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AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS FACULTY HANDBOOK

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

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Committee Structure Revised May 28, 2003

Introductory Remarks

This handbook is designed to document the rules and operating procedures as approved by the faculty of the Department of Agricultural Economics. This handbook contains the Faculty Rules, Leave Policies for Teaching Faculty, Policy on Research Assistantships, and policy on Faculty Recruitment. These rules and policies are believed to be consistent with University of Kentucky Administrative Regulations, but in case of any differences the Administrative Regulations take precedence.

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**RULES OF THE FACULTY
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS**

I. Organizational Structure

The Departmental Faculty - The faculty of the department consists of the chairperson and the members of the faculty of the College of Agriculture. In addition, membership, with or without voting privileges, may be extended by the departmental faculty to any other member of the departmental staff or to any person assigned to it for administrative work, teaching, research or service. The department has traditionally given full voting rights to all faculty members, whether tenured or non-tenured.

Department Chairperson - The Department Chairperson serves as the Chair of the Department Faculty in the development of policies on such matters as academic requirements, courses of study, class schedules, graduate and research programs and service functions. The Chair presides over all departmental meetings, except as he/she may delegate this function. He/she has administrative responsibility for implementing the department's program within the limits established by the Governing Regulations of the University, policies of the University Senate and the rules of the College of Agriculture.

The Department Chairperson is responsible for recommendations to the Dean of the College on the appointment of new members (of the department), salaries, salary changes, promotions, reappointments, terminal appointments, decisions not to reappoint, post-retirement appointments and the granting of tenure, according to the

procedures and criteria established by the University, the College, and the Department.

The Department Chairperson is responsible for the periodic evaluation of department members by procedures and criteria established by the University, the College and the Departmental Faculty.

II. Committee Structure of the Department (Last updated 5-28-03)

Graduate Program Committee - The Graduate Program Committee shall consist of at least six faculty members and one graduate student. The duties of this Committee are concerned with the development and implementation of policies on admission to the graduate program, recruiting graduate students, curriculum development and revisions, the offering of new graduate courses, and the coordination, with the Undergraduate Program Committee of course offerings in support areas. In addition, the Committee reviews and makes recommendations on all other pertinent aspects of the department's graduate program.

The Director of Graduate Studies serves as the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee. In developing and administering the graduate program, the Director may use subcommittees or ad hoc committees, as appointed by the Department Chairman, in such areas as Curriculum Development, Admissions, Recruitment, Preliminary Examinations and other needed areas. The Chairperson of the Graduate Program Committee shall serve as an ex-

officio member of all such ad hoc or subcommittees.

There shall be one graduate student who shall be elected by the graduate students in Agricultural Economics. The graduate student representative shall have full voting rights except in matters dealing with individual students such as admissions, assistantship appointments, qualifying exams and research proposal or paper reviews. Graduate students may be members of any subcommittees on graduate programs as deemed necessary by the Chairperson of the Graduate Program Committee. Such student members shall be appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies.

On May 28, 2003 the Research Committee was dissolved and its duties assigned to the Graduate Program Committee. Therefore, the Graduate Program Committee shall review the goals and objectives of the University, the College, and the Department, the research resources of the department and the agricultural economic research needs of the state and nation, and shall recommend to the Department Chairperson the future directions the department research program should follow.

The charge to this committee also includes the review of all Experiment Station research project proposals of the department for appropriateness of the research in view of the goals of the department, the structure of the proposal itself to include literature review, clarity of objectives, methodology and the form in which the project is submitted in light of Experiment Station and CSRS requirements.

The Committee is charged to

recommend to the Department Chairperson approval or disapproval of each project proposal and on any changes that might be needed in proposed projects to make them acceptable.

As a basis for coordination and to minimize possible misunderstandings, the Department Chairperson, whenever feasible, will communicate to the Committee and to the faculty member the grounds for approval or disapproval.

Another research related duty of the Committee is to review all department research manuscripts submitted for publication as Experiment Station or Departmental publications. The Committee is charged with the responsibility for reviewing manuscripts for appropriateness of content, style of presentation and publication series to be used. The committee will report to the author on (1) whether or not publication is recommended, (2) changes recommended if the publication is endorsed, and (3) the form of publication outlet recommended.

Undergraduate Program Committee - The Undergraduate Program Committee shall consist of at least five faculty members and one undergraduate student. This Committee shall review undergraduate curricular requirements as these relate to the Department of Agricultural Economics and shall make recommendations for any changes to the Chairperson as they directly affect this department's undergraduate degree requirements in the areas of specialization (options) available to students pursuing degrees with a major in Agricultural Economics. Further, this committee

coordinates the development of syllabi for each course offering in the undergraduate program and makes continual evaluation of the prerequisites for the various undergraduate courses offered in the department, as well as making suggestions for adding, deleting, and renumbering of courses.

An important responsibility of this committee is to make recommendations for the scheduling of undergraduate offerings and coordinating these with recommendations of the Graduate Program Committee in the interest of securing the most useful schedules available to our undergraduate and graduate students.

The Undergraduate Committee shall include one undergraduate student majoring in Agricultural Economics who has a junior or senior classification and an aggregate grade point average of at least 2.0. The student representative shall be appointed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and shall have voting rights except on issues dealing with individual students.

Extension Committee - The Extension Committee shall consist of all Extension faculty members, and a graduate student. The duties of this Committee are to develop means for strengthening Extension programs offered by the Department including the following items: (1) plans for interdisciplinary efforts in Extension, (2) the relationship between state and area specialists as appropriate, (3) the relationship between state specialists and resident teaching-research faculty and ways in which Extension can be more closely oriented to the research program, (4) the research role of the state and area specialists in terms of applied effort and

recommendations regarding the funding of such efforts, (5) the implementation of the developed Extension programs, and (6) the recommendation for continuance or discontinuance of existing programs and for new programs in Extension.

Duties of the Committee also include the review of departmental manuscripts submitted for publication as Department or Cooperative Extension Service numbered series and other Extension publications and to make recommendations to the author on: (1) whether or not publication is recommended, (2) modifications recommended, and (3) type of publication outlet recommended. The Chairperson of the Committee will sign in behalf of the Committee, written recommendations of the Committee which shall be forwarded to the Department Chairperson.

The Department Chairperson will handle any differences between committee recommendations and the author regarding decision to publish or not to publish and/or recommend revisions by the Committee.

The Extension Committee is responsible for planning and implementing training programs for County Extension personnel to be carried out by state and area Extension Specialists.

A graduate student shall be elected by the Agricultural Economics graduate students to serve on this committee. Such student shall serve in an advisory-observer capacity and shall not have voting rights on the committee.

Departmental Support Committee

The Departmental Support Committee shall consist of at least three faculty and six

staff support people elected by the staff. In addition, one graduate student elected by the students shall also serve on this committee. The Departmental Support Committee is charged with developing recommendations to the Department Chairperson for more efficient operations by acquisition and organization of faculty support in: (1) secretarial and clerical services, (2) computer equipment and support, (3) computer programmers and data processors, (4) providing methods and guidelines for acquiring outside funding for departmental research, and (5) other methods for assisting the faculty in carrying out their teaching, research, and extension responsibilities.

On May 28, 2003 the Social Amenities Committee was dissolved and its duties assigned to the Departmental Support Committee.

The responsibilities of this committee will now also include the planning and coordination of the various social events which the department may sponsor, including meeting new students and faculty, departmental picnics, retirement recognition and the like. The committee will also be responsible for administering the department's flower and gift fund in accordance with departmental policy.

III. Appointments to Departmental Committees (last updated May 28, 2003)

The Department Chairperson shall appoint members to departmental committees with staggered three year terms except for student members for whom the tour of service shall be for one year. When a three year term is completed the individual will be off that committee for one year before being eligible for re-

appointment. Appointments to departmental committees will be announced between July 1 and September 1. For committees with student members, election of student members shall be conducted during the spring semester for service in the coming academic year.

The Department Chairperson will confer with the respective standing committee chairpersons on the need for subcommittees in the undergraduate, graduate, and extension program and shall make all such appointments as deemed necessary. The chairpersons of the Undergraduate, Graduate, and Extension Committees shall serve as ex officio members of all such committees in their respective areas.

In addition to the regular committees listed in the Rules of the Faculty of the Department, the Chairperson may appoint such additional ad hoc committees as may be necessary.

IV. Departmental Faculty Meetings

Departmental faculty meetings, unless otherwise specified in the notice of open meetings, are open to all graduate students in Agricultural Economics and to the officers of the Agribusiness Club. Invitations may be extended by the Chairperson to other individuals or groups when the agenda for the meeting includes topics of concern to the individuals or groups invited.

Departmental faculty meetings are held monthly on a regular basis and at other times upon call of the Chairperson. Items for the agenda at such meetings are submitted to the Chairperson in advance by

faculty members and may be added to the agenda during the course of any faculty meeting. Notices of faculty meetings are circulated in advance of the regular called meetings and agenda items are announced prior to meetings when the time interval permits.

Voting rights are extended to all members of the faculty and to the President of the Agricultural Economics Club (Graduate) and the Agribusiness Club (Undergraduate). Proxy voting on agenda items previously circulated will be allowed provided it is granted in writing to another member of the faculty or, in the case of a student representative, to another student majoring in the department.

Questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by these Rules of the Faculty shall be resolved according to Robert's Rules of Order.

V. Leave and Travel

Leave - Leave for vacation, sickness, family medical leave and for other official purposes is provided to the faculty in accordance with the provisions of the Governing Regulations of the University. Faculty on 12 month appointments are entitled to 22 days of annual leave per assignment period (fiscal year). Prior administrative approval is required for vacation leave and leave should be scheduled so as not to conflict with teaching, research, and extension responsibilities.

Sick leave for faculty may be granted by the appropriate vice president/chancellor. Sick leave for periods longer than six months must be approved by the Board of

Trustees.

Official leave is provided for professional meetings, research meetings, extension meetings and for other purposes associated with professional activities. When such leave conflicts with teaching responsibilities, arrangements should be made to avoid cancellation of classes if at all possible.

Official leave without pay may be taken by faculty upon recommendation by the appropriate administrative officers and approval by the appropriate vice president or chancellor.

Travel - Travel for official purposes related to University duties in teaching, research, and extension is covered by official leave and the faculty member is reimbursed for travel expenses according to prevailing reimbursement policy, provided: (1) prior approval is received for the travel and (2) funds are available for the travel. Procedures for travel authorization and reimbursement for travel are established by the College for teaching, research, and extension activities.

VI. Consulting Arrangements

All proposals of faculty to undertake outside assignments must be made in writing to the Department Chairperson, whose recommendations shall be forwarded to the Dean of the College and to the appropriate Chancellor or Vice President for final action. Such proposals shall indicate the nature of the work to be performed, the estimated time involved, the duration of the assignment, and the scale of reimbursement.

VII. Merit Evaluation and Plans of Work

Annual merit evaluation of non-tenured and biennial evaluation of tenured faculty is carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures spelled out by the College of Agriculture.

VIII. Amendments to Rules of the Faculty

Amendments to the Rules of the Faculty shall be by either of the following procedures:

(1) By conducting a mail vote of the voting membership of the department provided the proposed amendment was presented, and was approved for voting at a previous faculty meeting. The voting members shall be allowed at least two weeks from the date of mailing to return their ballots. The election shall be conducted in a manner to preserve the secrecy of the ballots.

(2) By action at any regular or special meeting of the department faculty provided a quorum of the voting membership is present and the proposed amendment was either presented and discussed at a previous faculty meeting or the faculty was issued a copy of the amendment at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

A quorum shall consist of more than 50% of the voting members.

Approved September, 1988

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS LEAVE POLICIES FOR TEACHING FACULTY

Teaching faculty with either research or extension responsibilities occasionally encounter conflicts between their teaching and other responsibilities. To expect that such conflicts be resolved in favor of teaching by canceling or postponing the conflicting research or extension activity is unreasonable. To expect assigned instructors to recognize that their absence from class causes some discontinuity for students and that they have an obligation to reduce such discontinuity is not unreasonable. These policies provide guidelines for balancing these various conflicts.

I. TYPES OF LEAVE

The various forms of leave may be combined into two broad groups: (A) professional obligations, etc., and (B) consulting leave and vacation leave. The legitimacy of missing classes for these two groups differs.

- A. Professional obligations such as research meetings, extension meetings, professional meetings.

Some professional meetings, SAEA for example, are scheduled during teaching semesters, and an instructor typically has no control over these schedules. An instructor may have to choose between the professional meeting and missing one or more classes. Similar conflicts sometimes arise with various research and extension meetings. While canceling a class to participate in such meetings is undesirable, it is legitimate in exceptional circumstances if reasonable alternatives are not available.

- B. Consulting Leave and Vacation Leave

An instructor normally has some discretion scheduling these activities. Hence, only under highly unusual circumstances shall a regularly scheduled class be canceled for these reasons.

II. MISSING OR CANCELING CLASSES

For the purpose of these policies, a class is cancelled if it does not meet at its scheduled time and if there is no makeup. An instructor has missed a class if he/she does not attend its scheduled meeting (regular or makeup), even if he/she has arranged a substitute. A canceled class is also a missed class.

If an instructor must miss a regularly scheduled class for one of these purposes, he/she should make reasonable efforts to provide an adequate substitute (e.g., reschedule, arrange a substitute faculty or graduate student lecturer, schedule an exam, prepare a video or audio

lecture). Canceling class should be a last resort and should be limited to some reasonably small number in any given semester. The number of classes missed by an instructor, for all purposes, should not exceed 15% of the scheduled meetings for that class (e.g., maximum of 7 classes for a 3-hour course meeting three times per week in a regular semester; Maximum of 2 classes for a one 1-hour course meeting three times per week in a regular semester).

III. PROCEDURES

An instructor's request for leave during a teaching semester, for whatever reason, shall be accompanied by a memo to the Department Chair, reporting:

- A. How missed classes will be handled.
- B. The number of classes previously missed during the semester.

An instructor shall inform his/her class as far in advance as practical of any plans to miss a class and the plans for a substitute or other arrangements.

NOTE: There is not departmental policy concerning graduate students teaching classes, either occasionally or regularly.

Approved May 1995

**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
FACULTY RECRUITMENT***

1. Department Chair works with subject matter individuals and Executive Committee to draft a job description and to identify possible Search Committee members. Department Chair and Faculty work to identify prime candidates using personal contacts and data base searches.
2. Draft is distributed to Faculty and Search Committee is named.
3. Faculty meeting is called to discuss job description and to provide ideas to the Search Committee.
4. Job description is circulated and advertised in appropriate newsletters such as (but not limited to) AAEEA, COSBAE, and CAWE.
5. Search Committee, along with Department Chair, does initial screening.
6. Before the Search Committee narrows the candidate list down to those to be ultimately interviewed, all Faculty members shall be invited to review candidate application dossiers and provide input. In the event the Search Committee decides to engage in telephone interviews as a part of the “narrowing” process, faculty shall be invited to suggest questions and to listen to the interviews.
7. Search Committee and the Department Chair shall identify the final list of candidates to be interviewed for the position.
8. Following interviews, Department Chair shall call a Faculty Meeting to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.
9. A ballot shall be distributed to Faculty and Graduate Students (those visiting with the candidates) noting candidate acceptability, ranking, and inviting comments.
10. Department Chair makes recommendation to Dean of the College of Agriculture.

*It is expected that in all instances that the Search Committee has both the responsibility to heed Faculty input as well as keep the Faculty informed about the process and the candidates. It is also expected that all Faculty members shall assume responsibility for reviewing application dossiers and providing input to the Search Committee and the Department Chair.

TEACHING INTERNSHIPS

EFFECTIVE

DATE: January 1, 1995

- POLICY:
1. The department should create up to 10 teaching internship positions per year using funds from vacant staff positions.
 2. A graduate student awarded a teaching internship would be assigned to assist in one or more undergraduate courses during a semester.
 3. Duties could include grading, records management, test and assignment preparation, library research related to the course, lecturing, and other related duties.
 4. The initial stipend will be \$1000 per intern per semester.
 5. Periodically, the department chair shall solicit requests from undergraduate instructors concerning their need for and intended use of a teaching intern.
 6. Teaching interns will be selected by the department chair in collaboration with the major professor and the director of graduate studies and assigned to instructors on the basis of class size, instructor need, intern experiential need, as well as other factors.
 7. The department should consider offering graduate students the option of earning credit for these internships.

ADOPTED: July 20, 1994

Teaching Loads and Course Assignments

EFFECTIVE

DATE: January 1, 1995

- POLICY:
1. It has been the long standing policy of the department that courses do not belong to an individual but rather to the department for teaching assignment and reassignment.
 2. Each full-time T/R faculty member teaches at least six hours of regularly scheduled courses or course sections per year.
 3. Each E/T faculty should teach at least three hours of regularly scheduled courses per year.
 4. Wherever possible courses taught by T/R faculty should include one graduate, and one undergraduate course.
 5. If a course does not fill consistently, the instructor will be reassigned to another course.
 6. Priority for assigning courses:
 - a. Faculty teaching preferences.
 - b. Faculty preference should resolve the assignment of most courses but in cases where it does not, the department chair should work with the interested faculty to resolve the matter. Should that fail, the chair should make the assignment based on teaching performance (student and chair evaluated performance) and expertise.
 - c. In cases where faculty teaching preferences result in no interest in teaching a course deemed important to the degree program, the department chair shall make the assignment.
 7. When a teaching vacancy occurs, the appropriate committee (undergraduate or graduate) shall poll the faculty with respect to interests in and suggestions for instructors to teach the course. Based on the information obtained and due consideration for the program, the appropriate undergraduate or graduate committee shall then make a specific recommendation to the department Chair regarding the instructor to be chosen. Only if this process fails shall the department Chair be authorized to unilaterally name an instructor for the course.
 8. Each course (especially core courses) should have at least two people designated who can be prepared to teach the course.

ADOPTED: July 20, 1994, and updated July 16, 2003

Approved May 1995

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS POLICY ON RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

A research assistantship is not a scholarship; a research assistant agrees to devote approximately twenty hours per week to some part of the department's professional activity, usually a research project managed by the student's major professor. An assistantship (Department "hard money") is awarded annually, subject to renewal, for a maximum of two years for an M.S. student, a maximum of four years for a Ph.D. student. Each renewal is conditional on satisfactory performance during the preceding assistantship period.

Assistantship Awards

Research assistantships will be awarded by the director of graduate studies. When an initial award is made, the student will be advised by the director of graduate studies. Several factors will be considered in awarding assistantships and approving major professors.

- a. Research assistants paid from grant funds are (will be) assigned to the principal investigator to whom the grant funds belong.
- b. In awarding assistantships from department funds, an attempt will be made to assure balance among the major research areas.

Within the first semester (M.S. student) or the first year (Ph.D. student) after being awarded an assistantship, a research assistant funded with department resource must petition the director of graduate studies to be assigned a major professor.

Assistantship Renewal

A student on research assistantship regardless of the source of funds, will be accountable for making minimum progress on some problem related to the research program of the department. The student's major professor will have some voice in whether the student's progress is minimally acceptable.

At least one month before the end of Spring semester, each research assistant will submit to the student's major professor a report, at most one typewritten page, describing progress during the semester on the chosen (or assigned) topic. Examples of acceptable progress include a completed research report, a completed extension report, a completed computer program, a completed set of data, or evidence of reasonable progress on any such project, a satisfactory performance as a teaching assistant in an extension or regularly scheduled class in the department. As a matter of strategy, the student should discuss with the major professor at least the broad outlines of the report before it is written.

The student's major professor will attach to the student's report a covering memorandum that

includes a recommendation on whether the student's assistantship should be renewed. The memorandum may note additional evidence not included in the student's report, justifying the recommendation. The student's report, along with the covering memorandum, will be forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies.

A cumulative file of these reports will be kept in the permanent file of each student. The Graduate Committee will review current progress reports and recommend to the department chair and director of graduate studies which assistantships to continue and which to terminate. Especially in cases in which early termination of an assistantship is being considered, past reports may be considered.

The department chair will review the recommendations of the Director of Graduate Studies, and decide whether to accept or reject the recommendation and inform in writing. Especially for any case in which the chair chooses to reject the recommendations, the chair will explain, by memorandum to the graduate committee, the reasons for rejecting the recommendations.

Approved February 15, 1996

**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
GUIDELINES FOR MENTORING COMMITTEES
FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Department of Agricultural Economics will establish a mentoring committee to assist in the academic/professional development of each tenure system candidate for reappointment, tenure and promotion. The purpose of a mentoring committee is to assist a new faculty member in his/her academic and professional development by providing informal advice and assessment. The committee is expected to provide regular feedback to the candidate in accordance with a mentoring plan developed by the candidate with the mentors and approved by the department chairperson. The mentoring relationship is most effective when it is informal and consensual, and is functionally separate from any official and formal evaluation process. Procedures for creation and operation of mentoring committees are as follows:

- C A mentoring committee will be established for each non-tenured faculty member who is a candidate for reappointment, tenure and promotion. It will be the responsibility of the candidate and the mentoring committee to take full advantage of the relationship.
- C A mentoring committee of from two to four tenured faculty must be appointed by the department chairperson as soon as the candidate knows the tenured faculty well enough to discuss possible mentors with the chairperson. In no case shall this be longer than 6 months after the faculty appointment. The committee will be appointed by the department chairperson following invitations by the candidate and acceptance of appointment by the tenured faculty members. The chairperson of the mentoring committee shall be selected by the candidate. A mentoring committee will be composed of at least two tenured faculty from the department, and should be persons who can mentor the new faculty member consistent with the candidate's distribution of effort (teaching, research, and/or extension). Other members may be appointed from elsewhere in the University or even outside the University if the nature of the candidate's appointment makes it appropriate. Only under exceptional circumstances will any one tenured faculty member serve on more than two mentoring committees.
- C The mentoring committee is expected to provide information about the operating environment of the department, college and university, assist the candidate in developing a plan of work to meet the goals agreed upon between the faculty member and the department chairperson, provide feedback on the candidate's program activities as desired by the candidate, and facilitate the academic/professional development of the candidate and the candidate's effective participation in the activities and mission of the department.
- C The mentoring committee will serve as long as the faculty member being mentored remains a candidate for tenure.
- C A faculty member on the mentoring committee will serve until the candidate provides a written report to the department chairperson for a change in the composition of the committee

(and such a request is approved by the department chairperson), or until the member of the mentoring committee requests to be replaced (and such request is approved by the department chairperson).

It is expected that there will be a close working relationship among the department chairperson, the mentoring committee and the candidate. The department chairperson has an annual merit evaluation conference with each candidate to review progress and plans. At this same time, it is expected that the department chairperson will review the candidate's interaction with the mentoring committee.

Department of Agricultural Economics Ph.D. Mission Statement
Approved June 26, 2002

Background Information:

The joint Graduate and Research Committee had four main tasks:

- 1) Investigate the allocation of assistantships,
- 2) Resolve the function of the AEC qualifying examinations including the possibility of field examinations,
- 3) Assess the impact of changes in these first two areas on interactions with the Economics Department and
- 4) Develop a Ph.D. mission statement including the determination of what type of Ph.D. program the department should have (including none as an option).

The following narrative addresses all of the tasks, but not serially. The way we approach the assignment is to start with the type of program we want and then proceed to the other issues since they are secondary.

The first conclusion is that as the University of Kentucky strives to improve its national ranking we would be foolish to abolish our Ph.D. program. Having a program, particularly one that is still seen as strong within the UK system, is going to make all our other tasks easier. Without a Ph.D. we will inevitably be a third or fourth tier department in terms of resource allocation decisions. We are also obtaining a fairly strong set of students despite our lack of a clearly defined Ph.D. program and limited efforts to market the program, which suggests we have the potential to build a better program.

Our belief is that if we can develop a focus or niche (potentially including several elements) for the Ph.D. program there is every reason to believe it could be viable, at least in terms of maintaining sufficient numbers to avoid challenges by the CPE (Council on Postsecondary Education). Thus the critical question is what is our niche or comparative advantage. We believe our best strategy is not to compete head on with the large programs that focus mainly on turning out doctoral students whose predominant career objective is a traditional research/teaching position at another large land grant university. These schools have higher profile faculty, broader and deeper course offerings, larger departments and better financial support for students. We are unlikely under any realistic circumstances to get enough new resources in the department to compete effectively on a consistent basis in that arena in the foreseeable future.

We instead suggest our strength lies in an ability to provide students with training in becoming a very good applied microeconomist. In practice this is not a large change in orientation from our current program, or that of other schools, but it is more a question of marketing. This is not to say that people will be unable to pursue an interest in a traditional large land grant university research/teaching position should they choose, but we won't market ourselves in that direction.

Furthermore, it is believed that sound theoretical training is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to be a good applied microeconomist.

A focus on applied microeconomics gives us a number of benefits. First it makes a clear statement about what we want to do and what students can expect. Second, it builds upon our past record of placing students from our graduate program – most of whom have gone on to be applied microeconomists in one way or another. Third, it allows us to differentiate our program in a relatively unique way. We can promise students that they will be able to gain practical experience working on applied problems, which could enhance their chance of being considered for extension specialist positions, jobs in government or jobs in industry (e.g., as energy economists).

Fourth, it allows us to make better use of our extension faculty in the graduate program by asking them to help provide practical training for Ph.D. students in the form of working them into their activities. Fifth, it allows us the opportunity to develop stronger links with the economics department, which lists its expertise in applied microeconomics as its key strength. Sixth, having this focus will allow us to rationally consider what material we should offer students within the department versus what students should obtain from other departments. Ideally this would allow us to revise our course offerings to add material that enhances the applied micro training and look to other departments for material that is not in our core competency. The details of this would need to be developed over time as needs dictate.

Moving in this direction means that we would try to improve our linkages with the Department of Economics (as well as other academic departments) and ideally persuade them that it is in our mutual interest to provide strong courses that teach applied microeconomics. Perhaps this would lead to more of their students taking our courses thereby improving efficiencies. It would also suggest that the main role of our candidacy exam would be to determine whether students met departmental standards for training in applied microeconomics. The exam would not be based upon specific material in core courses but on a general ability to understand a problem and apply economic tools to analyze and resolve it. This would entail different types of questions than are now usually asked and broader participation in developing and grading the exam.

Mission Statement:

The Department of Agricultural Economics' mission regarding its Ph.D. program is to recruit, retain and graduate individuals with an interest and competency in successfully applying microeconomics to problems in agriculture, natural resources and other aspects of rural areas.