North Region Extension Excellence in Programming Academy: An In-depth Program Development Training Model for Early to Mid-career Extension Educators

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Abstract  
This professional development course for early to mid-career Extension educators focuses on principles, theories, techniques, and applications for program development within extension educational programmatic environments. Program development strategies, focusing educational programming in relation to issues identified by clientele, and program planning to help people and organizations succeed will be the focus of this professional development course.

A program development caveat to all leaders and managers . . . outcomes will occur in the presence or absence of formal planning and program development activities. In the absence of formal planning and program development, outcomes are more likely to be random and
uncontrolled. In the presence of formal planning and program development, outcomes are more likely to be predictable and controlled.

As Extension organizations become more complex, as change becomes more constant, as accountability becomes more pervasive, and as individuals have more choices, formal planning and program development becomes increasingly critical to achieving success.

It is expected that by the time an Extension educator has finished this professional development course, they will be able to:

- Define and use terminology associated with Cooperative Extension;
- Define in detail the Extension organization and infrastructure;
- Describe how Extension programs are developed, implemented and evaluated;
- Demonstrate the core competencies critical for individuals employed within Texas AgriLife Extension as they relate to the program development process.
- Help Texas AgriLife Extension Service faculty achieve success, determine their sense of purpose, deal with change, and improve effectiveness and efficiencies through planning and program development.
- Understand the importance and necessity of planning and program development within programmatic environments.
- Use planning and program development principles, theories, techniques, and applications to help agricultural/life science organizations achieve strategic objectives.

The North Region Extension Excellence in Programming Academy is a unique approach that is modeled after a similar effort conducted in the South Region in 2007. It is a 10 month program in which the following are utilized.

1) Centra Meetings
2) Three Face-to-Face classroom type sessions which are three days in length
3) Online self directed lessons
4) Assignments as assigned that will support and add value to agents county program

Partners in conducting the academy are: Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M University, West Texas A&M University, and Texas Tech University. Participants are able to enroll for graduate credit in any of the partner institutions.

**Key Words:** Program development training model, Early to Mid-career Extension Educators,