

Developing a Staffing Plan for Extension Programming for the Northwest Region Pat Colyer

Issue:

The ability of the AgCenter to accomplish its programmatic objectives in 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Family Consumer Sciences has become a challenge with the loss of faculty through attrition and early retirement incentives along with a hiring freeze on state employees. The hiring freeze and the anticipation of continued reductions in state appropriations provides little opportunity to hire new extension faculty to meet the demands of these programs. As a consequence, the administration has begun to look at how to best accomplish programming objectives with existing faculty. A staffing plan is needed to meet our programmatic goals. Regional directors were encouraged to develop staffing plans for their regions.

What has been done:

Several meetings have been held within the administration to discuss staffing and programming efforts within the Extension Service. Meetings have also been held with the regional 4-H and Family Consumer Sciences coordinators in the region to solicit their input. Opinions from stakeholders have also been considered in developing these plans. These activities provided a solid foundation for the development of a staffing plan, and staffing plans with some alternative strategies have been developed. These plans emphasize the utilization of more regional and/or multi-parish assignments and the reassignment of some faculty to critical programs and locations. Some plans include a reduction in programs. Nothing has been put into action at this time. Initial action has been delayed until the budget for the new fiscal year is known. At that point, it is anticipated that some aspects of the plan(s) will be put into action.

Impact:

Until the plan is initiated, it is difficult to measure impact. It is anticipated that the plan will allow the AgCenter to meet its identified programmatic objectives in 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Family Consumer Sciences despite the reduction in extension faculty.

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