

Program Evaluation Research & Support (PERS) Working Group Final Report: May 24, 2007

Activities/Outputs/Short-term Outcomes, Year 1:

- Conducted two working group meetings (August 2006 & May 2007).
- Developed and implemented an assessment of extension faculty PE needs (see attached summary report). This is the major output of our group for year 1. This evaluation provides baseline data on extension faculty PE practices, perceptions, and training needs. The results of the survey will be made available online to help increase faculty awareness of PE needs and of the PERS WG as a resource.
- Based on the faculty survey, the WG developed a work plan for year 2 and identified some longer-term (3-5 year) working group goals.
- Based on faculty survey, we determined an immediate need for some basic PE resources for faculty. We used WG funds to order copies of three outstanding practical PE guidebooks, and distributed these among county faculty.
 - *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method 2007 Update with New Internet, Visual, and Mixed-Mode Guide*, D. Dillman.
 - *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research, Third Edition*, R. Krueger et al.
 - *Practical Program Evaluation: Assessing and Improving Planning, Implementation, and Effectiveness*, Chen et al.

This is a short-term output only. Over the next grant cycle, if funded, we will assemble and deliver to faculty via the web a clearinghouse of practical PE tools and examples.

- The faculty survey itself served to increase faculty awareness of and communication about effective PE practices. Data indicate the majority of respondents (53%) feel it is “very important” to improve their PE skills.
- Communicated and partnered with the Professional Development Working Group (PDWG) to ensure complimentary function and to minimize duplication of efforts. (We have at least three common members.) For example, if funded, the PERS WG will partner with the PDWG to develop a program evaluation training as part of next year’s PDWG statewide initiative workshop.
- In addition, dialog about PE practices and methods among PERS WG members has been very beneficial. We are learning from each other and as a result, our own PE skills are improving. We have formed the foundation for a “community of practice” that could ultimately benefit all CALS faculty.

Faculty Needs Assessment Results Summary (additional details attached)

- The group reviewed results from the Extension faculty program evaluation survey. There was a 36% response rate. On average, faculty evaluate about 50% of their programs, and 53% of respondents indicated that it was “very important” to improve their program evaluation skills.
- Although specific needs and interests varied considerably, the most highly ranked evaluation training topics were (1) measuring program outcomes and impacts; (2)

assessing clients needs; and (3) evaluation for improving programs (process evaluation).

- Preferred methods of delivery of program evaluation education was through (1) face-to-face workshops; (2) program planning tools; (3) a community of learners; and (4) access to web-based resources and models to facilitate evaluation.

The full survey results can be viewed at:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=326615373075>

Working Group Budget Report:

Our original budget anticipated that most of our resources (\$1,500) would go to the expense of conducting the faculty survey. Because we made use of the Extension Survey Monkey account, there was no cost for the survey. Also, we kept travel costs minimal by holding our first meeting in conjunction with the CALS Faculty Conference in August, 2006, and our second largely as a conference call in May 2007. About \$100 was spent on travel, communication and miscellaneous expenses.

During the May conference call, it was decided we would dedicate our remaining resources (~\$1,400) to putting some very good resources into hands of Extension faculty throughout the state, to address some of the needs identified in the faculty survey. We discussed strategies for ensuring these resources are not “lost in the shuffle,” but made available to faculty who will use them.

PERS WG Plans for 2007-08:

- Based on the faculty PE needs assessment report, the group decided that a need exists for program evaluation training and resources and that there is value in seeking continuing working group funding in the next cycle.
- It is clear that a wealth of existing resources are available for Extension program evaluation, including tools from other land grants and resources developed in-house by many of us for our individual programs. It was suggested that organizing and corralling these resources onto a single “clearinghouse” website could be an educational outcome for the next working group cycle.
- Secondly, the goal of a face-to-face PE workshop will be met by partnering with the existing Professional Development Statewide Initiative (PDSI). They are developing a proposed in-service program for next year that will include two primary topics: effective teaching and program evaluation. It was suggested we partner with the PDSI and provide input for their program, based on identified needs from our faculty survey (rather than apply for a separate statewide initiative). Although several ideas for this training were discussed, final decisions will depend on our interaction with the PDSI group.
- We will develop a packet of evaluation and program planning “examples” as a resource / handout at face-to-face training and to be included in the web resources.