

PERCEPTIONS HELD BY LEGISLATORS TOWARD THE LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

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Abstract

Members of the Louisiana Legislature were surveyed to determine their perceptions of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) and to identify factors that affected their perceptions about the LCES. The factors included in the study were: familiarity with LCES programs, perception of effectiveness, source of LCES information, and participation in LCES programs. The study also determined the association of selected characteristics with legislators' perceptions. Legislators were familiar with the LCES, with the 4-H program receiving the highest familiarity. The agriculture and 4-H programs were perceived as very effective by legislators. Legislators indicated that printed information, personal contacts, newsletters and newspaper articles provided moderate exposure to LCES. A majority of the legislators had attended at least one 4-H youth development activity. Rural legislators were more likely to perceive LCES as effective. Agriculture Committee membership was the best predictor of perception of the effectiveness of LCES programs. One key recommendation was that the LCES should initiate a program designed to strengthen and improve the image of the LCES held by legislators.

Introduction

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is an integral part of the higher education system of land-grant colleges and universities. Like colleges and universities, the CES depends upon the legislature for funding. Over the years the CES has addressed the challenge of working with people to identify problems and opportunities, adapt to societal change, and serve the needs of its clientele. This must continue if it is to maintain efficient and effective educational programs for the people.

Extension programs are financed cooperatively from federal, state, and county sources. The current national distribution pattern reflects federal support of approximately 40%, state support of about 40%, county support of 18% and 2% is derived from non-tax sources (Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, 1996). Federal appropriations in Louisiana accounted for 30% of the overall

1996 budget, while 69% was from state appropriations, .4% from parish appropriations, and .6% from non-tax sources (Louisiana Legislature, 1996).

Legislators were targeted in this study because current and future programs of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) are directly affected by the legislators' perceptions of the LCES. Laws enacted by the Legislature impact the destiny, prosperity, and general well-being of individuals as well as organizations such as the LCES. Since members of the Legislature are formal legitimizers for the LCES and are usually perceived as key influentials within their respective districts, it is important to the LCES and its clientele that the legislators have an understanding of LCES programs and activities.

John Paluszek, CEO of Ketcham Public Affairs in New York, was retained by the Cooperative Extension Service and Cooperative State Research Service to study the Extension Service and Experiment Stations. In his report, Paluszek stated, "the

Cooperative Extension Service is swimming against some very strong currents. Federal funds are being redirected and state and local funds are under unprecedented pressure" (p. 96). According to Paluszek, the CES has performed well but needs to significantly communicate an awareness of the programs, how those programs can be accessed by customers, and the benefits those programs provide to individuals and to communities (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, 1995).

Wahlke, Eulaw, Buchanan and Ferguson (1962) conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of the American legislative system at the state level. Their study focused on the perceptions and behavior of the men and women in four state legislatures. In examining the political careers of these legislators, the researchers found that certain information sources guided the perceptions and attitudes of the legislators. According to Wahlke et al.:

Legislators do not respond to expectations from whatever source as incumbents of a particular kind of public office alone but in terms of qualities and characteristics which define them as human beings. How they respond and why they respond as they do are questions influenced by the whole sequence of their prior experiences, attitudes and predispositions; their current perspectives and goals; and by their anticipation of the future (p. 7).

Dugas (1994) studied the voting records of the members of the 1992 Louisiana Legislature as these records related to support for higher education. To accomplish this, Dugas collected data on the roll calls on bills on higher education and related them to personal characteristics of legislators. Dugas concluded that legislative support for higher education is reasonably predicted by studying personal characteristics of the legislators, which included race, gender, education, age, occupation, legislative experience, party affiliation, committee membership, legislative committee leadership, and number of bills introduced (Dugas, 1994).

Miller (1988) sought to determine the perceptions of the South Carolina Legislature with regard to the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service. Miller identified four areas where perception was to be determined: purpose and objectives, participation and involvement, basic program areas, and clientele of the CES. He attempted to associate these perceptions with selected factors: role in the legislature, years of legislative experience, political party affiliation, place of residence, character of district, age, and occupation. A mailed questionnaire was used to collect data from 65% of the 1985 South Carolina Legislature. Legislators perceived the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service as a rural, agriculturally-oriented organization. Each of the selected factors was associated significantly with at least one or more aspects of perception. Miller found that party affiliation, place of residence, and character of the district exerted the greatest influence on how the legislators perceived the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service (Miller, 1988).

Curtis (1978) conducted a study similar to the research done by Miller to determine Alabama legislators' perception of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. Curtis (1978) found that the respondents had a low level of understanding of the major purposes of the CES and a low level of participation in extension activities. The findings showed that the respondents were more familiar with major program thrusts of the CES in agriculture and 4-H youth, and ranked these as the two most important areas of work. The study also noted that respondents who received reports on work and accomplishments of the CES did not have more positive perceptions of the CES (Curtis, 1978).

A comparison of the perceptions of Texas legislators, their legislative staff members, and of registered lobbyists in Texas concerning sources of information on animal agriculture issues was the focus of a study by Schlink (1996). Providing information to legislators concerning agricultural issues was deemed essential. The study also concluded that lobbyists were effective in influencing legislation regarding agricultural issues and the same methods

used to inform legislators can be used to inform and influence lobbyists. Conversely, working with a specific legislative aide in order to influence a specific legislator was seen as most effective for lobbyists (Schlink, 1996).

Walker (1977) found that the legislator's place of residence was related to their familiarity with the overall CES program. Legislators with agricultural occupations and committee assignments were more familiar with the total CES program than legislators with non-agricultural occupations and committee assignments. Even though these groups knew more about the CES, this did not appear to influence participation in CES activities. All legislators perceived 4-H and youth development as an important area of work. Even though some legislators knew more about the overall CES program, their participation in CES did not differ from those who knew less (Walker, 1977).

Hemmingsen (1996) stated that in this era of increased accountability and limited resources, decision makers are asking tougher questions about continued funding for public programs. At the same time, these same decision makers do not have the time nor resources to conduct an in depth study of every program they control. It is everyone's job within these organizations to clearly describe what they do. Staff must be able to articulate, in terms that matter to the public, what difference the organization makes, what are the outcomes and impacts. Planning and coordination of these educational and advocacy efforts must occur at the organizational level. As individuals and organizations build their relationship marketing capacity, and develop consistent contact with important decision makers, the ability to positively impact key policy and funding decisions will be enhanced (Hemmingsen, 1996). Kotler and Fox (1985), in their book on institutional strategic marketing, point out that only by fulfilling the needs of customers can an institution or business effectively market itself.

In developing, maintaining and enhancing relationships with elected officials, extension service staff must employ "high touch and personalized technology" communications strategies. By

using imagination to portray the extension service's commitment and ability to address important community issues, the extension service's future will be secure (DeYoung, 1988).

Statement of the Problem

Since its beginning, the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) has been oriented toward the agricultural sector of the state. Since its clientele has been largely concentrated on farms and in rural areas, the LCES is concerned about the support that a more urban legislature will give its requests for appropriations as it restructures its programs to meet the needs of citizens from both urban and rural areas of the state.

Prior to this study, no information existed on the image of the LCES as perceived by members of the legislature, or on the factors that affect their perceived image of the LCES. This information can be useful in evaluating the marketing and educational efforts currently underway within the LCES and in modifying the marketing program as appropriate based on the legislators' perceptions of the state's needs.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions of the Louisiana Legislature toward the LCES. The objectives were to:

1. Describe the demographic characteristics of the legislators,
2. Determine legislators' level of familiarity with LCES programs,
3. Determine the effectiveness of LCES programs as perceived by legislators,
4. Determine sources of information about LCES used by legislators,
5. Determine the amount of participation in LCES programs by legislators,
6. Determine if differences existed in legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs by selected variables,

7. Determine if relationships existed between perceptions of effectiveness of LCES programs and selected variables, and
8. Determine if selected variables explained a significant proportion of the variance in the legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs.

Procedure

The population included members of the Louisiana Legislature over time and the members of the 1997 Louisiana Legislature were considered to be a representative sample. Personal data such as gender, race, and age, party affiliation, and committee assignments were collected on each legislator from the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc., the Louisiana Legislature home page, and the Louisiana Department of Elections and Voter Registration. The survey data were collected by LCES faculty who were located in parishes corresponding with the legislators' districts. Of the 144 legislators, 109 surveys (76%) were returned.

The goal of this research was to determine the perception of the LCES held by members of the legislature. In considering an appropriate method of investigation, the survey method was selected. Kerlinger (1986) stated that responses to mail questionnaires are generally poor. Returns of less than 40 to 50 percent are common. Since a higher return rate was desired, and the survey involved a population that might not yield a high response rate if a mail survey alone was used, the personal survey method was chosen (Kerlinger, 1986).

No instrument could be located in the literature, which would adequately address the objectives of this study. Using selected content from other instruments as a foundation (Curtis, 1978; Dugas, 1994; Miller, 1988; Walker, 1977), an instrument was constructed that contained the following sections: questions eliciting demographic information not provided in the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc. (PAR) reference, questions eliciting information on legislators' familiarity with

LCES programs, questions eliciting information on legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs, questions eliciting information on sources from which legislators gained information on LCES programs, and questions eliciting information on legislators' participation in LCES programs. The instrument's face and content validity were assessed by four university faculty members, and the Director and Assistant Director of the LCES. The validation panel recommended minor changes, which were incorporated into the survey instrument. As an additional effort to assess the face and content validity of the instrument, 10 former members of the Legislature were faxed a copy of the survey instrument. Seven of the former legislators returned the survey. Several suggested minor changes in the survey instrument, which were incorporated into the survey instrument. In the study, the internal consistency for the four scales in the instrument ranged from .76 to .95 using Cronbach's alpha based on data from the population studied.

Procedures recommended by Dillman (1994) were used in collecting data. LCES agents were asked to distribute the surveys to assigned legislators based on location of the legislators' districts as it corresponded to where the agent was employed. A letter from the LCES Director explaining the purpose of the project was mailed to all participating LCES parish chairmen so that the chairmen would be familiar with the purpose of the study. Other material in this mailing included: copies of the survey instrument, a copy of the letter to be given to legislators prior to the interview, and names, addresses and telephone numbers of those legislators to be surveyed. Parish chairmen assigned agents on their staff (including the parish chairmen) to distribute the surveys. Extension agents either delivered the survey instrument to the legislator, left the instrument at the legislator's office, or mailed the survey to the legislator after a phone contact. The survey was completed by the legislator without any input from the extension agent. Follow-up data collection efforts included a reminder letter from the Director of LCES, telephone calls by the

authors, and a final letter to all non-responding legislators.

Significant differences existed in the scale means for the four primary variables (scale means) by the four response waves. The alpha level for these tests was set a priori at .05. Although some would argue that a 76% response rate is fairly high, the differences in scale means by response wave were so substantial that it was concluded that the responses did not represent the population of legislators. Therefore, all findings and conclusions reported in this manuscript apply only to the respondents, and cannot be generalized to the rest of the population.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the personal characteristics of respondents. Analysis of variance and *t*-tests were used to determine if there were differences in legislators' familiarity with LCES programs, perceptions of effectiveness of LCES programs, exposure to LCES information, and participation in LCES activities by selected characteristics. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between selected characteristics and legislators' familiarity with LCES programs, perception of effectiveness of LCES programs, exposure to LCES information sources, and participation in LCES activities. Stepwise regression was used to determine if selected variables explained a significant portion of the variance in familiarity with LCES programs, perception of effectiveness of LCES programs, exposure to LCES information sources and participation in LCES activities. For the *t*-tests, analyses of variance, Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple regression analyses, effect sizes were reported instead of statistical significance since these data represent the population of respondents. For the *t*-tests and analyses of variance, Cohen's *d* was reported (Cohen, 1988). For the Pearson correlation coefficients, the set of descriptors proposed

by Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1979) were used to describe effect size. Since R^2 represents the proportion of variance accounted for by the independent variable(s) studied in multiple regression analysis, R^2 will be used to describe effect size.

Findings

Objective 1: Demographic Characteristics

Ninety-eight male and 11 female legislators participated in the study. Ninety-seven were white and 12 were black. The average age of members who participated in the study was 50 years, and 44 had less than five years of service in the legislature. One-fourth of the Senators and over one-fourth of the House members described their districts as rural; four senators and seven representatives described their districts as urban. The remainder described their districts as suburban.

Twenty-eight legislators listed their occupations as attorney and 16 were employed in real estate/insurance. Agribusiness, which included farming, was the occupation cited by 12 of the legislators. The remaining legislators were distributed over a number of other fields. Democrat was the dominant party affiliation in both chambers.

Objective 2: Familiarity with LCES

The legislators who responded to the survey indicated that they were familiar with LCES (Table 1). Responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*unfamiliar*) to 5 (*very familiar*). The 4-H program received the highest familiarity score for a LCES program, agriculture programs ranked next, and home economics ranked third, followed by community and agricultural leadership development. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*unfamiliar*) to 5 (*very familiar*).

Table 1
 Legislators' Familiarity With LCES and LCES Programs

Program Area	Familiarity With LCES	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Cooperative Extension Service	3.85	1.08
4-H youth programs	3.65	1.12
Agricultural programs (parish agents)	3.56	1.31
Home economics programs	3.22	1.22
Community and agricultural leadership development	3.01	1.38
Fisheries programs	2.88	1.34
Expanded food and nutrition programs (EFNEP)	2.65	1.28
Grand Mean	3.26	1.25

Note. N=108. 1=Unfamiliar, 2=Slightly Familiar, 3=Somewhat Familiar, 4=Familiar, 5=Very Familiar.

Objective 3: Effectiveness of LCES Programs.

Agriculture and 4-H programs were perceived as very effective by the legislators; home economics, community development and leadership, fisheries, and

EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Program) were perceived as effective. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*ineffective*) to 5 (*extremely effective*) (See Table 2).

Table 2
 Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Selected LCES Programs Held by Louisiana Legislators

Program Area	Program Effectiveness		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
4-H youth programs	92	4.12	0.68
Agricultural programs (parish agents)	90	4.06	0.75
Home economics programs	79	3.76	0.87
Community and agricultural leadership development	72	3.63	0.88
Fisheries programs	68	3.57	0.94
Expanded Food and Nutrition Programs (EFNEP)	57	3.54	1.02
Grand Mean		3.78	0.89

Note. N does not include "Unfamiliar" responses. "Unfamiliar" responses were not included in the M score for the perception of effectiveness of LCES programs. Scale: 1=Ineffective, 2=Slightly Effective, 3= Effective, 4=Very Effective, 5=Extremely Effective.

Objective 4: Sources of Information

The legislators who responded to the survey indicated that printed information, personal contacts, newsletters and newspaper articles provided moderate exposure to LCES. Responses were

recorded on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*no exposure*) to 5 (*very frequent exposure*). Other sources of LCES information that provided some exposure were attendance at LCES programs, family experiences, contact with legislative aides,

radio, phone calls to LCES, visits to local LCES offices, personal contacts, television, newspaper articles, constituent contacts, and the Agricultural Center video (see Table 3).

Objective 5: Participation in LCES Programs

A majority of the legislators had attended at least one 4-H youth development activity, especially 4-H livestock shows. Community resource development meetings and parish advisory committee meetings were attended by 36 (33%) of the 109 legislators responding to the study. Only 11 (10%) of the legislators had attended a home economics workshop (Table 4).

Objective 6: Differences in Perceptions of Effectiveness of LCES Programs by Selected Variables

Analyses of variance and *t*-tests, using effect size rather than inferential statistics, were used to analyze the data for this objective. The analyses revealed that Democratic legislators perceived LCES as more effective than Republican legislators (Cohen's $d=.36$, small effect size), and those legislators who were members of the Agriculture Committees perceived LCES as more effective than those who were not on the Agriculture Committees (Cohen's $d=.61$, medium effect size). Urban legislators' perceptions of effectiveness were lower than the perceptions held by legislators from districts that contained 1) rural and suburban areas, 2) rural and urban, and 3) rural areas.

Table 3
Sources of Information That Have Informed Louisiana Legislators About LCES

Information Source	Exposure Level		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Printed information	109	3.48	1.27
Personal contacts	109	3.41	1.41
Newsletters	107	3.38	1.26
Newspaper articles	108	3.26	1.29
Attendance at LCES programs	108	2.94	1.23
Family experiences	109	2.82	1.38
Radio	109	2.61	1.21
Phone calls to LCES	109	2.52	1.25
Visits to local LCES offices	108	2.45	1.26
Constituent groups	109	2.38	1.19
Television	108	2.38	1.21
Agricultural Center video, "Taking the University to the People"	109	1.61	1.01
Grand Mean	109	2.77	1.25

Note. Scale: 1=No Exposure, 2=Some Exposure, 3= Moderate Exposure, 4=Frequent, 5=Very Frequent.

Perceptions of effectiveness of legislators from districts that included both suburban and urban areas were lower than those of rural legislators (Cohen's $d=.21$, small effect

size). No differences existed in legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs by occupation.

Objective 7: Relationships Between Perceptions of Effectiveness of LCES Programs and Selected Variables

Correlation coefficients were calculated between legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs and selected variables. Significant correlations existed for all but two of the variables, namely, age of the legislators, and years of service. These data and the effect sizes for each correlation are presented in Table 5. The effect sizes reported are based on the set of descriptors

proposed by Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1979).

Objective 8: Explanation of Variance in Legislators' Perceptions of Effectiveness of LCES Programs

Stepwise regression analysis was used to determine if selected variables explained a significant proportion of the variance in the legislators' perceptions of effectiveness of LCES programs.

Table 4
Participation by Louisiana Legislators in LCES Programs

Program Area	Number/Percent Participating					
	Senate		House		Legislature	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
4-H livestock shows	15	53	42	52	57	52
4-H youth development activities	10	35	45	56	55	50
Parish advisory committees	11	39	25	31	36	33
Experiment station field days	9	32	25	31	34	31
Community resource development meetings	7	25	24	30	31	28
Agricultural marketing meetings	7	25	18	22	25	23
Agricultural production meetings	9	32	15	18	24	22
Mall exhibits	7	25	17	21	24	22
Horticulture/gardening programs	6	21	17	21	23	21
Fisheries programs	7	25	12	15	19	17
Leadership seminars	5	17	11	14	16	15
Home economics workshops	1	3	10	12	11	10
Total	38	37	95	31	143	35

Table 5
Correlations Between Perceived Effectiveness of LCES Programs and Selected Variables.

Variable	<i>r</i>	Effect Size ^a
Phone calls to LCES offices	.59	Moderate correlation
Personal contacts	.59	Moderate correlation
Printed information	.57	Moderate correlation
Constituent group contacts with legislators	.56	Moderate correlation
Familiarity with fisheries programs	.55	Moderate correlation
Familiarity with leadership programs	.55	Moderate correlation
Familiarity with agriculture programs	.54	Moderate correlation
Contact with legislative aides	.54	Moderate correlation
Familiarity with home economics programs	.53	Moderate correlation
Attendance at LCES programs	.53	Moderate correlation
Visits to local LCES offices	.52	Moderate correlation
Family experience	.51	Moderate correlation
Familiarity with 4-H youth programs	.47	Low correlation
Familiarity with Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs	.46	Low correlation
Years of service	-.04	Little if any correlation
Age of the legislators	-.07	Little if any correlation

^aThe effect sizes reported are based on the set of descriptors proposed by Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1979). Statistical significance was not reported because these data are based on a population.

Three variables explained 23% of the variance in legislators' perceptions of effectiveness of LCES programs. Agriculture Committee membership was the best predictor of legislators' perceptions of effectiveness of LCES programs, explaining 12% of the variance ($R^2=.12$). Other variables that explained an additional 11% of the variance were: years in the House (additional $R^2=.07$) and years in the Senate (additional $R^2=.04$).

Conclusions

The conclusions for this study apply only to the population of legislators who responded to this study. The typical legislator is a white, male Democrat between 40 and 60 years of age who has served in the Legislature for less than eight years. They represent districts that are either rural or partially rural and they are likely to

be an attorney, in general business, in real estate/insurance, or agribusiness.

Legislators are familiar with LCES and are most familiar with the 4-H, agriculture, and home economics programs. Overall, legislators perceive that LCES programs are effective. The agriculture and 4-H programs are perceived as very effective by the legislators and home economics, community development and leadership, fisheries and EFNEP are perceived as effective. Printed information is the most effective source of information about the LCES used by legislators. Personal contacts, newsletters, and newspaper articles are effective tools for informing legislators about LCES. Legislators participate in a wide variety of LCES programs, with strongest participation in 4-H youth and livestock show programs.

Democratic legislators and members of the Agriculture Committees perceive LCES programs as more effective than Republican legislators and legislators not on the

Agriculture Committees. Legislators whose district descriptions are a combination of rural and suburban, a combination of rural and urban, and rural perceive LCES as more effective than legislators whose district descriptions are urban and a combination of suburban and urban. No differences exist in legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs by legislators' occupations.

No relationship exists between legislators' age and years of service, and their perception of effectiveness of LCES programs. Moderate relationships exist between legislators' familiarity with agriculture, fisheries, home economics, and leadership programs and legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs. Low relationships exist between legislators' familiarity with 4-H youth programs and EFNEP and legislators' perception of the effectiveness of LCES programs.

Agriculture Committee membership is the best predictor of legislators' perceptions of effectiveness of LCES programs. Other variables explaining additional variance include years in the House and years in the Senate.

Recommendations

The LCES should initiate a program designed to strengthen and improve the image of the LCES held by legislators. An effort must be made to help both rural and urban legislators understand the mission and programs of LCES, with special emphasis on urban legislators. LCES staff must continue to invite legislators to attend and participate in programs and activities to gain first-hand information about LCES. There needs to be a greater use of printed information and personal contacts as a means of improving communications with legislators since this appears to be an effective way of educating legislators about extension programs.

The legislators' responses indicated that party affiliation and membership on Agriculture Committees were related to perceptions of LCES. The relationships indicated by these correlations should be kept in mind in planning and developing

new programs. LCES staff should be encouraged to maintain personal contacts with legislators and contacts with legislative aides. Legislators should be specifically invited to visit LCES offices and to participate in LCES programs.

Recommendations for Further Study

Additional research should be conducted to determine what patterns of legislative contacts (i.e., by mail, telephone, electronic personal, or other means) are appropriate to maintain adequate levels of familiarity with LCES programs. Research should also be conducted to determine if correlations exist between legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of LCES programs, and legislators' votes on issues specifically affecting LCES and/or LCES programs.

The Internet has revolutionized the types and amount of information that is instantly available to the public. A study should be conducted of the impact this delivery mode has on legislators' support of LCES programs.

With budget pressures increasing, more emphasis on local funding of LCES programs is likely. Studies should be conducted of local officials' familiarity with and perceptions of effectiveness of LCES programs. Such studies could be "localized" by city, parish, and groups of parishes or cropping areas. Research should also be conducted to determine the elements (content, timing, personalities, pictures, action, etc.) of stories on LCES programs that gain the attention of members of the news media, selected sub-groups of the general public, and public officials. In addition, the Agricultural Center should investigate ways to more effectively expose legislators to the Agricultural Center video, "Taking the University to the People."

Implications

Some extension educators would maintain that extension should change its programs to fit the needs of constituents rather than attempting to educate legislators about extension programs. Certainly, legislators respond to the needs of their

constituents and the educational needs of LCES constituents should be the driving force behind all extension programming. If constituents demand services from LCES, then legislators will usually respond to their constituents' wishes.

The conclusions reported in this study show that legislators' perceptions of the effectiveness of some extension program increases as their familiarity with extension programming increases. Since extension depends on substantial funding from the legislature, extension must continue its efforts to educate legislators about extension programs because the alternative could lead to reduced funding and, subsequently, reduced program effectiveness.

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