

**Statement of Operating Procedures  
for the  
UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council**

**Foreword**

The Board of Trustees of the University of New Hampshire, the governing Board of the Land-Grant University through which UNH Cooperative Extension programming is conducted, and the County Commissioners, which administer the funds toward support of this work, have entered into an agreement, recognizing the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council as the Advisory Group of UNH Cooperative Extension work in said county. This agreement, known as the "Memorandum of Understanding between the University System of New Hampshire and the County Commissioners," which has been signed by representatives of the University of New Hampshire, the University System of New Hampshire, and the County Commissioners, contains the following paragraph:

Therefore, be it resolved that with a view to continuing the policy of local guidance, the Board of Trustees of the University System of New Hampshire and County Commissioners do hereby enter into an agreement to recognize the County Cooperative Extension Advisory Council as the sponsor, guide, and advisory group of Extension work in said county in accordance with the Statement of Operating Procedures for County Extension Advisory Councils, as may be amended from time to time, to be filed with the County Commissioners and the Board of Trustees of the University System of New Hampshire.

This statement of operating procedures outlines clearly the responsibilities of the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council and its relationship with UNH Cooperative Extension.

**I. Purpose of UNH Cooperative Extension Work**

UNH Cooperative Extension is organized as a division of the University of New Hampshire in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the New Hampshire Division of Resources and Economic Development and New Hampshire County governments. Extension Educators, based on campus and in each of the ten counties, are responsible for disseminating knowledge and research through educational outreach programs based on identified needs within the county, as authorized through State and Federal legislation in cooperation with County government.

**II. The UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council, consisting of 14 members, in accordance with the "Memorandum of Understanding between the University System of New Hampshire and the County Commissioners," sponsors, guides, and promotes UNH Cooperative Extension work set forth in this document.

A. Membership of the Advisory Council

UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Councils will have twelve (12) members consisting of individuals who can assist with the identification of the educational needs of

county residents and relate them to how Cooperative Extension can meet those needs. Persons will be elected for two-year terms beginning June 15 of each year.

In addition to these 12 persons, one member of the County Delegation and a representative of the County Commissioners will serve on the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council with undefined terms.

A member of the Council may serve three (3) full two-year (2-year) terms consecutively. A person who is a member of the UNH Cooperative Extension State Advisory Council or Council of Agricultural Research Extension and Teaching (CARET) whose term to either, or both of these has not expired, but whose term on the UNH Cooperative Extension County Council has expired, will remain on the County Council or State Council as an ex-officio member until his or her term has been completed as a CARET representative. (An ex-officio is a non-voting, non-office holding member.)

If an elected County Advisory Council member misses three consecutive meetings, the chair may initiate appropriate action to replace the Council member.

#### B. Election of New Council Members

When a UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council position becomes vacant, the chair will appoint a nominating committee of three (3) other members of the council. The nominating committee will then solicit nominations through other council members, the UNH Cooperative Extension professional staff, the county Extension newsletter or some other form of mass media. Within a two-month period or less, a slate of potential candidates will be developed and an election held.

#### C. Organization of the Council

At the first meeting following June 15, the Council shall organize and elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer . Also, the Council will appoint two delegates to the UNH Cooperative Extension State Advisory Council for two-year, non-coinciding terms. From its membership, the Council shall name a Finance Committee of at least three, one of which will be the Treasurer.

The Council shall meet at least six (6) times a year, and at other times as determined by the Council Chair.

Seven (7) or more members will constitute a quorum.

#### D. Duties of Officers and Finance Committee

1. The Chair - shall preside at all meetings of the Council and vote only in case of a tie.
2. The Vice-Chair - shall perform the duties of the Chair in his/her absence or at her/his request.
3. The Secretary - shall keep accurate records of all meetings and handle such correspondence as directed by the Council Chair. These records will be on file in the

County Extension Office and copies will be sent to the Dean and Director of UNH Cooperative Extension. Copies of the minutes will be distributed to all members of the Council.

4. The Treasurer - shall have general financial oversight of the finances within the county for the support of UNH Cooperative Extension work which includes all funds handled directly by the County Extension office. The Treasurer may delegate certain responsibilities, such as signing checks, to another council member or the County Office Administrator under the direction of the Treasurer. Individuals authorized to sign checks should be bonded where appropriate. In those counties where the bookkeeping and expenditures are managed by county government, the Council still has the responsibility for overseeing expenditures.
5. The Finance Committee - shall develop a budget along with the County Office Administrator, for each fiscal year and submit it to the Council with a copy to the Extension Dean and Director.

The Finance Committee shall submit the approved budget request in time for suitable consideration.

The Finance Committee and the County Office Administrator shall be responsible for supporting and explaining the request for such funds.

It is suggested that the Council County Delegation member serve on the Finance Committee.

### **III. Responsibilities of the UNH Cooperative Extension Administration**

- A. To appoint, provided the requisite funds are available, such Extension Educators as are determined necessary to perform the required work in educational outreach programs identified within the county. Such appointments to be made in the following manner:

Candidates, with training and experience believed to be suitable, shall be recommended to the Council by the Extension Dean and Director. From these candidates, the Council may select the one they believe best suited for the position, and this candidate shall be nominated. The final decision will rest with the Dean and Director in accordance with the policies of the University of New Hampshire.

Extension Educators have the responsibility to involve the Council in identifying priorities and establishing Plan of Work objectives. When the programs have been approved, it shall be the duty of Extension Educators, acting under the immediate supervision of Program Leaders, to see programs implemented. Extension Educators shall work with and through advisory groups to the fullest possible extent, and it shall be the duty of Extension Educators to keep these groups and members of the Council thoroughly informed as to the development of the educational work.

At times, certain emergency situations may arise when matters will need the immediate attention and prompt action by Extension Educators which should be undertaken without

the necessity for a meeting of the Council. In such cases, the Council Chair should be kept informed of developments.

The starting salary and any changes in salaries shall be in accordance with University System of New Hampshire policies and where appropriate, Extension Advisory Councils will be consulted.

- B. To ensure that educational outreach programs are conducted to benefit the county, based upon identified needs within the county.
- C. To make available University subject matter specialists for planning, implementing and conducting educational programs in the counties. And, to make available publications, electronic networks, and other information resources and staff in support of County Extension programs.
- D. To provide professional development for all UNH Cooperative Extension staff members located in the counties.
- E. To ensure that the County Cooperative Extension Advisory Council and County Office Administrator shall be accountable to County Commissioners for the expenditure of county funds appropriated for Cooperative Extension programs.
- F. To assist in the development of guidelines and procedures for evaluating the educational programs so Extension work will be conducted in the best interest of the people.
- G. To provide appropriate opportunities for orientation and continuing education of new and existing Council members on matters associated with UNH Cooperative Extension programs.

#### **IV. Responsibilities of the UNH Cooperative Extension Advisory Council**

- A. To interview and nominate Extension Educators for employment as stated in Section IIIA.
- B. To approve suitable office facilities, in cooperation with County Commissioners and County Office Administrator.
- C. To oversee the expenditures of monies and be accountable for all funds appropriated by the County Convention and all other funds as may be made available within the county for conducting Extension programs. Bookkeeping shall be kept in accordance with a uniform system of accounting required by UNH Cooperative Extension or said county.
- D. To work cooperatively with the County Office Administrator and Extension Educators in identifying and prioritizing program objectives based on county needs.
- E. To seek opportunities for orientation and continuing education concerning policies, programs, marketing, and support of UNH Cooperative Extension activities.

## APPENDIX

### UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AND THE COUNCIL MUTUALLY AGREE:

#### A. Staff Employment

County Extension Educators are employed by the University of New Hampshire and are under the administrative direction of the Extension Dean and Director. They carry out programs and policies of UNH Cooperative Extension programs as may be mutually agreed upon by the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council and the Dean and Director or his/her representative.

#### B. Staff Recruitment

The responsibility for recruiting professional staff members rests primarily with the Associate Director of Cooperative Extension. The following are specific procedures for recruitment and employment.

1. For all Extension Educator positions in the counties, the Program Leader will meet with the UNH Cooperative Extension Advisory Council to review county needs and program priorities.
2. Following an agreement of county needs and program priorities with the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council, the Program Leader will determine the responsibilities of the position and a draft position announcement is sent to the Council for review. When the position announcement has been reviewed by the Council, it is then forwarded by the Program Leader to the Associate Director.
3. When the position announcement is finalized, the search process for candidates is handled by the office of the Associate Director in accordance with the University System plan for equal employment and affirmative action.
4. After the announcement has been released, a screening committee is established and comprised of the appropriate Program Leader, staff and at least one Council representative to select and interview semi-finalists.
5. Following preliminary interviews, at least one and no more than three finalists are recommended by the screening committee for final interviews with the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council. The Program Leader will send the completed applications of finalists to all Council members prior to the interviews. Salary offers are discussed with the Council and are based on the Extension Educator Ranking System established by the University.
6. Following final interviews, the UNH Cooperative Extension Advisory Council will nominate its selection to the Associate Director through the Program Leader. If none of the finalists are acceptable, other candidates may be interviewed. If additional acceptable candidates are not available, the search will continue.

### C. Staff Appointments and Probationary Period

Extension educator appointments are made for the University System Board of Trustees by the University of New Hampshire President on the recommendation of the University of New Hampshire Vice-President for Research and Public Service and the Dean and Director of UNH Cooperative Extension.

A newly appointed Extension Educator serves an introductory period of one year. During this concentrated evaluation period, the Program Leader will make every effort to help the new Extension Educator perform satisfactorily in the position and will provide guidance in areas needing improvement.

Before the end of the introductory period, the Program Leader must conduct a review of the individual's performance which will include Council input, and determine his/her suitability for continued employment. If the staff member's performance is unsatisfactory at the end of a probationary period, a minimum of 90 days written notice of termination will be given by the Dean and Director.

### D. Program Development and Extension Educator Plans of Works

Extension Educators are responsible for designing, implementing, marketing, and evaluating educational programs that address the needs of New Hampshire residents in the educational outreach program areas. Programs planned are based on needs and priorities the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council helps identify.

Each year, prior to October 1, Extension Educators along with the Program Leaders, will work out a mutually agreeable Plan of Work which establishes in writing the objectives and responsibilities for the year. This Plan of Work, along with other performance standards, comprise the criterion for subsequent performance evaluations. The Plan of Work may be modified on a mutually agreeable basis as demands of the position change.

It is important UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council members be knowledgeable about the Plans of Work of Extension Educators. There should be particular emphasis placed on Plan of Work objectives. Following are some specific suggestions for productive and beneficial UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council member involvement:

1. Gain a general knowledge of the situation and trends that will affect the establishment of program priorities in the state and specifically in the county.
2. Provide guidance to Extension Educators in the identification of program priorities.
3. Become well acquainted with Plan of Work objectives each Extension Educator has identified.
4. Request Extension Educators focus upon objectives when providing reports. Reports should relate to progress (or lack of it) being made toward reaching key objectives. Reports should not emphasize degree of activity, but relate activity to objective.

5. Assist Extension Educators in periodic evaluation of progress being made. A clearer understanding of Plan of Work objectives should provide a basis for improved communication between Council members, Extension Educators, and Program Leaders. Progress in achieving these objectives should be a primary factor in performance evaluation. Further, such understanding of plans and objectives should help everyone better communicate with external decision-makers as well as the general public.

#### E. Performance Evaluation

Each Extension Educator receives an annual performance review by the Program Leader based on appropriate input from County Council members, Program Leaders, County Office Administrators, field staff, self-evaluation, specialists and other sources of information such as accomplishment reports. UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council members have a responsibility to assess Extension program effectiveness and the performance of Extension Educators, which may include attending events and talking with individuals who have participated in Extension programs. County Office Administrator will also receive a performance review following similar procedures.

Concerns regarding unsatisfactory performance will be discussed at a meeting of the Council with the Program Leader. If it is mutually agreed an individual is not performing at a satisfactory level, the procedure below will be followed.

To discuss deficiencies in performance, a meeting will be held by the Program Leader with the Extension Educator. Beyond the initial one year probationary period, an Extension Educator may be put on "special probation" at any time following legitimate performance evaluation procedures. If it is mutually agreed between the Program Leader and the UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Council that the Extension Educator's performance is unsatisfactory at the end of a "special probationary" period, a minimum of 90 days written notice of termination will be given by the Dean and Director.

#### F. Salary Administration

Recommendations are made to the Dean and Director by the Program Leader based on performance evaluation and are granted within the annual wage and salary guidelines of the University of New Hampshire. Extension Educator salary increases are normally effective on July 1 of each year if an increase is granted by the University.

#### Amendments

Amendments to this document can be made at any time by mutual agreement between the Dean and Director of UNH Cooperative Extension and the UNH Cooperative Extension State Advisory Council.

The Executive Committee of the State Extension Advisory Council will periodically review these operating procedures and present recommended changes to the State Extension Advisory Council. After presentation to the State Advisory Council, such recommended changes will be reviewed by County Advisory Councils. At the next State Advisory Council, discussion and adoption of changes will take place.