

SPIT 5/29/07

Notes taken by Amy Ouellette

Our next meeting is June 28 at Granite State College on Manchester St. in Concord. Jim will buy us lunch.

Jim reviewed points from the last meeting's minutes. He made a point that staff accountability is an issue that could be addressed as a recommendation to the L Team (from SPIT) but not necessarily addressed as part of the new strategic plan. We discussed accountability as it relates to staff letting support staff know their whereabouts including staff schedule (on-line), proper use of annual leave and sick time, cultural issues associated with where we are, etc... What happens when a person blows off an important meeting, does not hand in reports on time, etc.? We want to maintain flexibility but not allow people to take advantage of the freedom we are given.

Should we divide up into smaller groups to address goals and strategic actions? Lisa handed out a matrix with the S.P. goals and strategic actions. Charlene said that she would prefer to be a part of all decisions, at least in the beginning. Darrel said that for the purpose of efficiency, we should assign parts of the plan to subgroups.

Jim wants to begin by discussing two topics:

Graduate students

Volunteers

### **Graduate Students:**

Jim proposed to the L Team that Extension should provide full tuition for graduate students in addition to the stipend. Nothing came of this. Proposals for grad student opportunities go out to staff in January. Three are selected and there's a discussion about who gets tuition paid and who gets only an assistantship. Beginning next year, health insurance will need to be paid as well. The grad student Dean was not happy that Extension did not pay tuition. Charlie said that if we do not offer both, we probably will not get the "cream of the crop". Lisa asked what were the outcomes we were hoping to accomplish (with the grad student program)? Is it to integrate better with departments? Yes. There is a large financial incentive for us to get specialists into departments. (Jim explained.)

Goal 3, Objective 3, Strategic Action C: Cost should be about \$75,000 for tuition and assistantships for three grad students. Committing to paying tuition and assistantships to grad students is not a long-term commitment. We have about \$800,000 in reserves...this is one time only money. Jim is worried that the university will question why we have this surplus. Charlene suggested we commit to two new grad students per year (both with tuition and assistantships), each for two years. So, at any one time, Extension has four grad students. Everyone liked the idea.

RFP goes out November 1.

Proposals in by Dec 15.

FY09 – Sept 2008

FY10 – Aug/Sept 2009

How do we prioritize the strategic actions? Should we require grad students to present their work to the L Team mid-way through and at the end? This fits in well with Goal 3, Objective 3, S.A. D – "Develop

an outreach seminar series on the UNH campus featuring the work of Extension specialists, other faculty and field staff.”

A specific RFP will go out. We'll include details...our expectations, benchmarks, can we “get into” new departments? Lisa will be responsible for this.

Resources required: year one \$50,000, year two \$100,000. The current grad students will be finished in May of 2008. Who would be eligible to submit a proposal for a grad student? An educator or specialist, not PAT (communications, ITDE). There are paid internships for the later situation.

Charlie suggested we frame an endowment from the UNH Foundation to provide funding for the long-term sustainability of this grad student program.

## **Volunteers**

Goal 2, Objective 4

The last S.P. recommended we hire a volunteer management/staff development specialist. Charlene asked why this did not happen. Jim said it's because the state announced budget cuts. What's happened since? Lots of political stuff.

Wendy has been the volunteer management person. Paul may be taking on this charge. Is there evidence of real need??? Are we falling short? Jim says yes. How can volunteer management become more effective? **Risks** associated with volunteers are bigger than ever. What other issues come up? (many episodes.....where do docents park when on campus, Master Gardeners using media equipment to give presentations on behalf of Extension, purchasing curriculum and many more)

Is the volunteer management interdisciplinary team a team forever? They will be releasing a manual soon. When interdisciplinary teams were formed, this team came about because we didn't have a specialist or point person. Julia: would a volunteer management specialist be dictating policy or providing a service to staff coordinating volunteers? At present, we are very reactive. Jim handles difficult situations. Where are these troubles going when Jim retires? Jim thinks it makes sense to have the HR person do the volunteer management. What are we recommending? Hire a part-time (50%) volunteer coordinator. Evaluate the position two years later. We recommend an advisory committee composed of our current volunteer coordinators. What about sharing a position with neighboring states?

Examples of benchmarks: hire someone, put volunteer manual on the web, offer training opportunities for our volunteers

Are there ways of accomplishing this objective without hiring someone? Jim thinks we make too many decisions based on staff we have on hand already. Hire a 50% time PAT position, to answer to the Associate Director. The L Team must vote on every new position.

Incentives to volunteer: examples: course subsidies, educational opportunities, credits for professionals, distance education, audits through Blackboard

Are all 4-H Educators requiring volunteers to go through training? Inconsistent

## **Goal 1**

When is it appropriate for Extension to address an issue? Jim would like each team member to come up with a few issues (obesity, loss of farm land, energy, etc.) from their own program area. Can we develop a process for assessing need that can be used consistently? Does each program area have its own strategic plan (or use their plan of work? Are the plans flexible? )

Other issues Jim wishes the team could think about: role of specialists, structure of a healthy organization, how ITDE, communications and web teams can work effectively with a central coordinator, EDEN, eXtension, rapid response, how do we allow for staff members with creative ideas to come forward

Lisa is going to talk with the Excellence in Teaching group tomorrow – this relates to Goal 2, Objective 2.