



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service

SDSU Extension Administrative Structure Enhanced

On January 8, 2007, the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service implemented a series of structural changes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an already strong organization. The updated administrative structure is the result of months of consultation with community leaders, advisors, stakeholders, and Extension employees. This results-oriented approach assures the SDSU Cooperative Extension Service will become even more responsive to the critical needs of all citizens.

RESULT: Improved Responsiveness to Local Issues

The new administrative structure will have four Extension Districts. Previously there were three, this will allow for more local level educator and program support. District Extension Directors will all be located in the district they serve, rather than primarily on the SDSU campus. District Extension Directors will provide support to 25 to 28 Extension Educators, in addition each will serve as a statewide liaison for one of the four major program areas of: agriculture and natural resources; family and consumer sciences; youth development and 4-H; and, community innovation and leadership.

In 1999, as a part of the new VISION for Extension, Field Education Units (FEU) composed of Educators with various subject matter areas of emphasis, within a geographic region, were established. Most existing Field Education Units will be maintained in the new configuration. Each FEU will now have an Administrative Team Leader who will serve as a liaison between educators in their FEU and Extension administration, plus strengthen the FEU Advisory Committee network. This will enhance communication and increase responsiveness to local issues.

RESULT: Increased Credibility for the SDSU Extension Service

Extension program areas of emphasis will be more closely integrated with the relevant SDSU academic departments and colleges. Extension Specialists in Family and Consumer Sciences will become members of the SDSU College of Family and Consumer Sciences faculty and will be housed within that college. All Extension Educators will work more closely with Specialists and SDSU scientists in a variety of Colleges within SDSU to conduct research and demonstration projects in counties across the state. Ultimately, these changes will provide system-wide support to Extension Educators in counties across South Dakota by improving access to all the educational resources of SDSU and the entire land-grant system.

RESULT: Greater Service To Western South Dakota and an Increased Emphasis on Youth Development/4-H

The position of Associate Extension Director will be created and based in Rapid City to represent and provide Extension support to western South Dakota stakeholders and staff. Additionally, Youth Development-4-H Specialists, 4-H Livestock Coordinator and the Character Counts staff will now report to the Associate Director, who has been charged

with providing support and leadership to all youth development programs and services within CES. Previously, Youth Development-4-H staff reported to a program director. This change reflects the great value SDSU places on youth development and 4-H programs. During the coming months, a process will be implemented to collect input from staff and stakeholders which will lead to the development of a Youth Development/4-H program and operational structure that will provide and support additional capacity to serve the people of South Dakota, focusing on youth.

RESULT: Greater Emphasis on Community Innovation and Leadership

Communities across the state have requested additional support in the area of community leadership and economic development. This has been added to the three traditional CES programming thrusts of ag and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and youth development and 4-H. The position of Extension Leadership Development Specialist has been created in the SDSU College of Family and Consumer Science. This position will also serve as a Principal Investigator for the Horizons II Project, a foundation funded project currently serving twenty-four communities statewide. This project and related activities will increase the capacity of the Cooperative Extension Service to assist individuals and communities in developing leadership and economic development capacity at the local level.

RESULT: Career Opportunities for Extension Professionals

The new administrative structure will provide advancement opportunities for current staff, as well as for Extension professionals in other states. The Field Education Unit team leaders will acquire leadership and management experience that will prepare them for higher level management positions in the future, both in extension and in other fields, should they choose to pursue them. Searches will be initiated for the position of Associate Dean and Director of the SDSU Cooperative Extension Service, the new Associate Director position; and, all four District Extension Director positions. Recruitment for all vacant positions will begin as soon as possible, with the goal of ensuring full staffing at the earliest possible date.

RESULT: More Integrated Research and Extension Capacity

The new structure will provide more support for communication from the educators in the field to the scientists and management within the Colleges of Agriculture and Biological Sciences and Family and Consumer Sciences regarding the research needs at the local level. It will also support better dissemination from the College faculty to the field staff regarding campus generated research opportunities. The development of constituent advisory groups facilitated at the FEU and regional level, by FEU Team Leaders and District Extension Directors, focused on specific needs, has the potential to significantly increase research and extension support/funding from foundations and other private and public sources.

RESULT: More Service to More South Dakotans

The changes being implemented will increase the ability of the SDSU Cooperative Extension Service to better serve current stakeholders and constituents, while building capacity to serve additional, currently underserved, audiences.

For more information, contact Dean Gary Lemme at 605 688-4148.