**Western Program and Organizational Leadership Committee (WPOLC)**

**Welcome Guide** *(to be placed on the website once finalized)*

We’d like to introduce you to Western Program and Organizational Leadership Committee (WPOLC).

**PURPOSE:**

The WPOLC shall be comprised of one person from each WEDA member institution who is able to represent all Extension administrative and program functions of their institution. The committee initiates and collaborates with the WEDA to identify, coordinate, and provide leadership for advancing WEDA regional and multi-state initiatives, explore extramural funding opportunities to support those initiatives, and address operational and organizational issues of importance to member institutions. The WPOLC may appoint special committees and/or task forces with membership internal and external to the WPOLC to assist and help coordinate Extension initiatives, programs, and operational and organizational work. The WPOLC will report to and meet jointly with the WEDA at least annually to discuss activities and outcomes of the past year, and to initiate and discuss priorities for the future. WPOLC also conducts the selection process for the Western Extension Awards of Excellence and the Western Extension Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award.

**ORIENTATION:**

WPOLC has developed an orientation plan to assist our new members. In addition to this guide, the Chair of WPOLC will set up a 30 minute orientation with you to share WPOLC’s current projects and address any questions you have. Additionally, the incoming chair will serve as an informal mentor to help connect you to resources, people, and knowledge. They are available to assist you with any questions you have in your new role both within your state and on this committee.

**MEETINGS AND TIME COMMITMENT:**

WPOLC meets virtually on the 3rd Tuesday of every month for 1 hour (2-3 Pacific time). Each state may be expected to give a brief report of activities at these meetings. There are also two face-to-face meetings per year. One meeting usually takes place in early November (location rotates around the western states) and the second is the Spring regional joint meeting with WEDA/WAAESD (location rotates also), which usually takes place in March.

All WPOLC members are expected to be active contributing members of the group. It is expected that all members take responsibility for achieving the goals and outcomes identified in the WPOLC annual work plan (see information under WEBSITE AND RESOURCES) and other work projects that arise.

The time commitment varies based on each indidual member’s leadership roles within the committee and tasks.

**MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP:**

You can find a list of WPOLC members here: <https://weda.extension.org/committees/western-program-and-organizational-leadership-committee/membership/>. Of importance, the chair role rotates and there is a schedule available on the website*.* The chair role is one year, starting after the Spring regional joint meeting and ending after that meeting. Be sure to check the leadership rotation schedule for your turn!

**COMMUNICATION:**

WPOLC has a listserve the includes the individual members and the Executive Director of WEDA. The WEDA Advisor is not on the listserve, so to include them on communications you will want to add that email. You can send communications via the listserve or to individual members. The listserve is: [wpolc\_weda\_listserv@lists.oregonstate.edu](mailto:wpolc_weda_listserv@lists.oregonstate.edu). To join the listserve send an email to Wiley Thompson at [wiley.thompson@oregonstate.edu](mailto:wiley.thompson@oregonstate.edu).

**WEBISTE AND RESOURCES:**

A number of resources are available on our committee website at: <https://weda.extension.org/committees/western-program-and-organizational-leadership-committee/>.

*Work Plan*. Annually, WPOLC develops a work plan at their November meeting and presents it to WEDA for approval. Past work plans can be found here: <https://weda.extension.org/committees/western-program-and-organizational-leadership-committee/work-plans/>. New members should familiarize themselves with the current year’s work plan.

*Onboarding Materials*. One of WPOLC’s past projects has been to create and make available onboarding materials for Extension professionals. Those materials can be found here: <https://weda.extension.org/professional-development/extension-employee-onboarding-modules/>.

*Awards*. WPOLC conducts the selection process for the annual Western Extension Awards of Excellence. This is usually done at the Spring regional joint meeting and the selections presented to WEDA during that meeting. You can find more information on the awards here: [https://weda.extension.oregonstate.edu/weda-awards-excellence](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fweda.extension.oregonstate.edu%2Fweda-awards-excellence&data=04%7C01%7Chorrillos%40unr.edu%7C86d9189916eb476544c008d9163c9d14%7C523b4bfc0ebd4c03b2b96f6a17fd31d8%7C1%7C0%7C637565271864072771%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=6EcW2aYptgo4vjB9ue4RAFF6qcJSyDIMWQD5zClZirM%3D&reserved=0).

**COMMITTEES:**

WPOLC has two committees that operate under their responsibility:

* Western Regional Evaluation Network (WREN) - WREN is a network formed by WPOLC. Their charge is to improve evaluation knowledge, skills, capacity etc. across the Western region. WREN is composed of professionals from each WEDA member institution who are able to represent the evaluation learning resources and needs of their institution. WREN may organize activities by sub-committees based on member interest and expertise. The full WREN committee meets at least annually with WPOLC to review outcomes from past priorities and set goals for future work plans. Their work plan is presented and approved by WPOLC and WEDA annually.
* Western Regional Mental Health Network is an approved Western Development Committee (WDC55) in NIMSS: <https://www.nimss.org/projects/18882>. WEDA charged WPOLC with overseeing this committee. At least one WPOLC member serves as an Administrative Advisor to the project. The goal of the network is to improve mental health outcomes across the lifespan through addressing diet quality and healthy food access.
  + *Objectives of the Network are to:* 
    - Convene a group of Extension and research faculty along with other partners to advance research and education related to the intersection of diet quality and mental health.
    - Increase awareness of the relationship between diet and mental health.
    - Conduct research and education to improve mental health outcomes through addressing diet quality and healthy food access.
    - Develop resources that states and territories can add to their portfolio of mental health efforts either as a stand-alone piece or additive to ongoing efforts.
    - Increase collaboration regionally and enhance fund development efforts.

Current groups associated with WPOLC:

* Western Region Farmer and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN). This is a USDA-NIFA grant funded program. WEDA charged WPOLC with establishing a group of regional colleagues representative of every state/territory to compete for the multi-year award. WPOLC has at least one member that remains connected to the group, their work, deliverables and successes. For more information see: <https://farmstress.us/>

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to the Chair, your informal mentor, or any of the other WPOLC members.

Welcome, we are looking forward to working with you.