

Unifas Advisory Committee Notes
April 27, 2006

Attending: Tom Obreza, Glenn Israel, Bill Larsen, Jeff Norcini, Dorota Haman, Phyllis Gilreath, Bob Swett and Bryan Terry

Glenn Israel provided an overview of proposed Extension Module revisions for Unifas, version

2. Israel framed the discussion with 6 questions:

1. When a faculty member work with others on a team for a program, should the emphasis be on team-level data or individual-level data? Specifically, counts of group contacts, clientele contacts, materials distributed, and volunteers can be displayed for either the individual or the team.
2. Should success stories be input and reported as individual “My Success Stories” or at the program (team) level?
3. Should the focus team defined topics and subjects in the curriculum builder be replaced by the USDA knowledge area (see attached) Subjects and subject descriptors?
4. Should clientele contacts include categories for 1) “web visits” and 2) “direct mail” or “direct distribution?” Note: we currently collect “web hits.”
5. Should Unifas distinguish between clientele contacts that are used for formula funding from those that are not?
6. What kinds of data should be collected for programming activities that involve new communication technologies, such as blogs and “wikis”, as well as on-line classes, etc.?
(Thanks to Dave Palmer for getting us to think ahead.)

Comments and discussion:

- Jeff Norcini said that information should be input into Unifas at the individual level. Norcini added that website hits are not the best indicator of educational outreach.
- It was noted that many faculty do not have a good understanding of how to use the Resource Assistance in Unifas. Dorota Haman also observed that faculty have too many Extension programs. Glenn Israel suggested that a fact sheet on “What is a program” might address some of these issues.
- Glenn Israel asked what data should be displayed on the screen related to an Extension program, that is, should it include all information related to the team or just the information related to the individual? Phyllis Gilreath said that she needs individual information for county reporting. Dorota Haman, Bob Swett, and Phyllis Gilreath suggested that the screen have a filter to display individual activities with the option of displaying all activities conducted in a team program (e.g., “My Activities” and “All Activities”).
- Dorota Haman suggests that a search engine that uses keyword be attached to the Unifas database. Bob Swett said that faculty need to be able to browse other programs. Glenn Israel asked what policy should be created for viewing data input into the Unifas system? There was a consensus that the Extension data should be accessible to everyone.
- Jeff Norcini suggested that focus teams need to review audiences in curriculum builder for focus and increase training on what is input into Unifas; Norcini added that teams need to communicate what audiences, topics and subjects that will be addressed by the team and expresses concern about the accuracy of information that is input in Unifas. Bill Larsen suggested that limits could be put on the number of audiences and topics selected for an activity. Committee members supported the idea of limiting audiences and topics selected for an activity, but not for a program.

- The proposal for using the USDA Knowledge Areas as a standardized list for topics and subjects was acceptable to the committee, but subjects will need to be added to the Topic Areas to address issues related specifically to Florida. It was noted that the topics can be used to link Extension programs with CRIS research projects (which use the same list). Committee members suggested asking the program leaders for input on additional subjects, followed by the goal/focus teams.
- Glenn Israel asked about changing the number of characters that are allowed in various text field. Phyllis Gilreath recommended leaving the field length unchanged, but the fields should be specific to an individual (rather than shared). Thus, a faculty member could have individual success stories, as well as a team-level success story.
- Glenn Israel asked whether the clientele contacts categories be expanded to include direct distribution for newsletters and downloads of electronic publications. The committee recommended that a clientele contact field for electronic downloaded publications be added to Unifas.