

**Utah State
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EXTENSION**

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TO: Extension Directors and Administrators

FROM: David L. Rogers, Chair, PODC Work Group

SUBJ: Extension's Role in Promoting University Outreach

As a result of a futuring process in the Fall of 1995, the Personal and Organizational Development Committee (PODC) of ECOP identified the need to explore Extension's role in creating engaged universities. A PODC workgroup prepared the attached document for consideration by ECOP.

We encourage ECOP to take appropriate action on these recommendations. Members of the work team are willing to provide any additional information and, at ECOP's request, will continue to work on this important issue.

Members of the Work Group:

David L. Rogers, Chair, Utah State University
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"Extending the University to YOU"

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION'S ROLE IN CREATING AN ENGAGED UNIVERSITY

In a joint statement to their colleagues on the Kellogg Presidents' Commission On The Future of State and Land Grant Universities, Commission leaders identified the urgency they feel for strengthening the linkages between universities and the larger society within which they operate. They said:

We are convinced that unless our institutions respond to the challenges and opportunities before them, they risk being consigned to a sort of Jurassic Park-places of great historic interest, fascinating to visit, but increasingly irrelevant to a world that has passed them by.

This concern was expressed by the Kellogg Presidential Commission in the context of the many achievements associated with Land-Grant universities. The genius of the Land-Grant movement was described as its emphasis on responsible engagement with communities. Various forms and levels of engagement are currently accomplished through outreach education including Extension. Universities, according to the Commission Leaders, should be partners and servants, be intimately connected to communities, and be responsive to national and international demands.

The position taken by this recently organized Kellogg Presidential Commission is that outreach should be the responsibility of every college and department in the same way these units are responsible for teaching and research.

DEFINITION OF AN ENGAGED UNIVERSITY

An engaged university, in the language of the Kellogg Presidents Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities (January, 1996), stimulates and organizes an exchange of knowledge and provides education having economic, social and cultural value. This approach is accomplished by working cooperatively with the communities the University serves. The engaged university has both an expansive knowledge base at its disposal and faculty with the ability to create new ideas for the common good. The engaged university rewards and encourages relevance and quality, expects student involvement, fosters governmental cooperation at all levels, and rewards innovation in instruction, research and outreach.

Additional ideas about university engagement strategies and methods for leveraging university capacities for engagement are described in a report prepared by a task force commissioned by ECOP (J. Christenson).

“UNIVERSITIES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT”

State and Land Grant Universities are experiencing major changes in their operating environments. Many of these changes enhance opportunities -for higher education while others present special challenges. A few examples of the changes presenting challenges include:

- The perceived mismatch between American society's needs from higher education and what is being provided has **reduced public confidence and trust.** (MacTaggart)
- **Increased competition for students** has been created by virtual universities, privatization of public schools, corporate classrooms and government delivered services. (MacTaggart; USA Today; Government Finance Review)
- Among other responses to the **decline in federal and state financial support**, universities need to develop partnerships to meet public expectations to address contemporary problems.(Leslie and Fretwell; Boyer)
- The **need for enhanced two-way cooperation** between the university and society is more critical because of the perception that the academy and its faculty are isolated from the mainstream of American life. (Apps; Bergquist)

Greater involvement of the public in the work of universities will help meet society's expectations that universities contribute directly to the economy. (MacTaggart)

- Knowledge generation, transmission and utilization require the **engagement of faculty and resources from the entire university** to accommodate life-long learning needs. (Lerner; Yates)
- The new world of cyberspace, diversification of the population and the growing need for life-long learning call on the university to **change its assumptions about the nature of education.** (Education Week)

Universities are more likely to be able to respond to the changes and challenges in their environments when they structure effective partnerships. To become an effective partner, universities will need to:

- Demonstrate multidisciplinary efforts across department and college lines
- Deliver teaching, research, and outreach, such as Extension, in a seamless manner
- Improve reciprocal relations among campus and off-campus faculty
- Engage both community partners and university faculty/staff in identifying learning and research needs
- Assist communities in developing the ability to sustain their own programs
- Use culturally appropriate methods of outreach *Accept our partners as teachers as well as learners
- Engage learners in the development of learning strategies
- Develop two-way communication between partners
- Increase public access to university resources

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

These PODC recommendations to Extension Directors and Administrators focus on actions that contribute to engaged universities.

1. Develop an awareness program on the concept and features of an engaged university which includes **fostering appreciation of outreach as a valued form of scholarship.**
2. Provide leadership within universities for creating **a culture that emphasizes team work, interdisciplinary efforts, and knowledge development and transfer.**
3. Explore alternative structural arrangements with university administrators to **maximize the potential of an engaged university.**
4. **Share expertise of extension faculty and staff** with non-extension faculty about how to assess and address local needs, how to organize interdisciplinary teams, and how to implement co-learning partnerships.
5. Encourage university adoption of Extension's **interdisciplinary approach to issue-based programming** which crosses departments and colleges for a seamless delivery.
6. **Share with other faculty** Extension's expertise in working with diverse and nontraditional audiences at the local level.
7. Offer local extension offices to university administrators as the **front doors in accessing the total university.**
8. Provide placement opportunities in local extension offices to **involve university students in service learning programs.**

PODC Procedures for Naming New SED Members

1. Name 4 new SED members each year to 3 year terms
 - seek representation of all 4 regions, 1890's, CSREES, Tribal Colleges
 - maintain committee membership diversity
 - consider Diversity Award nominees as possible source
2. During summer-fall of each year, PODC members from each Region, the 1890's and CSREES will work with Extension Directors to nominate two people for possible SED membership
 - Director support for each nominee should first be sought including support for release time and travel dollar support
 - when Director support is obtained, gain acceptance of nominee to have his/her name considered for selection

3. The names of two nominees from each region, 1890's and CSREES will be brought to the winter PODC meeting.
4. During the winter PODC meeting, PODC and SED leadership will select 4 new members. The list will be shared with PODC prior to adjournment and adopted by motion to the committee as a whole.
5. PODC Chair will inform new SED members of their selection by letter immediately after the winter PODC meeting. The PODC Chair will also correspond with all other nominees thanking them for their interest and informing them they were not selected.

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