

## Developing Successful Competitive Proposals

**Northeast Region  
Program Leaders Network Meeting**

**February 15-17, 2012**

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R. Shepard, Executive Director - NCCEA; Northeast Program Leaders Network Meeting (February 2012)

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### **NRI – Grants in North Central Region (2008, only)**

**In 2008 – a review of 124 “active” projects:**

- The 124 “active” projects involved \$52M.
- Of the 124, sixty-one percent (61% ) involved genetics and microbiology research (basic and applied methodologies).
- Of the 124, 14 projects were INTEGRATED involving \$8.4M.

**A closer look at the 14 INTEGRATED and active projects:**

- 2 projects described integration with Research and Extension.
- 2 projects were described as integrated with Research and Education.
- 6 projects attempted to describe integration with Extension but were unclear (described Extension-outreach as project publicity).
- 4 projects had potential for integration with Extension but had none stated.

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### **AFRI – Panel Characteristics (2010)**

**Geographic Region:**

	<i>number</i>	<i>percent</i>
Northeast	132	24%
North Central	145	26%
Southern	167	30%
Western	107	19%

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**AFRI – Panel Characteristics (2010)**

<b>Panelist:</b>	<i>number</i>	<i>percent</i>
Research	275	50%
Education	131	24%
Extension	78	14%
Other	67	12%
		551 Total Panelists

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**Opportunities for Integrated Teams**  
*(Competitive Projects & Proposals)*

- What is your reason for working together?
- How does this team (and the project) define success:
  - ✓ Is it relevant?
  - ✓ Is it realistic?
  - ✓ Is it connected to the proposal's objectives?
  - ✓ Is it measurable?
- Is it clear how the integrated expertise of the Land Grant University will be focused on a problem or need?

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**What is "Integrated" in Grant Writing?**  
*(The AFRI Definition)*

An Integrated Project includes at least two of the three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (i.e., research, education, and extension) within a project, focused around a problem or issue.

The functions should be interwoven throughout the life of the project and act to complement and reinforce one another.

The functions should be interdependent and necessary for the success of the project.

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### How Do We Know When It's Working?

- increasing internal communication
- increasing program visibility
- sharing expertise
- expanding relationships
- building capacity (training programs)
- developing support materials
- funding (redirecting, leveraging, finding new \$\$\$s)
- sharing the rules for accountability

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### Factors That Influence "Successful" Integration

- Share goals – common work product.
- Geographic scope – shared production zones.
- Pooling capabilities and skills.
- Finances and budget.
- RFA's requirements.
- A strong desire for the win-win.
- Leveraging - more than a just a good idea.

*Mutual Respect*

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### Strengthening Extension-Outreach Components

- An emphasis on the scholarly principles of engagement and outreach.
- The importance of education to address a specific local problem or issue.
- The identification of measurable objectives and expected outcomes.
- The development and/or implementation of a curriculum-based series of connected learning activities.

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**Strengthening Extension-Outreach Components**

- Clear and specific engagement of the public or target audience.
- A realistic time line for development and implementation of the programming.
- An evaluation plan and/or reflective critique to assess program impacts.
- Clear explanation of the methods that will be used to share lessons learned and/or communicate findings of the project.

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**Quality Extension/Outreach  
Fatal Flaws**

- Lack of focus on a central issue (e.g., water quality, etc.) in relevant spatial scales.
- Clear lack of merit within stated goals of the RFA (e.g., insignificant commitment to Extension programming).
- No attention to community relevance, impacts, and/or cost-benefit analysis.
- Generalized information transfer sold as Extension/Outreach programming.
- Inadequate resources (funding, time, teaching methods).

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**Quality Extension-Outreach  
When We See It**

- A "series" of connected learning activities that engage the public in practical problem solving.
- A connection to:
  - a) scientific-research based information, and
  - b) science-based teaching techniques and informal educational principles.
- Engagement activities force on "community-based" learning situations and applied problem solving.

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