

Management and Evaluation of Shared UF/IFAS Extension Agent Positions

On behalf of UF/IFAS Extension, [FSG's Associate Director of Extension and Education](#) helps Extension faculty design, implement and evaluate their programming; providing input to agents as they write their promotion packets, and reviewing promotion packets. Duties also involve serving as a Sea Grant liaison to county extension directors, district extension directors and the UF/IFAS Dean for Extension. As Extension agents are eligible for permanent status and promotion at UF through a system that parallels the tenure system for departmental faculty, this Associate Director is an integral component to this process. They work with the tenure-track FSG Extension Specialists (i.e., assistant professors with 70% extension and 30% research assignments) to help develop their extension programming. These faculty are evaluated at the department level for annual progress and progress toward tenure and promotion; the FSG Director and Associate Director of Extension and Education participate in these reviews and provide feedback from the FSG perspective. Finally, the responsibilities of this Associate Director position include assisting in the compilation of information for reporting to the National Sea Grant Office.

Individual marine extension agents receive guidance from a local advisory committees and utilize these committees for help in developing, marketing and implementing extension and education activities at the county level. *SMART objectives* and *Logic models* (Diehl and Galindo-Gonzalez 2019; Israel 2019) are developed to plan what inputs and activities will be used to achieve outputs (i.e., short-, medium- and ultimately long-term outcomes). Programs develop as follows:

1. Program Planning Phase

County-based program planning is conducted individually with input from local advisory committees and UF/IFAS county-based extension and local government leadership (as described above, agents and specialists typically share their work priorities with Florida Sea Grant and local governments).

In addition to localized activity planning, FSG supports the engagement and participation of all program affiliated agents and specialists in WAGs. These WAGs are designed to address a set of prioritized issues shared by many agents and specialists that span Florida regions and geographies. WAG activities blend expertise from county-based agents, statewide specialists and research affiliates towards addressing issues that have broader relevance to Floridians and FSG partners.

Collaborative programming is planned within the context of WAGs, which convene twice per year and once coinciding with an annual FSG Extension Program meeting. During this meeting, Plans of Work are established that help guide individual and group activities.

2. Implementation Phase

As is the case with planning, implementation of interventions to address prioritized issues is coordinated with local partners or takes place within the context of WAGs as collaborative or shared responses. Activities typically draw from the programmatic expertise of participating agents and specialists. As the only statewide marine extension and outreach program, FSG provides a unique capability to support broader agency-driven programs that require stakeholder engagement (e.g., meeting hosting and facilitation, citizen science, resource monitoring, fisheries extension, formal and informal education).

3. Evaluation Phase

Programs and collaborative activities are typically planned and implemented with evaluation in mind, and in conformance with the Logic Model concept, which works backwards from desired outcomes and then to design activities and evaluative components. Evaluation can take the form of pre-tests and post-tests to assess knowledge gained, follow up surveys to quantify a change in behavior, to more intensive dialog with collaborators, partners and end-users leading to accomplishment and impact descriptions and economic benefits calculations.

4. Reporting Phase

The reporting of activities and programmatic outputs (i.e., accomplishments and impacts, tools and information services, performance measures, economic benefits, etc.) occurs throughout the year in a manner consistent with the requirements of the National Sea Grant PIER system. Typically, extension and research affiliates share their activity reports in an in-house Online Activity Reporting System (OARS) with sufficient time to allow program management to assemble, summarize and transfer this information annually into the NSGO PIER system.

Coordination with other FSG program elements

Within FSG, the Extension and educational programming is functionally integrated with other program elements – notably Research and Communications – in a variety of both formal and informal activities. With respect to research, the most fundamental impetus for integration of missions is through the [WAGs](#), as these groups are collaboratively managed and driven by research and extension personnel. In addition, as appropriate, FSG Extension agents will collaborate and coordinate with FSG-funded researchers in developing outreach/education materials. In addition, these faculty can fill the role of collaborators, investigators, associate investigators or principal investigators on FSG-funded research projects.

References

Diehl, D.C., and S. Galindo-Gonzalez. 2019. *SMART Objectives*. Publication #FCS6018. University of Florida IFAS Electronic Data Information System (EDIS). Gainesville, FL.

Israel, G.D. 2019. *Using Logic Models for Program Development*. Publication #AEC360.

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