

October 2, 1997

TO: Barbara Tricinella
President, National Extension Association for Family and Consumer Sciences

Don Drost
President, National Association of County Agricultural Agents

Keith Martikainen
President, National Association of Extension 4-H Agents

FROM: JoAnn Gruber-Hagen
Director, Human Resources Development and
Chair, ECOP Personnel and Organizational Development Committee

RE: Extension association representation to PODC

During our September '97 Personnel and Organizational Development Committee (PODC) meeting, we discussed concerns that extension associations have raised regarding your appointment of members of PODC. As you consider your options in the future, I wanted you to know the value that PODC places upon the contributions your representatives continually make.

During my tenure with PODC, I have worked with five different committee members who were appointed by their respective extension associations.

- Lu Harper, a former NEAFCS representative, served skillfully as PODC Chair-Elect and Chair.
- Chuck Leifeld, a former NAE4-HA representative, brought very thoughtful and reasoned field-based perspectives to a wide range of issues.
- Our current members appointed by the associations, David Danner, Peggy Powell and Linda Webb continue this quality of contribution

PODC is continually working on actual projects. Everyone is a member of one or more workgroups. David, Peggy and Linda are integral members of these. PODC isn't a committee where committee members convene a couple times a year to react to suggestions and then adjourn until the next meeting. Project work consumes most of our meeting times and work-groups often continue to meet via electronic means, surface mail and telephone between meetings. It is important to the work of PODC to have some level of continuity. Three year membership terms contribute greatly to this needed continuity.

- Peggy and David have been invaluable in helping PODC look at the impact that nonformula funding (revenue) has upon personnel and organizational issues. If they weren't involved in this effort, much of the local impact at the county level could well have been missed and not addressed. This effort will result in a seminar at the upcoming Galaxy Conference and a position paper that is expected to go to ECOP this February.
- Linda has been instrumental in the work-group looking at the role Extension can play in helping the broader university "engage" with its external communities and constituencies. Linda brings a mature and sophisticated county perspective to this task. The project would have been diminished if she had not been integrally involved during this past year. The group has already published one paper as a follow-up to the Kellogg Commission's paper on the "engaged university". The group now is formulating practical "implementation ideas" that individual states as well as the nation-wide Cooperative Extension System can use to implement the recommendations in the first paper. This effort is also resulting in a seminar at Galaxy and there will be at least one more document submitted to ECOP for acceptance and distribution.

PODC is also addressing supervisory and managerial needs of new and experienced supervisors and managers. As it happens, none of your representatives function in this work-group but they continually offer solid advice on needs and strategies to meet the needs. We will likely be taking a look at staff turnover issues in the near future. The extension associations' perspectives and participation will be invaluable in this effort. In fact, I would welcome any thoughts you might have on ways that PODC could partner with the associations in taking a look at staff turnover.

I observe the extension associations' representatives providing a two-way communication linkage with the broader Cooperative Extension System nationwide. They bring issues from their own states as well as from their interaction with peers on a national level. They also take back to their states and national networks ideas and strategies that come out of PODC. I have been copied on electronic messages that Peggy Powell has shared with her national peers regarding PODC issues. Reports are made to JCEP and JCEP reports are made to PODC. It is the opinion of our current association representatives that, while they can represent a county or field-based view point that can transcend program lines, they find it difficult to truly represent different programming perspectives that sometimes impact upon PODC issues and would find it awkward to facilitate good two-way communication with associations other than their own.

I believe that, in addition to the contributions the associations' representatives make to PODC, they also gain personally and professionally from PODC membership. The opportunity to work on issues at a national level, to have access to information on emerging national trends and just to focus on the personnel and organizational development issues that come before PODC have a professional development quality to them for the individuals.

Many of the representatives named by Extension Directors/Administrators or by ECOP tend to be state-based administrative staff. PODC is very committed to maintaining a committee membership that spans a broad cross section of our organization. We plan to work with ECOP and Directors/Administrators to emphasize the

importance of a diversity of roles being appointed to PODC. It is our belief, though, that the associations will always be very sensitive to this issue and will be consistent sources of field-based PODC members.

PODC does not presume to be fully aware of the pressures that extension associations currently face. We are, though, fully aware of the tremendous advantage your representatives bring to PODC's work. We selfishly don't want to lose this advantage. If there would be reason to discuss the continuation of your representatives to PODC, I can assure you that PODC leadership would be most interested in doing so.

Thanks for letting me express PODC's appreciation for your association's support of members to our committee!

cc: David Danner
Peggy Powell
Linda Webb
Judy Barth, PODC Chair-Elect
Harold Benson, PODC Administrative Advisor
Milan Rewerts, PODC Administrative Advisor
Zane Helsel, ECOP Chair
Myron Johnsrud, ECOP Executive Director