Cornell Cooperative Extension

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

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Section 1: Why Program Advisory Committees? And What Do They Do?

Introduction

CCE programs are expected to develop stakeholder engagement at the grassroots level to understand community needs and assess program effectiveness. CCE constitutions and the association accreditation standards set the guidance for how that will happen – but in all cases, the reasoning is the same – meeting local needs with educational programs.

This handbook provides Cornell Cooperative Extension executive directors and lead program staff with details on how to develop, implement, and engage an advisory committee for effective program planning. Included are suggestions about advisory committee structure, membership, and function regardless of the program/issue area.

If you have any questions related to the development of your advisory committee, please contact your Executive Director, State Extension Specialist, or the Cornell Cooperative Extension Organizational Development Team cce-orgdev@cornell.edu and they will assist you.

Purpose of a Program Advisory Committee

Program advisory committees have been an important building block in the development of effective CCE programs since the inauguration of the land-grant university concept in NYS over 100 years ago. The mission statement for the land-grant college includes the Cooperative Extension Service mission of "a federal, state and county partnership dedicated to…making knowledge accessible to sustain and enhance the quality of human life." Advisory committees are a part of this basic grassroots philosophy that provides recommendation for improving accessibility to underserved audiences and considering if we are meeting the needs of local communities. That said, over time with staffing changes there is sometimes a loss of understanding of the purpose, value, and functionality of PACs – and with that a need to review purpose, structure, and implementation.

The CCE advisory committee has two main purposes: to advise and to advocate. An effective and well-developed advisory committee is made up of a diverse membership with the knowledge base needed to provide the best recommendations for Extension program development and evaluation. The committee as advisors can help identify needs and issues, target audiences, most effective ways to reach underserved audiences, and review of program effectiveness. The advisory committee can also act as advocates for Cornell Cooperative Extension, carrying the message of Extension's mission to stakeholders' communities.

It is important to note that PAC's do not make policy, implement programs, or take on the roles of program staff. While your association might have program development committees (volunteers that support staff with program implementation) the function of PACs is more thinking, evaluating, and advising, and less doing.

To make the PAC purpose clear, there should be a job description for the advisory committee members that includes the job title, a job description that clearly states the roles and expectations, required qualifications, skills and the time commitment that will be required to do the job. A sample job description for committee members is provided in the Appendices and References. For those planning to start a new advisory committee, the Timeline for Developing a PAC found in the Appendices and Refences might be helpful.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Program Advisory Committees are intended to:

1. **identify needs/issues within a community or county,**
2. **advise or recommend on how best to reach community audiences,**
3. **review evaluation plans and results, and**
4. **when necessary, to function as advocates for Extension programs and Cornell Cooperative Extension.**

Advisory Committees + Staff – Who does what?

There are many articles in the Journal of Extension that provide information on working with advisory committees and expectations of the advisory team. One especially good article from the Journal of Extension clarifies who is doing the work. Using Nominal Group Techniques for Helping New Extension Agents Understand How to Effectively Involve Advisory Committee Members

To some degree, it may be more clear what roles PAC members play, than staff, yet there are some responsibilities that should only be on the shoulders of the Extension educator.

Roles of Program Staff

While the roles of the PAC may be to advise and advocate, Extension program staff are essential to convening meetings, being inclusive, providing opportunities for dialogue and listening, and managing some of the meeting logistics. Below is a listing of possible staff roles related to advisory committees (and PAC members as volunteers):

1. Identify, develop and maintain the general advisory committee structure.
2. For newly forming PACs, identify some basic issues you will be dealing with (build your preliminary team around relevant issues).
3. Work with the committee in identifying, selecting, and appointing committee membership.
4. Provide orientation and training for committee members. It is your responsibility to be sure they fully understand Extension and the role we play. They also must understand their roles and responsibilities within the broader picture.
5. Provide leadership and assistance in development of committee as necessary.
6. Provide leadership to ensure positive team dynamics and the management of team diversity within your advisory committee. If your team doesn't function well together, they cannot be successful in anything they are trying to do.
7. Secure a meeting space.
8. Maintain open communication channels.
9. Provide necessary support for committee decision making.

10. Provide program evaluation results, participation data, community assessment tools. This includes results of your educational programs. A PAC is like a 3rd party evaluation team. Do take their feedback as HELP and not personal critique.

11. Support, encourage, and motivate committee and individual members.

12. Facilitate effective committee operations in such areas as:

    a. Agenda planning
    b. Meeting notification
    c. Dissemination of minutes (to the board and ED too)
    d. Evaluation of meetings

13. Track terms/rotation of membership.

14. Assume a facilitation role or a shared leadership role in actual committee members through the election of an advisory chair and/or officers (some of this will depend on your Association governance).

15. Publicize and/or award contributions of the members as individuals or as the total advisory committee, and not the contributions of the educator. This is a shared role.

Program Advisement – Needs, Audiences, and Program Evaluation

Assessing Local Needs

While program staff may be trained and capable of needs assessment functions, **having a PAC that works with program staff on needs assessments can help ground an idea in a community**. Sharing the roles of needs assessments can mean working collaboratively with a PAC to interview stakeholders, implement a survey, gather resources, or better understand who the key stakeholders are in a community. Welcoming PAC membership into this role helps to demonstrate support and community engagement. See the Appendices for the bulletin on assessing local needs.

Reviewing Reach

A strong advisory committee should be a cross-section of a community or county's demographics and as such they are critical in helping the Extension program staff find ways to meet parity in Extension programming. It is expected that the overall advisory committee would be made up of members that represent the county demographics. The program advisory committees (i.e., 4-H, horticulture) will be composed of members whose demographics relate to the target audiences they serve.

The representative committee can provide suggestions and recommendations that both reach and provide the best educational programs for targeted audiences. Varied input will help to better understand needs, and opportunities, increasing the likelihood for better outcomes for all audiences including the underrepresented and underserved.

Affirmative Action Review

As such, **PACs can help programs to uncover gaps in program delivery by reviewing participation data and evaluations and making suggestions**. Demographic data collected for program reporting compared to local demographic distribution can be a clue to where there are participation gaps are - and a well-developed PAC could be help think differently about approaches.

Selecting the right members and providing the correct training can help produce a successful advisory committee when it comes to Affirmative Action review. Some strategies include:

- Communicating the purposes of the advisory committee, including their role in Affirmative Action review.
- Explaining why committee membership is crucial in understanding the culture and needs of targeted audiences.
- Providing a formal orientation that includes basic information on affirmative action compliance, including data collection.
- Including discussion on affirmative Action compliance and how it can be best incorporated in the development of each new issue (see the Affirmative Action compliance check-up in the Appendices and Resources.
- Identification by advisory committee of minority groups that may not have been included on the advisory committee and identification of possible new advisory committee members to represent these target audiences.

What does this review look like? A demographic program review includes sharing participation data from the Program Development and Reporting tool:
https://apps.cce.cornell.edu/participant/main/outcome_program.cfm
A summary report of reach for a particular program will provide a perspective, a deeper look into any particular events may be necessary. Staff may have additional information too help understand the context and how the staff promoted a program. PAC members may have clarifying questions, or suggestions on changes to grow audiences or reach.

Identifying the Baseline Demographics

To identify what audiences exist within a community, a new educator might look at data that breaks down the county demographics.

The Cornell Program on Applied Demographics has demographic breakdowns and projections by county and town. https://pad.human.cornell.edu/ This can be very helpful when comparing program participation to local community demographics.
The U.S. census (http://www.geolytics.com/) also has a wealth of information, as does the State of New York website (https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/vital_statistics/)

Parity

Parity is the state of being equal or equivalent to the demographics of a target population. It is looking at the demographic makeup of a particular population and then making sure that Extension programs and advisory committees reflect these demographics. For example, if a particular target population in a county or community is made up of 50% white, 30% African-American, and 20% Asian, then the parity the educator should be trying to reach in attendance at Extension programs should mirror these percentages.

Reaching parity isn't always an easy process, but it is federally mandated for Extension program staff to show that they have done everything possible to reach parity. **Extension advisory committees are subject to federal audits and reviews, and although county program staff aren't always able to reach parity, they must provide proof that they have made every attempt to be in federal compliance.** This may include advisory committee minutes in which methods of reaching target audiences have been discussed, as well as examples of the social media, fliers, newsletters, websites, individual visits, etc. that occurred because of these discussions. This information should be collected and stored for at least five years. Failure to provide this information during a federal audit or review could have serious consequences. They are generally conducted every ten years, but sometimes they occur more frequently and without a great deal of notice. A set of Affirmative Action compliance check-up materials is available in the Appendices and References.

Reviewing Program Evaluation Plans and Results

The third major area for PAC work is around the review and analysis of program evaluation plans and results.

How will your program be evaluated?
What does success look like for your staff and participants?
What would success look like for stakeholders?

A brief overview of evaluation plans should be a part of your program plans submitted annually in Program Development and Reporting (PDR) tool: https://apps.cce.cornell.edu/participant/main/outcome_program.cfm. The PAC membership can help with the review of plans and evaluation plans. Is the evaluation plan realistic? Is it being implemented? What does the data look like? Are there written results from the evaluation that can help you to tell the success story? Review of outcome data reported in PDR is a role for the PAC. Is there documentation for the data reported? Evaluation data can help determine how a program evolves with the intent of meeting community needs. The PAC can help staff take an objective view of the program results and make formative changes as needed in order to remain impactful.

Section 2: Organizational Practices of Program Advisory Committees

Structure of the Advisory Committee

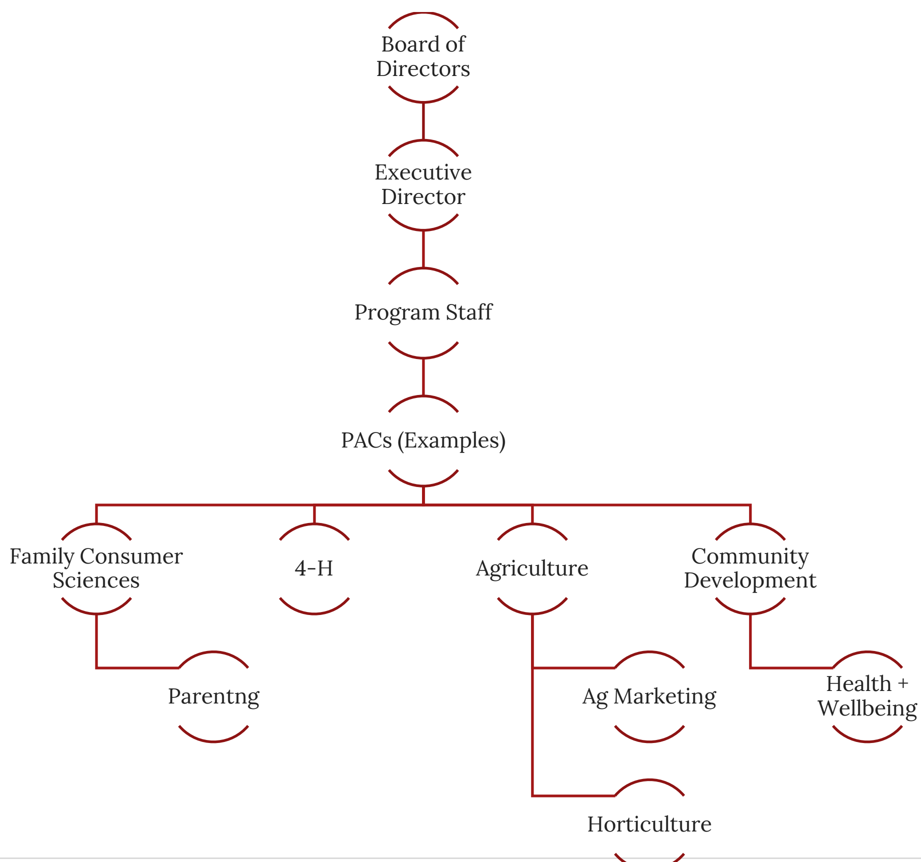
CCE association constitutions and operational guidelines set the stage for how exactly a PAC will function. While 74% of CCE associations have a fully at-large, elected Board of Directors as required by their constitution, 26% of CCE associations have constitutions that nominate 1-2 members of PACs annually to the board of directors as program representatives. The governance structure doesn't change the intended function or operation of a PAC, but it is important to note. Check with your Executive Director to see what type of constitution and operational guidelines that you have in place.

Traditional or umbrella? Two Effective Model Structures

In the past, most counties had one program advisory committee for each major program area, that might be considered "traditional". In the traditional model, programmatic advisory committees meet quarterly, at different times, and with different agendas. PACs report to the board of directors (by sharing minutes to all board members) and EDs, providing guidance and advisement on programmatic changes and support.

In recent years an "umbrella" model of advisory committees has been emerging. In the umbrella model, the overall committee is made up of members representing all program areas. This relates to the idea that all issues and environments are embedded in each other and that better solutions can be identified by a more holistic approach. As per the traditional method, the umbrella PAC reports to the board of directors, providing guidance and advisement on programmatic changes and support.

FIGURE 1: COMMON CCE PAC STRUCTURE



Considerations for Advisory Committees

Regardless of whether you're using an *umbrella* or *traditional* model, three common considerations for advisory committee work are:

* Structural * Programming * Group dynamics

Structural components include purpose, power, membership, and bylaws. Both a written purpose and bylaws provide clarity to the advisory committee role and expectations for potential membership as well as stakeholders.

The power to create bylaws is generally given in a county constitution and provides the book of order for the day-to-day guidelines for your advisory committee. Having bylaws can be very helpful in dealing with questions that might arise, including quorum for votes, conducting officer elections and rotations of members, defining the rules of order for conducting business, and time and place of meetings. Bylaws also can provide guidelines for filling officer positions that have been vacated or dealing with delinquent members or officers who want to be on the committee but are not active.

The **programming** components relate to the actual work that each committee does. It is important that the committee learns what an Extension program looks like, from needs assessment to evaluation. CCE programs should have a plan of work available that provides all of the program components. Cornell Cooperative Extension Administration provides training on the Extension programming for program staff. Please contact your Executive Director, State Extension Specialist, or the Cornell Cooperative Extension Organizational Development Team cce-orgdev@cornell.edu for more information. The program process should be shared with all new advisory committee members during their initial training.

Group dynamics are often overlooked but one of the most important parts of committee work. Group dynamics includes an understanding of human behavior and human interaction among advisory committee members. Committee training can reduce conflict, improve interaction, and make for a more effective problem-solving process. The Organizational Development team cce-orgdev@cornell.edu offers training for Extension program staff through in-service training opportunities. Building relationships amongst committee members will help them to connect, to feel valued, and to contribute. See section 3 of this handbook for suggestions on convening productive meetings.

A successful advisory committee must consider structural, programmatic and group dynamic work. Often seasoned advisory committee members are involved in training for new advisory committee members rotating onto the team. A starting point for committee ground rules is available in the Appendices and References section. Where program staff need training in these areas, training should be sought – these are important leadership skills.

Committee Logistics

If you do not currently have by-laws or guidance for meeting logistics, consider PAC leadership, the number of members needed and how to rotate them on and off the team.

Effective Advisory Committee Membership

Let's assume that you don't currently have by-laws and guidance for membership. Consider the number of members needed and how to rotate them on and off the team as well as other logistics.

Officers

Officers can help you plan the agenda and other logistics. Advisory committee officers are different in every county. In some counties there is just a chair who is elected by the committee. In other counties, the officer positions are more formal and include at the minimum a chair and secretary. Many counties go so far as to include a treasurer and parliamentarian – check with your Executive Director to see if this is spelled out for your association.

A secretary can help keep and distribute minutes. A copy of the minutes of the committee meeting should be shared with the Executive Director, other educators in the office, and with Board of Directors. Minutes should be archived and kept in the Extension office for at least 5 years.

A treasurer is only needed if money is being collected. There are rules governing the collection, recording, and accounting for money, and this should be discussed in detail with the county Extension director or your office financial staff. It is important to understand this process before selecting a treasurer.

A **parliamentarian** can be very beneficial on advisory committees that are having problems proceeding for a number of reasons. There may be power issues on the team, there may be a committee member who is too gregarious or members with personal agendas. A well-trained parliamentarian can keep the meeting efficient and orderly.

Number of Members on PAC

The number of members on an advisory committee is set by the board of directors. An approximate number might be around 8-10. The representative committee has a diverse group of members who as a group have the knowledge needed to properly advise and provide advocacy. It is important to remember that the more members there are on a committee, the more important it is for the team to be trained in group dynamics to reduce conflict and increase successful team interaction.

Terms and Rotations

Rotation of advisory committee members is an important part of managing a successful committee. Members should be rotated off the committee and new members added in a way that makes certain there are always some “seasoned” members on the committee who can help to train and/or guide new members. New ideas and renewed energy comes from the addition of new people. Terms and term limits assist in rotating members. Your bylaws should contain information on how rotation works.

Some program staff have people on their advisory committees for three years with a maximum of two terms or one year off between terms. For members interested in being chair of the committee, this allows them time to learn the ropes and thus be prepared to run for chair-elect, and then to serve as chair before rotating off the committee. This means that one third of the members should rotate off each year. Some program staff prefer a two-year rotation-- members can then serve for one year on the committee to learn how it functions and then serve in officer roles before rotating off. In this type of rotation one- half of the members are rotating off each year as another group rotates onto the committee.

Selecting and Recruiting Members

There is no single best way to select and recruit members for your advisory committee. As part of the selection process, it is important that your advisory committee have a broad range of knowledge of the programmatic issues facing your community, and that they know or belong to the audiences you will be trying to reach with your programs. It is not expected that every member will have knowledge of every problem or every audience but as a whole, the advisory committee membership should be able to provide the advice you need to develop strong programs and successfully reach your audiences.

Although knowledge is crucial, there are other attributes that must be considered when selecting new members. These include experience, leadership skills, responsibility, dedication and neutrality. You want people on your team who can be flexible in their team decision- making, who portray a willingness to work with others, and who are willing to negotiate with the rest of the team to identify the best solutions. All members should have a highly developed level of leadership skills so that they can share leadership within the committee and will also be good-will ambassadors for Extension throughout the county. They should be well networked throughout the county. Members need to be responsible for attending meetings and carrying out committee responsibilities. Finally, advisory committee members should be dedicated to the mission of Extension and free of personal agendas.

Research by Senge (1990); Salas, Sims and Burke (2005); Schei & Rognes (2005); and Brodeur (2006, 2007) shows strong justification that the development and awareness of certain member attributes is crucial to the success of team or committee development and outcomes. In selecting team members, it is a good idea to consider each attribute below and to look for members who exhibit these traits or would be willing to learn them:

- Leadership, in particular shared leadership
- Personal interest in the total community and needs of the community
- Ability to see and reflect the needs of people that can be addressed by the Cooperative Extension system
- Respect for others on the committee and a sensitivity to their needs
- Commitment of time and energy to the committee
- Willingness to do more than their share when needed
- Willingness to be adaptable to new ideas and directions but also to be persuasive when the need arises
- Willingness to work on the team with no hidden or personal agendas
- Willingness to build a shared mental model or cultural camaraderie with other team members
- Communication and listening skills
- Ability to negotiate, to make the final solutions or recommendations better than individuals could accomplish working on their own
- Shared vision and ability to think long-term

It is always good to make a list of potential candidates, because a well-developed list can let you see where you might be missing important demographics or a critical knowledge base. You can also look at the rotation process and how this will impact you over the next few years. If there is a critical program area and the only two members on your committee who have valuable knowledge for developing your programs, it would not be good if they both rotated off at the same time. Planning ahead like this can save headaches later. Several sample graphs have been included in this guide for this purpose. These include a worksheet to identify potential members and the advisory committee membership grid that allows you to keep track of your membership, when they were hired, when they rotate off and other demographic information that will be useful for affirmative action audits. An example listing to help consider new PAC recruits is included in the Appendices and References, as is a "pre-work" document that will prompt you for some key details to have on hand prior to recruiting new members.

Finding Members

There are many ways to find potential members of your advisory committee. Some of the most effective sources of information include the following:

- Word of mouth: Talk to other educators or community leaders, especially those in target audiences or who work with target audiences.
- Media: Pay attention to local newspapers, magazines, radio, television and social media channels. Leaders and those familiar with issues you will be solving often can be identified this way.
- Industry, finance and education: If you are dealing with specific industries, you can often find someone willing to be on your committee who is in industry or teaches in the area in which you have an interest. For example, you might have an ag advisory committee and one of the main issues relates to ag profitability and sustainability. You might involve a local banker who understands issues related to farm credit, and there may be a community college professor who teaches international trade. You might also find someone who works in the information technology field who could provide insight into local and global communication.
- Leadership within target audiences: These individuals are generally people who live within and are a part of a target community. Examples might include ministers, business leaders or teachers.

As you continue to network across your county in your program area, ask for names of people who would be good choices for inclusion on your committee. You may have a strong committee, but you don't know what issues might arise in the future or who might have to resign. It is always good to have a list of potential candidates handy. Sometimes the best choice may be a second in command rather than the highest level person. For example, the mayor may not be a good choice because of his/her schedule, but the assistant to the mayor would have the mayor's ear and would also be likely to be aware of the same problems the mayor is familiar with.

Meeting Logistics

Meeting Times and Locations

Deciding on the frequency and best times to hold your advisory committee meetings is important to having successful attendance. The minimum standard for frequency is four times per year. If you are new and have "inherited" an existing advisory committee, you can survey them verbally to see when the best time is to meet. As you add new members in the rotation process, you must always provide the meeting times to make sure it works with his/her schedule.

Careers and job types can have a lot to do with when people are available for meetings. Those who have jobs that are hard to leave during the daytime, such as teachers, usually do better with evening or weekend meetings. Agriculture producers often are easiest to have at breakfast meetings before they begin their day. Business and government personnel often find it easier to attend luncheon meetings. The important point is to communicate your meeting times and be flexible if they need to change.

Proper location is another important point to cover when putting together successful meetings. The location and the room layout are important. Arrangements for facilities should be made as far in advance as possible in order to be assured of the date and time for the meeting. Adequate seating arrangements should be provided for as well as necessary materials such as a white board, flip charts, screens and hookups for computers and projectors that might be needed. The location of the meeting should be as central as possible for all who need to attend. The facilities should be well-ventilated and neither too hot nor too cold. Lighting should be sufficient for reading purposes and to see screens clearly without glare and to be able to hear and see all of the participants of the meetings.

Agenda Development

Agenda development and sharing prior to the meeting is a good practice – and it can be done in a variety of ways:

- call the PAC chair to discuss the agenda
- send a meeting notice out and share draft items, asking for additional items
- discuss with other staff potential agenda items for review
- use a standard agenda for times of the year (reviewing evaluation, program needs, or program reach on a calendar basis).

A sample agenda is provided in the appendix. At the very least, the agenda should contain the location, date and time the meeting will be held, the meeting objectives, topics for discussion and the name of each of the presenters. The agenda can be used for notetaking as well to simplify the work of the secretary.

Room Arrangements

Most people don't pay a lot of attention to seating arrangements for their advisory committee meetings. However, seating arrangements can change the perceived power dynamics and make for more successful interaction. Three types of seating that work well for advisory committees are 1) the U-training arrangement, 2) the problem-solving circle, and 3) the long table decision- making arrangement.

U-Training Arrangement

This room arrangement is especially useful for training - providing better visibility for the educator (and other advisory member trainers) and makes interaction between the trainer and participants easier. This method allows the trainer to walk closer to individual participants to speak or answer questions while still being visible to the other participants.

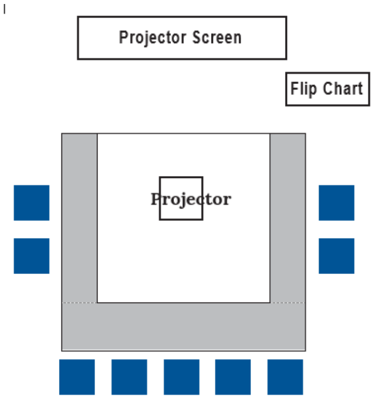


FIGURE 2 FIGURE 2. U-SHAPED ARRANGEMENT FOR TRAINING.

Problem-Solving Circle

When a high level of interaction is required among members, the circle can help to minimize power issues. Since there is no "head of the table" in a circular table or chair arrangement, power is more neutralized, which fosters a feeling of equality and equal contribution for all advisory members.

FIGURE 3. CIRCULAR ARRANGEMENT FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING.

Long Table for Decision-Making

Often when advisory committees meet, their charge is to arrive at a specific decision or recommendation. For this process there needs to be a leader, which may be the county educator or the chair of the advisory committee or someone the committee has designated as their leader for a specific reason. Selecting a rectangular table that provides enough seating for all the advisory members provides the opportunity for direct discussion while allowing the leader to facilitate conversations that might include a higher level of conflict. The long table concept also allows the seating of aggressive or "intense" personalities at opposite ends of the table from each other, so their conversations can be more focused on the solution and less on interacting directly with each other. It is also easier with the rectangular shaped table to place the leader halfway between all members by placing them in the middle of the longer side of the table rather than at the "head" of the table.

FIGURE 3FIGURE 4. LONG TABLE ARRANGEMENT FOR DECISION-MAKING

Section 3: Convening | Setting the Stage for Good Work to Happen

Convening and facilitating is often the work of lead program staff. Investing the time in thoughtful committee meeting planning will pay off.

Advisory Committee Training for New Members

A formal orientation of new advisory committee members is crucial to success. Orientation should include:

- The role of the advisory committee
- Advisory committee job descriptions of all members shared with all members
- Bylaws that include member rotations
- Average time commitments
- Brief history of Extension in the U.S. and of the Cornell Cooperative Extension within the state and county
- Training that includes an understanding of the program plan, advisory committee group process skills (including human dynamics) and an understanding of how Extension does program accountability, evaluation and analysis of data (including data and data processing that must be followed to meet Affirmative Action compliance)

Expectations that Advisory Committee Members May Have

It is important when managing an advisory committee that Extension program staff be aware of some of the specific expectations members may have as part of their participation on a committee. This is certainly a good discussion with individual members and the group, but it may help to know **typical expectations by PAC members have included:**

- Feeling welcomed at committee meetings
- Receiving a thorough orientation, including a clear explanation of roles, reasonable expectations of what an advisory committee does, and the role of the county program staff
- Feeling needed and wanted and that their contributions are valuable
- Needing support from the county Extension program staff until they feel competent
- Needing to feel a sense of accomplishment
- Needing to have specific problems to solve or participate in solving
- Need for active communication between the program staff and the committee members not just at meeting times but continuous

Practices for Successful Advisory Committee Meetings

Thoughtful practices for running meetings for an advisory committee are like running any other meeting – be considerate of the those in attendance, treat others with kindness and respect, and think of the outcomes that you want to achieve when planning the agenda. Below are a few practices to observe and put into place regularly. Some of these items have been covered elsewhere in this handbook but – a succinct list follows:

- **Agenda**. Be clear about committee/meeting expectations. Create and active agenda where participants are engaged. If only a few items need to be discussed and your bylaws allow for it, consider an alternative meeting method such as Zoom. Eventually your advisory committee will understand that you see how valuable their time is, and when a meeting is called, they will know important items will be discussed. See sample agenda.

- **Meeting time/place.** Meet at a time and place appropriate for your committee.

- **Keep the advisory committee at a manageable size**. The size of the committee should be based on the knowledge needed and the representation required to reflect the community rather than the number of people.

- **Navigating meetings**. Not everything will go smooth. Expect there to be hoops and hurdles. Learn about team dynamics and how to navigate differences, utilize strengths and work to neutralize perceived power differences with strategies for collecting ideas and making decisions. Below are a few more tips for helping to navigate meetings:

    a. **Assign Tasks to People**– Specific action steps should always be assigned to specific individuals. If there are large tasks, make an individual a sub-committee chair to facilitate a smaller group.
    b. **Assign Deadlines** – Give individuals a definite time for completion of the task. A common deadline is by the next meeting.
    c. **Evaluate the Meeting** – Distribute a short survey that asks what the participants thought about the meeting and how future meetings can be more useful.
    d. **End on Time** – Participants tend to get disenchanted when meetings are too long or go over their time limit. Be extremely time conscious and end on time.
    e. **Be Prompt with Follow-Up** – Send all committee members a recap of the action steps and assignments within a few days following the meeting. This serves as a reminder and also as an update to absent members.
    f. **Provide Social Interaction** - Informal social interaction, usually in the form of refreshments, allows the committee members time to continue conversations from the meeting, meet with sub-committee members, or build informal networks.
    g. **End on a Positive Note** – Affirmations are very popular and provide a source of motivation to the group. Use inspirational quotes, motivational poems, or uplifting short stories.
    h. Announce the Next Meeting, Time and Location

- **Understand member motivation.** People have reasons for being on committees. Identify these reasons and try to make their time personally rewarding. Also, letting them know that you appreciate them goes a long way. A simple email saying thanks makes a difference.

- **Meetings do not have to be boring.** Plan something fun for your committee once a year – sharing a meal, a field visit to a program, or visiting other local programs could build relationships and program or evaluation strategies. Invest your time and your member's time in experiences that will members to work as a team with you.

- **Moving action items forward.** Change your meetings to "doings" - Always treat meetings as an opportunity to create a plan, strategy, report, outline, idea etc. Have a specific purpose and desired outcomes distributed with the agenda.

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APPENDICES AND REFERENCES

Appendix I. Job Description for a Member of a Cornell Cooperative Extension Program Advisory Committee (sample)

Cornell Cooperative Extension Program Advisory Committee Member Volunteer Position Description

Title: Program Advisory Committee Member

Purpose of Position: Members of the CCE Program Advisory Committee serve to advise the Board and the Staff in planning, developing, and evaluating educational programs that meet the needs to f the citizen of the county.

Responsibilities:

- Advise the board of directors and staff on the need for and relative priority of specific educational programming within the topical area
- Provide input to the plan of work cycle
- Advise on the content, structure, and targeted audience of such programming
- Advise on marketing specific programs
- Assist with program evaluation
- Develop awareness, understanding and support for program, and represent CCE generally to the public, constituent groups, funders and public decision makers
- Maintain regular communication with the extension educator.

Expected Results: Resulting educational programs will be aligned with local needs, will reach new audiences through PAC member connections and external stakeholder groups. Members will provide a source of informed advocates for Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Training and Support:

- Job Description
- Volunteer Orientation (required)
- Committee Packet
- Committee Chair
- Other Committee Members

Reporting:

- Reporting for the Committee will be completed by the Chair
- Volunteer enrollment is required annually

Time Commitment: Varied. Time will be needed for committee meetings, time to meet with the designated Extension staff member, and time to conduct tasks associated with the committee's work. Time will be needed for reporting to identified groups. Committee meetings must be held a minimum of 4 times per year.

Level of Background screening required (check those that apply):

- Interview
- Reference Check
- Criminal Background Check
- Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Check

Qualifications:

- Is knowledgeable and of the Cornell Cooperative Extension mission and program area
- Is committed to the (Program Name)
- Works well with adults and youth
- Effective communication, organization and interpersonal skills
- Willingness and availability to complete the work of the committee
- Dependable

Benefits:

- Enhance personal knowledge and skill in work associated with the committee
- Collaborative and collegial work with staff and committee
- Derive satisfaction from seeing program meet the needs of the community
- Derive satisfaction in task accomplishment
- Improve teamwork skills
- Opportunity for training and resume building

Salary:

Unsalaried; this position does not imply employment with Cornell University or Cornell Cooperative Extension

Mentor/Supervising Professional:

Name:
Title:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

"I have read, understand, and agree to fulfill the purpose and responsibilities of this volunteer position and further agree to accept guidance and direction from the supervisor. I am committing to involve individuals regardless of race, color, age, sex, religions, disability, or national origin in educational experiences in cooperation with other Extension volunteers and Extension personnel. I also understand that failure to fulfill the purpose and responsibilities of the volunteer position and to accept guidance and direction from the supervisor could result in suspension of my position. I also understand that this volunteer position is renewable annually; I will notify the supervising professional if I am no longer interested in serving."

Signature of Volunteer Date

Signature of Extension Professional Date

Appendix II: Timeline for Developing an Extension Program Advisory Committee

1. **Complete a needs assessment (See Needs Assessment survey)**
   - Talk to Executive Director, board and other program staff
   - Review existing (state and county) strategic plan and plan(s) of work
   - Review local media for needs
   - Review current or connected program data
   - Review local board and commission meeting minutes for local needs (ex. Department of Health)
   - Survey/talk to members of the public and industry
   - Identify potential audiences with needs

2. **Identify individuals who might make good members**
   - Use the same methods above to identify potential committee membership
   - Be sure potential membership list includes all possible candidates

3. **Decide on the structure of the committee**
   - Type of committee (overall, programmatic, any sub-committees) b. Meeting locations/ dates and times
   - Rotation of membership
   - Officer structure (chair, co-chair, chair elect, parliamentarian etc.) e. Leadership of committee (educator run or officer
   - List of responsibilities membership

4. **Invite members to apply**
   - Understand what motivates people to join committees
   - If you don't know potential members well, meet with them several times before inviting them to join committee
   - Use mutual friends to help recruit
   - It is better to invite face-to-face rather than by email or letter
   - There will be questions—know the answers in advance
   - Be open and honest about expectations of the committee
   - Put expectations in writing

5. **Put together preliminary team**
   - Appointment by board chair/board of directors

6. **Conduct orientation and training**
   - Team responsibilities
   - Affirmative action requirements
   - Human dynamics

7. **Use prepared agendas for meetings**

8. **Above all, stay in communication with your team**

Appendix III: Assessing Needs Guide for County Staff

Full version can be found here: Assessing Needs Guide for County Staff

Why Assess Needs?

A "**Needs Assessment** or **Needs Analysis**" process uses quantitative and qualitative data to help make educated decisions about planning future programs and allocating resources.

Community needs can be assessed very broadly for a strategic plan or more narrowly around a programmatic interest. At best a Needs Assessment will use a variety of approaches to verify findings. For example, a Needs Assessment may include reviewing existing data and documentation, reaching out to stakeholders and potential stakeholders with a survey, and seeking expert advice (using something like the Delphi Technique).

What is "Need"? "Need" is described as a gap between real and ideal (or normal/normative) conditions. An issue is particularly ripe for educational programming when there is a "gap between real and ideal that is both acknowledged by community values and potentially amenable to change." (Reviere, 1996, p. 5). An issue is ripe for CCE programs when it also fits our mission and is on target with Research and Extension plans of work (see Program Definitions & Standards).

Options for Needs Assessments:

- **Consider Demographics -** Local Demographic Maps the Cornell Program on Applied Demographics has county and local demographic maps.
- **Extrapolate from existing studies** – look for data collected by others that can help to shape the program needs. Sources like NIH, NCHS (National Center for Health Statistics), Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of the Census, and USDA each have statistical analysis that can be useful.
- **Document social needs** – record/document instances of media attention locally and nationally.
- **Use service statistics** – Look at participation records and recorded requests.
- **Public forum/focus groups** – Public meetings and focus groups are less costly then surveys in terms of time and money and can encourage clarification of issues and a democratic process.
- **Conduct a Survey** – where clientele and stakeholders are asked directly what they think that they need.
- **Expert Advise/Dephi Technique** - solicit expert opinions on a particular subject.
- **Use resource inventories** –review local databases of known resources, references, inputs considering unique niches of other organizations and agencies involved in addressing a particular issue.

Full version can be found here: Assessing Needs Guide for County Staff

Appendix IV. Cornell Cooperative Extension Affirmative Action Check-Up

Preparation

1. Notify Executive Director of decision to conduct an Affirmative Action check-up in the specific county.
2. Request County Affirmative Action reports for the past two years.
3. Obtain basic demographic data on the county including youth population, adult population, school demographics.
4. Obtain two years of plans and reports for review of contacts and potential audiences.
5. Obtain copies of program reporting for the past two years.
6. Secure at least two AADIP/Civil Rights posters to take along.

During review

1. Invite all staff (including key admin staff) to participate in the overview of history and components of the Affirmative Action Check-Up
2. Review historical information about the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the subsequent legislation.
3. Review the history of the Extension Service and USDA relative to discrimination in programs and employment, paying specific attention to the judgements found against the agency and how we must continue to take positive actions to prevent any discrimination in our programs or employment.
4. Discuss the CCE Affirmative Action, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (AADIP).
5. Point out the areas of concern for New York Counties and that Federal Audits are routinely completed. Review the purpose of the AADIP Check-up.
6. Go through two handouts (General guidelines and FAQ's - available on https://www.nifa.usda.gov/office-equal-opportunity-civil-rights-faqs), item by items, indicating what will be looked for during the Check-Up and clarifying expectations and concerns. Gather input from staff and answer questions immediately.
7. Review the demographics of the county and note that these racial, ethnic ratios will be used consistently as a measure of potential and realized contacts in Extension programs.

Follow-up

1. Write summary with appreciation for the effort, strengths, corrective action needed, and critical tasks which must be accomplished in a short time. Include specific information about each major section with positive or corrective information.
2. Follow-up with answers to questions raised during the day.
3. Send copies to the Executive Director, State Extension Specialist, and CCE Board.

Affirmative Action Review

Notes/Work Sheet

Program____

Reviewer (s) ____

Date____

Files	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Must have complete set of standardized files			
Must have a copy of the AADIP plan for the County			
Current years (and five-year history) should be accessible from other sources (compliance letters, registration, participation lists, mailing lists, etc.)			
Everyone (all staff) knows where the files are and what is in them.			
Annual reports filed with the State			
Clientele Contacts/Parity	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Staff understand the concept of parity.			
Review ethnic potential audience for the county, targeted program audience by ethnic and gender in the ROA / POW. Contrast with the county demographic data.			
Examine corrective plans planned in the POW to correct the targeted ethnic participation.			
Program Advisory Committees	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Must be representative of the potential audience for the program committee by race and gender			
If overall advisory, should be representative of county by race and gender.			

Must have an expansion and Review Committee.			
Must discuss AADIP reflected in the minutes of the meeting, the status of the AADIP in the program - that is for all program areas.			
Minutes should reflect the participation / nonparticipation of minority members in the group. (Should not just be a paper representation).			
Expansion and Review Committee	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Must be geographically representative from throughout the county			
Must be racially representative			
Must be gender representative			
Must include 1/3 young people			
By-Laws / Operational Guidelines	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Any written by-laws (4-H clubs, program advisory committees) need to have verbiage which includes non-discrimination statement.			
Mailing Lists	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Whether in hard copy or electronic, all groups must be coded by race and gender. Minorities must be coded. These must be the official lists.			
Insure that there is no separate listing by minority groups or by gender.			
A minority media list is acceptable.			
Participant Lists	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Must keep a list of all participants of events, activities. (May be kept by individual program staff.)			

These should be coded by race either during the meeting or immediately following the event.			
Comparisons may be made over a five year time examining trends in minority or female participation. (Only need to keep for 5 or so years). Shows attention to trends.			
Announcements of Program Offerings / Public Notification Plan	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Event and program announcements always have, in the body of the information, the non-discrimination statement. (Cannot count the disclaimer printed on the letterhead). Work to include this statement in the narrative part of the notification or article.			
By-Laws / Operational Guidelines	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Any written by-laws (4-H clubs, program advisory committees) need to have verbiage which includes non-discrimination statement.			
Mailing Lists	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Whether in hard copy or electronic, all groups must be coded by race and gender. Minorities must be coded. These must be the official lists.			
Insure that there is no separate listing by minority groups or by gender.			
A minority media list is acceptable.			
Participant Lists	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
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These should be coded by race either during the meeting or immediately following the event.			

Comparisons may be made over a five year time examining trends in minority or female participation. (Only need to keep for 5 or so years). Shows attention to trends.			
Announcements of Program Offerings / Public Notification Plan	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Event and program announcements always have, in the body of the information, the non-discrimination statement. (Cannot count the disclaimer printed on the letterhead). Work to include this statement in the narrative part of the notification or article.			
Clip the article and also keep what was sent to the newspaper if there is a history of the paper not including this information. File together and keep in the file.			
If photos are available either in newspapers or for those which were just taken, include those as well to document minority participation. Photos can also be displayed on the wall, with the map.			
Posters which should also have the non-discrimination statement.			
Mass Media Outlets / Grass Roots Organizations	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
List any mass media which are used and note which are specifically targeted toward minority groups.			
List any grassroots organizations that relate to a specific minority group -- these should be used to send program announcements.			
Discuss ways that to get information to minorities or underprivileged - social service organizations, minority professional, sororities, church. Build a broad based list who can provide avenues to minorities			
Complaint Poster	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments

One posted in reception area			
One posted in each major meeting room			
All Staff can answer the question - "who should be contacted if there is discrimination"			
All Reasonable Efforts	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Must be done for all clubs which are - or + 4% out of parity. Must be done for *each club* that is out of parity.			
Three dimensions are required: 1. All available mass media to inform potential participants of the availability of the program. 2. Personal letters or special circulars sent to people. A mailing list will be necessary for this. E & R committee can help- ask who they know who could be contacted with a special letter of invitation. Personal letter does not have to be everyone, but a reasonable amount. Document 3. Personal visit to a representative number of potential recipients. These need to be documented as well.			
Keep documents on file.			
4-H Camp Attendance (Overnight)	Below standards	Meets Standards	Comments
Examine total number of volunteers at camp by race and gender			
Examine total number of participants by race and gender. Compare with county youth potential by racial balance.			
Examine placement of minority youth in cabins to insure non-discrimination.			

Appendix V. Identifying Potential Program Advisory Committee Members

Below is a list of positions that might help you find likely candidates. This might be helpful to brainstorm with your PAC – who could help?

Mayor (or assistant to the Mayor) ______________________________

City or County Commissioner ______________________________

Director of the Chamber of Commerce ______________________________

Bank Official ______________________________

Growers, Farmers______________________________

Wholesale or retail ______________________________

Principal or other school official (school board) ______________________________

Parents/Teacher Association ______________________________

Service organization representative (red cross, girls and boys club director) ______________

Clergy______________________________

Social worker ______________________________

Farm organization president or officer ______________________________

Justice system representative ______________________________

Radio, television or newspaper editor or reporter ______________________________

Extension related program volunteers

____

Military (ROTC, recruiters) ______________________________

Military organization (VFW) ______________________________

Retired organizations (AARP, retired teachers association) ______________________________

Youth______________________________

Historical society or museum curator ______________________________

Business Clubs (rotary, lions) ______________________________

Social Clubs (Gourmet groups, Investment club) ______________________________

Appendix VI. Sample Agendas

Sample Agenda (adopted from the 11th edition of Robert's Rules of Order)

1. Call to Order
2. Reading and Approval of minutes
3. Reports of Officers
    a. Chair
    b. Vice-chair (if one exists)
    c. Treasurer (if one exists)
    d. Secretary
4. Reports of Standing Committees
    a. Fair Committee (example) Reports of Special Committees
    b. Committee assigned to check with county office on agricultural land usage in North side of County (example)
5. Special Orders (matters which have been given a special priority that need to be addressed)
6. Unfinished Business or General Orders
    a. (example) continue review of summer events
7. New Business (anything new in the present meeting that needs to be brought before the group)
8. Final Announcements/comments Adjourn
9. Next meeting: date

Appendix VII. Pre-work Before you Recruit Potential Advisory Committee Members

1. What is the purpose of your PAC??

2. What are the needs you have identified so far for this program area?

3. What areas of expertise will you need from advisory members (identifying target audiences, resources, understanding of specific needs within a community, etc.)?

4. Who do you know within your community who could provide this expertise or could identify potential members?

Appendix VIII. Sample Ground Rules

Ground Rules for Engagement

Be present as fully as possible. Be here with your doubts and your convictions, listen and speak up. Be present to all involved. Focus on the task at hand (use technology in ways that encourage full engagement without outside distractions).

Respect individual differences. Our views of reality may differ, but all are welcome to the table. Listen for understanding before responding. When offering an opinion, use "I" statements and create space for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard.

- **Acknowledge challenges respectfully and avoid defensive behavior.** Avoid denying problems or changing topics, allow others to talk without interruption. Lean in to conflict. Hard stuff…but important.
- **Seek first to understand.** Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions instead of corrections as new ideas are presented. Practice restating what others have said in seeking clarity and understanding.
- **When the going gets rough, reflect**. Suspend judgement to create opportunities for discovering what you don't know that you don't know. Assume the best of intentions.
- **Appreciate tension and complexity.** There may be times we differ in our perspectives. Move away from "either/or" thinking. Know that "us **and** them" doesn't need to mean "us vs. them."

Develop a sense of trust and team. Certain practices help build "team":

- Demonstrate **a willingness to compromise** or seek consensus.
- Accept and **publicly demonstrate support** for group decisions.
- Support a **strong sense of community** and relationship.
- **Expect and accept that our work is ongoing.** Have patience in the process.
- **Intentionally model collaborative behavior** practices within and outside of the team.

Know and respect where the buck stops. At the end of the day, some decisions are made at a higher level for all of us. Know that those in administrative roles wrestle with and set important priorities accordingly. Be respectful of this relationship.

Adapted from Circle of Trust Touchstones. *Touchstones are part of the Circle of Trust® approach developed by the Center for Courage & Renewal and based on the work of author/educator Parker J. Palmer.*