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*University of Wisconsin-Madison*  
*Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics*

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**The Specialist in Today's University of Wisconsin – Extension**

By

Steven Deller and John Preissing

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## **The Specialist in Today's University of Wisconsin – Extension**

Steven Deller  
Professor and Community Development Specialist  
Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics  
Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development  
University of Wisconsin – Madison/Extension

John Preissing  
Professor and Northern District Director  
University of Wisconsin-Extension

### Abstract

As part of a comprehensive strategic planning effort undertaken by the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension Service (UWEX-CES), a web-based survey of state specialists was undertaken in the fall of 2007. This manuscript represents the "reporting-out" of the survey results. Based on the work of the strategic planning committee this survey covers a range of issues, but focuses on the role of the specialist in today's UW-Extension as well as the notion of scholarship. Specialists in general reported that they felt comfortable in their own roles but expressed concern that non-Extension colleagues lacked an appreciation for Extension work and notions of scholarship. While specialists general enjoy wearing numerous "hats" they expressed concern that an increasingly smaller resource pool is pulling them in too many different directions. Specialists strongly subscribe to the idea that Extension educational programming is research based and that research must stand the test of peer review. There is disagreement, however, on what constitutes peer review. Many specialists have the opinion that publishing their work in appropriate scholarly journals is the standard barer of peer review while others disagree. Many noted in written and verbal comments, however, because of the wide heterogeneity of specialists it is difficult if not dangerous to talk about the "representative" specialist. Yet, the survey results suggest that on a range of issues, the specialists are generally in agreement.

## **The Specialist in Today's University of Wisconsin – Extension**

### Introduction

In May, 2006 then-Dean of UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension Service (UWEX-CES), Arlen Leholm appointed a 14 member Strategic Planning Committee to consider all aspects of UWEX-CES. The Guiding Principles of the Committee include: broad-based and inclusive participation; not setting limits on our thinking; clear agreement on what's possible; responsive, relevant programs for the state that are grounded in the grassroots. The Committee agreed early in the process that specific programming initiatives were not the focus of the planning process. What UWEX-CES programs in is a unique decision each member of the faculty and staff undertakes. Rather the Committee has focused its energy on how UWEX-CES goes about its work and how the institution can be restructured to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the faculty and staff. In a nutshell, how can UWEX-CES structure itself to make faculty and staff be most effective in identifying, developing and implementing world-class educational programs?

Over the past several months the Committee has been hosting a number of listening sessions around Wisconsin to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of UWEX-CES. From a strategic perspective how can we build on our strengths while addressing our weaknesses? As part of this data collecting phase, a web-based survey of UWEX-CES specialists was implemented in the fall of 2007. Based on the results of the numerous listening sessions and internal discussions of the Committee two broad issues were identified that needed specialists' input. The first is the role of the specialists and their relationship to UWEX-CES as well as with county-based faculty and staff. The second is the role of scholarship in Extension educational programming. Clearly, there are a range of other possible issues that the Committee should be considering from the perspective of the specialists but by focusing on "roles" and "scholarship" we were able to keep the survey instrument relatively short and on target. By soliciting additional input through open ended questions we hoped to identify some of those addition issues.

The intent of this specific manuscript is to "report out" the findings of the survey itself along with initial reactions from a Wisline-Web forum that took place in Madison on November 30, 2007. All analysis of the survey data are provided with selected responses to open-end questions used to help explain a particular point. All open-end question responses along with detailed notes from the Wisline-Web forum are provided in a set of appendices. In addition to the general responses from all specialists, we also break out results by program areas, tenure-track and academic staff, physical location of the specialist on a four year campus or another location and then finally by length of employment with UWEX-CES.

## Sample Background and Methods

Of the approximately 320 specialists within UWEX-CES a total of 102 responded to the web-survey for a response rate slightly more than 30 percent. Slightly more than half (53.5%) of the respondents are tenure-track and the remaining 46.5 percent are classified as academic staff. Of those responding specialists with a tenure-track appointment 70 percent have tenure. A clear majority of respondents (68.7%) are integrated into a four year campus and the average Extension appoint for these integrated specialists is 71.6 percent. The integrated specialist represents both challenges as well as opportunities for UWEX-CES. Integrated tenure-track specialists have Extension resources placed on them in terms of salaries and perhaps some operational resources but the tenure home is the four-year institution where the specialist is located. Hiring, tenure decisions, promotions and merit pay raises are often made by faculty that do not have Extension appointments and may or may not understand and/or appreciate the role of Extension specialists. In addition, the academic culture in which integrated specialists function may create an environment that plays a direct role in the specialist defining his or her role. This is an issue we will return to below.

Slightly more than 41 percent of respondents were from the Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development program area, 36.6 percent is from Agriculture and Natural Resources, 16.8 percent is in Family Living and 4.9 percent are Youth Development specialists. The relatively small number of Family Living and Youth Development specialist in the sample is not a reflection of a poor response rate but rather the strategic decisions these program areas of made in terms of investing in county faculty and staff relative to investing in state specialists. Almost a third (30.7%) of respondents have been with UWEX-CES for less than five years and 23.8 percent have between 5 and 10 years with Extension and 29.7 percent have between 11 and 20 years and 15.8 percent have more than 20 years with Extension. This large share of respondents having few years with the institution is encouraging because surveys are often biased toward older respondents.

In addition to the survey itself a Wisline-Web program was held in Madison on November 30, 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to "roll-out" the survey results and also engage in an initial discussion of the issues identified through the survey. There were about 25 specialists in attendance in Madison and an additional 25 joining the discussion through Wisline-Web. A summary of the comments made during that workshop are provided in Appendix D.

In the survey we used a Likert-scaling process to ask for the respondent's opinion about a particular statement. Beyond the simple descriptive analysis we conduct a series of sub-sample equivalency tests to see if the responses vary across the characteristics describing the specialists outline above. A standard F-test is used to test for sub-sample mean equivalency under the assumption of a normal distribution of the responses, a Kruskal-Wallis test which lifts the assumption of normality and finally a

median test of median equivalency. While the median test is considered crude and insensitive because there are so few assumptions a statistically significant result is very convincing.

### Overall Results: Role of Specialists

As reported in Table 1 there are ten specific statements about the role of specialists that we asked specialists to respond to and we present those in order from those statements which were most heavily agreed with to those that are the most heavily disagreed with. It is widely held that specialists believe that role of the specialist has changed over time and today the primary role is to co-develop educational programming based on research foundations. A large share (57.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the county-based faculty and staff are the primary partners for the development in these educational programs. Regardless, nearly one-in-four do not see the county faculty and staff as being their primary responsibility. As discussed below, many specialists see larger professional organization, state and federal agencies and researchers as their primary audience. A clear majority (62.7%) feel that this role is well defined but a smaller minority (18.6%) do not think that their role is well defined. As one academic staff specialist in CNRED stated: “There may be a changing understanding of the role of the specialist, but the role itself has not changed as long as I've been in Extension (almost 30 years).”

There is less agreement amongst the specialists as to the role of research in their support for county educational programs. A slightly larger share (40.6 vs 29.7%) believes that what they bring to the table is the research foundation for county educational programs. More than one-in-three (37.6%) believe that their primary responsibility as a specialist is to add new knowledge through research. One tenured ANRE specialist stated that “...job one is research as this is our highest value to society and our unique role in the world... educational programs are a close second, but they are second because without the research driver, we have nothing unique to offer to society as there are lots of other organizations, public and private, that can do a fantastic job of education...” Yet, 40.6 percent think that this few is too narrow and either disagree or strongly disagree that research is the sole purpose of the specialist. Of all the ten questions seeking insights into the role of specialists, this one question about the preeminence of research being the role of specialists resulted in the widest degree of disagreement amongst the specialists.

Some specialists expressed a concern that there is a widening gap between the research that is being undertaken by non-Extension faculty and staff and the educational needs of UWEX-CES. As the gap widens Extension specialists are finding that they must fill in the gaps with original research. A junior tenure-track ANRE specialist notes that “[t]he biggest change in the role of the specialist based on my experience and from talking to senior and emeritus specialists, is that specialists, need to conduct or coordinate more than 95 percent of the applied research. No longer are there faculty in academic departments that conduct applied research or even basic research that can be transferred to clients.” As

questions that Extension clientele struggle become increasingly complex the research foundation upon which our educational programming is based must become more focused. Unfortunately, the responsibility for that research foundation is falling increasingly on Extension specialists.

There is generally wide concern about how Extension specialists are viewed by non-Extension peers. A clear majority (54.5%) believed that there are conflicts between their Extension and non-Extension responsibilities. At the same time nearly half of responding specialists (48.0%) state that their non-Extension peers do not understand their role as specialists. As will be explored in more detail below, these perceived conflicts can lead to anxiety in terms of responsibilities and perceptions of quality work which can spill over into personnel decisions including, but not limited to merit pay raises, mentoring of junior faculty and staff and even tenure decisions for tenure-track specialists. But care must be taken in drawing too strong a set of conclusions from these two questions because of the elusiveness of some of the issues that the questions raise. As one specialist in the Wisline-Web meeting noted: "Specialist – Department relationships were not explored with this survey..."

In written responses within the survey as well as the discussion from the Wisline-Web discussion, there was concern expressed that it is difficult, and perhaps wrong, to try and define a specific role for UWEX-CES specialists. There was wide agreement that UWEX-CES specialists are highly heterogeneous; as one Youth Development specialist noted "...the role of specialists vary so much that it is hard to classify them..." In essence different specialists bring different strengths to the table hence defining different roles. One tenured Family Living specialist responded that "[t]he above questions are challenging because of the lack of consistency between different types of program specialists. Some clearly have a research focus while others have a support focus. Neither is particularly right nor wrong - just different and each important." A tenured ANRE specialist noted that "[t]he primary role differs according to the position--some are more research-focused, others more educational."

Despite the difficulty of developing a specific definition of the role of a specialist, there is wider agreement in terms of the role of scholarship in the work of specialists (Table 2). Nearly all respondents (92.1%) agreed that specialists apply research to address local issues and concerns and almost nine in ten (89.0%) concur that Extension specialists' research must stand the test of peer review. Further, four in five (80.5%) respondents believe that Extension's educational programs must also stand the test of peer review. While no specialists disagreed with research needing to stand the test of peer review, a very small share (4.0%) thought that educational programs need not stand the test of peer review. Finally, four in five (79.5%) agree that Extension specialists hold themselves accountable for excellence in scholarship. The question then becomes how one ensures excellence in scholarship through the test of peer review.

Within the university setting how one documents excellence in scholarship represents a continuing ongoing discussion. Historically, scholarship has been akin to publishing in the academic journals and in the case of junior faculty the notion of “publish or perish” holds significant meaning. Today discussions center on not only publishing in the appropriate journals but also the quality of the journals measured through such journal impact factors (such as those reported by Thomson ISI Journal Citation Reports) as well as author citation rates (such as those provided by Google Scholar). Debates center to some extent on the quality of one ranking system over another. The idea is to quantify qualitative notions of quality and impact of scholarship. For UWEX-CES specialists, however, there is wide disagreement if peer review is synonymous with publishing in the academic journals. Approximately one in three (34.4%) tend to agree that peer review is synonymous with academic journals, but 43.1 percent disagree with the statement. This raises a very important question that the survey is not able to answer; if specialists hold themselves accountable for excellence in scholarship and peer review is an important element of that accountability what exactly do we mean by peer review? Does this mean simply having a colleague look the research or educational material over and provide comments? How do we ensure that the comments are incorporated into the work? If it does not necessarily mean publishing in a peer reviewed journal such as the *Journal of Extension* what does it mean?

There are three additional results from Table 2 that warrant further discussion. In general, specialists are in agreement that today’s Extension educational programs require an inter-disciplinary approach. Sixty percent agreed in general that an inter-disciplinary is required and only 23 percent maintain that most Extension programs should be discipline-based. Second, the majority of specialists (71.0%) agree that our work should be focused on Wisconsin issues. As discussed below, this can be a challenge for some junior tenure-track specialists on the Madison campus where tenure decisions rest on the national and indeed international reputation of the specialist. This creates a strong incentive to look beyond Wisconsin for research and educational programming development. The third and final issue centers on UWEX-CES programming in controversial issues. A clear majority (84.2%) agree that Extension should not avoid controversial issues in developing research and educational programming.

We also asked a few questions about future directions along the lines of hiring practices and methods of meeting educational needs (Table 3). While it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions from only three questions coupled with a space for comments there are two observations that warrant discussion. One strategy that UWEX-CES administration has considered over the past several years and has implemented in a few occasions is to contract with non-extension faculty and staff who have expertise in particular subject areas for short-term program development projects. This strategy provides greater flexibility in terms of tapping into university-wide resources to rapidly address immediate research and educational needs. This approach diverges from the traditional approach of making long-term investments in specialists who focus in specific areas, areas that may or may not match rapidly



immerging new issues. From the survey specialists disagree with this approach. During the Wisline-Web discussion one participant argued that “[t]here is a trend toward a lesser, short term commitment to academic staff due to funding arrangements. In response, staff members ask, ‘Why should I be interested in the long term direction of this organization?’.” Unfortunately, the survey is not sufficient to draw strong conclusions about this strategy and future discussion amongst the specialists must take place before recommendation can be drawn.

The second observation looks to exploring new approaches to meeting educational needs and the vast majority of specialists (85.0%) think that UWEX-CES needs to be more innovative. One could argue that the wording of the statement was such that it would be difficult to disagree with the statement. The open ended question provided deeper insights and matched with our other qualitative data from our input session, the UWEX-CES Strategic Planning Committee will be able to reach stronger conclusions. In general, specialists noted that the internet has fundamentally changed how people gather and process information. To a growing portion of population the word “research” is becoming synonymous with “google”. Terms such as “distance education” and “podcasts” and “D2L” point to areas that need to be more fully explored. As one tenured ANRE specialist put it rather bluntly: “[m]ake better use of technology...Extension is stuck in a 1930's mode of delivering information only in person...[i]t needs to make better use of the web, video conferencing, etc. We have created an expectation among our stakeholders of a certain delivery method. Instead of helping move them along the technology ladder, we continue to use old inefficient methods to deliver our programs.” Similarly, an academic staff specialist in Youth Development stated “Extension is chronically behind when it comes to technology. We don't have the funds, it seems, to stay ahead so it seems that we are always a few years behind the technology curve.” In addition to concerns about general lack of resources, there are large inconsistencies across UWEX-CES in terms of its web presence. Specialists expressed strong interest in having a stronger web presence but express concern about how to proceed with limited resources.

But some specialists expressed concern that care must be taken when identifying new educational approaches. One tenured ANRE specialist noted that “Extension needs to stop chasing its own tail. Each time a new fad emerges, or a business exec publishes a new book, it seems UWEX want to stop what it is doing and chase this new, PC issue.” Others noted that UWEX-CES as an institution is slow to respond and as noted by one tenured Family Living specialist “[t]he academy, particularly a public one, tends not to be the most flexible institution around. Funds are not easily and quickly available to jump on emerging opportunities, the way capital is in private enterprises.” But as with any institution change is dependent upon the people within the institution. When discussing barriers to change a tenured CNRED specialist observed that “the only one is tradition and faculty's unwillingness to change”.

### Patterns Across Different Types of Specialists

As outlined above, the written responses to the survey as well as the discussion during the November 30, 2007 Wisline-Web forum argue that the heterogeneity of specialists can not be over-emphasized. To gain insights into how this heterogeneity influences responses to the issues raised in the survey we compare and contrast specialists using sub-sample equivalency testing. We compare across tenure-track and academic staff (Tables 4-6), location on four-year campus or not (Tables 7-9), program areas (Tables 10-12), and length of time with the institution. Note that we do not report the results for length of time with the institution because we found no statistically significant differences. In other words, from a statistical perspective the views of the most senior specialists are consistent with the most junior specialists. This is somewhat surprising given the perception that the specialist of today is fundamentally different than the specialist of 20 years ago. These survey results challenge the validity of that perception.

Turning attention to the results across tenure-track and academic staff (Tables 4-6), we find that there is general agreement on the vast majority of issues with most statistically significant differences being in terms of strength of agreement or disagreement. For example, both tenure-track and academic staff agree that the role of the specialist has changed over time, but tenure-track specialists agree with the statement slightly stronger than academic staff. In addition, both tenure-track and academic staff generally disagree that there are no conflicts between Extension and non-Extension responsibilities but tenure-track specialists tend to disagree with the statement stronger than academic staff. In addition, tenure-track specialists tend to agree more strongly with statements about the need for peer review and holding themselves accountable for excellence in scholarship than academic staff.

There are two statements where tenure-track and academic staff specialists expressed different opinions. Tenure-track specialists tend to agree with the statement “my primary responsibility as a specialist is to add new knowledge through research” (mean score 2.74) while academic staff specialists tended to disagree with the statement (mean score 3.26). This result should not be surprising because of the research requirements for tenure as well as the research expectations placed on tenure-track specialists. The second statement centers on the role of publishing in the academic journals. Tenure-track specialists tend to concur (mean response 2.74) with the statement that “peer review is synonymous with publishing in academic journals” while academic staff specialists tended to disagree (mean response 3.40). This is likely a reflection of the “publish or perish” philosophy that dominates much of the academy, particularly on the Madison campus.

When we look across specialists that are housed on four-year campuses compared to those who are not, we tend to see a comparable pattern reviewed in our discussion of tenure-track and academic staff (Tables 7-9). There is divergence on the statement “my primary responsibility as a specialist is to add new knowledge through research” where four-year campus based specialists tended to agree (mean

response 2.85) while other specialists tended to disagree (mean response 3.32). A similar observation can be made on the role of publishing in the academic journals. Other than these two statements, four-year campus based specialists and specialists housed off four-year campuses tended to concur with the few instances of statistically significant differences are more a matter of degree than disagreement.

Looking across program areas provides a slightly more complex picture to describe (Tables 10-12). Because of the nature of the sub-sample equivalency tests used in this analysis the most that we can say is if there is a statistically significant difference across program areas. We can not, with any statistical certainty, state if one program area is different from another. Thus, care must be taken when comparing and contrasting specific program area results.

Of the 23 separate statements that we asked specialists to respond to there is statistically significant difference across program areas for ten statements. But as in the analysis reported above, most of these differences are in terms of strength of agreement or disagreement with any particular statement. For example, specialists across all program areas tend to agree that “the role of the specialist has changed over time” but ANRE specialists tend to agree with this statement the strongest while Youth Development specialists tend to agree the weakest. Similarly, specialist across all program areas agree that the specialist primary role “is to provide support to county-based faculty and staff” but Family Living and Youth Development specialists tended to agree the strongest while CNRED specialist agreed the weakest. Why these patterns occur can not be answered for the survey and explanations at this point would be pure speculation.

There was also general positive agreement with the statements about the work of the specialist standing the test of peer review and excellence in scholarship, but the weakest level of support for these ideas appear to be within the CNRED program area. Similar to the previous analysis there are differences in the specialists’ view about publishing in the academic journals. Here CNRED, Family Living and Youth Development tend to disagree with the statement that “peer review is synonymous with publishing in academic journals” but ANRE specialists tend to agree with the statement. This latter result might reflect the fact that the vast majority of ANRE respondents to the survey are tenure-track while the other program area respondents have a more even mix of tenure-track and academic staff. If one looks at the written comments, most of the statements emphasizing the importance of research to their work tended to be expressed by ANRE specialists. Additional analysis of the data is required to draw any stronger conclusions.

Despite the written and verbal comments about the heterogeneity of UWEX-CES specialists, there is generally wide agreement amongst the specialists on a range of issues. Even when we were able to identify statistically significant difference across different types of specialists the differences tended to be

in the strength of agreement or disagreement with any particular statement. For example, nearly all specialists agree that the role of the specialist has changed over time, but the strength of agreement varies across different types of specialists. The areas of disagreement amongst the specialists responding to the survey center on the primary role of research, peer review and publishing in the academic journals. Specifically, should research be targeting at creating new knowledge or organizing existing knowledge? Specialists agree that peer review is important but it is not clear what we mean by peer review.

### Conclusions

As part of the strategic planning effort of UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension Service (UWEX-CES) a survey of specialists was undertaken in the fall of 2007. Based on the preliminary work of the Strategic Planning Committee two strategic issues were identified which required further input from specialists. These are the perceived changing role of the specialist and the role of scholarship in the Extension work of specialists. A total of 102 specialists responded to the survey and approximately 50 participated in a Wisline-web meeting where the initial results of the survey were reported and discussed.

Four major observations can be made from this analysis:

- There is considerable heterogeneity across UWEX-CES specialists.
- Despite the heterogeneity there is wide spread agreement amongst the specialists.
- There are differences in perceived importance of research amongst the specialists.
- There are differences the understanding of what we mean by peer review.

The intent of this particular report is to “report out” preliminary analysis of the survey and help steer further discussions. We strategically elected to keep the survey instrument short and simple to minimize the burden on respondents. As such, there are several issues that we do not address in this study as well as introduce some issues in a cursory manner. For example, important themes to explore further include why specialists vary between program areas, can UWEX-CES sustain different views on what we mean by scholarship, the important role that specialists saw for improved technology, and is it important to seek greater unity on the primary role of the specialist..

Table 1: General Results of Specialists' Roles

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
The role of the specialist has changed over time.	28.0	36.0	31.0	5.0	0.0	2.1
The specialists' primary role is to co-develop educational programming based on research foundations.	19.8	45.5	25.7	8.9	0.0	2.2
I believe that my role as a specialist is well defined.	18.6	44.1	18.6	15.7	2.9	2.4
Integrated and non-integrated specialists have different roles.	18.8	39.6	29.7	7.9	4.0	2.4
My primary role as a specialist is to provide support to county-based faculty and staff.	26.7	30.7	15.8	22.8	4.0	2.5
The specialists' primary role is to provide the research foundation for county educational programming.	10.9	29.7	29.7	26.7	3.0	2.8
My primary responsibility as a specialist is to add new knowledge through research.	9.9	27.7	21.8	35.6	5.0	3.0
The values between integrated and non-integrated specialists are often at odds.	4.0	11.9	61.4	20.8	2.0	3.0
My non-Extension peers understand the role as an Extension specialist.	4.9	20.6	26.5	33.3	14.7	3.3
There are no conflicts between Extension and non-Extension responsibilities.	2.0	14.9	28.7	40.6	13.9	3.5

Table 2: General Results on Scholarship

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
We apply research to address local issues and concerns.	52.5	39.6	7.9	0.0	0.0	1.6
Extension specialists' research must stand the test of peer review.	47.0	42.0	8.0	2.0	1.0	1.7
Our educational programming must stand the test of peer review.	39.6	47.5	8.9	2.0	2.0	1.8
Extension specialists hold themselves accountable for excellent scholarship.	32.4	47.1	16.7	3.9	0.0	1.9
We should focus our work on Wisconsin issues.	20.0	51.0	15.0	12.0	2.0	2.2
Most extension programs should be primarily inter-disciplinary.	15.0	45.0	30.0	8.0	2.0	2.5
Peer review is synonymous with publishing in academic journals.	12.8	21.6	22.6	33.3	9.8	3.1
Specialists should be the driving force behind Extension educational programming.	5.9	22.6	24.5	38.2	8.8	3.2
Most extension programs should be primarily discipline-based.	2.0	21.0	29.0	38.0	10.0	3.3
Cooperative Extension should avoid programming in controversial issues.	1.0	2.0	12.9	40.6	43.6	4.2

Table 3. General Results of Future Directions

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Extension should primarily hire short term expert time from departments to respond to emerging needs.	1.0	5.9	30.7	30.7	31.7	3.9
Extension should primarily hire long term specialists to develop comprehensive programming responses to needs.	37.6	47.5	13.9	1.0	0.0	1.8
We should explore new approaches to meeting educational needs.	31.0	54.0	14.0	1.0	0.0	1.8

Table 4: Differences between Tenure-Track and Academic Staff Perspectives on Specialists' Roles

	Tenure Track	Academic Staff	F-test	Kruskal-Wallis	Median
The role of the specialist has changed over time.	1.91	2.39	7.8812 (0.006)	8.3810 (0.004)	9.9330 (0.002)
The specialists' primary role is to co-develop educational programming based on research foundations.	2.15	2.32	0.9209 (0.340)	0.9318 (0.334)	0.8884 (0.346)
I believe that my role as a specialist is well defined.	2.39	2.43	0.0297 (0.863)	0.0389 (0.844)	0.2015 (0.654)
Integrated and non-integrated specialists have different roles.	2.42	2.36	0.0684 (0.794)	0.0008 (0.977)	0.0000 (0.995)
My primary role as a specialist is to provide support to county-based faculty and staff.	2.55	2.38	0.4440 (0.507)	0.4691 (0.493)	0.0992 (0.753)
The specialists' primary role is to provide the research foundation for county educational programming.	2.74	2.89	0.5586 (0.457)	0.4258 (0.514)	0.5437 (0.461)
My primary responsibility as a specialist is to add new knowledge through research.	2.74	3.26	5.6189 (0.020)	4.5216 (0.034)	2.0678 (0.150)
The values between integrated and non-integrated specialists are often at odds.	3.02	3.11	0.3372 (0.563)	0.3913 (0.532)	0.4073 (0.523)
My non-Extension peers understand the role as an Extension specialist.	3.44	3.19	1.2983 (0.257)	1.5224 (0.217)	1.1861 (0.276)
There are no conflicts between Extension and non-Extension responsibilities.	3.76	3.17	9.6448 (0.003)	9.3393 (0.002)	10.1984 (0.001)

Table 5: Differences between Tenure-Track and Academic Staff Perspectives on Scholarship

	Tenure Track	Academic Staff	F-test	Kruskal- Wallis	Median
We apply research to address local issues and concerns.	1.55	1.55	0.0022 (0.963)	0.0001 (0.991)	0.0013 (0.971)
Extension specialists' research must stand the test of peer review.	1.53	1.85	4.1236 (0.045)	4.7816 (0.029)	5.4328 (0.020)
Our educational programming must stand the test of peer review.	1.74	1.87	0.6450 (0.421)	1.1677 (0.280)	1.5541 (0.212)
Extension specialists hold themselves accountable for excellent scholarship.	1.81	2.04	2.0141 (0.159)	2.8156 (0.093)	3.0779 (0.079)
We should focus our work on Wisconsin issues.	2.21	2.28	0.1077 (0.743)	0.0769 (0.781)	0.2030 (0.652)
Most extension programs should be primarily inter-disciplinary.	2.28	2.46	0.8970 (0.346)	0.4055 (0.524)	0.0277 0.868
Peer review is synonymous with publishing in academic journals.	2.74	3.40	8.0716 (0.006)	6.2324 (0.013)	2.9803 (0.084)
Specialists should be the driving force behind Extension educational programming.	3.24	3.17	0.1062 (0.745)	0.0454 (0.831)	0.0005 (0.982)
Most extension programs should be primarily discipline-based.	3.30	3.39	0.2029 (0.653)	0.2729 (0.601)	0.4922 (0.483)
Cooperative Extension should avoid programming in controversial issues.	4.30	4.15	0.8508 (0.359)	1.5566 (0.212)	2.3969 (0.122)

Table 5: Differences between Tenure-Track and Academic Staff Perspectives on Future Directions

	Tenure Track	Academic Staff	F-test	Kruskal- Wallis	Median
Extension should primarily hire short term expert time from departments to respond to emerging needs.	4.17	3.51	12.7465 (0.001)	10.967 (0.001)	9.4334 (0.002)
Extension should primarily hire long term specialists to develop comprehensive programming responses to needs.	1.68	1.89	2.2430 (0.137)	3.0611 (0.080)	3.6895 (0.055)
We should explore new approaches to meeting educational needs.	1.85	1.87	0.0357 (0.851)	0.0494 (0.824)	0.0156 (0.900)

Table 7: Differences between Four Yr Campus Based and Othersf Perspectives on Specialists' Roles

	Four Yr Campus	Other	F-test	Kruskal- Wallis	Median
The role of the specialist has changed over time.	1.98	2.43	5.4671 (0.022)	5.0820 (0.024)	5.6536 (0.017)
The specialists' primary role is to co-develop educational programming based on research foundations.	2.19	2.29	0.2520 (0.617)	0.0723 (0.788)	0.0048 (0.945)
I believe that my role as a specialist is well defined.	2.56	2.09	4.1028 (0.046)	3.2974 (0.069)	1.9832 (0.159)
Integrated and non-integrated specialists have different roles.	2.46	2.23	1.1408 (0.288)	1.2418 (0.265)	2.1476 (0.143)
My primary role as a specialist is to provide support to county-based faculty and staff.	2.51	2.35	0.3206 (0.573)	0.3328 (0.564)	0.0330 (0.856)
The specialists' primary role is to provide the research foundation for county educational programming.	2.84	2.77	0.0711 (0.790)	0.0425 (0.837)	0.0257 (0.873)
My primary responsibility as a specialist is to add new knowledge through research.	2.85	3.32	3.8622 (0.052)	3.8043 (0.051)	4.0649 (0.044)
The values between integrated and non-integrated specialists are often at odds.	3.04	3.10	0.0990 (0.754)	0.0032 (0.955)	0.0333 (0.855)
My non-Extension peers understand the role as an Extension specialist.	3.47	2.97	4.5057 (0.036)	5.1070 (0.024)	4.6520 (0.031)
There are no conflicts between Extension and non-Extension responsibilities.	3.59	3.23	2.7408 (0.101)	3.1337 (0.077)	4.5986 (0.032)



Table 8: Differences between Four Yr Campus Based and Othersf Perspectives on Scholarship

	Four Yr Campus	Other	F-test	Kruskal- Wallis	Median
We apply research to address local issues and concerns.	1.65	1.35	4.5661 (0.035)	3.7293 (0.054)	2.5760 (0.108)
Extension specialists' research must stand the test of peer review.	1.59	1.84	2.0457 (0.156)	3.0644 (0.080)	4.5689 (0.033)
Our educational programming must stand the test of peer review.	1.79	1.81	0.0045 (0.947)	0.0317 (0.859)	0.1296 (0.719)
Extension specialists hold themselves accountable for excellent scholarship.	1.98	1.81	1.0351 (0.312)	0.8898 (0.345)	0.9061 (0.341)
We should focus our work on Wisconsin issues.	2.22	2.30	0.1341 (0.715)	0.3507 (0.554)	0.6392 (0.424)
Most extension programs should be primarily inter-disciplinary.	2.28	2.57	2.0858 (0.152)	1.7294 (0.188)	1.0613 (0.303)
Peer review is synonymous with publishing in academic journals.	2.85	3.48	6.0334 (0.016)	5.0529 (0.025)	2.6698 (0.102)
Specialists should be the driving force behind Extension educational programming.	3.12	3.48	2.5001 (0.117)	2.5207 (0.112)	1.0597 (0.303)
Most extension programs should be primarily disciplined-based.	3.38	3.30	0.1467 (0.702)	0.3683 (0.544)	1.3243 (0.250)
Cooperative Extension should avoid programming in controversial issues.	4.26	4.16	0.3276 (0.568)	0.1480 (0.701)	0.0692 (0.792)

Table 9: Differences between Four Yr Campus Based and Othersf Perspectives on Future Directions

	Four Yr Campus	Other	F-test	Kruskal- Wallis	Median
Extension should primarily hire short term expert time from departments to respond to emerging needs.	3.79	3.97	0.6761 (0.413)	0.8557 (0.355)	0.7198 (0.396)
Extension should primarily hire long term specialists to develop comprehensive programming responses to needs.	1.84	1.68	1.0684 (0.304)	0.8750 (0.349)	0.6681 (0.414)
We should explore new approaches to meeting educational needs.	1.89	1.77	0.6556 (0.420)	0.8092 (0.368)	1.2070 (0.272)

Table 10: Differences between Program Area Specialists on Specialists' Roles

	CNRED	ANRE	Family Living	Youth Development	F-test	Kruskal-Wallis	Median
The role of the specialist has changed over time.	2.38	1.86	2.00	2.60	3.0156 (0.034)	8.4823 (0.037)	9.1197 (0.028)
The specialists' primary role is to co-develop educational programming based on research foundations.	2.31	2.19	2.12	2.20	0.2257 (0.878)	1.0960 (0.778)	1.6984 (0.637)
I believe that my role as a specialist is well defined.	2.38	2.41	2.35	2.20	0.0604 (0.981)	0.7164 (0.869)	1.1363 (0.768)
Integrated and non-integrated specialists have different roles.	2.52	2.36	2.06	2.40	0.8531 (0.468)	2.6620 (0.447)	2.2251 (0.527)
My primary role as a specialist is to provide support to county-based faculty and staff.	2.88	2.31	1.88	1.80	3.9548 (0.011)	11.5919 (0.009)	15.4487 (0.002)
The specialists' primary role is to provide the research foundation for county educational programming.	3.09	2.75	2.35	2.20	2.8910 (0.039)	7.7355 (0.052)	7.1179 (0.068)
My primary responsibility as a specialist is to add new knowledge through research.	2.98	2.78	3.35	3.20	1.0889 (0.358)	2.9580 (0.398)	2.1578 (0.540)
The values between integrated and non-integrated specialists are often at odds.	3.12	3.08	2.88	2.80	0.5964 (0.619)	2.3077 (0.511)	2.5156 (0.472)
My non-Extension peers understand the role as an Extension specialist.	3.17	3.62	3.24	2.40	2.4911 (0.064)	7.7109 (0.052)	9.8920 (0.019)
There are no conflicts between Extension and non-Extension responsibilities.	3.31	3.81	3.37	3.20	2.0800 (0.108)	7.2727 (0.064)	9.5339 (0.023)

Table 11: Differences between Program Area Specialists' Perspectives on Scholarship

	CNRED	ANRE	Family Living	Youth Development	F-test	Kruskal-Wallis	Median
We apply research to address local issues and concerns.	1.61	1.54	1.41	1.40	0.4826 (0.695)	1.4472 (0.694)	1.3533 (0.716)
Extension specialists' research must stand the test of peer review.	2.00	1.53	1.24	1.80	5.0720 (0.003)	14.4484 (0.002)	13.9726 (0.003)
Our educational programming must stand the test of peer review.	1.98	1.70	1.53	1.60	1.4608 (0.230)	6.8314 (0.077)	6.6658 (0.083)
Extension specialists hold themselves accountable for excellent scholarship.	2.21	1.65	1.65	2.00	4.6173 (0.005)	10.5307 (0.015)	8.4561 (0.037)
We should focus our work on Wisconsin issues.	2.30	2.00	2.41	3.00	2.03 (0.115)	6.13 (0.105)	6.73 (0.081)
Most extension programs should be primarily inter-disciplinary.	2.59	2.11	2.44	2.20	1.9322 (0.129)	5.1552 (0.161)	4.6997 (0.195)
Peer review is synonymous with publishing in academic journals.	3.38	2.49	3.41	3.40	4.8269 (0.004)	12.1857 (0.007)	9.2095 (0.027)
Specialists should be the driving force behind Extension educational programming.	3.43	3.03	3.18	2.80	1.1793 (0.322)	3.2238 (0.358)	2.1780 (0.536)
Most extension programs should be primarily discipline-based.	3.56	3.14	3.19	3.40	1.3555 (0.261)	3.7194 (0.293)	3.7354 (0.291)
Cooperative Extension should avoid programming in controversial issues.	4.41	4.19	3.88	4.60	2.1260 (0.102)	9.9417 (0.019)	10.5899 (0.014)

Table 12: Differences between Program Area Specialists' Perspectives on Future Directions

	CNRED	ANRE	Family Living	Youth Development	F-test	Kruskal-Wallis	Median
Extension should primarily hire short term expert time from departments to respond to emerging needs.	4.02	3.95	3.41	3.60	1.8597 (0.142)	4.7672 (0.190)	3.5922 (0.309)
Extension should primarily hire long term specialists to develop comprehensive programming responses to needs.	1.90	1.59	1.88	1.60	1.4935 (0.221)	4.5810 (0.205)	4.7110 (0.194)
We should explore new approaches to meeting educational needs.	1.55	1.92	1.59	2.20	1.3700 (0.257)	4.3170 (0.229)	4.5856 (0.205)

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## Appendix A: Changing Role of the Specialist

### **Question 2: Please share any additional comments you have about the changing role of the specialist.**

A difficult question to answer as I am presuming that we can only have one PRIMARY role. All the choices are important and it is a balancing act. Perhaps a ranking would make more sense.

There appears to be a larger institutional commitment on the part of specialists that was not as prominent in years past. I think the roles of specialists are largely defined by their audiences and partners. Sometimes the county faculty are included as either audience or partner, but in a number of instances this they are not included.

I've only been here 3 years, so it is difficult for me to answer about the "changing" role of specialists.

Many of us are required to teach a number of undergraduate courses as well as advise 10+ undergraduate students, which take considerable amount of time away from extension duties. Some of us do not have research appointments, yet, merit and tenure are based on research performance, regardless of your appointment. This is not fair, nor equitable.

If we have integrated faculty members in a department that do not value the Extension outreach activities in the same way that they value their contributions to the department, we should not be investing Extension dollars in those positions. I'm tired of hearing this excuse. Invest Extension dollars in people who are going to deliver Extension programs. Period. We are not here to subsidize campus-based departments.

The answer choices are foolish-are we to believe that they are mutually exclusive? or that they are so simplistic? I'm disappointed in the design and very worried about what you will conclude!

Delivery of educational programs is moving away from agent-hosted events, toward state-wide electronic delivery.

More emphasis on research, publications, and grant dollars. Less funding to support extension related activities. My research dollars are used to support extension programming.

My assignment is 90% extension and 10% teaching although i perform research it is not considered part of my job responsibility. it is additional or over and above.

Specialists are required to become less specialized as resources become more limiting and cover additional areas.

The skills of a specialist can provide significant value to state agencies with policy development, develop management tools for statewide application and conduct research to support the above mentioned activities. I believe these activities have as great or a greater impact than only supporting county activities.

The primary role differs according to the position--some are more research-focused, others more educational.

There may be a changing understanding of the role of the specialist, but the role itself has not changed as long as I've been in Extension (almost 30 years). We still serve the same range of county, state, and federal Extension and agency clients.

It is important to differentiate between the roles of integrated and non-integrated specialists.

I did not answer the questions regarding the primary role of the specialist because none of them fit my view. I feel that the primary role of the specialist is to generate new knowledge, interpret that knowledge, and make recommendations and guidelines. The recommendations/guidelines can then be delivered to County faculty/staff for their programs which specialist may or may not participate in. Ideally all of this is done with input from others, including other specialists and county faculty. However, the specialist is the scientist and should have final scientific "say" about recommendations/guidelines. That is county faculty should not make up their own recommendations, they should be consulting specialists.

The biggest change in the role of the specialist based on my experience and from talking to senior and emeritus specialists, is that specialists need to conduct or coordinate more than 95% of the applied research. No longer are there faculty in academic departments that conduct applied research or even basic research that can be transferred to clients. The increasing tightening of the rules regarding funding/accounting on campus require that specialists spend more time dealing with administrative details and make it more difficult to cobble together the funding that they need to conduct research. Which brings me to the increasing cost of research and the inability of funding sources to "keep up with inflation". It would be particularly useful if either Extension or the Colleges where specialists were housed would provide hard funding for at least 50% of the salary & benefits of an academic staff person to work on specialists research (for specialist with large  $\geq 70\%$  Ext appointments). Now that all that is said, I want to make it clear that I really like my job and most of the people I work with and I am very committed to serving the people of Wisconsin.

Specialist must often interact with agencies, industry, and NGOs without the involvement of local staff.

I've been a specialist for 6 years. I don't think my role has changed in that time.

County faculty/staff better-equipped and more interested in program delivery. Role of specialists has shifted toward joint program planning and program development.

Job one is research as this is our highest value to society and our unique role in the world. Educational programs are a close second, but they are second because without the research driver, we have nothing unique to offer to society as there are lots of other organizations, public and private, that can do a fantastic job of education.

Conducting applied research is certainly an important role for integrated specialists, but there may be a serious hazard if specialists believe it is their primary role. The hazard could be the loss of supporting agents and being an active part of the system. Many specialists also play important liaison roles with industry and agencies which was not queried here.

Some specialist continue to be closely aligned to a particular industry group (e.g., potato growers). The political implications of this, in all dimensions, is worthy of thought and discussion.

I'm not sure if my responses are typical since I have a very defined role as an evaluation specialist and work with staff of a center to design and carry out program evaluation. Please consider this contextual information. Perhaps this suggests there are many different definitions of specialist and what they do is highly influence by context.

The role of specialists vary so much that it is hard to classify them, and thus hard to clarify if their roles are changing. My particular role relies less on research, more on working with county staff to support their programs as they emerge. As local programs and problems change, the role of my position, and I assume most specialist positions, changes.

I believe that the primary role of the specialist is to integrate applied research with effective mechanisms to transfer knowledge that will actually impact the core stakeholders. The county based agents may or may not be an effective mechanism for reaching various stakeholder groups.

My problem with the questions above is that there is a strong bias in them toward a technology transfer/university ideas put in peoples heads and actions mental model. There are many other possible models of the role of people on campuses, in centers, in collaborative state agency positions and in counties working to create trans-formative learning. Nearly all of the UW four year institutions (they all offer Masters Degrees) have instruction, research and outreach in their missions. The core activity which is at the heart of all of these is learning. Learning is the connective element which links all of us who work with support of UW-Extension. We have repeated for many years that we provide research based learning experiences. I have never been sure what we mean by this. Does this mean that all the learning opportunities we provide can be traced to a base of peer reviewed research? If that is the criteria then I believe that a very large share of our work as currently practiced does not pass this test. I also believe that if we limit our teaching and learning to such a criteria we limit severely the scope of learning experiences we provide. Scott Peters at Cornell University has written persuasively that there is strong evidence that an "educational organizing" tradition has been a learning model which characterized much of the best of cooperative extension work through its history. There has been an extensive dialog across higher education of the multiple and interacting roles of university faculty. That dialog does not appear to have enlightened the questions above. Perhaps it will emerge from the analysis of this survey.

Because county educators are increasingly faced with issues that transcend single disciplines, specialists are increasingly asked to collaborate with other specialists, agencies, and organizations that are outside their usual circles.

Some of us work on statewide issues with varying degrees of County support.

We develop research based programming that may or may not include county faculty. It is likely that state specialist have more direct contact with local clientele than in the past.

The above questions are challenging because of the lack of consistency between different types of program specialists. Some clearly have a research focus while others have a support focus. Neither is particularly right or wrong - just different and each important.

WNEP seems to be a very different situation from Family Living or Ag or other areas of Extension because of the regulations about what we can/can't do.

I feel the role as a specialist is continually changing based on the interest and needs of the area served. I could have actually answered yes in part to all of the above four role proposals.

The role of an extension specialist changes on a regular basis, we are essentially "firefighters" that have the ability to anticipate futures issues/problems that our constituents will likely encounter.

This is likely to be highly case specific and idiosyncratic. There is probably no typical state specialist.

County-based faculty and staff are only one set of the several constituencies I work with. Most of my research and applied work is through others.

The push to have a specialist do more research than education has reduced the capacity to teach and educate. A researcher requirement forces the specialist to chase the dollar rather than educate and support the county based faculty.

First off, I personally feel I have a very defined role, though I don't know how widely I am known amongst county Extension staff. Most of them (CNRED) work on economic development and thus, don't cross paths with my natural resources work very often. Basin Educators are my primary link to locally-based Extension staff in the state. -- As far as non-Extension peers, I don't think I've ever used the term "specialist" with any of them. I'm known by my program content, not as a specialist, so don't think if you asked any of them what an

Extension specialist did that they'd be able to tell you who specialists are. In terms of my primary role, I think it's all of those things (though again, I don't work often with county staff because they're working on different things) so I hesitate to pick any one of them. The closest I could get was agreeing to the last one.

Specialist almost always have to do some research to answer local questions. In addition to supporting county faculty, specialists work with state-wide commodity groups and provide leadership in those settings.

Being relatively new, it is hard to comment on role changes, but with few specialist in youth development, the pressure to provide generalist support militates against opportunities to play a stronger knowledge creation role.



Appendix B: Changing Role of Specialist in Conducting Original Research

**Question 6: If percents are expected to change, please describe why:**

More emphasis is being placed on research and bringing in money.

Materials will have been developed that will only need slight edits to remain current. This should free time to interpret, share and apply other research for communities in Wisconsin.

Department expects me to teach more undergraduate courses and advise more students.

I have to say I am puzzled by the question. I think we should be investing in specialists who apply research. There is more than enough research being done by non-Extension faculty that we can draw from.

I will retire in 2 years.

Less funding available for applied research and increased costs.

Hoping to get back to some basic research questions in my field, partly to ground/update myself in emerging theory and statistics.

Fewer non Extension faculty are conducting research that I can extend to others. That is I need to conduct more of the research myself.

I see the further integration of research and extension as more tightly coupled.

Increasing collaboration with county staff on local applications/educational offerings associated with my research.

Agent demand/needs.

Extensive need for research to meet immediate needs and the need to share results is also important.

I expect original research in my discipline to be increasingly important to the state.

I dearly hope to spend less time as a professional driver and more time as a professional researcher and educator.

You're missing a point here that original research in a discipline and for immediate extension needs can be the same.

Increasing technical level of subject matter / more difficult questions to answer

What is "original research"? I simply don't believe there is a common understanding of that phrase among specialists, agents or faculty in general. Is the analysis of the data for a particular community associated with the Community Economic Analysis model original research? Is the analysis of replicated test plot trials of corn varieties original research? Is the descriptive analysis of the contributions of alumni of the Wisconsin Rural Leadership Program original research?

A bit less campus committee work and a bit more time spent getting good useful information onto our website.

I would like to be become involved in more research in upcoming years.

I feel overtime my relationships with county faculty will evolve and create additional requests from that clientele

I'm called upon to develop educational programs more and more and anticipate the trend will continue. Lack of research is not the problem in my field; lack of action is!

I will be retired in 10 years. I hope at some point to begin to back off my research effort to summarize collected information into Extension and research publications.

My own professional development increases the likelihood of more research as a non-integrated faculty member.

My job is likely to change as positions are re-evaluated this year

Predicting more expectations for administrative duties related to integrated position

Want to move to a stronger research orientation.

My original appointment did not require as much research emphasis.

I see some new opportunities to fund my research that has been languishing.

As I build my original research base, I expect this proportion to increase and related Extension programming to increase. This is already happening within my program.

In my initial years, I felt it important to engage with colleagues and programs in as broad a fashion as possible to build relationships and understand the system. I intend to focus more on research and evaluation work as that need diminishes.

Eventually have more time for research and do a bit less outreach.

Appendix C: New Approaches to Meeting Educational Needs

**Question 9: If you agree or strongly agree that we should explore new approaches to meeting educational needs, please describe potential barriers to addressing educational needs in new ways.**

The only one is tradition and faculty's unwillingness to change -- a significant barrier

Lack of first-rate facilities, funding

Constituents do not want the new style, but want the old style of meeting educational needs

We would need to eliminate the internal bias we have towards thinking that integrated faculty specialists are the preferred mode of doing business.

County responsibilities of county faculty.

Distance learning, web based learning, new partnership.

Traditional ways of doing things sometimes hard to change, difficult to evaluate for effectiveness

Lack of adequate funding

Lack of money.

resistance to change "unfunded" research efforts

\$\$ to invest in innovative programs and tools.

institutional momentum

County staff. Limited focus prevents ability to address broader, emerging needs

Funding sources

Lack of financial resources to pay for technology; lack of personnel to help implement technology

The academy, particularly a public one, tends not to be the most flexible institution around. Funds are not easily and quickly available to jump on emerging opportunities, the way capital is in private enterprises.

Our leadership that feels they have to follow the shifting winds of political correctness in order to try and be all things to all people rather than making a leadership decision to focus on a few salient issues.

We already work with partners extensively. Sharing funding can be an issue.

Clientele in remote parts of the state may feel disconnected from the Univ. if the technology is not used properly or if the county based faculty don't have the right attitude towards new technology.

Different operating environments of those involved; Lack of (sufficient) competitive resources that might engage faculty and drive innovation; Separated programs between UWEX and campus;

Using technology more fully and effectively would be a paradigm shift for some - both specialists and clients - and therefore a barrier.

There's a lack of leadership on helping promote the use of new technologies for communication. We have created an expectation among our stakeholders of a certain delivery method. Instead of helping move them along the technology ladder, we continue to use old inefficient methods to deliver our programs.

Resistance of county faculty to distance education

Concerns with expanded industry sponsored programs are objective, unbiased programs, and if industry will really provide financial support.

Differing worldviews of faculty members. Empire-building by administrators.

Inertia on the part of long-time specialists, funding, and technology problems

Our own beliefs and values that knowledge is lodged with experts and that peer review is the most important source of determining credible research.

Budget. Extension is chronically behind when it comes to technology. We don't have the funds, it seems, to stay ahead so it seems that we are always a few years behind the technology curve.

Turf battles and fear of failure.

Barriers: travel costs

Unless we see broadly that there is an approach which would serve us and our citizens better inertia will keep us where we are. The current system serves some interests well and does not serve other interests. The primary major alternative response I have seen in my 30 plus years has been in Nutrition education where we somehow learned that accomplishing the task required us to respond with staff and educational practice which fit the specific local populations who we were learning with.

"Clinging to the past is mandated by the belief in the legitimacy of what has come before."

bell hooks in her book *Teaching to Transgress: education as the practice of freedom*, Routledge, N.Y, N.Y. 1994

Disciplinary silos are very real constraints even when experts want to break out. "Action Research" requires trust in a team and trust in process of identifying AND addressing issues as they come up in the unique circumstance of any one place at any time. Perceived (and real) real risk of not being "expert" when one comes up against something new.

The capacity to do so, the ability of smaller counties to keep up with change when funding doesn't support better use of technology

Nothing beats a face to face conversation for educational impact and our travel budgets are quite limited. Also, some folks still believe that Extension bulletins/fact sheets/etc. work even though they may not be integrated into a programming thrust or effort.

Some of these methods cost considerable time and money, and may offer little return. We must be careful

to not become too issue oriented. Many major issues can be addressed within current disciplinary and inter-D teams or departmental effort.

- many local educators have been doing things the same way for a long time

- change takes time and money

Tradition; association snobbery; Fear of perceived failure; Working outside of University "walls" comfort zone.

Institutional inertia.

Access by clients to distance ed facility, no training of specialist in providing distance ed, clients like face to face, hard to develop trust with a talking head and no personal contact

many organizational systems would need to change to achieve a vision of helping communities address the complex issues they face; (e.g. personnel hiring and training, professional development; tenure requirements; rewards)

Of course, there may be resistance to changing how things are done, esp. if working with communities who have deeply seeded feelings about how things are done and traditions. I wouldn't recommend force feeding some new approach without first asking constituents if they feel change is needed and getting feedback indicating it is. Or, at the very least, implementing change gradually is better than doing so in a way that's sure to bring contention and possibly negatively affect our interactions with communities.

Funding is always a limitation. I also believe that as younger clientele replace older people we will be able to use technology even better than we currently do.

The "old school" approach of face-to-face meetings is being replaced by a "new school" of the county faculty/staff being the "face of Extension". The specialists job is to make the "face of Extension" the county faculty/staff "look good." If the specialist is doing all the programming, then the specialist is the face of extension....

Traditional roles in Extension, identifying new audiences, - may be some resistance to change or new ways of doing things.

Our culture and organizational history. Most would feel and see as a threat to job security or function.

Need to maintain local political support

Separation of program areas

Lack of tradition of innovation in pursuit of applied research support.

Appendix D: State Specialist Wisline-Web November 30, 2007

Comments Related to Presentation

How representative are the results of the specialist population as a whole? This question points to a broader need to describe our staff.

There was a good deal of discussion regarding the use of the word "primarily." The focus of the discussion seemed to be around the "forcing" of a decision.

General Discussion

The emphasis on research driving programming seems appropriate and, in theory good, but a larger proportion of grant dollars are focused on outreach type work, not research.

There is a category of specialists who should be recognized as first time responders. A research based response is needed and yet, there isn't research to back up our response.

Specialist – Department relationships were not explored with this survey. There is a need to think about linkages that will enable us to co-define research agendas.

The role of the specialist is to connect research/programming at a number of different levels: national, state, regional, county.

One participant was struck by the apparent agreement that focus should be on Wisconsin issues. This is problematic for specialists who have a multi-state, and/or international focus. It holds the potential for sending conflicting signals.

There was a reminder made that extension is a national movement. Should we do more team work that brings states together? This in turn, brings more notice to our state.

Job descriptions are broadly defined and it appears that this will become even more the case. Specialists are being asked to do more of the following kinds of work:

- train future researchers
- hold world class seminars for peers
- excellence in teaching students
- ability to raise funds...much of which goes toward Extension-related activities

Concern expressed over the fewer number of colleagues doing more things; difficulty in retaining new faculty; difficulty in recruiting new faculty.

Expectations vary across 4 year campuses in terms of publications and requirements to raise funds.

Has the proportion of academic staff vis a vis faculty changed over time? Data are available to explore this question. Why, if this is indeed the case? Responses will vary depending on College/Department; nature of work; ease of hiring; nature of funding. If there has been a change, has this taken place by default or the result of a strategic decision?

How can we be more effective in tapping into expertise in other states? Clarify the costs and benefits, pros and cons of moving in this direction.

There was a general statement for the need of a “balanced” approach to the hiring of faculty and academic staff.

Our institutions have so many unique specialist positions. This makes it difficult to say we should do more of this or that. Perhaps we need to develop criteria to consider when defining a specialist position.

The integration of research and education needs to be broadened to include what we do across program areas.

There is a tension between campus and extension missions. Related to this is the additional need to adopt strategies that will help us build capacity of partners. We want to do this with a strong research base, yet if we put funds into a department, there is a concern that we will lose the extension mission.

General discussion related to interdisciplinary work...what kind of research supports work with complex issues? Both campus and community based faculty/staff are challenged by this issue.

Campus is placing a greater emphasis on having students engage in community issues.

Genuine efforts have been made to build bridges between resident and integrated faculty/staff. The primary bridge is an emphasis on outreach.

There is a trend toward a lesser, short term commitment to academic staff due to funding arrangements. In response, staff members ask, “Why should I be interested in the long term direction of this organization?”

Should research come from campus or extension specialist? Perhaps this is the wrong focus. Instead, pursue partnerships with campuses/departments with a genuine interest in outreach...those having a commitment to the Wisconsin Idea.

I’m amazed at the number of faculty who do extension-like work and yet have a real misunderstanding of who we are and the nature of the work that we do. Another response is that they can make money on extension-like work, so why should we partner with extension?

Some specialists do a great deal of programming with counties apart from county faculty and staff.

There was some discussion around roles when it comes to controversial issues. We can’t be driven by current political whims. We need to provide balanced information to controversial issues. If we don’t program around controversial issues, we lose our credibility. There is also need for clarifying the various roles specialists can play when it comes to controversial issues.

We cannot underestimate the value of the message that specialists are the UW resource to the counties. Whatever we do, we cannot lose this linkage.

There are many non-Extension faculty who are interested in partnering with Extension.

I, as a specialist, would be more interested in engaging when there are opportunities to look at issues that require a multi-disciplinary approach.

Annual team plans of work are a better place for specialists to provide input than in the multi-year planning process. The goals of the multi-year planning process are too broad.