

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEETING OF OHIO COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE SUPPORT STAFF FRATERNITY

DECEMBER 10, 1986

Members present: Dorothy Rex, Micki Daniels, Becky Hooper, Irene Moore, Marilyn Bloom, Jacqueline Mueck.

Committee members met at 2:00 pm to refine and define progress made thus far on the support staff fraternity before presenting these ideas and objectives to Director Sprott and Drs. Cunningham and Smith at our 3:00 pm meeting.

President Dorothy Rex passed out a copy of the Epsilon Sigma Phi membership form and a recent newsletter. The committee agreed we would design our membership form the same but add a place to indicate "years of service" with OCES as well as other service with Extension outside Ohio. Dorothy suggested we give charter members a small pin or token to show designation as a charter member; committee members agreed.

Dorothy ask^d members for additional input or questions. Becky Hooper asked about the possibility of receiving "start-up" money from Administration to cover initial costs. We will bring this item up with Director Sprott.

Micki Daniels reported to the committee that Administration does not presently have a listing of support staff, but Marge Hall would arrange to have a list/labels prepared which would also include years of service.

Members felt it would be helpful if we could have a representative from Epsilon Sigma Phi participate in our committee meetings (at least during the time of organization) to give guidance and counsel. Dorothy suggested Joe Brown since he has many years of experience and served Epsilon Sigma Phi in many different areas. He will be asked to attend our next meeting.

Director Sprott and Dr. Cunningham joined the committee members at 3:00. Dr. Smith was still involved with Annual Conference and would be late in coming. Dorothy passed out the agenda and minutes of our last committee meeting.

Recognition by peers is a very powerful tool, according to Director Sprott. It has been proven that recognition by peers as well as superiors is a great motivator that enhances job performance. We are very lucky in Ohio to be part of an organization such as The Ohio State University and the Extension Service where they have the foresight to recognize this and to offer this support along with career opportunities. Ohio is a leader; most other states do not offer this kind of support.

Director Sprott was curious to know what district supervisors and chairs thought of the support staff fraternity concept. Committee members indicated a very positive attitude coming from those supervisors and SITS who had been involved in any discussion as well as support staff from surrounding offices.

As Director Sprott read through the minutes, the following comments and questions arose:

He was very impressed with the progress made and felt the committee had done considerable work to accomplish so much. The committee was well organized and had defined goals. Director Sprott liked the name, Chi Epsilon Sigma.

Director Sprott questioned if we are doing "unnecessary damage" by excluding support staff other than Extension for membership? Would support staff eligibility be determined by percent of salary paid by Extension or if an individual is working for an Extension professional? Also questioned the 5 years of service before qualifying for membership.

The committee originally felt membership should be a privilege to those who have been associated with Extension for a specified number of years, thus avoiding a great turn-over of those who hold employment for short periods of time. But we did recognize the fact that five years may be too long to wait for those who are dedicated and enthusiastic Extension employees. Also, lowering the years of service requirement may be a positive influence in keeping support staff on board with Extension through involvement in a fraternity. The committee unanimously agreed to extend membership to those with one year of service. It may also be a common courtesy to extend an invitation to non-members to attend the annual meeting. This would avoid exclusion for those people not involved and could be a key in participation of members. Some people need the re-assurance of their co-workers and splitting them for the evening while away from the office may be a hindrance. This can be discussed further.

An explanation was given on why the committee felt membership should be open to Extension support staff exclusively, not to include ATI and OARDC. Extension is unique in itself even though we do have a lot in common with ATI and OARDC. We would be adding strength to the fraternity by bringing together those with the same common ground and not broadening ourselves. ATI and OARDC would be encouraged to form their own chapter within this same fraternity.

A discussion followed on the definition of "support staff". Does this include all program assistants? Dr. Cunningham shared his thoughts in that this would be anyone who does secretarial/clerical work. This may or may not include program assistants, depending on the individual's job description. It was agreed that all persons who receive information on in-service training for support staff would be the targeted "potential membership list."

Committee members asked if Drs. Sprott and Cunningham knew of any national organizations we could affiliate with; they were not aware of any. But they suggested Dr. Smith check with his counterparts in other states to find out. As far as anyone knows, we are the pioneers.

The idea of "start-up" money was brought to Director Sprott's attention. He felt there could be some non-tax money available but Dr. Cunningham would need to check into this. He did request we present him a proposed one and two year budget to give him an idea of what we are expecting.

Membership fees were discussed. The concern of pricing ourselves out of the market was brought up. The decision was to stay at \$15 annually.

To introduce the fraternity concept to support staff around the state and trigger interest, Director Sprott will include an article in the Brown Letter. He asked the committee to write the article and forward it on to him. It will be important to let everyone know about the charter membership. We can attach individual letters of invitation and the membership forms to the Brown Letter to save on postage.

Director Sprott ask^ed to have copies of the first committee minutes to present to Administrative Cabinet. Becky Hooper will make copies and give to Micki Daniels.

As the meeting was adjourning, Dr. Smith arrived. Committee members briefed him on items discussed and asked him to check with other states to see if there is a group or organization we could affiliate with. He will follow up and check back with the committee.

Next committee meeting will be March 18, 1987, Anne Deja Vu Restaurant, 308 W. High Street, Mt. Vernon, at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Hooper