

Extension State Advisory Council
I-Hotel and Conference Center – Alma Mater Room
February 17, 2020
Minutes

Present:

Council Members: Martha Brown, Sal Garza, Patsy Hirsch, Ruby Lingle, Lee Maki, Brian Mueller, Brittney Muschetto, Kathleen Piatt, Carolina Schottland, Reginald Summerrise, Mark Ward, Tim Wells, Jeff White, Linda White

Extension Leadership Team: Dennis Bowman, Harry Clore, Lisa Diaz, Tony Franklin, Ryan Hobson, James Hazzard, Samantha Koon, Deborah Seiler, Anne Silvis, Joe Toman, Steve Wald

Absent:

Janice Blanchette

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sal Garza at 8:17a.m. with roll call taken and self-introductions made. Present were those noted above. The October 14, 2019 minutes were reviewed with a motion made and seconded but not passed. Reginald asked that the minutes be tabled until the next meeting for approval. Sal stated that any changes or amendments need to be submitted to Tony, Patty and Sal within a couple weeks following the meeting so that adjustments can be made and the minutes can be re-reviewed. A motion was made by Reginald to table the October 14, 2019 minutes to allow for review and amendments. Motion was seconded and motion carried.

There were no public comments.

Director's Update – Tony Franklin for Shelly Nickols-Richardson

Shelly was unable to attend. Tony shared her comments reporting the following:

- Positions for the Assistant Dean and Program Leader Agriculture and Agribusiness (AAB) and Assistant Dean Natural Resources Environment and Energy (NREE) have been posted. Search committees for both are very broad and include Extension educators, county directors, outside groups such as farm bureau and departmental specialists. The NREE search also includes individuals from Purdue who are with the IL-IN Sea Grant program and it is being chaired by Bob Schooley, Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences.
- Search is underway for the Director of the Energy Education Council based out of Springfield. The job announcement was previously sent to the group and it is appreciated that the information is being shared. Harry Clore is chairing the search.
- As positions become open the information will be sent to ESAC for a larger reach in seeking a robust candidate pool.

Sal asked to have names of new staff members as well as filled positions sent to ESAC members. Samantha indicated that the ACES Communications group is working to compile a listing and that she would get ESAC added to the listing.

Financial Update – Harry Clore

Harry shared a presentation of state funding since 2017 mentioning that there is a large gap between what has been asked for and what has been received noting the following:

- 2018 - ½ CCI, ½ youth received
- 2019 – 0 CCI received
- 2020 – ½ CBM received but no CCI or youth received

In 2015 he prepared and had spending mechanisms in place which allowed the units to be somewhat whole as far as funding. In 2017 units were not heavily funded centrally. In 2018, 2019 and 2020 substantial financial assistance was provided centrally.

He shared that a determination needs to be made on how to manage the situation with the uncertainty of funding explaining that the largest issue is to determine a strategy to deliver the programs with the uncertainty of the funding.

He mentioned that some funds can be held but cash cannot be stockpiled. 50-60 positions were not filled in the last five years.

Sal shared a scenario on how he handled this type of situation when he served as Mayor indicating that he used local lenders to receive a line of credit. He inquired about the possibility of a line of credit and the value versus what it costs to not fill positions due to uncertainty.

- Q - What happens if funding can't be paid back?
A - Taxes would have to be raised.

Sal inquired about advocacy and whether Deputy Governors had been contacted. Steve Wald responded that there had been no communication on the Ag side and that Extension funding flows through IDOA rather than Higher Education. Sal suggested visiting with both the Governor and Deputy Governors and felt that if the latter group is not being contacted that a good avenue is being missed.

Harry said he is not aware of any lines of credit but is aware of a bonding program. He shared that Extension has to follow University policy and cannot buy buildings. He explained that the majority of the cost is staff and buildings (leases). Most of the reserve is due to educators and administrators both having notice rights with many being up to one year and salaries must be paid. Leases still stand one to five years. Anything done would have to go through the Board of Trustees but he felt it worth exploring.

- Q – What are the associated costs of staying ahead of the cash flow, moving funding, and what is the loss to cover the expenses? What is the real cost by not filling positions and what opportunities are being missed?
A - Need to seek out the appropriate funding mechanisms.
- Q – How many months are in operating capital?
A – Approximately 15 months of operating capital in reserve.
- Q – If too much in reserve falls under scrutiny, where is the threshold?
- A - 18 month level. Harry works hard to keep much of the reserve in the unit trust accounts which is local tax dollars and specific CBM dollars. Also tries to keep in Smith-Lever, and Federal Funds specifically for Extension. These are considered safe funds. If balances in GRF (state funding) or ICR (income off grants) are too large then the possibility exists that campus will take the funds since they are not being used. If funds are kept in the right mix things should be okay. The recommendation is to scale back a year or two of operating reserves. Suggested 24 months of operating reserves which gives time to react in the instance the money is not received. He mentioned that an effort is being made to do more fee for service and that we need to also be more aggressive as there are many grant opportunities available. He also shared that county funding comes in at approximately \$12 million per year.
- Q – Where does Extension fit within the campus as far as priorities?
A - Steve Wald responded that Extension is on the top ten list but could be 9 or 10 and that this was a big year for public higher education. In the overall agenda, Extension is in the picture and Governmental Affairs staff hear about Extension. When the system puts out a one page document, Extension is visible in two places which represents all three campuses. Specific asks for Extension is the only part through Ag rather than higher ed. It is understood that Extension is vital part of the land-grant mission.

Sal mentioned that the mission has been to advocate to external groups but internal advocacy at the campus level hasn't been discussed and perhaps this is an area to explore and become more aggressive.

- Q– Is dissemination of funding controlled by the State or College?
A – Extension is a common-good organization centrally funded through the campus and the Provost distributes funding to Extension.

Following the meeting Sal will make some contacts regarding the five Deputy Governors to be sure we are working with the appropriate party. He feels there is an opportunity to establish the one-on-one relationship at the next level but wants to have a thorough understanding on the history of the funding. He suggested working more with Steve and arranging meetings to bring the issue to the forefront. Steve responded that there will be discussion later on the agenda on the Government Affairs strategy, advocacy for Extension as well as ESAC strategy.

Harry shared that once Smith-Lever funding is received it has to be spent within five years. This originated in 1914 with the Smith-Lever Act. FY17 funds are currently being spent.

Sal explained that the same recurring question on the ongoing challenge of funding has been raised at each meeting since the end of 2015. He encouraged ESAC members to continue following the same roadmap of being assertive in contacting both local and federal legislators but to also add additional leverage and to educate others to a deeper understanding of the need. He proceeded to thank the group for their input and discussion on the topic.

IT Update – James Hazzard

There was a change in the agenda with no report from Extension IT.

ESAC Purpose – Discussion (added agenda item) - Tony Franklin

Tony explained that when new members are brought on board, a brief orientation is given along with the description and also copies of previous minutes. He asked the group how many serve on local Extension Councils and what the role of that group is? Responses were shared. He emphasized that these groups should be as diverse as possible and that it is important to include people who are less familiar with Extension. He then read the ESAC purpose statement indicating that the group acts as an advisory group. He shared that support is being provided at the local level and that ESAC is advocating at the state level. Employees can educate but not advocate. The goal is to have ESAC more engaged and providing feedback to the program leaders and leadership team collectively. He explained the difference between an advisory group and a board stating that advisory groups offer/provide advice whereas a board is in charge of the group. ESAC members are the eyes and ears at the state level and it is important for the group to feel their input is valued and that the two yearly meetings are worthwhile. He closed by stating that ESAC is connected with different circles of influence and asked the group to consider how information about Extension is being shared at other meetings.

Roundtable Discussions- Anne Silvis and Lisa Diaz

Anne shared that ESAC feedback and input is important. Each table was provided with a discussion topic and worksheet and comment sheet to be completed. Reporting of table discussion highlights will be brought back during the discussion time. Following the exercise, the worksheets were collected and a summary report will be prepared and shared with the group. Table discussion topics were:

1. What issues are surfacing in your area that Extension could address?
 - a. What would be the most effective role for Extension to address that issue?
 - b. What local/state/regional partners would or could help Extension in that effort?
 - c. How might U of I, Extension, or 4-H alumni be invited to collaborate?
2. From your perspective, what do funding stakeholders in your area value? More precisely, what would your area funding stakeholders want to see from their investment in Extension?
 - a. In terms of programming? How much? To whom?
 - b. In terms of important issues, which issues? How do area stakeholders define those issues?
3. How do you get information about Extension programs and events? How is that different from information you get about other educational/research/event/programming opportunities? What technologies/ platforms do audience in your area use that Extension has no (or little) presence in? Would audiences in our area consume more Extension programming if it was delivered by a favorable technology? What would that look like?
4. What issues do you see as most pressing/critical for youth audiences in your area?
 - a. How might U of I, Extension, or 4-H alumni be engaged to help address those issues?
 - b. In your area, what youth audiences could or should Extension be working with that we're not already working with?
 - c. What local/state/regional partners would or could help Extension in that effort?

All tables were given the following question to consider:

5. Extension has historically been successful at engaging volunteers to extend impact (for example, MG, MN, 4-H). From your perspective, what is needed most to continue being successful at volunteer recruitment and engagement?
 - a. Who are potential volunteers in your area which we are not yet reaching?
 - b. What are the best mechanisms of recruitment/communication with those audiences?

- c. What is important to successfully engage and retain volunteers?
- d. What are the barriers to volunteerism in your area?

Roundtable Discussion Report

Group #1 – Table discussion information was shared. Lisa asked about high level issues. Diabetes and cottage foods were brought up. She indicated that for the next meeting to be thinking about happenings related to the topic that they aren't aware of and what can be done in those areas.

Group #2 – Table discussion information was shared. Lisa asked if there were comments from other tables. She shared that the question was intended to show how to best demonstrate return on the investment to the investors. She asked about additional items outside of providing numbers. It was stated that Extension needs to do a better job in explaining what Extension is. It was expressed that there are good programs but not a path for those who want to volunteer from 4-H to MG or MN. Need to recruit “for life” starting at 4-H then to other programs.

Group #3 – Table discussion information was shared. Lisa asked other tables for thoughts on making people aware and more knowledgeable about what is available. Question was asked whether there is any follow through on Google searches. James responded that Extension uses Google Analytics for tracking and that Google cookies and tracking cookies are not used. Paid ads are sometimes used for event tracking.

Group #4 – Table discussion information was shared. No additional feedback given.

Question #5 was given to all tables. Table discussion information was shared.

- Does my voice matter, do other volunteers welcome and appreciate me, am I making an impact? Is the volunteering event well organized, what would drive others to volunteer, work hard to get more youth involved/engaged, work better with affiliated groups (nurseries, etc.), get word out via face-to-face.
- Reduce time commitment for volunteers, be more specific on time commitment, make it easier, be less rigid, develop other projects for them, cross-train.
- Provide opportunity to provide information (booth, etc.), change hours when offered. Offer to large employers and employees. Offer meaningful opportunities and identify them to get youth to volunteer. Explore opportunities for stay at home moms to volunteer, review worker shortage. How to move forward with self-sustaining programming. Align volunteerism more specifically to the community.
- Target 4-H alumni. Extension needs to provide more acknowledgement of the volunteers.
- CED volunteerism – there needs to be an area for collaboration with other units. There may be a common desire but no mechanism to get better collaboration.
- Work with many people in community and other organizations, i.e., handicapped population.

Tony mentioned that it is important for volunteer groups to be as diverse as possible, including ESAC

Lisa thanked the group for their time and input and stated that she and Anne would work with Tony to determine the best way to share the feedback whether as an agenda item at the next meeting or via another method.

Working with Elected Officials/Best Practices – Steve Wald

Steve shared that the right to lobbying is part of the First Amendment right. Talking to legislators as citizens is important as it gives access and persuasion. For Extension this goes hand in hand. Extension has access to legislators as public employees and a state government entity. There are substantial relationships with legislators that are often long-term. Extension provides service to constituents within legislative districts including youth, families receiving nutrition information, etc. and has a reputation of providing useful and reliable information to communities that are directly served. This information can be provided to legislators in a relevant and timely manner. Within the University, College, Campus and system leaders, there is ability to mobilize constituents in the grassroots efforts.

In his PowerPoint presentation, Steve covered persuasion fundamentals, tactics, and relationships in working with legislators. Persuasion fundamentals includes Credibility (is the argument, policy, etc. true and solid?); Saliency (addresses an issue that matters – is it true, solid and relevant?) and Legitimacy (who are you and who do you represent?) with the focus on the decision maker. Under tactics he mentioned that contributions are important and considered when working with University leadership to determine the tactics. The objective needs to be framed for action by a decision maker who has the power, there should be a focused strategy with a broad, more measurable goal

and tactics should be planned accordingly. He further stated that secondary targets and those who are influential such as constituents, etc. should be researched. Building a relationship with a legislator takes time and is a developmental process. They need to know you so it is important to build that relationship. In the development process it is important to plan, prepare and then make the ask. Timing is important and it is good to share with them at the level they are ready to receive.

ESAC members were encouraged to be involved in activities related to Governmental Relations and informed that these activities can be coordinated with the County Director, Regional Director and Steve. ESAC members can be an eye witness. Staff are up to date on statistics but a volunteer can be a character witness for Extension by explaining what the programs mean to them and/or the community. In doing so it is important to provide your own testimony and stories about Extension and the impact. A key developmental stage is to get legislators to attend Extension activities.

Questions were raised about funding programs and if it is easier to get smaller programs through as well as if there are problems in DC whether a physical presence is beneficial. Steve explained that the size matters not and that it is more the big budget. He also explained that Governmental Relations staff including a Director of State Relations and Director of Federal relations and 2-3 support staff are in reporting lines to President Killeen. The Council of Governmental and External Relations discusses work that is happening. The group includes official lobbyists for the University, Extension, the Medical School and Public Affairs.

Steve shared the action plan for 2020 and opportunities for ESAC members to be involved.

- Campus Governmental Relations are anxious to have a conference call (monthly) with ESAC
- March 4, 2020 Lobby day in Springfield
- May 5, 2020 Lobby day in Springfield
- In-district meetings with members of Congress during recesses: April 5-17, May 4-8
- Pending additional discussions about budget strategy, ESAC may consider additional strategies including
 - A group sign-on letter to the general assembly
 - Letters to the editor
 - Phone calls
 - Illinois Connection Advocacy Network (22,000 people on the listserv). Action alerts are received. Open to advocates of the University as well as alums. Have offered sending out Extension action notices possibly in the spring. May be part of the coordinated strategy. Google – intake list to join the group.

Sal requested that Steve make the call to ESAC members with a response in an informal manner. Suggestion was an Outlook meeting invite. It was requested that prior to lobbying days in Springfield to have a webinar to prep everyone on issues, how to address, strategy, and some major talking points so the message is unified and consistent.

Steve provided a hand-out entitled “Make Your Voice Heard! The Art of Advocacy” by the League of Women Voters of Connecticut which includes tips for lobbying and the best methods for communicating with legislators.

Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) – Sal Garza

Sal turned the discussion over to Steve. Steve gave an overview of PILD explaining that the conference is held April 5-8 with Sunday reserved for fly-in, Monday and Tuesday the conference and Wednesday delegation visits to legislators. The legislative visits are to share information about Extension and the advantage of the Smith Lever funding that is received. ESAC members are responsible for making the ask. Prior to the conference Steve hosts calls with the IL delegation for preparation work on what will happen while in DC. The IL delegation consists of 4-5 Extension staff and three ESAC members. Sal shared that several groups work simultaneously. A determination needs to be made on ESAC representatives from Regions 2 & 3. Reginald will be attending as the Region 1 representative. Steve will send an email following the meeting to discuss and determine interest. Sal asked that Britney, the student representative, be invited to participate.

A question was raised as to why meeting with legislators in DC is more advantageous than meeting with them in their local districts. Steve responded that meetings this year during PILD will be with staffers rather than legislators. He further explained that this is an opportunity to meet with those who make NIFA decisions. Meetings with district staff are beneficial but it is also very valuable to spend time with the staffer in DC. Question was asked that if ESAC

members cannot attend whether it is possible for a representative to attend on their behalf? Sal said he wants to be receptive to all ideas but that will also need to be discussed.

ESAC Business (Old/New) / Open Discussion – Sal Garza

Old Business

It is preferred to have the minutes earlier. Members need them in time for local Extension Council meetings. Jeff prefers to have them within 30 days of the meeting. A suggestion was made to possibly have the meeting recorded. Reginald stated that he recalled some inaccuracies in the minutes mentioning that he had a question about the Cook County funding but did not see it in the minutes. He also expressed concern about the structure of the minutes and that questions need to be shown more directly. His preference is to have notation of the person posing the question as well as the person giving the response. Sal will work with Harry and Tony as to what the practice is as far as recording meetings. Prior to the next meeting a response related to the university policy on taping, permissions, recommendations, etc. will be shared with the group. This can also be included as a report on the October meeting agenda.

Following discussion Jeff White motioned to have the minutes in draft format within 30 days following completion of the meeting with ESAC members then given three weeks to respond with any corrections/revisions. Motion was seconded, motion carried. Sal mentioned that he feels it valuable to keep the minutes open for approval at the next meeting.

A question was raised on the status of the new building on campus to house Extension. Harry responded that the goal is to make it happen, that funding is an issue and it is on the Dean's radar. He shared that the desire is for the building to be near the Arboretum. There has not been much traction but the project is moving forward and he feels it will happen. Discussions are taking place about getting an architecture feasibility study.

A question was raised about the endowment for funds to support one 4-H educator in each office. Tony indicated that Angie Barnard in the Advancement Office is working on it and making a concerted effort to raise money for that purpose. Harry mentioned that the initial discussion was for an overarching endowment but the Advancement Office is now looking at it on a per unit basis as it is easier to raise funds at the local level. This is an ongoing project.

Under old business for the October meeting Sal would like to have an update and discussion on any challenges and opportunities where ESAC members can be involved.

New Business

Jeff White suggested implementing an action register for the meetings to track what is owed to the group as an answer and what is owed back to the staff, i.e., a line item to keep a clear record of the progress and what items are still open. Tony asked for more specifics. Website implementation, Facebook, unit pages were a few. Sal mentioned action items worked on with staff, and what has been completed and accomplished with the input of ESAC so at the end of the year it can be reported out how ESAC made an impact due to their participation. He also felt that such a tool would be beneficial when recruiting new ESAC members.

Mark Ward asked for an update on the status of new hires. Tony responded that there are two. Anne added that they are faculty funded positions that carry Extension appointments and are within the Department of Human Development and Family Studies – Courtney Cuthbertson and Allen Barton.

A question was raised about capital investments related to EPECC and how relations can be built with contacts across campus. Harry responded that salary is currently built into the budget model and that Extension cannot purchase property or buildings.

It was stated that some ESAC members review the budget at the unit level and the question was raised whether an income statement/balance sheet for Extension at the state level can be provided. Harry said that it is possible but he would need to review and think about what/how it is presented.

The question was asked whether October is a new membership meeting. It was also requested that terms be included on the roster of names. Tony responded that he will check and let the group know and that he is aware of a current vacancy in Region 3.

Samantha Koon shared that Campus is giving training for all Communication Coordinators on campus related to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) inquiries so that those involved in each step of the process are aware of their responsibilities. FOIA requests are currently forwarded to Campus Public Affairs for response. Should questions arise related to FOIA, Samantha asked that they be brought to her attention.

A question was raised about Extension's position on cannabis. Tony responded that federal funding is received. Dennis Bowman added that USDA has listed industrial hemp as a crop and there are research plots around the state for industrial hemp. Nothing can be done with cannabis in other forms at this time. The Plant Clinic will give best recommendations on industrial hemp but no advice will be given on recreational cannabis. Phillip Alberti on the Commercial Ag Team is the lead for the state.

Sal thanked the group for their time and effort. There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting at 2:55pm

Next Meeting

October 12, 2020

iHotel and Conference Center