

2017 University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Combined Research and Extension Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results Review

Status: Accepted

Date Accepted: 06/18/2018

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State: Tennessee

Institution(s):

- University of Tennessee
- Tennessee State University

Type of Report (Check all that apply)

- 1862 Research
- 1862 Extension
- 1890 Research
- 1890 Extension
- Tuskegee Research
- Tuskegee Extension

NPL Reviewers:

- Eric Norland

Report Overview Section (Required):

Acceptable		
YES	NO	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Executive summary. (Suggested in Guidance)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total FTEs are included for each appropriate institution of the Report

Comments:

The Executive Summary describes the roles of UT and TSU in creating economic opportunities across the state in all 95 counties. Agents and specialists provide science-based information that provides solutions to the most pressing societal, economic, and environmental issues for 6.7 million Tennesseans. The economic impacts of UT and TSU programs returned an estimated \$8.65 for every \$1 of public funds. Further, an estimated 6,505 jobs were created or retained through the impacts of the research and extension programs. Both UT and TSU, individually and collectively, have made important research discoveries that are transformed into practical use and improved their facilities in order to conduct cutting edge research in state-of-the-art laboratories.

Merit/Program Review Process Section (Required):

Acceptable		
YES	NO	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	At least one process has been checked (including other) (required)

Comments:

The merit review and peer review processes used in the plan of work were implemented 8 years ago when an external review panel was conducted. The merit review process for TSU Extension consists primarily of a review done by an internal university panel which reviewed and approved annual plans of work and reports of results. The TSU research program review system remains unchanged from previous years. Faculty proposals are evaluated for relevance, scientific soundness and appropriateness of the planned outcomes. Only those programs that are approved are developed into executable programs. The UT AgResearch program underwent a formal week-long review several years ago and is due for another one once a new research Head is appointed. In the meantime, the program review report continues to serve as an important reference document for research direction, productivity, and staffing. An online review system at UT allows for rapid interactive proposal review and revision of work plans as needed.

Stakeholder Input Process Section (Required):

Acceptable		
YES	NO	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) Actions taken to seek stakeholder input that encourages their participation (Required)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) Method used to identify groups and individuals (Required)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) Method used for collecting stakeholder input (Required)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) A statement of how collected input will be considered (Required)

Comments:

Actions taken to seek stakeholder input - UT and TSU made more than 8,000 contacts to assess program needs by

stakeholders. These contacts occurred in the form of advisory committee meetings, focus groups, and interviews with key informants. Special emphasis was placed on involving youth and other underrepresented groups. Both TSU and UT engage important agricultural organizations, commodity groups, and professional societies in stakeholder input processes.

Methods used to identify individuals and groups and collect input from them - UT and TSU use a variety of methods to identify individual and organizational stakeholders. All TN extension agents receive training in selecting stakeholder assessment strategies and selecting individuals for Advisory Committees. UT engages with three Regional Advisory Committees to help guide AgResearch and each AgResearch Department has an advisory group that provides stakeholder input. TSU research engages with community groups, industry associations and individual stakeholders to solicit input to determine research areas of emphasis.

Methods used for collecting stakeholder input - Stakeholder input is collected using most of the standard methods for collecting input, including meetings and survey with both UT and TSU users and non-users. In recent years, various social media tools have been used to collect input and a number of programs maintain an active presence on social media. Additionally, UT conducts a "Day on the Hill" to meet with legislators, producers and farmers, and industry groups to present program accomplishments and solicit comments about important issues that need to be addressed.

How collected input is used - Stakeholder input was specifically used to modify several programs, including the Human Development; Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries; Health and Safety; and 4-H Youth Development Planned Programs. These program changes resulted in more children and adults being reached and impacted.

In summary, UT and TSU have very effective approaches to identifying stakeholders, soliciting input, and utilizing that input to revise programs.

Planned Programs Section (Required):

Acceptable		
YES	NO	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used Appropriate Logic Model Elements
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Input Dollars Expended on Each Planned Program
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate Knowledge Areas
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate Outputs for each Program
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate Outcomes for each Program

Comments:

UT and TSU have reported FY 2017 accomplishment and impacts in 13 Planned Programs. Across the entire portfolio of planned programs, UT and TSU research and extension have identified the most pressing issues, be they human health and safety for adults and youth; economic realities and opportunities; agricultural and horticultural production challenges; human-induced threats to water, forests, and wildlife; food safety and availability; and family dynamics and well-being. In all areas, relevant research is being conducted and impacts are reported; likewise, across the extension programs in the planned programs there is strong evidence that both UT and TSU actively engage partners and volunteers to expand the reach and effectiveness of the programs. It is evident from the quality of the impacts and accomplishments that are reported on that there is a strong culture of evaluation at both institutions and that both research and extension faculty and staff are committed to determining just what the impacts of their work are and are Tennesseans' lives being improved.

One suggestion regarding reporting research impacts: In the OUTCOME section of each planned program, in part 3c - Qualitative Outcome or Impact Statement, a good example of what has been done is represented on page 208 where the investigator completed the "Results" section with: "Findings include..." This is contrasted with many of the "Results" sections across programs and indicators that make a general statement, such as "Information was learned [what information?] or information was conveyed to farmers about [what information?]. I would encourage a review of good examples of Results throughout the report and convey them as examples to all who contribute to the report. UT and TSU could better represent and talk about their programs with more (quantity, not quality; there are already many fine Results sections) specific result statements.

General Recommendations:

The only recommendation that the reviewer has is to continue to develop and support the culture and expectation for evaluation in both the research and extension program. Work with new faculty and staff in both areas to help them understand and appreciate the value of evaluation.

Not a recommendation but an observation - For several years, UT AgResearch has made reference to a program review that was conducted several years ago. With the impending (I assume) appointment of a new Director of AgResearch, UT might want to consider if they would benefit from an external program review. These are not required by NIFA, and they do entail a considerable amount of work and some expense, but "outside" eyes, perspectives, and experiences may contribute to the evolution of what is already a very fine program.

We hereby recommend NIFA acceptance of this Annual Report.

Eric Norland /s/

NPL Signature

05/18/2018

Date