

Selecting Committees

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How productive are extension council committees? Are many made up of the same people? Have projects failed for lack of proper study? Have programs been dropped for lack of needed resources? Is it difficult to get people to serve on committees?

Successful committees depend on careful selection, recruitment and orientation.

Selecting Committees

When forming a committee, step one is to consider the kinds of people within and/or outside the council that should be included. Make a list of skills, knowledge, viewpoints and other considerations that should be represented on the committee. Several important considerations:

- What groups are interested in the activity?
- What or whom will be affected?
- Which people have the knowledge or skill needed?
- Which people have access to the resources to do the job?
- Are there groups that might develop a greater sense of belonging or commitment to University Extension if they worked on the committee?
- Is representation needed from different points of view—civic and community groups, ethnic groups, age groups, economic levels?

After deciding on the kinds of people that should be on the committee, step two is to select the individuals to fill the roles. Consider:

- People interested in the issue;
- People who will communicate with others in the community;
- People with a positive attitude and enthusiasm;
- People who are able to work with others;
- Continuity in committee membership; and
- Personal interest or technical expertise

Recruitment

Having decided what kinds of people will be needed and having identified individuals who can fill those roles, step three is recruitment. Individuals are successfully recruited by indicating to them, in specific terms, why they were selected and why their unique combination of knowledge, skills and interests are vital to the success of the group. Steps 1 and 2 should be the basis of your recruitment. If the request is sincere, it will be an offer they won't refuse.

An example: The elections committee used the following process in selecting nominees to the council.

Step 1: Kinds of people needed	Step 2: Individuals	Step 3: Recruitment
One skilled in fund raising	Barry Smith, local college	We need your skills in public relations campaigns
One who knows business training needs	Julie Smart, Chamber of Commerce	We need someone who is in touch with local business
Service club representatives	Rick Rhodes	We need your enthusiasm
Local government official	Carol Sharp, city manager	We need your knowledge and network with the city.
Realtor, who knows sites for the new office location	Sally Bright	We need your knowledge of the county
Farmer, who is interested in small-farm operations	Tom Marlow	We need your knowledge about small farming operations.
Organization, coordination skills	Wilma Brown	We need your coordination skills.

Recruitment should always include information about the time commitment requested. Tell people the number of meetings involved, how long they last, whether work will be needed outside of committee meeting (if so, what it will be) and the length of the term on the committee.