



NERA News & Notes

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From the Office of the Executive Director

IMPACT WRITING

Increasingly, the issue and need to prepare meaningful impact statements is becoming a priority matter for administrators, faculty and staff. We are all spending more time on this activity and rightly so. As administrative advisors to regional projects and committees, we need to bring the matter of preparation of impact statements to the forefront of our project and committee activities. Assisting the project or committee with this process of impact statement preparation is one of the more important roles that an administrative advisor plays.

Why is the preparation of impact statements so important? Clearly, and perhaps the most important reason we need to be able to respond and prepare well-focused and articulate impact statements, is our need to justify and even defend the investments that are made to our system by Congress for public sector research and extension activities. **GIVEN THE LOOMING REDIRECTION OF FUNDS IN THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET FOR FY 06, THE IMPACT WRITING ACTIVITY IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT.**

So how do you prepare an effective impact statement? What is an effective impact statement, and how can I assist my regional project or committee with this task?

In many ways, the impact statement is the most important element of a marketing plan. It's the culmination of a successful program, the proof of a responsive effort in research or extension. As we advise our regional projects and committees, we should always keep an "eye" toward finding the impactful message, e.g., that finding that will aid us in marketing our programs. The impact statement is really nothing more than an accountability statement. You just need to identify the impact, and then know how

to use it effectively, or at least prepare the impact statement in a manner that others can use effectively.

The clearly written impact statement presents the results of the research or extension effort to the targeted audience. In one short paragraph you need to explain the problem or issue you're trying to solve, and its importance. Here is where you can benchmark the problem and even establish cost-benefits for the stakeholder. It is the "*Who Cares, So What and What's New*" question. If you can answer this question, you can write an effective impact statement.

In general, the effective impact statement not only answers the "*So What, Who Cares and What's New*" question, it is a brief summary in lay terms, written to demonstrate in an economic, environmental or social context the impact of your effort(s), the accomplishments and the payoff to stakeholders. Another way of stating this is – "Impact is the difference that your program(s) are making in people's lives and well-being". In more technical terms, impact is the reportable and verifiable difference that a program makes in the lives of citizens. Just remember, impact reporting is not activities reporting.

In your one paragraph can you explain the problem or issue and its importance? Ask yourself: What prompted this work? How important is this issue to the region, or nation? How widespread is this problem and who is affected?

Once you have defined the problem, set stage and tell the reader why this information is important. Frame the scope of the problem or issue. Mention the potential public payoffs that have or are resulting from this work. Then describe what you did to solve the problem or address the issue. Provide in the briefest possible way, the details of the project that are meaningful to the non-

scientist reading this statement. Then describe “What has been done”. It really is quite straightforward.

The impact paragraph is the heart of the statement that you are preparing. Here is where you quantify what you accomplished in economic, environmental or social terms. How do your findings relate to real people and real-world programs. This is where you reinforce the “*So What, Who Cares and What’s New*” question.

Lastly, finish your impact statement with the name, address, phone and/or e-mail contacts where the reader can turn to for more information. For some impact statements, it’s also important to list funding sources. Don’t forget those who contributed or played a role in making your effort successful.

Also critical is the issue of why impact reporting is important. It illustrates the accountability of the organization or program, it improves program visibility, generates materials for the lobbying effort, is a repository of anecdotes for speeches, talks, etc., helps the organization focus its efforts, and creates better understanding of programs with the public.

Bottom line, it is easier to sell science and education programs when there is an emphasis on outcomes.



NSF Ethics Education in Science and Engineering

The Ethics Education in Science and Engineering (EASE) program considers proposals for research and educational projects to improve ethics education in all of the fields of science and engineering that NSF supports. This year, proposals must focus on improving ethics education for graduate students in science and engineering fields, and on ethical issues that arise in research or graduate research education in those fields, particularly in interdisciplinary or inter-institutional contexts.

EASE will consider proposals for research projects, education projects, and combinations of the two. It is interested in encouraging innovative education and research projects likely to create long-term improvement in ethics education for graduate students in science and engineering.

NSF anticipates awarding 5 to 12 grants of up to \$300,000, with a maximum duration of 3 years. A complete program description is available via NSF’s website at:

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2005/nsf05532/nsf05532.htm>

The EASE program is limited to one submission per institution. NSF deadline for submission is March 10, 2005.



Northeast Regional Community and Urban IPM Conference

The Northeast Regional Community and Urban IPM Conference will be held March 15-16, 2005, in Manchester, New Hampshire. Researchers, educators, regulators, and pest managers from across the Northeast will gather to share their insights and expertise on the use of integrated pest management (IPM) in buildings, parks, gardens, golf courses, nurseries, athletic fields, homes, schools, and other urban settings. For a full conference description and registration materials, please visit the conference website:

http://northeastipm.org/conference2005_index.cfm

Deadlines for registration and poster submissions are as follows:

- February 1: Submission of abstracts for poster presentations
- February 15: Early registration deadline
- February 15: Final deadline for exhibitors to register
- March 1: Final registration deadline

For additional information please see the following sites:

Publicity brochure:

<http://northeastipm.org/conference/brochure.pdf>

Publicity flyer:

<http://northeastipm.org/conference/flyer.pdf>

Exhibitor brochure:

http://nepmc.org/conference/IPM_Exhib_packet8.pdf

Poster registration:

<http://www.conted.vt.edu/cfp/ipm/index.html>

For more information, please contact: Liz Saul (540-231-2786, lisasaul@vt.edu) or Liz Thomas (315-787-2626, egt3@cornell.edu).



Northeast Sun Grant Update

Funding for the Sun Grant Initiative is still included in S. 1072: the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2004. Funding was provided at \$3 million a year for each of six years for each of five Centers. We understand that these are “pre-obligated” funds. The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works has indicated that they expect that this legislation will be taken up again at the beginning of the next Congress with the goal of completing conference and final passage by March of 2005. Our colleagues from Oklahoma State University have brought the chair of this committee, Senator James M. Inhofe - Oklahoma, up-to-date on SGI. This proved very fortuitous. The staff indicated that there would be a strong effort to reintroduce the bill, move through conference and pass the Highway bill – all by very early March of next year. It is clear that we will have appropriation for SGI in the bill, but we will need to be very proactive in late January through February to insure that we sustain the current funding levels. We are in the process of getting “Dear Colleague” letters addressed

to Senator Inhofe from our two New York Senators, and it would be helpful if other senators from the region could also make Senator Inhofe aware of their interest in seeing SGI funded. Given the federal budget deficient, the transportation bill is our best opportunity for securing SGI funding in 2005. University of Tennessee, South Dakota State University, Oklahoma State University, Oregon State University and Cornell are actively working with their respective congressional delegation to inform them of the importance of SGI to land-grant institution around the country. Our colleagues in the N.E. can help get the word out on what we are trying to accomplish with SGI and we would recommend that you make your congressional delegation aware of our roadmap which can be downloading from the following web page: www.nesungrant.cornell.edu.

On another front, we have engaged the Office of the Chief Economist at USDA in a dialogue regarding the Office assuming lead responsibility for implementing the authorization language, which is now in the Energy Title of the 2002 Farm Bill. We need champions at USDA if we are to going to secure SGI funding through agriculture appropriations. The recently appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Michael Johanns, has been a strong advocate for corn-based ethanol production and there is hope in the biomass community that he will be a strong voice for biomass research and development. Also, if we are to secure additional appropriations we need help from USDA in getting the SGI in the president budget.

We are continuing with our planning for the N.E. Sun Grant Initiative (NESGI). Dr. Tom Fretz has agreed to chair the SGI Steering Committee that will have responsibility to managing the competitive grant program. Our goal is to be ready to move should the Transport Equity Act of 2004 is passed by March. Cornell remains committed to a full partnership with our N. E. colleagues in developing the NESGI. More information on the composition of the steering committee and SGI appropriation process will be shared with research and extension directors after the first of the year.

Larry Walker and Corey Rutzke will circulate the second installment of the NESGI newsletter after the first of the year. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform our colleagues of the latest SGI developments and to share

interesting research and extension activities from around the region.



Conference Announcements

National Conference on Establishing a “Academic Network of Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Diseases”

The Department of Homeland Security has announced that it is convening , April 6-8, 2005 in Washington, DC, a National Conference on Establishing an ***“Academic Network on Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Diseases”***. Invited speakers from the federal agencies and the university community will explore how to build an integrated national network of universities and federal laboratories to work with the Department of Homeland Security to meet the full array of potential biosecurity challenges involving foreign animal and zoonotic diseases. The conference agenda will include presentations on the following:

- Federal agency interests in how university research and outreach can help prevent and mitigate the use of foreign animal and zoonotic diseases as biological weapons,
- New opportunities for developing university partnerships to address federal agency foreign animal and zoonotic disease biosecurity research priorities and expand homeland security education and outreach capabilities,
- Next management strategies and new technologies to facilitate collaboration between universities, the federal agencies, and the private sector, and
- Developing a new integrative, “one medicine” approach to foreign animal and zoonotic diseases, combining the resources of public health, veterinary medicine, and environmental epidemiology.

The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn – Capitol, 550 C Street, NW, Washington, DC. Hotel reservations must be made March 7, 2005. A conference registration

fee of \$130 is required. More information and online registration is available at:

<http://anfazd.tamu.edu>



Where the Rubber Hits the Road

“Where the Rubber Hits the Road” is the theme of our upcoming Joint Session on July 10-12, 2005, in Peabody, MA. If you recall, a “Cheese” Committee was formed from last year’s Joint Session and was given the charge to follow-up on last year’s proceedings. This committee spearheaded the planning activity with two meetings in late 2004. They laid out several topic ideas that were generated from the 2004 Summer Joint Session. The Joint Planning Committee then stepped into action and brainstormed on how to combine impact reporting with a specific multistate issue. The committee selected Land Use. There will be demonstrations of successful collaborations related to Land Use and how an effective impact reporting strategy have brought success to these projects.

Steve Broderick of The Green Valley Institute (GVI) has been invited to be one of the presenters. GVI is a partnership of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the University of Massachusetts Extension and many others.

As stated in GVI’s homepage, *“GVI targets audiences who most influence land use in the Corridor, including private landowners, municipal boards and commissions, Corridor land trusts and local builders/contractors.*

GVI’s Goal: To insure they have the information, knowledge and resources they need to make good land use decisions as they plan for the future.

GVI’s Vision: That one day, land use and natural resource-related decisions, at every level from the individual landowner to the Corridor as a whole, will

be made by informed individuals who have up-to-date information and the resources to follow through.”

From inland to coast, the session will then focus on another successful project, the Atlantic Slope Consortium (ASC). This is one of five projects funded nationally by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through its Estuarine and Great Lakes (EaGLe) Indicator Research Program. The project is a collaboration among the Pennsylvania State University, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, East Carolina University, the Environmental Law Institute, and FTN Associates.

As stated in ASC’s homepage, *“The overall goal of the ASC is to develop and test a set of indicators in coastal systems that are ecologically appropriate, economically reasonable, and relevant to society. This suite of indicators will produce integrated assessments of the condition, health and sustainability of aquatic ecosystems. These indicators will be developed using ecological and socioeconomic information compiled at the scale of estuarine segments and small watersheds, with clear connections to smaller and larger scales.”*

Bruce McPheron is currently working on inviting presenters from ASC. Bill Coli of the University of Massachusetts and a national expert on Impacts will facilitate the session. A panel of CARET representatives will respond to the presentations.

Also this year, a new group will join the summer meeting - the Northeast Managing Officers, a.k.a. NEMO. These are program, administrative, finance and human resources officers from our Northeast institutions, a.k.a. the people who keep the research and extension directors out of trouble, not to mention the deans. This group meets annually in October but in their meeting last year decided it will be worthwhile for them to join this meeting and find out what their bosses are up to.

With this line-up of interesting topics and speakers, new participants and a venue full of fun summer activities, our 2005 Joint Session is surely an event not to be missed!

For more information, see:

<http://www.thelastgreenvalley.org/welcome.html>

<http://www.asc.psu.edu/default.asp>



Formula for Success: The Value of Federal Formula Funds to the U.S. Agricultural and Food System

I recently forwarded to each of your offices copies of the recently completed ***“Formula For Success: The Value of Federal Formula Funds to the U.S. Agricultural and Food System”***. With the announcement of the President’s budget for FY 06 and the suggested redirection of 50% of the Hatch formula funds, this piece now seems all the more critical to making the case for continuation of this important source of funding. As you have needs for more copies of the ***Formula For Success*** to share with decision makers, please do not hesitate to call me.

Clearly it is important to make the case with decision makers that this has and continues to be a worthwhile investment. The annual rate of return to society from the benefits of publicly funded agricultural research has been approximately 50 percent, far above the S&P’s average rate of return of 8.5%, or the 30 year average rate of return on government bonds, which sits at 3% above inflation.

We should not forget that the formula funds, e.g., Hatch, McIntire-Stennis, Smith-Lever, Evans-Allen and the Animal Health appropriations have been the cornerstone of support that has been leveraged with state and private sources to create the agricultural research and outreach system that is the envy of the world. With this very modest investment of formula funds, we have created a partnership that works and produces results.

The federal formula funds have been particularly critical in this mix. Formula funds in combination with state appropriations have allowed state research directors to meet local and regional needs. It is this flexibility that has proven to be the real ***Formula For Success!***