

ANR Cooperative Extension Risk Assessment Best Practices

Staff – Work Load/ Stress/Administrative Burden

A. Employee Benefits

1. Encourage staff to take vacation time and sick leave, as appropriate
2. Provide good employee benefits (e.g., health care, vacation, etc.)
3. Adhere to personnel policies
4. Monitor and facilitate use of annual, study, sabbatical leaves
5. Compensation to match the job responsibilities
6. Implement job shadowing opportunities to gain ideas/insight

B. Coping Mechanisms

1. Exercise flexibility/adaptation to situations
2. Use organizational tools, e.g., task lists, calendars
3. Delegate tasks to others in an appropriate fashion
4. Confront and deal with issues along the way, not waiting for them to reach crisis level
5. Encourage staff to pace themselves
6. Keep communication lines open so that staff feels supported
7. Provide opportunities to brainstorm together about solutions to problems
8. Develop system for dealing with personnel issues prior to crisis stage
9. Be proactive

C. Training, Staff Development

1. Make professional development opportunities available
2. Provide training for staff on time management and personal management
3. Provide training in meeting management -- facilitation model, etc.
4. Arrange workshop sessions on stress management
5. Provide time-management training/seminars for staff
6. Develop effective new staff orientation
7. Train management and staff on personnel management issues/policies/regulations/skills
8. Provide training so we have less crisis reaction
9. Develop staff fully and delegate to extent possible
10. Implement staff internship program and/or structured mentoring program

D. Administrative Actions

1. Review priorities frequently with staff and share duties

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2. Strive to assign only high-priority action actions
3. Hold quarterly all-staff breakfast meetings
4. Support Vaux' statewide county director survey on issues of work overload and stress
5. Ensure that individuals do not assume risks instead of the organization assuming the risk
6. Assist staff to prioritize program and cut back on low-priority projects
7. Foster effective, consistent and efficient communication throughout Division
8. Provide clear interpretations of existing policies
9. Evaluate all parts of the system, including top administration
10. Issue policies at the beginning of the program year
11. Allow staff to keep unused vacation time
12. Encourage staff to take vacations
13. Keep job descriptions concise and realistic
14. Prioritize workloads and avoid loading staff with projects and competing deadlines
15. Hold well-organized, productive meetings
16. Make timeframes for new policy implementation realistic
17. Provide administrative leadership from administrative units regarding UC and ANR policies; streamline flow of administrative guidelines and support from ANR

E. Planning and Priority Setting

1. Start planning for growth based on program priorities
2. Help staff set priorities
3. Proactively set realistic high-priority goals, focusing on what can reasonably be accomplished
4. Evaluate/prioritize administrative burdens
5. Spend more time with advisors, helping them with program direction and prioritizing

F. Budget and Resources

1. Provide resources to improve facilities so we can house more people
2. Increase salary scale for advisors and increase County Director stipend to make commensurate with job duties
3. Establish base budgets for regions to allow decisions that match the flattened organization
4. Develop budget model (process) to quickly address changes in staffing levels and continuation of core programs
5. Provide more program management staff to free advisors for their academic work

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G. Personnel Considerations

1. Provide employee benefits (e.g., medical, dental)
2. Provide recognition for staff accomplishments
3. Review position descriptions for reality check of what an individual can effectively accomplish rather than setting impossible goals
4. Shorten and simplify the promotion process, which is too long for both those preparing a Program Review and those evaluating it
5. Coordinate timing of academic merit/promotion activities, budget proposals, and statewide conferences so they do not happen all in the same timeframe
6. Acknowledge and understand the increased pressures of the CE advisor job and compensate accordingly if CE advisors are to be held to the campus standard as it relates to program reviews and career advancement
7. Respond to comments regarding administrative overload in counties (e.g., we need more timely administrative feedback on things like the county director survey conducted by the Academic Assembly Council last year).

H. Technology

1. Make program time available by use of technology such as teleconferencing for meetings
2. Control/reduce/consolidate the number and quality of "mandatory" meetings through the use of technology
3. Have equipment like Group Systems to gather ideas/suggestions/feedback on a regular basis
4. Continue to use Web-based administrative reporting tools such as DANRIS and CASA; use Web technologies for communication, information-sharing, etc.
5. Continue investment in communication technologies to maximize efficiency

I. Coordination and Communication

1. Communicate with staff to determine what it is actually doing and encourage open discussions
2. Develop a statewide calendar and coordinate meetings/conferences to make effective use of time
3. Track "Hot Issues" from the point of submission to the point of resolution
4. Plan more interaction between Oakland staff and county-based staff, such as conferences/meetings