OSU Extension Signature Program Guidelines

At Ohio State University, needs continually emerge that require ongoing quality education, rapid response, and proactive planning. In the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Science, academic signature programs are intended to direct future success in education and research. Such efforts also demonstrate the leadership and institutional proficiency that better insure the college's status as a top-tier academic institution.

OSU Extension supports the college's focus on excellence by developing Signature Programs that provide the opportunity for community engagement. Introduced as an important initiative of OSU Extension's strategic plan, Signature Programs sustain the college's efforts to respond rapidly with educational outreach programs that address current critical issues amongst Ohio's citizenry. When issues affect major clientele groups and when OSU Extension has the programming resources and expertise that can be used for the purpose, Signature Programs will be identified that reflect OSU Extension's capabilities.

What are Signature Programs?

"OSU Extension Signature Program" is a designation given to a small number of programs that complement the impacts of OSU Extension's existing portfolio of core programs. Signature Program Status elevates and highlights successful, replicable programs that have appropriate curriculum and a history of documented impacts or potential to move beyond the current level to achieve significant impacts.

 The Signature Program effort is designed to:
* Demonstrate the ability of OSU Extension to address educational needs associated with Ohio's most pressing critical issues;
* Communicate significant impacts of statewide OSU Extension programs;
* Elevate the status and perceptions of OSU Extension as a dynamic educational entity; and
* Promote high quality OSU Extension programming across the state.

To achieve the above stated goals, programming efforts tagged with the Signature Program designation will receive a rapid cash infusion from Extension Administration and close collaborations with CommTech and Program Development and Evaluation (PDE) to add a heightened level of polish to program materials, to design and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign and to refine and augment data collection and reporting.

Why have Signature Programs?

OSU Extension recognizes the value of existing core/base programs that are well established and have histories of making significant, documented impacts. The Signature Program effort is an intentional strategy judiciously implemented to help OSU Extension better publicize the organization's ability to carry out its mission. Signature Programs focus on establishing and promoting the impacts and relevance of OSU Extension to all Ohio residents, legislators, and key stakeholder groups to strengthen perceptions of Extension's capacity to respond rapidly to critical needs and demonstrate significant impacts. Signature Program status should not be seen as a negation of other equally important OSU Extension programs, but as an opportunity to:

- Focus on the most relevant, timely, key issues via greater emphasis on in-depth program delivery and evaluation
- Capitalize on innovative ideas, materials, and/or methods
- Demonstrate evidence of impact
- Promote and market OSU Extension

Signature Program Criteria

Efforts designated Signature Program status will address the following 10 criteria. Submit responses to the following items at the Signature Program Online Request for Proposal (RFP) site http://go.osu.edu/SPrfp by May 15. You will be given the opportunity to upload supporting documentation (including a citation list file) to the RFP site.

Relevance and Significance:

1. Addresses a critical need or issue relevant to a significant proportion of Ohioans.
2. Has the potential to significantly elevate the public's knowledge of OSUE (may upload marketing materials as pdf).
3. Aligns with one or more of the impact areas of OSUE, the significant focus areas of CFAES, and the OSU Discovery Themes.

Collaboration and Participation:

4. Is easily replicable and enables employees (faculty, A & P Educators, program staff, CCS) throughout Ohio to play a role in planning, delivery, and evaluation of the program.
5. Enables and increases cross-disciplinary participation and collaboration.
6. Employs innovative ideas, materials, and/or methods in planning, delivery, and evaluation to maximize program participation.
7. Has the potential for cost recovery.

Evaluation and Impact:

8. Has a curriculum designed to achieve significant outcomes and impacts (may upload curriculum materials as pdf).
9. Has impact data instrumentation and a history of significant documented impacts (may upload impact evaluation instrument as pdf).
10. Can achieve the anticipated short-term, medium-term, and long-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices, behaviors or conditions within 2-4 years.

Application Process

Those involved with programming that meets the expectations above must discuss their potential Signature Program with the appropriate Assistant Director(s) and/or the Associate Director, Programs by April 15. Download and complete the "Signature Program Logic Model Worksheet" outlining / identifying program goals and objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes (http://go.osu.edu/SPlmw) to use as the basis for your discussions. **You will be directed to upload this completed logic model worksheet pdf with your online proposal.**

Following the discussions with the Assistant Director(s) and/or the Associate Director, Programs, the completed proposal should be submitted online at the Signature Program Online RFP site by May 15. The submitted proposals will be forwarded to Administrative Cabinet and to the Signature Program Proposal Review committee for review.

What are the benefits of becoming a Signature Program?

"Signature Programs" will be approved by Extension Administrative Cabinet and will receive a rapid cash infusion from Administrative Cabinet to "polish" program materials. Additionally, Signature Program Leader(s) will have at least a combined 25% FTE appointment at the state level for the duration of signature program status to fulfill those responsibilities and to work closely with Communications and Technology, PDE, EERA program contacts and others, as necessary.

Signature Program Evaluation Criteria

Administrative oversight for Signature Programs comes from the Associate Director, Programs. Signature Program Leaders will be asked to submit an annual report each year using the four areas of evaluation below to organize their report and document their accomplishments. A review committee chaired by Associate Director, Programs, will review the Signature Program reports and make recommendations as to continuance based on the four evaluation criteria.

Areas of Evaluation
- Extent to which the program is implemented across the state (e.g., who, where, how, how many, how long, etc.),
- Extent to which the program achieves the anticipated short-term, mid-term, and/or long-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices, or conditions
- Extent to which the program elevates the public's knowledge of OSUE
- Extent to which proposed program marketing, communication, implementation and evaluation methods and strategies are followed

Review of Signature Programs

The Signature Program Review Committee determined that a consistent review process was needed for identifying new Signature Programs. They recommended the following considerations as part of the review process:
- Signature programs must have a consistent look and feel of Extension especially in terms of marketing. Current websites of ongoing Signature Programs reflect varying looks.
- Leaders of identified Signature Programs should work with Extension's Program Development and Evaluation unit to get the programs identified in Research in View (RIV).
- Signature Programs should show impact within 2-4 years. In today's political climate we have to be mindful of IMPACT NOW as this is going to be more in demand.
  - Positive outcomes of the evaluation designed for the particular curriculum
  - Number of counties using/implementing the program
  - Economic impact attributed to the program, perhaps in profitability, savings, or more efficient use of limited resources as evident through deliberate evaluation.

- o Educational and/or informational resources made available as a result of the signature program include written and web-based materials, including websites
- There needs to be ample time to truly evaluate success. More time is needed to identify and obtain information for decision-making especially as it relates to keeping or graduating the program.

Timeline

April 15	Deadline for discussing completed logic model worksheet with Assistant Directors and/or Associate Director, Programs. Logic model worksheet is located at http://go.osu.edu/SPlmw
May 15	Deadline for Signature Program RFP submission online. Complete the online request for proposals at http://go.osu.edu/SPrfp
May 31	Signature Program Review Committee recommends new Signature Programs and graduation of current Signature Programs to Administrative Cabinet
June 13	Administrative Cabinet approves new Signature Programs and graduation of current Signature Programs
July 1	Implementation of new Signature Programs
December 31	Graduation of Signature Programs not continuing into the next year
March 1	Deadline for Signature Program Leader(s) to submit annual report based on the Signature Program Evaluation Criteria and Areas of Evaluation above. Send annual reports as a pdf in an email to OSUE-signatureprogram@osu.edu

If there are any questions, contact Ken Martin, Associate Director, Programs at martin.1540@osu.edu or 614-292-8793.

Administrative Cabinet acknowledges and thanks the initial Signature Program Review Committee for their work on helping to develop these guidelines:

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