

University of Minnesota Extension Leadership Program Bridging Brown County Group Summary of Findings

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January 30, 2005

The Community Vitality Leadership and Civic Engagement Capacity Area conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the Extension Leadership Programs. The evaluation tool used was the *Community Leadership Program Survey*, by Dr. Kenneth Pigg, University of Missouri, 2000.

To evaluate the impact of the Bridging Brown County Program, individuals who had participated throughout the year in six or more program activities, including the Board of Representatives, County Congress of Elected Officials, Network Brown County, and the annual countywide workshop were identified. Forty-five individuals met the criteria.

The evaluation design asked participants in the program to rate their pre-and post-levels of achievement of a set of seventy specific outcomes. The resulting difference between these scores was interpreted to be the outcome of the program, with those items that had a change of at least 0.5 level being statistically significant. The Bridging Brown County report showed 16 outcomes with a greater than 0.5 change.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- The age of participants ranges from 34 to 78 years, with a mean of 53 years.
- Gender: (63%) participants are male.
- The number of years that participants lived in their community ranged from 6 to 78 years, with a mean of 29 years.
- (67%) of the participants have immediate family members living in the community.
- Eighty-nine percent of participants are employed.

MEMBERSHIP IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- 44% of participants took on an active or a leadership role in at least one new organization following the program.
- Before the program, 13 (72%) participants held a leadership position in at least one organization. Following the program, 15 (83%) held leadership positions in at least one organization. This was a 15% increase in the number of participants.
- A total of 95 active and leadership positions were held in community organizations after the leadership program by participants, an average of over 5 organizations per participant.
- A total of 34 leadership positions were held by participants before the program. After the program, a total of 39 leadership positions were held, an increase of 15%. This group began with a large number of leadership positions held by the participants.

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

Bridging Brown County	Mean	N	RANK
Know steps needed to obtain broad-based support	0.842	19	1
Understand the importance of building agreement	0.722	18	2
Have knowledge of local, county, and state resources	0.684	19	3
Felt that I have a good understanding of public issues	0.667	18	4
Sense of mission	0.632	19	5
Understand how new ideas are adopted	0.632	19	5
Consider myself to be well qualified for public issues	0.579	19	7
Regard change as a source of vitality	0.579	19	7
Move out of my comfort zone and learn to grow	0.579	19	7
Aim to improve consensus-building skills	0.556	18	10

Table: Top 10 greatest changes in survey questions at end of program

FACTOR CHANGES

This section examines the changes that are witnessed by the group. These factors are composed of a cluster of questions, some of which are explained below.

Civic Engagement	Community Commitment	Community Knowledge	Personal Growth and Self-Efficacy	Shared Future/Purpose
.4471	.2500	.3895	.3264	.4306

This group scores especially high on two factors: Civic Engagement and Shared Future/Purpose. Civic Engagement is measured through the following questions:

1. I think I am better informed about public issues and government than most other people.
2. I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.
3. I seek to forge connections and strengthen personal and professional bonds among members in my community.
4. I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in public issues.
5. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important public issues facing our community.

The second, Shared Vision and Purpose, is measured through the following questions:

1. I talk optimistically about the future of my community.
2. I have confidence that my community will achieve its goals.
3. I envision exciting new possibilities for my community.
4. I articulate a convincing vision for the future of my community.