



CONNECTION

MAY 2000 □ NUMBER 80

EPSILON SIGMA PHI

The Cooperative Extension Professionals' Organization

2000 Epsilon Sigma Phi National Professional Development Satellite Broadcast
Thursday, November 30 at 12 Noon Eastern Time

Request for Proposals - Video reports of exemplary programs

by: **Fay B. Strickler, Pennsylvania – Chair of 2000 National Conference**

For the fifth year, a televised satellite broadcast will be associated with ESP's National Conference. There is a significant new twist to the 2000 plans. Instead of featuring a single presenter, the 2000 broadcast will portray the excellence that exists within the Extension System. In every state there are numerous examples of Extension staff creating exemplary programs that serve the diverse needs of clientele. The satellite broadcast will feature some of these programs and the people that made them happen.

The focus of the satellite program is on *EXCELLENCE* and how that is played-out through partnerships, technology and alternative delivery systems reaching diverse audiences. You will see model programs where Land - Grant Colleges and Universities, through their Cooperative Extension System, are engaged in putting critical resources of knowledge and expertise to work on the problems the communities it serves face. That means being responsive to local problems. Partnerships are used that are two-way streets defined by mutual respect among the partners for what each brings to the table. Appropriate delivery methods are used. Those are components of an engaged institution. Land - Grant Colleges and Universities are breathing new life into our historic missions through the focus on engagement.

You are invited to submit a proposal to feature an outstanding program or successful project from your state for consideration as a segment of the satellite broadcast. By June 30, 2000, send your proposal and videotape to Fay Strickler, ESP Second Vice President. The RFP (Request for Proposal) for these outstanding programs is located on the National ESP Web Site (*click on "Calendar" and go to June 30*). Chapter leaders, attending a 2000 Regional Workshop, have a "hard copy" of the RFP. Both members and non-members can submit proposals. For more information contact Fay Strickler (*fbs1@psu.edu or 610-378-1327*), or Judy Carlson (*jcarlson@prtel.com or 218-864-8678*).

(See *Downlink* page 2)



National President – Elect Jim Lindquist (*back row far right*) attended all the JCEP Regional Workshops this winter. That was a superb opportunity for him to do extensive listening to ESP chapter leaders during their discussions. The input he gathered will be very valuable as he develops the next national plan-of-work. The entire group of national leaders who attended all of the workshops were (*back row left to right*) Vernon Waldren, National Association Extension 4-H & Youth Agents, Curtis Grissom, National Association of County Agricultural Agents, Don Floyd, Executive Director of National 4-H Council, Lindquist, Epsilon Sigma Phi, and (*front row*) Cheryle Jones Syracuse, National Extension Association Family and Consumer Sciences.

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Good work through ESP National Mini-Grant

Just what is an Engaged University?

by: Judy Weber, Nebraska

An Epsilon Sigma Phi mini-grant enabled Nebraska's Alpha Upsilon Chapter to sponsor the keynote address on a futuristic topic at the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's annual professional meeting.

On November 16, 1999, over 140 members of the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association heard Dr. Ellen Fitzsimmons speak on "University-wide Extension & The Engaged University."

Dr. Fitzsimmons is currently Associate Dean and Director for Cooperative Extension at the University of Wisconsin. Her institution has incorporated university-wide Extension for some time and she spoke about the opportunities and challenges posed by this unique structure. One major challenge in higher education, she said, is the growing frustration with what is seen as our unresponsiveness. The emphasis on the concept of engagement is intended to turn-a-round this negative perception of unresponsiveness to needs of the communities served.

Dr. Fitzsimmons defined engagement as: *"Redesigned teaching, research, and extension and service functions that are sympathetically and productively involved with the communities served by universities, however community is defined."* Those attending were told we're all doing partnerships when we're working together, developing, and sharing in decision-making.

Seven principles were offered to define an engaged institution:

1. **Responsiveness**- Are we listening and are we listening well?
2. **Respect for partners**- Do we identify joint definitions of problems, solutions, and successes?
3. **Academic neutrality** - Do we stay neutral in public policy debate?
4. **Accessibility** - Are we equally available to all?
5. **Integration** - Do we value Extension and outreach equally with our other functions?
6. **Coordination** - Does one part of the organization know what the rest of the organization is doing?
7. **Resource Partnerships** - Do we commit adequate resources, both fiscal and human, to this work?

Extension was suggested as an instrument for engagement due to its uniqueness. Extension has a strong community base, direct access to a research and knowledge base, the ability to work as equals in communities, exceptional groups process and facilitation skills and a history and culture. Those doing Extension work were reminded that **structure is never as important as attitude**. They were challenged to listen better, form partnerships, and be creative. *Judy Weber is past president of Alpha Upsilon Chapter. jweber@unlnotes.unl.edu*

(Downlink from page 1)

Be sure your state submits video clips for consideration. And if you won't be attending the national conference in person, plan to view this portion of the conference on Thursday, November 30, 2000 at a downlink site. The Professional Development Committee is trying to bring this program to its members and others within the Extension System at a very modest fee. Additional details will be published in the next issue of the ESP Connection and made available on the ESP National Web Site.

Go ahead and reserve your downlink sites for November 30,

2000 and block-out the time on your calendar for viewing and learning. Tell others to do the same for this outstanding professional development broadcast on Thursday, November 30 at 12 Noon EST, 11 AM CST, 10 AM MST and 9 AM PST. The broadcast will be two hours long.

(See article related to the concept of engagement for Land - Grant Colleges and Universities above.)

Task Force Reviewing National Conference Guidelines

Jim Lindquist, KS, Chair
Ellen Varley, MD
Pat Bruschini, GA
Margaret Viebrock, WA
Linda Garringer, IN
Vickie Parker-Clark, ID
Steve Jackson, UT
J. C. Shaver, NY

Send suggestions and questions to a member of the committee.

The mission of Epsilon Sigma Phi is to foster the standards of excellence in the Extension System and to develop the Extension Profession and Professional.

JCEP Request for Proposals

Research project to determine benefits of association leadership

There is a high demand for leadership in professional organizations. What benefits do the individual leader and his or her organization gain from being leaders in Extension's professional organizations?

JCEP (Joint Council of Extension Professionals) has issued a RFP (Request For Proposal) seeking innovative research proposals to determine the benefits of association leadership to the

individual professional, the profession, the associations, and the Cooperative Extension system as a whole. The goal of the project is to identify, to examine, and to communicate effectively with members and administrators about the benefits of leadership in organizations such as Epsilon Sigma Phi and the other JCEP partner organizations.

JCEP will fund one proposal for \$1500, with the project to begin March 1, 2001. A final report is to be made at the Galaxy II Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah in September 2003.

Proposals are due postmarked by December 15, 2000. For a copy of the RFP, contact Judy Carlson at jcarlson@prtel.com or Laurel Kubin at kubinl@co.larimer.co.us.

2000 Version – Epsilon Sigma Phi Chapter Handbook

The Epsilon Sigma Phi Chapter Handbook is an electronic publication. It is updated each year. To obtain the 2000 updated version download it into your word processing program off the ESP National Web Site or request it on a diskette from the ESP National Office. The revisions are incorporated throughout the entire handbook to accommodate changes in policies, programs, and procedures. Therefore, to ensure yourself and your chapter that you have the most current information please de-clutter your paper files, notebooks and hard drive of any material from previous versions.

Here is a list of just a few of the updates – new installation of officers and memorial ceremonies, new dues policy incorporating the increases and changes in deadlines, updates in the awards section, updates in the supply section, re-written letters of invitation which incorporate the new organization tag name of the Cooperative Extension Professionals Organization, etc.

The electronic handbook is a real cost saver for ESP. The only publication cost has been a few computer diskettes. Quite a contrast to what it might have cost to publishing it in hard copy.

Task Force Reviewing the National Epsilon Sigma Phi Handbook

Evva Wilson, LA, Chair
Eleanor Wilson, DC
Richard Garrard, ID
Marilyn Schnittjer, IA
Jim Hovland, WI
Gretchen Ferenz, NY
Sally Soileau, LA
Jo Ann Mathis Ross, UT

Contact any committee member with your ideas and suggestions. 2000 Version of the Chapter Handbook available on National ESP Web Site at <http://esp-nat.tamu.edu>

Extension System quiz

1. The total number of Extension System employees nationwide, including faculty, specialists, agents, technical, clerical, etc. is about:
a. 16,000 b. 19,000 c. 23,000 d. 32,000
2. What is the current average years of tenure for State Extension Directors (*Administrators*)?
a. 3.0 years b. 4.5 years c. 6.0 years d. 7.5 years
3. During the fiscal years from 1987 - 1994, the total federal appropriations for Extension increased a total of about:
a. 0% b. 10% c. 20% d. 25% e. 30%
4. During the fiscal years from 1995 - 1999 the total federal appropriation for Extension has increased a total of about:
a. 0% b. 10% c. 15% d. 20% e. 25%
5. The Extension Service's total annual budget nationwide from all sources of funds is about:
a. \$1.1 billion b. \$1.6 billion c. \$2.0 billion d. \$2.3 billion

Answers: (1. d. 32,000) (2. b. 4.5 years)
(3. e. 30%) (4. a. 0%) (5. b. \$1.6 billion)

From: Colorado Staff Development Newsletter 1-2000



CONNECTION

EPSILON SIGMA PHI, INC.

The Cooperative Extension Professionals' Organization
A Newsletter

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Regions elected regional vice presidents for 2001 & 2002

"Fruit basket upset" works well

Epsilon Sigma Phi chapter leaders, at the 2000 Regional Leadership Workshops, elected their regional vice presidents to represent them on the National Board in 2001 and 2002. Each new regional vice president will also chair a major national standing committee. These four committee chair positions rotate from region to region each two-year term.

At first glance this seems like a major "fruit basket upset" to change all four regional vice presidents and committee chairs at the same time. To ensure more continuity, it may seem more logical to stagger the elections by year. An explanation of this current structure was requested from the National Board.

National President Laurel

Kubin responded by recalling that this somewhat unusual structure was designed six years ago so that the various committee chairmanships could rotate among the regions. For sure it is a dual-duty job to be a regional vice president and a national standing committee chair. Despite possible pitfalls the structure has worked very well because there is always

direct input from the major national standing committees when the National Board deliberates. Electing the regional vice presidents almost a year before they take office gives ample opportunity for extensive mentoring with the current officer and committee chair they will replace. In addition nearly half of the Board continues.

Western Region VP and Chair of the National Global Relations Committee

Jo Ann Mathis Ross, Utah



Western Region: Richard Garrard, Idaho (*left*), will be followed as regional vice president in the Western Region by Jo Ann Mathis Ross, Utah. During the next nine months Richard Garrard will serve as a mentor for Mathis Ross as she prepares to assume that position in December 2000.

Jo Ann Mathis Ross teaches family life programs in Davis County, Utah, serving a population of over 220,000. Her office is in Farmington, Utah. Mathis Ross earned a Master of Science Degree at Colorado State University and is a twenty-seven year Extension veteran. Two years ago she was president of Iota Chapter in Utah and is deeply involved in plans for the 2000 National Conference set for her state. She has attended PILD and ESP National Conferences. In 1998, she was named Extension Agent of the Year.

North Central Region VP and Chair of the National Resource Development & Management Committee

James Hovland, Wisconsin

James Hovland is the University of Wisconsin Extension Community Resource Development Educator in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin. Hovland was president of the ESP Alpha Sigma Chapter a few years ago. At the national level, he participated in PILD plus national ESP conferences and workshops. Six years ago he worked on local arrangements for the ESP National Conference in Milwaukee and presented a concurrent session. Jim is a member of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. He is a graduate University of Wisconsin Madison with a BS and MS in Horticulture with work in Agricultural Education and Environmental Education.



North Central Region: James Hovland, Wisconsin (*left*), was elected to succeed Marilyn Schnittjer, Iowa (*right*), as the regional vice president for the North Central Region for 2001-2002.



Southern Region: Sally Soileau, Louisiana (left), will assume the role of regional vice president for the Southern Region from Evva L. Z. Wilson, Louisiana (right), at the conclusion of the upcoming National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Southern Region VP and Chair of the National Membership Services Committee

Sally Soileau, Louisiana

Sally Soileau is an Extension Home Economist in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. She does public educational programming in nutrition, diet and health, parenting, child care, financial management, leadership and ethics, and workforce preparedness. Currently she is completing requirements for a PhD in Vocational Education at Louisiana State University. Soileau has been vice president of her ESP chapter in Louisiana and served on the ESP National Membership Recruitment and Retention National Committee. She participated in ESP National Conference activities during Galaxy I and attended three regional workshops.

Northeast Region VP and Chair of the National Public Issues Committee

Gretchen Ferenz, New York

Gretchen Ferenz has provided leadership to the area of Environmental Issues, of Cooperation Extension in New York City, for the past nine years. Due to her vision, commitment to the organization's mission, as well as strong leadership, administrative and organization skills, she has developed an informal education program that builds partnerships and results in sustainable, community-based outcomes. Ferenz completed a BS Degree in Plant Science/Horticulture at Cook College, Rutgers University and a MS Degree in Environment Horticulture at University of California, Davis. Ferenz assisted in efforts to plan for and provide the "Future Proof Leader" national satellite broadcast to local offices in New York State. She has attended PILD for two years and served as a voting delegate representing Lambda Chapter at the 1999 National Conference in Indianapolis.



Northeast Region: Gretchen Ferenz, New York (left), was elected to be the next regional vice president for the Northeast Region. She is pictured with Eleanor Wilson, life member of the chapter at the USDA in the District of Columbia (right), who will complete her two-year term during the remaining months of this year and will be a mentor for Ferenz.

Exhibited excellence

The basic ESP national membership criteria

by: Jim Lindquist, Kansas – National President-Elect

The increasing numbers of new members initiated is an indicator of positive results from chapters' actions which changed membership criteria so they are a better fit with the current staff demographics and organizational structure of their respective Extension Systems.

One of the more innovative aspects of the first national strategic plan, established in 1995, was to open-up national membership criteria to exhibited excellence by an Extension professional. Within that guideline, chapters have the opportunity to set criteria for their own

chapter membership. The basic national ESP membership criteria is:

Membership is open to those Extension professionals who have exhibited excellence in education and programming leadership. Members continue to provide leadership and excellence in Extension programming throughout their career and during retirement.

During the ESP meetings at the 2000 Regional Workshops, chapter leaders reported on their current membership criteria. (These reports are available at the National Office.) In summary, over the ensuing years,

since 1995, nearly all chapters have reviewed their membership requirements. Many implemented changes to fit the changing demographics and personnel organization structure for the state's respective Extension System. As a result the number of new members being initiated is on the upswing. Extension personnel formerly not eligible for membership due to part time positions, split appointments, job changes, new staffing patterns, etc. are now extended invitations to membership adding to the overall health of Epsilon Sigma Phi – The Cooperative Extension Professionals' Organization.



The PILD experience

For 2000, Epsilon Sigma Phi was represented on the JCEP Public Issues Leadership Development Conference (PILD) Planning Committee by Bill Thomas, Georgia, Marilyn Schnittjer, Iowa, and Bernadette Watts, North Carolina. Thomas was appointed by the ESP National President. Schnittjer and Watts served on the

committee by virtue of their national ESP roles which relate to public issues education. For next year, Gretchen Ferenz, New York, and Laurel Kubin, Colorado, will replace Schnittjer and Watts. Bill Thomas will continue for a second term and is the co-chair of that planning committee.



ESP national officers and planning committee members at PILD 2000. (left to right) Laurel Kubin, national president; Evva L.Z. Wilson, vice president for the Southern Region; Bill Thomas, PILD Planning Committee member; Marilyn Schnittjer, ESP National Public Issues Committee Chair and PILD Planning Committee member; Fay Strickler, national second vice president; and Bernadette Watts, national past president and PILD Planning Committee member.



ESP's national PILD Scholarship winners. (left to right) Marlene Berger, Utah; Libby Curry, Kansas; Alma Fonseca, Texas; and Gertrude Dougherty, Pennsylvania.

Professional courtesy

Practicing the golden rule of courtesy by treating others as we'd like to be treated was once more commonplace than it is today. This is true within families, schools, communities and workplaces. We make excuses for our behavior with the "anything goes" attitude.

During the 1999 National Conference, Deanna Tribe, Ohio ESP member, told of research conducted in Ohio where co-workers shared their professional courtesy pet peeves. Common pet peeves included people arriving late, leaving early, and talking in side conversations during programs.

Just imagine how pleasant it would be if every Extension professional were introduced with the same decorum as outside speakers receive, if every speaker had the full attention of their audience, and if tact were always used. How much more civil we would be if we curtailed the use of negative humor, worked on building each other's self-esteem, and showed respect for ourselves and others. Ask yourself, "What's my responsibility to help make this world civil and just?"

Exercising professional courtesy with co-workers contributes to a sense of value, worth, and appreciation. It provides recognition and models desirable behavior for other employees. All that is required is tact, thoughtfulness, and respect. Let familiar co-workers know that they are as deserving of our "company manners" as are strangers. People who treat other people nicely are more likely to be treated nicely in return. As Tribe said, "Let's revive this old-fashioned value and practice it again at home, in the workplace, and beyond in the community."

PILD – testimony a year later

by: Marilyn Schnittjer, Iowa and Louise Turner, Washington

Louise Turner, County Chair and 4-H Youth Development Specialist in Kitsap County in Washington, attended PILD (JCEP Public Issues Leadership Development Conference) last year. Just a year later Marilyn Schnittjer initiated an e-mail visit with Turner to get her testimony about the worth of PILD. Turner used a national ESP scholarship as a source of funding to pay part of her expenses to attend PILD.

What has the PILD experience meant to you? My knowledge is broader and my appreciation deeper for the worthy role of Extension in the lives of communities across the Country. It is essential for all of us to communicate that worthiness so Extension will be understood. Looking back, I wish I had started at least three months in advance to seek the support and input of Extension Directors and University decision makers. Being better prepared would have helped so much.

What did you do to follow-up on your PILD experience? I wrote a feature article in the Beta Chapter ESP newsletter about advocating for Extension. At a statewide workshop for Extension professionals, I co-presented a workshop about advocating for Extension to decision makers. And on an individual basis, I networked among my colleagues to encourage them to attend the PILD Conference and apply for the ESP scholarship.

What is the impact from your efforts following PILD? There is a noticeable increase in the willingness of some Extension professionals to develop stronger relationships with legislators. My ability to educate my colleagues with accurate information has increased. Funding in my county has improved due to my ability to communicate more effectively with local legislators.

Louise Turner can be contacted at turnerl@wsu.edu

News from the National Public Issues Committee

Key sources of retirement info

by: Larry Madsen, South Dakota

Here are some key sources of information intended to bolster your retirement planning:

- The National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) publishes a monthly magazine, **RETIREMENT LIFE**, for its members. Articles deal with many retirement aspects. Legislation is always monitored and actions reported in this informative magazine. The March 2000 issue details "Tax Exemption Comparison of Social Security and CSRS Retirement Benefits". Ask a friend to see their copy of this magazine. You may want to join your local NARFE Chapter. Go to the NARFE web site (<http://www.narfe.org>) to access their information.
- Check out the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) web site at <http://www.opm.gov/retire/html/hottopics/index/html/> and click the "Tax Calculator". You will need to know your annuity starting date and the contributions made to the CSRDF. The later can be found on the original statement of annuity form or on the form 1099R sent to annuitants by OPM each January.
- Order a copy of **Your FERS Retirement** or **Your CSRS Retirement**. You can learn ways your decisions may affect your retirement benefits. These two publications are for those nearing retirement status. There is a cost. The Internet site is www.FENDonline.com. (Click on Product Catalog) or call toll free 1-800-989-3363.
- Oregon State University Extension Service publishes a bulletin used by many states. Ask for EC 1365 "Choices for Federal Employees Pension Benefits or Life Insurance for the Surviving Spouse". The price is \$1.25. Call (503) 737-2513 to obtain a copy of that bulletin.

Author Larry Madsen can be reached at madsen.lawrence@ces.sdstate.edu or 605-765-9747. He is an Extension Area Management Specialist at Gettysburg, SD. The National Public Issues Committee welcomes your inquiries and dialogue regarding retirement issues.





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**Make plans to go
National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah
November 30 – December 2, 2000 at Wyndham Hotel
ANTICIPATE EXCELLENCE: PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS**

Imagine the Wasatch Mountains at your back as you look out over the Great Salt Lake while pondering your family history and learning models of excellence in Extension. All this is possible at the 2000 National ESP Conference. Convenience reigns in this fascinating popular conference hub, Salt Lake City, Utah, which will be host to the 2002 Winter Olympics.

A light rail transit system runs directly in front of the conference hotel which is only 10 minutes by free shuttle from the airport. Within walking distance of the Wyndham Hotel are the historic Temple Square and the Family History Library.

Plan now to witness the most outstanding programs of excellence in the nation via the conference satellite uplink, coordinated by Roger McEvoy, an outstanding leader in distance education technology at Utah State University. John Miller, author of PERSONAL

ACCOUNTABILITY, will provide an engaging keynote address. Dave Litchford, a highly recommended local motivational speaker, will give a keynote address, "The ABC's of Success." Concurrent sessions and other speakers, including the Ruby DSA lecturer, will also address the conference theme: "Anticipate Excellence: Pathways to Success". The annual business meeting of the National Council will be held.

Participants will enjoy tours and making and renewing collegial friendships combined with excellent professional development. Make your plans to attend. The conference starts November 30 and concludes after the awards banquet on December 2. You'll love Salt Lake City and its many attractions. The ESP National Conference is one-of-a-kind! There's more information about it on the ESP National Web Site at <http://esp-nat.tamu.edu> – click on National Meeting.