

TIMELY INFORMATION

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Scholarship and Service in Cooperative Extension

An important study was recently published by the LSU AgCenter. Richard Vloskly and Michael Dunn recently completed a study that looked at the “employment experiences and personal perceptions” of Extension workers. The survey found that Extension employees receive more satisfaction from service activities, but that they felt they were rewarded more by their institutions for scholarship. These results were consistent for all regions of the country. The entire study is well worth reading, and can be accessed at:

<http://www.lfpdc.lsu.edu/publication/papers/wp82.pdf>

In the southern region, 77% of respondents indicated that they were expected to exhibit scholarship as part of their Extension job. However when asked if scholarship had been clearly defined by institution administrators, a similar proportion indicated in the negative, that scholarship had not been clearly defined.

Another very interesting facet of this research is that it provides a ranking of the relative importance of various types of scholarly output by southern Extension workers. When asked to rate the importance of examples of scholarship, highest rated was “development and presentation of research-based materials”. Second highest rated was “knowledge and application of new technology”. Third was “program delivery effectiveness”. “Refereed journal articles” ranked near the bottom, in 14th place ahead of “radio interviews” but behind “website development”.

Ranking of examples of scholarship for Extension employees in the South:

1. Development and presentation of research-based materials
2. Knowledge and application of new technology
3. Program delivery effectiveness demonstrated by evaluation, change, and adoption
4. Innovative teaching methods
5. Presentations at professional meetings
6. A tie between Advising on critical issues and Cooperation/collaboration with other faculty in your institution.
7. External funding
8. Participation in and leadership of professional organizations/committees
9. Documentation of major program areas and initiatives
10. Participation in public policy and community issues
11. Writing newspaper articles
12. Awards and recognition
13. Website development
14. Refereed journal articles
15. Radio interviews
16. Being mentioned in newspaper articles

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