AACES Resolutions
Proposed, 2007

2007 Resolution 1:

We commend CES administration for its willingness to provide opportunities for professional development among faculty and staff. We propose that CES institute a reciprocal internship program between State and County Faculty to create more awareness about the respective duties, responsibilities, and day-to-day issues that each part of the organization faces.

Background: A criticism commonly heard among county agents is that faculty members at the state office are out of touch with what county agents need and they don't provide adequate support for programs. In addition, many county agents believe that CES should be investing more resources in the counties and less at the state office. Similarly, state faculty may believe that county agents don't utilize or distribute materials they have developed appropriately and that they don't respond to emails or requests for information from counties. A reciprocal ~~internship~~ shadowing program, where a county agent shadows and works with a state faculty member and a state faculty member works in a county alongside a staff chair or agent, would help each side to better understand and appreciate the contributions made, and pressures experienced by, each group and encourage more teamwork throughout the organization.

The number of participants could be limited to 3, one from each district. Suggested time is 2 days to one week. The county agent should have time allocated to shadow in more than one program area (up to three). The committee is asked to explore this with administration, including funding options.

Comments:

2007 Resolution 2:

We commend the efforts of a small staff of people working to keep up with multiple budgets for faculty and staff as we continue to grow exponentially. We respectfully request that administration consider ~~contracting with an outside organization~~ *an outside program review,* with a reviewing entity well-versed in the latest accounting data systems available for a large organization with a complex network of accounting needs. The contracting organization would be charged with auditing and assessing the needs and capacity of existing programs and accounting processes – and with making recommendations for systems and reporting processes that are user-friendly and provide real-time data from multiple sources.

Background: *Frustration with accounting processes and lack of access to real time data reduces the motivation of faculty to seek grant funding.* Current systems make it cumbersome to track print jobs, ~~office supply orders,~~ outside contracts and ~~other~~ most *income and* expenditures in a timely fashion. Faculty with multiple grant accounts and internal accounts must create and maintain their own systems and vigilantly track down expenditure records. They must also maintain their own reminder system to verify timely invoicing of MOA agreements. The slow response time may cost us financial opportunities, because of our inability to access and respond quickly to requests for assistance.

In an era when the world is banking, trading, buying and selling electronically, there may be lessons to be learned from e-Bay, Pay-Pal, E-Trade, Quicken, Turbo-Tax, and other financial management and tracking mechanisms of the world. We request research into a comprehensive system that tracks and report credits, debits, and internal charges in an easy-to-understand format. *This will increase interest in pursuing grant projects, and allow faculty to devote more time to delivery of educational programs* .

Comments:
Do we need to ask for clarification of where responsibility lies for grant accountability? What is the responsibility for the P.I. in a grant situation?

2007 Resolution 3:
We commend the current faculty and staff who provide CES faculty with grant preparation assistance. We respectfully request that administration consider establishing a ~~CES~~ Division of Agriculture Office of Research Support and Sponsored Programs, consistent with our academic environment and the emphasis on enhancement and maintenance of external revenue sources for our institution. This office would be charged with pre- and post-award support for funding source research, faculty training, grant/contract development, and post-award management and support.

Background: We have researched the structure and functions of external funding support that is provided to faculty at two of our sister campuses, the University of Arkansas Fayetteville and UALR. See Weblinks: UALR: http://www.ualr.edu/orsp/ ; U of A Fayetteville: http://www.uark.edu/admin/rsspinfo/

The UALR Office of Research and Sponsored Programs provides external fund development support to faculty through a faculty/staff that include: a Research Manager, Associate Director, two Pre-Award Specialists (one which also serves as a web master), and three Post-Award Grants Managers.

As a result of our research, we recommend to CES administration that we learn from the successes of these institutions and expand our investment to the level of a dedicated office/department, in order to reach our mutual development goals for external support.

We request that immediate steps be taken to allocate funds ~~for a CES~~ *to create a Division of Agriculture* Office of Research Support and Sponsored Programs to provide the following functions:

1) Support expanded grant fund seeking for both research and Cooperative Extension programs.
2) Faculty training for grant writing & contract negotiations, including structured classes/instruction and one-on-one mentoring,
3) Maintenance of subscriptions to major grant periodicals and software funding research tools,
4) Provision of structured, customized computer-based searches to identify diverse funding sources for specific subject matter areas,
5) Provision of pre-award support, including:

-writing coaches/mentors and content editors
-support for budget development
-IRB training and coordination of applications with UAF Committee
-coordination of the internal approval process and final proposal submission/transmittal
5) Provision of post-award support, including:
-Monthly financial reports to PI's related to expenditures, encumbrances, and funds remaining by line item
-timely pre-approval of expenditures to ensure compliance with grant specifications
-monitoring of federal and state regulations regarding financial management of external funds to allow for maximum flexibility with grant expenditures/utilization of funds
-provision of regular feedback to PI's for grants management (for example, information and processing of requests for no-cost time extensions, communication related to individual funding source requirements and support for written requests for grant program or budget modifications, and/or allowable movement of funds between spending categories.)

Having access to these resources will improve the quality, award amount, and acceptance rate of CES grants, save faculty time, and increase extramural funding for our organization.

Comments:

Resolution 4.

A potential opportunity exists for a CES partnership with the UALR Cooperative Education Program. This program is an academic program that "allows qualified students the opportunity to participate in work-integrated learning." The program is noted to be very useful to organizations as a Human Resources tool for employers who want to recruit bright and highly motivated student employees. Likewise, the cost of training is significantly reduced if the intern is hired upon graduation in a full-time position. As an employer, this likewise gives CES ample time to screen students for permanent employment opportunities. We recommend that a partnership be formalized *through a Memorandum of Agreement* and that funding be allocated as a part of the CES budget to address both staffing and recruitment needs of the organization.

Background:
Many major corporations in central Arkansas are partnering with UALR, so this is an established program. Participating employers have included Acxiom, Alltel, Arkansas Blue Cross & Blue Shield, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Audubon Arkansas, Baptist Health, Dassault Falcon Jet, Heifer International, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon Aircraft, and Entergy to name a few. The program includes both undergraduate and graduate participating majors which include computer science, technical and expository writing, organizational communication, psychology, management, marketing & advertising, radio, TV & film, engineering, economics and finance, environmental health, human resources, geology, health sciences, and many more (over 30 degree programs).

Comment received:

1/26/07:   Part of the problem is that most of the faculty members do not have "research" as part of their job description. Many grants require research. Changing our responsibilities to 10% research and 90% Extension would help with trying to obtain grants.

Additional comments: