



EXTENSION

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Operational Guidelines for Design Teams¹

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What Is a State Major Program?

A State Major Program (SMP) is an interdisciplinary programming effort that focuses on a major issue or situations. Further, it requires the expenditure of human and financial resources on a problem of importance to a relatively large audience. An SMP is based on county programs and state, national, or international issues--usually beginning with an awareness or knowledge of impending changes in legislation; social, economic, or environmental conditions; or grassroots concerns. State Major Programs are identified by state Program Leaders in collaboration with faculty, appropriate Department Chairs, and Extension Administration.

Once a program has been labeled a "State Major Program," a *Design Team* is established to provide leadership for addressing the issue through educational programs. An SMP is designed to bring about behavior and/or practice change by participants. Inherent in the Design Team responsibilities are the establishment of priorities and a refined focus on problems and issues of concern to people. This involves the comprehensive planning, development, and evaluation of a set of educational subject matter and appropriate methods of delivery.

Purpose of a Design Team

Design Teams must see their purpose in four major areas. The purposes of a Design Team are to:

- help County Faculty with the *planning* of county major programs that make up SMPs;
- identify, develop, and/or help obtain educational materials needed to support county major programs;
- give leadership to the *implementation* of SMP activities and support the *implementation* of the county major program throughout the program term;
- give leadership to SMP *evaluation* efforts; facilitate and support individual county major program *evaluation* efforts.

Design Team Composition

The core of a Design Team consists of Extension Specialists within the primary commodity/program area and main supporting disciplines; a Design Team is usually interdisciplinary. County Faculty are also active members of Design Teams. In some situations, leaders from non-faculty sectors are also invited to participate. Non-faculty representation are seen as consultants, not full Design Team members.*

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Membership and leadership on Design Teams should be rotated to facilitate the addition of new ideas, diversity, and an enhanced analysis of the problem.

The team members are identified by appropriate state Program Leaders in collaboration with Design Team Leaders, Department Chairs, Center Directors, and Extension Administration. In most cases, a Specialist from the primary commodity/program area is designated as team leader or the team is co-chaired by both State and County Faculty.

County Faculty representation on Design Teams should be made in consultation with the Program Leaders and the District Extension Director. Representation from County Faculty is desirable for Design Teams. These appointments are to enhance the Design Team's perspective of county level programmatic concerns and to strengthen communications between counties and Design Teams. County Faculty are encouraged to serve on one or two teams, particularly for those at Agent II and above. County Faculty often express a desire to serve on multiple Design Teams, but are encouraged to limit their involvement to one or two that align with their primary program expertise. County Faculty are encouraged to be active members of the Design Team.

Two liaison positions are established for each Design Team. These include a representative from the Program Development and Evaluation Center and the District Extension Directors. Although these individuals may not attend every meeting, they are supportive and available to work closely with the team. They serve to represent Extension Administration and help to ensure that the SMP is focused upon educational outcomes.

**Consultants are not Extension employees and therefore are not held responsible for conducting program activities and generating desired outcomes in the same way that team members are. Consultants provide grassroots input that serves to increase relevance.*

Number of and Notification of Meetings

Most Design Teams meet a minimum of three to four times per year, with both process and content of team efforts incorporated into the meeting activities. The annual Design Team calendar, meeting notices, locations, and minutes of the meetings should be routinely sent to all members (using a distribution list provided to the team), the Program Leader, and the two liaison members (Program Development and Evaluation Center and the District Extension Director's Office).

Two widely used and highly recommended meeting times would be during the Extension Administrative Conference or immediately following or preceding County Faculty In-Service Training.

Resources to Support Team Efforts

Design Teams, based on effectiveness and proposals, may seek internal or external funding to accomplish their Plan of Work. Grants may be sought to provide additional resources including personnel support, committee training, curriculum planning tools, demonstrations, videos, publications, training aids, Web page design, evaluation instruments, etc. Design Teams should work closely with the appropriate Extension Program Leader in identifying potential financial sources. Extension Administration has provided modest enhancement awards during the last few years to help teams accomplish innovative efforts.

Travel Expenses for Design Teams

Most meetings are held in a locale convenient for members or via telephone or video conferencing. Travel for Specialists comes from the Specialist's travel budget, unless additional enhancement funds or grants are obtained. Travel expenses for County Faculty are reimbursed through their District Extension Director. As a courtesy, notices of meeting should be sent to the Program Leaders and DEDs in advance so that they can adequately monitor travel expenditures.

Frequency of Design Team Meetings

Design Teams may vary the number of meetings from two to six times per year. For very active committees in the program planning stages, sub-groups may meet more frequently. At minimum, a functioning Design Team will need to produce a Plan of Work, design and update curriculum, sponsor In-Service for County Faculty, and review Reports of Accomplishments by County Faculty.

Minutes and Record Keeping

Correspondence, Plans of Work, and proceedings should be kept by the Design Team Chair, with routine correspondence sent to the entire team. In addition, appropriate Department Chairs, Center Directors, Program Leaders should receive copies of minutes, agenda notifications, curriculum materials, and In-Service proposals for their review.

Reporting on an SMP Plan of Work

At the close of each program year, County and State Faculty are required to finalize their Faculty Activity System (FAS) reports on professional activities during the prior 12 months. Specifically, faculty describe their accomplishments through description of educational activities (inputs and outputs) and outcomes/impacts related to program objectives. Department Chairs, Center Directors, District Extension Directors, Program Evaluation staff, and State Specialists review these reports for key information for performance appraisal and the aggregating of outcome and/or impact data for numerous state and federal reports.

Those Design Teams which have provided strong programs and easy to use evaluation tools that contain indicators are able to draw conclusive statements about the total impact of the SMP effort. But the primary purpose of these evaluation tools and the data collected is not to provide information for state reports. State Major Programs can be improved and sharpened, bringing about the even greater behavior and practice change among clientele.

References

- Fact Sheet PE-31 Role of a Design Team, October 1990
- Fact Sheet PE-56 Concept of State Major Programs and Design Teams, December 1994
- Fact Sheet PE-49 Concept of a Major Program, January 1994
- Circular PE-63 Extension Specialist's Role and Responsibility Statement, July 1996

Recommended Web Sites for Current SMP Plan of Work and AREERA

POW: <http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~smpweb/>

AREERA: <http://pdec.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Faculty Web Modules:

<http://pdec.ifas.ufl.edu/newfaculty.htm>