

2016 University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Combined Research and Extension Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results Review

Status: Accepted

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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 provides a thorough description of the work Tennessee State University (TSU) and the University of Tennessee (UT) - the Tennessee Land Grant Universities(LGUs) - the settings and venues in which their staff conduct research, education, and education programs, and the positive impacts that they, jointly and individually, have on the lives on Tennesseans. Their work extends to all 95 counties in the state and the 6.5 million residents. The Extension professionals and the volunteers that are recruited and trained had 4.7 million direct contacts throughout the year. The research and extension accomplishments are closely aligned with the priorities of NIFA and as identified as needs by the state's residents.

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:

Both TSU and UT utilize merit review processes to ensure that their science (research, education, and extension) programs are high quality, based on the most up-to-date science, and relevant to their stakeholders. TSU continues to utilize a longstanding and effective merit review process involving an internal university panel comprised of researchers and administrators in the 1890 LGU System. Faculty proposals for planned programs undergo a stringent review for relevance, scientific soundness, and appropriateness of planned outcomes. UT's merit review process is based on process recommendations from an external review team that evaluated AgResearch's self-study several years ago. UT continues to use an online work plan submission system where the plans are the core of many of the planned research programs. This system allows review and revision of plans based on interactions between Project Investigators (PIs), Department Head, Research Center Director, Deans and others.

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:

a. Actions taken to seek stakeholder input that encourages participation: Both TSU and UT take specific actions to

engage stakeholders. This section primarily describes actions that are taken to seek stakeholder input for research programs. In the case of TSU, the institution seeks stakeholder input in both hiring processes and in determining research priorities. A wide range of commodity groups are regularly utilized to determine research needs and direction. TSU forestry programs seek input from various state and local forestry agencies, and environmental programs are engaged with the Cumberland River Compact. UT formed three regional advisory councils to help guide programs and priorities. They are organized around the extension regions. Additionally, each Department has an advisory group, and most research and education centers have advocacy groups which are comprised of individuals specifically invited and are comprised of industry and regional representatives, local leaders, scientific peers, commodity groups and other relevant stakeholders.

b. Methods used to identify groups and individuals -

UT and TSU employ methods that are effective in identifying stakeholder. Not every method is effective for every stakeholder holder groups to methods are varied depending on the stakeholder representatives that are sought. Both institutions utilize well-developed needs assessment approaches, including advisory group meetings, focus groups and interview with key informants. All Tennessee Extension Agents (UT and TSU) are trained in selecting needs assessment strategizes and selecting individuals for Advisory Committees who represent diversity in all of its forms. Extension Agents recruit individuals who have not utilized Extension as well as those who are regular participants. UT and TSU administrators meet with the State Extension Advisory Committee to help them determine the needs and to direct educational programs.

Most stakeholder input for TSU research is collected in face-to-face discussions, interactions with commodity groups or via survey instruments. With the increase in the use of social media, feedback is received from Facebook and Twitter. Also, audience recorders are being used to collect information in real time.

c. Methods used for collecting stakeholder input - The institutions utilize the input in a wide variety of ways. In FY 2016, stakeholder input was used to identify volunteer leaders, identify new audiences, and identify and secure locations for Extension programs. The report provides specific examples, on a program basis, on how programs are strengthened and modified based on stakeholder input. Examples are provided for the Environmental and Water Quality; Health and Safety; and Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife programs.

d. How collected input is used - The Annual Report provides examples of how stakeholder input was utilized to modify these Extension program:

- Environmental and Water Quality Impacts;
- Health and Safety;
- Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife;
- Youth programs in STEM areas, leadership development, financial planning, beginning farmer training, obesity/health, and nursery crops were other programs with needs that should be prioritized by TSU Extension. Utilizing stakeholder input, UT AgResearch modifies research directions, drops obsolete programs and adds new lines of research to address emerging issues. One example where there continues to be strong interest and stakeholder input is the entire spectrum of biofuels and bioenergy

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:

TSU and UT have provided extensive qualitative and quantitative data on the 13 planned programs that they work on jointly or individually, most of which are integrated programs (research, extension, education). The report contains good descriptions and goals of each of the programs. There are many good qualitative impact statements for research- and extension-related outcomes, though they are mostly dominated by research impacts. There are several planned programs with planned outcomes with no qualitative impact statements for any of the planned

outcomes. A recommendation regarding this is in the summary comments for the report. Several of the planned programs have noteworthy publication productivity, particularly research publications. Another noteworthy accomplishment is the broad involvement of Extension Specialists and Agents across many eXtension Communities of Practice (CoPs). Their efforts with these CoPs has statewide as well as national impact. These level of engagement with eXtension is likely the result of Extension leadership that is supportive of their involvement. One question from the reviewer is what appears to be a possible anomaly in the PLANNED vs. ACTUAL PAID FTE/SY for Planned Program #2 - Agronomic Crop Systems. The PLANNED is 4.0 FTE/SY; the ACTUAL PAID is 45.0 FTE/SY. This is the only planned program with that great of a difference between PLANNED and ACTUAL.

General Recommendations:

Tennessee State University and University of Tennessee have once again submitted a very fine annual report. It documents the research, extension, and education programs, and their impacts, that are supported by the federal partner, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The programs are impressive by any measure: They specifically address the needs of Tennesseans as evidence by the stakeholder input processes that are in place; they create and transfer new knowledge across a wide range of agricultural, natural resources, youth development and human behavioral sciences. And most importantly, the programs of these institutions make a difference in peoples' lives.

This reviewer offers a few recommendations for consideration, with the caveat that the institutions will know best of they are applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider the possibility of another external research review ("last one was several years ago"). The reviewer acknowledges that external reviews require considerable time, effort, and expense.
- Consider re-organizing the Stakeholder Input section of the report. First, It basically reads the same as it has for the past several years and references reviews and efforts that are now several years old (e.g. PR firm utilized by UT AgResearch). Second, some of the information provided in each section belongs in different responses to the questions. A couple of specifics for your consideration:
 - Actions taken to seek stakeholder input - mostly relates to research. Include actions taken to seek stakeholder input for extension programs.
 - Processes used to identify individual and groups - There is some repetitive information in this section that doesn't really answer the question. For example, "One of UT AgResearch's highest priorities..." is also shown in the "Actions to seek stakeholder input section." The question that needs to be more specifically focused on is HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY INCIVIDUALS AND GROUPS, not what the groups are (e.g., the RAC's).
 - For each Planned Program, determine at least one planned outcome for a research outcome and an extension outcome for which a qualitative outcome/impact statement can be provided. It is not necessary to provide a qualitative outcome/impact statement for every planned outcome in every program.

This reviewer appreciates the opportunity to review the TN LGUs' annual report for the sixth consecutive year. Congratulations on the accomplishments of the faculty and staff who have done the work and to the administrators for their effective leadership.

We hereby recommend NIFA acceptance of this Annual Report.

Eric Norland /s/

NPL Signature

05/29/2017

Date