



Extension Issue-focused Teams

An internal grant program to develop multi-disciplinary teams of faculty to address critical issues in agriculture

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Issue: Existing and emerging issues facing Washington agriculture require teams of faculty members from appropriate disciplines to engage in as teams to approach these issues in an interdisciplinary manner. Faculty teams need to be assembled and operational in order to apply for and win competitive grants at the national level.

What has been done: Extension operating funds were redirected from general support allocations, traditionally given to individual faculty members, to competitive awards for faculty teams. Thirty-seven initial proposals were narrowed to seventeen teams that were provided grants of \$3,000 to assemble teams and submit proposals. Six teams were awarded internal grants of up to \$75,000 for an 18-month period with expectations to meet stated goals and compete for larger competitive grants.

Impacts: Faculty members from academic departments, outlying research and extension centers, and county locations became acquainted and contributed to the team efforts. Junior faculty members were mentored in grantsmanship by senior faculty. Teams, including some that only received the smaller planning grants, were able to submit and win competitive grants from a variety of sources. One team developed an on-line Master Gardener training program that kept that program viable during the unforeseen economic downturn when travel was restricted for traditional means of program delivery. A cross-disciplinary team focused on protecting and enhancing the Washington state seed industry was established, facilitating the sharing of data and coordination of research and technology transfer among specialists and scientists, and led to the creation of a website for team members and seed growers. This team also submitted grants for over \$2 million and garnered over \$350,000 in funded proposals. Another team addressed the issue of bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) persistent infection in Washington cow-calf operations, involving the testing of ca 12,000 head from 66 herds. This effort has provided base data for a pending competitive grant and has increased awareness of the issue among cattle producers. This team effort contributed to four refereed scholarly publications and fostered working relationships among faculty who previously were not collaborating. Another team addressing sustainability of wine grape and small fruit industries in Washington developed a website that attracted 4,000 visitors, published a 20-page Extension bulletin for growers, organized 8 workshops and delivered 20 presentations to industry and professional organizations. This team submitted 8 competitive grant proposals and garnered over \$600,000 in funding. This new funding model has stimulated awareness of interdisciplinary team participation.

Funding Sources, Cooperators, Partners, Mentors etc.: WSU Extension provided ca \$200,000 per year and the Agricultural Research Center provided \$100,000 per year. One team was from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. Some teams involved private and corporate cooperators.

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