

Looking Ahead to Better Service

CSREES' Response to Administrators Implementation Team Recommendations to Enhance Customer Service

Recommendations CSREES is already addressing:

1. Initiate immediate joint action to develop a “collaborative partnership” with land-grant and other institutions based on trust and shared leadership for policy and budget issues.
 - Initiating State Liaisons Program
 - Reinvigorating Partnership Working Group
2. Continue and maintain effective and efficient grants management.
 - Offering option of electronic submission in FY07
 - Improving communication through web site
3. Establish more direct communication between CSREES and the partner institutions.
 - Distributing agency news releases and announcements via e-mail listserv
 - Within institutions, working to share key information with appropriate partners
 - Transitioned on-line extension office directory to link directly to state extension office websites
 - Transformed CSREES newsletters to on-line, html versions
4. Increase the visibility of CSREES within the Department of Agriculture.
 - Improving reports of Agency/partnership activities, accomplishments and news in weekly reports to Undersecretary
 - Improving reports in monthly government wide reports to Undersecretary highlighting Agency's involvement in cross cutting activities to solve national problems
 - For Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Undersecretary use at events, developing topical hot issue sheets focusing on partners' work in research, extension and education by state
5. Realign CSREES and university expectations with respect to program reviews.
 - Providing more flexibility in scheduling
 - Giving more emphasis to CSREES and universities working together to identify specific issues to be addressed by reviews
 - Recommending individuals with specific areas of expertise for review teams
 - Within 30 days of completing reviews, submitting reports to institutions
6. Develop and share with the public a database index that includes basic information about, and demonstrates potential uses of, each database CSREES maintains.
 - Sharing One Solution's business definitions for our systems with partners

Recommendations CSREES is committed to addressing:

1. Expand frank, open, candid, and frequent communication leading to common agenda.
 - Include stakeholders beyond partner institutions in deliberate process to identify and prioritize research, extension and education efforts.
 - Improve communications to more fully inform the system regarding policy and budget decisions.
 - Foster a collaborative partnership based on trust, open communication, and program and policy development under girded by a shared value system.
 2. Synthesize and use knowledge gained from program reviews to inform portfolio analysis and other planning processes, and the development of requests for applications and other program guidance materials.
 3. Identify and communicate critical science and education issues for national policy development.
 - Utilize input from stakeholders at all levels.
 - Use State Plan of Work (POW) stakeholder input as first line input for identifying national priorities.
 - Consolidate state priorities into national goals.
 - Consider extending “Science roadmap” model to education and extension functions.
 4. Employ Agency’s national perspective to showcase the impact of universities’ work to decision makers and enhance public awareness of CSREES and its partner institutions. Facilitate the dissemination of high quality progress reports and impact statements.
 - Ask task force to develop/manage process for disseminating information about funded projects to public.
 - Recognize many excellent state publications highlighting the successes of grantees.
 - Have team, perhaps Agency’s communications staff, select and aggregate success stories into an innovative format.
 - Consider modifying/incorporating Agency’s collection of “impact” data into process.
 - Allow PDs/universities to track progress of submitted reports online.
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Recommendations needing further definition:

1. Initiate joint effort with partners to define role of National Program Leader (NPL). Consider reducing number of NPLs who have major leadership responsibilities and designating some NPLs as managers rather than leaders.
 - Undertake joint effort to mutually agree upon and understand NPL role, including delineation of NPLs management vs. leadership responsibilities.
2. Link State POW process to review of formula funded projects for relevance, quality and performance.
 - Modify POW process so it can be used to help review Hatch projects.
 - Enhance use of POW as way to improve review of Hatch projects.