



The WELD Program

The History of the Western Extension Leadership Development Program

Cooperative Extension has a long history of being committed to leadership development for its employees. Some leadership opportunities, such as National Extension Leadership Development (NELD), have been offered for participants from all regions at the national level. However, many leadership development opportunities have focused on the regional level.

For many years, the University of Arizona offered a very popular Winter School, which attracted participants from many states to the warm Arizona winters for leadership development and renewal. After years of hosting Winter School, the University of Arizona decided it no longer had the staff resources and time to continue hosting Winter School, so Colorado State University rose to the occasion of providing leadership development training in the summer in beautiful Estes Park. This opportunity continued for a few years and then Colorado State University became home to the NELD Program, and it was decided the Western Region would have to collectively decide how to provide continuing leadership development opportunities for faculty and staff. To address the need for leadership development training in the Western Region, Extension Directors each nominated one person, often someone who had participated in NELD, to meet in Phoenix, Arizona, in January 2000, to propose a leadership development plan for the Western Region. Oregon Extension Director Lyla Houghlum met with a small group in Phoenix to begin discussions for the future. Included in the initial planning were: Deborah Young, Arizona; Judy Barth, Colorado; Arlinda Nauman, Idaho; Dave Sharpe, Montana; Jaime Castillo, New Mexico; Scott Reed and Tom Gallagher, Oregon; and Guy Denton, Utah. This group formed the core of the first Planning Committee for the Western Extension Leadership Development (WELD) Program, with Scott Reed from Oregon serving as Chair of the group. Additional members on the original planning committee included: Sheryl Stanek, Alaska; Linda Manton, California; Marlene Rebori, Nevada; Curt Moulton, Washington; and Carol Whitaker, American Samoa. This group laid the plans for a two-session Western Extension Leadership Development experience for “interns” from each state in the Western Region, and recruitment for WELD I occurred the fall of 2000.

WELD I and II

With Deborah Young from Arizona as Chair of the Planning Committee, the first WELD I class was held in San Diego, California, in March 2001. This class had 34 interns representing 11 western states. The Capstone Seminar for WELD I was held in Post Falls, Idaho in June 2002, with Judy Barth from Colorado providing leadership for the Planning Committee. Based on the successful completion of WELD I, positive evaluations from participants, and continuing support

from Western Region Extension Directors, recruitment for WELD II occurred in the Fall of 2002, with Arlinda Nauman from Idaho serving as Chair of the Planning Committee. Twenty-six interns from 11 states participated in WELD II. The first session for WELD II was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, in April 2003, and the Capstone Seminar for WELD II was held in Park City, Utah, in June 2004. New WELD Planning Committee members for WELD II included: Linda Tannehill, Alaska; JoAnne Skelly, Nevada; Steve Burr, Utah; Doug Stienbarger, Washington; and Steve Schafer, Wyoming. In June 2004, Western Region Extension Directors reviewed the WELD II evaluations and innovative projects and recommended the leadership development training program be continued, with interns for WELD III recruited in Fall 2004. Linda Manton from California was selected as Chair of the Planning Committee, and new Planning Committee Members included: Christopher Jones, Arizona; Wayne Nishijima, Hawaii; Dan Clark, Montana; and Reynaldo “Rey” Torres, New Mexico.

Submitted by Arlinda Nauman, Idaho
Chair, WELD II
August 2004

WELD III

Twenty-eight interns from 11 western Extension States began their WELD III journey in April 2005, with Seminar 1 held in Phoenix, Arizona. This class of interns was diverse, in terms of disciplines, job titles, agents (county-based) and specialists (campus-based). The diversity of the class was important to its success. Unfortunately, by June 2006, when Seminar 2 was held in Portland, Oregon, WELD only graduated twenty-two interns. Six interns did not complete WELD III due to resignations from their Extension position, transfers to other units/states, and some for personal reasons. Based on the evaluations conducted at the Capstone Seminar in Portland, 100 percent of the interns felt that the WELD goals established at the beginning of the 2005 program were met, and several of the interns reported that they had become involved in new leadership roles.

WELD Planning Committee members for 2005-2006 were: Milan Shipka, Alaska; Chris Jones, Arizona; Linda Manton, California; Judy Barth, Colorado; Lynn Nakamura-Tengan, Hawaii; Barry Bequette, Idaho; Dan Clark, Montana; Staci Emm, Nevada; Rey Torres, New Mexico; Russ Karow, Oregon; Steve Burr, Utah; Doug Stienbarger, Washington; Stephen Schafer, Wyoming; and Paul Gutierrez, Western Extension Directors Liaison.

With approval and support from Western Extension Directors, WELD IV was launched with Steve Burr from Utah appointed as new chairperson to lead WELD into Class IV.

Submitted by Linda Manton, California
Chair, WELD III
February 2008

WELD IV

Interns for the WELD IV program were recruited in the fall of 2006. For the first time, thirty-one interns from all 13 western states and American Samoa participated in the WELD IV Seminar 1, held in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in March 2007. Again, the diversity of interns, in

terms of disciplines, job titles, agents (county-based), and specialists (campus-based) contributed to the success of the class. The “capstone” WELD IV Seminar 2 was held at Big Sky Resort, Big Sky, Montana, June of 2008.

At the conclusion of the program, twenty-eight interns graduated from WELD IV (three interns did not complete the program due to resignations from their Extension position, transfers to other units/states, or for personal reasons). Based on the WELD IV End-of-Program and Follow-Up Evaluation conducted at the Capstone Seminar 2 at Big Sky, a large majority of the interns felt the four WELD goals/objectives established at the beginning of the program were either “completely met” or “almost fully met”. Interns evaluated the content and value of both WELD IV Seminars as extremely high. As a result of Seminar 2, interns indicated they would change their leadership behavior. Interns indicated learning both leadership skills and more about other states’ Extension programs as being very valuable. In addition, many of the interns reported they had become involved in new leadership roles, not necessarily directly because of WELD, but many felt the WELD experience would enhance their leadership capabilities in their new roles.

WELD Planning Committee members for 2006-2008 were: Milan Shipka, Alaska; Chris Jones, Arizona; Linda Manton, California; Judy Barth, Colorado; Lynn Nakamura-Tengan, Hawaii; Barry Bequette, Idaho; Dan Clark, Montana; Staci Emm, Nevada; Rey Torres, New Mexico; Russ Karow, Oregon; Steve Burr, Utah; Doug Stienbarger, Washington; and for Seminar 1, Paul Gutierrez, New Mexico State University Extension Director and WELD Western Extension Directors Liaison; and for Seminar 2, Jim Christenson, University of Arizona Extension Director and WELD Western Extension Directors Liaison.

With approval and support from Western Extension Directors, WELD V was launched with Doug Stienbarger from Washington appointed as the new chairperson to lead WELD into Class V.

Submitted by Steve Burr, Utah
Chair, WELD IV
October 2008

WELD V

Twenty-five interns from 11 western Extension states were recruited into the WELD V program in the fall of 2008. Spanning late March and early April of 2009, the Interns met in Denver, Colorado, to start their leadership journey with Seminar 1. Unfortunately, two of Montana’s four interns were caught in a spring snow storm and were unable to attend Seminar 1. The WELD Capstone Seminar was held in beautiful Park City, UT in mid-June of 2010.

Again, the cohort of WELD Interns exemplified a diverse group of Extension professionals representing county based educators, campus based specialists, a 1994 institution, and a cross section of disciplines and years of experience in Extension. Interns experience in Extension ranged from three to 27 years and averaging nine years. This diversity added to the rich discussions and interaction between the interns, planning committee members, and workshop presenters.

Of the twenty-five original interns who attended Seminar 1 in Denver, only 20 graduated at the conclusion of Seminar 2 in Park City, UT. Due to retirements, personal obligations, and resignations, five interns did not complete the requirements necessary to graduate from WELD V. When asked in an end-of-program evaluation survey if the goals and objectives of the WELD program were met, seventy percent of the interns indicated they were either completely met or almost fully met. When asked about their overall experience with WELD, one intern commented, “...*Self-discovery was the best thing I got from the program. Once I understood myself better I could work with it and adjust the way I do things to get the best results from myself and others.*”

WELD V Planning Committee members for 2009-2010 were: Milan Shipka, Alaska; Chris Jones and Dan McDonald, Arizona; Shannon Mueller, California; Judy Barth, Colorado; Lynn Nakamura-Tengan, Hawaii; Dan Clark, Montana; Staci Emm, Nevada (representing 1994 Institutions), Amy Meier, Nevada; Rey Torres, New Mexico; Troy Downing, Oregon; Steve Burr, Utah; Doug Stienbarger, Washington; Duane Williams, Wyoming; and Jim Christenson, Western Extension Directors Liaison.

With approval and support of the Western Extension Directors, WELD VI will be launched in the Fall of 2010 with Milan Shipka, University of Alaska, serving as Chair of the WELD VI Planning Committee.

Submitted by Dan Clark, MT
Chair, WELD V
August 2010