

Southern PLN Conference Call- October 27, 2015

- **Opening of Meeting and Welcome Remarks-** Billy Lawton, Southern PLN Chair
- **Roll Call-** Melissa Stewart, Southern PLN Secretary
 - Alabama- Uma Karki, Paul Mask
 - Arkansas- Rick Cartwright
 - Florida- Marty Main, Saqib Mukhtar
 - Georgia- William Hubbard
 - Kentucky- Louie Rivers, Marion Simon
 - Louisiana- Rogers Leonard
 - North Carolina- Tom Melton
 - Texas- Billy Lawton
 - Virginia- Bobby Grisso; Brian Benham
 - West Virginia- Melissa Stewart

- **Minutes** from previous meeting approved
- **Peer Review Guidelines-** Bobby Grisso, Southern PLN Vice Chair and Brian Benham, Extension Specialist Virginia Tech
 - Process developed at help with Peer Review of programs for Specialist (during the tenure track)
 - Review Efforts
 - Specialist are looked at twice during tenure process
 - Idea is to improve the educational process
 - Purpose is similar to that of a process for instructors and use this as a tool to assess weaknesses and increase the quality of delivery
 - Desire to improve upon Extension review models through looking at the current peer review process for faculty
 - Brian is currently running this through their college and assessing how to implement and what is required for that tenure process
 - Started out with different versions of the peer review (from difference departments)
 - College Governance Committee was convened
 - Overall process is to review programs and assess impacts two times during the tenure process
 - Report from the evaluation is included in the tenure file
 - Peer Review Team consists of 3 faculty
 - Specialist Peer Review Package
 - Looks to identify the resources that the Specialist use and identifies the clientele
 - This is done before the process by the Specialist
 - During the process the information is reviewed and feedback received from the clientele (target audience)
 - Report is created with question provide to guide the report

- Feedback is provided to the Specialist along with opportunities for improvement to meet expectations
- Call was opened for **Questions** in regards to the presentation on the Peer Review Guidelines
 - **Question- How is the three member committee chosen? Do they have Extension expertise of are they Faculty? In the past problems have arisen from senior faculty stating that Extension doesn't tenure, Research tenures. How is this screened?**
 - Committee chosen includes from Extension faculty and this process helps to clarify to others the rigor and education piece of the Specialist position which hopefully then strengthens the candidate's statement and mission.
 - The review process also provides an overview and articulates the fundamentals of what outcomes as impacts from their position better than the P&T file
 - This type of information can increase the faculty knowledge (within department and university committees) of the Extension Specialist positions and the quality of these educational efforts
 - **Question- How public is this document? Can the Department Heads share within their institutions or with other institutions?**
 - This document can be shared with other institutions as well as within your own systems
 - Something like this would most likely need to be approved at the University level and within the respective colleges/departments
 - It was designed as a two part process to help the Specialist and increase their level of awareness
 - Their P&T file includes this assessment
 - In the past it has been used with old guidelines and about 1 in 5 Specialists did this but the feeling (from the Dean's point of view) is that everyone should undergo this process and become a college wide expectation
 - **Question- Is this type of review process in place for county-based faculty as well?**
 - No, this is only the process for the statewide Specialist and the county-based faculty have a different promotion process in place.
- Sidebar conversation to look at the last page of the document distributed
 - Includes Questions for Assessment that gives scope to the process
 - Specialists should be able to answer questions and this fine-tunes their articulation
 - Specialists need to communicate well but the final document encapsulates the overall review
- **Question- Successful Specialists needs to have interactions with the Agents as well as the State Agencies, but Agents are not distinctly mentioned within this review process?**
 - Yes, VA Specialists work closely with the Agents as well as the State Agencies. Agents are implied.
 - As this was circulated through Extension, the notion was that Agents would be implied under "clientele" and that was open then for the Specialist to define

- Some may consider clientele to be others outside of the Agents themselves
- **Question- P&T Dossier is very defined in what can be included, usually a three page statement without a lot verbiage allowed- how is this utilized?**
 - This is submitted within the document which gives the opportunity to include additional narrative
- **Question- What is the investment, time and energy- for the Peer Review Committee? How much time does this process entail?**
 - For Instruction Review the three member committee spends 3 days in an hour lecture and then an additional day in the lab setting if applicable
 - Easily for a review of everything for a course it would require around 20hrs/semester with the write up time as well
 - This process would be similar commitment but a little harder to structure the assessment
 - Most likely 20-35hrs commitment interacting on the committee- most hours would be put in by the committee chair
 - Only occurs twice during the tenure process and the investment of time pays off
- **Question- Recent conversations have increased awareness that new methods of communication through videos or apps are not highly regarded by faculty- not as accepted as an outreach approach. Has anyone else heard this opinion voiced?**
 - The review process has helped to garner more respect for the Specialist by demonstrating rigor and scholarly approach through the communication of information
 - Sometimes these issues arise within a Department due to strong personalities who are able to sway the opinions of others
 - The goal is to give tools to empower ways to evaluate extension outreach
 - Program development is pivotal in the early years of the tenure process
 - Inclusion of videos and apps are part of the collective program and the Specialist need to look at an overall program rather than just the pieces
- **Question- How are others measuring the impact of social media- is it by the number of hits or what is your methodology?**
 - The purpose of social media is to increase knowledge or create a change of behavior
 - The last page of the document addresses impacts and questions “How is the Specialist measuring impacts?”
 - Hits are one way to measure but until there is an agreed way for these impacts to be measured we have to give the Specialists a little slack
 - There is an expectation of an activity and the quality of the product
 - Impacts of a publication
 - What are the outcomes?
 - Impact Assessment needs to have Administrative Support of how to better improve the assessment process
 - It also needs to involve the creativity of the Specialist

- **Question- Do we need to look at developing an Academy of sorts, like the Sea Grant Academy, to increase development of the Specialists, with a focus on new Specialists?**
 - It appears that a concept like that would garner support after hearing conversations from Specialist and it would be good to get feedback from Specialist on this type of opportunity
- **Question- Do we need to provide guidance on what is considered a program and what is an activity?**
 - There needs to be a consensus of what is a common application for the given information
 - There will be differences but the concentration needs to be on what makes a good Extension Program
- **Next Steps**
 - How do we make this process applicable as well to the 1890's
 - Collect items discussed
 - Look at the document and determine what are universal/key items
 - Maybe look for 3-4 common elements
 - It may be that there is no single document for the Region- each state may look to develop their own approach
 - States should approach the Executive Directors with this need
 - Bobby will share a similar Teaching Peer Review Document
 - Academy idea across the Southeast is worth discussion at the next face to face meeting in TN
 - Notes to Tom Melton from this meeting in the next couple of weeks
 - Also send the info for the planning for of the 2017 meeting to Tom
 - Committee within our Committee has already met to begin these discussions
 - Next Meeting - Nov. 17th @ 10am (EST)
 - Key Items
 - Plan of Work
 - Tall Fescue Belt- Dec 15th
 - 2 Conference Calls with NRCS- goal by Dec 15th
 - 2017 Meeting
 - Committee for Professional Development- July 2016
 - Marty will send out the Agenda for the Sea Grant Academy
 - Will get to Billy for distribution
 - Professional Development
 - Online into one website
 - Working with development
 - Info and links will be sent before July
 - Plan of Work
 - Beginning of the year start meeting on this item
- **Meeting Adjourned-** Billy Lawton @ 10:52 am (EST)

Submitted by Melissa Stewart (West Virginia State University Extension)