

# **REPORT**

**to**

**Arlen Leholm, Ph.D.  
Associate Vice Provost and  
Director of Extension**

**from the**

**MSUE Certificate Program Committee**

**MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION**

**June 22, 1998**

The MSUE Certificate Program Committee was convened by Associate Vice Provost and Director of Extension Arlen Leholm in November, 1997 to respond to the following charge:

- **Investigate** how other Extension organizations are approaching certificate programming;
- **Define** what a certificate program is and how it relates to Extension on campus and in the field;
- **Design** a procedure for authorizing the development of certificate programs;
- **Identify** the areas that should be addressed in developing a proposed certificate program;
- **Address** issues related to pricing certificate programs and distributing profits;
- **Identify** potential certificate programs in the various Areas of Expertise within MSUE.

Nine faculty and staff members were asked to join the Committee and all agreed to serve. Committee members are listed in **Attachment 1**.

The Committee met five times and is pleased to present the following report and recommendations to Dr. Leholm for his approval and implementation.

- **Investigate how other Extension organizations are approaching certificate programming.**

The Committee met with Penn State and Rutgers using distance learning technologies. While both institutions offer very successful and profitable certificate programs, their approach to certificate programming is quite different. The following information from the discussions helped to shape our recommendations. More detailed notes from the meetings are available.

### **Penn State University**

Penn State offers about 200 different certificate programs. They have been doing this type of educational outreach for 15 years. Certificates exist on a continuum from entry to associate degree to baccalaureate degree to post-baccalaureate to graduate level. Their "Step-Up" Model allows students to move from one associate degree to another associate degree to a BA or BS.

Certificates generally fall into two categories: open enrollment certificates and contract certificates. Open enrollment certificates may be offered for credit or noncredit. They are designed to meet individuals' needs for enrichment, professional development, new credentials or career advancement. Contract certificates are offered on-site for corporations or they may be sponsored by corporations. They are usually made up of credit courses. They may be customized to the corporation's needs. The stakeholders participate in designing customized certificates.

Penn State certificates are "certificates of completion." They have no legal standing from the state perspective. Advising is a very important component. Participants need to know what they are "buying." It is also important that what is communicated in marketing the programs is clear and not misleading.

At Penn State every program - credit or noncredit - has faculty approval. There is an academic program director/coordinator for each certificate. S/he provides the link back to faculty in departments. Credit courses go through the regular faculty governance procedure. Noncredit courses are approved by the department head and the faculty person providing instruction. They are approved for two years. Feedback is solicited from students just as it is in credit courses. The hope is that noncredit courses will eventually be offered for credit.

The Market Research Section tests the market for new certificates. Researchers identify competitors in the state; determine who might be interested in a particular program and how much they are paying/would be willing to pay. They conduct market surveys and focus groups and get informal feedback from field staff. There is a Program Innovation Fund of about \$500,000 to finance development of new programs. A statewide coordinator ensures efforts are not duplicated.

Charges for certificates for credit adhere to published rates. Fees for noncredit certificates are set at the local level and are market sensitive. Grades are given in both credit and noncredit programs. CEUs are awarded on the basis of one unit for every 10 contact hours.

Note: Extension was not specifically represented at the table in the discussions with Penn State. Extension is part of a Unit that also includes Continuing Education, Distance Education, Public Broadcasting and Market Research.

### **Rutgers The State University of New Jersey**

Certificate programs are on a continuum. All are noncredit. Rutgers offers 300 noncredit "events" a year. This does not include programming offered by Extension. Offerings range from an 8-week, all noncredit, instructional curriculum for licensed sanitarians to a 6-day noncredit course for landscape contractors to "light end" certificate programming that is measured in contact hours of instruction. There is not the extensive faculty review of what The Office of Continuing Professional Education offers that we found at Penn State. Faculty are involved in identifying needs and maintaining the integrity of the programs.

Grades are not given for any programs, but certificate programs have a higher level of expectation on the part of participants than workshops or seminars. There is some demonstration of proficiency – a test or a paper, for example. Rutgers has a system in place that gives persons who have participated in certificate programs a "transcript" of the "courses" they have attended to use in resumes, etc.

The Office of Continuing Professional Education is funded totally on soft dollars and has a \$4 million operating budget. Staff budget for a year based on projections of how much revenue they will generate. The projections are updated every two weeks. Staff are hired in four steps and are promoted on the basis of performance. Dr. Ned Lipman, Director of The Office of

Continuing Professional Education, feels that it would take from three to five years to institutionalize certificate programming into a self-supporting endeavor.

- **Define what a certificate program is and how it relates to Extension on campus and in the field.**

The Committee sees a certificate program in MSUE being defined and organized somewhere between the two models represented by Penn State and Rutgers. We see a definition as providing guidelines, with the understanding that not all certificate programs will exactly fit the definition.

**In our definition a certificate program consists of a connected series of educational experiences, focused within a career development context, that preferably leads to eligibility for certification by some organization, agency or association, or, in the case of programs offered for credit, may be applied to requirements for a degree.**

In developing our definition, we considered the following to be necessary elements:

- A certificate program should display the depth and rigor that enable participants to develop both knowledge and skills to meet career demands.
- A certificate program meets a market need and does so in a timely manner.
- A certificate program in MSUE would be non-credit except when linked to the CANR or other MSU colleges and approved through a Department and the appropriate college and university curriculum committee, following normal governance procedures. Credit certificates could also be offered in collaboration with a Community College and would go through that institution's approval process. Extension certificate programs might be the first step on the "ladder" to developing courses that could be offered for credit, either at MSU or Community Colleges.
- A certificate program must have documentation of student learning.
- A certificate program has longevity, sustainability and replicability.
- A certificate program goes through an approval process.
- A certificate program is self supporting, revenue generating or third-party funded.

Because of the emphasis on career development, we propose that certificate programs in MSUE be identified by the designation **“Michigan State University Extension Career Development Certificate Program.”** We further recommend that an appropriate identifying mark be developed and a uniform style of certificate be adopted.

- **Design a procedure for authorizing the development of certificate programs.**

MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs should have an organizational structure for examining, approving and sanctioning the programs. The programs need to be linked to AoEs or Core Competencies and to the community.

We recommend that development of MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs originate in the AoE Teams or the Core Competency Committee (CCC) in conjunction with an Outreach

Marketing Research Unit. A proposal could come directly from an AoE Team or Core Competency Committee, indicating an identified need. Or the AoE Team or Core Competency Committee could identify an idea and go to the Outreach Marketing/Research Unit, asking for help in determining whether there would be a need or a large enough audience for that particular program. Individuals or other groups with proposals for MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs would approach the related AoE or Core Competency Committee with their concepts.

After an MSUE Career Development Certificate Program has been developed according to the criteria outlined below, we recommend that it go to a conjoint group for approval. The conjoint group would include representatives (chairs) from related AoEs and departments and campus and county staff. Its purpose is to question and comment, ensure consistency, avoid duplication, and determine that the program fits the MSUE mission. We recommend that a time limit for the conjoint group to review the proposal be established to ensure a timely response.

Once the MSUE Career Development Certificate Program's content and structure have been approved, we propose that it be turned over to the Outreach Market Research unit for promotion and advertising. If non-recurring seed money is needed to initiate the program, the conjoint group could forward a request to the Director of Extension. (See **Attachment 2.**)

- **Identify areas that should be addressed in developing a proposed certificate program.**

As stated above, MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs need to be developed in conjunction with AoE Teams or the Core Competency Committee and community partners. Potential partners would be:

- Community Colleges
- Associations
- Organizations/Agencies
- Commodity Groups
- MSU Departments
- Federal, State and Local Government
- Regulatory Agencies
- Industry
- Anyone with \$\$ wanting something that fits with our mission

We recommend that the following be part of the development and design of a potential MSUE Career Development Certificate Program:

- Audience identified
- Need demonstrated
- Course description articulated, including level (beginning, intermediate, advanced), pre-requisites, eligibility, requirements, readings, activities, and time frame
- Process for assessing student learning clearly identified
- Instructional model determined (lecture, field experience, laboratory, distance learning)
- Instructor qualifications defined (general such as RD, CPA, etc.)
- Evaluation of course and instructor(s) developed
- Sustainability plan demonstrated
- Costs and sources of funds identified

We recommend that, following the piloting phase, funding for an MSUE Career Development Certificate Program Coordinator and coordinators for individual certificate programs when needed be requested for a three-year period. Subsequently these costs would be accounted for in the fee structure for each program. The Coordinator or some coordination functions might be part of a collaborative effort on behalf of MSUE, CANR and University Outreach.

- **Address issues related to pricing certificate programs and distributing profits.**

We recommend that non-recurring funds be made available to AoE Teams, the Core Competency Committee (CCC) and faculty/staff who wish to develop an MSUE Career Development Certificate Program. As stated above, the funds can be requested by the conjoint group when the program is approved for development.

Recognition for those who develop and offer successful MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs could take the form of:

- direct financial reward
- operating funds
- recognition as part of continuing employment/tenure
- recognition from Director/Dean
- source of revenue for ongoing and future programming

We recommend that overhead costs for the Outreach Marketing Research Unit be accounted for in the fee structure for each program.

Outreach Marketing Research could serve the following functions:

#### Marketing Research

- identify market opportunities (audience) in collaboration with AoEs/CCC
- identify program opportunities (topics) in collaboration with AoEs/CCC
- conduct competitive analyses
- conduct environmental scanning/trend analyses

#### Program Planning

- support AoEs /CCC in developing program opportunities
- link AoEs/CCC to market opportunities
- connect AoEs/CCC to resources and services

#### Financial Planning

- establish program prices in consultation with AoEs/CCC
- develop and negotiate contracts
- administer budgets

#### Marketing Communications

- advertising
- brochure development and design
- web page development

We recommend that funding for the Outreach Marketing Research functions be requested for a three-year period. Funding would be needed for professional and support staff as well as an operating budget. We would anticipate that the unit would be, or nearly be, self-supporting after three years, as these indirect costs are included in pricing for MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs.

Since we feel that a Marketing Research function is critical to the success of MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs, it is possible that the unit or some of its functions might be part of a collaborative effort on behalf of MSUE, CANR and University Outreach.

- **Identify potential certificate programs in the various AoEs within MSUE.**

Since it is our belief that MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs should originate in collaborative efforts of the AoEs, the Core Competency Committee, and the Outreach Marketing Research Unit as well as other individuals and groups, we recommend that the Interim Certificate Program Coordinator share our recommendations with these groups and facilitate the identification of potential programs in keeping with the MSUE mission.

Ideas/programs that might be considered as MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs were identified by our committee at our initial meeting and are included in **Attachment 3**. They are grouped by program area and could be shared with AoEs and the Core Competency Committee as examples of what might be explored.

### **Conclusion:**

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities. The MSUE Certificate Program Committee believes that the development of MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs will support this mission by linking the prestige of the nation's premier land grant institution to programming that is community based and addresses a market need while focusing on career development.

We recommend the following steps be undertaken in the development phase to ensure that MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs do not appear to be "top down":

1. Committee recommendations are reviewed and approved by Extension Director Leholm.
2. Interim Certificate Program Coordinator shares recommendations with AoE Teams and Core Competency Committee.
3. AoE Teams and Core Competency Committee identify potential MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs in their areas.
4. Suggestions are reviewed by the Certificate Program Committee and three or four are selected for piloting.
5. Recommendations of the committee and potential MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs are shared with campus and field staff for their input.

6. Interim Certificate Program Coordinator oversees development of the pilot programs by contracting, collaborating or bartering for services with financial support from the Director's office. Expenses will be carefully tracked to determine actual costs of development and implementation. This pilot phase will also include developing the process for approval by the conjoint committees.
7. A budget for the support functions, including MSUE Career Development Certificate Program Coordinator(s) and an Outreach Marketing Research Unit, will be developed and a three-year commitment of funds pursued. Funding could be sought collaboratively by MSUE, CANR and University Outreach. At the time a budget is determined, a plan for sharing revenue will also be developed.
8. MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs will be self-sustaining within three years with the eventual goal of generating revenue.

Respectfully submitted,  
June 22, 1998

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**Attachment 1**  
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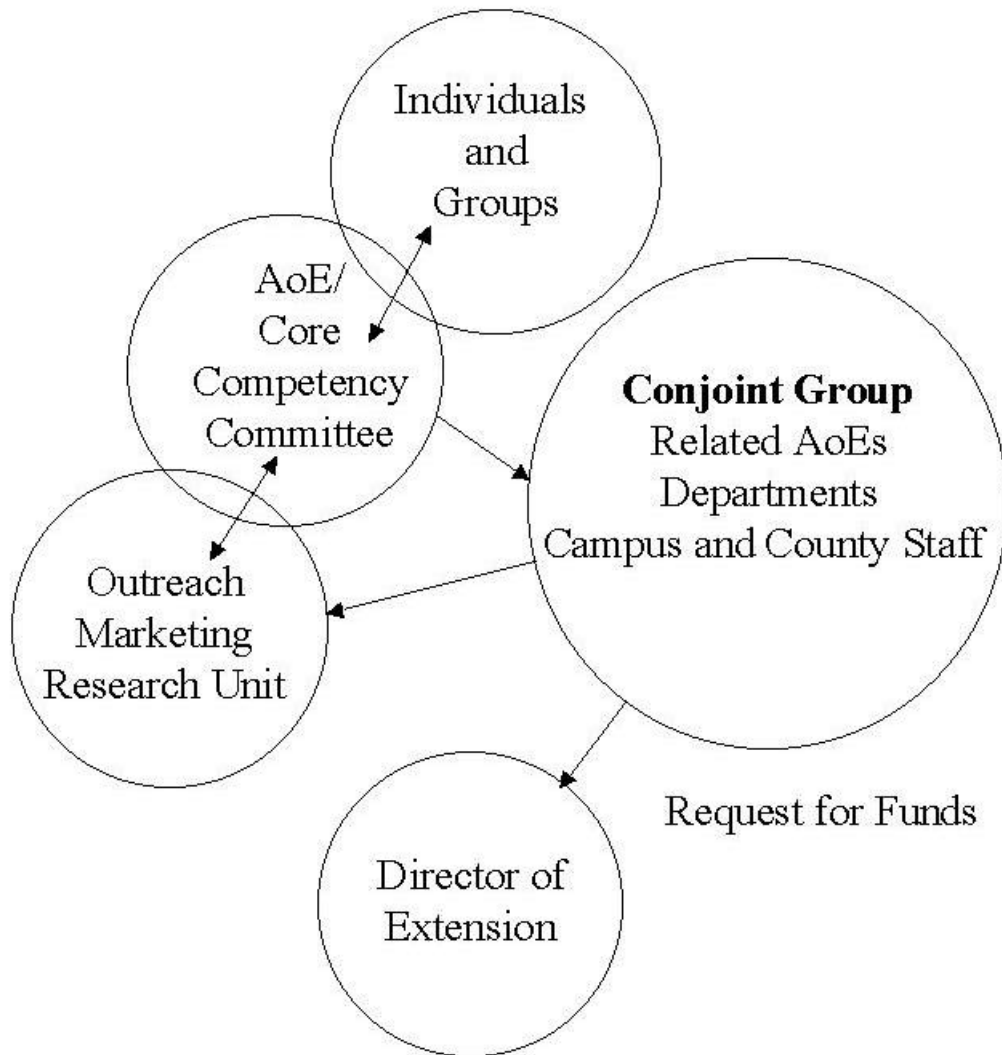
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Attachment 2

- **Design** a procedure for authorizing the development of certificate programs.



## **Attachment 3**

### **Ideas/Programs That Might Be Considered for MSUE Career Development Certificate Programs**

#### **Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Programs**

- Master Gardener
- Land Use
- LEAP - Logger Education to Advance Professionalism
- Integrated Pest Management
- Labor Management Training (There is a program for Dairy; could be developed to almost any of the commodities)
- Food Safety
- Food Handling
- Food Law
- Landscape Management
- Florist Certificate

#### **Extension Children, Youth and Family Programs**

- Paraprofessional Training
  - Home Visiting Skills
  - Breastfeeding Peer Counseling
  - Parent Education
- Child Day Care Provider Training
- Training for Youth Developers
- Food Safety
- Food Handling
- Home Buyer Counseling
- Home Health Care Provider
- Home builders

#### **Extension Community and Economic Development Programs**

- Community-based skills (issues identification, building collaborations, understanding power)
- Land Use
- Tourism Academy
- LEAP - Logger Education to Advance Professionalism
- Child Day Care Provider Training
- Diversity
- "So You Want to Run for Office" - Training for Potential Candidates
- Training for Government Officials
  - Township
  - City
  - Village
  - County
- Home builders
- Leadership

**Extension Core Competency Programs**

Evaluation (with/in addition to the one created by ADS)

Diversity

Adult Learning

Presentation Skills

Program Development

Leadership

