

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND BENEFITS

Volunteer staff has the right to:

- Have rewarding, suitable jobs with clear expectations and support.
- Be provided with orientation, training, support, supervision, and evaluation.
- Be kept informed. Be listened to by faculty.
- Be trusted and respected by faculty and co-workers.
- Be appropriately recognized for effort.
- Be treated as a co-worker.
- Be valued as a person capable of unique contributions.

Volunteer staff has the responsibility to:

- Accept assignments suited to personal interests, talents, and skills.
- Participate in orientation and training programs.
- Learn about Extension policies, programs, and people.
- Uphold policies of the OSU Extension Service.
- Act in a professional manner, which includes respecting confidences.
- Be accountable to and supportive of Extension when involved in Extension work.
- Complete assignments.
- Participate in staff and program evaluations.
- Be willing to use and teach new ideas.

Benefits for volunteer staff:

- Receive help in reaching personal goals.
- Increase leadership ability.
- Participate in training and learning opportunities.
- Know efforts are helping others.... bettering families and community.
- Gain recognition through cooperative effort.
- Increase self confidence by sharing program responsibility with agent and other volunteers.
- Develop lasting friendships.
- Receive community recognition as an Extension volunteer.

SALARIED STAFF RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND BENEFITS

Salaried staff has the right to:

- Receive philosophical support and financial resources necessary for quality work from Extension administration.
- Have volunteer service management recognized as a legitimate job function.
- Receive training for working with volunteers.
- Hire and terminate volunteers.
- Be kept informed by volunteers.
- Be trusted by volunteers.

Salaried staff has the responsibility to:

- Support and direct volunteers.
- Expand service through volunteers.
- Communicate expectations and responsibilities to volunteers.
- Respect volunteers and provide opportunities that encourage personal growth.
- Develop job descriptions and contract agreements.
- Provide adequate orientation, training, supervision, and evaluation of volunteers.
- Place volunteers in roles suited for them.

Benefits for salaried staff:

- Receive merit recognition for quality management of volunteer services.
- Acquire fresh ideas through collaboration.
- Gain satisfaction from reaching more people through volunteer efforts.
- Experience an enhanced professional role.
- Increase understanding of the community and clientele.
- Gain access to more community resources.
- Develop lasting friendships.

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Answer the following questions about the advisory council for your organization.

Yes	No	
_____	_____	1. The organization acts as if it is important to work with and support advisory councils.
_____	_____	2. The following are clearly defined:
_____	_____	a. The overall function of the advisory council.
_____	_____	b. The expectations of volunteer staff.
_____	_____	c. The expectations of salaried staff.
_____	_____	d. What it means to succeed (the criteria for an effective advisory council).
_____	_____	3. The organization has well-defined expectations for the relationship between salaried and volunteer staff.
_____	_____	4. The council's function is clearly defined regarding policy setting, advising, planning and implementing.
_____	_____	5. Everyone understands who is responsible for implementing advice.
_____	_____	6. Everyone understands what happens when advice is not followed.
_____	_____	7. Organization committed to providing enough salaried staff support for council activities.
_____	_____	8. Organization has a defined process for recruiting, selecting, and training council members. This includes selection criteria, recruitment plans, orientation, recognition, continuing education, performance standards, and perhaps termination procedures.
_____	_____	9. Organization has concise bylaws.

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What Attracts Members

Leader: Share overhead #8. These are not just statements, but foundational principles that should be used in establishing and working with advisory councils. An advisory council has a dynamic nature rather than being static or status quo. A certain amount of maintenance is required in any conforming to the organization, but do not let maintenance be the driving force. Be creative and think of ways to keep the advisory council lively and inspired.

Excellence in Non-Profit Organizations

Leader: Research by Independent Sector on effective leadership and management found that excellence in non-profit organizations was characterized by five elements. Discuss overhead #9. If participants currently serve on a council, ask if these elements are present. If not, why not?

Factors That Contribute to Strong Groups

Leader: Research shows that at least seven factors influence group strength. Discuss handout #7.

It is possible that some groups with poor group strength continue to function on the strength of former days. If the group has become institutionalized, it operates routinely rather than with new and vibrant ideas.

Leader: Those who work with groups should consider the following factors in developing group strength. Review overhead #11. Use progressive disclosure. Summarize the workshop by reading the story by Joseph Luft concerning bubble bees.

Leader: Appendix material could be used in self-evaluation of a council. The National 4-H Foundation produce this material in a project founded by the Kellogg Foundation. It provides a good summary of components that need to be evaluated in council effectiveness.

MISSION VERSUS MAINTENANCE

Members are attracted to:

A vision, not tasks
Achievement, not problems
Momentum, not maintenance

Or, to put it another way:

mission motivates -- maintenance kills

Source: William Conrad

ELEMENTS FOUND IN NON-PROFITS THAT DEMONSTRATE EXCELLENCE

1. **There is a sense of mission.**
2. **There is an individual who truly leads the organization.**
3. **There is an involved and committed volunteer board.**
4. **They can attract financial and human resources.**
5. **They operate programs that support the organization's mission.**

Source: Independent Sector

BUILDING A STRONG ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. The group meets personal needs. Many times people are attracted to groups because of what the group can do for them.
2. Other factors being equal, the size of the group has a great influence on its cohesion. The ideal size for cohesion is somewhere between five and thirteen members. Size determines participation, and it has been found that increased participation leads to increased satisfaction. People soon fall away from a group if they feel they cannot participate effectively.
3. Geographical location of group members influences group strength. If group members are separated by great distances and interact only occasionally, the group may not be as cohesive as desired.
4. Leadership style of the chair, support staff, and group members has a great influence on cohesiveness. Research has found that most people desire a facilitative, participative style of leadership. An OSU Extension Leadership survey found that Extension staff desired the following behaviors in their leaders:
 - a. Sense of direction
 - b. Integrity
 - c. Vision
 - d. Decisiveness
 - e. Willingness to involve others
 - f. Ability to delegate responsibility
 - g. Self-starter
5. Internal competition can cause conflict, jealousy, etc. Working on common goals brings a sense of oneness and mutual support. When competition comes from outside the group, it has a tendency to produce group solidarity. Outside competition is useful in developing group cohesiveness.
 6. Group cohesiveness increases if the group has its own identity or feels special. A uniform, name tag, news releases, certificates, special meeting room, or any other activity that helps the members feel unique contributes to group strength.
 7. Attractiveness of the group increases with the level of difficulty required to attain membership. If everyone can be a member, why join?

GROUP STRENGTH

1. **Members are attracted to a group because of specific personal needs.**
2. **Members and leaders must understand their roles and how they can contribute to group goals.**
3. **Group norms and standards of operation have to be established. Everyone should agree on the goals and objectives.**
4. **Groups must have some successes or interest will deteriorate.**

THE BUMBLEBEE HYPOTHESIS

Joseph Luft, in his book Group Process: An Introduction to Group Dynamics, uses a wonderful story comparing bumblebees and groups. He shows that, in spite of conflict, stress, and confusion, bees can fly in groups.

"Engineers once studied the bumblebee to see why it could fly. In this tale, aeronautical engineers carefully examined the wings and the body parts and took note of size, shape, and mass. After a thorough analysis, they agreed unanimously that, according to the laws of aerodynamics, the bumblebee could not fly.

Groups are like bumblebees. Communication is frequently distorted. Illusions and multiple invisible loyalties make coordination unlikely. Conflicts sap their strength. Their large mass drags. Groups cannot get off the ground; they cannot fly. Group life is impossible, according to scientific analysis.

But bees do make honey and artful honeycombs and wax. And they pollinate flowers. And yes, bees do fly.

Human groups also thrive despite gravity and entropy. Groups nourish life, and although some are known to be inefficient and at times combative and destructive, others are busy cross-pollinating ideas or harvesting rice. At this moment, a group somewhere is rehearsing a symphony by Mozart."

Council Effectiveness

The appendix is designed to help councils assess their overall effectiveness. Existing councils may want to use the tool to evaluate their current effectiveness. Those interested in establishing new councils may want to use it as a checklist to determine preparedness.

Appendix:

Assessment of Council Effectiveness

Mark whether they are:
F = Fully in place
P = Partially in place
N = Not in place

Elements of Effective Councils

1. Staff values councils and makes developing them a high priority.
2. The organization's administrative leadership values councils and makes them a high state priority.
3. Salaried staff values volunteer involvement as a resource on a council and makes encouraging and developing it a high priority.
4. The organization's administrative leadership values volunteer involvement as a resource and encourages it.
5. The organization's leader supports the time that salaried staff spends working with councils and includes it in the performance evaluations.
6. A common glossary and language for work is established for both salaried and volunteer staff members.
7. The reasons people volunteer are understood.
8. Situations that attract volunteers are recognized and understood.
9. The concepts of delegated responsibility and accountability are accepted and understood.
10. The concepts of motivation, leadership, and management are accepted and understood.

Administrative Elements

1. Work for the organization or program is clearly identified.

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2. Salaried staff and council members share a vision of how our country will be different and better because of the work.
3. Strategic plans to bring the organization's vision to reality are available in written form.
4. The function of each council is clearly identified, understood, and accepted by both the volunteers and salaried staff.

Management Elements

1. Volunteers serving on a council know who appointed them.
2. Members of a council know that they can meet with the appointing authority for differences of opinion that require mediation.
3. Members of a council know how they relate to the administrative and program structure of the organization.
4. Adequate resources exist to support council operations.
5. The council is structured effectively to manage or accomplish its delegated work.
6. The structure and organization of a council is based on what works for the group rather than a preestablished model.

Monitoring

The performance of each volunteer and salaried staff member of a council is evaluated annually.

2. If a volunteer's performance warrants termination, their appointment is terminated.
3. There is a reorientation system to update those whose service has been interrupted.
4. There is an established system to orient new volunteers and staff to council processes.

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Staff Knowledge and Skills

1. Salaried staff has appropriate knowledge and skills for working with a volunteer council.

Chairman Attitude, Knowledge, and Skills

2. The chairman of a council has a positive attitude toward the contribution and value of the group.
3. The chairman of a council has a complete, holistic view of the organization and the programs to which it relates.

Empowerment

1. Volunteer members of a council are empowered to carry out their delegated assignments.
2. Written guidelines are established to describe the responsibilities and limitations of a council.
3. Volunteer members of a council are accountable for the responsibilities assigned to them.
4. Periodic differences and disagreements between volunteers on a council are viewed as necessary and desirable and are satisfactorily resolved.
5. The council is willing to discuss and act on controversial issues.
6. Meetings of a council reflect free and wide-ranging discussions, full participation, and respect for different opinions.
7. Volunteer members of a council, who occasionally find themselves in the minority, accept and support the majority positions as they remain a part of the group.

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8. Members of a council accept other members, appreciate their strengths, and understand their limitations.
9. Volunteers on a council are able to effectively communicate with other members, giving full respect to and understanding their experiences and values.
10. Periodic disagreements between salaried staff and volunteer council members are viewed as necessary and desirable and are satisfactorily resolved.
11. Individual volunteer members of a council do not attempt to represent the group outside of their own meetings without the sanction of the group.
12. A written document clearly states the:
 - a. Function of a council.
 - b. Expectations of the volunteers on the council.
 - c. Characteristics of effective council groups.
 - d. Functions of salaried staff in support of the council.
 - e. Types of policy which a council group is authorized to make.
 - f. Expectations for the council group to implement the policy they make or the advice they provide.

Section III: Framework and Legal Factors

1. The legal and liability responsibilities of a council are clear to the members of the group.
2. In the case of a council whose advice is rejected by its appointing authority, the procedure for appealing to a higher authority is in written form.

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- g. A clearly defined information and communication process is established:
 - 1. Internal to the council
 - 2. Between salaried staff and volunteers
- 8. Orientation, continuing education and recognition:
 - a. Orientation, up-to-date information, and training are regularly provided for:
 - 1. Council members
 - 2. Council chairpersons
 - 3. Salaried staff responsible for councils
 - b. A system and procedure for recognizing the contributions of volunteer members of councils is established.
 - c. Positive program accomplishments are appropriately recognized or acknowledged on a regular basis by a representative of the appointing authority or sponsoring organization.
- 9. Committee organization and work:
 - a. The work or task of a committee is in writing when is appointed.
 - b. Activities relate to work to be done.
 - c. Timelines are established.
 - d. Procedures for reporting committee work to others are established.
 - e. Committee chairs are selected from willing and capable people.

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- f. Committee chairs are provided with appropriate training.
- g. Committee chairs are evaluated on their performance at least annually.

10. Council Group Operations

- a. Decisions or recommendations are made by the council as a whole rather than by chair, subgroup, or executive committee.
- b. New and innovative ideas are discussed with a spirit of openness and substitute enthusiasm.
- c. Salaried staff shares relevant information with the council even though it may reflect negatively on staff work.
- d. Routine matters are handled without unnecessary discussion.
- e. Regular assignments are carried out:
 - 1. Accomplishing the council's objectives.
 - 2. Effectiveness of the group's operation and work.
 - 3. Efficiency of the group's operations and work.
- f. The work of the council is communicated regularly to other relevant council groups.
- g. Potential for cooperation and collaboration with other council groups is assessed regularly.
- h. The council has a good relationship with salaried staff.
- i. Officers' responsibilities are clear.

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