyond girls’ canning clubs to adapting the concept of farm demonstration to the home. Home demonstration clubs for the mothers and other rural women had become a major program effort of the home agents. These clubs not only provided educational programs for the women, but they also created a forum for much needed social interaction.

Until the war, food preservation was a major program emphasis of the home demonstration clubs. Women were introduced to the latest technologies and practices on how to minimize food spoilage for the benefit of the farm and family. After the war began, techniques on food conservation were added to the program offerings home demonstration agents delivered across the state (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941).

The war also brought new opportunities to the work venue of the home agents. Working with the Red Cross, the agents mobilized participants in their home demonstration clubs and girls’ canning clubs to sew bandages and make clothes. They also helped organize community-

based Liberty Loan drives to assist in the financing of the war (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). Even though service was the primary outcome of these two efforts, participants also received new skills and knowledge such as of sewing and personal finance. The teaching of these new skills was consistent with the extension mission of education.

The first significant stretch of the mission of the young agency also came about as the result of an epidemic of influenza that hit the state in 1918. With the availability of nurses and health-care workers very much limited, home agents were called upon to assist the State Health Department with the care of the epidemic's victims by doing:

Nursing in destitute private families, helping in both city and town hospitals, organizing and managing hospitals where nurses could not be secured, opening diet kitchens, and acting as distributors of food, medicine and clothing from one end of the county to the other and taking the place of the doctors who could not be gotten but who had given her special instructions. (Jones, 1919, p 68)

In his recollection of the period, President Eggleston noted that home demonstration agents "did great service as nurses and health workers" in the epidemics of influenza that broke out during the war period (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p. 15). Eggleston went on to note:

Some argue that this was not their job, but the fact that they did it well endeared them to the hearts of the farm people with whom they worked, and aided in the development of a sound home economics program in this state. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p. 15)

Ella Agnew, the state program leader for home demonstration work, answered those who did not believe the involvement of the home agents' work with the influenza epidemic was a part of their job:

Why was it not? Did not all homes need help? Were they not demonstrating the vision of the leader from the beginning, who said "home demonstrators find their work wherever there is a need. The home extends as far as the need of the human family." (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 18)

Post War Efforts

World War I would end with the armistice of November 11, 1918. Virginia's farmers shared in the excitement of the Ally victory believing that their increased production contributed to the subsequent peace. The international peace, however, would present new challenges for Virginia's agricultural based economy.

As noted earlier, the war years had provided the state's farmers boom times. Realizing unprecedented yields from their production and receptive markets, farmers had enjoyed a strong

dollar with their dollar returning at least five percent overage on other services and commodities (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 20). The end of the war heralded a change in the market conditions, but as could be expected, changes in production did not occur. The subsequent result was a downward turn of the financial condition of the farmers. By the end of 1920, the average farmer's purchasing power had dropped more than thirty percent.

By 1922, many of Virginia's farmers were significantly feeling the effect of the downturn in agriculture profitability. John Hutcheson, who in 1919 became the third director of extension-- a position he would hold for twenty-six years, initiated an effort to put together a state-wide group that would set common directions for the agricultural industry and to develop strategies that would help farmers respond to the dire economic conditions.

This group, the Virginia Agricultural Advisory Council, involved key individuals and stakeholders from all segments of the agricultural industry including commodity groups and the state Department of Agriculture. It also included representatives from other segments of the private sector which had a significant vested interest in the agriculture industry such as the state bankers' association, the state Chamber of Commerce, railroads, and the media (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

After nearly two years of meetings to develop strategies, the Council unveiled an aggressive plan that would guide the direction of Virginia Cooperative Extension's work for the agricultural community. This plan had five major strategies:

- 1) To increase production of food and feed crops for home use.
- 2) To increase efficiency in crop and livestock production.
- 3) To encourage cooperation among farmers in the purchase of farm supplies and the sale of farm products.
- 4) To increase attention to the fitting of agricultural production to consumptive demands.
- 5) To develop practical methods for the improvement of rural living standards. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, pp. 15-16)

There are three critical points about the plan that are noteworthy. The first point is related to Hutcheson's process of engaging key stakeholders from across the state in determining extension's major program strategies. This is an important precedent that has become central to the character of the extension agency. It recognized that program determination must be made in concert with the citizens that are to be served. It also clearly communicated a commitment to relevance and that extension's value to the state is contingent upon its ability to respond to the critical issues confronting the people. The advisory council provided a vehicle through which constituency needs were identified. It also provided a means that allowed constituents to be a part of the solution. The concept of advisory councils was soon replicated across the state with each county encouraged to

create its own agricultural advisory council (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). The African-American extension workers from Hampton Institute, the state's 1890 land-grant college, also developed an advisory group of the farmers with whom they worked (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). This process of involving constituents and constituency groups in determining program direction continues to be a valued part of the extension program development model.

The second noteworthy item of the 1924 plan is related to its recognition that the educational needs of the agricultural community went beyond production. In its first ten years, extension's programs had been effective in introducing new production techniques to the farmers. Production had been the focus and farmers had enjoyed significant increases in their productivity. During the war, when markets were abundant, the increased production brought significant financial rewards. The diminished market conditions of the post war era brought new challenges and needs to the farmer. The harsh reality that increased production did not necessarily correlate to increased profitability was becoming too well known to too many farmers. In calling for "increased attention to the fitting of agricultural production to consumptive demand" (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p. 16), the plan acknowledged the need for extension to provide leadership in delivering education that would help farmers develop market strategies for their products.

The plan went further to suggest that extension should assist farmers in learning how to work cooperatively with each other in both the purchase of supplies and the sale of products. Such cooperative strategies could strengthen the farmers' position in the market place. These fundamentals would also increase the efficiencies of the farmers and could result in a net increase in their profitability. The cooperative way of doing business and the subsequent development of farmers' cooperatives would become common across the agricultural community.

The third important point of the Council's strategic plan was its call for the "development of practical methods for the improvement of rural living standards" (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p. 16). The roaring twenties did not roar for everyone. Rural Virginians suffered greatly. The dire economic conditions for the farmers took its toll on all facets of rural communities. The land-grant university through its research and extension service was challenged to take on the plight of rural Virginia to provide programs that would enhance the quality of life enjoyed by rural residents. This statement clearly communicated a belief that the university should generate the necessary knowledge that could be applied in rural communities and with rural families to improve their quality of life. This is a broad charge as so many factors influence standards of living.

It would be fair to say that extension's plan for the agricultural community and rural Virginia had a lasting impact. In 1939, fifteen years after its introduction, former director and President Eggleston commented that it had "been the basis of the extension program in the state" (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p. 15) for the past decade. Many of its features still characterize the contemporary extension program efforts.

The Depression Years

Despite extension's expanded programming efforts, things didn't let up much for the farmers over the next few years. Market conditions remained volatile and living conditions in rural Virginia remained much below the living standards of Virginians residing in the growing urban centers. Towards the end of the decade, other segments of the financial world began to experience some of the troubles being endured by the farming community. Finally, in October, 1929, the entire country was thrown into a full economic depression.

The depression years wiped out many of the country's business segments. None suffered more severely than agriculture. Many of the bank failures occurred in rural areas. Farmers' prices, which had dropped 40 percent prior to the depression, continued to erode (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). Newly imposed international trade tariffs for all practical purposes shut down foreign markets. Again, the ever increasing production of the American farmer was left with major surpluses which in turn sent prices tumbling. Between 1929 and 1933 prices of agricultural products slid another 50 percent (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

In March, 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt signed legislation enacted by Congress that boldly intervened into the dire situation facing farmers. This legislation known as the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) would provide price supports to encourage farmers to curb production of certain products. Nationwide administration of the act was assigned to the land-grant universities' extension services by the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture. This responsibility of having to administer and enforce the law would provide agents a very challenging task.

To many farmers, paying them not to grow something or, even worse, to destroy livestock or a crop already in production just did not make sense. This was not only contradictory to their values, but it appeared to be inconsistent with the production gains they had realized in the past decade. The farmers' contempt for the act was captured by W. H. Daughtrey, Virginia's administrator of the program:

I recall trying to explain the difficult program to a group of farmers at a country store in Brunswick County. One particular farmer asserted that he didn't intend to plough up a single plant. He said what God had given him no man could destroy. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 30)

Despite the problems with the legislation, extension agents responded by providing educational programs that would help farmers understand the important connection between production surpluses and deflated prices. Agents also worked one-on-one with farmers to develop individualized farm management plans that would maximize the financial benefit of the price support program to the farmer. Eggleston described the difficult dilemma extension agents found themselves in with their program efforts related to the Agricultural Adjustment Act:

Virginia farmers have higher regard for the extension agent who will help them with their programs, even though such programs are not perfect, than for the agent who sits back and says he will have nothing to do with such programs because they are not 100 percent sound. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p. 18)

Coupled with two extreme droughts in the summers of 1934 and 1936, the Agricultural Adjustment Act began to have the desired outcome of restoring parity prices to farmers. In 1936, Extension Director Hutcheson wrote:

100 units of farm products are again exchanging for 100 units of the goods and services of other groups, and we not only have agricultural progress but industrial progress. Just how long this progress will continue will depend on how long we maintain the proper balance between agriculture, industry, and labor. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 32)

The depression years brought other program venues to Virginia's extension service. The ability and capacity of the extension system to orchestrate change was recognized by developing federal agencies and thus extension was included in the program delivery of several new initiatives. For example in southwest Virginia, the newly created Tennessee Valley Authority forged a partnership with Virginia Tech to have extension agents develop and deliver educational programs that supported initiatives to improve soil fertility in counties contained within the Tennessee Valley watershed. Extension's role included working with selected farmers in developing five-year management plans that included regular soil testing and strategies on how the farmer would restore fertility to the soil.

With the 1936 enactment of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, extension was asked to provide statewide educational programming in support of the work of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). In addition to assisting the SCS organize farmers and landowners to establish local conservation districts, extension provided education that demonstrated newly discovered methods that could be incorporated into their farm management practices to reduce the amount of erosion that was taking place on the farms. The latest research by Virginia Tech scientists had determined that new practices could reduce erosion by as much as 94 tons per acre (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

Rural Electrification

Again, it wasn't just the farmer who was the beneficiary of the programming provided through extension in the depression years. The quality of life of families and the economic well being of communities also continued to be a major focus of the extension program. Home agents advanced their educational programs through home demonstration clubs. The education focus was on ideas that contributed to family self-sufficiency included home gardening, the latest in food preservation, and personal garment design and construction.

One of the great successes of the agency during this time on behalf of families was its significant contribution to bringing public utilities into rural communities. Whether it was helping individual families develop strategies to get running water into their homes or creating plans for extending the access of centrally generated electricity into rural communities, extension took the lead in getting the latest research out to the people. Extension first began addressing the lack of electricity in rural communities prior to the economic crash of 1929.

As early as 1923, extension's agricultural engineering specialist Charles E. Seitz began working with leaders of farm organizations, rural communities, and the state's electric power companies to begin developing strategies that would bring electricity to rural areas (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). At that time, the minimal uses of electricity on the farms were being sustained by either gasoline driven generators or in very few cases small farm based hydroelectric units. In 1924, the first rural power line was constructed in Henrico County. This experimental power line ran "4.8 miles and served the rural homes and farms along its route" (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 108). Seitz' research of the performance of this rural line demonstrated that central station electric service could work in rural Virginia. When his research was published in 1926, it was estimated that only 1,500 rural homes and businesses—500 of which were farms—had power line service.

College of the Fields (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987) chronicles Seitz' efforts to bring electricity into rural Virginia:

Seitz encouraged the two largest power companies in the state to establish rural departments and place an agricultural engineer in charge of their rural development programs. The Committee on the Relation of Electricity to Agriculture (CREA) worked with the State Corporation Commission to develop a uniform rural power line extension policy. Such a plan was announced in 1929. It proposed that the companies would finance and build rural lines where the customers served would guarantee a certain minimum revenue for a stated period of years. The first Rural Electrification Conference and short course was held at VPI in 1929. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 108-109)

Extension's rural electrification initiative under Seitz' leadership paid off. By 1935, approximately 5,800 miles of power lines had been installed in rural Virginia and central-station electrical service was being provided to nearly 40,000 rural customers. The number of rural customers being served would continue to grow by 10,000 a year to where by 1938 approximately 70,000 rural Virginians had the luxury of central station electric service (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941).

Getting electric service to the people was just part of the story. A whole different educational strategy was teaching people how to use it. Along with the electricity came new tools and resources that could be used on the farms and in the homes. Again, in partnership with the state's electric power companies and the electric cooperatives, extension agents developed

and delivered programs that demonstrated how this new technology could help farmers and rural families. Finally, many families were able to utilize and enjoy conveniences that their urban living friends and relatives had been enjoying for some time.

World War II

The technological advances of the 1930's alone did not end the economic perils of agriculture and the rural communities. The land-grant universities, through the cooperative extension system, had contributed greatly to supporting several of the initiatives created by President Roosevelt's New Deal. The disparity between rural and urban communities still existed, but many of the basic necessities were no longer a variable.

The depression years also saw farmers becoming more productive. By 1939, just 25 years after the establishment of the national extension system, American farmers had become the most productive in the world. Virginia farmers were certainly no exception. In his reflections on the successes of Virginia Cooperative Extension Service's first twenty five years, Eggleston observed:

Crop estimate figures for the five-year periods 1909-13 and 1934-38 indicate that the average yield per acre for potatoes as increased from 102 to 120 bushels; for tobacco, from 685 pounds to 805 pounds; for cotton, from 259 to 276 pounds; for peanuts, from 709 to 1,062 pounds; for wheat, from 12 to 13½ bushels; and for oats from 17 to 20 bushels. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p.21)

Eggleston went on to illustrate that similar gains were also being realized in areas of livestock and dairy production:

The number of chickens on Virginia farms has increased from less than 6,000,000 to an average of more than 9,000,000 during the past twenty-five years; and the total of all poultry products has more than doubled. But of still greater significance is the fact that from 1910 to 1935 the average egg production per hen increased from 72 to 87 eggs.

Turkey production has also increased rapidly. The number of turkeys raised on Virginia farms increased from 528,000 in 1929 to 788,000 in 1938.

The number of milk cows in Virginia has increased from an average of 335,000 from 1909-13 to an average of 413,000 in 1934-38; and the average production per cow has increased from approximately 2,700 pounds to more than 3,500 pounds per year.

Prior to the establishment of extension work in Virginia most of the manufactured dairy products used in our large cities were imported from other

States. In 1915, creamery butter production amounted to less than 2,000,000 pounds and the production of ice cream less than a quarter of a million gallons annually. In 1937 Virginia manufacturing plants made more than 6,000,000 pounds of butter, 3,580,000 gallons of ice cream, and 18,000,000 pounds of condensed and evaporated milk. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1941, p. 22-23)

Unfortunately, though, the increased productivity didn't produce much needed economic relief. This eventually came about through the misfortune of others. The international scene was once again consumed by a growing conflict in Europe. Germany, under the leadership of Adolph Hitler, was forcefully annexing its neighbors. The world was on the brink of a second world war in less than three decades and some of the world's best and most fertile farm lands were being transformed into battle fields. As was true in the earliest days of the extension service, a war in Europe meant unprecedented market demands for American food and fiber products.

The farmers' realized production gains would prove to be invaluable in the upcoming years. In December 1941, the United States was propelled into the war effort. America's farmers were faced with needing to supply the necessary food to feed the largest war effort known to mankind.

Immediately extension began to intensify its educational programming to assist farmers in meeting agriculture production quotas imposed by the federal government as part of the home front war effort. Virginia farmers were asked to increase milk by three percent; eggs by seven percent; and swine by 15 percent. They were challenged to increase their fat and oil producing crops by as much as possible (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

The major obstacle Virginia's farmers confronted with respect to meeting the quotas was the absence of farm laborers. The war effort had bled rural communities of many of its most able workers. Farmers had the know how to meet the production quotas, but the manpower wasn't available to produce.

Extension responded to the need. With the enactment of the Farm Labor Bill in April 1943, the extension system was assigned responsibilities to help recruit and train farm laborers. Practically every segment of society was perused to find potential candidates to help with the farm production efforts:

Virginia Extension workers helped supply the state's farmers with many kinds of laborers including Bahamians, migratory workers, Boy Scouts, British and American sailors and soldiers, men and women from urban centers, local people, vacationers, mountaineers, conscientious objectors, convicts, and school youth. In a few sections of the state, through an Extension-administered program, labor was provided by prisoners of war. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 38)

These recruitment and training labors yielded positive results. Virginia farmers were able to meet their farm quotas.

Another unique contribution Virginia extension made to the successful war effort was the product of a major statewide educational program that encouraged families to raise enough food to sustain their own needs. This educational initiative, known as the Victory Garden Program, involved all extension staff as well as over 5,000 volunteers. It resulted in over 50,000 families participating in growing enough food to feed their families and livestock (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). The success of this effort would allow for much of the domestic agricultural production to go to feed the allied troops.

To maximize the total effect of the enhanced home production, agents provided educational programs that encouraged the preservation of foods. Demonstrations on how to use pressure cookers for canning became a major program focus of the home demonstration agents. In 1943, agents working with families on the processes of food preservation reported 35,000,000 quarts of canned food (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

As was true during the World War I years, agents were also called upon to lead other educational efforts that were beyond what was part of their normal work. The Red Cross was one major beneficiary of this activity. In communities across the state, home demonstration agents provided first aid training to families, led blood donor drives, and organized groups that produced garments and surgical dressings. Agents also helped in the financing of the war effort by organizing educational programs that promoted the purchase of defense bonds.

Rural Virginia also became a source of scrap metal for the needed production of war machinery. Practically every farm across the state had its own scrap metal junk depot created by old and broken down farm machinery. Extension agents organized farm clean-up efforts and worked with families to encourage their contribution of their useless metals to support the war effort. It was estimated that in a six-month period in 1943 these efforts resulted in over 180,000 tons of scrap iron and steel being reclaimed from Virginia farms (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

In Search of a Post-War Identity

World War II ended in August 1945. Its successful completion was a tribute to the work of a determined people—both those who risked (and gave) their lives in combat as well as those who committed much of themselves to provide the necessary resources to sustain the war effort. Virginia farmers and families had done their part. Virginia extension had made its contributions—responding to the many venues and needs identified by its funding partners and local constituencies. However, there were those who questioned whether or not some of its contribution was outside its perceived mission. An example of such was captured in College of the Fields as Clarke County agent C.C. Funkhouser is quoted as saying in 1943:

We hardly know what the status of Extension work in the county is at present. With all the emergency programs increasing and changing from day to day, it is impossible to carry on constructive long-time Extension programs and more. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 46)

Indeed for much of two decades, extension had tailored its programs around the political and economic agendas of the day. Many, including Extension Director J. D. Hutcheson, argued that such reaction was the nature of extension:

Extension never stays the same for more than two years in a row. Its work moves like marching men, and the Extension which does not change its program to meet changing conditions is soon out of step. And so far as an Extension agent is concerned, he has to either adjust or adjourn. (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 46)

Unlike World War I, the end of World War II didn't usher in catastrophic economic conditions for agriculture. The European recovery plan provided a relatively stable market place for the American farmer. Socially it was a time of reunion for many families and a time for the creation of others.

Without major external pressures, the post-war times provided extension at both the state and federal levels the opportunity to deal internally with the stresses that had been spawned by the different perspectives as to how it would interpret its mission to the people. The depression and war had propelled extension into programming venues well beyond production agriculture and traditional home economics, which had been included in the language of the Smith-Lever Act.

In 1946, the United States Department of Agriculture developed and published Scope of Extension's Educational Responsibility which recognized that the end of the depression and the war provided extension the opportunity to reevaluate its programming priorities for relevance to a new world order. SCOPE 46, as the report was commonly known, also attempted to provide a definition as to what the role and mission of extension would be in the post-war era.

This landmark document took a very broad perspective on the value of extension's outreach to all the people of the United States. It claimed that every citizen was a potential customer of extension programming. It suggested that the future of extension should recognize the historical development of the agency to help provide for the broad base of peoples' educational needs, as well as the original rural direction provided by the Smith-Lever Act. In addition to production agriculture, the report validated programming in and around issues facing rural communities such as marketing, rural health care, farm and home management, natural resource conservation, and leadership development. It also exhorted that extension had a role to play in shaping public policy and helping families adjust to changing social relationships and cultural values.

Scope 46 set a broad agenda for the contemporary extension service. It reconfirmed Hutcheson's expressed notion that "the extension that does not change its programs to meet changing conditions is soon out of step" (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 48). It held on to the foundation that by its very nature extension was deeply rooted in rural Virginia, but yet the agency was challenged to reach out to those living outside rural communities. Extension, and thus the land-grant university, should meet the people where they were with the research-based knowledge that would help them live "more fruitful lives" (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 48).

Expanding the Outreach

The quality of life enjoyed by all the citizens of the Commonwealth became the ultimate goal of Virginia Cooperative Extension. The 1940's and 50's were characterized with an expanded program outreach to the agricultural community (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). New program initiatives included a greater emphasis on small grain production and expanding the state's grazing lands. The realization of both of these initiatives also helped promote diversification in livestock production with great gains being made in the area of beef cattle. Farms across the state became extended classrooms of both Virginia Tech and Virginia State universities with an increasing menu of demonstration plots and field day opportunities (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

Family programming also expanded significantly in the years following the war. The baby-boom era created a large market of young families needing and seeking education in issues related to home economics. Mothers organized themselves for educational purposes in extension sponsored home demonstration clubs. Membership in these clubs exploded to over 40,000 members by 1954 making the Virginia Federation of Home Demonstration Clubs, the largest organization for women statewide (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). The educational programs provided the mothers information on non-traditional topics such as parenting and family finances, as well as the more traditional topics of clothing design and construction, menu planning, and food preservation.

Possibly, though, the greatest value membership in the home demonstration clubs afforded participants was the opportunity to be part of a support group. The monthly (sometimes more frequent) meetings gave the women the chance to share their frustrations, concerns, and joys with others who were in a similar station of life. The home of the host member was used as a learning laboratory for the issue of the day. It was a wonderful learning model that met the complex needs of growing families.

This was also a time for great expansion in the 4-H program. Not only did the membership of the organization grow significantly, its educational offerings became much diverse reflecting the ever-expanding interests of youth.

A special feature of the Virginia 4-H program emerged from this period of time. Since the early days of the 4-H program, summer camps and other residential programs known as 4-H

short courses had been popular among its members. The summer camps were held at relatively rustic camps at different locations across the state, while the short courses were usually held on the Virginia Tech campus. Early in his tenure as state 4-H program leader (1950-62), William Skelton proposed the development of regional, comprehensive learning centers dedicated for the purpose of advancing the state 4-H program. These 4-H educational centers would serve as the sites for the weeklong, summer residential camps. They would also be used throughout the year as training facilities for 4-H adult volunteer leaders and to provide additional learning opportunities for the 4-H members. Efforts were launched in several localities across the state to help advance Skelton's concept. The first to come to fruition was the establishment of the Southwest Virginia 4-H Center outside of Abingdon in 1958. This center would become the predecessor to six 4-H educational complexes that significantly extended programming to the youth audience (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

Also in 1958, the United State Department of Agriculture published an update to SCOPE 46 (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987). This update, known as SCOPE 58, identified six priority areas for extension programming nationwide:

- 1) Marketing
- 2) Conservation of natural resources
- 3) Farm and home management
- 4) Leadership development
- 5) Public affairs awareness
- 6) Community development

These six federal program priorities certainly didn't stretch the mission of extension into venues not explored before by the agency. They were consistent with what Virginia extension had been doing for most of its nearly half century of service to the people of the Commonwealth. They did clearly communicate a strong commitment to a broad-based strategy for extending the knowledge of the land-grant university in support of agriculture, families, and communities.

SCOPE 58 in essence was the reconfirmation of what extension had evolved to become since its inception 44 years before with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act. The report said that "the legal mandate implicit in the Smith-Lever Act reinforced by the insistent demands of people for help in understanding public problems, amply justifies everything now being done and more" (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 62-63).

Thus, the extension system had evolved into a locally based resource for public problems. As the state's social and economic conditions had expanded well beyond an agricultural foundation, so did the outreach of the state's land-grant universities. For many Virginians, extension had become a trusted resource for the prevailing issues that they confronted. Being steeped in its agricultural tradition and hinged upon a research foundation contained within Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture, extension would enter the 1960's still very much an agency focused on rural Virginia.

This tradition would be tested in the next decade as the state and the country experienced a great social and economic transformation. This transformation would include further migration from rural America, significant advances in technology and science research due to the space race, and a challenge to social order.

CHAPTER FOUR

A LAND-GRANT MODEL TOWARDS FULFILLMENT OF A TRIPARTITE MISSION

The Model Land-Grant of the 20th Century

The social transformation that occurred in the United States in this late 1950's and 60's challenged all of higher education to respond to new opportunities and problems. Complicating the issues for higher education was also an unparalleled explosion of students matriculating to college and university campuses. Those students were the product of the post-World War II baby boom. Most land-grant universities responded by greatly diversifying their curricular offerings. Agriculture and the mechanical arts remained a major piece of their academic agendas, but they were supplemented with new ventures in business, other sciences, and the arts.

The diversification of academic programs raised questions as to how far the program offerings of the extension service should follow this diversification. From its founding in 1872, Virginia Tech had, throughout its first century, persisted to satisfy its Latin motto: Ut Prosim, which means "That I May Serve." Its record of service to the Commonwealth was reflective of a secure self-image that was true to its peculiarities and special purposes. In addition to delivering quality resident teaching programs in agriculture, mechanic arts, and military tactics, as mandated by the Morrill Act (1862), Virginia Tech had been quick to embrace and to champion its accountability to students beyond its Blacksburg campus.

The Commonwealth of Virginia was its campus. It had been a good steward of the resources provided through subsequent federal and state legislation such as the Hatch Act of 1887, which extended the mission of the land-grant to advance agricultural research, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which created the cooperative extension system (Brunner, 1949). By 1962, the 100th anniversary of the first Morrill Act, the 90 year-old Virginia Tech had a comprehensive presence across the Commonwealth. Practically every county and many of the independent cities had a Virginia Tech cooperative extension office. These outlets provided programs primarily in agriculture, home economics, and 4-H youth development (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1987). Additionally, the university in partnership with locally controlled not-for-profit groups, owned and operated facilities to support the 4-H summer camping program in Virginia Beach, Jamestown, Appomattox, and Abingdon. A fourth was being planned in Franklin County on Appalachian Power Company's newly constructed Smith Mountain Lake (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987).

Just as impressive were the properties the university owned or managed in fulfillment of the intent of the Hatch Act. The university conducted agricultural research at eleven different research stations, including the Tobacco Research Station at Chatham; the Shenandoah Valley Research Station at Steele's Tavern; the Experimental Orchards and Winchester Fruit Research Laboratory in Frederick County; the Piedmont Research Laboratory, south of Charlottesville; the

Southwest Virginia Station at Glade Spring; the Piedmont Research Station, Orange; the Tidewater Research Station, Holland; the Beef Cattle Research Station, Front Royal; the Virginia Forage Research Station in Upperville; and the Eastern Virginia Research Station, Warsaw (Young, 1970).

Other off-campus branches maintained by the university demonstrated a progressive commitment to extending the full scope of the university to the citizens. These included two divisions of the school of engineering--the Danville Division of VPI, which began in 1946, and the Roanoke Technical Institute, which was started in 1958. In 1962, the Virginia General Assembly approved a plan and provided resources for the university to expand even further by developing off-campus two year programs in Wytheville and Covington-Clifton Forge (Flowers, 1975). The success of these two efforts eventually inspired the creation of the Virginia Community College system with the Wytheville program becoming Wytheville Community College and the Covington-Clifton Forge project becoming Dabney S. Lancaster Community College.

Visionary Leadership

The year 1962 was not only significant in as such that it was the centennial celebration of the enactment of the Morrill Act, but it was also the year in which the university welcomed a new president--just its eleventh. Under the leadership of a youthful and visionary T. Marshall Hahn, the university launched an even more aggressive campaign to enhance its capacity to serve the Commonwealth. In his twelve years in the presidency, Hahn helped transform Virginia Tech from a predominantly male-focused, agricultural and engineering institution into a major comprehensive university (Virginia Tech, 1995c).

The list of Hahn's achievements as Virginia Tech's president is impressive. The resident student enrollment tripled from 4,000 to 12,000. Obviously to meet the needs of such an expansive growth in student enrollment, the university's Blacksburg campus experienced a major transformation with the addition of twelve new buildings. The academic program experienced great diversification with the addition of several new programs and the creation of two additional colleges (Virginia Tech, 1974).

Recognizing the immense contributions of his predecessor, Virginia Tech's current president Paul Torgersen has commented, "Marshall Hahn literally reshaped the physical and cultural landscape of Virginia Tech. In doing so, he helped develop the invaluable strengths this university needs for the 21st century" (Virginia Tech, 1995c, p. 21). One of the greatest of these invaluable strengths would be Hahn's commitment and consistent action to having the university fulfill all three parts of its appointed tripartite mission. To him, Virginia Tech had to be an equal blend of resident teaching, research, and extension:

Virginia Tech is both a land-grant university and a state university. Typical of such institutions is its unique three-prong mission for resident instruction,

research, and extension. All three are important, core values to the land-grant university. Such universities are to be about the transmission of knowledge through both the classroom and the extended campus and the generation of new knowledge. (M. Hahn, personal communication, February 9, 1998)

Hahn's vision for Virginia Tech was for it to become the model land-grant university. "One of my objectives as president of Virginia Tech was to bring it into national prominence in all three areas: instruction, research, and extension. In many ways, Virginia Tech was a sleeping giant and the times were right to wake it up" (M. Hahn, personal communication, February 9, 1998).

William Skelton, who became Hahn's chief architect and field general for the university's expanded role in extension activities, commented, "Dr. Hahn believed in his heart that extension was equally important as research and teaching. Virginia Tech had no primary nor secondary mission. He saw the combination of the three is what made the university complete" (W. Skelton, personal communication, April 9, 1997).

Hahn was not only visionary--he was also a pragmatist. Soon after becoming president of Virginia Tech, he realized that Virginia Tech's great identity across the state was tied to its traditional baseline programs--agriculture and engineering. Since the end of World War II, Virginia had experienced a significant transition of its population. Much of the state's population growth was occurring in a triangle bounded by three centers--Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Tidewater. Not only was this urbanization happening at points furthest from the Blacksburg campus presenting real problems for student recruitment, but it also heralded the potential erosion of political support for the university. Rural Virginia and the agricultural community were at risk of losing its dominance of the state's political agenda. Hahn recalls:

The mid-60's were a time of changing levels of political influence. The rural areas of Virginia were seeing its political base diminish, while the growth in the urban areas was enhancing the political positions of people living in those regions. For Virginia Tech to sustain its broad base of support, it was important for us to develop and deliver programs that met the needs of citizens living in both rural and urban areas. (M. Hahn, personal communication, February 9, 1998)

Two Potential Models

It was this concern and his sincere belief that Virginia Tech had a larger agenda that guided Hahn to examine how the university might be better equipped to take its land-grant purposes to a higher level. The ordinary was never good enough for President Hahn--he always sought something better. It was Skelton, who at the time was director of the Cooperative Extension Service, who first conceived of the idea that the university could never realize a bigger

role for extension unless it was placed differently within the organizational structure of the university (W. Skelton, personal communication, March 29, 1995).

Having returned in the autumn of 1965 from a post-doctoral study experience at the University of Wisconsin in which he had explored the organizational structures of extension programs across the country, Skelton discovered that Virginia Tech's structure, which had cooperative extension as an administrative unit within the College of Agriculture, was the classical model adopted by most of the 1862 land-grant institutions. He also postulated that as long as extension was so aligned it would be forever limited in its ability to adapt to emerging needs from across the state and to represent the full social capacity held within an expanding university (W. Skelton, personal communication, March 29, 1995).

To fulfill the dream of Hahn's university, Skelton proposed that Virginia Tech must transform its administrative structure and place extension organizationally outside the venue of just one college (W. Skelton, personal communication, March 29, 1995). Skelton believed that the mission of extension was broader than just one college:

Simply put, I believe the mission of extension is to make available the resources of the university to the people of Virginia. When I say resources, I mean the full capacity of the university, not respective to any discipline or subject matter. As the needs of the people have diversified, so did the need for extension to diversify. If we are to be serious about the tripartite mission of the land-grant university, then we need to respect the fact that where instruction and research exist, so should there be an extension program. Extension needs to change with the needs of the people. (W. Skelton, personal communication, April 9, 1997)

In late 1965, Skelton submitted to President Hahn a choice of two models that would facilitate expanding the program outreach of extension. The first proposed model was to create a College of Extension and Continuing Education. In this plan, all cooperative extension activity, as well as all the university's continuing education functions, would be organized within a single college. All faculty members, including extension agents, given the responsibility of off-campus program delivery would have their academic appointment in this college. The college would function in the traditional sense of a college with departments and with a dean as the administrative head (W. Skelton, personal communication, March 29, 1995).

Skelton's second model was much more audacious as it called for a restructuring of the university that would bring all special educational activities off-campus and to non-traditional students under one administrative officer, a Dean of Extension. This officer would work with and through the deans of the university's six colleges in the coordination and delivery of extension programs. It was a model that recognized that each college had a responsibility in fulfillment of the university's tripartite mission. Faculty would retain their academic appointments within their respective units, but faculty within those units may have differing responsibilities--some would teach resident students, some would conduct research, and some

would extend the university's research and resources to citizens across the state (Flowers, 1975). The keystone of the model was the proposition that the Commonwealth formalize the structure by establishing independent funding streams for the three missions. Instead of Virginia Tech being one funded agency of the Commonwealth, it would become three: Virginia Tech Division of Instruction, Virginia Tech Division of Research, and Virginia Tech Division of Extension.

Noteworthy is the fact that both models featured extension as the critical operative. Then, as now, Virginia Tech was grappling with the notion of what to call its non-research/non-resident teaching activities. Cooperative extension was only a part of this effort--what should the full effort be called? Public service, outreach, and extension emerged as the favored choices. Hahn, Skelton, and university Executive Vice-President Warren Brandt agreed that Virginia Tech was to be about extension. Skelton remembered the discussions:

Other universities in the state carried out public service. Only Virginia Tech and Virginia State were legally authorized to do extension. The people already knew and could identify with the term extension. We (Hahn, Brandt, and Skelton) spent hours upon hours debating this issue. We conscientiously made the decision that which ever model we pursued, its trademark would be Extension. (W. Skelton, personal communication, March 29, 1995)

Skelton's recommendations were referred by Hahn to a university Self-Study Committee, which was preparing for the reaccreditation process by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The intent was to have the Self-Study Committee review and evaluate the two models as a part of its report that would be reviewed by the Visiting Accreditation Committee in the spring, 1966. Hahn believed that having the recommendation come out of this process would strengthen its appeal within the university community and would help build a stronger case for action when it was taken to the Virginia General Assembly at its 1968 session (W. Skelton, personal communication, March 29, 1995). With Skelton as its chair, Hahn had every reason to believe that the Self-Study Committee would be diligent about its assignment and come forth with the "proper recommendation" (W. Strother, personal communication, May 8, 1995).

A Changing Political Environment

According to Warren Strother, retired director of Virginia Tech's Division of Information Services and historian of the T. Marshall Hahn era, President Hahn had an uncanny ability to "read" the environment in which he operated. "He was a masterful politician and an even more skillful opportunist," observed Strother. "He constantly looked for ways in which he could 'sell' his vision for the university. He was a beautiful propagandist" (W. Strother, personal communication, May 8, 1995).

The results of the state elections of November 1965, provided Hahn the perfect opportunity to test his political prowess and persuasion skills. Mills Godwin was elected the state's governor and he immediately set out to make higher education the foremost priority of his

administration. In the closing days of its 1964 session, the General Assembly authorized a comprehensive study of higher education. The Bird Commission's (named for its chair State Senator Lloyd C. Bird of Chesterfield) fresh and progressive report, as well as a national agenda caught up in President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, provided Governor Godwin with the impetus to propose that every Virginian should have easy access to a post-secondary education. The foundation of his educational agenda was to be a system of two-year colleges geographically disbursed across the state. The Virginia Community College system was born.

Hahn moved quickly to embrace the idea and promptly became one of its most outspoken champions. Being the perennial opportunist, Hahn foresaw the potential the addition of the community colleges held for Virginia Tech. The university's own two schools at Wytheville and Covington-Clifton Forge had already proven to be good sources of students. A statewide system could multiply this effort. Just as importantly, however, Hahn was quick to philosophically subscribe to any effort that made educational access its underpinning (W. Strother, personal communication, March 8, 1995).

If access was to be a priority of the new administration, Virginia Tech had a rightful interest in being a part of that endeavor. The timing was right to surface the idea of restructuring Virginia Tech. In January 1966, Hahn asked Skelton to pull together his ideas and to write draft legislation to present to the General Assembly. The Self-Study Committee agreed to push forward with the three divisions model. Draft legislation was prepared to have two different bills--one creating a Virginia Tech Extension Division and the other creating a Virginia Tech Research Division--introduced in the 1966 session of the General Assembly.

Finding a patron for the legislation was easy. State Senator George M. Cochran, who was in the middle of serving a second term on the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, agreed to sponsor both legislative pieces. As history will many times play out, there is irony in the fact that it was Cochran who provided the leadership for the endeavor. He was a graduate of the University of Virginia, and, before accepting his appointment to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors in 1960, had never been to the Blacksburg campus and had absolutely no understanding of extension (G. Cochran, personal communication, May 8, 1995). Adding even greater to the irony is the fact that Senator Cochran's Senatorial District encompassed many of the same localities--Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro--that were represented by Senator Frank Nolen, who sponsored legislation in 1994 that would rescind the establishment of the two separate divisions (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1966c).

The Legislative Process

On Friday, February 11, 1966, Senator Cochran delivered the university's proposed legislation to the Clerk of the Senate. The Research Division Bill, designated as Senate Bill 323, and the Extension Division legislation, known as Senate Bill 324, were the only two pieces of legislation submitted on behalf of Virginia Tech. The citation to the Research Division Bill read:

S.B. NO. 323:

A bill to amend and reenact Sections 23-133, 23-135.1, 23-135.2, 23-135.4 and 23-135.5, of the Code of Virginia, and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding thereto a section numbered 23-135.6, the amended and new sections relating to the establishment of a Research Division of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, to transfer certain functions to this Division, define its purposes and administration; to dispose of its receipts and to appropriate funds therefor; and to repeal Section 23-135.3. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1966a)

The citation for the Extension Division legislation was not much different, although it did recognize in its wording the unique cooperative nature of extension by allowing for the appropriation of funds from localities:

S.B. NO. 324:

A bill to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 3 a chapter numbered 6.1 consisting of sections numbered 3-44.1 through 3-44.8 relating to the Extension Division within the Virginia Polytechnic Institute; its functions; an appropriation therefor and the uses thereof; authorizing localities to appropriate money therefor; the duties of Virginia Polytechnic Institute to select personnel and supervise work of Extension Division, and reports to be filed; reference throughout Code; and to repeal Chapter 6 of Title 3 containing sections numbered 3-40 through 3-44 of the Code of Virginia, relating to County Demonstration work. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1966a)

Senator Cochran's bills cruised through the legislative process without much attention and debate. Both were immediately referred to the Committee on Public Institutions and Education from which they were reported out on Thursday, February 24, 1966, without changes. The first reading of the bills on the Senate floor took place the following day, while the second reading was on Monday, February 28. Two days later, Wednesday, March 2, the bills were read for the third time and when the question was called both bills passed with the identical vote of 38-yeyes; 0-nays (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1966c).

The bills took separate courses in the House of Delegates. After the first reading of both bills on Thursday, March 3, S.B. 324 was referred to the Committee on Education, while S. B. 323 was referred to the Committee on Agriculture. Both received the approval of their respective committees, but due to the heavy docket of the Education Committee, S.B. 324 was reported out and read for a second time a day after S.B. 323, March 9 and 8, respectively. On Thursday, March 10, S.B. 323 was read for a third time and was passed unanimously without amendment. The next day, S.B. 324 received the same action. With the signatures of House Speaker E. Blackburn Moore and Lieutenant Governor Fred G. Pollard already attached as verification of the action of both chambers of the General Assembly, Governor Godwin signed the bills into law on April 1 to be effective on July 1, 1966.

Senator Cochran was delighted by the action, but was not surprised at its ease through the legislative process:

There were primarily two reasons the legislation received such expeditious action. First of all, at that time the General Assembly did not make it a practice to meddle with the internal affairs of agencies and institutions, and the proposed legislation was seen as an effort to enhance the internal capacity of Virginia Tech. Secondly, President Hahn had established a great respect with members of the General Assembly. He had the full confidence of most members. If Dr. Hahn was convinced this action was in the best interest of Virginia Tech and the state, we were anxious to follow his lead. (G. Cochran, telephone interview, May 8, 1995)

The Legacy of Senate Bill 324

The legislation truly announced a new day for Virginia Tech. The specific language of Senate Bill 324 was written so broadly that the university now had legal precedent and authorization to aggressively develop and deliver a variety of programs across the state. The duties of the new division were defined in the bill's Section 3-44.2:

The Division shall provide the people of the Commonwealth information and knowledge through instruction and practical demonstration in such fields as agriculture, business, industry, home economics, resource development, 4-H Club work, and subjects relating thereto, and imparting information on said subjects through demonstrations, conferences, intensive courses, workshops, publications, meetings, and otherwise; and the necessary printing and distribution of information in connection with the foregoing. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1966a)

Hahn and the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors operationalized the legislation by formally establishing the Division of Extension on July 1. Skelton was officially appointed its first dean on August 16. In announcing the establishment of the Extension Division, President Hahn said:

All of the university Extension activities are being consolidated to increase the quality and scope of Extension Services of VPI. The Dean of the Extension Division is charged with the overall administration of the university's total spectrum of Extension programs. (Flowers, 1975, p. 53-54).

Specific program assignments to the new division included Cooperative Extension Service, State Technical Services, and General Extension, which was defined as all other off-campus, university-sponsored programs and activities; graduate credit courses; and the non-credit education programs conducted on campus (Flowers, 1975).

The Virginia Tech experiment received quick acclaim. When the Visiting Committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools made its report after its October 23-26 study, it included a significant observation and prediction:

VPI is recognizing its enlarged role as an educational leader of the state and region, and it expects to expand its off-campus services steadily during the years just ahead. If these developments can be carried through as now projected, VPI may well become one of the outstanding universities of the nation. (Southern Association of Colleges and School, 1966, p. 69)

Five years later, after closely monitoring the successes of the Virginia Tech initiative, the Southern Association's Commission on Colleges revised its accreditation criteria to include a recommendation that advocated that other member land-grant institutions replicate the three division model (Virginia Tech, 1978).

Impact Upon the Commonwealth

There was strong evidence in the Virginia Tech experience that warranted such bold action by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Within five years after the enactment of the legislation, the university had successfully delivered on its vision. Off-campus course offerings jumped from 35 in fiscal year 1966-67 to 233 in 1971-72. Registration in these courses correspondingly multiplied from 750 (FY 67) to 4,298 (FY 72) (Virginia Tech, 1975).

Registration in campus-based, non-credit programs, which were practically non-existent in 1966, exceeded 10,000 in 1972. Much of this may be attributable to another product of the new division--the construction and opening of a continuing education facility on the Virginia Tech campus. This facility, which today operates as the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center, was a major early effort of the Extension Division. It opened in 1968 (Flowers, 1975).

The university's traditional cooperative extension programs also blossomed under the new structure. Between 1966 and 1972 forty additional extension agents were added to the field staff. Nearly three hundred extension program technicians were also employed to support the work of all extension agents. Campus-based faculty with extension responsibilities jumped by 80 full time equivalencies. Total clients served by the division's cooperative extension programs bounced over twenty-five percent from 545,500 in 1967 to 689,000 in 1972 (Virginia Tech, 1975).

Finally, the state's commitment to its creation is best reflected in its willingness to fund the Extension Division. In its first year, the Extension Division was funded by state General Funds at \$6.4 million. In 1972, General Fund support had grown to just short of \$12 million (Virginia Tech, 1975). Additionally, non-General Fund revenues, including appropriations from local governments, climbed from \$600,000 in 1967 to \$2 million in 1972.

The late 1960's and 70's saw Virginia Tech truly staking out an enhanced position of service to the people of the Commonwealth. It was a very good time for Virginia Tech. Hahn attributed much of this to the establishment of the Extension Division:

The strengthened Extension Division with a program presence across all colleges of the university provided us a vehicle through which we could reach all areas of the state with our programs. It was this enhanced capacity to meet the needs of all the people that gained us political favor and allowed for our unusual growth in all areas of the university. The greater the ties that we had to the people of the state through extension, the greater our success was with all our initiatives on behalf of the university. (M. Hahn, personal communication, February 8, 1998)

Skelton was quick to give much of this success to President Hahn and his bold actions on behalf of extension:

Hahn brokered his support for the community college system to strengthen the extension mission of Virginia Tech. Hahn was an effective spokesperson for education and an even more effective political broker for his university. He was the complete spokesman for education. He and Governor Godwin had great respect for each other. (W. Skelton, personal communication, April 9, 1997)

In reflecting back upon the total impact of the new structure on extension, Skelton notes four critical points:

- 1) It established credibility that Virginia Tech had a full array of resources that people needed and could use.
- 2) It allowed for Virginia Tech to create State Technical Services. On a competitive basis the university received dollars from the federal government to begin a program that helped with the technical assistance of businesses. This effort showed that we could meet people where they were. When the federal partner phased out resources for this, the state picked them up.
- 3) It made us to reevaluate the role of the agent. No longer was the agent a helper, but he or she became a teacher. Agents were brokers of information -- having to connect community needs to the research of the university.
- 4) Finally, it helped build the university's image at the local level. The extension office was truly the front door to Virginia Tech. Agents were expected to market the university to prospective students and clientele, as well as make connection with alumni.

Other universities raised questions as to why Virginia Tech was able to do what it was doing in these areas. We were able to defend our position upon the basis of our unique mission as being the land-grant university (W. Skelton, personal communication, April 9, 1997).

Concluding Thoughts

The eighty-four year history of extension in the nation's land-grant universities is a remarkable story enriched by compelling incidents of vision and commitment to a fundamental conviction that education is the purist of social programs. From its earliest days in 1914 with the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act, extension has been a valued instrument of the university in making its research relevant and applicable to the rural people. As the university evolved and its programs became more diversified, the extension program outreach did not always adapt. Historically, across the country, extension remained closely tied to its agricultural roots.

One of the reasons for this inability to adapt is the organizational structure in which extension has had to operate. Historically confined within a College of Agriculture, extension has effectively been relegated to only extending the resources represented within that organizational unit.

In 1966, Virginia Tech, under the leadership of a visionary but pragmatic president, departed from the norm and made a bold leap into the future by asking the Commonwealth of Virginia to give it a structure that would allow the broad delivery of programs across the state. The Extension Division, which was the hallmark of this act, stretched the full capacity of the university into every community across the state. Virginia Tech had created an administrative model that truly reflected its unique mission of being the state's 1862 land-grant university.

CHAPTER FIVE THE MISSION DEBATE

Questions Arise

In 1971, five years after the creation of the Extension Division, W. E. Lavery, the Associate Director of the division who would become the next president of Virginia Tech, chaired a task force that was to examine the effectiveness of the model and create strategies for the university's position in fulfillment of its outreach to the Commonwealth. That document reinforced an aggressive posture on how the university would fulfill its extension mission:

The creation of the Extension Division envisioned a greater education force to be utilized in serving the people of the State. The main purpose of the University's extension, therefore, must be to interpret, disseminate, and encourage application of relevant scientific knowledge which motivates people to make more effective responses to their environment. This can best be done through the development of planned educational programs that are oriented toward helping people improve their economic, social, and cultural well-being in a constantly changing and complex society. These programs must be flexible and subject to constant revision to fit changing conditions. The University must seek to meet the economic and social needs of Virginia by providing its citizens opportunity for continued learning throughout their lifetime. The impetus giving rise to the need for continuous learning is the rapidity of changes in the technological and the social structures of our society. Through programs of continuing education and services, the University must make available the benefits of its expertise, its research findings and its educational facilities to meet the continuing education needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth and the nation. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1971, p. 1-2)

The report included thirteen general recommendations for the future of extension. The first recommendation explicitly contained a mission statement that served as the foundation for the other twelve:

The extension mission of Virginia's land-grant University places it in a key role as a social and economic development agency of the state. Therefore, the overall extension mission should be that of improving human and natural resources in recognition of a changing society. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1971, p. 2)

This broad perspective on the mission of extension as originally crafted by Hahn and Skelton truly would remain the blueprint for the university for much of the decade of the 1970's. Lavery recalls:

Skelton and Hahn believed strongly in an extension model than spanned the total university. Each college had faculty with an extension appointment. This was one of the great strengths of the Virginia system. The great thing about the model was its flexibility. The university-wide system promoted educational service to all Virginians. Everyone, no matter his or her interests, had a piece of Virginia Tech. (W. Lavery, personal communication, April 14, 1997)

The system did have its detractors. Some within the agricultural community openly questioned the relevance of some of the program activity the university was conducting in the name of extension. They saw extension more in context of being a program for agriculture and rural interests solely. Lavery remembers:

The pitfall to all of this was the fact that some within the agricultural community saw the money flowing to the university for extension and their concept of extension was purely agriculture. Added to this was the fact that the federal partner (USDA) had remained primarily focused on a traditional agriculture mission. USDA had lots of clout in the agriculture community. Its lack of program diversification sent a message to Virginia's agriculture leadership that program delivery outside an agriculture mission was not legitimate. (W. Lavery, personal communication, April 14, 1997)

The success of the system was dependent upon the sustained support of the clientele and the funding partners. Lavery credits Skelton and Hahn for their abilities to appease those who questioned the expanded programming as well as generate the necessary political support:

Skelton and Hahn were masterful in their abilities to sell the model to the state legislators. Skelton spent much of his time doing public relations--always making sure key decision-makers knew the impact of extension programs. He saw this to be central to his position as dean of the division. He left the day-to-day operations of extension to others. (W. Lavery, personal communication, April 14, 1997)

However, Hahn would leave the presidency in 1974 to assume the leadership of Georgia Pacific, and Skelton stepped down as dean in 1976. Soon thereafter, in the spring of 1978, the university's interpretation of the mission of extension would be challenged when Delegate Frank Slayton, a member of the Virginia General Assembly's powerful House Appropriations Committee, began to ask questions during the state's budget deliberations about the appropriateness of some of extension's programming. Delegate Slayton reported that he had heard concerns from folks in his home district, House District 60, which included the City of South Boston and Halifax County, about some of extension's programs in those localities. He was particularly alarmed that extension had forgotten what he perceived to be its mission to agriculture. Delegate Slayton recalled:

Members of the Halifax County Board of Supervisors began to complain to me that extension was doing things well outside its mission. These activities were mostly in the area of recreation including sponsoring local golf tournaments. Those who complained felt as if this activity was at the expense of the agency's work with agriculture. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I was concerned that the agency was not expending resources in the program areas it was supposed to be. (F. Slayton, personal communication, December 22, 1997)

The answers to Delegate Slayton's initial questions revealed that the university had indeed followed a course of action that extended the university's knowledge-base well beyond the delegate's perceived mission of the agency. In addition to the traditional programs associated with cooperative extension, the university was delivering through the Extension Division a variety of programs, including credit graduate courses, statewide. For all practical purposes, extension was the umbrella for all activity the university conducted outside its Blacksburg campus. For example, off-campus graduate education had significantly increased. Off-campus degrees awarded jumped from 10 in 1972 to 343 in 1977. Most (297) were awarded due to an expanded and aggressive outreach effort through the university's new College of Education.

A good example of the recreational programs cited by Delegate Slayton was a special initiative that was being conducted in his home Halifax County. There the local extension office was working with local government to develop and deliver a program for at-risk youth. This program--done in the name of 4-H and funded through federal funds appropriated to Virginia State University--included recreation (L. McPeters, personal communication, December 22, 1997).

Transcripts from an interview with Delegate Slayton broadcast over the Halifax-based WHLF-AM radio station on August 26, 1978, reveal other expressed concerns of the delegate:

I made a careful inquiry into the work going on in the Extension Service and had the staff of the Appropriations Committee go through the vouchers which had been filed by the Extension Service as of June 30 (1978), so that we could get some indication of where the money was being spent. One voucher which was pulled indicated that on April the 21st and 22nd an employee of the Extension Service was paid to attend or was paid to organize a workshop in Annandale, which is in Arlington County, on how to organize and conduct yard sales. I don't feel that the taxpayers of Virginia are interested in paying people to travel around the state to organize classes on how to conduct yard sales. We found that on March 15, another member of the Extension Service was paid to go to Northern Virginia to conduct a school on Human Relations. (Walker, 1978)

It appears that it wasn't only the type of programming that concerned the delegate, but that it was being delivered to a non-rural audience. In a telephone interview, the delegate said he was also alarmed to discover that in northern Virginia and other urban areas, extension was

helping homeowners with educational programs and resources concerning landscaping (F. Slayton, personal communication, December 22, 1997).

Delegate Slayton went on in the radio interview to express his dismay about the agency's programs:

This is a \$57 million dollar item in the state budget. I frankly was somewhat surprised to learn that of the \$57 million dollars only thirty two percent of it is spent for agriculture and natural resources. As you know, of course, when the land-grant university was established in Virginia, the Extension Service was designed as an outreach program to assist primarily farmers and homemakers in rural Virginia in raising crops, and in handling livestock, and that sort of thing. Today, though, VPI acknowledges that they have gotten quite far field and away from there by virtue of an amendment to the Act that created the Extension Service. The programs were substantially broadened by legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1966. . . . I hope that next winter the General Assembly will reexamine this budget and see if we can't reduce it to some appropriate level. (Walker, 1978)

Delegate Slayton didn't wait until the next session of the General Assembly to continue his case. He took the matter to Governor John Dalton, a friend from his law school days. Governor Dalton, ironically a native of the Blacksburg area and known as a strong supporter of Virginia Tech, shared the delegate's concerns (F. Slayton, personal communication, December 22, 1997). He asked Slayton to work with the Secretary of Administration Charles Walker and Secretary of Education Wade Gilley to continue the investigation. This support from the Republican administration was very important to Delegate Slayton, a Democrat:

I didn't want this to become a partisan battle. With the Republican Governor's support, I felt more comfortable in moving forward with a full-fledged review of the extension problem. As I recall, it was Secretary Walker's suggestion that we proceed with a study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission. (F. Slayton, personal communication, December 22, 1997)

Lavery, who assumed the presidency of Virginia Tech upon Hahn's departure, recalled the time as a pivotal test of the university's unique role as the state's 1862 land-grant institution. He also cited the fact that the university's efforts to secure significant funding for the establishment of a new veterinary college may have contributed to the added scrutiny:

Frank Slayton was the individual who requested the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission study. Something happened in Halifax County that encouraged him to request the study. At the same time, Governor John Dalton was asking us to set some program priorities and stick to them. There were several things contributing to all of this on the political scene. The first may have

been our efforts to secure an \$8 million appropriation for the Veterinary School. At the same time, the leadership of other universities, including George Mason, Old Dominion, and VCU, were raising questions as to why Virginia Tech was allowed to have such a presence in what they called their service areas. Basically, they were questioning our mission as a land-grant university. (W. Lavery, personal communication, April 14, 1997)

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission

Jointly, Delegate Slayton and the administration proceeded with a request to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to study Virginia Tech's Extension Division. Among the directives given to the commission for study was to explore the following questions: Has the Extension Division gone beyond the intent of its legislative mandate? Is the organizational structure of the division appropriate for effective delivery of programs? Is there duplication with other state agency programs? Does the professional staff engage in activities so construed as a conflict of interest? Has the traditional service to rural Virginia and to agriculture been neglected to favor growth of programs in suburban and urban Virginia (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979)?

The study was begun in the winter of 1978 and continued into the summer of 1979. All extension faculty and agents were either interviewed or asked to complete a survey. All local county administrators or city managers in whose localities were served by an extension program were also surveyed. Information was requested and obtained from eighteen other states. JLARC staff also visited and conducted interviews with extension personnel, city or county administrators, elected officials, and citizens in twelve localities across the state. These interviews were conducted in the counties of Fairfax, Hanover, King and Queen, Orange, Pittsylvania, Southampton, Rockbridge, Wise, and Washington and the cities of Charlottesville, Hampton, and Roanoke (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979). This study would be the first of three comprehensive studies of Virginia Cooperative Extension over a 15-year period.

The preliminary staff report of the commission was submitted for review and comment to officials at both Virginia Tech and Virginia State on July 20, 1979. Overall, the report was perceived by the universities' officials as a positive reaffirmation of the work of extension, but it did include twenty-seven recommendations on how the universities could improve the effectiveness of the agency. These recommendations were assembled around ten broad categories: (a) funding, (b) mission definition, (c) duplication and overlap of programs, (d) reporting and evaluation, (e) travel controls, (f) conflict of interest monitoring, (g) tenure requirements, (h) off-campus credit instruction costs, (i) organization and staff, (j) management of the Continuing Education Center, and (k) general administration (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979, p. 81-88).

The recommendations varied considerably with respect to content specificity. For example, the first recommendation gave fairly broad directions to Virginia Tech on how to communicate its goals for changing the distribution of extension funding to the General Assembly as part of the budget process. It also suggested the agency explore the availability of alternative funding options such as increases in local or non-tax funds and the increased use of volunteers in program delivery. However, no targets were included in the recommendation. On the other hand, another recommendation gave the university clear direction to make the operations of the Continuing Education Center self-supporting through revenues generated by program participants.

As to the question of mission and scope of programming, the report included some striking revelations that challenged the long-term health of the agency. Possibly the most acute of these was evidence of a growing internal polarization among extension faculty as to their perception of the mission of the agency. When asked about program scope, more agent and specialist faculty with at least a 60 percent program assignment to agriculture agreed than disagreed with the statement: "Extension programs have expanded too far beyond the traditional areas of agriculture, 4-H, and home economics" (Specialists: 43 percent agreed; 38 percent disagreed; 19 percent remained neutral; Agents: 41 percent agreed; 33 percent disagreed; 26 percent remained neutral.) Specialists and agents with non-agriculture program appointments had a marked contrasting perspective, in as much as only 10 percent of specialists agreed with the statement, while 80 percent disagreed (10 percent remained neutral). Non-agriculture agents had a similar perspective as to the specialists with only 15 percent agreeing, 69 percent disagreeing, and 16 percent remaining neutral (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979, p. 33). It is interesting to note that on the same question, it was reported that only 24 percent of the city and county administrators responding said that extension had expanded beyond its traditional program scope with rural county administrators tending to be the most critical of program expansion (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979, p. 32).

Among the programs specifically mentioned within the report that could be perceived as representing an expanded mission and that should be reviewed for future program determination were: instruction in arts and crafts, home care and garden care, creative and performing arts for 4-H youth, health and rehabilitation, manpower development, mental and emotional health, child care and development, community beautification, home management information, development of tourism and industry, community awareness, and business assistance (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979, p. 31-32).

In its summary, the report concluded:

The present scope of extension programs, in terms of intensity and direction, is within the broad legislative mandate assigned to the Division by the General Assembly in 1966. However, extension administrators do not have the benefit of clearly defined program priorities. Furthermore, the present statutory mission statement of the Extension Division has not been reviewed by the General

Assembly since 1966 and may not provide an adequate delineation of the program limits intended for cooperative extension by the legislature. (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979, p. 82)

The recommendation that followed this observation gave very specific directions to the administration of the university:

VPI&SU, in conjunction with the State Council of Higher Education, VSU, and the Secretary of Education, should prepare a detailed statement on the role and mission of cooperative extension in Virginia. As part of the mission statement, an explicit objective for program growth, based on a rational planning process and a generally accepted system of priorities, needs to be prepared.

The mission statement should be submitted to the General Assembly for review and approval. The mission statement might be submitted as a resolution, a statutory statement of purpose, or as an amendment to the statutory mission contained in Section 3.1-41, Code of Virginia. (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979, p. 82)

W. R. Van Dresser, who had succeeded Skelton as Dean of Extension when he retired in 1976, submitted Virginia Tech's official response to the draft report. In an August 24 communication to JLARC director Ray D. Pethtel, Van Dresser wrote:

The working draft of the Commission program review of the Virginia Tech Extension Division taken as a whole is an excellent overview of Extension programs. While some statements, conclusions, and recommendations are included in the report with which the Division cannot concur, the report in its entirety is extremely valuable to the Extension Division as it seeks to strengthen its effectiveness and efficiency in serving the Commonwealth. (W. Van Dresser, letter to R. Pethtel, August 24, 1979)

Further, in his official communication to the JLARC director, Van Dresser picked up on the recommendation concerning the need to have the mission of extension defined. Interestingly, his response didn't disagree with the intended outcome of the recommendation, but he did take strong exception to the process through which the mission statement should be defined:

The basic purpose and mission of the Extension Division is broadly outlined in the 1966 statutes which created the Division. The General Assembly can and should revise its delineation of Extension Division responsibilities in broad outline in the light of changing needs. However, the review team recommendation that a mission statement including "explicit objective for program growth, based on a rational planning process and a generally accepted system of priorities," might be a function of the executive branch rather than the legislative branch.

Accordingly, a better approach may be to proceed with the definition of a broad mission statement by Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the Secretary of Education, and the State Council of Higher Education, in conjunction with representatives of the local and federal governments and clientele groups. The mission statement would be transmitted to the General Assembly for its consideration. Legislation should articulate general public policy, rather than enunciating specific planning processes and priorities which are subject to change. The detailed or “explicit objective for program growth” should be defined with executive branch involvement. (W. Van Dresser, letter to R. Pethtel, August 24, 1979)

In a very brief August 21, 1979, response to Pethtel on behalf of Virginia State University, M.C. Harding, Sr., the administrator of the extension programs at the 1890 institution, concurs with the need to refine the mission, but says nothing about the process:

Based on information available to me, I believe the draft (report) represents a fairly objective appraisal of the status and addresses issues of major concern. I am especially sensitive to the need to define our mission and refine our program development, implementation and evaluation process so that we can adequately document our effectiveness and accountability. (M. Harding, letter to R. Pethtel, August 21, 1979)

On September 10, 1979, the final staff report of JLARC was transmitted to the leadership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State, as well as the eleven legislative members of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission. Its recommendations included the original language concerning the development of a mission statement that would be submitted to the General Assembly for review and approval. The concluding statement in its summary emphatically reinforced the case for defining the mission of the agency:

This expansion has created several problems. The lack of a generally accepted mission statement hinders budget review and coordination between the Extension Division and many state and local agencies. There also appears to be disagreement within the Division about extension’s proper role, a situation which could affect morale and program management. Guidelines are necessary to establish priorities for managing resources during a period of funding reductions and increasing costs. Finally, questions raised by legislative and executive officials about the proper role for extension suggest the need for a detailed review of the Division’s statutory mission. (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 1979, p. iv)

The university had until the end of the 1980 calendar year to take action on most of the JLARC recommendations. However, the deadline to have the mission statement was set for October 1 to provide adequate time for review prior to the convening of the Virginia General Assembly.

Implementation of JLARC Recommendations

Upon receiving the final JLARC report, President Lavery asked the administrative leadership of the Extension Division to immediately begin developing an implementation plan. The university was to regularly report to JLARC progress towards the implementation of the recommendations. The first report to the Commission, dated December 20, 1979--just three months following the receipt of the recommendations--communicated earnest effort on behalf of the university to fulfill the objectives of the study. Its introduction stated:

The Extension Division has taken action on all of the recommendations approved by the Commission and as amended by the subcommittee. Our basic approach has been to assign primary responsibility for each recommendation to an individual in the Dean's office. The procedure included researching and restudying the situation related to each recommendation. Additional information was obtained as necessary, especially in those situations which had changed since the JLARC staff had collected their data. Following the analysis of the situation a plan of action was developed. The plan incorporated the JLARC recommendations as well as other changes deemed necessary and appropriate. Each plan includes target dates for implementation and deadlines as needed. The action plans have been submitted to the Dean of Extension. Upon approval, the plans are being implemented and documentation is being submitted to the Dean's office.

While action has been taken on all of the recommendations, the degree of completion varies. Final action has been taken on some recommendations. Others have future deadline dates and may require as long as a year to complete. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1979, p. 1)

Indeed much progress had been taken on many of the recommendations. However, one of the recommendations that had not received much attention was the recommendation pertaining to the development of a mission statement. The update on this recommendation simply read:

During the next month an outline and timetable will be developed for completion of the role and mission statement of the Extension Division to meet the October deadline. A preliminary discussion has been held with the President's office and associate deans. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1979, p. 4).

The next progress update, dated May 1, 1980, provided evidence of even more progress towards the implementation of the JLARC provisions. It included greater attention to the task of developing a mission statement. It reported:

The Extension Division administrative group analyzed the entire JLARC report for all references to mission role and definition and compared these findings to JLARC's recommended action. Then, we reviewed the existing mission statements as written into law and legislatively approved in 1966. In addition, we studied mission statements from a number of other states and reviewed the mission narratives from each of the state-supported and independent institutions in the Commonwealth.

Through this internal review, we identified six aspects of the recommendation for further study by the Division: (1) elements of a mission statement; (2) system for establishing priorities; (3) process for planning program growth; (4) options for funding and budgetary considerations; (5) methods for avoiding program duplication and overlap; and (6) procedures for developing statement and committee involvement. Study has been completed in each of the six areas.

Next, we drafted an Extension mission narrative using the format developed by State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). The mission draft is circulating within the Extension Division for review and revision. The second draft will be reviewed by President Lavery and the University administration. It is anticipated that this phase will be completed June 1. This draft will be used as the basis for further discussion and review with SCHEV, Secretary of Education, and representatives of Virginia State University. Following this review the final statement will be submitted for the General Assembly's review and approval. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1980a, p. 2)

The task of developing the mission statement prior to the October 1 deadline continued through much of the summer. In early August, a draft statement was sent from the leadership of Virginia Tech to Gilley, Secretary of Education, Gordon K. Davies, Director, State Council of Higher Education, and Thomas M. Law, President of Virginia State University. This seven-page document titled Extension Division Mission Narrative contained five sections: (a) History and Development of Extension Division, (b) Purpose and Responsibility of Extension, (c) Extent of Extension Division Mix of Programs, (d) Organization—Cooperative Relationships, (e) Future Directions.

In essence the draft mission statement was a restatement of much of the information contained in the original JLARC report. The report's conclusion under the subtitle of Future Directions attempted to shed some light as to where the agency would go in the future:

The future of the Extension Division will be dictated by the needs of the people of the Commonwealth. The Division expects to continually assess its programs and change priorities to accommodate expanding and changing needs within a

framework of limited growth. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1980b, p. 6)

Inflation, energy, and the environment were identified as being major issues extension programming would address in the next biennium. The concluding paragraph, however, appears to reinforce a broad interpretation of the mission of the Division:

The Division has in place and operating effectively an educational delivery system that will continue to extend the resources of land-grant universities to the people by assisting them in improving their lives through the application of useful and practical information. There will be continued emphasis on the cooperative model and the land-grant philosophy to ensure that citizens of Virginia will receive the educational assistance they deserve and expect from the state's two land-grant universities. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1980b, p. 6-7)

The draft statement failed to satisfy the critical external players. On August 20, 1980, President Lavery met in Richmond with Gilley, Fox, and Barry Dorsey, who as the Assistant Director, SCHEV, represented Davies. Van Dresser and Harding also participated. The meeting ended with agreement that the draft statement needed to be strengthened with greater attention given to defining goals and objectives for each of the division's program components.

In early September the administrative and program leadership of the Extension Division developed the requested goals and objectives, as well as set program priorities for the agency. These were added as an addendum to the draft mission narrative. The revised mission document was included in a progress report submitted to JLARC on October 1, just a little more than a year after receiving the final JLARC report.

On behalf of JLARC, Director Pethel requested further refinement to the mission narrative wanting the statement to be more focused and concise. Van Dresser and others within the extension administration responded to Pethel's request and resubmitted on December 1 the Extension Division Mission Statement. This document would become the basis for funding for the Extension Division for the 1982-84 biennium. It included a broad role for the Extension Division:

The role of the Extension Division shall be to conduct educational programs and disseminate information to the people of Virginia to assist them in applying the results of scientific research and technological developments. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1980c, p. 1)

The mission narrative made a clear distinction among the major programs of the Extension Division. The responsibilities of the division were defined as being three fold—cooperative extension, community education, and community service. It represented a position

on community education and community service as being defined by the State Council of Higher Education and structured the same as in other Virginia institutions of higher education. Cooperative extension was defined by its legislative authorization citing the federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and the Acts of 1914 and 1966 of the Virginia General Assembly.

With respect to cooperative extension programs, this mission narrative took on a different viewpoint from earlier drafts. The mission narrative identified four primary program areas: agriculture and natural resources, family resources, 4-H, and community resource development. It went on to define the content of these four primary programs consistent with program priorities that had recently been established by USDA:

The content within the four authorized program areas will be limited to the 21 federal program components as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture—Science Education Administration (USDA-SEA) for program planning and reporting. The program components are:

1. Crop Production
2. Livestock Production
3. Business Management and Economics
4. Agricultural Marketing and Farm Supplies
5. Natural Resources and Environment
6. Mechanical Science, Technology, and Engineering
7. Safety
8. Food and Nutrition (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program—4-H Youth and Adult)
9. Food and Nutrition (Other than EFNEP)
10. Personal and Family Resource Management
11. Family Life, Child Development, and Human Relationships
12. Textiles and Clothing
13. Human Health
14. Housing and Home Environment
15. Leadership Development
16. Organization Development and Maintenance
17. Comprehensive Community Planning
18. Community Service and Facilities (other than Health and Housing)
19. Economic Development, Manpower, and Careers
20. Government Operations and Finance
21. Leisure and Cultural Education. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1980c, pp. 1-2)

The limitations defined by these program content areas still gave the agency much flexibility in sustaining a broad-based educational program across the Commonwealth. There was very little the agency was currently doing that fell outside the 21 specified areas, including

some of the programs originally questioned by Delegate Slayton. Local determination of programs was upheld as being the primary way through which the mix of programs would be prioritized:

Program priorities are determined by the specific needs expressed in the communities which are supplemented with program oriented needs identified at the district and state levels. Extension professional staff plan and conduct programs based upon the needs. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1980c, p. 2)

Additionally, the mission narrative went on to say that the agency would give emphasis to agriculture, 4-H, home economics, and community development programs in rural areas. Program budget targets for the next two biennia, also included in the narrative, represented growth in the percentage of the budget devoted to agriculture and home economics and a decrease in funding for 4-H and community resource development.

The Nine-Block Plan

The mission narrative became the centerpiece for discussions and political posturing for much of the next year. Delegate Slayton and other members of the Appropriations Committee continued to debate the appropriateness of some of the 21 federal program content areas contained within the report. They were not going to be held hostage by the federal partner and defended a position that just because programs were part of a federal agenda didn't mean that they would necessarily remain program priorities for Virginia Cooperative Extension. The political wrangling eventually led to a compromise that was agreed upon by members of the legislature, the executive branch, and the leadership of Virginia Tech (W. Lavery, personal communication, April 14, 1997).

Among the actions that resulted from the compromise was the separation of off-campus graduate education from the Extension Division. This took place in 1980. Even though the JLARC report did not specifically recommend this action, the study and the political discussions of the time uncovered a belief that inclusion of the resources needed to support this outreach effort greatly inflated the Division budget. These resources were reassigned to the university's instructional budget leaving cooperative extension and non-credit, continuing education as the division's two primary program areas.

A second—and what would prove to be a much more controversial part of the agreement—was the grouping of cooperative extension programs into nine major categories or program blocks. This plan, which became known as the Nine-Block Plan, would become the source of resource allocations by the state. The original legislative language actually had ten blocks, but the tenth block represented pass-through funding for the university's statewide program support of vocational and technical education, which was a program responsibility of

the Extension Division, but not cooperative extension. A Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (1982) document explaining the Nine-Block Plan provided the following definitions:

Block Number 1: “Agriculture and Natural Resources for Industry and Government.” This block includes the several program components most closely related to agriculture and natural resources, such as crop production and livestock production. Activities are classified in this block if the audience being served has a vocational interest in these activities. This program block is intended to serve such people as farmers, cattlemen, nurserymen, florists, conservationists, land-use planners, etc.

Block Number 2: “Agriculture and Natural Resources for Families.” This block encompasses activities similar to those outlined in Block 1; however, they are intended to serve those audiences whose interest is primarily home gardening, lawn care, home horticulture, or care of family pets.

Block Number 3: “4-H.” This block covers all activities offered under the auspices of 4-H.

Block Number 4: “Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.” This block covers all activities related to the federally funded program entitled “The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).”

Block Number 5: “Family Resources I.” This block includes instruction and demonstration work in the basic knowledge and skills related to food and nutrition, textiles, and clothing, housing and home environment, and personal and family resource management. Instruction in this area covers food preparation and preservation; the principles of balanced nutrition; selection, care and construction of textiles and clothing; energy management in the home; and balancing family resources, especially as related to inflation. The audience types included in this program block are industry and government, families, and Extension Homemakers.

Block Number 6: “Family Resources II.” This block refers to family resource activities as further defined by the program components of human health, and family life, and child development. The audience of programs in this block are individuals in a related business or government function.

Block Number 7: “Family Resources III.” This block includes all programs similar to Block 6 but directed toward families and those with avocational interests in these fields.

Block Number 8: “Community Resource Development I.” This block is activities that assist in the operation of communities and local governments. Program components such as community planning, community services and facilities, and government operations and finance are included in this group. These activities are directed toward industry and government, families, and Extension Homemakers.

Block Number 9: “Community Resource Development II.” This block encompasses other community services such as leadership development, organizational development and maintenance, economic development, manpower and careers, and leisure and cultural education. The intended audiences for this area are industry and government, families, and Extension Homemakers. (Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, 1982)

In an unprecedented move, the General Assembly moved forward with setting clear program priorities for cooperative extension around the nine program blocks. The language of the 1982 Appropriations Act (Item 317) provided direction on how state general funds were to be spent over the next four years:

Funds for the operation of Cooperative Extension Services, including salaries paid by local governments shall be gradually realigned over the period 1982-84 and completely reallocated by 1984-86 to conform with the following provisions. Proportional support to each succeeding program component from the general fund shall be: **HIGH** in Agriculture and Natural Resources for Industry and Government, 4-H, Family Resources I, and Vocational-Technical Education; **MODERATE** in Family Resources II and Community Resource Development I; **LOW** in Agriculture and Natural Resources for Families; and **NONE** in Family Resources III, Community Resources Development II and the Expanded Food and Nutrition program, which [is] fully supported by federal funds. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1982, Item 317)

The university was now subject to a new set of rules as it developed future program priorities for cooperative extension. The budget directions that along with the program priorities defined a **HIGH** priority ranking as meaning that the state would provide a maximum of 80 percent general fund financing to support these programs. A **MODERATE** ranking meant that no more than 55 percent of general funds could be spent in support of these programs. A **LOW** prioritization translated into no more than 30 percent of state general fund support of these programs. A ranking of **NONE**, meant exactly that—no state general funds would be appropriated to support program efforts in these blocks. Delegate Slayton’s perception of the original mission of extension appeared to prevail in the programs identified to receive a high level of support from the state. Basically, production agriculture, 4-H, and traditional home economics became the program priorities for which state dollars could be spent.

With program priorities defined through the appropriations' language, extension administration began the task of realigning its resources to meet the budget targets. Internal budget documents indicate that half way through the second year of the first biennium (December 31, 1983) the agency had shifted its program resources to where all nine blocks were in line with the mandate (Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, 1984). Cooperative extension had responded to its legislative mandate.

For more than a decade the Nine-Block Plan remained as the official budget guide for cooperative extension. Program decisions were made based upon the budget restrictions set forth by the Nine-Block Plan. Organizational budget documents demonstrate that the agency was committed to honoring the program directions spelled out by the Nine-Block Plan (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1991). It is fair to say that for the most part, this appeared to satisfy many of the agency's former critics.

Internal Politics

At the same time the voices of the external forces were being calmed, the discussion of mission seemed to become more of an internal issue within the university. In October 1981, while the university was in the final throws of negotiating the Nine-Block Plan, Division Dean Van Dresser resigned his position to become the university's Vice President for Administration. The vacancy in the dean's position provided the opportunity for the university to give study to the organizational structure of the agency and to look at other issues that might need attention.

Mitchell R. Geasler, who had just arrived at Virginia Tech from Michigan State University a month before to become associate dean, was named interim dean of the Extension Division and director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. In making the formal announcement of Geasler's interim appointment to the university community, Provost John Wilson underscored the issues with which the university was still grappling:

Before a national search is undertaken I intend to give the most careful attention to the question of division organization. I have no preconceived notion of what might serve us most effectively, but I do think we should, at the least, examine the wisdom of the present combination of Continuing Education and Cooperative Extension, with still further thought about realignments in Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. (J. Wilson, memo to Deans, Directors, and Department Heads, October 16, 1981)

Geasler must have wondered what he had stepped into. He assumed the reigns of an agency that had been in an intense, three-year, political battle. The politics had in many ways shattered the very foundation on which the Extension Division had been built. The Extension Division he inherited was significantly different in scope and morale than the one Skelton had left just six years prior.

Geasler's appointment remained as interim for over a year. During that period of time, efforts to rethink the organizational structure fell victim to those related to the implementation of the Nine-Block Plan and an USDA directive to develop a plan to bring the agency's program efforts into compliance with federal civil rights policies. When Provost Wilson announced his resignation to assume the presidency of Washington & Lee University in the autumn of 1982, he expressed frustration at not being able to bring some closure to the extension issue before his departure. In his final appearance before the Faculty Senate, Wilson commented:

Among my regrets is the failure—my failure—to reorganize the Extension Division to answer questions about its mission and focus in the commonwealth, its lines of communication, and the separation of faculty from the mainstream. The resolution of these matters is a very difficult and important matter. (“Wilson Takes,” 1982, p. 1)

One thing, however, Wilson did accomplish before he left was recommending to President Lavery that the interim status be removed from Geasler's appointment. Lavery made the announcement of Geasler's appointment as Dean of Extension and Continuing Education and Director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service on December 6, 1982. The addition of Continuing Education was new to the name of the Division, which was an intentional statement of a resolution to the program functions of the agency. Lavery's announcement spoke to this resolve:

It has been reaffirmed that the Extension and Continuing Education Division should remain a separate state agency encompassing the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (VCES) and the continuing education function headed by a dean who reports to the university provost. (W. E. Lavery, personal communication, December 6, 1982)

The same letter gave insight into the program direction of the agency. Lavery stated that it was his expectation that Geasler initiate immediately actions that will go about “strengthening the tie and commitment to the basic mission of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, particularly agriculture” (W. E. Lavery, personal communication, December 6, 1982). This reinforced the direction set forth through the legislative mandate.

Organizationally, the Extension Division saw another shift just nine months following Geasler's appointment as dean and director. In his efforts to restructure the university administration, the new Provost, David Roselle, announced an organizational chart that was intended to reinforce a perspective of the tripartite mission of Virginia Tech. His new organizational structure included three vice provost positions—Extension, Academic Administration, and Research and Graduate Studies—coinciding with the three missions. Roselle believed the structure represented “an alignment whereby university priorities are coordinated across three agencies representing extension, instruction, and research” (D. Roselle, personal communication, September 13, 1983). Geasler was named Vice Provost for Extension

and retained the title and responsibility of Director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. In addition to cooperative extension, continuing education continued to be part of the program responsibilities of Geasler's position.

This organizational structure remained intact for much of the decade. Its programmatic and political effect appeared to be negligible, although there were segments within the agricultural community that expressed concerns that cooperative extension should be more closely administratively aligned to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Lavery retired in 1987. In 1988, the university named his successor, James D. McComas, who had an impeccable pedigree of land-grant experience. Although he had most recently served as president of the University of Toledo, a public, non-land-grant school, McComas had received degrees from West Virginia University and Ohio State University. He had taught or served in administrative capacities at four other land-grant schools: New Mexico State, Kansas State, the University of Tennessee, and Mississippi State, where he was president (Wallenstein, 1997). With the exception of West Virginia University, all of these schools had held on to the traditional model of cooperative extension being administratively aligned with their colleges of agriculture (W. Lavery, personal communication, April 14, 1997). (During McComas' years at West Virginia University, its Extension Service was part of the College of Agriculture.)

Early in his tenure as Virginia Tech's president, McComas moved to reorganize extension into a structure with which he was more familiar. McComas believed greatly in the public service role of the land-grant university, but he saw extension as being distinctly an agriculture cooperative extension program and the other outreach efforts as being public service. He wanted to enhance the public service efforts of the university, but felt as if the current structure would inhibit his ability to garner the political support he wanted to generate to fund the expanded public service activities. His uneasiness about launching a major initiative to seek an infusion of new resources for public service had been shaped by the agricultural community. Former President Lavery recalls discussions with his successor about the situation:

Dr. McComas sensed—actually it was more than a sense as leadership of the Virginia agriculture community visited him in Toledo even before he started here as president—that the agriculture community was pretty upset with the university. That wasn't something he wanted to fight early on in his presidency, so he moved extension into the College of Agriculture. He was a new guy moving in who sensed a discomfort with the way things were, so he acted to remove the discomfort. I don't think he believed where extension was administratively was that big of an issue. You must remember that his experiences to date had been at land-grant universities which had a traditional agriculture extension service. (W. Lavery, personal communication, April 14, 1997)

James F. Johnson, who became Director of Extension in 1989, remembers the reorganization as an attempt to fulfill McComas' agenda without hurting cooperative extension:

President McComas was concerned that the interest groups and policy networks currently engaged with Virginia Cooperative Extension would resist his broader vision of public service. Separating “public service” from “cooperative extension” would allow the cooperative extension networks to remain intact, while allowing the university to develop new networks for the president’s outreach initiatives. (J. Johnson, personal communication, November 17, 1994)

McComas’ reorganization basically separated the old Extension Division into two pieces. Continuing education, including the programs offered through the Donaldson Brown Continuing Education Center, became the core of Virginia Tech public service programs. Cooperative extension was realigned as a program within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences with the director of cooperative extension administratively reporting to the dean of the college. To make the connection to its programmatic responsibilities beyond the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, a “Cooperative Extension Deans’ Council” was created. It included the provost and the deans of the colleges of Human Resources, Veterinary Medicine, and, later, Forestry.

Not all of the programs of cooperative extension made the shift. Agriculture and natural resources, 4-H, and family and consumer sciences remained part of cooperative extension. These programs were priority programs of the Nine-Block Plan. Community resource development and leadership development, however, were splintered off into the public service piece. These programs were not high priority programs in the Nine-Block Plan. Separating them out of the cooperative extension piece could provide a creative means in which the university could bolster their resource allocations.

Geasler became a casualty in the reorganization, as he left Virginia Tech to become an administrator with USDA. Johnson replaced Geasler. Johnson’s title was Director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. It had been nearly 25 years since the head of cooperative extension had carried just that title.

Bad Timing and Bad Times

The timing for a bold move to secure new resources for the university could not have been worse. Possibly McComas’ strategy may have worked in better economic conditions, but beginning in the fall of 1989 a recession hit the state and the country. The early 1990’s brought significant budget reductions for most public agencies, including higher education. Extension was by no means exempt from the reductions. During the two-year period 1990 through 1992, state General Fund support was reduced by \$7 million annually. The Extension Division was required to reduce expenditures by 12.5 percent (Virginia Tech, 1992). Many programs—meaning people—were either eliminated or substantially reduced. Staffing figures for the three-year period between 1989 and 1992 reveal that the division lost 198 positions, which was nearly 20 percent of its total workforce (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1993). Even though the

earliest rounds of reductions were to have been percentage-based across the board, most of these positions and program reductions came from the cooperative extension piece of the division.

The financial situation could have been much worse if Governor L. Douglas Wilder would have had his way. The Executive Budget for the 1992-94 biennium included a 23.4 percent reduction for the Extension Division, \$4.7 million in 1992-93 and \$7.5 million for 1993-94 for a total of \$12.2 million. The Governor used the Nine-Block Plan as the basis for this round of reductions. A staff report prepared by Dick Seaman, Higher Education Legislative Fiscal Analyst to the House Appropriations Committee, explained the Governor's position:

The Governor proposes to provide general funds for only the "High" priority services identified in the Appropriation Act. These services would receive a maximum of 80 percent general fund financing. Services now categorized as "Moderate" priority and "Low" priority would not receive general funds beginning with FY 1994. Federal funds would make up the difference. The Appropriation Act language is changed accordingly. (Seaman, 1992, p. 1)

If sanctioned by the General Assembly, the proposed reduction would further reduce Extension's workforce by 21.2 percent or another 116.59 positions. Programmatically, the proposed changes to the Nine-Block Plan would provide state support in just three blocks: Agriculture and Natural Resources for Industry and Government, 4-H, and Family Resources I. Basically Extension would be confined to programs in production agriculture, 4-H, and traditional home economics. All other programming, if conducted, would have to be funded through federal funds (Seaman, 1992).

Extension constituencies responded loudly to the proposed reductions. They packed public hearings across the state to renounce Wilder's plan. They were successful with their efforts as members of the General Assembly passed a budget amendment to restore \$3.2 million for fiscal year 1993 and \$2.6 for fiscal year 1994.

Another Study

The political battle also resulted in the Commonwealth's Secretary of Education, James W. Dyke, requesting another study of the Extension Division. It was history repeating itself except this study was to be conducted by the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget (DPB). The charge given the DPB study team revisited many of the same issues JLARC had investigated 14 years before. The stated goals were:

- 1) To analyze the current organizational structure of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE),
- 2) To assess interagency collaboration and coordination between VCE and other state agencies,

- 3) To analyze the VCE funding structure,
- 4) To assess VCE program priorities,
- 5) To identify all cooperative extension programming and to assess satisfaction with programming activities,
- 6) To determine potential programming duplication with other state entities,
- 7) To examine the organizational staffing methods and processes of the program, and
- 8) To review cooperative extension organizational structures and activities in other states. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, October, 1993, p. i-ii)

The study process was even more comprehensive than that undertaken by JLARC. It included interviews with over 200 extension staff, legislators, USDA officials, state agency heads, universities' administrations, client groups, and extension volunteers. Virginia Commonwealth University was contracted to do a public awareness and customer satisfaction survey of a sample of adult Virginians. It also included a survey of local governments on their assessment of extension activities at the local level.

Nearly eighteen months after it had begun its work, DPB finally reported its findings. Ironically, the study was released in October 1993, just one month before Virginians would go to the polls to elect a new governor. For all practical purposes Wilder was a lame duck, and Dyke, who had requested the study, had already stepped down from his position to pursue the private practice of law.

The report contained 40 recommendations grouped around five broad categories:

- 1) Organization and Structure
- 2) Funding
- 3) Programming
- 4) Staffing and Management
- 5) Communication, Collaboration, and Coordination

The summary statement read:

Virginia Cooperative Extension has provided important educational programs to the citizens of the Commonwealth in the past and continues to have a strong record of achievement. Virginia's demographic and economic changes

now present opportunities for VCE to become a dynamic organization in addressing some of the Commonwealth's more pressing needs. However, in doing so, VCE must, within its broad mandate, establish priorities and focus its programming to better address a limited number of significant issues.

Increased accountability will be the key issue Virginia Cooperative Extension must address as it looks to the year 2000. Without it, other actions recommended here, and the achievement of VCE articulated goals, lose their meaning. Virginia Cooperative Extension must become more responsive to a wider, more diverse audience and more accountable to the citizens of the Commonwealth on the use of its significant resources. VCE's increased accountability must be coupled with a realization that the program has to establish priorities, eliminate marginal activities and programs, and develop a service delivery mechanism which reflects both the budgetary realities of the program and the needs of contemporary Virginia. Without adaptation to a changed social, economic, and political environment, VCE risks losing public support and its position as an important educational resource. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993, p. iv—x)

The report summary seemed to contradict the budgetary directions given by the governor. Just as interesting were the directions provided by many of the report's recommendations. For example, the first recommendation indicted the action taken by McComas in placing the position of director of Virginia Cooperative Extension into the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. It read:

VPI&SU should adopt the university-wide model for cooperative extension which was in place prior to 1990 and consolidate all of the university's major extension activities under the Vice Provost for Outreach and International Programs. The Director of VCE should report to the Vice Provost. The university should report to the Secretary of Education by October 1, 1994, on progress on the implementation of this recommendation. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993, p. 83)

The Nine-Block Plan was even taken to task. Recommendation 13 of the report suggested a major overhaul of the Nine-Block Plan document, which has been the appropriations guide for a decade:

The Nine Block Plan should be modified as decision-makers and VCE address such issues as program priorities and alternative approaches to programming. While the allocation of funds among programs should continue to be specified in the Appropriation Act, additional flexibility for VCE to manage its program—and accountability for this management—should be benchmarks for this new policy guidance. Reports on decisions and actions taken by VCE should be provided on

an annual basis to the Governor, the Secretary of Education, and members of the General Assembly. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993, p. 86)

As for program priorities, the report suggested that Extension had stayed too closely tied to an agriculture mission. It stated:

Demographically, the Commonwealth is remarkably different from what it was a few decades ago. As the state and the nation have moved to a service economy, production agriculture is no longer the dominant feature of the economy. Virginia's population has mushroomed and along with the growth has come increased urbanization and an influx of new residents from other nations. VCE now needs to serve many audiences, rural, urban, and suburban, in a Commonwealth characterized by diversity and pluralism. In addressing these emerging needs, VCE must look at existing programs and identify where additional change is possible. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993, p. 47)

One of the recommendations (Number 15) reinforced this notion and to give specific thoughts on where program emphasis should be directed:

VCE should develop a plan to gradually alter the balance in its program offering in order to place increased emphasis on educational programs for families and youth and the environment. Demographic, economic, and social changes in Virginia over the past several decades have highlighted the critical needs in these areas. A similar change in program direction is occurring across the nation as other cooperative extension programs design and provide enhanced programming in these areas. Likewise, VCE has been moving in this direction, particularly with the increased emphasis on the environment in the agriculture/natural resources program area. However, VCE's program offerings do not yet reflect a reasonable balance between its major program areas. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993, p. 86)

As for a long-term position on VCE's role, program focus, and mission, the report recommended the appointment of a task force of "high-level participants" to help define specific priorities which will guide VCE programs:

The Secretary of Education should appoint a task force to work with VCE to develop a document which defines its direction and priorities, placing a greater emphasis in the areas of programming for youth, families, and the environment. The working group should include representatives from the Secretariats of Education, Health and Human Resources, Natural Resources, and Commerce and Trade; land grant university officials; VCE program staff; representatives of localities, and staff from the Senate Finance and House Appropriations

Committees. The task force should report to the Governor, the Secretary of Education, and the appropriate legislative committees prior to the 1995 Session of the General Assembly. (Virginia Department of Planning and Budget, 1993, p. 87)

In the university's official response to the study report to Karen F. Washabau, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, McComas expressed his belief that the report was overall very positive:

In general, we find the report to be a very positive endorsement of the services provided to the Commonwealth by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. Many of the recommendations will assist Cooperative Extension to effect changes that will improve our current programs. (J. McComas, letter to Karen Washabau, September 10, 1993)

He specifically applauded the study for its recommended revisions to the Nine-Block plan:

We are encouraged by Recommendation 13 which supports our contention that the Nine Block Plan hinders our flexibility to respond to changes in demand for Cooperative Extension Services. We are eager to work with the Department of Planning and Budget to develop a replacement for the Nine-Block Plan, a replacement that will focus on outcomes rather than inputs. We recommend a plan which identifies program priorities and provides for annual reporting and assessment of accomplishments but does not rigidly assign funds to certain categories or programs. (J. McComas, letter to K. Washabau, September 10, 1993)

His letter, however, did challenge several of the recommendations contained within the report. One of the items McComas understandably took exception to was the recommendation concerning the organizational placement and structure of extension within the university:

We do not believe at this time that an immediate reorganization would be received favorably within the University nor across the Commonwealth, especially by some support organizations. Therefore, we request a delay in any reorganization recommendation for one to two years while Virginia Tech carefully evaluates the current structure and considers whether or not an alternative should be implemented. Reporting relationships are primarily internal management matters. The University should have the opportunity to review the current structure, taking into serious account the DPB findings, before any decision is made. (J. McComas, letter to K. Washabau, September 10, 1993)

In November 1993, just a month following the release of the report, Virginia elected a new governor. Wilder's replacement was George Allen, a Republican. Allen's agenda for Virginia Cooperative Extension would not be the same as that of the Wilder administration. At the same time the state was making its shift, the university went through a major change of leadership, as McComas became ill with cancer and left the presidency less than a month following the release of the study. A new cast of players would have to implement the recommendations provided by the Department of Planning and Budget.

A Bartered Birthright?

On the Virginia Tech side, the new character was Paul Torgersen who was named to replace McComas. A veteran administrator who had served as Dean of the College of Engineering and had been the interim president between Lavery and McComas, Torgersen had come to Virginia Tech in 1967, one year following the establishment of the Extension Division. He had been witness to the growth of the Extension Division. He was also quite familiar with the political capital that had been expended in defending the position of extension in the years preceding his promotion to the presidency.

In Governor Wilder's final budget, submitted in December 1993, just days prior to leaving office, another \$1.7 million budget reduction for extension was proposed. Not knowing for sure how the new administration would behave with respect to the recommendations of the Department of Planning and Budget Report, the university took a wait and see approach with much of its implementation. In the mean time, Torgersen, with the counsel of the university's Senior Vice President Minnis Ridenour and Director of Government Relations Ralph Byers, decided to take a different political strategy with the extension budget. Believing that separate funding streams for the three missions of the university may be complicating the university's political position, the university sought from the General Assembly legislation that would rescind the 1966 legislation that had been the vehicle through which the university had created its plan for service to the people of the Commonwealth.

It was a rationalized judgment to become more like the Commonwealth's other comprehensive universities. "We had found explaining why we should be different from the other institutions too difficult and politically volatile," explained Byers (R. Byers, personal communication, April 9, 1997).

Indeed, the political climate was threatening the very life of the agency, Byers noted:

The proposed bill was called the Restructuring of Virginia Tech. At the time, the university—indeed all of higher education—was under a great deal of political pressure to restructure. Under the Wilder Administration, the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) had directed colleges and universities to streamline. Additionally, Governor Allen was moving aggressively to continue the Wilder

administration's fiscal reductions on higher education. We essentially had three options:

- 1) Leave extension and agriculture research as they currently were as two separate agencies. Discussions in Burruss Hall among the administration reflected a belief that the three-agency structure had outlived its usefulness.
- 2) Collapse the functions of extension and agriculture research into the instructional budget. Thus, the university would have just one budget request. In other words, there would be just one Virginia Tech. In this scenario, we felt as if the instructional side of the house could become vulnerable. Everyone going into one agency would inflate the university's financial numbers as compared to other universities.
- 3) The Dean of the College of Agriculture (L. A. Swiger) proposed that we merge the extension and agriculture research functions into one budget. Dean Swiger felt as if the new structure would better represent the university's agriculture mission under one expenditure account. He also believed that the combined agency would help eliminate perceived mistrust between the field and campus. At the time there was great concern that the university was playing shell games with the Extension budget to help in other parts of the University. Basically, we felt as if we needed to do something fairly dramatic to restore confidence in our commitment to fulfilling the mission of extension. (R. Byers, personal communication, April 9, 1997)

Taken at face value, Senate Bill 313, known as the Restructuring of Virginia Tech, appeared to be limited in significance and consistent with a contemporary educational political agenda that promotes organizational restructuring under the guise that it always produces efficiencies without regard to effectiveness. Patroned by State Senator Frank Nolen (24th Senatorial District), the bill's citation simply read:

A Bill to amend and reenact §§ 3.1-40, 3.1-41 and 23 135.2 of the Code of Virginia, and to repeal §§ 23-133, 23-135.1, and 23-135.6 of the Code of Virginia, relating to restructuring of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1994, SB 313)

The proposed amended wording was represented by strike-overs on the original legislation as enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1966. It simply replaced Extension Division of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University with Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station Division and the elimination of Continuing Education Program, as a function of the renamed Division (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1994). The sections of the Code of Virginia slated for repeal were sections also enacted in 1966 that established a Research Division of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Senate Bill 323, the General Assembly of

Virginia, 1966). The legislation, in essence, would reverse the landmark legislation of 1966 and collapse two of the university's three divisions (extension and research) into one.

President Torgersen recalled:

The incentive behind this action was very simple. I was persuaded that the action would simplify the university's budget process. We thought having the extension and research divisions lumped together as one budget item would make it easier to present and defend to the General Assembly. (P. Torgersen, personal communication, April 22, 1997)

On behalf of President Torgersen and in support of the university's case to have the legislation enacted, Byers provided legislators with the following briefing:

Senate Bill 313 is an effort by Virginia Tech to free resources in Extension and the Agriculture Experiment Stations for programming in the field by reducing administrative costs. Currently Virginia Tech is treated as three separate agencies for budget purposes: Instruction, Research, and Extension. Cooperative Extension is in the Extension Division and the Agricultural Experiment Stations are in the Research Division. This bill will create a new division called the Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station Division and eliminate the old Research and Extension Divisions, creating two divisions where there had been three. This will reduce paperwork and duplication of administrative effort between the two units.

The language in this bill is taken entirely from existing sections of the Code. The only new language describes the relationship between Virginia Tech and Virginia State (page 1, lines 26-29) and has been approved by both institutions.

This bill simply brings together two sections of the Code and makes no changes in existing relationships or the mission of Extension or the Agricultural Experiment Stations. It is an effort by President Torgersen to streamline in order to provide additional resources for the field. (R. Byers, legislative memorandum, January 25, 1994)

The justification played well. With practically no opposition and debate, the proposed legislation quietly sailed through the Senate Committee on Education and Health and onto the Senate floor, where it was unanimously passed. From there it went to the House of Delegates, where it found navigation through the House Committee on Education just as easy. It was passed on a 96 to 2 vote by the full House on March 2. On April 8, without attention and fanfare, Governor George Allen signed S.B. 313 into law (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1994).

Worthy of note were the two dissenting votes cast against the measure by Delegates Morgan Griffith (Eighth District) and Watkins Abbitt, Jr. (59th District). An odd couple in as much as Griffith was a freshman Republican and Abbitt was a senior Democrat. The two legislators teamed to become an insignificant minority that felt strongly that the proposed legislation was short-sighted and could lead to a clouding of the distinct missions of the university. Griffith expressed a concern that the merger of the two divisions "might lead to mischief in the future by giving the Virginia Tech administration the flexibility of taking dollars intended for one purpose and redirecting them to another" (M. Griffith, personal communication, May 8, 1995).

Delegate Abbitt voiced a similar concern, but added:

The old (three-division model) had served the university and the Commonwealth well. Extension has meant a great deal for rural Virginia. While the bill was being tooted as an effort to increase the efficiencies of the university, I had the fear—and I still have it—that we would lose our understanding of what it means to have a land-grant university. I probably should have been more vocal in my opposition, but the skids were already greased. The university administration had done their homework. They knew what they wanted. (W. Abbitt, personal communication, May 8, 1995)

What the university had sought and had received was the reversal of the legislation that had been the keystone of a pilgrimage that had begun nearly 30 years earlier to become a force of change in the lives of many Virginians. The politics of a new day had forced the university to compromise Hahn's carefully crafted vision.

Yet Another Study

The restructuring plan apparently had no effect on the new administration. In the first executive budget submitted following the merger of the Extension Division and the Research Division that had been home to the work of the Agriculture Experiment Station, Governor Allen proposed a \$12.2 million reduction for the combined agency. For extension the proposed reduction represented another 30 percent of its state appropriations.

Once again, extension supporters and constituencies rallied to the occasion. Calls, letters, and visits from citizens unhappy with the drastic reductions flooded legislators. The General Assembly again responded affirmatively and restored all but \$134,000 of the proposed reduction (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995). The negotiation process that led to restoring the funding also resulted in the university administration accepting new budget language. Along with the restored resources, the 1995 Appropriations Act also contained program direction language that was seemingly contradictory to the priorities proposed by the DPB report just eighteen months earlier. The new language stated, "It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Cooperative Extension Service gives highest priority to programs which comprised the original mission of the

Extension Service, especially agriculture at the local level” (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995, p. 158).

Also contained within the new language was the request for another study to further advance the university’s on-going restructuring. It simply stated, “As part of Virginia Tech’s restructuring efforts, the university shall conduct a review of the programs and administrative operations of the Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station Division” (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995, p. 158).

Unlike the JLARC and DPB studies, the university was in control of this review. In April 1995, President Torgersen and the newly appointed provost Peggy Meszaros appointed a committee to conduct the study. The thirteen-member Experiment Station Research and Cooperative Extension Self-Study Review Committee included faculty and administrators from Virginia Tech and Virginia State, extension agents, and a 4-H volunteer. The charge provided to the group by President Torgersen and Provost Meszaros stated:

To study the programs and project content, the delivery of the programs and the administration of the Extension/Research missions for the purpose of recommending a restructuring plan for Extension and Research that reduces costs and fulfills the missions more effectively and efficiently.

Specifically the restructuring should:

- Focus on the original mission especially agricultural programs, home economics and 4-H at the local level;
- Utilize information technology in delivery of programs;
- Place more resources in the field;
- Explore alternatives for increasing non-general fund revenues in Cooperative Extension and Agriculture Experiment Station; and
- Review administrative operations. (Torgersen and Meszaros, April 4, 1995)

The committee conducted its business throughout the spring and summer of 1995. As part of its data gathering, members of the committee developed a survey that was distributed to program participants and volunteers, all extension staff, agriculture experiment station researchers, county/city officials, and representatives from various agricultural interest groups. Additionally, the committee interviewed key stakeholders with both state and federal government, including members and staff of the Virginia General Assembly, state agency heads,

and United States Department of Agriculture officials. It also formed an advisory group, which was composed of broad representation from various constituencies, to serve as a reaction panel to the findings and recommendations of the group (Virginia Tech, 1995a).

In August 1995, the committee completed its study. The Advisory Report to President Torgersen and Provost Meszaros on Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station contained 43 recommendations around ten broad categories: (a) continue to improve research programming at the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station; (b) Extension administration and staff must continue to refine and explain the educational mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension; (c) redirect more Virginia Cooperative Extension resources from administration to programs and into the agricultural and natural resources program area; (d) reduce state funding for certain programs; (e) increase local government involvement in decision making, working in a negotiated partnership with Extension administration; (f) programming expertise available to localities will be market driven; (g) increase greater utilization of technology in program delivery; (h) increase organizational and program accountability; (i) increase non-general funds to support programming and its delivery, and; (j) restructure administrative and programming functions to improve effectiveness of Virginia Cooperative Extension and better support program delivery at the field level.

Even though the study was to include both the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station and cooperative extension, the task force's work and recommendations primarily centered on extension. The set of recommendations that did pertain to the work of the Agriculture Experiment Station reaffirmed a perceived value of the combined agency and spoke to strengthening the programmatic relationship between the experiment station and cooperative extension.

As for extension, the report provided a new blue print as to how the agency would enter the 21st century. The sole recommendation on mission maintained a rather broad and philosophical position restating the foundation of extension work as being about the delivery of research-based knowledge: "All VCE programs and activities will contribute to the VCE mission by focusing on the development and delivery of research-supported, needs-driven education" (Virginia Tech, 1995a, p. 32).

Other recommendations, however, would establish program priorities consistent with the program direction included in the 1995 budget language. Agriculture programs at the local level were confirmed as the priority of the agency. The report recommended a shift of significant resources from administration and other programs towards meeting this program priority. Extension's administrative structure was to be reorganized to eliminate six positions. The programs identified to be downsized to gain the necessary redirected resources were consumer horticulture, community resource development, home economics, and disaster assessment. The report recommended that all current state funding for consumer horticulture and community resource development be shifted to agriculture. The home economics program was asked to forfeit \$190,000 from specialists' positions in Virginia Tech's College of Human Resources and

eleven agent positions. The work the agency provided in disaster assessment was to be picked up by another state agency, the Department of Emergency Services.

On September 15, 1995, the university released its official response to the self-study. In the Statement on Restructuring Virginia Cooperative Extension, President Torgersen and Provost Meszaros (1995) communicated to members of the General Assembly, the state administration, members of the university community, and the many clientele and constituencies of extension that the university would incorporate the recommendations of the study in charting the future course for extension. Their response identified five major directions for Virginia Cooperative Extension: (a) streamlining administration; (b) investing in information technology; (c) prioritizing resources on the original mission, including agriculture at the local level; (d) increasing outside revenues; and (e) strengthening extension's relationship with local government.

The statement also contained a vision that the university had for the future of Virginia Cooperative Extension:

For the 21st century we see a smaller, more specialized, tightly focused, and highly trained Extension that is able to deliver more timely information to more people more effectively. The Extension agent of the 21st century will be a true educator of the information age, linked directly to the research base of Virginia's land-grant universities. Extension will become more technology-based and market-driven, providing educational programming and technical information in ways that respond directly to the needs of citizens, businesses, and government at the local level. (Torgersen & Meszaros, 1995)

This vision reflected two popular, political priorities of the time: doing less with less and exploiting the capacities of technology. The extension of the future would be characterized by a workforce that is more focused programmatically and has greater technical skills. The advances of technology would provide a means to support the more timely transfer and delivery of new discoveries. The vision also held on to a belief that the knowledge being generated by the state's land-grant universities had relevance to the social and economic well being of the Commonwealth. Extension's educational product would address the needs of citizens, businesses, and government.

The responsibility for implementation fell to a newly named interim director, C. Clark Jones, who had assumed the leadership of Virginia Cooperative Extension on July 1, 1995, just barely a month prior to the submission of the self-study's final report. A veteran administrator who had been intimately involved with the agency's efforts to stabilize its political base, Jones accepted the challenges presented by the university's response to the self-study:

The five principles described by Drs. Torgersen and Meszaros (Virginia Tech provost) will help us become the most responsive and innovative extension

organization in the nation. We are excited. These changes are going to be challenging for those within the organization. But, they are designed so that we are better able to serve the state and its people. We are in the people business.

We can point to many, many significant accomplishments. But we cannot, we will not rest on our record. We must be and will be prepared to 'make a difference' today and for many tomorrows. Cooperative Extension has played an important role in improving the economic well-being and the quality of life for the people of our state. With the changes outlined in this plan, VCE is ready to enhance its support of the people now and into the 21st Century.

It will be smaller, more streamlined, and closer than ever to the needs of local communities and the citizens of the state. We will be restructured and re-energized. One thing that has not changed is our dedication to the people of Virginia, their enterprises and their lives. We will continue to provide practical education--education that makes a daily difference--to the people close to their homes and workplaces (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1995c, p. 2).

Jones' response held onto a broad perspective of the mission of the agency. It also communicated, however, his recognition that the politics of the time was demanding visible and significant change in how the agency looked and acted. He, with the support of the university administration, moved quickly to orchestrate changes consistent with the five principles spelled out by Torgersen and Meszaros.

In the arena of streamlining the administration, Jones moved to restructure administrative positions from 20 to 12. Five of these positions were realized through reconfiguring the administration of agent staff through redrawing district administrative units. Instead of having agents administratively aligned in eleven regions, they would be administered via six districts. At the state level, two other positions were eliminated and the 4-H and family and consumer sciences programs were merged under one administrative position.

The plan to invest more in the use of technology for the development and delivery of educational programs received an important endorsement by the state. Earlier in the year, the state had sponsored an incentive program, the Workforce Transition Act (WTA), to reduce the number of state employees. Seventy extension employees took advantage of the opportunity. Resources formally tied up in nearly 50 of these positions were requested back to fund an enhanced technology effort. Torgersen observed, "It should be noted that the linchpin of this concept is the ability to retain salary savings from the WTA to invest in information technology and training for Extension personnel." (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1995c, p. 2) The state complied and nearly \$2 million were redirected to significantly increase the capacity of the agency's use of technology (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1996a).

Agricultural programming at the local level became the priority for staffing decisions. The remaining resources and positions that were returned to the agency following the WTA which were not redirected to technology enhancement were used to fill 22 agriculture agent vacancies. This not only fulfilled the directive of the self-study, but also satisfied the current state budget language crafted by the state.

A recommitment to having a local presence in every locality and improved communications were the primary strategies behind Jones' efforts to strengthen relationships between cooperative extension and the local governments. The significant reductions in field agents over the preceding five years had resulted in agents needing to program outside their home base. Many local governments questioned whether they would continue to have "their" extension office. District directors began working with local agents to facilitate more regular contact between agents and local boards of supervisors or city councils. Local governments were also provided more information on how their resources were being used to support local programs.

Possibly the most challenging piece of the restructuring plan to implement was related to the directive to increase outside revenues. This directive could be perceived as being contrary to the very foundation of extension. "The philosophy of Extension has always been one of making information free of charge," observed President Torgersen (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1995c, p. 1). Two programs, consumer horticulture and community resource development, were identified to have their public state general fund support replaced by either local governments or program participants' fees. Not surprisingly, both of these programs had been classified as being low priority items in the Nine-Block Plan nearly 15 years earlier.

Prologue

For the past two years, the Statement on Restructuring Virginia Cooperative Extension has been the blueprint that has guided Virginia Tech's position on extension. Program and budget decisions have been made in light of their compliance with the intent of the five principles of the restructuring plan. The streamlined administration remains at 12 positions. The investment in technology has continued at around the \$2 million level annually (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1998a). Every extension agent in the state has a computer and has received training to support the use of technology with educational programming.

Agriculture programs at the local level continue to be the highest priority for staffing decisions. Jones made a commitment that every county in the state that wanted an extension agriculture agent and would fund its cost share would have one. By spring 1998, he had fulfilled this commitment with practically every county having an agriculture agent (Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1998b).

The partnership with local governments continues to be addressed through greater communications and the restored local presence of agent faculty in every unit office.

Additionally, the development of local citizen groups to assist with the identification of needs and to advocate the value of an extension program has been instrumental in this effort. These groups, known as Extension Leadership Councils, provide a unique forum through which the local extension office can better connect to the key decision-makers within the community.

Non-general fund revenues have also significantly grown. Many localities have chosen to pick-up the cost of the agents who provide program leadership to consumer horticulture. The community resource development initiatives are on a three-year phase-in to becoming self-sustaining through grants and contracts (Virginia Tech, 1995b).

The greatest evidence of the value of the implementation of the restructuring plan has been a stabilized political position of cooperative extension at the state level. In the first executive budget submitted following the restructuring, Governor Allen proposed flat funding for the 1996-98 biennium. Considering the prior adverse budget proposals of the decade, flat funding was a positive step forward. Even greater news was provided by the state in the spring of 1997 as the General Assembly passed a budget amendment that increased the state appropriation by nearly \$400,000 (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1997). The state had again demonstrated its confidence and support of extension.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND DISCUSSION

Summary

The original mission of cooperative extension is best defined through an interpretation of the intent, as well as the language, of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. The language of the enabling act read:

Be it enacted that in order to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics and to encourage the application of the same, there may be inaugurated in connection with the college or colleges in each State, now receiving, or which may hereafter receive, the benefits of the act of Congress approved July 2, 1862, entitled "An Act donating public lands to the several States and Territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts" (12 Stat. L., p. 503), and of the act of Congress approved August 30, 1890, agricultural extension work which shall be carried on in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. (Smith-Lever Act of 1914, 1914)

When put into a historical perspective, Smith-Lever was clearly a response to the decaying social and economic conditions of an early 20th century rural America. Agriculture was the industry of rural America, and the land-grant universities had the knowledge to foster and sustain the economic development of this industry. Increased production, enhanced markets, and new technologies were products of this effort.

Smith-Lever, however, was not just about agriculture. Farm operations were family operations. The whole family was important to the success of the farm. The land-grant university had the ability to assist the farm wife. At that time in our history, the farm wife had primary responsibilities for the management of the home, the nurturing of the children, and, in many cases, the keeping of the farm financial records. These were the important day-to-day tasks that the science of home economics could address.

Rural children, who were much needed laborers in support of the farm operation, were deprived of the educational and social opportunities of children living in towns and cities. The land-grant university created new learning experiences through 4-H that not only expanded their knowledge and skills, but also expanded their opportunities for socialization and to be part of a group.

Cooperative extension was viewed as successful, and it also proved to be adaptable to other social and economic issues. Early in its history, it was applied to help people facing disease and the perils of World War I. It led the way in helping correct the disparity between those social strata extremes created by the lack of electric power in rural areas. Cooperative extension provided support to families through the financial catastrophes of America's Great Depression. The Great Depression also proved to be a challenging time for many agents as they had to move beyond their traditional educational roles to become enforcers of unpopular federal policies that mandated reductions in agricultural production. When America was called to war again in the 1940's, it helped mobilize citizens to assist with the clothing and feeding of the Allied troops.

Following World War II, the power of the land-grant university was again unleashed to assist in the transition of the thousands of men and women who returned home from their service to find jobs and to create families. In many cases, they didn't return to the farms they had left. Others sought a different way of life. Whole communities sprung up overnight. The families living in these communities had new issues and different problems. Extension expanded its programs to respond with the latest research from the university. It was a resource they had learned to trust from an earlier day.

The 1960's heralded a time of unprecedented opportunities for higher education. The babies born following the war graduated from high school and began their matriculation into colleges. Virginia's community college system emerged as an alternative to accommodate the mass migration of students. Convenient access was the philosophy behind the community college system. To some degree, the community college system could have been a threat to the perceived mission of the land-grant university, but Virginia Tech's administration acted boldly in creating a plan that would help support its programming across the state.

The centerpiece of this action was the creation of the Extension Division. The local extension office truly became the front door to the university and extension was the descriptive name by which practically all the university's off-campus activities, including graduate education, non-credit continuing education, and cooperative extension, were known. The late 1960's and the 1970's were the good times for extension and Virginia Tech. State support for all programs, including the traditional programs of agriculture, home economics, and 4-H, grew significantly. Virginia Tech was strong politically as it brokered its extension presence in every House of Delegates and Senatorial district in the state for the greater good of the total university.

Late in the 1970's, regionalization of public higher education came to the forefront. The growth and expansion of the regional universities brought Virginia Tech unprecedented challenges. The activities the university was conducting outside the Blacksburg campus in the name of extension became the subject of added scrutiny by state government. The recommendations that were brought forth by the state's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission were cast in a genuine philosophical disagreement as to what the role and mission of extension could and should be in a state whose population was increasingly becoming more urban.

This philosophical debate has continued for twenty years. The intensity of the debate has waxed and waned contingent upon the internal politics of the university, the social and political agendas of state administrations, and the economic conditions of the state. The debate has been manifest in regular public review of extension's programs and resources. Its results have included the administrative realignment of cooperative extension; a significantly down-sized professional staff to develop and deliver educational programs in agriculture, home economics, and 4-H; the creation of a new outreach effort, under the name of public service that lacks connection to the locally-based extension delivery system, but delivers programs formerly conducted through extension; and a loss in political capital and long-term opportunity.

Conclusions

For much of this century, through its cooperative extension educational programs, Virginia Tech, in partnership with Virginia State University, has provided residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia access to a body of research-based knowledge being generated through the nation's land-grant university system. The legacy of the programs and services of Virginia Cooperative Extension is a tribute to the power that access to the information and knowledge being generated by the land-grant universities can have on the ways people live, work, and sustain social interactions.

This model of nonresident education was created in 1914 with the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act by the United States Congress. This act is the cornerstone for the extension programs of the land-grant university system. Throughout its history, the cooperative extension model has embraced the premise that education is an instrument of the public domain that clutches the means to economic development and to an enhanced quality of life enjoyed by the people. It is within these same two broad goals that the mission of extension is defined. Extension is simply an educational process that is connected to the people and helps them to become more productive and self-sufficient. The distinguishing characteristic of extension is its educational process and the bridge it maintains to connect the land-grant universities to the people.

Three important characteristics of the extension system that are central to its mission have been defined: (1) access to research-based information, (2) a strong presence in local communities, and (3) a capacity to provide timely responses to emerging issues. These three components are important for the continued program and political viability of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Cooperative extension is founded upon a philosophy that built upon the original mandate of the nation's land-grant university system to provide low cost, residential instruction in the agriculture, mechanical, military sciences, and the classical studies (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862). It provides a delivery system that would make the knowledge-base of the land-grant universities available to all the people of the nation, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, age, veteran

status, national origin, disability, or political affiliation. Cooperative extension promotes a fundamental policy objective that citizens shouldn't have to physically go to the university to access its information. For its knowledge to be of the greatest benefit to the people, the university should have a presence in the communities where people live and work.

It is important to recognize that cooperative extension has also been about much more than just the dissemination of information. In addition to the function of "diffusion of useful and practical information," the Smith-Lever Act (1914) explicitly directed the resources of the cooperative extension system to develop an educational process approach "to encourage the application of the same" (Smith-Lever Act of 1914, 1914). Central to its mission has been the assumption that for society to receive the greatest benefit from its research investments the information must be made practical and applicable to the needs of people in their homes and their places of work.

Through staff both on the campuses and in the localities, cooperative extension facilitates the conversion of research to practical application. Campus-based faculty specialists, who are either involved in research or regularly interacting with those who are leading research initiatives, appropriately packages and transfers research discoveries to agents working in localities.

It is the local extension agent who delivers and works directly with the receiver of the information to facilitate a change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, or practices. The agent also recruits, trains, and manages local volunteers who assist in the educational process. Many times these volunteers are early adopters of the new knowledge and practices being taught by the extension professionals or practitioners who can through their personal experiences vouch for the value and success of the extension product. It has been this educational process—Seaman Knapp's demonstration work—that has distinguished cooperative extension from being more than just a source of information. The process helps people to incorporate knowledge into their everyday lives.

Having an office in local communities has another viable responsibility that is as important as the transfer of knowledge and the facilitation of change. The system can and should work in reverse to assist the land-grant universities in identifying and prioritizing local needs and issues that must be fed into the research agenda. By living and working within the communities, agents have the opportunity and responsibility to scan their community environments for emerging problems or needs that would merit the attention of the researchers. The agents communicate those needs through the specialists, who in turn help shape the university's research agenda. It is this two-way, dynamic system of program delivery and needs identification that has distinguished the land-grant system. The generation of new knowledge is the engine of the land-grant university. Extension can serve as the delivery system for research-based knowledge and the eyes and ears to communities to determine the relevance of the university's research agenda.

The ability and capacity of Virginia Cooperative Extension to provide an educational response in a timely manner has been the difference between economic disaster and sustained profitability for many farms, businesses, and industries. That same capacity has kept families from losing their homes, experiencing hunger, and being denied quality and affordable dependent care. And, in two situations, the ability of the extension system to respond quickly assisted a nation through times of war by mobilizing communities to do their part at home and in the workplace to support the war effort.

Thus, it is in the design and delivery of the response that has been most influenced by the political, social and economic conditions of the time. The venue and scope of programs developed and delivered under the name of extension have fluctuated due to politics, economics, and social issues. This is the very nature and arguably the strength of extension. This was the point made by J. D. Hutcheson, when he said “Extension never stays the same for more than two years in a row. Its work moves like marching men, and the Extension which does not change its program to meet changing conditions is soon out of step.” (Epsilon Sigma Phi, 1987, p. 46)

Keeping in step with the changing dynamics of the political, social, and economic times has been and continues to be the challenge. Politics has played a significant role in shaping the programs offered through extension. Extension is the product of the political climate of the earliest days of the 20th century. It was the politics of President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal that mandated agents to enforce the policies of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The politics of the mid-1960’s provided Virginia Tech the opportunity to greatly expand its outreach under the name of extension, especially with off-campus graduate education. It has been the political agendas of two consecutive governors in this decade that have sent conflicting messages as to what should be the agency’s program priorities. Because it is an agency of the public trust, extension has to respond to these political agendas and change accordingly to enjoy further investment from state, local, and federal appropriations.

Many times, it’s difficult to separate political agendas from economic agendas. Politics can be the product of economic influences. Being a publicly funded agency, the economic conditions of the state, federal, and local partners have had a direct impact on the capacity of cooperative extension to deliver its educational products. In times of economic growth, extension has enjoyed reasonably stable public support. The significant budget reductions Virginia Cooperative Extension endured in the early 1990’s were as much related to the economic recession of the Commonwealth as they were to true differences in political philosophy. With diminished tax revenues, the governor and members of the Virginia General Assembly had to make choices as to what the priorities of the state would be. Economics created the need for the choices. Politics became the means.

The ability of extension to respond to changing social dilemmas is central to its mission. Throughout its history, extension has adjusted programs to remain relevant and useful to the people it was serving in the Commonwealth. It has responded to social calamities such as disease during World War I. When people relocated from rural communities into urban and suburban

areas, extension responded by teaching urban horticulture and parenting. It has expanded program offerings, especially in the late 1960's and 1970's to reach a broader base of constituents than had been its traditional audience. However, with its history and funding—particularly at the federal level--deeply rooted in rural and agricultural communities, adapting to these changing social environments has not come without political questioning.

Extension's future is contingent upon the ability of Virginia Tech and Virginia State to maintain the historical service to agricultural and rural interests while at the same time developing and delivering programs that meet the needs of the ever-growing populations in Virginia's urban and suburban areas. It's a balancing act that will require the leadership and political savvy that was demonstrated by presidents Eggleston and Hahn. The balancing act will also require a clearly defined vision and mission as to how extension helps Virginia Tech and Virginia State to fulfill their land-grant responsibilities.

Discussion

This year, as it celebrates the 125th year of its founding, Virginia Tech has the opportunity to reaffirm what it means to be a land-grant university. In fulfillment of its covenant to be the university of the people, Virginia Tech is about building societal capacity and enhancing the economic opportunities and quality of life enjoyed by all Virginians.

At Virginia Tech, the concept of land-grant university has been developed through a history of successes by its alumni, its many research contributions to various enterprises, and its demonstrated commitment to provide a practical education that makes a difference in the fundamental ways people live and work. Being a land-grant university reflects a set of beliefs about the social role of the university within our society. It submits to a Jeffersonian conviction that the greatest instrument of a democratic people is education and that education is the foundation of good citizenship. As Virginia's senior land-grant university, Virginia Tech is called upon to share its resources for the generation and delivery of knowledge that will help the state's businesses, industries, and citizens to become more productive and self-reliant.

Extension provides Virginia Tech a network through which the university can foster its statewide outreach. Capitalizing on the three previously defined attributes of extension--(1) access to research-based information, (2) a strong presence in local communities, and (3) a capacity to provide timely responses to emerging issues--can assist Virginia Tech in its efforts to become the model land-grant university of the 21st Century. When applied to the university more broadly, the three attributes can take on strategies that could help define the contemporary land-grant university. Some of these strategies might be as follows:

1) The knowledge generated by Virginia Tech will be made accessible to all. The hallmark of the land-grant system is access for all people. It was the basis for the creation of land-grant universities. It was bolstered through the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 that established the extension system. Indeed, the Commonwealth has been the campus of

Virginia Tech through the university's expansive statewide network of extension offices, agriculture research and extension centers, and regional educational centers. The technological discoveries, institutional development, and improvement in human capacities of the last decade afford the university with unprecedented opportunity to expand its boundaries and enter new marketplaces. The land-grant university of the 21st Century can complement its existing network with new technologies. The new technologies provide for the effective and expedient delivery of knowledge to maximize the benefit to those who will apply the knowledge in their workplaces, homes, and communities.

2) The local presence of Virginia Tech can support the notion of life-long learning. The last half of the 20th Century has been witness to an astonishing explosion of knowledge. Academic programs help prepare students to enter the workforce marketplace, but the knowledge gained is subject to obsolescence at an unprecedented rate. To fulfill maximum productivity in the workforce, graduates must remain attentive to new advancements in subject matter and techniques. The model land-grant university of the 21st Century can complement the creativity and genius of its faculty with the latest technologies to create learning environments that inspire students' continued engagement in learning. It must also construct communications and support systems that sustain student learning needs beyond the successful completion of their formal education. Alumni status should no longer symbolize a stagnant condition of what was past, but should connote a relationship of continued learning that is applicable to the current ventures of the student. The local extension office can facilitate a greater connection to the alumni and support their continuing education.

3) The research and outreach agendas of Virginia Tech will have relevance to the critical needs of citizens. Land-grant universities have influenced the economic and social well-being of society through their research agendas. The land-grant university of the 21st century must further develop and maintain systems that facilitate the active engagement of communities in determining the research activities of its faculty. With research as the foundation that undergirds both its instruction and extension missions, Virginia Tech must foster a connectivity to business, industry, public schools, government, and other community-based enterprises and groups to facilitate a dynamic process that includes the exchange of knowledge and the identification of issues that command the direction of research resources. It should uphold research standards that reflect the highest degree of excellence, objectivity, relevance, and usefulness.

The very basic needs shared by all the people must continue to be part of Virginia Tech's research and extension work. The university must continue to generate and deliver knowledge that contributes to a safe and abundant food and fiber supply and fosters environmental stewardship. This is an important legacy of the land-grant tradition that has had a significant impact on how humankind has learned to utilize natural resources to provide quality, safe food and fiber products. The continued growth and urbanization of the Commonwealth present challenges that require continued research and education to ensure that our production and consumption of food, fiber, and materials does not irrevocably impair our land, water, air, and other resources.

Point of View

Virginia Tech should act boldly with vision and conviction to stake a claim that it has a unique role within the state's higher education plan. The Morrill Act of 1862 was the original Contract with America. The federal government made a contract with the states that in exchange for a substantial grant of federal land the state would provide educational resources to the people. Virginia Tech is one of the stewards of this contract. It should never accept a relegated position as being just the state university of southwest Virginia. Its calling and its connection to the people through extension make it so much more.

As we enter the 21st century, our society still harbors classes of people who for a variety of reasons are victims of economic and social disparity. These disparities are not confined to just a certain part of the state. For example, many rural Virginians do not have the access to many of the benefits provided through recent advances in technology. As it did with rural electrification a half century ago, Virginia Tech, through its local extension offices, could lead in developing the infrastructure and training to correct this disparity.

On an even larger scale, one could argue that the conditions that now confront urban America are not too unlike those that existed in rural America at the turn of the 20th century. Engaging the land-grant universities to develop and deliver an educational response that is linked to heightened research on the social and economic issues related to urban decay could have outcomes similar to those produced by the creation of the extension system. To many this would be a stretch of what the mission of extension is, but it has a legislative and historical precedent that would suggest that this is what extension was intended to be.

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