

# Suggestions for Administrative Advisors

**Background:** In 2003, Director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Dr. Lou Magnarelli, wrote suggestions for Administrative Advisors. Some 15 years later, many of the suggestions that Lou made still resonate. Here's an update on Lou's suggestions for Administrative Advisors.

## Suggested Administrative Adviser Activities

1. Update the technical committee on changes in multistate research program.
2. Review annual reports. Is the project achieving its objectives? Are the results clear, concise, and usable?
3. Assist the technical team in setting deadlines (e.g., completing annual reports, revising/renewing the project, scheduling annual meetings, etc.)
4. Encourage attendance of all project participants.
5. Encourage broad participation in scientific expertise, including extension, from a multitude of states including those in different regions.
6. Get to know the scientists and who the leaders are in the group.
7. When problems arise, consult with the leaders of the technical committee to achieve goals and meet deadlines
8. Encourage dissemination of research results to stakeholders.
9. Ensure that delivery of services and information is directed to all citizens and that the principles of equal opportunity, affirmative action, diversity and inclusion are applied to all activities.
10. If you need any assistance, contact NERA ED, Rick Rhodes ([rkr3@uri.edu](mailto:rkr3@uri.edu)) or NERA coordinator, Dave Leibovitz [david\\_leibovitz@uri.edu](mailto:david_leibovitz@uri.edu)

## *The Administrative Advisor's Challenge in Multistate Research: Managing and Leading*

There are a number of tasks that AA's assume in their roles: these include management activities and leadership activities. Importantly, these activities do not require the AA to be a project discipline expert.

### *Management:*

The management roles are relatively easy and modest in nature: authorizing annual meetings, seeing that the annual reports are completed on time and properly submitted, and assisting with project revision/renewal. The rules of operation of multistate projects are described in the NIMSS User Guide ([User Guide for the National Information Management Support System \[NIMSS\]](#)), [Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities](#) and [Northeastern Supplement to the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities](#). Support for accomplishing the management activities are provided by the NERA.

### *Leadership:*

Our regional committees and projects should serve as catalysts for expanding the multistate, multi-institution, and multi-disciplinary research and outreach agenda that focuses on the food and agricultural system of the US. As AA, you have a unique opportunity and perspective to encourage development of competitive proposals coming from the project area of expertise. What can you do as the AA to assist the technical team *to leverage the work of the project to compete for a pool of funds that are targeted toward large, integrated, multi-disciplinary awards?*

What might you do as the AA to promote and advocate for the project? This could include *the identification and development of meaningful impact statements*. As AA you're not alone in this activity. The Multistate Research Fund Impacts Program (<https://www.multistateresearchimpacts.org/>) prepares and shares Impact Statements to communicate the importance of multistate projects, the land-grant university system, and agricultural research. Consider seeking a writing workshop for your project. Or nominate your project for a regional or national multistate research project award.

## *Checklist for Administrative Advisors*

### *Management*

\_\_\_ Have I reviewed the *NIMSS User Manual, Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities and Northeastern Supplement to the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities*?

\_\_\_ Have I authorized the annual meeting using NIMSS, 90 days prior to the planned meeting or activity?

\_\_\_ Have I checked to see that an annual report has been completed for the past year's activities, and properly conveyed?

\_\_\_ How can I assist the regional committee leadership with the preparation of the meeting agenda? Is the agenda built around the project's objectives?

\_\_\_ Is there a strong commitment to the multistate activity as evidenced by annual meeting attendance?

\_\_\_ Has the committee developed a systematic approach for assuring timely submission of reports, authorizations for meetings and project revisions?

\_\_\_ As AA, have I encouraged the project leadership to set deadlines for necessary committee/project activities, especially the completion and submission of the annual report (SAES 422?)

\_\_\_ As AA, have I discussed and reinforced the need for demonstrating interdependence in the preparation of annual reports?

\_\_\_ As AA, have I encouraged the project leadership to complete the annual report in a timely fashion?

\_\_\_ Have I encouraged the NIFA representative to attend the annual meeting? In the event that the NIFA representative cannot participate, have I discussed issues which need to be brought to the attention of the committee members?

\_\_\_ When new members join the regional project activity, have I spent time acquainting them with the project activity?

\_\_\_ Are all scientists assigned to the research project activity contributing?

\_\_\_ Have I conducted a mid-term review of project and shared the review with the MAC?

### *Leadership*

\_\_\_\_ Have I familiarized myself with the nature and the purpose of the regional activity?

\_\_\_\_ When and where appropriate, have I encouraged linking and meeting with similar multistate activities to expand collaboration?

\_\_\_\_ Are there other investigators from other disciplines that if brought into this project activity would increase the multidisciplinary nature of the activity, including extension faculty?

\_\_\_\_ Do the regional committee activities support the project objectives?

\_\_\_\_ Does the project activity demonstrate a level of interdependence in its approach? Is there evidence that the investigators are working together on each objective, or is the work simply a collection of individual investigators conducting research without some demonstrated level of interdependence?

\_\_\_\_ In reviewing the outcomes of the proposed activity, are they achievable? Has achievability been discussed with the committee?

\_\_\_\_ Have the scientists engaged in the multistate activity shown any interest or success in seeking and finding supplemental funding to enhance selective objectives of the project?

\_\_\_\_ As AA, am I acting as an advocate? Have I worked with the technical team to assist in the identification and development of meaningful impact statements?