Analysis of Extension Evaluation Policy: Results of a Concept Mapping Study
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Presented at American Evaluation Association Annual Conference, November 2008

Idea Statements by Cluster, with Average “Potential Difference” Ratings

Potential Difference – how much of a difference would it make to evaluation efforts in Extension organizations if the following idea were put in place?

1 – very little difference
2 – some difference
3 – moderate difference
4 – substantial difference
5 – very significant difference

Idea Statements were generated in response to the Focus Prompt: “One specific thing an Extension organization can do to support the practice of evaluation is ...”

Cluster 1: Communicate Value of Evaluation (#1 in average potential difference ratings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[43] educate Executive Directors on the importance of evaluation</td>
<td>4.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>[1] educate staff and volunteers as to the benefits of evaluation.</td>
<td>4.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>[38] demonstrate how results of evaluation lead to better programming, more resources, etc.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>[45] make evaluation results easy to understand, streamlined, user friendly.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>[12] have a person (or more than one) who champions evaluation within the organization, and uses strength-based approaches to encouraging and supporting evaluation work.</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[25] plan and then evaluate the evaluation effort itself.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>[66] engage participants directly in formulating evaluation questions and pointing out specific program flaws.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
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Average: 3.92

Cluster 2: Increase Incentives and Recognition (#9)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[4] create a culture of inquiry -- where staff are wanting feedback and excited about it.</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[35] make sure all stakeholders get to see evaluation results.</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[62] call attention to high quality evaluation efforts in the Association.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
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<td>[60] recognize evaluation training and experience as a marketable skill.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<td>[36] schedule and budget for trips to conferences to showcase successful programs.</td>
<td>3.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>[58] have Cornell Cooperative Extension News include highlights or success stories of program evaluations and outcomes happening around the state.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>[18] create an economic incentive for staff members implementing evaluation, ie one staff member per year receives an award with a small cash bonus ($100-$200) for either excellence in evaluation implementation or innovativeness.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>[10] hold periodic parties for staff where the price of admission is either an evaluation-related question the staff person is wrestling with or a way that evaluation is helping make a difference in some aspect of that staff person's work.</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
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Average: 3.28

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1 Statement ID numbers are in square brackets with each statement. They were assigned randomly and have no inherent meaning. Rating for each statement is an average across all participant ratings (n=33 raters.)
Cluster 3: Expand and Tailor Resources (#7)

[59] identify Land Grant University staff and faculty with solid evaluation experience and interest in specific program areas and work to get them involved in program efforts in an Association that would like to strengthen evaluation practice in those program. 3.91

[69] help people get over the fear of "bad results" by emphasizing the value of feedback for improving programs, and by supporting those efforts to improve programs. 3.76

[23] provide multi-channel technical assistance and instructional resources (e.g., self-serve resources, EPP, regular webinars, resource exchange, etc.) 3.73

[29] dedicate a part-time staffer who has a specific responsibility for working with other staff on evaluation planning. 3.64

[42] allow for or encourage creative, context-specific, personalized measures, so that program staff "own" the method and feel its appropriateness for their work (to the extent, though, that it also fits in as a "valuable measure" into the evaluation process.) 3.58

[52] assist faculty and staff on campus who are developing program initiatives in incorporating effective evaluation approaches and resources. 3.48

[6] when bringing in outside evaluators or technical assistance, make sure the approach is gentle and sensitive to existing organizational culture. 3.34

[67] examine what other organizations have done to integrate evaluation practice in their organizations, and adapt ideas to Extension. 3.33

[73] provide constant feedback whenever staff are asked to do extra work for the evaluation. 3.24

Average: 3.56

Cluster 4: Provide Technical Assistance (#8)

[28] arrange for technical assistance support from Cornell for evaluation (team who can advise on research design and models and evaluation tools), and for data analysis (statistics specialists). 4.03

[79] provide software and other tools and samples that facilitate evaluation planning and implementation. 3.79

[56] have an online list of resources for how to do evaluation and where to find more information on evaluation. 3.52

[16] have a wiki or online resources where people can submit and comment on evaluation design and methods so we don't have to reinvent the wheel. 3.39

[30] have a source of technical assistance for IRB applications. 2.83

Average: 3.51

Cluster 5: Provide Training (#6)

[44] teach people ways of getting feedback (evaluation input) from what they already do -- logging phone calls and e-mail inquiries, comments at end-of-program celebrations, etc. -- and connect this to more formal evaluation methods. 4.27

[78] provide training to staff on the hows and whys of evaluation. 4.03

[13] provide training (perhaps on campus) on evaluation to core staff and follow up with yearly or biannual staff discussions of how evaluation is being used by each member. 3.88

[75] have staff develop clear understanding of the difference between outputs, outcomes and impact. 3.85

[39] encourage all leadership staff to attend the Program Leadership Certification program. 3.74

[71] hold an annual evaluation workshop day by regions. 3.67

[27] teach support staff the language of evaluation to make it easier for them to understand how to produce evaluation documents. 3.45

[63] require that staff complete an on-line course or Adobe-Connect session on evaluation. 3.45

[15] hold lunchtime discussion groups about evaluation processes within the organization where lunch is provided and the Executive Director or knowledgeable person is present and able to answer questions or address frustrations. 3.21

Average: 3.70

Cluster 6: Integrate into Organization Structure (#3)
[7] use the data collected to enact meaningful changes in programming.
[32] link evaluation to proposal development (including grant-writing) and program planning, implementation and reporting.
[46] at the Association level: communicate specific outcome evaluation information needed for purposes of Association reporting and fund development.
[80] Executive Director needs to ensure that VISION supports need for evaluation and reinforces message that all are held accountable.
[21] create a climate of cooperation in which evaluation is a support, not a threat to funding.
[2] require evaluation data (quantitative and/or qualitative) on our periodic impact reports (instead of just participant numbers).
[61] clarify evaluation roles and responsibilities within the classification/compensation system and link to explicit performance criteria.

Cluster 7: Set Expectations and Requirements (#2)
[50] make evaluation an expectation as it is for many grant programs -- not an option.
[76] have evaluation woven into people's work plans in realistic and feasible ways.
[17] make evaluation part of every job description, including the top people.
[57] build evaluation practices into the Extension "accreditation" process.
[74] develop reporting protocols and procedures that emphasize outcomes and impacts -- this will create the "demand" for evaluation.
[40] get Executive Directors to commit to seeing that each staff uses evaluation at least once during a specified time period.
[72] have program evaluation be an explicit requisite for any extension projects funded by Extension Administration.
[49] generate a long-term, strategic plan for evaluation.
[20] use an evaluation process (well developed) in re-evaluating the 4-Year Plan of Work.
[34] establish policies around resource allocation, program development, reporting, etc that emphasize evaluation.

Cluster 8: Collaborate, Capitalize (#5)
[14] at the statewide level: provide tools or standards for specific, primary programs.
[24] when new staff begin in an Association, have specific examples of various evaluations available to look at.
[5] build evaluation discussion and "report outs" into regular educator meetings. (We currently discuss grants and activities, but not evaluation on a regular basis.)
[8] start in an organization with those individuals with the most interest and the most to gain from implementing evaluation practice and then have them share their results with others in the organization.
[70] encourage programs to use various forms of evaluation, depending on what the program needs and what they can do at this time.
[77] hold regular (e.g., bi-monthly) meetings of issue leaders and educators to report out on their strategic plans and share evaluation measures and methods.
[31] facilitate opportunities for Extension program people to dialog about the value of evaluation for their work and for their organization.
Cluster 9: Standardize and Streamline (#4)

[47] set clear expectations of what staff must do to fulfill evaluation needs; establish a standard operating procedure.  4.48
[48] after making sure staff have received evaluation training, incorporate evaluation skills and activity as part of performance appraisal information.  4.15
[53] strive for some degree of consistency across all Association statewide in developing, using, implementing evaluations.  4.09
[9] involve all staff in program and evaluation planning -- not top down.  3.94
[51] have specific monetary support for evaluation from both state-wide Extension administration and the Associations.  3.85
[64] document evaluation procedures you have developed so future staff can refer back to them.  3.82
[68] centralize data collection methods by having a few key questions all program areas ask and answer.  3.79
[54] apply evaluation planning to organization functions as well as to programming so that every staff person practices evaluation on a regular basis.  3.73
[37] invest in collaborative approaches (e.g., multi-county evaluation of a program area, incentive funds to program work team, etc.)  3.64
[65] use multiple options to encourage collaboration, networking, and idea-sharing on evaluation planning and implementation (between programs and/or between offices).  3.61
[55] set standards in terms of which programs per year have to do a "big" evaluation (i.e. so that there is not an expectation that all programs have to be evaluated intensely all the time, and so that evaluation resources are focused where they are most valuable.)  3.61
[33] model data-based decision making at all levels, especially in Extension Administration.  3.58
[22] have Cornell Cooperative Extension Administration communicate what specific information is needed from associations for leveraging funding, etc. at the state level.  3.58

Average: 3.83