

FAQ's about the proposal to restructure OAEP and ESP into Ohio JCEP

- 1. How will the proposed restructuring effect dues?** If you are currently a member of one organization you will experience an increase in dues under the new proposed structure. If you are currently a member of both ESP and OAEP your dues for 2013 will remain the same. As we enter into an implementation phase the committee felt it most prudent to leave dues at their current level until we have some experience working with the new model.
- 2. As ESP will eliminate the requirement of 5 years of service prior to membership with the proposed restructure, will people feel it is less of an honor, therefore less desirable, to be a part of ESP?** This proposal will allow people to be members when they begin working for OSU Extension. Historically, ESP was a "fraternity" and an honorary, but that is no longer the case. A little more than five years ago ESP national eliminated that premise, with a focus on professional development and professional excellence as the organization's primary purposes. The requirement for 5 years of service prior to membership is an Ohio rule. Nationally, any Extension professional can be a member of ESP. A few other states still have years of service requirements but most do not. Research on today's multi-generational workforce indicates that younger Extension professionals do not relate to the concept of a professional fraternity/honorary as something that would be helpful to their growth as professionals, but with ESP's focus on professional development and excellence we have an opportunity to position ESP as a valuable organization for professionals of all ages. Also, since people tend to stay in careers for shorter periods than in the past, the window of opportunity for many is not as large.
- 3. Will there be fewer opportunities for employees to serve in leadership roles with only one organization and not two; could this influence P&T and Annual Performance Reviews?** There will be fewer committees to serve on but not fewer offices to hold. The structure will be different if the proposal is adopted, but ESP will still maintain a separate board because of national activities/expectations such as the endowment fund, service opportunities, parallel committees and our state-level endowment. There will be fewer committees (8 total) and duplication can be eliminated and processes streamlined. One issue in recent years is committees within the two organizations with long lists of members but only a few of those members actually engaged in the committee's work. This is not fair as it relates to performance reviews and the P&T process so we see the goal of having people serve on one committee, rather than one in each organization, as a step toward encouraging professionals not to be on committees "in name only."
- 4. Aren't the current number of members are only a fraction of potential membership of either organization? If increased percentages of those eligible to be members became involved, it would provide more critical masses for both organizations; i.e., if efforts in membership recruitment and retention were increased, many of the reasons for the restructuring would go away.** It is correct that not everyone chooses to join either organization. Increases in membership would definitely strengthen both organizations as they currently exist and a proposed Ohio JCEP. But there are many other reasons to restructure. The current structure is complex and confusing to those newer to our profession. There are numerous duplications of effort such as the ESP Friend of Extension award/OAEP appreciation awards and professional development scholarships. The intent is not to create fewer of these opportunities but to create

more efficient processes. The primary purposes of the two organizations are very similar and as they have evolved over many years the differences between the two have become less distinct. "OAEP has two main objectives: One is the professional improvement of its members. The other is the improvement of the Extension organization as an educational delivery system for county, state and federal Extension Programs" (<http://oaep.osu.edu/>); ESP: "We are dedicated to fostering standards of excellence in the Extension System and developing the Extension profession and professional." (<http://ohioesp.osu.edu/>)

5. **Will the restructuring discourage administration from joining? There will definitely be a dues increase for administrators; even though administration can join, they cannot belong to all committees, and therefore not have access to all the privileges of membership. In the past, ESP has provided opportunity for all members, regardless of position, to work side by side as equals on committees and as officers.** The proposed restructuring prohibits administration from serving on one committee – the personnel committee – because this committee is seen as a venue for field-based employees to discuss and address concerns with administrative decisions as a group. Administrators have regular opportunity for dialogue among themselves via administrative cabinet; this committee provides field staff a similar venue. Administrators will be equals in every other way, both in the proposed Ohio JCEP organization and in the current and future structure of ESP. In addition, the continuing ESP structure will provide the same opportunities to work as equals as in the past.
6. **Effort to merge will expend some extra energy for at least a couple of years while all the details and problems are being resolved. Other states with less people have separate organizations and still make it work; some even have separate organizations for ANR, 4-H FCS & CD.** These statements are absolutely correct and are issues that must be considered. There are also other states that have "umbrella" or JCEP organizations which meet the needs of Extension professionals. The opportunity to have separate subject matter organizations in the future is not precluded by this proposed restructuring. A significant amount of time and energy has been invested in this project by the leadership of the two organizations with support from the two boards. Change always includes these kinds of challenges as new norms are established.
7. **This is probably irreversible if passed; or will take a several years to resolve to change back.** That is true. The intent is that a well thought-out plan should preclude the need to return to the old model but this is a risk.
8. **How will life memberships be handled?** All current life members will be grandfathered in. To become an ESP life member one pays dues to ESP national. That will stay the same. OAEP initiated a life membership fee a few years ago. If the proposal is accepted the new board will need to determine how to reconcile that issue.

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