

Southern Region Middle Managers Committee

Minutes of Conference Call – October 10, 2019 via ZOOM

Attendees: Blake Lanford, Jenny Cocanougher, Curt Lacy, Jeff Young, Gerald Jones, Jim Stewart, Sonya Furguson, Dr. Rick Cartwright, Tom Obreza, Karissa Ulmer, Lonnie Johnson, William Hodge, Sharon Reynolds, Dr. Carolyn Williams

Called to order by Blake Lanford. The ZOOM conference call is being recorded and will be shared via email to the listserve; as well as possibly imbedding in quarterly newsletters.

Update from Administrative Advisors:

Dr. Rick Cartwright shared lots of new department heads and faculty positions occurring in Arkansas. Dr. Cartwright is retiring next year and an active search has begun for his replacement. He reminded the group of these items:

1. Recommends following the newsletter “Focus” being shared by Doug Steele. May be able to access a copy through your state administrative leader.
2. Importance of the National Impact Database
3. Recognized TN and AK for National Excellence in Extension awards

Dr. Carolyn Williams joined the meeting later and shared continuing progress in the move of NIFA offices.

Blake Lanford asked Jim Stewart for an update on plans for the Middle Managers Conference. Jim is currently working with hotel locations in downtown Nashville. Tentative date: April 5-9, 2021.

Sharing from states:

FL – Tom Obreza shared they are doing quite a bit of hiring in FL. Question for the group – where do you advertise job openings? Committee member present shared a number of ideas.

KY – Jenny Cocanougher shared update on KY’s transition to new administrative structure. Currently 3 regional director positions are posted. Two models are being considered that would utilize area directors providing direct supervision to a smaller group of counties within each region.

AK – Sharon Reynolds shared county staff chair stipends have been increased.

TN – Jim Stewart shared concerns over decreased 4-H camp attendance - asked for ideas of incentives for agents who have increased camp attendance.

SC – Blake Lanford shared process to address compression issues with employees

Current Plan of Work review and updates:

1. Addressing the Opioid Crisis – Jeff Young has received information from NC, MS, GA, TX, VA and AK. Will send a reminder to listserve.
2. Onboarding – Karissa will be gathering information related to onboarding of new employees
3. Quarterly video conferences – Blake is taking lead with assistance from Mike Martin. Would like to build in presentations into the scheduled quarterly meetings (webinars). Example – information on the LEAD21 project
4. Quarterly newsletters – Blake is taking lead and plans to imbed recorded quarterly meetings in the newsletter.
5. Repository of “Key Informants” who are willing to crosstrain staff
6. Explore various collaboration tools – OneDrive, TEAMS, Google docs, etc

Committee members brainstormed ideas for newsletters/webinars:

- Onboarding techniques
- Recruitment ideas
- Working with Limited English Audiences – translators, developing evaluation tools, etc.
- Roles, structure and function of effective Advisory Councils
- Follow up from Marketing presentation (utilizing social media, FB live etc.)
- Succession Planning

With no further business the meeting was adjourned. ZOOM meeting was recorded by Blake Lanford, minutes recorded by Jenny Cocanougher.

Next conference call scheduled for: February 13, 2020 - 9 am CTS/10 am ETS