

**A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEADERSHIP  
ADVISORY BOARD IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF VISIONING AND  
ADVOCACY FOR THE TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE**

A Dissertation

by

**JEFFREY PAUL RIPLEY**

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

December 2008

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,  
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## **ABSTRACT**

A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of the Leadership Advisory Board in Meeting the Needs of Visioning and Advocacy for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

(December 2008)

Jeffrey Paul Ripley, B.S., Tarleton State University;

M.Ed., Texas State University

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This study sought to determine and evaluate the effectiveness of the Leadership Advisory Board structure and its membership at meeting the needs of Visioning and Advocacy for Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

The research was conducted with the members of the Leadership Advisory Boards in 48 counties in Texas, with a selection based upon distribution of counties across all Extension categories roughly equal to the percentage of each category currently present in the State.

The primary purpose was to determine the self perception of members of their ability to serve as advocates and as a visionary organization to help Extension identify and validate the issues important to the residents of their county. A secondary purpose was to identify the benefits, concerns and solutions that can assist Texas AgriLife Extension in strengthening the organizational structure and methods associated with these Boards across the State. Five research questions were examined by the researcher. These questions were, 1. What is the competency level of the Leadership Advisory

Board members on the pertinent issues in the county?, 2. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Boards understand the Land-Grant system and the Extension Service?, 3. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board feel that their ideas lead to programs?, 4. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board assist with interpreting program impacts to key stakeholders and decision makers?, 5. What benefits are Leadership Advisory Board members receiving from their involvement on the Board?

The sample population included 490 Leadership Advisory Board members, with 236 of these participating in the survey. The instrument utilized was a seven page survey with 26 perception statements on a likert-type scale, six true or false questions to measure knowledge of the Land-Grant system, three open-ended questions for qualitative analysis, and 10 demographic questions to describe and categorize the respondents. The results included 10 significant findings, which led to 7 recommendations for Extension related to the Leadership Advisory Board, and 5 areas of further research.

## DEDICATION

This study is the culmination of over four years of work toward a doctoral degree. There have been numerous sacrifices made in the pursuit of this degree, but none so much as of those closest to me. I dedicate this work to my family.

To my best friend: my wife Tina. You were the one who picked up all the slack while I did this. You are the most unselfish and giving person I have ever known. You always pushed and prodded until I got back on task to finish this goal, but never showed any impatience with me during this long process. Words can never express the gratitude and love that I have for you and for the belief that you have in me.

To my children: Courtney, Kelcey, Lauren and Colton, thanks for all the words of encouragement and for all the patience and understanding when Dad had “homework” and had to miss important things in your lives. No more classes, papers, or assignments to interfere with the games, shows and other activities that we love to do together.

My parents and in-laws: J.S. and Glenda Ripley, Kenny and Deborah Peck, Pat Turner and Lenny Peck, have been cheerleaders and an inspiration to me through the entire process. Hopefully holidays can return to normal with no more school work to catch up on.

To my Mom, Sue Pittman Ripley, I wish you were here to enjoy this with me, this was your dream and I know you would be proud.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people to thank for the support and assistance provided to me during my degree work and research project. I have been very blessed to have such an outstanding group of friends, supporters, coaches and mentors.

Dr. Scott Cummings and Dr. Chris Boleman, thank you for the patience and guidance that you have given me as my Extension and Departmental guides through this process. I know that mine was the number you dreaded seeing on your caller I.D., but you always answered and helped me through the tough spots. Dr. Gary Briers and Dr. Ed Smith, thank you for the dedication that you exhibited while serving on my committee and for the support that you have provided. Dr. Tim Murphy, thank you for stepping in for the traveling Dr. Briers near the end, and for your feedback and assistance which has been extremely valuable. To the entire faculty and staff of the ALEC Department at Texas A&M University, thank you for the way that each of you embraced me and my work.

Thanks to my supervisors and administrators in Extension for the encouragement and understanding during the past few years. Dr. Bonnie McGee, Mrs. Cheryl Mapston, Mr. Kyle Smith, Dr. Darrell Dromgoole, and Mr. Scott Durham: each of you have been instrumental in the completion of this effort and have been extremely understanding and supportive.

Thank you to my co-workers, Dr. Elaine Fries and Mrs. Barbara Moretich who have absolutely gotten me through the research project and dissertation. I could never have gotten this written without the assistance that you have provided.

To the County Extension Agents in the 48 counties included in this research: thanks for the help in getting your volunteers to respond to the survey and for the quick response every time I needed some help. Of course, thanks to the volunteers in those counties who hold Extension in such high regard and who gave of their time to help with this project.

Many others within Texas AgriLife Extension have been helpful in so many ways, including Dr. Monty Dozier, Dr. Ruben Saldana, Dr. Joan Gillespie, Mr. Skip Richter, Mrs. Sharon West, Mr. Pete Flores, Ms. DiAnna Moglia, Ms. Sylvia Falcon, Ms. Stephanie Klock, and Ms. Sharon Thompson. Each has provided help in so many ways and has encouraged me along the way.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Texas AgriLife Extension Service has utilized the input and assistance of volunteers in developing educational events and programs since its inception. The structure and format of the volunteer involvement has changed over time, but the grassroots involvement has always been critical to the success of the educational programs that County Extension Agents conduct. In 2006, Texas AgriLife Extension implemented a major change to the way counties involved advisory leaders, the roles that volunteers play in visioning and advocacy, and the types of community leaders involved in Extension planning groups.

The literature reviewed will demonstrate the history of volunteer involvement in Extension planning, as well as the structures that have been implemented and utilized in various planning schemes in Texas AgriLife Extension. A very stable structure was utilized for over fifty years, from the 1950's until the early 2000's, in which almost all planning group members were clientele directly involved in Extension educational programs. The majority of programs were planned by subject matter planning groups, known as Program Area Committees, that were comprised of individuals that were beneficiaries of Extension programs, and were very knowledgeable in the specific subject matter assigned to the committee. These members were generally viewed as

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This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Extension*.

successful and were opinion leaders in the community as it related to the subject matter, such as a successful farmer or rancher on a crops or livestock committee.

The chairperson of each of the Program Area Committees in a county comprised the majority of the membership of an overall planning group known as the Executive Board. The Executive Board also involved a select few community members who were selected “at-large” to the Board. The goal of such an arrangement was to broaden the perspective of the Board beyond the traditional involvement of leaders in agriculture, family and consumer sciences and 4-H and youth development. The Board was charged with a number of tasks, but in practice they typically served as a general oversight group for the total Extension program, and served as the planning committee for programs directed at Community and Economic Development.

The identified deficiencies from this structure were that most counties were very limited in the following:

1. Visioning – volunteers involved were not typically well versed in issues that were important to the general population of a county.
2. Advocacy – Volunteers were not seen as opinion leaders in many cases, and were not involved in advocating for Extension with key leaders and elected officials to the extent that was needed.
3. Limited or Slanted View – Most, if not all of the membership in Extension planning groups were clientele or direct beneficiaries of Extension programs. The individuals had a stake in particular

program areas, but may not have the broad view needed to direct a vision and determine the needs of the community.

With these deficiencies in mind, Extension implemented a new structure to be adopted by all counties in September of 2006. The new structure would still involve the subject matter planning groups through Program Area Committees, Task Forces and Coalitions. These groups would continue to be comprised of individuals that are seen as leaders in the particular subject matter, and will continue to be clients and beneficiaries of the programs. The overall planning component, however, was changed dramatically. The Executive Board was dissolved in the county structure, and replaced with a Leadership Advisory Board. The membership of the Leadership Advisory Board is not necessarily members of other committees and current clients of Extension. The individuals serving on Leadership Advisory Boards are community leaders who are identified for their vision of community needs and issues, involvement in community organizations, and ability to build support for successful programs and organizations.

The Leadership Advisory Board has fewer functions than the Executive Board, and are tasked primarily with visioning and advocacy activities. Visioning will consist of scanning the community and assisting the County Extension Agents with identifying issues that are important to the community as a whole. These issues may, or may not be related to the base program areas that Extension works in, but they will be issues that Extension can help to facilitate solutions for. The advocacy function involves the Leadership Advisory Board helping to develop plans for County Extension Agents to interpret the results of programs to elected officials, community leaders and partners.



Members will also have an elevated role in speaking for Extension with elected officials and those who fund the programs in their county.

The new structure was adopted to address the concerns that were expressed related to the structure involving the Executive Board. This study will begin to assess the success of the new structure in meeting the needs that Extension has for enhanced community visioning and for advocacy by its volunteers and staff.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

Leadership Advisory Boards have been pilot tested in the urban counties in Texas for almost 10 years, and was adopted statewide in September 2006. There is currently a need to assess the progress that counties are making in adopting the total structure and functions of the Leadership Advisory Board. The proposed study will examine the following five research questions:

1. What is the competency level of members of Leadership Advisory Boards on the pertinent issues in the county? Do members feel that they can scan the environment and assist the County Extension Agent to maintain relevancy?
2. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Boards truly understand who Texas AgriLife Extension is? Do they connect the agency to the Texas A&M University System? Do they understand the funding sources and the relationships with each?

3. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board believe that their ideas lead to programs? Is the visioning process that they undertake just an exercise, or is it used in setting the direction that local educational programs will follow?
4. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board assist with interpreting program impacts to key stakeholders and decision makers? Do they advocate for Extension in both formal and non-formal settings? Do they assist in developing strategies and developing messages for key decision maker contacts? Do they feel comfortable in talking to elected officials?
5. What benefits are Leadership Advisory Board members receiving from their involvement on the Board? Are we helping to develop their personal leadership skills? Have their connections and networks benefited from their involvement?

### **Implications of the Study**

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher hopes that Texas AgriLife Extension will utilize the information in the following ways:

1. Training for County Extension Agents will be developed to be delivered at the District/Regional level if needed
2. Curriculum will be developed to assist Leadership Advisory Board members to more fully complete their roles as a Visioning and Advocacy group.

3. As a means for conveying the importance to County Extension Agents of following the recommendations of Extension Education in structuring and staffing an effective Leadership Advisory Board at the county level.
4. Leadership Advisory Boards, and certain key members, will be more fully utilized on the county, district, state and federal levels by Extension faculty.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Historical Perspective**

There is, to this day, disagreement on who first had the idea for the Land Grant College system. It has most often been credited to Justin Morrill, the Congressman from Vermont who authored the legislation creating the Land-Grant College. However, many argue that Illinois college professor, Jonathon Baldwin Turner, first conceived it and that Morrill was merely reflecting Turners views (Herron and Edwards, 2002). In either case, the Land Grant College was created in 1862 with the passage of the Morrill Act. The primary goal of the act was to create a college in each state that would allow the common person to receive higher education.

Before that time, only affluent Americans had access to college, and were taught only the classics. There had been no effort to teach a curriculum designed to prepare students for a vocation other than theology and law. The expansion of the U.S. to uninhabited lands, and the vast farming operations were taking its toll on soil conditions, and it was noted that there was a need to educate those who were tilling the soil in the proper methods to produce food, while being good stewards of the resources. There was a need recognized to educate the working class, for the first time in American history. The bill to create the Land-Grant System was first proposed in 1857, and failed. By the time it was proposed again, in 1862, the Country was in its darkest moment, the Civil War.

The Southern members of Congress, who had opposed it before, had withdrawn and were representing the Confederate States of America. Furthermore, the new version of the Land-Grant College Act had included a provision for military tactics to be taught at each of the colleges (Herron and Edwards, 2002). This time the bill was passed, and President Lincoln signed it into law. At the end of the Civil War, in 1865, Land-Grant Colleges began to emerge in States around the Country.

Another significant development that led to the establishment of the Cooperative Extension system was the passage of the Hatch Act, which established a national system of agricultural experiment stations. According to Rasmussen (1989);

The concept of a nationwide system of agricultural experiment stations was expressed in 1845 by John Pitkin Norton, a professor at Yale. One of his students, Samuel William Johnson, became an advocate of agricultural experiment stations. In 1875, Johnson's efforts led to the establishment of the Connecticut Experiment Station. The same year, under the leadership of E.W. Hilgard, the University of California established an experiment station. A number of other states followed the examples of Connecticut and California (p. 26).

The concept of providing federal and state funds was first introduced in Congress by William H. Hatch of Missouri and J.Z. George of Mississippi in 1882 ( Rasmussen, 1989). The Hatch Act that provided federal appropriations for support of agricultural research was signed in 1887 (Rasmussen, 1989).

The Cooperative Extension System was established in 1914 as a result of the Smith-Lever Act. This act was introduced by Senator Hoke K. Smith of Georgia and Congressman Asbury F. Lever of South Carolina (Rasmussen, 1989). Kelsey and Hearne (1963) outlined the major provisions of the Smith-Lever Act as follows:

1. State colleges and the U.S.D.A were to establish a cooperative working relationship and joint responsibility for implementing and administering the Cooperative Extension Service.
2. Provisions were to apply only to residents of the state receiving appropriations. Non-residents were to be excluded from benefits.
3. Educational services addressed an unlimited array of subjects. Funds were to be used for giving instruction in agriculture, home economics and related subjects.
4. Educational service was to include demonstration work. The act stated that services should consist of the giving of practical demonstrations.
5. Funding was to be based on the number of rural citizens.

The foundational principles of Extension suggest that the educational efforts might be of County Extension Agents simply transferring knowledge to clientele. This philosophy, however, has not been the case since the inception of the Land-Grant system. Dating back to 1904, County Extension Agents have worked in partnership with clientele and community leaders to develop education that was relevant to the local people and economy (Peters, 2002a) Extension has long prided itself on the inclusion of local leaders in developing plans for educational programs to be developed and delivered in each county. Peters (2002b) says that:

Extension educators often work as *organizers*. In their organizing role, they develop leadership and build relationships between and among individuals and institutions in order to engage people in the work of identifying, understanding, and taking action on a variety of public issues.

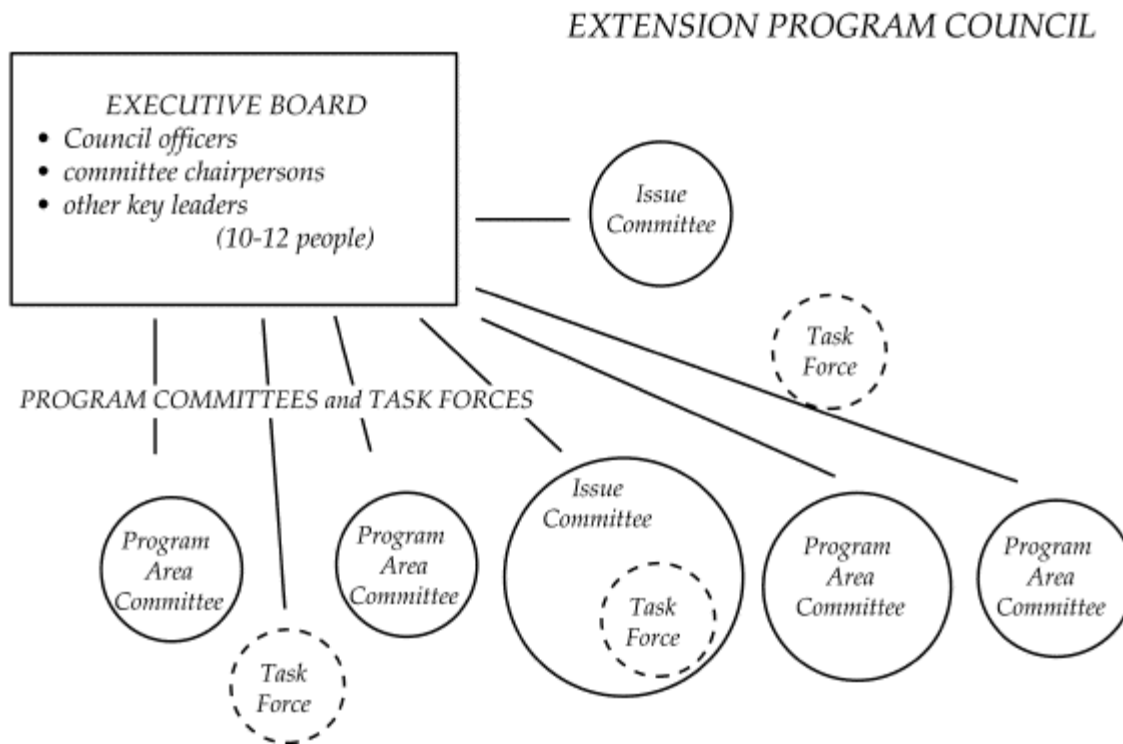
There has been a systematic approach applied to program planning for many years. Each program area utilizes local opinion leaders in developing plans for that particular subject matter area, through Program Area Committees (PAC's). An example would be a Beef Cattle PAC, which might include local ranchers, feedlot operators, order buyers and others who may have specific knowledge that would assist the County Extension Agent in planning effective programs to be delivered to the beef cattle producers in the county. This type of committee is in place for each of the program areas in the county. The chairperson of each of these committees also served on the Executive Board, which provided oversight to the total Extension program, and often served as the PAC for Community and Economic Development issues. A quote from A.E. Bowman, Director of Extension in Wyoming in the 1930's further points to the prominence that planning groups have played in Extension and the benefits of such groups to the community.

The Extension Service, while seeming to deal chiefly with the economic problems involved in helping the producer secure a greater income from his farm, and his wife to manage the home with greater economy and less effort, has contributed to rural society something vastly more important than a knowledge of improved practices and greater income. To induce men and women and boys and girls to come together to think collectively, plan collectively, and then act collectively to bring about desired conditions, does something to the individual. It gives opportunity, the greatest boon to mankind, for self-expression and development. It is not the acquisition of more lands or more cattle or more home equipment that brings greater happiness. It is the "finding of one's self," the development of leadership, improved skills, increased knowledge, broadened understanding, and greater appreciation attained by the individual taking part in community activities set afoot by the Extension Service that measures its value to the rural people. (Bowman, 1934)

The structure used in Texas since the early 1950's was that of an Extension Program Council, which combined the PAC's and the Executive Board. This structure has served to maintain relevancy in Extension programs for many years, specifically in

the program areas, through the involvement of the PAC's. Figure 1 below shows the interaction and structure of the Extension Program Council.

**Figure 1.** Extension Program Council Structure, Marshall (1990).



Marshall (1990) points out that experience has proven that successful county educational programs can be achieved most effectively with the involvement of local citizens and the formal support of Extension Program Councils in the counties. Marshall (1990) also identifies the following benefits to the Extension Program Council approach:

- The Extension Service is kept in direct contact with people for whom educational programs are designed to benefit.
- Educational programs are “people centered”, based on expressed needs.



- The process draws on knowledge, creativity and leadership skills of many people, thus increasing the quality and effectiveness of programs.
- In the involvement of citizens, their leadership capabilities are increased, and leaders themselves are able to assume key roles in other groups and efforts in the community.
- Citizen involvement multiplies the efforts of County Extension Agents and produces more effective programs than Agents could manage alone.
- The process uses evaluation in all phases to keep the program aimed in the right direction.

These benefits are certainly true, and can be applied to all planning groups involved in the process of developing educational programs that meet the needs of local clientele.

The Executive Board, though, was charged with providing the visionary leadership that was necessary to make certain that Extension was addressing the issues that were of most importance to the community as a whole. These may, or may not, be issues related directly to the major program areas that Extension traditionally works in, or that Executive Board members had a significant interest in. By involving only members of PAC's, Extension was limiting itself dramatically to only those individuals who had a stake in the program area that they represented. These individuals were not typically in touch with the community's general needs, so visionary planning and issue identification was lacking in many cases. New Hampshire Extension determined that since 1914, when Extension was formed, the advisory functions have been largely performed by those individuals who were actively involved in agriculture production (Black, Howe, Howell & Bedkar, 1992).

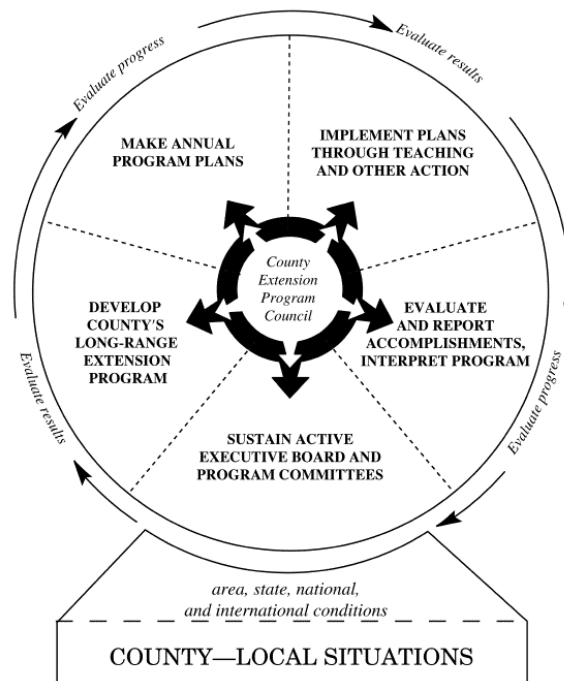
Marshall (1990) listed 12 specific functions that the Extension Program Council Executive Board would be charged with:

1. Periodically review county situations and identify new areas of concern that need attention.

2. Study area, state and national programs for which Extension is responsible; determine how these may be implemented most effectively in the county.
3. Delegate program responsibility to an appropriate program area or issue committee or task force; establish or reorganize program committees when appropriate, and disband committees whose functions have ceased.
4. Work cooperatively with program committees to develop a long range educational program
5. Plan and carry out an educational program of interest to a cross section of citizens in the county every year.
6. Assist in identifying and recruiting capable executive board and program committee members and resource people to help the council carry out its role.
7. Develop standing rules to govern the Extension Program Council.
8. Communicate plans and accomplishments of each program committee to members of the Extension Program Council and related organizations.
9. Provide interpretation to publics about the Extension program, the purpose of the Extension Program Council, and accountability in the use of resources.
10. Provide for training or orientation of all Council members to the county Extension program and organization to which they are a part.
11. Recognize, motivate and inspire Extension Program Council members toward exemplary service.
12. Review work of the executive board and other parts of the Council, evaluate accomplishments and take the lead in program re-direction when and where needed.

This list shows in detail the very broad area of influence that the Executive Board has had for the past many years. They served as a visioning group, as well as a program management committee, recruitment committee, fundraising committee, advocacy group, and to some degree, a governing organization, as shown in Figure 2 below, yet the membership was largely composed of individuals who were interested in only one aspect of the total Extension program.

**Figure 2.** Role of the Extension Program Council, Marshall (1990).



### **A New Approach**

Urban counties were among the first to see the potential downside of the traditional structure of Extension advisory boards. In Cuyahoga County, Ohio (Cleveland), there was a noted deficiency in advisors that were broad thinking and had the proper types of experiences and connections to keep Extension relevant in the 1980's. The Extension staff took the opportunity to reorganize the group with 15 new members who were not necessarily Extension users, but who had a potential interest in the mission of Extension. The purpose of the new committee was narrowed slightly from the historical scope of responsibility and included guidance in program emphasis, help in budget preparation, public relations and legislative advocacy. This approach

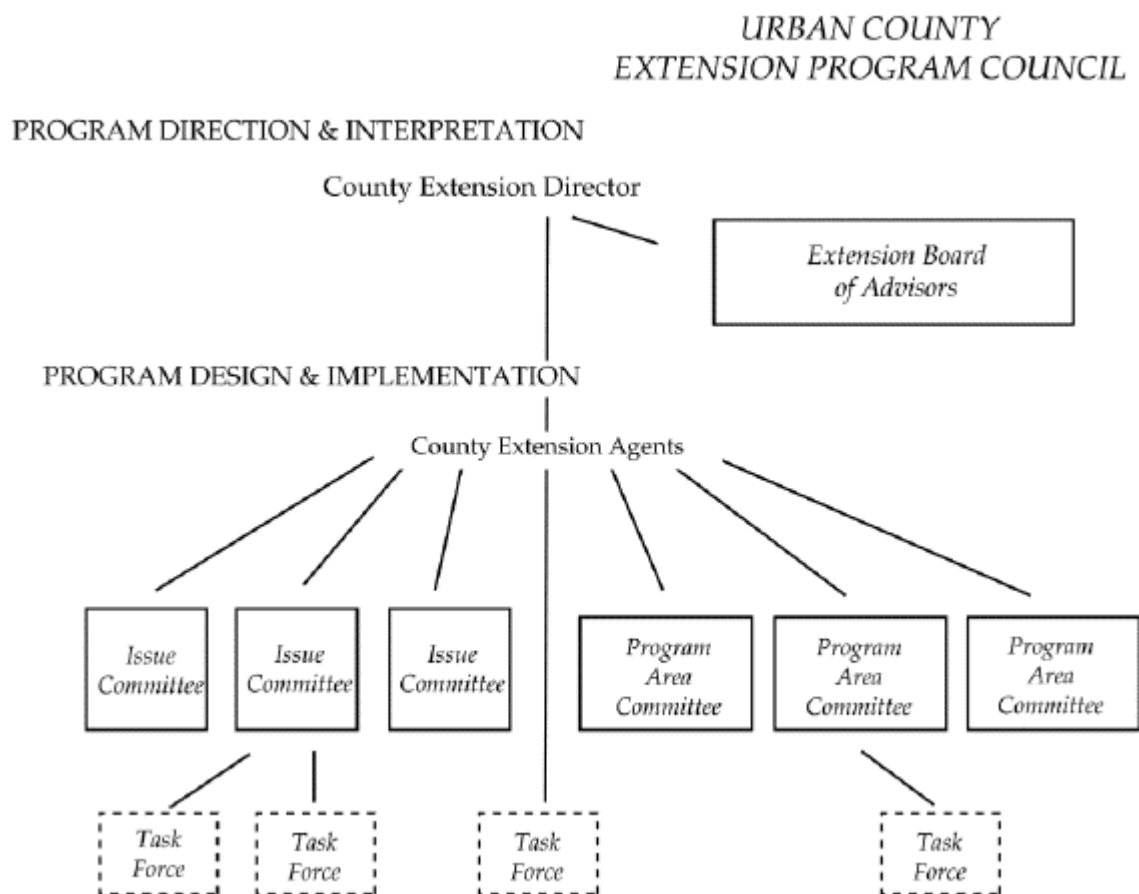
proved very beneficial, as the strength of the committee was in areas that Extension needed the most assistance, visionary issue identification, public relations and advocacy (Ebling, 1985)

A similar structure began being investigated in the urban counties of Texas in the mid 1990's. Harris County was the first to adopt a Board of Advisors concept that involved community leaders that were not members of other Extension planning groups or PAC's. They had the primary responsibility of advocacy and resource development, with little or no programmatic oversight or subject matter program planning in their scope. The membership of this Board was largely that of community leaders who had little or no current involvement with Extension. These individuals were business leaders, community advocates, public servants, and others who had a passion for making a difference in their community.

The model being evaluated in Harris County was soon adopted in Travis and Tarrant counties with varying degrees of similarity. There was maximum flexibility given to the County Extension Directors in selecting members for the Advisory Board, and in establishing guidelines to determine its scope and focus. In all instances, the Boards proved beneficial in the primary role of advocacy, allowing Extension many opportunities to tell their story to key elected officials at the County and State level. Harris County has had tremendous success in resource development as well, founding an educational foundation to expand programs with local and private funding sources. Ellis (1996) states that: "*Most advisory groups have an impact through influence and persuasion, rather than through decision making authority.*" This concept is how the

advisory boards were utilized in the urban counties of Texas. Figure 3 below depicts the structure that was utilized in Texas' urban counties:

**Figure 3.** Urban County Structure for Program Development, Marshall (1990).



Building off the success that the urban counties were having with the new structure, Extension began to ask some questions regarding the benefits and pitfalls of the two structures being used in urban and rural counties. Looking at the philosophy of

Extension is of primary importance, and reaffirming that the land-grant philosophy of listening to the people in the counties was being adhered to was paramount to the success of our programs. In his paper regarding the philosophy of Extension, Keith L. Smith (1991) asks some pertinent questions, among others he asks:

1. Who are we listening to? Are we listening to the real world?
2. Are we developing new coalitions and linkages?
3. Are we building an image of an organization that is credible, relevant, and effective?

These questions have been answered earlier, as we know that the makeup of these committees was heavily Extension users and those with a very narrow view of the community and its needs.

The structure of Extension Program Councils in Texas was changed in 2006, to a system that is similar to those being used in the urban counties. The groups are called Leadership Advisory Boards (LAB), and replaced the Executive Boards in the previous structure. The PAC's and other planning groups remain unchanged, and provide the primary direction to programs in specific subject matter areas. The functions of the LAB were expanded slightly from those in the urban counties and include the following primary responsibilities:

1. Reviewing the county Extension program's mission and purpose and the local program's goals, objectives and audiences.
2. Developing resources to ensure that high quality programs can be implemented.
3. Ensuring that legal and ethical integrity and accountability are maintained.

4. Monitoring and strengthening the educational program.
5. Enhancing the county Extension programs public standing.

The LAB may also serve as the PAC providing direction to Community and Economic Development program efforts (Boleman & Burkham, 2005). These responsibilities are much the same as those outlined in the Texas urban model, with the addition of some broad programmatic oversight to assist in maintaining relevance.

The answers to the questions asked by Keith Smith (1991), however, remain largely the same as before, based solely upon the new structure. Simply changing the name of the EPC Executive Board to Leadership Advisory Board and slightly changing the functions of the Board do not change the answers to the questions about who were are listening to, relevance and new linkages. These questions, and the ultimate success of the LAB lies in the ability of Extension faculty to involve the right people at the local level. As a part of the volunteer administration initiative that Texas Cooperative Extension has undertaken, the involvement of “Opinion Leaders” in these groups has moved to the forefront. In his book *Diffusion of Innovations*, Rogers(1995), says that opinion leaders are set apart from the rest of society based upon their access to new ideas and information; access to resources and people; socio-economic status; and innovativeness. These characteristics need to be identified in potential members of the LAB. In order for the LAB to meet the needs of Extension, members must possess the ability to see the community and its needs in a broad vision; must be able to articulate the mission and accomplishments of Extension; have the connections and ties to decision makers to allow Extension access to educate that audience on those programmatic

impacts; and be the innovators to assist in identifying where Extension can address the needs of the community. These opinion leaders must have the standing in the community to be able to influence the power structure and help them see the relevance and value that Extension can bring. Boleman and Burkham (2005) stress that:

In every community there are individuals who play an important role in community decision making. They are found in local government, education, agriculture, families, the health field, or youth organizations. They are the ones people look to for leadership and who represent the opinions of the general population. These leaders, both adult and youth, are the ones who should be asked to serve on the Leadership Advisory Board.

The involvement of these opinion leaders is a major shift for many County Extension Agents, who may not have the comfort level to work with these community leaders. This can be an uncomfortable change for County Extension Agents in many cases. History tells us that the planning groups that County Extension Agents have worked with were staffed largely with clientele, or those who worked with Extension on a regular basis. The new structure dictates the involvement of a different type of person in many cases. Merten and Boleman (2007) say:

As change agents introduce and implement new ideas in a community, they often find themselves moving into unfamiliar subject areas. Opinion leaders- knowledgeable and influential people within a community- can help the County Extension Agent understand local issues more clearly, advise the County Extension Agent on specific decisions and influence others in the community to adopt the changes being promoted.

All characteristics and functions of the Leadership Advisory Board point to major contributions that the Board and its membership of opinion leaders can make toward the local program: Visioning and Advocacy. In their book *Leadership and Management of*



*Volunteer Programs*, Fisher and Cole (1993) list, among others the following benefits of involving volunteers:

Volunteers bring a useful community perspective to program planning, implementation and evaluation; and

Volunteers are strong representatives of the agency throughout the community.

### **The Role of Visioning**

Let's begin by examining the role of Visioning that the Leadership Advisory Board will play. Carver (1997) states the following as it relates to a board's tasks:

The board's job is a verbal task. The school board coaches no basketball teams. The county commission constructs no bridges. The hospital board cures no patients. The symphony board conducts no music. The boards job is not to coach, construct, cure or conduct. The board talks. Debating, clarifying, and enunciating values are talking tasks.

Boleman and Dodd (2007b) define *Strategic Visioning* as the process of developing a plan for the future. It results in a view of the future that everyone in the organization can support. They further describe *Strategic Planning* as the process of developing the steps that put the vision into action. In the strategic planning process, the Leadership Advisory Board sets priorities and guides others in identifying the most important needs to be addressed in a community. After the needs are identified and priorities set, community organizations determine their goals, objectives, roles, responsibilities and timelines for meeting the needs. Boleman and Dodd (2007b) further discuss the differences between *Inside-Out Planning and Outside-In Planning*. They state the following:

Inside-out planning usually focuses on the organization as the primary client. It looks at the organization's mission goals and purposes.....and is usually reactive in nature.

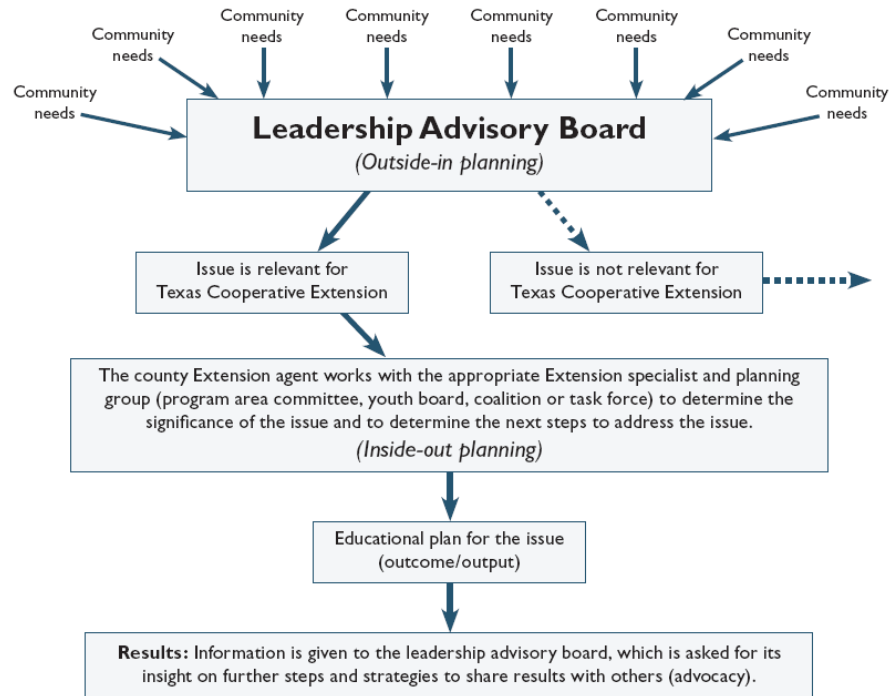
At the county level, Extension's inside-out focused groups include program area committees, youth boards, coalitions and task forces. The members of these groups have a vested interest in the specific subject matter being discussed.

Outside-in planning entails looking into an organization from the outside. It focuses on society as the primary audience. It challenges the status quo and can cause discomfort to employees because it often suggests change. Outside-in planning is usually proactive in nature.

In Texas Cooperative Extension, outside-in planning is typically conducted by a county's leadership advisory board. This group is not connected to the specific subject- matter areas addressed by Extension programs; instead, it represents the "big picture" thoughts and ideas of the community. The members of a leadership advisory board must represent the voices of the people and be truly "visionary" in their approach.

The chart in Figure 4 depicts how the two approaches to planning work together to develop a relevant and effective county Extension program.

**Figure 4.** Role of the Leadership Advisory Board in Visioning, Boleman and Burkham (2005).



The Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders Curriculum (2003) describes the role that advisor leaders play in the process as:

....the critical role of linking Extensions to its publics. It is this vital function that enables Extension to do programming with the assurance of addressing customer needs.....The process begins with the planning phase which includes environmental scanning and needs assessment. Advisory leaders input is especially critical at this stage where advisory leaders represent needs from the learner perspective.

Cornell Cooperative Extension has utilized a community scanning process for some time. Anderson (1989) describes the process as that of utilizing leaders within the

community to identify and prioritize issues that are most pressing in the community.

She describes the benefits of the process as:

.....as important addition to the planning process. The input received from a variety of people outside of the system set the stage for what followed. The visions of the public helped shape the horizons of the staff. The public at large, potential clients, and staff questioned what could be and then began to develop options.....The analyzed data then served as the guiding vision for the programming process.

Carver (1997) discusses the role that a board must play in determining the vision and direction of an organization. He states:

Relative value stability in other policy areas and the strategic importance of Ends lead the board to work on two compelling concerns each year: (1) “How can we connect with even more integrity with those on whose behalf we serve?” and (2) “Given new information, new wisdom, or new possibilities, what good for which people at what cost should we strive to do in the years ahead?”

All of the above points to the need for a more broad-thinking planning group to assist County Extension Agents in developing programs that are relevant, timely and effective at addressing the needs of the community as a whole. Evidence suggests that once the issues are identified, Extension has had a very effective vehicle for developing specific subject matter educational programs, but has been lacking in the role of outside-in planning, looking at the issues from a society view-point. The leadership advisory board, through its role as the visioning organization, can help with this need at the county level.

## **The Role of Advocacy**

Advocacy involves representing an organization through articulating the mission and supporting and defending the organization's message. For Extension, this involves knowing the history, mission, funding sources, and organization as well as being intimately familiar with the impact that local programs are having on clientele. It is readily apparent that those with that knowledge of Extension are most commonly our faculty and staff. County Extension Agents are generally knowledgeable about the Cooperative Extension System, the ties to federal, state and county government, the priority program areas being addressed by co-workers, and certainly the impacts that their programs are having on local clientele. However, the Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders Curriculum (2003) warns that, "*Faculty is viewed as having a biased view of the world by elected officials.... Well informed and articulate advisory leaders, on the other hand, can be very effective because they believe in the value of Extension and recognize how the programs can save taxpayer dollars.*" Boleman and Dodd (2007a) list advocacy as a key role that members of the leadership advisory board must play. They do, however, point out that members must have a firm understanding of Cooperative Extension, Texas Cooperative Extension and the relationship the agency has with federal, state and county governments. DeBord (2005) states that "*Extension Advisory Councils should be carefully reviewed to assure they are comprised of people who truly understand the value of programs and can defend this value.*"

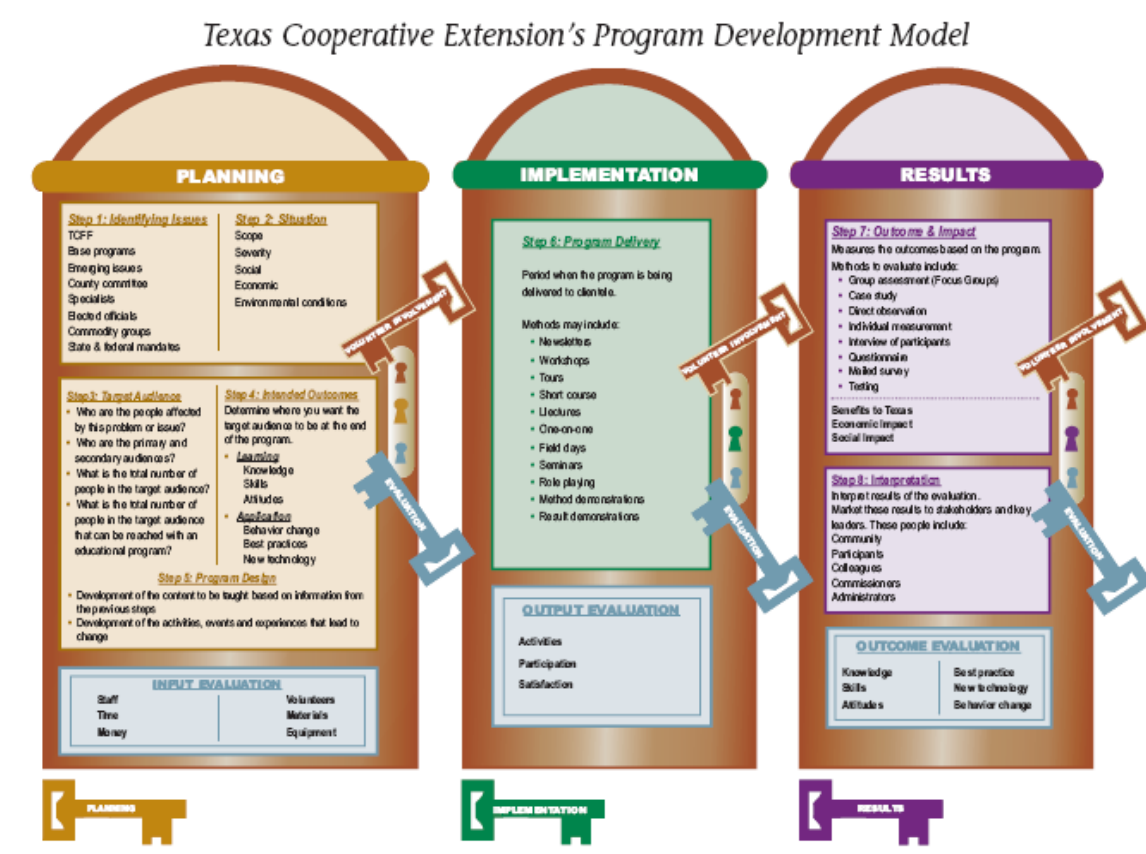
Often this can be achieved with a comprehensive orientation of board members, making certain that they have a firm understanding of the key principles needed.

Ellis (1996) says that:

Orientation and training are as important for board members as for any other volunteers. Regardless of the expertise for which the board member was recruited, no one is able to walk into a new situation and start being productive without learning the details of that particular situation.

There is tremendous demand for the limited dollars available from all three government funding sources that Extension draws upon to fund its programs. In order to expand or maintain current funding, Extension must be able to demonstrate the impact and importance of its programs to those who make the funding decisions. The impact and value of programs must be measured and articulated clearly to decision makers. Diem (2003) insists that in order to effectively measure the impact of Extension programs, an educator must “start with the end”. Despite what is commonly believed and typically practiced, evaluation needs to be considered when a program is being developed. The end results need to be identified at the beginning of the planning process. The program development model utilized by Texas Cooperative Extension does exactly that, by identifying the intended outcomes at the beginning of the planning process, as seen in Figure 5 below:

**Figure 5.** The Texas Cooperative Extension Program Development Model



Often, Extension focuses on measuring the benefit of its programs to individual clients, and that is certainly important. Why, however, should individual clients not pay for the benefit that they receive from Extension funding rather than the government funding such programs? Kalambokidis (2004) describes the importance of Extension identifying and articulating the benefit of its programs to the public in general. She describes how Extension educators formulate their messages for decision makers in Minnesota to focus on how the benefits to clientele have a positive impact on society as

a whole. This concept will require thought and research on the part of the person developing the message to make certain that the public value can be articulated to decision makers.

The Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders Curriculum (2003) discusses *Relationship Marketing* as a process for attracting, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with key people.

This concept is important now and will become increasingly important as competition for shrinking financial resources on all government levels escalates. It is not enough to let our quality programs speak for us. There is a continuous need to raise Extension's credibility with decision makers who no longer know Extension.

The curriculum identifies four distinct roles that our advisory leaders can play in advocating for Extension.

**Ambassadors** - This role can be assumed by many different people. It is primarily the business of spreading good will and information about Extension programs.

**Door Openers** – Behind the scene workers who are willing to provide information about leaders and lend their own name of influence. Advisory leaders can help form a network of people who can influence just the right person.

**Cultivators** – People who do the warm up in social and sometimes formal situations. The cultivator creates the setting for informal exchange of business to occur. There are generally limited numbers of cultivators and they enjoy using their social circles to set the stage for productive things to happen.

**Solicitors** – In a position to make the “ask” and be successful. There is some risk assumed on their part, so they will want to be well informed on all issues.

Each of these four roles can have a significant impact on our efforts to effectively interpret the results of Extension programs to decision makers at all levels. There is a



need for all four to be represented on the leadership advisory board, and the same person may assume different roles as the circumstances dictate. Ebling (1985) discusses the purposes of the Advisory Committee as:

.....help in budget preparation and presentation,...consult on public relations, inform those who need to know, and maintain legislative ties at the local, state, and federal levels.

These purposes point to a need for each of the roles that were identified in the Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders Curriculum (2003). Ebling (1985) further points out that because advisory leaders are people with substantial experience and influence themselves, their ideas are fresh and their legislative contacts are the best. Also noted is the fact that "...many doors have opened to the real power structure, always difficult to identify...." Advisory leaders have, and will continue to offer Extension a source of contacts and an unbiased message delivered to key decision makers to assist in securing and expanding the resources available to Extension to provide the programs that the community needs.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

As stated, the primary purpose of this study is to measure the self assessed competencies and perceptions of randomly selected Leadership Advisory Board members as they relate to the primary roles of (1) Visioning, and (2) Advocacy. A secondary purpose is to have members identify strengths and weaknesses that they perceive are associated with the Leadership Advisory Board process.

#### **Research Design**

The researcher developed a survey instrument that was completed by selected Leadership advisory Board members to address the following research questions.

1. What is the competency level of members of Leadership Advisory Boards on the pertinent issues in the county? Do members feel that they can scan the environment and assist the County Extension Agent to maintain relevancy?
2. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Boards truly understand who Texas AgriLife Extension is? Do they connect the agency to the Texas A&M University System? Do they understand the funding sources and the relationships with each?
3. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board believe that their ideas lead to programs? Is the visioning process that they undertake just an exercise, or is it used in setting the direction that local educational programs will follow?

4. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board assist with interpreting program impacts to key stakeholders and decision makers? Do they advocate for Extension in both formal and non-formal settings? Do they assist in developing strategies and developing messages for key decision maker contacts? Do they feel comfortable in talking to elected officials?
5. What benefits are Leadership Advisory Board members receiving from their involvement on the Board? Are we helping to develop their personal leadership skills? Have their connections and networks benefited from their involvement?

The survey was completed via mailed or web based survey with members, based upon their preference. Returned mail surveys were entered into the web based survey program, and aggregated with those entered by individual members.

### **Population and Sample**

The sample was developed randomly from the 254 counties in Texas, with certain restrictions. There is representation from counties of varying size, based upon the current structure that Texas AgriLife Extension uses to group counties by category. There were a total of 50 counties included in the initial sample, randomly selected from each category of county based upon the guidelines in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution of counties involved in study

County Category	Number of Counties Selected for Participation
1	2
2	10
3	9
4	16
5	8
6	3
7	2

All counties were entered individually into one of seven Excel worksheets, based upon the category that the county has been assigned. The counties in the worksheet were each assigned a random number by Excel. Once a value was assigned to the counties in each category, they will be ranked in priority order, from lowest random number assigned to highest random number assigned. A list for each of the twelve Extension Districts was then developed from the worksheets. The researcher shared the list with each of the District Extension Administrators for their approval and input on the counties located within their district. Only those counties who meet the following criteria were selected from the randomly generated and prioritized list:

1. County is fully staffed.
2. County has a Leadership Advisory Board in place.

Of the initial 50 counties identified, nine were replaced based upon the recommendation of their District Extension Administrator due to one of the limitations listed above. In these cases, the next county in the ranked order was moved into the

sample. Once the counties were identified, the County Extension Agent(s) in each county were contacted and informed of their selection, asking for their cooperation and support to have Leadership Advisory Board members complete the survey instrument, and for their assistance in securing current and accurate contact information for the members of their Leadership Advisory Board.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher notified each of the County Extension Agents in the 50 counties of their selection, and asked for contact information for their Leadership Advisory Board. Further, each of the County Extension Agents was invited to participate in one of three question and answer sessions to outline the process and answer any questions or concerns that they may have. Only six of the counties chose to participate in one of the sessions. After the initial request and one reminder, 41 of the 50 counties had responded and provided the lists of their Board members. A follow-up contact was made with the District Extension Administrator from each district with counties that had not yet responded. This resulted in a total of 48 counties providing contact information for their members. One county reported that they did not have a Leadership Advisory Board, and one was non-responsive. The total membership from the 48 counties in the sample is 505.

County Extension Agents provided mailing addresses for each of their members, and electronic mail addresses for those they had. Of the 505 members, the researcher was given electronic mail addresses for 173 of the members. An electronic mail

message was sent to this group announcing the survey, and giving them a time frame for the release of the survey for their completion. Returned mail messages indicated that of the 173 addresses, 17 were undeliverable. The survey was released online on June 4, 2008 for those members who had been contacted via electronic mail. During the first week the survey was open, 77 members completed the online survey. On June 12, a mailed survey, with a letter giving members full instructions for completing the online survey, or returning the mailed copy was sent to all 505 members. Of the 505 mailed surveys, 15 were returned due to inaccurate addresses, none of which had electronic mail addresses, making the final sample size 490 Leadership Advisory Board members.

A deadline of June 23 to either complete the online survey or return the paper copy via the postage paid envelope was originally set. On June 23, a reminder was sent to each of the County Extension Agents in the 48 counties, asking them to remind their members of the deadline. In addition, an electronic mail reminder was sent to the members in the electronic mailing list. Upon the close of the survey on July 11, 2008, the response was 236 members, or a 48.16% response rate of members. Of those returned, 113 returned the survey via United States mail, and 123 completed the survey via the web based system.

### **Instrumentation**

For this study, the same instrument was used in an electronic format, as well as a mailed survey. The instrument contains 26 statements describing various skills and attitudes to determine self-perception of Leadership Advisory Board members. These

correspond to five internal scales, each addressing the previously identified research questions. In addition, there are 6 true or false test questions that measure the knowledge associated with research question 2, member's knowledge of the Land-Grant system and the relationship of Extension to the cooperating partners. The 26 statements were responded to on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was utilized to determine internal consistency for each scale within the instrument. Alpha scores ranged from .776 to .879 for the five scales within the instrument. The composite alpha value for all 26 Likert-type statements and the 6 true or false questions was .918, indicating that the instrument would have a very high probability of achieving similar results if used by a different researcher on the same case (Gall, Gall and Borg 2005). Tables 2 demonstrate the alpha scores for each of the scales within the instrument.

**Table 2.** Internal Scales and Reliability Coefficients

Scale	Statement	N	Alpha*
<b>Community Assessment Skills</b>		221	.789
	<p>I feel confident in my knowledge of issues important to the county</p> <p>My profession requires that I know what is important to residents of the county.</p> <p>I work with a diverse group of county residents on a regular basis.</p> <p>I am often perceived as a leader in my community.</p> <p>I have a broad understanding of issues that affect my county</p> <p>I was asked to serve on the LAB due to my community leadership or professional position</p> <p>The programs that the County Extension Agent develop and deliver are relevant to the most important needs of this county</p>		
<b>Agency/Land-Grant Understanding</b>		223	.803
	<p>I feel confident in explaining the relationship that Texas AgriLife Extension has with the Texas A&amp;M System, the U.S.D.A. and the County Commissioners Court</p> <p>I understand how our local Extension Office is funded</p> <p>I have been oriented and given information about Texas AgriLife Extension, its structure and funding sources by the County Extension Agents</p>		
<b>Vision to Programs</b>		220	.776
	<p>The issues identified by the LAB are relevant and acted upon by the County Extension Agents</p> <p>Issues identified are based upon the opinions and experiences of the membership of the Board</p> <p>When the LAB suggests an educational program it is usually conducted by the Agents</p>		



**Table 2.** Continued

Scale	Statement	N	Alpha*
	Since joining the LAB, the Board and County Extension Agents has conducted a needs assessment to identify new issues Often the County Extension Agents suggest the programs they feel comfortable addressing and the LAB agrees with the Agents		
<b>Advocacy Skills</b>		219	.801
	In the past year, I have talked with an elected official about our local Extension programs and the impact that they have The County Extension Agents keep me fully informed about the results of their educational programs in all subject areas I have sufficient contacts to facilitate meetings with elected officials for Extension I feel comfortable in addressing elected officials at both the County and State levels I have been informed about the economic impact that Extension programs have locally		
<b>Personal Leadership Development</b>		220	.879
	Members of the LAB receive training on topics related to community leadership Because of my membership on the LAB, I have developed new contacts that will benefit me personally or professionally I feel that my personal leadership skills are stronger because of my involvement on the LAB I feel more confident in interacting with community leaders and elected officials because of my participation on the LAB The other members of the LAB in my county are well respected and viewed as leaders in the county The LAB is a group recognized by local leaders as an effective group that positively affects the county		

\*Cronbach's alpha used

## **Data Analysis**

SPSS 14.0 for Windows software was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data. Frequencies, percentages, central tendency measures, and variability were used to describe the data. Relationships were compared between the perceived competencies of the Leadership Advisory Board members from their perspective. The dependent variables of “community assessment skills”, “agency/land grant understanding”, “vision to programs”, “advocacy skills”, and “personal leadership development” are scale variables consisting of average responses. A composite, a scale comprised of all items was developed and internal consistency of this scale was assessed by Cronbach's coefficient alpha. These responses were compared among years of participation and previous involvement with Extension programs. These techniques include independent samples t-test. Confidence intervals and tests for statistical significance were set a priori at the 0.05 level.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the perception of members of the Leadership Advisory Boards in a representative sample of counties across the state, as they relate to their ability to meet the Extension Service's goals of advocacy and visioning by this group of volunteers. A secondary goal is to determine the demographic characteristics of this group, and to determine their previous and current Extension involvement and other community involvement.

#### **Description of the Sample**

The sample for this study consisted of the membership of Leadership Advisory Boards in 48 counties across the state. The typical Leadership Advisory Board has between 8 and 15 members, however some of the counties included in this study had as many as 23, and as few as 6, with the mean number of members being 11.375 and the Standard Deviation was 4.226. The individuals serving on these boards are selected by the County Extension Agents, and/or other members of the board based upon their ability to assist the County Extension Agents in identifying issues that Extension can address, and to help advocate for Extension with elected officials and key decision makers at the local and State level. Of a possible 490 members with accurate and complete contact information, 236 completed the survey either online or via the United States Postal Service, accounting for a 48.16% response rate included in the initial analysis of data. There were 6 additional surveys received after data analysis was

complete, and were included only in the analysis of data for handling of nonresponse. The effective response rate, then becomes 49.4%. In order to describe the demographics of the respondents, the SPSS procedures Frequency and Descriptives were used.

### **Demographics of the Sample**

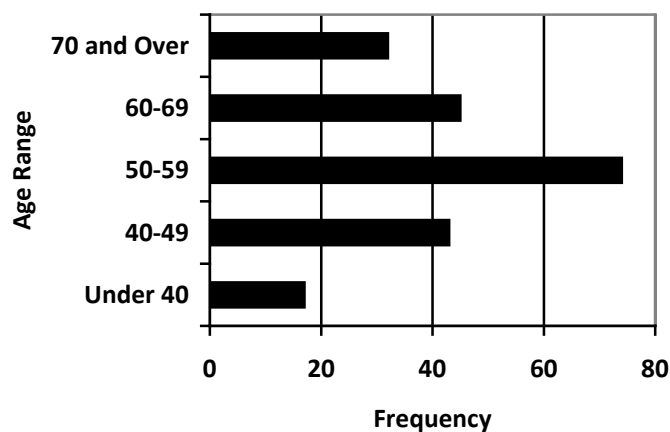
The ethnicity of the sample was primarily Anglo, with over 87% of those indicating their race as White or Anglo. The next largest group within the sample was that of Hispanic members, which comprised 8% of the sample. The remaining 5% of the sample was divided among African Americans, Asian, and Native American members, and those who listed other. Table 3 below shows the ethnicity of the sample, as compared to the general population of the 48 counties included in the sample, and the general population of the State of Texas.

**Table 3.** Ethnicity of LAB Members

	n	Sample Percent	Sample County Population	Texas Population
White/Anglo	186	87.3	63.3	48.3
Hispanic	17	8.0	29.4	35.7
African American	6	2.8	5.9	11.9
Asian	1	0.5	0.6	3.4
Native American	2	0.9	0.8	0.7
Other	1	0.5	0.9	1.3
Total	213	100		

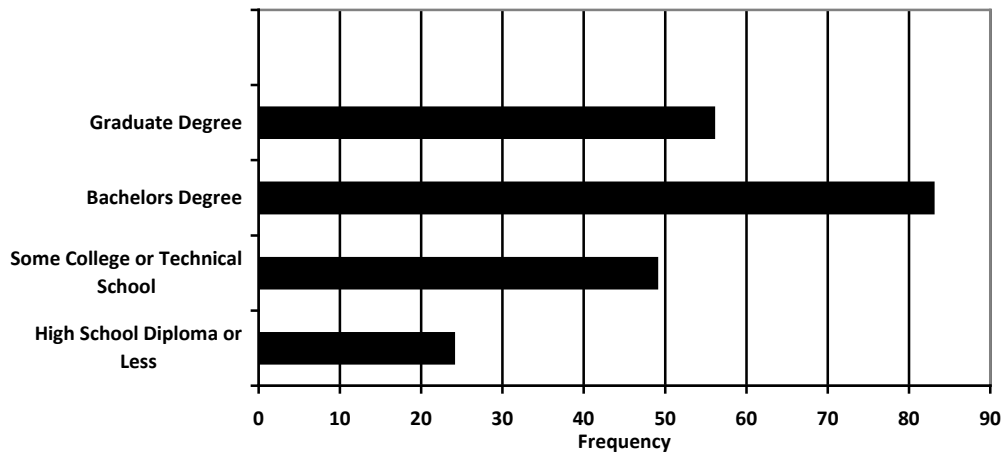
The 210 respondents to the question of gender were fairly evenly divided, with 51.9% being male and 48.1% female. The mean age of the sample with 211 respondents providing this information, was 56.41 years of age, and the median age was 56. The range in ages was from 28 years old to 88 years old. Of this sample, 24.6% were age 65 or older, and 28.4% were age 50 or younger. Figure 6 below depicts the distribution of member's ages.

**Figure 6.** Age Distribution of LAB Members

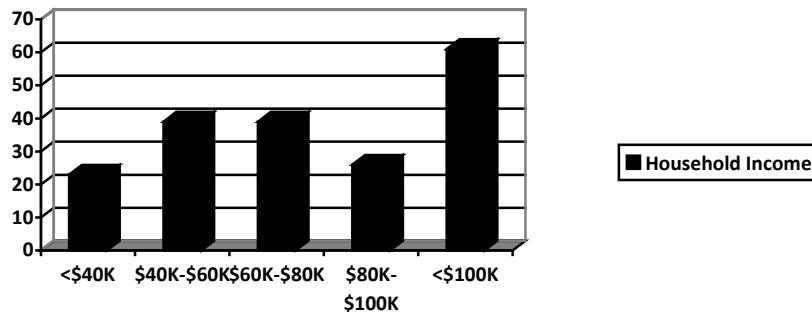


As depicted in Figure 7, the Leadership Advisory Board members who responded to this survey were largely well educated. Of the 212 respondents, 72.7% had at least an Associate degree and 65.6% had a Bachelors degree or higher. Only 1.4% had not completed High School, and only 11.3% had not attended College or Trade School.

**Figure 7.** Education Level of LAB Members



The annual household income for this group was also relatively high, with the largest number of respondents, 30.8%, reporting an annual household income of more than \$100,000. Of the 198 respondents who answered this question, 68.7% had household incomes in excess of \$60,000, while only 11.6% had household incomes less than \$40,000. The median household income for the State of Texas, as reported in the United States Census data for 2006 is \$43,044 (U.S.Census, 2006). Figure 8 depicts the distribution on household income for LAB members.

**Figure 8.** Annual Household Income for LAB Members

Other questions related to demographics were designed to determine the previous exposure to Extension, and leadership roles in other organizations. Respondents were asked to provide the length of time that they had been involved with Extension, either as a participant or a committee member. Table 4 below shows the response from 201 of the sample members who provided that information.

**Table 4.** Tenure of Extension Involvement by LAB Members

Extension Involvement	N	Percent
Less than 3 years	28	13.9
Between 3 and 5 years	19	9.5
Between 5 and 10 years	29	14.4
More than 10 years	125	62.2

These data suggest that most members of Leadership Advisory Boards have been long time participants in Extension programs. However, when asked for the length of time these individuals had served as members of the Leadership Advisory Board, the

mean was 5.32, the median was 3 and the mode was 2. These data suggest that, while many had been involved with Extension, their length of service on the Board was relatively low; in fact 56.4 % had been on the Board for 3 or less years. This factor is largely attributable to the reorganization of the EPC Executive Board into the Leadership Advisory Board Structure in 2006. Many counties began involving new members on their Leadership Advisory Boards when the change took place, seeking to meet the direction that Texas AgriLife Extension had set forth regarding the membership of these Boards. The survey also asked respondents to reveal whether they had previously been a member of the Extension Program Council Executive Board, approximately one-third, 34.7% indicated that they had been members of the Executive Board prior to the formation of the Leadership Advisory Board. In addition, respondents were asked about membership on other Extension planning committees, and task forces. Of the 200 members who answered this question, 95 indicated that they were members of other committees, and 105 indicated that the Leadership Advisory Board was their only committee.



Finally, members were asked if they were members of boards or committees for organizations other than Extension to help us identify the community leadership of our membership. Of the 201 responses, 84.1% indicated that they were involved in boards or committees for other organizations, suggesting that our membership are recognized as leaders and are service oriented.

### **Findings Related to Research Question 1**

What is the competency level of members of Leadership Advisory Boards on the pertinent issues in the county? Do members feel that they can scan the environment and assist the County Extension Agent to maintain relevancy?

In order to determine the self perceptions of Leadership Advisory Board members related to the skill area previously describes as “Community Assessment Skills”, members were asked to respond to 7 statements in the instrument. Table 5 displays the mean, distribution and frequency for each response, for each of the 7 statements related to Research Question 1.

**Table 5.** Leadership Advisory Board Member Responses<sup>1</sup> to Statements Regarding Their Ability to Assess Community Conditions and Issues

Statement	Frequency of Responses						$\bar{x}$	SD	Total
	SD <sup>1</sup>	D	N	A	SA				
I feel confident in my knowledge of issues important to the county	3 1.3%	1 0.4%	19 8.05%	153 64.8%	60 25.4%	4.13	.672	236	
My profession requires that I know what is important to the residents of the county	3 1.3%	12 5.1%	49 20.85%	109 46.4%	62 26.38%	3.91	.887	235	
I work with a diverse group of county residents on a regular basis	4 1.7%	16 6.8%	33 14%	122 51.9%	61 26%	3.93	.906	235	
I am often perceived as a leader in my community	2 0.8%	5 2.1%	43 18.2%	152 64.4%	34 14.4%	3.89	.691	236	
I have a broad understanding of issues that affect my community	0 0%	4 1.7%	29 12.7%	152 66.3%	44 19.2%	4.03	.624	229	
I was asked to serve on the Leadership Advisory Board due to my community leadership or professional position	1 0.4%	1 0.4%	18 7.9%	144 63.2%	64 28.1%	4.18	.624	228	
The programs that the County Extension Agents develop and deliver are relevant to the most important needs of this community	1 0.4%	2 0.9%	18 7.9%	136 59.4%	72 31.4%	4.21	.653	229	
<b>Grand Mean for Community Assessment Skills</b>						<b>4.04</b>	<b>.504</b>		

<sup>1</sup>Responses: SD (strongly disagree)=1, D (disagree)=2, N (neutral)=3, A (agree)=4, SA (strongly agree)=5.

Responses to questions related to this research question revealed the fact that all of the statements had relatively positive response scores, with all having a minimum of 72% or more of the respondents who either agree or strongly agree. The three statements with the lowest level of agreement relate to the members public perception as

a leader, their profession requiring community assessment, and the diversity of their regular contacts. The members did, however, feel strongly that they were asked to serve on the LAB because of their community leadership experience or their professional position. The highest mean agreement level, and the statement with the largest number who strongly agree point to the fact that members believe that Extension programs are relevant and issue based.

In addition, the statements that address Research Question 1 were combined to form a construct by computing a new variable, Issue Identification. The statement ranking for each respondent to statements 1-6 above were added together and divided by 6 to assign a composite score related to their competencies in this construct. Question 7 was omitted due to the fact that it was a perception of program relevance rather than an LAB member competency. The composite score was then compared to a series of other variables, using an Independent Samples t-Test to determine if there were significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) between the means of groups as they related to those identified competencies. A summary of those findings is outlined in Table 6.

**Table 6.** T-test Values for Community Assessment Skills Related to Different LAB Member Characteristics

Variable Name	Mean 1	Mean 2	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
College Degree	4.0731	4.0318	.534	104.018	.595
Extension Background	4.0636	4.0339	.428	180.017	.669
Other Extension Committees	4.0681	4.0206	.668	178.450	.505
Other Organizations Boards	4.0659	3.9531	1.212	44.669	.232
Previous EPC Experience	4.1010	4.0169	1.188	150.611	.237
LAB Membership Under 3 Years	3.9842	4.0796	-1.205	121.465	.230

The findings as means were compared was that there was no significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between any of the dichotomous variables as they related to the construct dealing with members competencies about their ability to assess needs, identify issues, and scan the environment.

### Findings Related to Research Question 2

In response to research question 2, there were three perception statements and six true or false questions to measure members' knowledge and understanding of the Agency and Land-Grant mission and structure. Table 7 shows the mean, distribution and frequency of responses to the three statements in the survey.

**Table 7.** Leadership Advisory Board Member Responses<sup>1</sup> to Statements Regarding Their Knowledge and Orientation of the Agency and Land-Grant System.

<b>Frequency of Responses</b>								
<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b><math>\bar{x}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Total</b>
I feel confident in explaining the relationship that Texas AgriLife Extension has with the Texas A&M System, the U.S.D.A., and the County Commissioners Court	1 0.4%	18 7.9%	39 17%	132 57.6%	39 17%	3.83	.817	229
I understand how our local Extension office is funded	2 0.8%	24 10.6%	27 12%	129 56.8%	45 19.8%	3.84	.893	227
I have been oriented and given information about Texas AgriLife Extension, its structure and funding sources by the County Extension Agents	5 2.2%	22 9.7%	37 16.3%	121 53.3%	42 18.5%	3.76	.939	227
<b>Grand Mean for Agency/Land-Grant Understanding</b>						<b>3.81</b>	<b>.752</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Responses: SD (strongly disagree)=1, D (disagree)=2, N (neutral)=3, A (agree)=4, SA (strongly agree)=5.

It is important to note that the three mean scores for these statements are relatively low, in comparison to the means from research question 1, indicating that members feel less prepared to explain the complicated relationships between the cooperating partners involved with Extension. It should also be noted that the statement with the least positive response was the statement regarding the orientation of members, indicating an area of potential improvement when working with members, both new and existing.

In addition to the three likert scale statements, there were six true or false questions included in the instrument to determine respondent's knowledge level. The

objective of these questions was to test members' knowledge of basic principles, and common misinterpretations of the relationships that form Extensions partnerships. In order to most completely measure the knowledge of respondents, the researcher chose to score those who did not respond to a particular question, as incorrect. The results of the test were low, with an average total score of less than 50% correct. Question 2 had the lowest number of respondents answering correctly, with only 25% of respondents answering correctly. However, the scores were low for all of the questions asked of respondents, with the highest percent of those answering correctly only 64.8% in response to questions 4 and 5. The second lowest score was in response to question 1, which asks if County Extension Agents are employees of Texas A&M University, a common misconception and clear evidence of our need to better inform our volunteers and employees of the relationship with the Texas A&M System. These data confirm the low score on question 2, as both allude to the relationship with Texas A&M University. Table 8 describes the questions asked and the percentage of correct responses from members.

**Table 8.** Percent Correct on True or False Questions Pertaining to Agency/Land-Grant Knowledge

Question	Percent Correct
Our County Extension Agents are employees of Texas A&M University	36.4
The Texas Legislature provides funding for our Agents to Texas A&M University	25.0
The County Commissioners Court provides only office space and secretarial support for the County Extension Agents	60.6
The Texas AgriLife Extension Service is a State Agency	64.8
Extension was founded as a result of the Smith-Lever Act	64.8
There are two Land-Grant Universities in Texas	47.0

In addition, the three statements related to LAB members knowledge of the Agency and Land-Grant System were computed into a new variable named Agency/Land-Grant Understanding, by adding their score in each of the three statements and dividing by three. The new score was compared with the means from six separate characteristics of LAB members to determine if there are statistically significant differences in the means. Table 9 summarizes the findings from the independent samples t-test analysis.

**Table 9.** T-test Values for Agency/Land-Grant Understanding Related to Different LAB Member Characteristics

Variable Name	Mean 1	Mean 2	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
College Degree	3.9425	3.7662	1.629	121.893	.106
Extension Background	3.5877	3.9440	3.223	149.259	.002**
Other Extension Committees	3.9158	3.7048	1.985	196.051	.049**
Other Organizations Boards	3.8205	3.7500	.520	47.379	.605
Previous EPC Experience	4.0637	3.6615	3.982	176.815	.000**
LAB Membership Under 3 Years	3.6261	3.9357	2.569	129.790	.011**

These data in Table 9 show significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) in the means of four of the different groups analyzed. Those members who responded with higher levels of agreement indicating a self perception of a greater ability to explain and articulate the Land-Grant System relationships to key decision makers, from groups that represent the following:

1. Those who report having more than 10 years of involvement with Extension
2. Those who serve on other Extension committees and Task Forces
3. Those who had previously served as members of the Extension Program Council Executive Board
4. Those who report having serve three or more years on the Leadership Advisory Board

These groups all represent those who have longer history and experience with Extension, or are more active with other Extension groups. It stands to reason that these



groups would have a higher level of knowledge and understanding of the system and its relationships with funding partners. The other component of measuring this competency, the True or False questions, however, do not hold true to the significant differences of the self perceptions reported in Table 9. The only grouping that showed a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the means, based upon one of the defined characteristics of members, was those with a “College Degree” scored significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) on the True or False questions. Those with a College Degree scored an average of 55.74, while those without a College Degree scored an average of 48.28. This finding suggests that those who have a longer tenure of service or participation with Extension perceive that they have a higher level of knowledge, however the limited number of questions with a correct answer do not support this self perception.

### **Findings Related to Research Question 3**

Research question 3 is designed to measure the perception that members have in regards to the visioning process of the board leading to programs and response from the County Extension Agents. This scale consists of five questions to determine the responsiveness of County Extension Agents to issues identified, and the relevance of programs that County Extension Agents are offering. Table 10 shows the mean, distribution and frequency of responses to the questions.

**Table 10.** Leadership Advisory Board Member Responses<sup>1</sup> to Statements Regarding Issue Identification Leading to Programs

Statement	Frequency of Responses					$\bar{x}$	SD	Total
	SD <sup>1</sup>	D	N	A	SA			
The issues identified by the Leadership Advisory Board are relevant and acted upon by the County Extension Agents	1 0.4%	5 2.2%	26 11.5%	136 59.9%	59 26%	4.09	.705	227
Issues identified are based upon the opinions and experiences of the membership of the Board	1 0.4%	5 2.2%	33 14.6%	144 63.7%	43 19%	3.99	.683	226
When the Leadership Advisory Board suggests an educational program to the County Extension Agents, it is usually conducted	0 0%	5 2.2%	42 18.5%	129 56.8%	51 22.5%	4.00	.707	227
Since joining the Leadership Advisory Board, the Board and County Extension Agents have conducted a needs assessment process to identify new issues	1 0.4%	9 4%	34 15%	132 58.4%	50 22.1%	3.98	.757	226
Often, the County Extension Agents suggest the programs that they feel comfortable addressing, and the Leadership Advisory Board agrees with the Agents	0 0%	14 6.2%	54 23.9%	121 53.5%	37 16.4%	3.80	.783	226
<b>Grand Mean for Vision to Programs</b>						<b>3.65</b>	<b>.425</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Responses: SD (strongly disagree)=1, D (disagree)=2, N (neutral)=3, A (agree)=4, SA (strongly agree)=5.

The information from Table 10 indicates that the programs identified are relevant to the needs of the community and are based upon identified issues. The respondents also suggest that when a program is suggested to the County Extension Agents, it is generally acted upon. However, the most important thing to note is the final question.

The fact that only 14 respondents disagreed with the statement indicates that the vast majority of LAB members feel that County Extension Agents often suggest programs that they prefer to address and that the board simply agrees with the suggestions.

In addition, the 5 statements were computed into a new variable, Vision to Programs, and compared to the six characteristic groupings being utilized to compare means between groups. The final statement in this construct was recoded into a new variable, reversing the scores (i.e. 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2 and 5=1) as the statement was negatively worded, but positively scored. The results of the independent samples t-test analysis are included in Table 11.

**Table 11.** T-test Values for Vision to Programs Related to Different LAB Member Characteristics

Variable Name	Mean 1	Mean 2	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
College Degree	3.7636	3.6065	2.538	107.716	.013**
Extension Background	3.5467	3.7024	2.675	185.967	.008**
Other Extension Committees	3.6565	3.6324	.389	185.384	.697
Other Organizations Boards	3.6482	3.6500	.026	52.572	.979
Previous EPC Experience	3.6912	3.6220	1.112	148.863	.268
LAB Membership Under 3 Years	3.6082	3.6839	1.108	123.690	.270

There are significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) in the mean scores, with members not having completed a college degree feeling more strongly that the issues identified by the Leadership Advisory Board led to programs. In addition, those with a longer tenure of Extension involvement felt significantly stronger ( $p < .05$ ) that their vision of issues led to educational programs. There were no significant statistical differences ( $p < .05$ ) among the other variables analyzed.

#### **Findings Related to Research Question 4**

The statements that address research question 4 were developed to measure the self perception of LAB members of their ability and willingness to serve in the role of advocates for Texas AgriLife Extension with elected officials. There is an additional question that also attempts to establish whether members have actually had the opportunity to interpret the results of programs to an elected official. Table 12 describes members' perceptions of these statements in research question 4.

**Table 12.** Leadership Advisory Board Member Responses<sup>1</sup> to Statements Regarding Ability and Involvement in Advocacy Activities

Statement	Frequency of Responses					$\bar{x}$	SD	Total
	SD <sup>1</sup>	D	N	A	SA			
In the past year, I have talked with an elected official about our local Extension programs and the impact they have	5 2.2%	49 21.7%	44 19.5%	83 36.7%	44 19.5%	3.51	1.084	226
The County Extension Agents keep me fully informed about the results of their educational programs in all subject areas	2 0.8%	15 6.6%	41 18.1%	118 52.2%	50 22.1%	3.88	.858	226
I have sufficient contacts to facilitate meetings with elected officials for Extension	2 0.8%	17 7.5%	42 18.6%	122 54%	43 19%	3.83	.854	226
I feel comfortable in addressing elected officials at both the County and State level	1 0.4%	17 7.6%	36 16%	115 51.1%	56 24.9%	3.92	.865	225
I have been informed about the economic impact that Extension programs have locally	2 0.8%	24 10.7%	42 18.7%	115 51.1%	42 18.7%	3.76	.909	225
<b>Grand Mean for Advocacy Skills</b>						<b>3.78</b>	<b>.681</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Responses: SD (strongly disagree)=1, D (disagree)=2, N (neutral)=3, A (agree)=4, SA (strongly agree)=5.

These data in Table 12 show that the members are informed and willing to interpret the results of Extension programs to elected officials. The statement with the least agreement from respondents regarding their knowledge and willingness shows that there is a need for improvement in informing LAB members regarding the economic

impact of Extension programs. The final observation from this set of data suggests that while members are willing to make contacts on Extension's behalf, not as many have actually done so in the past year. Only 56.4% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that they had made such a contact.

To further analyze the statements in Research Question 4, the scores from each respondent were computed into a new variable, Advocacy Skills, to be analyzed for differences in the means from the six characteristic groups used throughout. The results from the independent samples t-test analysis are included in Table 13.

**Table 13.** T-test Values for Advocacy Skills Related to Different LAB Member Characteristics

Variable Name	Mean 1	Mean 2	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
College Degree	3.8964	3.7438	1.408	94.642	.162
Extension Background	3.6107	3.8797	2.785	168.233	.006**
Other Extension Committees	3.8191	3.7359	.846	188.882	.398
Other Organizations Boards	3.8229	3.5938	1.832	45.428	.073
Previous EPC Experience	3.9676	3.6810	2.961	153.541	.004**
LAB Membership Under 3 Years	3.6622	3.8649	1.883	126.327	.062

There are significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) between the means of two dichotomous variables utilized in this analysis. The groups who reported more involvement in advocacy activities, or their perceived ability to advocate with elected officials were:

1. Those with a tenure of Extension involvement greater than 10 years
2. Those who had previously served on the Extension Program Council  
Executive Board

These groups would be expected to have a better working knowledge of Extension, and feel more comfortable in discussing Extension's value with elected officials. It might also be inferred that those with a longer and more intense involvement with Extension would feel more passionately about the benefits that Extension has to offer, and feel more comfortable discussing those benefits.

#### **Findings Related to Research Question 5**

Research question 5 sought to measure members' perceptions related to how the LAB enhances their personal leadership development. The statements measure the training that board members have received, as well as the benefit that board members gain through interaction with other members of the board. In addition, members are asked to provide their perception of how the board and its members are viewed by other community leaders. Table 14 shows the mean, distribution and frequency of responses to the six statements addressing research question 5.

**Table 14.** Leadership Advisory Board Member Responses<sup>1</sup> to Statements Regarding Personal Leadership Enhancement due to LAB Involvement

<b>Frequency of Responses</b>								
<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b><math>\bar{x}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Total</b>
Members of the Leadership Advisory Board receive training on topics related to community leadership	2 0.9%	37 16.5%	62 27.7%	101 45.1%	22 9.8%	3.46	.913	224
Because of my membership on the Leadership Advisory Board, I have developed new contacts that will benefit me personally or professionally	4 1.8%	11 4.9%	65 29%	108 48.2%	36 16.1%	3.72	.856	224
I feel that my personal leadership skills are stronger because of my involvement on the Leadership Advisory Board	4 1.8%	9 4%	81 36.2%	100 44.6%	30 13.4%	3.64	.830	224
I feel more confident in interacting with community leaders and elected officials because of my participation on the Leadership Advisory Board	3 1.3%	14 6.3%	76 33.9%	99 44.2%	32 14.3%	3.64	.852	224
The other members of the Leadership Advisory Board in my County are well respected and viewed as leaders in the county	1 0.4%	0 0%	22 9.8%	136 60.7%	65 29%	4.18	.631	224
The Leadership Advisory Board is a group recognized by local leaders as an effective group that positively affects the county	2 0.8%	8 3.6%	47 21%	109 48.7%	58 25.9%	3.95	.832	224
<b>Grand Mean for Personal Leadership Development</b>						<b>3.76</b>	<b>.651</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Responses: SD (strongly disagree)=1, D (disagree)=2, N (neutral)=3, A (agree)=4, SA (strongly agree)=5

The highest level of disagreement in this scale relates to members receiving training related to community leadership as a part of their participation on the



Leadership Advisory Board. The highest level of agreement suggests that members perceive fellow board members as being highly respected by the community, and that they perceive that the board as a whole is viewed favorably by other community leaders. The lower agreement scores suggest that enhanced training could be beneficial to Leadership Advisory Board members.

Additionally, the scores from each respondent were computed into a new variable, Personal Leadership Development, and compared to the six dichotomous variable utilized to measure mean differences in the other Research Questions. The results from the independent samples t-test are summarized in Table 15.

**Table 15.** T-test Values for Personal Leadership Development Related to Different LAB Member Characteristics

Variable Name	Mean 1	Mean 2	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
College Degree	4.0088	3.6861	3.448	114.893	.001**
Extension Background	3.6467	3.8267	1.932	173.474	.055
Other Extension Committees	3.8599	3.6683	2.040	185.009	.043**
Other Organizations Boards	3.7589	3.7917	.269	45.844	.789
Previous EPC Experience	3.9461	3.6641	3.024	153.941	.003**
LAB Membership Under 3 Years	3.5968	3.8850	2.865	140.616	.005**

There were four of the groups that differed ( $p < .05$ ) in their means related to their personal leadership development associated with LAB membership. Those without college degrees felt more strongly that their personal leadership was enhanced due to

their participation on the LAB. This is likely due to the limited opportunities for leadership that might exist for those without a college degree. It could be inferred that those with college degrees have had more opportunities to serve in positions of leadership, so their skills would be more advanced, or that the County Extension Agents spend more time and commit more attention to those without a degree to bring them up to the level of the other board members. The other groups differing significantly are:

1. Those who serve on other Extension committees or task forces
2. Those who had previously served on the Extension Program Council Executive Board
3. Those who had served on the Leadership Advisory Board for three years or more

These findings indicate a stronger feeling of personal leadership development for those who have a more involved and longer tenured Extension involvement. This would suggest that those members have been involved long enough to recognize an enhanced level of personal leadership due to their Extension involvement, and that that enhanced leadership could be the result of involvement beyond just the Leadership Advisory Board.

### **Qualitative Results from Open-Ended Questions**

Participants were asked three open-ended questions to seek further input regarding the benefits, concerns and areas of improvement that they perceive in relation to the Leadership Advisory Board in their county. They were also asked to identify

other Extension committees or task forces that they are members of. The response was very good to these questions, as their response was completely optional, with 197 different respondents responding to one or more of the open-ended questions. Only 39 respondents did not provide feedback to at least one open-ended question. A summary of the responses to each of the questions is included below, using the procedure outlined by Dooley and Murphy (2001) to theme and aggregate the responses.

**1. What do you see as the primary benefits that the Leadership Advisory Board can provide to the county?**

There were several themes that could be identified from the responses to this question. Of the 236 respondents to the survey, 181 provided feedback to this question. The major themes, broadly characterized, were:

1. Visioning/Direction
2. Direct delivery of educational programs
3. Advocacy/Visibility

Several of the responses were multi-part, so the same respondent may have provided perceived benefits in more than one of the above themes. The complete list of comments provided, exactly as entered/written by respondents, is included in the appendix. The data from these responses is aggregated and summarized below in Table 16.

**Table 16.** Summary of Perceived Benefits of LAB

<b>Primary Benefit Identified by Members</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Visioning/Needs Assessment	92	50.8
Providing Educational Programs Directly	60	33.1
Advocacy/Visibility of Extension	42	23.2
Other Benefits	13	7.2

The data clearly shows that Leadership Advisory Board members recognize that visioning and needs assessment are among their primary responsibilities, with a total of 92 members listing that as a benefit. In addition, 60 members list educational program delivery as a primary benefit. It appears that, as evidenced earlier, the Leadership Advisory Board does not see themselves as involved in advocacy as Texas AgriLife Extension would like. Of the 181 responses, only 42 list advocacy or enhanced visibility of Extension as a primary benefit that the Leadership Advisory Board can provide. Other responses, not directly falling into one of the major categories, include Economic Development, Networking, and Leadership Training. The vast majority, over 92%, identified benefits that fit into one of the major themes identified in Table 16.

**2. What could Texas AgriLife Extension Service do to help the Leadership Advisory Board be successful?**

There were 148 responses to open-ended question 2, with many have numerous parts. Again, several themes emerged from the responses provided, including:

1. Meet more often/Seek more input from members
2. Provide training and current information to members
3. Increase funding to local programs/County Offices and Staff

The complete list of responses is included in the appendix, exactly as entered/written by respondents. The information provided above can be aggregated and summarized to reflect three major areas of improvement that Extension should consider to enhance the operation of the Leadership Advisory Board. These three areas are identified in Table 17 below, along with the number of time identified by respondents.

**Table 17.** Perceived Areas Where Extension Can Better Serve the Leadership Advisory Board

<b>Major Areas of Improvement for Extension</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Increase Communication and Frequency of Meeting	55	37.2
Increased Training and Orientation for LAB Members	46	31.1
Increased Funding or Resources Available to LAB	13	8.8
Other Responses	34	23

While it has been a long accepted standard for the Leadership Advisory Board to meet a minimum of two times per year, the members are clearly indicating that they would like more frequent contact and meeting in order to become more involved and able to assist with their roles. They also indicate that they are in need of additional training and orientation regarding Extension and its programs in order to make educated decisions and assist with advocacy.

### **3. What concerns do you have about the operation or function of the Leadership Advisory Board?**

There were 86 respondents who provided concerns regarding the operation or function of the Leadership Advisory Board. Again, some major themes emerged from the responses:

1. Frequency of meetings and communication from Extension
2. Commitment of members and/or County Extension Agents to the LAB
3. Lack of clear direction for members and the Board
4. Age and/or diversity of membership

All responses to this question are included in the appendix, exactly as they were written or entered. Responses that simply stated that the respondent had “no concerns” were omitted from the table. The feedback and comments can be aggregated and summarized by the following information in Table 18.

**Table 18.** Concerns Expressed by LAB Members over Operation and Function of Board

Concern Expressed by LAB Members	Frequency	Percent
Infrequent Meeting and Lack of Communication from Extension	24	27.9
Lack of commitment from LAB Members and/or County Extension Agents	16	18.6
Lack of a clear direction for the Board	15	17.4
Age and/or Diversity of Membership	10	11.6
Other Responses	21	24.4

The most frequent concern expressed was also expressed in response to the previous question, that members feel a need to meet more often and to have more frequent communication from their County Extension Agents and among the membership of the Board. Also identified as concerns were the lack of commitment from both LAB members and County Extension Agents; the lack of a clear direction for the Board, or uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities; and concern about the age and diversity of membership on Boards.

### **Nonresponse Error Handling**

With the moderate response rate of just under 50%, an obvious threat to external validity is the error for nonrespondents. Using the procedure outlined by Lindner, Murphy and Briers (2001), the researcher compared the responses from early responders

to those of late responders on the major constructs of the study. For the purposes of this analysis, “Late Responders” will be defined as those who responded after the initial deadline of June 23, 2008. On June 23, 2008, a last reminder was e-mailed to the Leadership Advisory Board members for whom that information was available, and County Extension Agents in the sample counties made follow-up phone calls to the members in their counties. This effort generated an additional 61 responses to the survey, which all arrived after the initial deadline, including 6 which were not included in the initial analysis of data. These six were received between July 22 and August 12, 2008. As evidenced in Table 19, there were no significant differences between the two groups of respondents, indicating that these data may be generalized to the target population.

**Table 19.** T-test Values for each Construct Comparing Early and Late Responders to the Survey

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Early Mean</b>	<b>Late Mean</b>	<b>t value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig (2-tailed)</b>
Community Assessment Skills	4.07	4.05	.233	112.537	.816
Agency/Land-Grant Understanding	3.79	3.87	.841	126.371	.402
Vision to Programs	3.94	4.03	1.384	153.971	.168
Advocacy Skills	3.76	3.80	.379	154.342	.705
Personal Leadership Development	3.75	3.85	1.191	135.008	.236



## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The final chapter contains a summary of the research and findings from this dissertation project. In addition, implications and recommendations resulting from these findings are made for The Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and Extension Systems nationwide.

#### **Summary**

The primary purpose of this study is to measure the self assessed competencies and perceptions of randomly selected Leadership Advisory Board members as they relate to the primary roles of (1) Visioning, and (2) Advocacy. A secondary purpose is to have members identify strengths and weaknesses that they perceive are associated with the Leadership Advisory Board process. This was accomplished utilizing a survey instrument with 490 Leadership Advisory Board members in 48 Texas counties, selected randomly.

#### **Research Questions**

The researcher developed a survey instrument that was completed by selected Leadership advisory Board members to address the following research questions.

1. What is the competency level of members of Leadership Advisory Boards on the pertinent issues in the county? Do members feel that they can scan the environment and assist the County Extension Agent to maintain relevancy?
2. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Boards truly understand who Texas AgriLife Extension is? Do they connect the agency to the Texas A&M University System? Do they understand the funding sources and the relationships with each?
3. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board believe that their ideas lead to programs? Is the visioning process that they undertake just an exercise, or is it used in setting the direction that local educational programs will follow?
4. Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board assist with interpreting program impacts to key stakeholders and decision makers? Do they advocate for Extension in both formal and non-formal settings? Do they assist in developing strategies and developing messages for key decision maker contacts? Do they feel comfortable in talking to elected officials?
5. What benefits are Leadership Advisory Board members receiving from their involvement on the Board? Are we helping to develop their personal leadership skills? Have their connections and networks benefited from their involvement?

## Summary of Review of Literature

The foundational principles of Extension suggest that the educational efforts might be of County Extension Agents simply transferring knowledge to clientele. This philosophy, however, has not been the case since the inception of the Land-Grant system. Dating back to 1904, County Extension Agents have worked in partnership with clientele and community leaders to develop education that was relevant to the local people and economy (Peters, 2002b). Extension has long prided itself on the inclusion of local leaders in developing plans for educational programs to be developed and delivered in each county. Peters (2002a) says that:

Extension educators often work as *organizers*. In their organizing role, they develop leadership and build relationships between and among individuals and institutions in order to engage people in the work of identifying, understanding, and taking action on a variety of public issues.

Marshall (1990) points out that experience has proven that successful county educational programs can be achieved most effectively with the involvement of local citizens and the formal support of Extension Program Councils in the counties. Marshall (1990) also identifies the following benefits to the Extension Program Council approach:

- The Extension Service is kept in direct contact with people for whom educational programs are designed to benefit.
- Educational programs are “people centered”, based on expressed needs.
- The process draws on knowledge, creativity and leadership skills of many people, thus increasing the quality and effectiveness of programs.
- In the involvement of citizens, their leadership capabilities are increased, and leaders themselves are able to assume key roles in other groups and efforts in the community.
- Citizen involvement multiplies the efforts of County Extension Agents and produces more effective programs than County Extension Agents could manage alone.
- The process uses evaluation in all phases to keep the program aimed in the right direction.

The structure of Extension Program Councils in Texas was changed in 2006, to a system that is similar to those being used in the urban counties. The groups are called Leadership Advisory Boards (LAB), and replaced the Executive Boards in the previous structure. The PAC's and other planning groups remain unchanged, and provide the primary direction to programs in specific subject matter areas. The functions of the LAB were expanded slightly from those in the urban counties and include the following primary responsibilities:

1. Reviewing the county Extension program's mission and purpose and the local program's goals, objectives and audiences.
2. Developing resources to ensure that high quality programs can be implemented.
3. Ensuring that legal and ethical integrity and accountability are maintained.
4. Monitoring and strengthening the educational program.
5. Enhancing the county Extension programs public standing.

The LAB may also serve as the PAC providing direction to Community and Economic Development program efforts (Boleman & Burkham, 2005). These responsibilities are much the same as those outlined in the Texas urban model, with the addition of some broad programmatic oversight to assist in maintaining relevance. All characteristics and functions of the Leadership Advisory Board point to major contributions that the Board and its membership of opinion leaders can make toward the local program: Visioning and Advocacy. In their book *Leadership and Management of Volunteer Programs*, Fisher and Cole (1993) list, among others the following benefits of involving volunteers:

\*Volunteers bring a useful community perspective to program planning, implementation and evaluation; and

\*Volunteers are strong representatives of the agency throughout the community.

These purposes point to a need for each of the roles that were identified in the Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders Curriculum (2003). Ebling (1985) further points out that because advisory leaders are people with substantial experience and influence themselves, their ideas are fresh and their legislative contacts are the best. Also noted is the fact that “...many doors have opened to the real power structure, always difficult to identify....” Advisory leaders have, and will continue to offer Extension a source of contacts and an unbiased message delivered to key decision makers to assist in securing and expanding the resources available to Extension to provide the programs that the community needs.

### **Instrumentation**

For this study, the same instrument was used in an electronic format, as well as a mailed survey. The instrument contains 26 statements describing various skills and attitudes to determine self-perception of Leadership Advisory Board members. These correspond to five internal scales, each addressing the previously identified research questions. In addition, there are 6 true or false test questions that measure the knowledge associated with research question 2, member’s knowledge of the Land-Grant system and the relationship of Extension to the cooperating partners. The 26 statements were responded to on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5

(strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was utilized to determine internal consistency for each scale within the instrument. Alpha scores ranged from .776 to .879 for the five scales within the instrument. The composite alpha value for all 26 Likert-type statements and the 6 true or false questions was .918, indicating that the instrument would have a very high probability of achieving similar results if used by a different researcher on the same case (Gall, Gall and Borg 2005). Tables 2 demonstrate the alpha scores for each of the scales within the instrument.

## **Summary of Findings**

### *Research Question 1*

What is the competency level of members of Leadership Advisory Boards on the pertinent issues in the county? Do members feel that they can scan the environment and assist the County Extension Agent to maintain relevancy?

Significant findings in responses to questions related to Research Question 1 include the fact that all of the statements had relatively positive response scores, with all having a minimum of 72% or respondents who either agree or strongly agree. The three statements with the lowest level of agreement relate to the members public perception as a leader, their profession requiring community assessment, and the diversity of their regular contacts. The members did, however, feel strongly that they were asked to serve on the LAB because of their community leadership experience or their professional position. The highest mean agreement level, and the statement with the largest number

who strongly agree point to the fact that members believe that Extension programs are relevant and issue based.

### *Research Question 2*

Do members of the Leadership Advisory Boards truly understand who Texas AgriLife Extension is? Do they connect the agency to the Texas A&M University System? Do they understand the funding sources and the relationships with each?

It is significant to note that the three mean scores for statements related to Research Question 2 are relatively low, in comparison to the means from research question 1, indicating that members feel less prepared to explain the complicated relationships between the cooperating partners involved with Extension. It should be noted that the statement with the least positive responses was the statement regarding the orientation of members, indicating an area of potential improvement when working with members, both new and existing.

In addition to the three likert scale statements, there were six true or false questions included in the instrument for members to answer. The objective of these questions was to test members' knowledge of some basic principles, and common misinterpretations of the relationships that form Extensions partnerships. The results of the test were low, with an average total score of less than 50% correct. These results indicate that members feel they are not completely oriented regarding the Agency and Land-Grant System, and the scores from the True or False questions validate that. In

particular, members appear to need further information and orientation to our relationship with the Texas A&M University System.

In comparing the mean scores among different groups of respondents, the data suggest that those LAB Members with a longer tenure and history of involvement with Extension perceive their knowledge of the Agency as higher than those with less experience. As evidenced, however, the scores from the True and False questions do not support this self perception.

### *Research Question 3*

Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board believe that their ideas lead to programs? Is the visioning process that they undertake just an exercise, or is it used in setting the direction that local educational programs will follow?

The data associated with Research Question 3 indicates that the programs identified are relevant to the needs of the community and are based upon identified issues. The respondents also indicate that when a program is suggested to the County Extension Agents, it is generally acted upon. The most important thing to note however is the fact that only 14 respondents disagreed with the statement that County Extension Agents often suggest programs that they prefer to address and that the board simply goes along with the suggestions.

There are statistically significant differences in two of the mean scores within this construct, with members not having completed a college degree feeling more strongly that the issues identified by the Leadership Advisory Board led to programs. In



addition, those with a longer tenure of Extension involvement felt significantly stronger that their vision of issues led to educational programs.

#### *Research Question 4*

Do members of the Leadership Advisory Board assist with interpreting program impacts to key stakeholders and decision makers? Do they advocate for Extension in both formal and non-formal settings? Do they assist in developing strategies and developing messages for key decision maker contacts? Do they feel comfortable in talking to elected officials?

The data shows that the members are informed and willing to interpret the results of Extension programs to elected officials. The statement with the least agreement from respondents regarding their knowledge and willingness shows that there is a need for improvement in informing LAB members regarding the economic impact of Extension programs. The final observation from this set of data suggests that while members are willing to make contacts on Extension's behalf, not as many have actually done so in the past year. Only 56.4% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that they had made such a contact.

The groups within this construct that feel most prepared and willing to serve in the advocacy role were those with a more extensive Extension background, and those with previous EPC experience. These groups would be expected to have a better working knowledge of Extension, and feel more comfortable in discussing Extension's value with elected officials. It might also be inferred that those with a longer and more

intense involvement with Extension would feel more passionately about the benefits that Extension has to offer, and feel more comfortable discussing those benefits.

#### *Research Question 5*

What benefits are Leadership Advisory Board members receiving from their involvement on the Board? Are we helping to develop their personal leadership skills? Have their connections and networks benefited from their involvement?

The highest level of disagreement within this construct relates to members receiving training related to community leadership as a part of their participation on the Leadership Advisory Board. The highest level of agreement suggests that members perceive fellow board members as being highly respected by the community, and that they perceive that the board as a whole is viewed favorably by other community leaders. The lower agreement scores suggest that enhanced training could be beneficial to Leadership Advisory Board members.

Those without college degrees felt more strongly that their personal leadership was enhanced due to their participation on the LAB. This is likely due to the limited opportunities for leadership that might exist for those without a college degree.

#### *Open-Ended Questions*

In addition to the five specific Research Questions, there were three open-ended questions provided to respondents to provide further feedback, and hopefully validate

the findings from the statements and questions in the survey. The general findings from the open-ended questions are:

1. Respondents clearly recognize visioning/issue identification as a key role and benefit that LAB's play in county program efforts
2. Respondents also report a high level of involvement in direct delivery of educational programs to clientele
3. Only 42, or 23%, of respondents identified Advocacy as a benefit that LAB's can provide to County Extension Agents and county programs
4. Respondents identified a desire for increased communication and more frequent meetings
5. A need for enhanced training and orientation of members was identified, along with a lack of commitment from members and/or County Extension Agents.
6. Lack of a clear direction for the LAB being articulated to members
7. Concern regarding the age and diversity of membership

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The following conclusion and recommendations were drawn based upon the findings of this study:

1. LAB members feel strongly in their ability to scan the environment and identify issues that are both important and relevant, with 90.2% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel confident in

this ability. Further, 85.9% of respondents feel that the issues identified by the Leadership Advisory Board are relevant and acted upon by the County Extension Agents.

**Associated Recommendation** - Texas AgriLife Extension needs to continue to refine the long-range planning process to include the Leadership Advisory Board as the key component in determining the issues that need to be addressed at the local level.

2. LAB members report a willingness to serve as advocates for Extension with local leaders and elected officials, with 76% reporting confidence in their abilities to complete this task. They report much less incidence of being given the opportunity to serve in this role, with only 56% reporting such a contact being made in the past year. The research suggests that volunteers and opinion leaders are the best spokespeople for our programs (Strengthening Advisory Leaders Curriculum, 2003).

**Associated Recommendation** - Texas AgriLife Extension needs to provide more opportunity for LAB members to serve in the role of advocate, once they are fully trained and oriented.

3. In order to serve as an advocate, however, LAB members must be more fully oriented regarding the following topics:
  - a. The Agency and Land-Grant System, and the relationships between and among the University System, the USDA, the State Legislature and the County Commissioners Courts. Currently only 71% agree or

strongly agree that they have been fully oriented on these topics, in addition, the scores from six true or false questions showed less than 50% answered correctly.

- b. The economic and social benefit of Extension programs in all subject areas, localized to the county of interest. Only 69% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they are informed about economic impact of programs, and only 74.3% agree or strongly agree that they are kept informed of program success in all subject areas.
4. Members of the Leadership Advisory Board are not identifying the increased personal leadership that the researcher had anticipated, with only 54.9% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that such training has been provided to members.

**Associated Recommendation** - Extension needs to make a more concerted effort to provide training and opportunities to LAB members to enhance their personal leadership skills as a result of their participation.

5. Members indicate that direct delivery of educational programs is a benefit of the Leadership Advisory Board. Over 27% of respondents list this as a benefit, with only Visioning/Needs Assessment being mentioned more often. This suggests that the members are more directly involved in programming than the current structure would dictate. The current structure would have the LAB involved only in educational programming that relates to Community

Resource and Economic Development, other educational program planning and delivery should be relegated to the Program Area Committees and/or Task Forces.

6. LAB members indicated a desire for increased communication from Extension regarding program successes and results. Almost one-third (31.1%) indicate a desire for more frequent communication. They indicated that they were not fully informed of programs in all areas that Extension is addressing, as evidenced by the 31% who did not agree that they were kept informed of program success in all subject areas.

**Associated Recommendations** - A sincere effort should be made to keep the board updated on programs that all County Extension Agents and Committees are conducting along with the results from those programs. Extension should consider a quarterly newsletter to all Leadership Advisory Board members from the Directors Office.

7. The LAB members expressed concern regarding the full understanding of the mission, direction and goals of the LAB. Respondents to the open-ended questions addressing these areas expressed desire for more orientation and training of members (31%), and a concern of lack of a clear direction for the Board (17.4%).

**Associated Recommendation** - Extension should increase efforts to orient members regarding their specific responsibilities, including a job description, and the goals and primary roles of the LAB in the total county program.

Each new members should be oriented in a small group meeting of the new members, the Chair of the LAB, and the County Extension Agent(s).

8. LAB members expressed concern over the age and/or diversity of membership of the board.

**Associated Recommendation** - County Extension Agents should follow the recommended rotation of members from the Board, and involve the membership in identifying potential replacements for those who are rotating off. Special attention should be given to ensure that all communities are represented, and that the board is representative of the population of the county.

9. Finally, 37% of the LAB members responding to the survey indicated a desire for more frequent meetings. A minimum of two meeting per year has been required in the past.

**Associated Recommendations** - Texas AgriLife Extension should consider a requirement that the Leadership Advisory Board meet at least quarterly to remain fully informed and to make decisions and suggestions in a more timely fashion for Extension. This change will lead to more engaged and committed volunteers, and assist with many of the other concerns relating to communication, training and orientation of members. A more fully developed set of sample agendas, program ideas, and calendar of suggested meeting events should be developed with guidance from the Volunteer Steering Committee.

### **Implications for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service**

While the concept and structure of the Leadership Advisory Board is still relatively new, and has been more fully embraced in some counties than in others, there are some significant changes that can make the process more effective. It appears that the previous structure, which was more programmatic and less visionary in nature, is still evident to a large degree in many counties. We must continue to transition this group to a more broad thinking entity that scans the county for issues that are of importance to the general population, as well as traditional Extension audiences. The membership must continue to be rotated and updated to keep fresh ideas and perspective present on the Board, but this membership must be more fully trained and oriented to the Extension mission, vision and structure to enhance the understanding of our complex organization.

With visioning being a recognized role of this committee by both the membership and Texas AgriLife Extension, it is imperative that we more fully engage them in this process. Extension has begun to utilize this group to validate issues, evaluate the efforts made to address issues, and identify new issues that need attention over the past 18 months. This process should become the primary needs assessment tool utilized by Extension, on a yearly basis, replacing the former method of developing a long range plan from community input. Hopefully, this process will grow to include issues that are not pertinent to Extension, and can be passed to collaborators and partners who are better equipped to address issues that Extension cannot.

Advocacy is the area that appears to be the most lacking in involvement from LAB members. Extension must continue to train and involve these volunteers to assist



in interpreting the results of Extension programs to key decision makers, particularly at the county level, but also with State elected officials and partners. In order to be effective at this task, though, Extension must equip these members with the information that is needed to accurately reflect the impact that Extension is having through educational efforts. This will require increased communication and more full disclosure of program successes and Agency needs and priorities.

An effective organization is one that has open communication, and frequent contact. In order for the Leadership Advisory Board to reach this level of excellence, it is essential that County Extension Agents make this a priority, and make regular and complete communication with the membership in their counties. More frequent meetings will be essential, and must be well planned and include programmatic updates, Agency updates, local office and personnel updates, and frequent training for the members. Members must feel that the meetings warrant the investment of their time, and a fully committed local staff will help with this feeling of worth to the membership.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

In the completion of this research project, a few areas of further research interest have surfaced. Texas AgriLife Extension should consider more fully evaluating the following areas:

1. Specific areas of training that would be beneficial to Leadership Advisory Board members relating to enhanced personal leadership skills. Evaluation

of curriculum, and pilot testing with select counties would be an effective means of achieving this desired result.

2. The benefits to Extension from involving Leadership Advisory Board members more fully in advocacy activities. We need to enhance the data on the effectiveness of their advocacy activities, versus some general anecdotal data that currently exists.
3. A study to determine the optimum period of service for Leadership Advisory Board members is needed. Currently it is suggested that members serve a three year term. This research suggests that those with longer experience and tenure were more knowledgeable about Extension, and more willing to serve in the role of advocate. It would be advisable to determine if the length of a term of service should be adjusted to compensate for this finding.
4. A study is needed to compare the issues identified by the Leadership Advisory Board with issues identified by local constituencies to measure the relevance of LAB issues and the effectiveness that the groups is having in scanning the community for important issues.
5. It is recommended that this study be replicated in three to five years to compare progress made toward identified deficiencies in this baseline study.

## **Conclusion**

Grassroots level input is what makes Extension a unique educational organization. This input is vital for Extension to remain relevant in educational programs being offered, and to make certain that issues identified are of importance to the residents of the county. The Leadership Advisory Board is the grassroots level organization that can accomplish these tasks for Texas AgriLife Extension, as well as becoming a leading organization serving as spokespeople and advocates for Extension. It is the sincere hope that of this researcher that the findings and conclusions of this research will be utilized to better serve our County Extension Agents, and the members of the Leadership Advisory Boards, and to create a higher commitment to this critical piece of the organization. The findings are largely positive, and show the dedication that this group has to Extension, but also their sincere desire to do more for an organization that they believe in, through increased involvement and training. Extension has a tremendous resource in the volunteers who make up the membership of the Leadership Advisory Board, and is thankful for their dedication.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**COUNTY SELECTION MATRIX BY CATEGORY**

## Category 1 Counties

County	Category	District	Random #	Comments
Sterling	1	7	1.8255257	
Irion	1	7	2.2237922	
Borden	1	2	2.7841121	DQ - Vacancies
Jeff Davis	1	6	4.3582568	
Kent	1	3	5.753563	
Kenedy	1	12	5.982757	
King	1	3	6.4005554	
Loving	1	6	7.37257	
McMullen	1	12	7.6353343	
Roberts	1	1	8.8856777	
Terrell	1	6	9.5079501	



## Category 2 Counties

County	Category	District	Random #	Comments
Donley	2	1	3.027405622	
Crockett	2	6	4.250587481	
Hardeman	2	3	5.50306711	
Hudspeth	2	6	6.576830348	
Mason	2	7	7.134952849	
Garza	2	2	7.490920743	
Upton	2	6	7.65498825	
Culberson	2	6	7.927457503	DQ - Vacancies
Kinney	2	10	8.472396008	
Stonewall	2	3	9.891872921	DQ - Vacancies
Dickens	2	3	10.10428175	DQ - Vacancies
Kimble	2	10	10.19363994	
Throckmorton	2	3	10.47343364	
Delta	2	4	11.05059969	
Briscoe	2	1	11.65999329	
Presidio	2	6	12.19028291	
Foard	2	3	12.28550066	
Sutton	2	10	12.34849086	
Lipscomb	2	1	13.05163732	
Aransas	2	11	13.29334391	
Motley	2	3	13.75478378	
Somervell	2	8	16.06344798	
Glasscock	2	6	16.68749046	
Concho	2	7	21.43519395	
Cochran	2	2	21.69008454	
Armstrong	2	1	23.59883419	
Shackelford	2	7	23.97531053	
Real	2	10	25.55299539	
Schleicher	2	7	25.65260781	
Martin	2	6	29.1683401	
Baylor	2	3	29.61659597	
Crane	2	6	31.15619373	
Edwards	2	10	31.9472335	
Winkler	2	6	33.0385754	
Menard	2	7	34.27201147	
Coke	2	7	36.09726249	
Oldham	2	1	36.61143834	

Cottle	2	3	36.70372631
Brewster	2	6	39.77120273
Ward	2	6	41.32251961
Jim Hogg	2	12	41.50416578
Hall	2	1	42.22928556
Collingsworth	2	1	43.63704337
Brooks	2	12	44.01058992
La Salle	2	12	45.55897702
Hemphill	2	1	46.11563463
Knox	2	3	46.31778924
Marion	2	5	48.31150243
Reagan	2	6	48.80077517

## Category 3 Counties

County	Category	District	Random #	Comments
Coleman	3	7	2.3696707	DQ - Vacancies
Wheeler	3	1	2.5388653	
Archer	3	3	3.2196722	
Goliad	3	11	3.7984252	
San Augustine	3	5	4.465804	
Yoakum	3	2	7.1299478	
Hansford	3	1	7.2910855	
San Jacinto	3	9	7.8000122	
San Saba	3	7	7.9772637	DQ - CEA Performance
Crosby	3	2	8.727897	
Stephens	3	3	9.2797937	
Blanco	3	10	9.6517533	
Ochiltree	3	1	13.951445	
Dallam	3	1	14.295206	
Haskell	3	3	14.83636	
Zavala	3	12	16.513535	
Childress	3	3	16.606189	
Refugio	3	11	19.435499	
Bailey	3	2	19.816858	
Mills	3	7	20.654775	
Zapata	3	12	20.711173	
Sabine	3	5	20.756829	
Dimmit	3	12	22.901303	
McCulloch	3	7	25.985748	
Sherman	3	1	26.215369	
Tyler	3	5	26.256996	
Pecos	3	6	27.963713	
Carson	3	1	28.324931	
Newton	3	5	29.271615	
Floyd	3	2	31.318064	
Lynn	3	2	32.117038	
Live Oak	3	12	32.204321	
Morris	3	4	33.087893	
Franklin	3	4	33.220832	
Jack	3	3	33.94998	
Hartley	3	1	35.809778	
Hamilton	3	8	38.490036	

Trinity	3	5	38.511521
Mitchell	3	2	38.535691
Andrews	3	6	39.121158
Reeves	3	6	40.709708
Duval	3	12	41.45497
Fisher	3	7	41.809473
Willacy	3	12	43.622272
Rains	3	4	44.532701

## Category 4 Counties

County	Category	District	Random #	Comments
Montague	4	3	1.30405591	
Colorado	4	11	5.48420667	
Titus	4	4	5.97613453	DQ - Vacancies
Hardin	4	9	7.4197821	
Freestone	4	8	7.53349406	DQ - Vacancies
Palo Pinto	4	3	7.99575793	
Walker	4	9	10.0796533	
Frio	4	12	11.5949889	
Austin	4	11	12.1338847	
Kerr	4	10	13.2635884	
Burnet	4	7	13.4737083	
Falls	4	8	13.9063082	
Orange	4	9	13.9335002	
Hutchinson	4	1	15.3029878	
Upshur	4	5	16.6576434	DQ - Vacancies
Val Verde	4	6	17.2262032	
Runnels	4	7	17.6340831	
Waller	4	9	18.5165868	
DeWitt	4	11	18.9244667	
Bosque	4	8	18.9392987	
Llano	4	7	19.0950346	
Chambers	4	9	19.2013306	DQ - Vacancies
Scurry	4	2	19.2631306	
Gray	4	1	19.9627064	
Camp	4	4	20.4150822	
Caldwell	4	10	23.6484573	DQ - Vacancies
Madison	4	9	25.1341288	DQ - Vacancies
Deaf Smith	4	1	27.2402722	
Lee	4	9	27.2575762	
Kendall	4	10	27.2921842	
Burleson	4	9	32.3597827	
Clay	4	3	32.4932707	
Jasper	4	5	33.3757744	
Fannin	4	4	33.7119663	
Jim Wells	4	12	33.9393902	
Wilbarger	4	3	34.868862	
Hood	4	8	35.6549577	

Cass	4	4	36.1320536
Terry	4	2	36.4633015
Starr	4	12	40.1984924
Ector	4	6	40.5841243
Callahan	4	7	44.6431471
Jackson	4	11	46.0867946
Howard	4	6	46.3710746
Grimes	4	9	47.1843623
Kleberg	4	12	47.6490982
Uvalde	4	10	47.9976501
Lavaca	4	11	48.5414899
Moore	4	1	48.7590258
Brown	4	7	52.5436567
Karnes	4	11	53.7920164
Fayette	4	11	55.11948
Young	4	3	55.3765679
Calhoun	4	11	55.4853359
Dawson	4	2	55.8215278
Polk	4	5	56.3282876
Maverick	4	12	58.0611591
Nolan	4	7	60.5727103
Comanche	4	8	60.6691183
Lamb	4	2	62.9458296
Lampasas	4	7	64.1373333
Limestone	4	8	64.7553331
Eastland	4	8	64.8023011
Houston	4	5	65.5933409
Swisher	4	2	66.1989807
Jones	4	7	67.3904843
Bee	4	11	67.6179083
Matagorda	4	11	68.6734519
Bandera	4	10	69.8946196
Panola	4	5	70.1887875
Milam	4	8	70.4705954
Gonzales	4	10	70.8043153
Hockley	4	2	71.5360271
Castro	4	2	72.035371
Robertson	4	8	72.7300027
Gaines	4	2	74.3664663
Shelby	4	5	74.6581622

Red River	4	4	75.7408979
Gillespie	4	10	77.0658895
Parmer	4	2	79.5032807
Rockwall	4	4	79.9531846
Leon	4	8	81.2213202

## Category 5 Counties

County	Category	District	Random #	Comments
Guadalupe	5	10	1.2844325	
Van Zandt	5	4	1.3357036	
San Patricio	5	11	1.9155553	
Cooke	5	4	3.8943754	
Wilson	5	10	4.6194952	
Parker	5	3	6.1637318	
Liberty	5	9	6.5262917	
Hill	5	8	9.1313517	
Hunt	5	4	10.241005	
Washington	5	11	10.347209	
Randall	5	1	10.764702	
Bowie	5	4	13.507706	
Webb	5	12	15.795373	
Comal	5	10	18.424848	
Victoria	5	11	19.667562	
Hays	5	10	20.115574	
Atascosa	5	12	20.651479	
Kaufman	5	4	21.039674	
Coryell	5	8	21.924711	
Harrison	5	5	23.261422	
Hale	5	2	23.401807	
Wharton	5	11	23.454299	
Hopkins	5	4	23.565386	
Anderson	5	5	23.594684	
Cherokee	5	5	24.502915	
Wise	5	3	26.225379	
Rusk	5	5	28.842647	
Tom Green	5	7	29.355358	
Potter	5	1	30.512619	
Navarro	5	8	32.747795	
Lamar	5	4	33.878201	
Gregg	5	5	34.349406	
Midland	5	6	34.418989	
Medina	5	10	34.52031	
Henderson	5	5	35.079409	
Erath	5	8	36.059664	
Nacadoches	5	5	37.994537	



Bastrop	5	10	38.976012
Angelina	5	5	39.041932
Wichita	5	3	39.072451
Wood	5	5	40.30784

## Category 6 Counties

County	Category	District	Random #	Comments
Nueces	6	11	1.6102176	
Ellis	6	8	1.7438887	
Taylor	6	7	1.8459731	
Williamson	6	8	3.9338969	DQ - Vacancies
Galveston	6	9	5.3365276	
Bell	6	8	5.8117008	
Brazoria	6	9	6.8124027	
Montgomery	6	9	8.6732688	
Smith	6	5	9.0541398	
Johnson	6	8	9.5311441	
Cameron	6	12	10.397259	
Jefferson	6	9	10.902646	
McLennan	6	8	12.436201	
Lubbock	6	2	14.095187	
Grayson	6	4	15.157689	
Brazos	6	9	15.25016	

## Category 7 Counties

County	Category	District	Random #	Comments
Harris	7	9	1.137608	
El Paso	7	6	1.990997	
Dallas	7	4	2.7419355	
Bexar	7	10	3.3596606	
Tarrant	7	4	4.2427137	
Fort Bend	7	9	4.6530656	
Travis	7	10	4.9727775	
Hidalgo	7	12	7.5675527	
Collin	7	4	7.5815607	
Denton	7	4	9.2193976	

**APPENDIX B**

**INVITATION LETTER AND E-MAIL TO LAB MEMBERS**

**REMINDER AND FOLLOW-UP E-MAILS**

May 20, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: LAB Survey CEA's  
SUBJECT: Request for Assistance

Co-Workers:

Your assistance with a research project to evaluate the Leadership Advisory Board process is requested and will be greatly appreciated. Your county is one of 50 that was randomly selected from across the State to have your Leadership Advisory Board members surveyed. The purpose of this survey will be the following:

1. Assess the current utilization of our LAB members in visioning and advocacy.
2. Assess the ability of LAB members to serve in needed roles.
3. Determine the level of training that has been provided to LAB members.
4. Determine the perceived benefit to the members from their participation on the LAB.
5. Assess the demographic makeup of LAB's across the state.
6. Help in directing the future of the LAB organization for Extension.

There will be two options provided to your members, they can complete the survey via an online survey tool (preferred), or if internet access is limited, a mailed survey can be provided to them.

**What I will need from you are the following:**

1. A listing of your Leadership Advisory Board members, including mailing address and e-mail address if applicable by **May 30**.
2. Your suggestion on how to achieve the best response rate from your county members, web-based survey or mailed survey (**include in your communication by May 30**)
3. Assistance with encouraging your LAB members to take a few minutes and complete the survey.

I have scheduled the following times to hold teleconferences and/or Centra conferences with any of you who would like to visit briefly to have your questions answered and receive a more detailed accounting of the plans for the process. You can select one of the following times and dates that fits into your schedule.

**May 30** - Centra Session, beginning at **9:00** a.m. Information on participating:  
To attend this event, click on the following link:  
<http://webconference.tamus.edu/LA/main/00000157b39f000001189f1eda6ad49a>

Attendees may enter the event by going to the URL below, and entering the event ID.  
URL: <http://webconference.tamus.edu/main/tce>  
Event ID: HSW058359

**June 4** - Teleconference beginning at **10:00** a.m. The phone number to call in is 979 847-9190

**June 5** - Centra Session, beginning at **10:00** a.m.. Information on participating:  
Attendees may enter the event by going to the URL below, and entering the event ID.  
URL: <http://webconference.tamus.edu/main/tce>  
Event ID: KRL442703

Again, thanks for your help and support of this project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 361-265-9203 or e-mail me.

**Jeff Ripley**  
**District Extension Administrator**  
**Texas AgriLife Extension Service**  
**Coastal Bend - District 11**  
**(361)265-9203**  
**[j-ripley@tamu.edu](mailto:j-ripley@tamu.edu)**

May 20, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: All CEA's in Texas  
SUBJECT: Leadership Advisory Board Research Project

Friends:

A research project involving a random sample of Leadership Advisory Boards across the State is about to get underway. I will be surveying the members of LAB's in 50 counties, representing all seven categories of counties in Texas. The process used to select the counties was one that is very similar to the process used to identify counties for the Customer Satisfaction Survey process each year.

The purpose of this project is to assess the current status of our Leadership Advisory Boards and membership as it relates to:

1. The competency of members to assist Extension in Visioning and Advocacy.
2. The understanding of members about the mission and objectives of Extension.
3. The utilization of members in key roles at the county level.
4. The level of training that LAB members have received, or are in need of.
5. The perceived benefits that members receive from their participation on the LAB.
6. The demographics of current LAB membership across the State.

The process will be fairly quick, and will involve the 50 counties that are identified in the attached document. These counties have all been notified and asked for their support and assistance. I wanted to let others in the system know about the project, and provide you with an opportunity to learn more, if you are interested. Please feel free to contact me at any time, should you have questions or need more information about this important project.

Thanks for your help in making this successful.

Jeff Ripley  
District Extension Administrator  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Coastal Bend - District 11  
(361)265-9203  
j-ripley@tamu.edu

May 30, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: LAB Survey CEA's  
SUBJECT: Reminder and Letter for LAB Members

CEA's:

Just a reminder that today is the deadline to get me the mailing/e-mail list of LAB members in your county. Most have responded, and I really appreciate the timeliness of getting me the requested information.

I have had a request to provide you with a sample letter (attached) to send out to your LAB, should you choose to do so, urging them to complete the survey. Any help that you can provide in increasing the number of returned surveys is greatly appreciated.

Your LAB members will be receiving the letter from me in the first two weeks of June, with a link to the online survey, and a paper survey for them to return via mail should they choose that option. If they ask, the online survey would be the preferred method, but either will accomplish the same result for us.

Again, thanks to each of you for your help in getting this accomplished. If you have not provided your mailing/e-mail list of LAB members, please do so as soon as you can. Feel free to join in the teleconference on June 4, or the Centra on June 5 if you would like more information, or simply give me a call or email.

Thanks,

Jeff





John Doe  
 1234 Main Street  
 Anywhere, Texas 123456

Dear John:

You will be receiving information in the coming days requesting that you complete a survey to evaluate the Leadership Advisory Board process across Texas. Your time and effort in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated, and will help Texas AgriLife Extension continue to improve and enhance the processes that we use to plan and implement educational programs here in the County.

We are one of only 50 counties that have been asked to participate in this study, so your response is very important. Rest assured that the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and the results will be reported in aggregate. We fully understand that your time is valuable, and want to express our sincere appreciation to you for helping us learn more about this valuable group of volunteers that provide leadership to Extension programs.

Should you have any questions or concerns, or if you do not receive this survey, please do not hesitate to give our office a call. Thanks for all you do to make Extension a viable organization in our County.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe  
 CEA-FCS  
 Anywhere County

Office Name  
 Address Line 1  
 Address Line 2  
 City, State Zip Code

Tel. XXX.XXX.XXXX  
 Fax. XXX.XXX.XXXX  
 emailname@tamu.edu  
 URL address

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.  
 The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Dear Leadership Advisory Board Members:

In an effort to continue to improve upon our Leadership Advisory Board process, The Texas AgriLife Extension Service would like to ask for a few minutes of your time to gather input. Our Leadership Advisory Boards are a key group all across the State in providing input and direction for our local Extension programs, and in helping us tell our story better at the local level. Members, such as you, are valuable to Extension for the wealth of leadership, guidance and vision that you can bring to our programs.

I would like to ask you to take a few minutes to complete an online survey regarding your participation as a member of the Leadership Advisory Board. The survey should take less than 30 minutes of your time, and will provide us with extremely valuable information as we continue to shape the direction of the program and of our Agency. Should you have any difficulty in completing the online survey, or prefer to complete a paper survey, feel free to complete and return the enclosed survey in the postage paid envelope.

To access the online version, please follow these steps:

1. Point your web browser to <http://coastalbend.tamu.edu>
2. Near the top-right of the page, you will see the link called "Leadership Advisory Board Survey"
3. Once you click the link, you will be asked for a user name and password, enter lab in both lines. *Please note lab must be in lower case.*
4. This will take you to the survey, which is very easy to navigate through.

Your assistance with completing this survey online by **June 23** would be most helpful. If you feel comfortable in completing the online survey, that will be the most time effective method for both of us, but the paper survey is certainly acceptable, and either will be appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to respond to this e-mail, or call me at 361-265-9203. Your continued dedication and service to Texas AgriLife Extension is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jeff Ripley  
District Extension Administrator  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Coastal Bend - District 11  
(361)265-9203  
j-ripley@tamu.edu

June 5, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: LAB Survey CEA's  
SUBJECT: Online Survey released

CEA's:

The online survey was released to those LAB members that you provided an e-mail address for. The mailed survey will go out within the next few days to all members, along with the web address for the online survey. The actual survey is attached for your reference. This is the same survey that members are accessing online.

Any encouragement that you can provide your members to complete the survey is appreciated.

Thanks again for all your help and support. If you have questions, feel free to contact me.

Jeff Ripley  
District Extension Administrator  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Coastal Bend - District 11  
(361)265-9203  
j-ripley@tamu.edu

June 5, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: LAB Members  
SUBJECT: Texas AgriLife Extension Leadership Advisory Board Survey

Dear Leadership Advisory Board Members:

In an effort to continue to improve upon our Leadership Advisory Board process, The Texas AgriLife Extension Service would like to ask for a few minutes of your time to gather input. Our Leadership Advisory Boards are a key group all across the State in providing input and direction for our local Extension programs, and in helping us tell our story better at the local level. Members, such as you, are valuable to Extension for the wealth of leadership, guidance and vision that you can bring to our programs.

I would like to ask you to take a few minute to complete an online survey regarding your participation as a member of the Leadership Advisory Board. The survey should take less than 30 minutes of your time, and will provide us with extremely valuable information as we continue to shape the direction of the program and of our Agency. Should you have any difficulty in completing the online survey, or prefer to complete a paper survey, there will be one mailed to you in the next two weeks.

To access the online version, please follow these steps:

1. Point your web browser to <http://coastalbend.tamu.edu>
2. Near the top-right of the page, you will see the link called "Leadership Advisory Board Survey"
3. Once you click the link, you will be asked for a user name and password, enter lab in both lines. Please note, lab must be in lower case.
4. This will take you to the survey, which is very easy to navigate through.

Your assistance with completing this survey online by June 13 would be most helpful. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to respond to this e-mail, or call me at 361-265-9203. Your continued dedication and service to Texas AgriLife Extension is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jeff Ripley  
District Extension Administrator  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Coastal Bend - District 11  
(361)265-9203  
[j-ripley@tamu.edu](mailto:j-ripley@tamu.edu)

June 10, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: Leadership Advisory Board Members  
SUBJECT: Survey

Dear Leadership Advisory Board Members:

The paper version of the Leadership Advisory Board survey will go in the mail this week to each of you, plus another 300 or so members who have no e-mail address on file. Thanks to the many of you who have already completed the online version of the survey, I hope you found it to be relatively quick and painless.

For those who have not completed the online version yet, here are the instructions:

To access the online version, please follow these steps:

1. Point your web browser to <http://coastalbend.tamu.edu>
2. Near the top-right of the page, you will see the link called "Leadership Advisory Board Survey"
3. Once you click the link, you will be asked for a user name and password, enter lab in both lines. Please note, lab must be in lower case.
4. This will take you to the survey, which is very easy to navigate through.

Your assistance with completing this survey online by June 13 would be most helpful. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to respond to this e-mail, or call me at 361-265-9203. Your continued dedication and service to Texas AgriLife Extension is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jeff Ripley  
District Extension Administrator  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Coastal Bend - District 11  
(361)265-9203  
[j-ripley@tamu.edu](mailto:j-ripley@tamu.edu)

June 25, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: LAB Members  
SUBJECT: Leadership Advisory Board Survey Reminder

Dear Leadership Advisory Board Member:

Thanks to the many of you who have completed the survey regarding Leadership Advisory Boards in Texas AgriLife Extension. If you have not yet taken a few minutes to complete it, I would greatly appreciate it. The current plans are to close the survey next week, so time is short.

You should have a hard copy of the survey, with a return envelope and stamp, or you can complete it online by following these directions:

1. Point your web browser to <http://coastalbend.tamu.edu>
2. Near the top-right of the page, you will see the link called "Leadership Advisory Board Survey"
3. Once you click the link, you will be asked for a user name and password, enter lab in both lines. Please note, lab must be in lower case.
4. This will take you to the survey, which is very easy to navigate through.

Thanks again to those who have completed it, and I look forward to seeing the remainder come in soon. Your assistance with this project is very valuable to Texas AgriLife Extension.

Sincerely,

Jeff Ripley  
District Extension Administrator  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Coastal Bend - District 11  
(361)265-9203  
j-ripley@tamu.edu

June 25, 2008

FROM: Jeffrey Ripley  
TO: LAB Survey CEA's  
SUBJECT: Leadership Advisory Board Survey Follow-Up

CEA's:

Thanks to each of you for your support and assistance in getting your members to complete the survey. They should have received their survey in the mail approximately two weeks ago, and the response has been very good. I would like to ask you to help in getting the last few to complete them. If you have the opportunity to make a quick contact with your members in the next few days, that would be very helpful. I hope to close the survey toward the end of next week, and begin to analyze the results.

Again, thanks for all your help with this project. I hope that we can gain some valuable insight into how we can utilize this important group fully to help us in Extension. Feel free to contact me at any time should you have questions or concerns.

Jeff

Jeff Ripley  
District Extension Administrator  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Coastal Bend - District 11  
(361)265-9203  
j-ripley@tamu.edu

**APPENDIX C**  
**SURVEY INSTRUMENT**





## Leadership Advisory Board Member Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached survey. Your input is critical to the continued success of the Leadership Advisory Board process across Texas. Please rest assured that your responses to the following questions will be strictly confidential, and results of the survey will be aggregated. The results will allow The Texas AgriLife Extension Service to continue to adjust and enhance the opportunities for Leadership Advisory Board members such as you.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [j-ripley@tamu.edu](mailto:j-ripley@tamu.edu) or (361)265-9203. On behalf of The Texas AgriLife Extension Service, let me thank you for your dedication to Extension and your willingness to help us improve this important process.

**Please mark the box that best describes your opinion of the statement in the left column.**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I feel confident in my knowledge of issues important to the county.					
2. My profession requires that I know what is important to the residents of the county.					
3. I work with a diverse group of county residents on a regular basis.					
4. I am often perceived as a leader in my community.					
5. I have a broad understanding of issues that affect my community.					
6. I was asked to serve on the Leadership Advisory Board due to my community leadership or professional position					
7. The programs that the County Extension Agent(s) develop and deliver are relevant to the most important needs of this community.					
8. I feel confident in explaining the relationship that Texas AgriLife Extension has with the Texas A&M System, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Court.					
9. I understand how our local Extension office is funded.					
10. I have been oriented and given information about Texas AgriLife Extension, its structure and funding sources by the County Extension Agents.					
11. The issues identified by the Leadership Advisory Board are relevant and acted upon by the County Extension Agents.					

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. Issues identified are based upon the opinions and experiences of the membership of the Board.					
13. When the Leadership Advisory Board suggests an educational program to the County Extension Agents, it is usually conducted by the Agents.					
14. Since joining the Leadership Advisory Board, the Board and County Extension Agent has conducted a needs assessment process to identify new issues.					
15. Often, the County Extension Agents suggest the programs that they feel comfortable addressing, and the Leadership Advisory Board agrees with the Agent(s).					
16. In the past year, I have talked with an elected official about our local Extension programs and the impact that they have.					
17. The County Extension Agents keep me fully informed about the results of their educational programs in all subject areas.					
18. I have sufficient contacts to facilitate meetings with elected officials for Extension.					
19. I feel comfortable in addressing elected officials at both the County and State level.					
20. I have been informed about the economic impact that Extension programs have locally.					
21. Members of the Leadership Advisory Board receive training on topics related to community leadership.					

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. Because of my membership on the Leadership Advisory Board, I have developed new contacts that will benefit me personally or professionally.					
23. I feel that my personal leadership skills are stronger because of my involvement on the Leadership Advisory Board.					
24. I feel more confident in interacting with community leaders and elected officials because of my participation on the Leadership Advisory Board.					
25. The other members of the Leadership Advisory Board in my County are well respected and viewed as leaders in the county.					
26. The Leadership Advisory Board is a group recognized by local leaders as an effective group that positively affects the county.					

**The following questions should be answered by circling either true or false.**

Question	True	False
1. Our County Extension Agents are employees of Texas A&M University	True	False
2. The Texas Legislature provides funding for our Agents to Texas A&M University	True	False
3. The County Commissioners Court provides only office space and secretarial support for the County Extension Agents.	True	False
4. The Texas AgriLife Extension Service is a State Agency.	True	False
5. Extension was founded as a result of the Smith-Lever Act	True	False
6. There are two Land-Grant Universities in Texas	True	False

**Please provide information that you feel best answers the questions below:**

1. What do you see as the primary benefits that the Leadership Advisory Board can provide to the county?

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2. What could Texas AgriLife Extension Service do to help the Leadership Advisory Board be successful?

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3. What concerns do you have about the operation or function of the Leadership Advisory Board?

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**Please Provide the Following Information about Yourself**

In what year were you born?	
-----------------------------	--

Are You	White/Anglo	Hispanic	African American	Asian	Native American	Other

Are You	Male	Female

What is your Annual Household Income?	Less Than \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$59,999	\$60,000 - \$79,999	\$80,000 - \$99,999	More Than \$100,000

Education Level	Less than High School	High School Diploma	Some College	Associate or Technical Degree	Bachelors Degree	Post Graduate Degree(s)

**How many years have you been involved with Extension, either as a participant or a member of a committee?**

Less Than 3 Years	3-5 Years	5-10 Years	More Than 10 Years

**Are you currently serving on Extension Committees, Boards or Task Forces other than the Leadership Advisory Board?**

Yes	No

**If Yes, please list committees:**


**Do you currently serve on Boards or Committees for other organizations?**

Yes	No

**Have you previously served as a member of the Extension Program Council Executive Board?**

Yes	No

**How long have you served on the Leadership Advisory Board?**

	Years
--	-------

**APPENDIX D****LAB MEMBER RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS**



### Question 1

**What do you see as the primary benefits that the Leadership Advisory Board can provide to the county?**

Educational opportunities for county residents	Help the Extension Service to better relate to local needs.
Developing programs that benefit citizens of this county.	To act on specific needs as provided by residents of our county.
This Board allows a venue for open discussion and communication between many groups throughout the County. It also uses value resources to provide educational and strength training throughout the County for many groups like 4-H, Master Gardeners, New Land Owners, and other groups begun by our AgriLife Agents.	With a broad panel of members, to let Extension know different areas of need or some attention paid to on certain concerns to benefit our county.
Our local LAB is working with AgriLife to increase educational opportunities in this County and to retain our youth in the county	Direction and vision
Provide vision and direction from a group of people who are not employed by AgriLife Extension.	To give guidance to Extension agents and county commissioners and other folks.
Identifying issues of importance. Coordinating efforts between various activities sponsored by AgriLife.	It provides a connection to the agent that otherwise he/she might not have. We may know of resources or concerns they might know about.
Our leadership board offers a diverse make up of the county and looks at the different areas that need to address. It may be new or growing agricultural occupations, elderly, student of all ages and health matters. It also tries to serve each community in the county with programs.	An insight to problems developing in county
None.	The advisory board is a great networking medium. It is a way for us all to be informed of the good and bad things we need to address.
information on programs, new ideas, more people involved in the county and extension	As core voluntary, for major benefit attractions.

Serve as a buffer between the extension service and the community and local political officials. Also, help work out any problems with club manager and 4-H members on the local level. Bring issues of concern to the forefront and help to find solutions. Plan programs to help develop leaders of the future.	No opinion.
Making the community aware of important issues and concerns.	Our agents do their jobs well. I'm not sure we can ADD to that.
leadership in the economic development of this county	Ambassadors for relations with citizens & the Extension office.
Bring issues to forefront. Initiate pro-active county programming. Positively influence county and state officials regarding Extension.	To provide needed long range goals on county interest.
to make positive comments to affect the different agencies and to work with legislatures to help with the funding and budget needs	Local impact.
Unsure	We can take problems from the field, as we see it, or told by others to our meetings. Here we can make suggestions to the board as to new programs to present.
Ways to help the students in the future become productive adults with knowledge about our state governments	Learning opportunities.
Keeping County officials up to date on pressing issues that pertain to agriculture and economic items.	The leadership advisory board is the eyes and ears and voice for the community needs.
Program recommendations and support, political influence, and donation/foundation activities.	Knowledge about projects projected and started in the county.
Making aware current problems and solutions to situations relevant to Montague County	Information on its activities and how other community leaders, organizations or businesses can tie into it for greater success and outreach, etc.
Identifying issues that are important to the county	Links A&M/local Extension staff with taxpayers, government elected officials and business interests.

providing input to extension programs creating a broader recognition of the extension programs adding political strength to extension programs	help keep programs visible to county residents
Valuable direction for education programs	Bring different ideas to the agents as to the needs of the county (training, educational programs, etc.)
Ideas that are brought from their professional life or from other outside sources about what needs to be done in Nueces County	Sharing ideas and information that benefits the county and its citizens.
Programs that are needed and requested by the community, meeting individual and group concerns.	aide in the melting together of rural and urban lifestyles
local need and initiatives	By providing programs to fit community needs.
current info on issues and problems	A steerable system.
Guide the extension programs to be more relevant to citizens of the county	Working closely with other agencies the Board can solve some of the major problems in the county.
A talent pool	Interface between Extension and community checking Extension learns needs of county and county becomes familiar with Extension program.
At this time I can see and benefits from the Leadership Advisory Board.	Knowledge and awareness of Agriculture
Assess needs and give input.	Leadership and training.
local issues	Providing informational programs through the County Agent that affect the welfare of the citizens.
Meeting as a group can offer board members an opportunity to bounce ideas off of one another in a "group setting". While this is sometimes helpful, it is important for the board to represent the diversity of groups and individuals in our county.	Strong direction for our Extension agent and support in his programs.
Advisement from the various fields each "leader" on the Board represents	A Board working together.

<p>The board presents worthy programs and at the young adult and selected adult programs are well received. I don't believe the county official take the programs too seriously, because they have "county" problems they deal with.</p>	<p>Being respected leaders and representatives of the county, the Board can pinpoint the physical and educational needs in assisting our growing diverse community.</p>
<p>Educational programs that will benefit everyone in the county</p>	<p>I see the Board and its programs as a mix of city and country people working together on issues important to each group.</p>
<p>Provide educational opportunities to our residents that will improve their knowledge base in their own county.</p>	<p>Identify areas of need that Extension can provide educational programs to benefit the people.</p>
<p>Bringing what the community needs and wants for educational programs</p>	<p>Educate them</p>
<p>Programming</p>	<p>Communication - LAB members meet and discuss issues in their organization. This information is then shared with those in the county.</p>
<p>It provides a broader understanding of county needs through input from its members</p>	<p>Getting the message to individuals, businesses and communities in the county what Extension is and what Extension can possibly do for them.</p>
<p>Leadership to the community to address areas that need improvement.</p>	<p>Source of new ideas and resources to continue to build and support the county extension/4-H programs.</p>
<p>Creating and producing programs to help ensure a better, healthier life for County residents. Provide an educational, fun outlet for youth and children.</p>	<p>Education the residents</p>
<p>We serve as a link between the County, its officials, AgriLife constituents and AgriLife agents.</p>	<p>Educate our family and friends of the area. Our youth is our future; we must instill leadership in them as we have in the past.</p>
<p>The leadership advisory board in Crosby county selects projects in the county where we can have the most impact. We do our best to identify problems that we can develop solutions for, that can improve the county citizen's lives and can be an economic benefit to the citizens of Crosby county.</p>	<p>Program suggestions and political support.</p>

Educational courses Identifying needs of the community	Public Relations between the county, State, and the residents of County. We are there to help serve the young and the old.
Identifying needs of the communities in the county.	We can take ideas and use our influence and diversity to put them to good use.
Direction, Understanding of benefits provided, Innovation of new ideas and directions of action	A "cross section" view of needs in the community, educational programs, spiritual guidance, etc.
Provide information to the community on how to overcome problems that affect the majority of the people.	Collaboration on county issues and development of leadership and programs for the growth of the county.
Present a wider range of interests and opinions than the agents themselves might receive on their own.	validates work of extension service
Input into the needs of the community	Collaboration with other County projects that are ongoing and the Board deems warranted. Initiating new projects deemed necessary. Advocating for the continued programs & benefits that AgriLife extension agents provide
Provide educational information to both agriculture people and those who don't know where their clothes and food come from.	A positive change and community awareness.
Development of programs which address the greatest need for the County.	Target potential problems before they escalate into big problems. Offer expertise from a broad range of people sitting on the board.
Provide programs that are beneficial to the majority of the producers in the county.	provide training in needed areas
Act as a sounding board for new ideas and programs	communication
A chance for comments and suggestions to benefit the county as a whole, youth and older adults. These comments and suggestions can lead to action.	Leadership and training.

education on emerging and current issues	Simply providing direction to our county agents as to new programs or expansion of existing programs is the greatest benefit.
The primary benefit of the Leadership Advisory Board is to keep citizens of our county informed and to keep extension connected to our county government.	I am a new board member and everything is being restructured at this time.
The LAB helping agents develop community educational needs and the LAB aiding in marketing to the community.	They bring county-wide programs for the public to keep everyone up to date on current issues.
Provide guidance for the needs of citizens of county.	Address issues particular to each county provide training and/or informative meetings
Preparation for a positive future Advanced information Conserving the future of our community	Move programs in the right direction for the most impact in the community.
Leadership, input, participation in events and programs, and positive support.	education unification
To ensure current topics and needs of the community are met.	Provide the county agents direction in planning programs in meeting community's needs - not just what agents think we need.
Provide and educate our younger group.	Provide assistance to county agents, keep county commissioners court informed of the need to provide knowledge to the people of the community.
Input on the needs of our producers as seen by the board.	Support within the county for AgriLife Extension.
Education of new ideas and trends to improve both financial and quality of life.	Educational benefits that will help improve the county and surrounding areas.
Identifying needs and acting to remedy them.	Attain input from citizens not on the board and present information at Advisory Board meetings.

Cross view of opinions from a variety of different people.	They can relay to the agents what problems are important to help people of the county have a better standard of living.
an overall awareness of issues impacting the county networking capabilities across many segments of business	Bring timely programs and information to the public on matters that relate to them
Educational programs Issues that need to be addressed	It can provide leadership opportunities for community leaders. It provides latest information that is available to the public. It is a wealth of information from agriculture to consumer information.
Professional direction to county director from non-related participants. Legislative/professional contacts.	Keep us updated on what AgriLife is doing to help people in the community.
Excellent local programs.	Provide support to our agents. Also provide educational programs.
Leadership Knowledge of what is really going on.	Providing educational programs.
1) I.D. areas of educational need, primarily related to agriculture. 2) Keep county officials and leaders abreast of issues important to agriculture.	Good solid educational programs.
The board can help in implementing programs for the whole county residents.	To help address important issues facing the residents of the county.
Information on current problems.	Get cutting edge information to clientele.
to keep the public abreast of changes that are taking place in our county and how it will effect it's citizens (social, economic, etc.)	Educational programs to benefit their needs.
education on current events	Education/information.
Information on upcoming issues Educational opportunities	Liaison between community and leadership of Texas AgriLife Extension.
Information we receive we can take back to the public, at our jobs, and in other committee and organizations we belong to.	Provide declining communities with leadership direction for economic development.

Advice on environmental concerns due to rapid and uncontrolled growth of the county.	To come up with ideas that the county can benefit from and have the agents work on the ideas.
a conduit for finding out what programs are available and a means to getting needed programs to the public	Support to the extension agent to better benefit the youth of the county.
input on local issues	Identify issues which affect the county
Vision, Planning, Representation, Public Education	Advise group of individuals from all areas with different perspectives on what our county needs are.
Improvement and aid to problem areas in the county.	What needs to be presented to the public?
Leadership and educational opportunities to the clients.	LAB allows for the opportunity for members with diverse knowledge and experience to suggest and promote ideas for the improvement of life in the county.
Program training - county wide for all ages and professions	Broadening the awareness of Extension Service in the Area
Guidance on local issues.	Broad participation by citizens.
Leadership	Many more contacts with business people, funding sources and political contacts
To be the link between the agents and community.	Input into local needs identified by residents
Recommend programs that would benefit the citizens of the county.	Identify new problems or areas for improvement in the county
	Address community concerns and provide educational opportunities to improve them



## Question 2

### What could Texas AgriLife Extension Service do to help the Leadership Advisory

#### Board be successful?

Continue to provide support and training for programs for the county through support of county agents	Overall training or workshop.
Continue to provide the resources and personnel to conduct educational programs.	Perhaps more training.
Provide help for location and funding of grant money for Board classes and training for the public. Grant money is needed to fill the gap between State money and County funding. Our county has a vision for a building to house both the AgriLife Extension Agents and a training facility to benefit many of our Agents projects.	Give more training to help us act on any specific topic.
Personally I think that AgriLife is making every effort to make the advisory board successful	maybe a broader sense of what Extension has to offer
Better utilize the talents of the Board members.	Facts, data, educational programs
Give it a little more independence and responsibility.	I think the leadership board is successful.
As we meet for our yearly programming planning meeting, if we had more current agricultural and growth data on the county to help decide the types of programs. Also our county is in the Dallas district but is more related and acquainted with the Overton district.	I think they are doing a good job. I don't know about other training, if it's available or needed.
Make the Leadership Advisory Board serve as an example for leadership.	Mail reminders of upcoming events at least 1 month in advance.
follow up and follow all agents progress	Require them to meet.
Make it more like the old 4-H Youth and Development Board or shut the committee down.	Supportive of new ideas & implement programs.
I think a big impact would to occasionally have another employee of Texas AgriLife other than the just the agent attend the meetings.	Continue to search for new and younger leaders as they arise in the county.

continue to promote the lab	Keep us aware and educated on activities.
Provide opportunities for the items listed above.	Continue to provide information and field staff to our meetings, to help with local activities.
they are doing an excellent job of keeping us informed	Keep them informed.
Provide seminars on how the Extension could improve the quality of life in our county and surrounding area.	stay connected
Perhaps send out more information on the logistics of the Advisory Board	Provide information and consultants.
More communication and possible quarterly meetings.	E-mail newsletters (?) about the service to provide a better understanding of the connection to our county --- maybe visit!
Listen to them and accept their recommendations because they really do know their geographical area needs and idiosyncrasies.	Extension should improve information about programs and their results to board members.
I realize we are an advisory board but feel like we would be more effective if we could help develop and present programs on the issues we are concerned about.	more locally available in-service/education
provide more media exposure for extension programs	Listen to ideas. Act on them. Share them with community.
More commodity based training	Carry out ideas given to them. Keep the Board aware of what they do and the success of their programs.
Exactly what they are doing now, giving us input into what they are doing, what they would like to do. <sup>65</sup>	keep board informed as to local, regional and state issues on water, land development, serves available
In my opinion, keep training and sending good, qualified extension agents out to the counties they serve. We have been very fortunate in our county.	Maybe meet more often and update the Board on the progress, on it's involvement.
keep doing what they are doing	Increase membership to include broader interest. Educate members on Extension services. Meet more frequently than 2x/year.
Meet more often more interaction with agents	More diversity, reach out to minorities
They are already swamped with work. I would not ask them to do anything for us...we need to do more for them.	continue to provide support
find a couple of extra hours to put in each day	Continue the cooperation already established.

Make sure that board members are aware that they are on the board and it's purpose other than doing so immediately before being asked to fill out this survey.	Continue to provide technical support through specialists.
money for projects	Texas AgriLife Extension Service can help the Board be successful, by providing or assisting with leadership and research information to help the Board to assist others.
Train the agent(s) in better volunteer leadership skills	Provide all educational information, handouts and materials in Spanish if needed. Target Hispanics.
A spoke word is useless if it falls upon deaf ears.	As a member of the Board, I would like to be kept abreast of the hiring of the agents. I find out through the media when a new agent is hired.
Continue to provide programs and information on issues that impact the county.	Provide necessary data to facilitate the guidance of educational programs for the board.
Orientate members to the board and their responsibilities as a member.	Educate and help with training.
I feel comfortable with what we have been informed about	Encouragement - LAB members need to know that their voluntary time is being used wisely.
Increase funding.	Continue to provide innovative and successful leadership programs and trainings for agents and committee/county members.
We represent a broad array of interest that mirror AgriLife programs. I am satisfied we succeed in our efforts to advise and inform.	Continue to help with teaching us adults as well as our upcoming leaders.
Texas AgriLife Extension has provided our LAB with resources that we use to conduct seminars throughout the county to help develop business people and students to become better citizens for the community at large. This does not necessarily include 4-H. We most often, in regards to students, try to find and involve students that are not participating in other activities to join and develop their skills and interests to make them a successful person in school and for the rest of their lives.	More training
Provide input, training, information	More training.
Provide education to members regarding responsibilities.	A good board will be successful no matter what.

Provide more information of resources available	A few more details about the exact roles we are involved in.
Update the members between regular meetings on activities and events.	We are already successful in many ways. I believe that "best practices" training would help in every area. Perhaps a little more information about AgriLife Extension could be shared at meetings to give me a better understanding of the group and its role.
It works the way it is	keep them informed by meeting regularly and through email, newsletters, etc
Provide more information to us on issues that none agriculture minded people might us to slander the agriculture industry.	Realize that each community is different. What applies in San Antonio may not apply in a rural area.
Have multi-County in-service training for the membership. This would provide a wider range of possibilities.	It is a team effort. They offer expertise or can obtain it from a vast array of sources available to them through Extension.
Keep the board advised on any current issues that affect producers in their county.	Assist with training - sponsor field days, provide information
Keep lines of communication open; some of us are newer members of the Board, and are also new to the communities we are servicing and have not yet made those connections needed to the other county elected officials.	Not sure - continue to support the county agents and provide excellent specialists in extension.
continue as we are -	I believe they are doing a good job.
By providing leadership to the county and by filling open agent's positions in a timely manner.	provide resources for our county meaning - educational material-people, etc.
Continued support and be part of planning process.	they do an effective job already
Send a newsletter for current affairs	It might be helpful to know what other counties are doing or have done. It would give us some fresh ideas or solutions where it fits our particular situation.
Continue to appraise the LAB of issues and opportunities to address for the benefit of the citizens of the county.	Continue to provide information that we can use to educate our community and it's leaders about the importance of agriculture and food.
Keep educating our Agents.	Broad participation in the Board
Provide more training.	Continue to work with and provide their professional leadership.
more timely meetings, year-long calendar established	Possibly supply list of popular program options and presenters. Keep board members informed concerning current happenings, opportunities, etc. (Newsletter.)

Being able to be more hands-on/active	Carry out suggestions for helping everyone in the county.
Keep the board informed of activity Inform the board of needs	I personally could benefit from some kind of training that would assist me in becoming a more active and viable participant.
Have meetings within the 610 loop area. Bear Creek is too far from the central business area.	Continue to provide support and resources.
Stop the last minute meetings. Plan ahead.	Keep us informed of today's needs.
REMEMBER what the AGRI stands for. Don't abandon those of us who are involved in agriculture.	Continue to provide training.
to be more visible to general public	Keep supporting our Extension Agents.
communication could be improved	Continue what you are doing.
Continue to provide agents who are knowledgeable on programs that are available.	Keep informed and updated on new information.
Allow us; maybe the proper word would be assign us tasks that we could do to better assist; in our advisory capacity.	Continue. Same as now.
Communication with Boards about changes in policy within Extension and activities of other Boards that concern Extension as a whole.	Provide guidance and assist us to obtain new and innovative ideas from the University System.
provide training in funding and program availability and viability to our local citizens	The agents to keep up the hard work that they are already doing.
increase networking events within the community	Perhaps more contact (meetings), to be able to have more involvement with activities.
Educate us on funding and organizational operations.	Provide leadership
Hold knowledgeable sessions for board members to familiarize themselves with project areas.	Keep us informed about their programs and what they are currently doing.
Continued support of the local offices.	1) Provides likes of different programming 2) Really does a good job on following up on ideas or questions
Keep us up to date on new programs and activities for community progress.	Provide information, research and material on issues discussed at meetings.
Don't really know.	They are doing a great job
Guidance and support	Continue as you have -
Continue as they are.	Good leadership, which we currently have
Keep the Board updates on what programs they do, the success and failures, and possible new areas of expansion	Have more meetings

### Question 3

#### What concerns do you have about the operation or function of the Leadership

#### Advisory Board?

The Board continues to get older. We need more involvement from younger folks.	Should be more aggressive in setting and attaining goals set for the county and the agency.
Funding.	Most of our members are overly involved in other endeavors and do not make time or the commitment to LAB; we therefore, have poor attendance at meetings or have to reschedule numerous times to get a quorum at the meetings.
AgriLife Extension needs to expand its programs internationally. AgriLife Extension needs to develop different funding models for its survival in the future.	Communication, Effectiveness, Efficiency
Poor attendance by members. Difficulty in continuity due to infrequent meetings.	Need to be involved with annual performance appraisal of agents.
I have none, ours is a working, successful board with hard working agents to carry out the programs.	Not sure when it meets or what it does.
It is completely lost as to its focus. It wants to copy programs from other areas.	My concern would be - are we doing all that we can to help our county?
I feel all our agents do not contribute equally and the effort is not always made by one	Our board works well with Extension and county officials. Might think of meeting a little more often. Quarterly?
The new guidelines for running this board are a waste of time. Let's work with real problems and concerns. I believe in change if it is needed but when something is working well for years change is not always needed or welcome. It's like the name change for the extension same employees and same great service and the same mission. But someone can say they revamped the extension service.	Sometimes I think it does not meet often enough.
I would like to see the board members more involved in the projects.	Require meetings and minutes.

continued participation by the people who can make an impact in the county	With no real power, our advice can be ignored; however, the board could become another layer of beauracracy in conflict with commissioner's court. The court should have more "say" in the operation of local programs.
The infrequent monitoring and meeting. Would like more frequent contact and reporting of efforts.	Heavy influence of 1 or 2 people over everyone else.
Somewhat unfuctional and inactive.	Get younger adults involved.
I would like to see a position description, how one is nominated or appointed to this position and expectations.	I really feel it functions pretty well due to the leadership of our county agent. We are kept informed by him and we have had some very good field days and gatherings.
Maintaining current relevance and activities in support of the local Extension office.	That a project will be started and not finished.
The problem I see is once areas of interest or concern are identified; we don't have the resources to follow through and find a solution, or have a successful outcome.	Maybe not meet enough? Updates between meetings? Create committees from the Board?
That sometimes we seem to be for "show" and not really taken seriously.	I believe it is working very well.
advisory board members sometime want to take a more hands-on role in extension programs.	My only concern is for it to continue.
meeting times and locations	volunteer involvement--I see a great list of community volunteers, but few participate at 100% and some you never see after the first meeting (a chain is only as strong as its weakest link)
Need more committed people to spend more time.	I have no concerns - our group is dedicated to helping others and providing programs to assist and educate.
most members have numerous other "volunteer" and work related obligations	Not meeting enough to keep up with what is going on with the Board. I know everyone is busy.
Being able to recruit new members to the Board, when the recent members have served their time and no longer want to be members.	Low impact
The fact that I was not aware of the existence of the board and that I was on it until immediately being asked to fill out this survey.	Needs more diversity, so more voices can be heard throughout the community.

<p>I am concerned that this board is "busy work" that adds to the work load of the individual agents. It seems that they have many opportunities to have discussions with people (one on one) about the needs of our community.</p>	<p>The concern(s) I have that all members do what we can to improve our county, and I am sure we will. And the county staff will help us with these issues we have to improve our lifestyle.</p>
<p>That it just rubber-stamps rather than really brain-storms and plans for the educational programs that address the most pressing needs of the county.</p>	<p>A more diverse group of Board members, persons of color would be a good start.</p>
<p>Effectiveness is limited due to county's finances to implement and support programs. and</p>	<p>Getting members to attend the meetings.</p>
<p>I have just become a member in the last few months, and I was unable to attend the last meeting because of a scheduling conflict. I would like to see it meet on a set day and at least once a quarter or more. I really cannot comment on the committee, because I have not been to a meeting which would give me a better prospective on what could or should be revamped.</p>	<p>Continuous funding for new programs.</p>
<p>The Board is not a true "working" board, as far as I know. We make suggestions and the Agents do the work. Perhaps we could become involved in at least one project a year in order to get to know the programs better.</p>	<p>I am very concerned of the financial problems of our area. the farmers with the low amount they get for their crops but yet all expenses are going up.</p>
<p>Our LAB meets monthly when possible. My concern is that while we develop and provide programs for the youth of our communities we do not receive as much support from the administrations of the schools in our county (there are 3 schools). I realize that there are restrictions on what can and must be taught in public schools today, but when I visit with the superintendent of my local school he wants to help the students see that with a little effort that they could have a good income providing services that are going unmet in our communities. If indeed that is the problem then we as an LAB need to work towards meeting those goals.</p>	<p>Finding younger people to serve on the board.</p>



Lack of funding restricts many programs. We need to have more support and be more aggressive in seeking funding from individuals and industry.	Specific goals for each aspect of Board members, handouts on expectations or job descriptions for volunteers and the others of groups.
The LAB should have input in the selection of new agent(s) when vaccines occur	My biggest concern is picking the right people. At times, members of the Board are selected on their position or for political reasons. A Board like this needs intelligent folks who take action.
The board meets once per year to set goals and probably should meet more to keep up to date on issues.	does not really direct what the extension service agents do in the county - but probably should not
That due to lack of information about the process of serving on the Board, there will not be enough interest to keep getting people on there, or supporting our existence in the county.	Probably could do more if more time was given to address various problems in the county.
I am concerned that our County government is not in tune with the programs offered by Agrilife Extension; although our County had made many efforts to inform them of what we are all about.	May have limited influence as an entity since there are several other local groups providing similar ideas/suggestions.
A need to continue Need more participation	is there more we can do?
No negative concerns; rather the agents actively involve the LAB in all aspects of their programs in a positive and productive manner.	In a small community it is difficult to find a good time for programs. Everyone has a hectic schedule because most of the people who would come, often times have conflicts in scheduling. It is a shame to ask a qualified speaker to come and then have a poor turnout!
It needs to meet more times during the year, and the same people need to be on that board for 2-3 years so they can see progress from the planning meetings.	Need to find new ways to conserve energy with solar and alternative fuels.
that they continue to have impact and look ahead to see future trends for the county	Fresh ideas & fresh board members
Needs to be: More active - More hands-on	The main concern that I have is that all too many times the major make up of these boards are the big rancher or farmer the rich guy or gal. Some of these individuals have no idea what goes on in the real world. But on the other side the small guy the regular joe, is intimidated by these boards.
Infrequency of meetings.	Adequate participation by board members

Functions well, but could meet by conference call on occasion.	The fact that we only meet twice a year makes staying in tune with issues and ideas more difficult - how about a monthly communication?
Members (esp. myself) don't have time to do it justice and older members don't have energy.	Not being aware of meetings. Information about what Extension is doing, etc
Should meet 4 times per year.	Meeting once a year and having no contact during the year is bad administration
Board appears to be stagnant.	We do not understand all that AgriLife Extension can offer the people of the county

**APPENDIX E**

**I.R.B. EXEMPTION LETTER**

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**  
**DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES - OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE**

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Institutional Biosafety Committee

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Institutional Review Board

**DATE:** 15-May-2008

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** RIPLEY, JEFFREY P  
 77843-3578

**FROM:** Office of Research Compliance  
 Institutional Review Board

**SUBJECT:** Initial Review

**Protocol Number:** 2008-0275

**Title:** A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of the Leadership Advisory Board in Meeting the Needs of Visioning and Advocacy for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service

**Review Category:** Exempt from IRB Review

It has been determined that the referenced protocol application meets the criteria for exemption and no further review is required. However, any amendment or modification to the protocol must be reported to the IRB and reviewed before being implemented to ensure the protocol still meets the criteria for exemption.

**This determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:**

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

**Provisions:**

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.

**VITA**

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**EDUCATION:**

- 2003 – 2008 Texas A&M University – College Station, Texas  
Doctor of Philosophy (December, 2008), Agricultural Education
- 1990 - 1993 Texas State University - San Marcos, Texas  
Master of Education (May, 1993), Agricultural Education
- 1985 - 1989 Tarleton State University - Stephenville, Texas  
Bachelor of Science (May, 1989), Agri-Business

**PROFESSIONAL  
APPOINTMENTS:**

- 2007 – 2008 Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Corpus Christi, Texas  
District Extension Administrator for Coastal Bend, District 11
- 2000 - 2007 Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Austin, Texas  
County Extension Director for Travis County, Austin, Texas.
- 1995 - 2000 Texas AgriLife Extension Service - San Angelo, Texas  
County Extension Agent for Agriculture and County Coordinator in Tom Green County.
- 1993 - 1995 Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Palo Pinto, Texas  
County Extension Agent for Agriculture and County Coordinator in Palo Pinto County.
- 1991 - 1993 Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Georgetown, Texas  
County Extension Agent for Agriculture in Williamson County.
- 1989 - 1991 Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Seguin, Texas  
Assistant County Extension Agent for Agriculture.