Integrating Extension, Research, and Instruction

Extension, research, and instruction are the three basic functions of a land-grant institution. Success in fulfilling these functions is greatly facilitated by close working relationships among Extension, resident instruction, and research faculty. Such relationships have been traditional for agriculture, but are less commonly found in home economics, due to various differences. But success is possible if all concerned are committed to the task. The recipients aren't only people located at the land-grant institutions, but also the county agents and their clientele.

A favorable administrative climate is necessary for effective interaction. Such a climate exists at the University
of Kentucky, where an integrated pro-
gram has developed over several years
and is currently in operation. Some
intangible factors necessary for effective
interaction are: professional equality
of all faculty, proximity of housing,
knowledgeable and supportive admin-
istrators, and professional determination/
cooperation or "give-and-take" from all
concerned.

It might be helpful to look at a
few examples of interaction among us
in teaching, research, and Extension in
Kentucky.

• Most college committees include
  Extension faculty.
• The college recently received
  AHEA accreditation. Extension
  faculty are members of eight of
  the nine committees involved in
  preparing the self-study.
• Some graduate students in the
  college have done their thesis
  research in cooperation with the
  Extension program at the state
  and local level. County agents
  who study toward advanced
  degrees provide a strong linkage
  with research and teaching faculty.
  Specialists have cooperated with
  resident faculty in conducting
  applied research, resulting in
  relevant information and recom-
  mendations for a better quality
  of life in Kentucky.
• Resident teaching and research
  faculty frequently make technical
  presentations before Extension
  audiences. This brings research
  results one step closer to the con-
  sumer and helps the agent under-
  stand and interpret research. Joint
  authorship sometimes results.
• Extension specialists have pre-
  sented papers at national and
  international professional
  meetings.

Joint research possibilities involving
Extension and resident faculty are un-
limited. The Extension faculty have
access to a population of homemakers,
4-Hers, paraprofessionals, and other
groups that may provide more than
adequate samples for "trials" or home/
family based projects.

How many problems are there that
need solutions among any clientele group?
The list is endless, but each year the
Kentucky Association of Extension Home
Economists develops a brief list of sug-
gestions for research and studies that's
shared with administrators and resident
faculty.

The ultimate payoff of joint research
is that home economists, other profes-
sionals, and participating clientele begin
to recognize that people in home econ-
omics units are concerned with finding
valid solutions to real problems of individ-
uals and families. Research becomes
visible and viable.

Are there any problems because of
joint or cooperative efforts to integration?
Some problems could be: lack of com-
munication, fiscal arrangements, space,
and/or secretarial loads. All concerned
discuss solutions that are acceptable
to the majority and there are "trade-
offs" that compensate for the lesser
advantages of integrative efforts.

What are the benefits of integrating
Extension, research, and instruction?
Basically, the benefits of close cooperation
accrue to the state, county agents, spe-
cialists, college, resident faculty, and
land-grant institution. Support networks
are established that benefit all of us.

Future efforts might include
concentrated, visible activities that
will help accomplish the purposes of

Idea Corner
"new initiatives in home economics," involvement in legislation affecting all areas of home economics, and/or working with the various organizations related to all areas of home economics.

To summarize, integration of the Extension, research, and instruction functions can work effectively. Administrators can provide the incentives and support the total integration, but the results depend primarily on the state and county personnel involved. The model that has evolved at the University of Kentucky works—and it's rewarding!

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