

Epsilon Sigma Phi
Alpha Tau Chapter

2014 Award recipients

Awards presented at the annual meeting of ESP, October 23, 2014

Meritorious Support Service Award

Recognizes university or extension state or regional support staff or paraprofessionals who have significantly supported extension professionals or programs for a sustained period.

Lisa Bland

During Lisa's 35-year career with University of Missouri Extension, she has been promoted 9 times to positions with increasingly complex responsibilities. This includes work at the University of Missouri CAFNR Delta Research Center, Southeast Region's EFNEP and Family Nutrition Program, and Southeast regional office.

Lisa currently is a Business Support Specialist II in the Southeast regional Office. She handles all aspects of fiscal, operational, human resources, and organizational support in the Southeast region, which includes 77 employees and 20 office locations.

While working with the Family Nutrition Program, Lisa provided training and mentoring for new employees. In her current position, Lisa coordinates training for county office support staff.

In all her past and current positions with Extension, Lisa exemplifies professionalism, personal connections, and a positive attitude. She is extremely competent and is always willing to take on additional tasks when needed. Lisa exhibits strong problem-solving and organizational skills, as well as talents in building and sustaining relationships—including those with office support staff, faculty, administrators, council members, stakeholders and elected officials. She is calm, kind and patient, and can be counted on to follow-through on commitments.

Friend of Extension Award

The highest award presented to a non-extension person and is designed to recognize truly outstanding support and personal involvement in Extension efforts over a period of time. Contributions may be of a general nature or specific to a programming effort.

H.C. Russell

H. C. has served on the University of Missouri Extension state council since 2005, and as a council chair from 2005 to 2014. Under his leadership, the state council redoubled its commitment to communicating the value of extension with legislators, county commissioners, the governor's office, and others. This has protected MU Extension's appropriated funds and its ability to meet the evolving needs of Missourians.

H. C. and the state council have created targeted, creative means for communicating internally with MU and UM System administrators and the UM Board of Curators. His leadership has provided county councils new tools to address stakeholder relations. They also increase communications with the UM Board of Curators to help board members understand what extension is about and how extension programs impact people's lives.

He encouraged the development of a county business plan template to help county councils plan and communicate with stakeholders about local programming and funding issues.

H.C. provided invaluable education and advocacy in last year's successful effort to pass legislation creating additional options for county funding.

Through his years of service to extension, H. C. has demonstrated key qualities of a true leader and valued ally.

Distinguished Team Award

Recognizes outstanding efforts of an extension staff team for responding to and incorporating into a specific educational program one or more critical issues.

Southwest Region Health Insurance Education Initiative Team

*Nellie Lamers, Family Financial Education Specialist, Taney County

*Amy Patillo, Community Development Specialist, Howell County

*Chrystal Irons, Business Development Specialist, Taney County

*Gordon Carriker, Ag Business Specialist, Christian County

*Kathy Macomber, Community Development Specialist, Barton County

*Janet LaFon, Family Financial Education Specialist, Jasper County

Pam Duitsman, Nutrition Specialist, Greene County

Lydia Kaume, Nutrition Specialist, Barton County

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is a major issue currently affecting the public. Many Missourians do not understand their rights and responsibilities under this law.

The Southwest Region Health Insurance Education team provided 1½- to 3-hour educational sessions based on a Health Insurance Education Initiative curriculum developed by state specialists. The team members worked with local hospitals, health clinics, organizations, and other agencies to recruit participants. Information about the ACA was also provided through panel discussions, television and radio interviews, and handouts given at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. A total of 43 educational/outreach activities were conducted with 681 attendees.

Evaluations following the sessions showed the majority of participants had more information to make informed health care decisions and were able to better understand their health insurance options.

Outstanding Regional Extension Faculty Award (Man)

Recognizes regional extension faculty demonstrating success in program development, regional or campus activities, innovative methods used, use of evaluation, willingness to cooperate, and other activities.

Richard Proffer

Richard was initiated into Epsilon Sigma Phi in 2011. He has served on the membership committee.

Since 2006, Richard has worked as a Business Development Specialist with the Missouri Business Development Program in the Southeast region.

During his career, Richard has implemented a series of more than 50 different workshops on a variety of business topics. He has taught or co-taught a total of 191 classes with 1,548 attendees.

He has written and secured several grants between 2009 and 2011, including:

- Workforce Investment Regional Economic Development, \$75,000
- Incubator Without Walls, \$25,000
- Delta Regional Authority Economic Development, \$63,000

Richard serves on many community planning committees. Regionally and statewide, he has provided leadership on the Fee Generation committee, Southeast Region Marketing team, and other extension initiatives.

He is a member of many professional and community organizations including the Missouri Economic Development Council (MEDC), Cape Girardeau Area Chamber of Commerce, Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce, and others. With the help of his leadership, UMEA's Silent Auction has grown steadily each year.

Through his work with extension, Richard has made a major positive impact on the people of Southeast Missouri. He is an extension educator that always acts and delivers in a professional manner. The quality and quantity of his educational programs is beyond reproach.

Outstanding Regional Extension Faculty Award (Woman)

Recognizes regional extension faculty demonstrating success in program development, regional or campus activities, innovative methods used, use of evaluation, willingness to cooperate, and other activities.

Maude Harris

Maude was initiated into ESP in 2001. Since 1996, she has been a Nutrition and Health Education Specialist in the Southeast region.

Maude Harris' work has made a significant impact on the health of the residents in the counties she serves. She has focused her career assisting adults and youth in developing healthy lifestyles, in a region of Missouri noted for unhealthy living. In particular, her diabetes education programming in Scott County has benefited hundreds of individuals and families affected by this disease.

Maude coordinates with area schools, churches, health agencies, organizations, and groups to reach target audiences with health promotion programs. Maude has served on numerous community service organizations and is the facilitator of the Multi-County Women's Health conference held each October in Sikeston, Missouri.

In a two-week study abroad experience in Italy, Maude learned about different aspects of the Mediterranean diet, including visits to organic food markets, farms, traditional taverns, and olive oil factories. The experience also provided opportunities to learn about research on adherence and behavior change related to the Mediterranean diet.

Additionally, Maude has managed several grant projects, including:

- Missouri Department of Agriculture, Community Garden Grant
- Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Minority Health
- Saint Louis University, Healthier Missouri
- University of Missouri Columbia, Healthy Lifestyle Initiative

Outstanding State Extension Faculty Award

Recognizes state extension faculty demonstrating success in program development, regional or campus activities, innovative methods used, use of evaluation, willingness to cooperate, and other activities.

Karen Funkenbusch

Karen was initiated into Epsilon Sigma Phi in 2006. Since 1994, she has worked as a state rural safety and health specialist and director of the Missouri AgrAbility Program with the Division of Food Systems and Bioengineering Unit at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Since 2014, she also is an HES State Specialist, as well as a member of the Health Systems Program Integration team.

The AgrAbility program provides local customized on-the-farm services and assistance to farmers throughout the state. In 1994, the average number of farmers seen was 30 and this has grown to over 100 farmers per year through Karen's leadership and insight.

Another of Karen's accomplishments is her work, outreach activities, and involvement with the Missouri Arthritis Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (MARRTC) grant which is funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research at the University of Missouri-Columbia. It includes arthritis research, education, and training about arthritis prevention and management for farmers and their workers, including migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

Not only is Karen very busy with programming and services, she has excelled in many ways as an extension professional through research, publications and scholarly work, training manuals, professional memberships, advisory committees, teaching on campus, guest lecturing, and more. Karen partners with numerous organizations such as Lincoln University, the MU Medical school, OSHA, the Department of Health and Senior Services, and local farmers; to name a few. She has written and received grants throughout the years totaling over \$1,520,000.

International Service Award

Recognizes an extension professional who has contributed significantly to the development and/or expansion of an extension program in another country or countries through in-state and/or overseas work.

Letitia “Tish” Johnson

Tish was initiated to Epsilon Sigma Phi in 2012. She is a member of the Global Issues and Public Issues Committees.

Tish has been a community development specialist with MU Extension for 18 years, helping rural communities build capacity and increase resiliency. Her work has included serving on several leadership teams for international exchange programs, which include:

- Tish was a community development exchange participant in Northern Ireland during 2004 and 2006 and was Missouri’s exchange co-chair in 2005. The activities included facilitating workshops for two segregated communities to work together and delivering trainings on volunteer development, action planning, and basic community development strategies.
- In 2011, Tish traveled to South Africa. She met with community engagement faculty from University of the Western Cape and explored partnership possibilities.

In addition to her Extension work, Tish has a 20+ year association with a non-profit/NGO that links communities in the U.S. and Central America. As a member of this organization, Tish served on the board, led two delegations to Guatemala, and developed and facilitated staff trainings and meetings in Guatemala and El Salvador.

Tish has made numerous presentations at professional conferences, including four international conferences where she co-presented via Skype or poster sessions.

Tish has made many significant contributions to building stronger communities, not just in Missouri, but also in Latin America, Northern Ireland and South Africa. She has a

special ability to bring communities together to solve problems and create sustainable solutions.

Early Career Service Award

Recognizes the new extension professional who has exhibited the potential for leadership and excellence in extension program planning, delivery, evaluation, in program and/or administration during the first 10 years of their career.

Linda Morgan

Linda Morgan has been a member of Epsilon Sigma Phi since 2010. She has been worked for University of Missouri Extension as a Project Director, Nutrition and Health Education Specialist, and CPD in the Southeast region since 2005. Linda also provides leadership as statewide program integration facilitator for the Health Systems team.

Linda currently has direct supervision of 20 Nutrition Program Associates and 3 staff, with a budget of approximately \$600,000. She has built the Family Nutrition Education Program (FNEP) in her region to one that teaches over 30,000 children and adults annually in proper nutrition, physical activity, and food safety. Her administration of this program has had a positive and lasting effect on residents in some of the most economically-depressed counties in the state.

Linda has given three national presentations related to research conducted for her doctoral degree on FNEP. The results showed positive knowledge and behavior changes in children who participated in FNEP compared to children who were not in the program.

With her strong leadership skills, Linda encourages positive communication, commitment to nutrition education, and a results-oriented environment. She is attentive to the audiences to be served and truly cares about improving their lives. Her pleasant demeanor, professional conduct, and the desire to support both Extension and target audiences are appreciated by everyone she works with.

Mid-Career Service Award

Recognizes the experienced extension professional who has consistently exhibited leadership and excellence in extension program planning, delivery and evaluation for over 10 years and less than 20 years.

Kate Akers

Kate was initiated into Epsilon Sigma Phi in 2012. Since then, she has developed and maintained the chapter's website and has been a member of the Professional Development committee.

Throughout her 18-year career, Kate has provided statewide website development and maintenance for MU Extension, as well as support and training for hundreds of MU extension regional faculty and staff. As a Programmer/Analyst-Expert, she continually improves the website, with visits up to 7 million in FY2014, compared to 5.4 million in FY2009.

Kate has written or co-written numerous policies, tutorials and guides for website use and publishing. She uses website analytics to monitor traffic, create reports, detect problems, ensure extension's website remains viable to our clients, and more.

Kate often takes on special projects to assist others within the organization. She developed space on the S drive for extension's professional organizations to save records. She recently created an online giving form for the MU Extension Development Office for easy donations to a county endowment or gift fund. Since implementing this system, online donations have increased 62% (FY13 to FY14).

In 1999-2001, Kate worked internationally to provide web development expertise in Ireland. She provided guidance to develop a website for faculty of Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority of Ireland.

Overall, Kate's responsive and innovative work has helped to greatly increase the delivery of research-based knowledge and programs to the citizens of Missouri.

Distinguished Service Award

Recognizes an experienced extension professional who consistently exhibits continuing leadership, initiative, and excellence in extension program planning, delivery, and evaluation over a career of more than 20 years.

Lisa Wallace

Lisa was initiated into Epsilon Sigma Phi in 1987. She has served as a member of the Membership Committee and chaired the Loan and Fellowship committee.

Lisa began her career with University of Missouri Extension in 1983, when she became a Housing and Interior Design Specialist headquartered in Henry County. Since 1993, she has worked as a Human Development Specialist in the West Central region.

As a Human Development Specialist, Lisa plans, develops, implements, and evaluates programs that impact the lives of families. Through a variety of teaching formats, she helps parents, child-care providers, spouses, social service agencies and youth to improve their quality of life. Focus on Kids, Building Strong Families, and basic parenting workshops are but a few of the programs Lisa delivers regularly.

Statewide, Lisa is well known for chairing the Statewide Awards Committee. Since 2007 she has served in this role, coordinating the nomination and selection process for the most prestigious awards given to Extension faculty and supporters. During the same timeframe, she also has chaired the statewide Fellowship Review Committee, awarding funds for faculty to pursue professional development goals.

Lisa is willing to provide programming outside her discipline of Human Development and regularly partners with specialists in other categories. She also has partnered with community development specialists to provide training for nonprofit organizations and worked diligently to ensure a high-quality 4-H youth program maintained in Henry County.