

Notes
Regional Directors / Program Leaders Meeting
October 12, 2009

Present:

Tim Cross, Carla Bush, Tim Fawver, Herb Byrd, George Smith, Steve Sutton, Connie Heiskell, Mike Gordon, Lynn Brookins, Linda Bower, David Perrin, Jim Stewart, Richard Powell, Shirley Hastings, Herb Lester, Brenda Voiles, Richard Winston via conference call, Joseph Donaldson

1. Field Staff Survey

Joseph Donaldson's graduate study will include a survey to determine job satisfaction for employees who are Extension agents or county directors. All agents will receive survey. Instrument is in draft form and plans to go out mid-November. Donaldson shared an overview of the internet-based study and questionnaire. TSU will be included in survey. Donaldson thanked Cross and Hastings for encouraging him in his educational pursuit.

2. Support for County Personnel: Celebrating Successes/Suggestions for 2010

SUPER has become a part of our business process; we need to focus on how to keep SUPER on the forefront; talked about celebrating SUPER successes and using 2010 Centennial Celebration to update about SUPER and reporting. Possibly have a discussion with regional directors every month and include a module per month as part of the meeting and learn tips and tools about that module. Someone at regional level needs to send SUPER updates to counties. There will be some enhancements to SUPER.

3. Changes in 4-H Camp Insurance Program

Terri Quillin will be interim manager of Columbia 4-H Center. Sutton passed out information on changes in camper's insurance. Effective Jan 1, 2010, rates will go up to .40 cents per person per day. Still need to be prudent, but use the insurance as necessary. Sutton handed out a letter prepared by Risk Management to give to 4-H Camper Parents concerning policies on camper's insurance. Sutton will email this information to regional directors. Camp fees are increasing from \$210 to \$215. Travel supplement for camps will be ½ the amount from last year – do not have to request – will automatically be deposited in camp accounts. In 2011, supplement will go away.

4. Social Networking Guidelines

Byrd handed out Kentucky's guidelines for social networking and discussed the possibility of developing guidelines for Tennessee Extension. Byrd suggested using the term 'social media' instead of 'social networking.' There have been instances of inappropriate postings on social media sites. Group discussed that social media is a good tool; hard to separate personal from professional; and guidelines are needed to create an awareness of what is appropriate and not appropriate. Cross suggested putting together a committee to draft some guidelines, maximizing the benefits and minimizing the drawbacks. Cross will send out a note to regional directors requesting names to serve on a committee.

5. Email Groups for Extension

Cross has reviewed the current email groups that were in Lotus Notes and feels they need to be organized a little differently. Cross is thinking we need to create 4-H, Ag, and FCS regional groups by corporate function, with TSU being a group. 7 groups within each region would roll into a regional group. Discussed program assistants being a group; groups less than 25 members – would be self-maintained; Regional office would be responsible for maintaining their groups. County directors would have to notify regional office if they hire or terminate a county-paid employee. Cross asked for thoughts and ideas about organizing these email groups. Cross will work with IT personnel to get these groups set up.

6. TSU

- Dean will be visiting Rutherford County on October 14 – staff will make a presentation. Dean had a similar visit recently in Shelby County.
- Expanded 2501 program to Monroe, Stewart, Sumner and Robertson Counties – Alvin Wade will head up this program.
- Finis Stribling will head up Agribility program – working with Tim Prather.
- Looking to put horticulture and landscape agent in Wilson County.
- Planning a staff conference at TSU December 7-9 -- Dean will be able to visit with all employees.
- Plan to visit all counties with TSU agents over the next few months.
- Associate Dean for Extension position is on hold. Richard Winston will continue to serve as interim.
- Fawver requested Winston to send him a current list of TSU agents and counties.
- Powell requested Winston to notify Program Leaders when TSU administration will be visiting counties in their region.

7. Performance Appraisals (completion and routing)

Byrd said that performance appraisals are being reviewed more extensively by HR, and this year several were returned. Performance Review forms should be sent to Byrd's office, where they will be reviewed before they are sent to HR. Regional directors should make sure everything on form is performance related and doesn't include things such as health related comments.

The group took a break and Program Leaders went to 4-H meeting. Regional Directors continued to meet.

8. Update on Searches

Assistant Dean – Ag: Hastings reported that committee is reviewing applications, and will meet on October 30 to narrow the pool and select candidates to be interviewed. November 30 – December 2 has been reserved for interviews in Knoxville and probably also in Nashville. May hold seminars in two locations depending on the number of candidates interviewed.

Assistant Dean – 4-H: Smith said they have received 25 applications. Committee has narrowed to 4 primary and 2 secondary and is contacting references. Committee will meet on October 19 to discuss results and decide on final candidate pool. Interviews will be held November 18-20, and committee will meet on Dec 3 to review results and forward strengths and weaknesses of final candidates to Dean. Seminar will be videocast.

Western Regional Director – Heiskell said committee has reviewed applications and has checked references. Committee will meet via Centra on October 14 to narrow the pool.

Central Region FCS Program Leader – November 3-4 dates have been reserved for interviews at the county office in Murfreesboro. Committee is checking references.

Group discussed the pros and cons of videostreaming the seminars. Pros: great way to save money; convenient for employees. Cons: fewer bodies present for seminar; may project a negative image for candidate of few people present. Need to generate a crowd for the seminars.

Need to stress confidentiality to committee members.

9. TNCEP Contract

Hastings gave brief update on status of TNCEP contract. DHS issued a continuing contract based on last year's funding. Amount requested for this year has not been approved yet. Six new program assistant positions have been put on hold. Hope to fill some new positions, as soon as we hear about funding.

10. Online Sale of Surplus Equipment

Fawver, Sutton and 4-H Center managers have proposed that 4-H Center managers will sell county equipment and split proceeds 50/50 with county. Counties would contact 4-H Center manager, provide a picture of equipment, and 4-H manager would put equipment for sale on line. Equipment would remain in county until sold. Computers would need to be cleaned off by IT specialists before they are sold. If not sold in 2 weeks, would be thrown away or recycled. Plan to do this before camping season begins. This would promote interaction between 4-H Centers and counties, as well as generating money for both. TNCEP computers should go through FCS office. Group agreed to proposal, and Fawver will draft guidelines with 4-H Center Managers.

11. Unrelated Business Income Tax

Fawver anticipates an audit of UT for unrelated business income tax. If counties are contacted about unrelated business income tax (by UT, IRS, or anyone else), please let Fawver know.

Fawver was contacted Friday by Internal Audit, asking for a list of counties to be reviewed. Regional directors should let Fawver know by Tuesday, October 13, if they have counties for audits.

12. Middle Managers Urban Task Force Webcasts

Heiskell handed out info on urban programming opportunities (webcasts). Heiskell would like to request that urban county directors participate. Shelby, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, Sullivan, Rutherford would be asked to participate. Cross said it looks like a good opportunity – Heiskell will send to other regional directors to pass along to urban counties and also to Winston. Heiskell will try to get more information about the content.

13. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2010

Cross handed out a list of tentative meeting dates for 2010.

14. IT Area Specialist Standards

Cross discussed our IT area specialist and technician positions, and asked regional directors to think about how responsibilities are handled in the region. Will be a topic at the next regional director meeting.

15. Other Items

- Cross asked Winston about training requests in counties by program area, and how both UT and TSU can integrate and coordinate more. Roy Bullock and Thelma Sanders will work on rural development programming. TSU employees could go into SUPER and sign up for rural development training next year.
- Roy Bullock – Ag; Javiette Samuel – 4-H; Thelma Sanders – FCS will participate in Program Leader meetings.
- Cross said we are looking at FY12 budget reductions that result in decreases in state funds of \$5-6 million. Need for new staffing plan. If we engage in a new staffing plan, TSU would be asked to participate. Will communicate with TSU as we look at a process for a staffing plan.
- Extension is pursuing an opportunity to acquire a property on Kingston Pike in Knoxville for housing the Eastern Region Office. Have support from Board of Trustees, and anticipate the acquisition will be approved.
- There will be a feasibility study on a 4-H Center in West TN – study will be provided at no cost by UT. Hope to know something in 3 or 4 months.
- Byrd has visited with Employee & Organizational Development about training for a certification. County directors, agents who supervise Program Assistants, aspiring agents, regional staff, and specialists will be eligible to participate. Proposing doing Part 1 over the next year. Much of it can be completed on-line. Group felt certification should be required for current county directors and EFNEP agents who supervise PAs. Limited to 50 in the class. Byrd will follow up and send regional directors potential dates and a package of information that can be forwarded to potential participants.

Next Scheduled Meeting – November 9, 2009