UTILIZATION OF ADVISORY COUNCILS IN PENNSYLVANIA SECONDARY AGRICULTURE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Abstract

Advisory councils have been found to be a vital component of the program planning process in agricultural education programs. They provide a link from the community to the programs, allowing collaboration in the planning and improvement process. With limited data specific to Pennsylvania available, the purpose of this descriptive research study was to describe how Pennsylvania agricultural educators use and perceive agricultural education advisory councils. The frame consisted of 241 Pennsylvania secondary agriculture educators of which 171 participants responded, yielding a response rate of 71%. The results of the study found that 90.6% (n=155) of educators indicated that they do have an advisory council. Advisory councils have an average of 11 members from both the school and community with two meetings held annually. The programs with advisory councils reported that 19.4% have a program of work and the teachers in these programs perceive the functions of an advisory council in a positive light, with the average responses ranging from mildly agree to very strongly agree on Likert-scale items. Teachers also indicated that the perceived influences of the council on all aspects of the program should be increased from where they are currently in the programs. A limited number of teachers, 10.1%, indicated that their program did not have an advisory council with 23.5% of the non-advisory board respondents identifying that advisory councils are not essential to the program. A frequent write-in response (n=5) was that teachers had no
need for a council because their programs were not Pennsylvania Department of
Education approved programs. The results confirm findings from previous studies that a
vast majority of programs have an advisory council. Further investigation is needed on
how those community resources are being used and how the goals of the program are
accomplished with almost 80% of teachers indicating that no program of work exists for
the advisory council. Professional development that shares best practices is
recommended.
Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. i
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. iii
List of Figures ......................................................................................................................... v
List of Tables .......................................................................................................................... vi
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................... viii

Chapter 1 - Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
  Purpose ................................................................................................................................. 1
  Operational Definitions ......................................................................................................... 4
  Significance of the Study ....................................................................................................... 5
  Summary ............................................................................................................................... 5

Chapter 2 - Review of Related Literature ............................................................................. 7
  Advisory Council Legislation ................................................................................................. 7
    Federal legislation ............................................................................................................... 7
    State legislation ................................................................................................................ 8
  Program Planning .................................................................................................................. 9
  Professional Development Needs of Beginning Secondary Agriculture Educators .......... 11
  Professional Development Needs of Experienced Secondary Agriculture Educators .... 12
  Functions of Effective Advisory Councils .......................................................................... 13
  Current Use of Advisory Councils ..................................................................................... 15
  Summary .............................................................................................................................. 16

Chapter 3 - Methods .............................................................................................................. 17
  Purpose ................................................................................................................................. 17
  Theoretical Foundation ........................................................................................................ 18
  Conceptual Framework ...................................................................................................... 21
  Population ........................................................................................................................... 22
  Non-Response Error .......................................................................................................... 24
  Data Collection ................................................................................................................... 24
  Instrumentation ................................................................................................................... 27
    Questions content .............................................................................................................. 28
    Validity ............................................................................................................................... 31
    Reliability .......................................................................................................................... 32
  Data Analysis ..................................................................................................................... 33
  Summary .............................................................................................................................. 34
List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Interactive Model of Program Planning as it Relates to Secondary Agriculture Education Programs. ................................................................. 22
List of Tables

Table 3.1: Contact Outline to Potential Respondents ........................................... 26
Table 4.1: Advisory Council Use in Pennsylvania ........................................... 36
Table 4.2: Gender, Age, and Ethnic Profile of Individual Respondents .......... 37
Table 4.3: Overall Teaching Experience and Agriculture Teaching Experience .... 38
Table 4.4: Teacher Certification Method ......................................................... 39
Table 4.5: Agriculture Education Professional Organization Involvement ........ 40
Table 4.6: School Enrollment, Unduplicated Agriculture Program Enrollment, and Number of Agriculture Educators ................................................................. 42
Table 4.7: Barriers to Implementation and Utilization of Secondary Agriculture Education Advisory Councils ................................................................. 44
Table 4.8: Voting, Non-Voting, and Total Membership for Pennsylvania Advisory Councils ................................................................. 46
Table 4.9: School Administration Representatives to the Agriculture Education Advisory Council ................................................................. 47
Table 4.10: Member Composition of Pennsylvania Secondary Agriculture Education Advisory Councils ................................................................. 48
Table 4.11: Individuals Charged with Selecting Agriculture Education Advisory Council Members ................................................................. 50
Table 4.12: Agreement with Statement that “The members of my local agriculture education program advisory council represents the agriculture industries in the school district” ......................................................................................... 51
Table 4.13: Rank Order of the Major Agriculture Industries in the School District Versus the Rank Order of the Major Agriculture Industries Represented on the Secondary Agriculture Advisory Council ................................................................. 52
Table 4.14: Number of Yearly Meetings Held by Pennsylvania Secondary Agricultural Education Program Advisory Councils ................................................................. 54
Table 4.15: Person In Charge of Minutes During Advisory Council Meetings……… 56

Table 4.16: Participant Likert-scale Responses to the Statement: “Professional development is needed on advisory councils for agricultural education in Pennsylvania”……………………………………………………………………………….. 57

Table 4.17: Professional Development Methods Preferred by Secondary Agriculture Teachers………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 58

Table 4.18: Rank Order of Advisory Council Characteristics by Level of Participant Agreement………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….. 59

Table 4.19: Perceptions on the Level of Influence the Advisory Council Currently has on the Program………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 61

Table 4.20: Perceptions on the Level of Influence the Advisory Council SHOULD has on the Program………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………. 62

Table 4.21: Rank Order of Perception Discrepancies Between the Influence that SHOULD be present and Influence Currently by the Advisory Council………………….. 64
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Talbert, Vaughn, Croom, and Lee (2007) stated, “One of the most important characteristics of a local agricultural education program is the interaction between the program and the community” (p.122). The notion of community and agriculture program interaction began many years prior. Herbert H. Hamlin, a professor of agricultural education at the University of Illinois in the 1900’s, is credited for the conception of advisory councils. In the 1920’s and 1930’s, adult education classes were popular (Phipps, Osborne, Dyer, & Ball, 2008). Adult farmers would attend these evening sessions to learn about the latest production practices that they could in turn use on the farm. Over time, these classes progressed from a group of farmers there to gain new knowledge into a citizen’s group that offered advice and suggestions to the entire agricultural education program. Because these agriculturalists were heavily involved in the industry, they offered advice to the agriculture teacher on curriculum and provided materials to use in the classroom (Phipps et al., 2008).

The passage of the 1976 Vocational Education Amendment took the idea of advisory councils and set in motion many changes that would affect vocational education for many years to come. The legislation was the first time advisory councils were required by secondary agricultural education programs to receive federal funding (Barbour, 2010). Some areas were already using an advisory council, but the 1976
Vocational Education Amendment legislation was the first time that schools were required to involve input from community members and stakeholders alike in the agricultural education program. The mandate still stands today and requires that career and technical institutions involve the community in the decision making process (Dillon, 1982).

Currently in the state of Pennsylvania, Chapter 339 of the Pennsylvania Code, the compilation of all codes and regulations in Pennsylvania, outlines the Vocational Education Standards that schools must comply with to have recognized vocational programs. A key aspect of Chapter 339 is that each program that wishes to receive state and federal funding through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Improvement Act of 2006 and other funding opportunities must undergo a program approval process. As part of the approval process, strong evidence that the local and occupational advisory council of the program provided input on program decisions must exist. Examples of the input areas include advice on the facilities, curriculum, equipment, and other characteristics of the program (22 Pa. Code, Sec. 339).

The belief that constant community-program interaction is vital to program planning and success is a common notion that is shared by policy makers and educational researchers alike. Research beyond agriculture education reveals that community members and resources are used to strengthen schools and student learning and indicate
that there is an exchange that occurs. The community provides the boost in student
learning and achievement while the school works to fulfill the goals of the community
(Decker & Decker, 2003).

Decker and Decker (2003) highlight that a key method of fostering this
community-school interaction is through the use of an advisory council, which is the
primary medium used in agriculture education. According to Phipps, Osborne, Dyer,
Ball (2008), advisory councils benefit the secondary agricultural education programs by
providing them with assistance in the program planning decisions and oversees the
evaluation of these programs to ensure that the program goals are being met. Roberts and
Dyer (2004) also indicate that community relations surfaces as a characteristics of
effective agriculture teachers that indicates a quality program.

Even with legislation mandating these implementations and prior research
indicating their importance to the program and teacher, research indicates that organizing
and effective use of advisory councils in agricultural education is a concern by a majority
of neophyte agriculture educators (Myers, Dyer, & Washburn, 2005). The concern
extends beyond beginning teachers however, and encompasses current teachers as well
whom all experience difficulty maintaining community support and involvement (Boone
& Boone, 2007). The studies show that both new and current teachers are struggling with
the use of advisory councils and their implementation. With research indicating that the
use of advisory councils is essential, this disconnect must be identified to find a solution to the problem.

**Purpose**

The Pennsylvania Code requires an advisory council for all agricultural education programs and research indicates the importance of advisory councils; however, there has been little research conducted on the status and implementation of advisory councils across Pennsylvania. The purpose of this descriptive research study was to describe how Pennsylvania agricultural education programs use and perceive agricultural education advisory councils. The study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. Determine the utilization of advisory councils by Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.
2. Describe the composition of advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.
3. Describe the program of work undertaken by advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.
4. Describe secondary agricultural educator perceptions of advisory council utilization.
Operational Definitions

Advisory council- Also referred to as “advisory committees” or “advisory boards” is defined in this research as a selected group of business, community, and school stakeholders who provide input regarding the planning, development, implementation, operations, and evaluation of an agricultural education program (Phipps et al., 2008).

Agricultural Education- The systematic instruction in agriculture and natural resources at the secondary level for the purpose of preparing people for entry or advancement in agricultural occupations and professions, job creation and entrepreneurship, and agriculture literacy (Phipps et al., 2008).

Agricultural Educator- Also known as an agriscience teacher, this is a person teaching agriculture and natural resources and related topics to youth or adults in a formal classroom setting (Phipps et al., 2008).

Significance of the Study

The American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) published the National Agricultural Education Research agenda for 2011-2015 that outlined the six priorities including Priority 5, “Efficient and Effective Agricultural Education Programs” which aimed to “define the characteristics of effective agricultural education programs and teachers and the means to correctly assess the current state of these characteristics”
(Doerfort, 2011). The research will contribute to understanding of how the best practices of advisory councils are utilized in Pennsylvania. Findings could improve effectiveness of professional development implementation about advisory councils across Pennsylvania.

**Summary**

The proven importance of advisory councils by past research in states across the country reinforce the need for further investigation into the utilization and perception of advisory councils in Pennsylvania secondary agriculture education programs. Federal and state legislation also mandates this implementation yet not all programs are reaping the research-based benefits advisory councils offer in the program planning process.

With the national priority of defining effective agriculture programs nationwide, gaining a pulse on Pennsylvania agriculture education advisory councils is the first step in evaluating the current state of this characteristic of an effective program.
Chapter 2 - Review of Related Literature

Progression in agriculture education is a constant battle. With the industry continuously changing, agriculture education too must follow these changing trends. The past accomplishments and work of others are what lay the foundation for future directions. The following chapter will outline past research on community support and advisory councils, laying the foundation for further research.

Advisory Council Legislation

For the past three decades, legislation on agriculture and vocational education has existed. While there are some federal regulations dealing with advisory councils, the majority of the legislation exists at the state level. With every state having their own set of rules, Pennsylvania differs from other states that have had advisory council research conducted within the state.

Federal legislation.

While the notion of advisory councils existed since the early 1900’s, it wasn’t until the passage of the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments took the idea of advisory councils and began placing legislation behind their implementation (Phipps et al., 2008). The legislation required agricultural programs to include community
stakeholders in the program (Barbour, 2010). From this point forth, advisory councils have been a necessity for both function and compliance to receive federal funds.

**State legislation.**

In the state of Pennsylvania, Chapter 339 of The Pennsylvania Code outlines the Vocational Education Standards that schools must comply with to be a recognized vocational institution. A key aspect of Chapter 339 is that each program that wishes to receive state and federal funding through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Improvement Act of 2006, and other funding opportunities, must undergo a program approval process. To become an approved program, a series of compliances must be met to ensure that the program is providing students with an adequate education. While there are many components to this approval process, the implementation of an advisory council is a necessity (22 Pa. Code, Sec. 339). In Chapter 339, section 4.33(c) of The Pennsylvania Code is referenced, which states:

An occupational advisory committee shall be established for each vocational-technical education program or cluster of related programs offered by a school district or AVTS. The committee shall be appointed by the board of directors, and a majority of the members of the committee shall be employees and employers in the occupation for which training is provided. The committee shall meet at least twice each year to advise the board, administration and staff on curriculum,
equipment, instructional materials, safety requirement, program evaluation and
other related matters and to verify that the programs meet industry standards and,
if appropriate, licensing board criteria and that they prepare students with
occupation related competencies (22 Pa. Code, Sec 4.33(c)).

The section clearly outlines the guidelines related to advisory councils needed to
receive federal and state funding for vocational and secondary agricultural education
programs. Failure to follow the guidelines may result in the loss of program approval and
the suspension of state and federal funds related to agricultural education.

**Program Planning**

In the past, many researchers and school policy makers have recognized the
importance of community involvement in the nation’s education system. In response to
this, schools have attempted to involve more community stakeholders in the educational
process and form small communities of learning in the schools themselves (Decker &
Decker, 2003). According to Decker and Decker (2003) though, many schools have
failed to include community members in the planning and implementation aspects of the
curriculum and school as a whole. These researchers go on to say, “a potential problem
is that while the community’s cooperation and collaboration are needed, they may not be
ey easy to get” (Decker & Decker, 2003, p. 27).
While Decker and Decker (2003) offer several examples of how to encourage this school-community collaboration, the notion of advisory councils surfaces again as a plausible connection between these two entities. “Advisory committees and task forces are commonly used to involve the community in education planning and decision making” (Decker & Decker, 2003, p. 127). By creating a representative advisory council of the community that follows the goals and ideals of the school and community, advisory councils offer a solution to this school-community collaboration problem and involve community stakeholders in the program planning process (Decker & Decker, 2003).

This perception of community involvement in the planning process is evident in Caffarella’s (2002) Interactive Model of Program Planning. The Interactive Model of Program Planning is similar to other models in some aspects but what sets this model apart is its inclusion of four major parts. These parts include: “by design, it is interactive and comprehensive; people and places are knowledged as important in the planning process; differences among cultures are taken into account in the planning process; and practitioners find the model useful and therefore a practical tool” (Caffarella, 2002, p. 20). The key component to this model is how it focuses on the importance of people in the program planning process (Caffarella, 2002).
Professional Development Needs of Beginning Secondary Agriculture Educators

Research done by Myers, Dyer, and Washburn (2005) on the problems facing beginning agriculture teachers yielded results indicating that organizing an effective advisory committee was one of the major problems faced by neophyte teachers. Expanding beyond just advisory committees, this study also indicated that three of the top five major problems faced by beginning teachers dealt with community support group issues. According to Myers et al (2005), beginning teachers may see the need for an effective advisory council but feel unable to organize and lead such a group. These researchers recommend that increased training and professional development for pre-service teachers is needed in establishing and managing support groups such as advisory councils to help reduce this problem (Myers et al., 2005).

Research by Layfield and Dobbins (2002) focused on inservice needs of beginning and current teachers in South Carolina. Current teachers inservice needs revolved around instructional strategies and FFA implementation such as FFA degree applications, proficiency awards, and multimedia use during instruction. In contrast, beginning teachers indicated that utilizing a local advisory committee was in the top five competencies of need (Layfield & Dobbins, 2002).

The findings of Layfield and Dobbins (2002) mirror a similar study conducted by Garton and Chung (1996) in the state of Missouri. Both studies indicated that utilizing a
local advisory committee is a top inservice need. Because of this repeated trend that existed, Layfield and Dobbins (2002) speculated that this similarity between South Carolina and Missouri could imply a possible national trend in beginning agriculture teachers.

**Professional Development Needs of Experienced Secondary Agriculture Educators**

While prior research indicates that beginning secondary agriculture educators highlight that the use of an effective local advisory council is a top inservice need, current teachers who have more years of experience report this need as well. Boone and Boone (2007) indicated that community support and involvement in agriculture education programs surfaced as a problem in West Virginia programs. Many teachers involved in the study indicated that community members did not support the program or its ideals (Boone & Boone, 2007).

Sorensen, Tarpley, and Warnick (2010) also found that utilizing the community to provide students with opportunities is a top competency in which Utah agriculture teachers were in need of inservice training. Under this umbrella of community support indicated by this study falls advisory councils. Again, the results of this study are consistent with other research conducted by Layfield and Dobbins (2002) and Garton and
Chung (1996), but expand now beyond beginning teachers to include experienced teachers as well (Sorensen, Tarpley, & Warnick, 2010).

Recommendations to combat this inservice need include the offering of workshops at the state events (Sorensen et al., 2010). Also, it was recommended by Sorensen et al (2010) to incorporate community cooperation strategies, including the effective use of an advisory council, into the coursework of pre-service teachers at the university level. The indicated need for professional development in the area of community involvement and effective use of advisory councils reinforced the possibility of a national trend existing with this subject (Sorensen et al., 2010).

**Functions of Effective Advisory Councils**

Two foundational agricultural education texts exist that outline the functions and roles of effective advisory councils. Talbert et al. (2007) authored the first of these references titled *Foundations of Agricultural Education (2nd ed.)*. According to Talbert et al (2007), the main functions of an advisory council are to aid in program development, program evaluation, supervised experience, and becoming proactively involved in the politics of education. All four of these advisory council roles allow the community stakeholders to offer advice on the various components that form an agriculture education program.
The second foundational agriculture education text titled the *Handbook on Agricultural Education in Public Schools* (6th ed.) by Phipps et al. (2008) indicates similar functions of an effective advisory council. According to Phipps et al. (2008), the two primary functions of an advisory council are to: “(1) assist in the planning decisions of agricultural education programs and (2) oversee the evaluation of agricultural education programs to ensure that the program’s goals are achieved” (p. 83). The text continues on to outline several examples of how advisory councils can assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of secondary agricultural education programs that focus on the program objectives and goals, curriculum, facilities, and evaluation procedures (Phipps et al., 2008).

Research data found by Whaley and Sutphin (1987) in the state of California is consistent with these foundational texts. This research indicates that effective advisory councils in California “focus most of their attention on curriculum development, management of teaching facilities, equipment selection and use, program evaluation, and articulation with school science curriculum” (p. 42). Based on these findings, it was recommended that all programs should utilize advisory councils in secondary agricultural education programs (Whaley & Sutphin, 1987).

In addition to these foundational texts and previous research in California, research conducted in Texas highlights similar roles of advisory councils. Texas
agriculture science teachers indicated in this research that advisory committees should have some influence in the overall program development of the program. According to Barbour (2010), Texas agriculture teachers believe that “advisory committees should have the most influence over establishing a communication link between the community and the agricultural science program and evaluation of the agriculture science program” (p. 83).

**Current Use of Advisory Councils**

The current use of advisory councils varies from state to state. Dormody, Seevers, and Clason (1996) reported that over 90% of the agriculture education programs nationwide had an advisory council, leaving less than 10% without an active advisory council. This research included secondary agriculture science teachers in every state as the sample for this study. Even though over 90% of the programs had an advisory council, it was recommended that programs should be held accountable for the implementation of an advisory council (Dormody, Seevers, & Clason, 1996).

Research in California concluded that 77% of the states agriculture programs did have an advisory council while the remaining 23% did not. Due to the lack of active advisory councils, these programs were not in compliance with the state’s standards and were not reaping the proven benefits these councils have to offer. It was recommended
that further research be done to conclude why these programs did not utilize an advisory council (Whaley & Sutphin, 1987).

More recently, Barbour (2010) conducted research in Texas on the status of the states advisory council implementation. Barbour reported that over 57% of programs do not have an advisory council currently. The results of this study indicated that the amount of programs that actively utilize an advisory council is significantly lower than that of the national average (Barbour, 2010).

Summary

Both legislation and prior research across the entire country show that the utilization of secondary agriculture education programs is essential in every successful program (Barbour, 2010; Dormody et al., 1996; Whaley & Sutphin, 1987). The proven benefits help to drive the program in a positive direction that mirrors that of the local community and stakeholders alike (Decker & Decker, 203). However, research also indicated professional development is desired by both new and current agriculture teachers on community involvement and the use advisory councils (Boone & Boone, 2007; Garton & Chung, 1996; Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Myers et al., 2005; Sorensen et al., 2010).
Chapter 3 - Methods

Prior studies provided the foundation for the research in the state of Pennsylvania. To ensure that the data collected would be comprehensive and represent sound research practices, a method and procedures was developed to guide the implementation of the study. The following chapter outlines the methods used to design, collect, and analyze the data for this research.

Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to describe how Pennsylvania agricultural education programs use and perceive agricultural education advisory councils. The study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. Determine the utilization of advisory councils by Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.
2. Describe the composition of advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.
3. Describe the program of work undertaken by advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.
4. Describe secondary agricultural educator perceptions of advisory council utilization.
Theoretical Foundation

According to Caffarella (2002), “program planning models consist of ideas of one or more persons about how programs should be put together and what ingredients are necessary to ensure successful outcomes” (p.15). Program planning models vary greatly in their compositions and essential elements. Differences between models include variations in size and shape, as well as the orientation of the model. Linear models follow the planning process in a sequential stepwise manner (Caffarella, 2002).

In contrast, the conceptualized program planning model does not follow a step-by-step approach, but is composed instead of a series of interacting elements. These conceptualized program planning models incorporate a multifaceted approach to the program planning process. It does not follow a stepwise progression of planning events but rather a model that allows the elements in program planning to interact simultaneously, to rearrange the elements to meet the needs of specific situation, and to eliminate unneeded parts based on the needs of a certain planning situation. Another major component of this type of program planning model includes the added component, which addresses the fact that this process involves working with people in a series of compromises and negotiations (Caffarella, 2002).

One such example of this conceptualized program planning model is the Interactive Model of Program Planning. According to Caffarella (2002), this model takes
into account the dynamic essence of the planning process and addresses the fact that
people plan programs and the ethical, political, and social factors must be dealt with
during the planning process. While it does share many characteristics with other popular
program planning models, the Interactive Model of Program Planning differs in the fact
that it includes four additional parts. These parts include: “by design, it is interactive and
comprehensive; people and places are acknowledged as important in the planning
process; differences among cultures are taken into account in the planning process; and
practitioners find the model useful and therefore a practical tool” (Caffarella, 2002, p.
20).

The first of these four components outlines the idea that there is not a distinct
beginning to the planning process. Rarely, if ever, is the program planning process linear
and step-by-step. Caffarella does highlight how a needs assessment may be an important
starting point in the program planning process but from that point forth, the process can
develop in a dynamic pattern (Caffarella, 2002).

The second component that sets the Interactive Model of Program Planning apart
from others is that the program planning process involves the extensive use of people.
The program planning process is a way to bring together the negotiations of various
educators, learners, organizations, and other stakeholders. All of these parties bring
diverse ideas and perspectives to the table, allowing this component of the process to allow for changes in the components of the model (Caffarella, 2002).

The third component deals with the notion that cultural differences must be taken into account when planning. Planning groups often include a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, which may affect the method by which they choose to develop the plan. The last of these four components is that practitioners can use this model as a practical tool (Caffarella, 2002). According to Caffarella (2002), program planners have observed that the Interactive Model of Program Planning both describes what needs to be done and addresses the means by which to achieve them, it mirrors how planners function in reality, and it also enables planners to expand their thinking into the components of the planning process.

The Interactive Model of Program Planning is a conceptualized model that focuses on a dynamic influence of factors, of which Caffarella highlights 12 key components. As Caffarella suggests, “The Interactive Model of Program Planning for adults is presented as a guide, not a blueprint for practice” (p. 21) so these 12 components of the planning process are suggested by never required. These twelve components include: discerning the context; building a solid base of support; identifying program ideas; sorting and prioritizing program ideas; developing program objectives; designing instructional plans; devising transfer-of-learning plans; formulating evaluation plans;
making recommendations and communicating results; selecting formats, schedules, and staff needs; preparing budgets and marketing plans and; coordinating facilities and on-site events.

The unique inclusion of certain components in Caffarella’s Interactive Model of Program Planning links this model to the organizational structure of Pennsylvania agriculture education program planning processes. According to Decker and Decker (2003), the program should reflect the community and incorporate input from community stakeholders. Caffarella’s Interactive Model of Program Planning incorporates people in this process as well as the diverse cultural and social factors into the process, providing this representative link between the program and community. Each agriculture community varies slightly and this inclusion of these dynamic factors takes into account the reason agriculture programs will uniquely reflect the wants and needs of specific geographic area and community.

**Conceptual Framework**

As depicted in Figure 3.1, the program planning of the agriculture education program is influenced by a wide variety of outside influences. Just as Caffarella’s Interactive Model of Program Planning highlights, people serve as specific stakeholders in the program and bring cultural differences to the planning process. In addition to
people, there are other aspects of the school and community that influence the program planning of the secondary agriculture education program.

Figure 3.1

*Interactive Model of Program Planning as it Relates to Secondary Agriculture Education Programs*

**Population**

The population of this study was all agricultural educators currently teaching in a secondary agricultural education classroom in Pennsylvania. A census of all current agriculture teachers was obtained from the Pennsylvania Agriculture Teacher Directory compiled by the Center for Professional Personnel Development, housed in the
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at The Pennsylvania State University. The frame was checked for accuracy and names were eliminated such as Young Farmers advisors, adult educators, and recent retirees, all of which have no direct connection with the advisory council for the school’s secondary agriculture program.

After the elimination of several names that did not fit the frame, the population was determined to be 241 secondary agriculture teachers statewide. The small population of the study allowed for all 241 agriculture teachers to be included. The study also included multiple teacher programs under the rationale that each teacher, although operating in the same agricultural program, will have slightly different perceptions and views on advisory councils.

According to Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009), there are four types of survey error- coverage, sampling, measurement, and non-response. With all 241 secondary agriculture education teachers being surveyed in this study, coverage and sampling errors were not a concern because they indicate discrepancies in the sample size and distribution, which hold no meaning when a census is conducted as in this study. Frame error was reduced because each name was checked to ensure that he or she was a secondary agriculture teacher. Frame error was also reduced due to the fact that all teachers now have school email addresses, which were used in the survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009).
Non-Response Error

Non-response error is a primary area of survey error that can occur. According to Dillman et al. (2009), “non-response error occurs when the people selected for the survey who do not respond are different from those who do respond in a way that is important to the study” (p. 17). Based on the research conducted by these three individuals, it was determined that comparing early to late respondents would be the method of reducing non-response error in this study. Late respondents were defined operationally as the latter 50% as recommended by Linder, Murphy, and Briers (2001) because there was no obvious wave of 30 or more respondents after the final email reminder. After comparing these two sets of respondents, it was determined that no threat to external validity was found and that non-response error had little to no effect on the resulting study.

Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted during the months of December 2011, January 2012, and February 2012. This study spanned over a period of 10 weeks during which the data was collected using an online survey tool. Dillman’s Total Tailored Design Method served as a basis for this research (Dillman et al., 2009). According to Dillman et al. (2009), the use of a mixed-mode survey has many benefits that include lowering the cost, improving the response rate, reducing non-response error, and to deliver incentives. Based on the objectives of the study and the benefits mixed-mode
survey offer, Type 1 of the mixed-mode survey designs outlined by Dillman et al. (2009) was chosen to serve as the data collection outline for this research.

Type 1 employs the use of one mode to contact the respondents and encourages response by a different mode (Dillman et al., 2009). In this study, respondents were notified of the study using a mailed pre-notification letter that was sent to the school address of all 241 teachers in the frame on December 7, 2011. Included in the envelope with the letter was a Teach Ag lanyard purchased from the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) as a research incentive. According to Dillman et al. (2009), “providing token incentives in advance evokes a sense of reciprocal obligation such that people feel the need to respond to the reward they received by completing the survey” (p. 24). The pre-notification letter described the survey and outlined that each potential respondent would receive an email to the online survey link in a few days.

The first email containing the survey link uniquely tied to the potential 241 respondents’ email was sent on December 13, 2011. After this email, 4 subsequent emails were sent to the respondents to remind them to complete the survey as well as thanking them for their support of the research project. Table 3-1 outlines the contact outline of the potential respondents.
Table 3.1

*Contact Outline to Potential Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Beginning Date</th>
<th>Recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-Notification Letter sent by mail</td>
<td>12/7/11</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Initial Contact Email: “Advisory Council Questionnaire”</td>
<td>12/13/11</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st Reminder Email: “Advisory Council Questionnaire Reminder”</td>
<td>12/19/11</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Reminder Email: “Thank You for your Advisory Council Survey Response”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Final Reminder Email: “Advisory Council Final Reminder – Please Help”</td>
<td>1/12/12</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Survey Closed</td>
<td>2/13/12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the initial contact email and the following reminder emails, a link to the online survey hosted by SurveyMonkey was provided. This link was uniquely tied to the email of the respondent and allowed each individual to access the survey when it was convenient to do so. In case of questions, concerns, or problems, several emails and phone numbers of the researchers were posted in the emails as well as on the first page of the online questionnaire.
**Instrumentation**

The online survey tool, SurveyMonkey was used to develop the research instrument and address the four research objectives. The survey can be broken into four sections, which were as follows:

- **Section 1: Utilization of Advisory Councils in Agricultural Education**
- **Section 2: Characteristics of Advisory Councils in Agricultural Education**
- **Section 3: Perceptions of Utilization and Influence of Advisory Councils**
- **Section 4: Demographic Characteristics**

The research instrument was developed and adapted from previous research conducted in Texas (Barbour, 2010). While this research addressed similar objectives, it was specific to the Texas agriculture education and utilized several questions unrelated to this research so this was used simply as a foundation for this questionnaire. The questions were modified to meet the objectives for this study specifically. The resulting survey that was developed consisted of nominal and Likert-scale questions and addressed the four research objectives of the study.

The instrument did contain two different Likert-scales within the same survey. A five point Likert-scale was used to gather data on how influential an advisory council is in the program and how influential it should be in the program. The five point scale was designated as 1-No Influence, 2-Limited Influence, 3-Some Influence, 4-Moderate.
Influence, and 5-Extreme Influence. The two questions using this five-point scale were adapted from the research instrument used by Barbour (2010) in Texas. Since the questions were previously utilized and were found to be reliable questions, they were used in this study to address the perceptions of advisory councils in Pennsylvania.

An eight-point Likert-scale was also utilized in the survey. The eight-point scale was designated as 1-Very Strongly Disagree, 2-Strongly Disagree, 3-Moderately Disagree, 4-Mildly Disagree, 5-Mildly Agree, 6-Moderately Agree, 7-Strongly Agree, and 8-Very Strongly Agree. All eight-point scale questions were developed by the researchers to achieve richer data collection and were not used in prior research so a pilot-test was needed to determine if the scales were reliable and valid (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Pilot test was conducted with the Arizona Agricultural Teacher Association, which was found to be a similar population to the Pennsylvania agricultural teachers.

**Questions content.**

The first section of the instrument aimed to determine the current utilization of advisory councils in Pennsylvania. This section was composed of three questions. The first asked whether or not the participant had an advisory council. If the participant answered “yes”, they proceeded to address how influential the advisory council has been in the program and in another question, address how influential the advisory council
should be in the program. The five point Likert-scale questions adapted from a previous research in Texas (Barbour, 2010) were used in the first section.

If respondents answered “no”, the participant would then be asked to address the barriers preventing the use of an advisory council. The question allowed participants to identify the reason why an advisory council was not currently implemented in the program. There were set nominal responses as well as an area for open-ended responses where participants could add a personalized response that did not fit into the other categories.

Section two of the survey addressed the characteristics of advisory councils in secondary agricultural education programs. This section consisted of seventeen questions, all of which were only answered by those participants who indicated that they currently have an advisory council. The first set of nominal questions addressed the composition of advisory councils. Nominal questions like how many voting members, ex-officio or non-voting members are on the advisory council and the school administration that attends the advisory council meetings were addressed. The composition questions also focused on the member composition, term lengths, how representative the council is based on the community, and the procedure and approval process for new members.
A subsection pertaining to the composition of advisory councils determined the industries that are in the community and the industries represented by the members. Two nominal questions asked respondents to identify the industries represented in their community and also the industries represented on their advisory boards. The categories used in this question set were based on the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Core Career Pathways as determined by the National Council for Agricultural Education (National Council for Agricultural Education, 2009). Also in this section were questions to determine the operation of the advisory council. Nominal questions that asked the number of meetings, whether or not a program of work was utilized, funding of the council, and the person designated to take minutes.

Questions regarding the perceptions of utilization and influence of advisory councils were present in the third section of the questionnaire. The first of four questions allowed participants to rate how much influence the advisory council should have in making various decisions. The five-point Likert-scale question was followed by an open-ended response, which allowed respondents to discuss other roles their specific council held in the program. Similar to the entire last section of the survey, the question was only answered by those with an active advisory council.

The next question was answered by all respondents and had them indicate their agreement with various statements regarding advisory councils. An eight point Likert-
scale was utilized ranging from 1-Very Strongly Disagree to 8-Very Strongly Agree. As a final, catch-all question, the section ended with an open-ended response allowing participants to share any final thoughts about advisory councils. The question was not required and was not answered by all participants.

The final section of the survey gathered demographic information regarding the educator as well as the program. Basic demographic questions were asked of the educator as well as years of teaching experience, certification method, and others were asked. In regards to the program, FFA involvement, program size, and others were addressed. Opinions regarding advisory council professional development needs were asked in this section as well.

**Validity.**

Measurement error is found when items in the survey are inaccurate and evoke incorrect responses from the respondents (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). According to Lindner, Murphy, and Briers (2001), “reducing this source of error requires that the researcher use items that are valid, reliable, and unambiguous to the research subjects” (p. 43). In an attempt to address measurement error, a panel of experts in agriculture education was used to determine face validity of the survey. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), face validity “involves only a casual, subjective inspection of the test items to judge whether they cover the content that the test purports to measure
(p. 196).” To carry out this process, a panel of experts was used to determine face validity.

The panel consisted of two experts from The Pennsylvania State University as well as one from The University of Arizona. Arizona is the state in which the pilot test was conducted. All experts were current professionals in teacher education and former secondary agricultural educators, thus being similar to the target survey population. These experts reviewed the survey and made recommendations that would increase the validity of the questionnaire. Based on their recommendations, the survey was improved and modified before launching the pilot test to test for reliability.

**Reliability.**

To ensure that the questions in the survey were reliable and eliminate this as a possible source of error, a pilot test of the research was conducted. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), reliability refers to “the degree to which measurement error is absent from the scores (p. 200).” Researchers suggest that a pilot study be used to determine reliability of the survey instruments (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

The pilot study was conducted in the state of Arizona prior to its implementation in Pennsylvania. Arizona secondary agricultural science educators are a similar population to that found in Pennsylvania. The pilot test was launched November 30, 2011 and was closed December 5, 2011. Because of the short timeline for the study, the pilot test was
only run until enough data was collected to run the reliability for this study. Of the 90 participants in the study, 30 responded resulting in a 35% response rate. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the Likert-scale items were found to measure internal consistency in the questions and test its reliability (Barbour, 2010). The acceptable range is between .4 and .6. Upon conclusion of these statistical analyses, it was determined that the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were .64, which exceeded the acceptable levels, which indicates that the information used was reliable.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected during the study was downloaded into Microsoft Excel 2011 from SurveyMonkey to be coded. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was then used to analyze the data based on the four objectives of this study. With the use of a research incentive and a well-designed implementation of the methods outlined, 178 out of the total 241 secondary agriculture teachers responded to the survey. After careful review of the data, seven respondents were eliminated from the study due to incomplete responses to the questionnaire. After eliminating seven sets of responses, data from 171 out of the possible 241 participants was coded, compiled and analyzed. Nearly a 71% response rate was achieved after the elimination of incomplete responses.
Summary

The limited population of secondary agriculture education teachers in Pennsylvania allowed for all 241 current teachers to be included in the study. A questionnaire was developed to reflect the four objectives of the study and was composed of nominal and Likert-scale items. Potential respondents were initially contacted with a letter and a research incentive and then reminded via email several times after the initial contact. A panel of experts reviewed all questions and a pilot study was conducted in Arizona to determine reliability.
Chapter 4 - Results

Prior research laid the foundation for this study and the predetermined methods guided the study to gather data that addressed the research objectives. The results that were gathered as a result of the research and methods are outlined in the following chapter. The results gathered were related to the objectives of the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to describe how Pennsylvania agricultural education programs use and perceive agricultural education advisory councils. The study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. Determine the utilization of advisory councils by Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.

2. Describe the composition of advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.

3. Describe the program of work undertaken by advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.

4. Describe secondary agricultural educator perceptions of advisory council utilization.
Findings for Objective 1- Utilization of Advisory Councils

Objective one of this study was to determine the utilization of advisory councils by Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs. As displayed in Table 4.1, 90.6% (n=155) of the 171 respondents indicated that they do have an advisory council for the agricultural education program. Alternatively, 9.4% (n=16) responded that there is not a current advisory council in place at that particular agricultural education program.

Table 4.1

Advisory Council Use in Pennsylvania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Council Implementation</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic profiles.

Regardless of whether or not an advisory council was in place, the 171 respondents were asked a series of demographic questions that resulted in a profile of both the individual teachers and the secondary agricultural programs across the state. The profile of Pennsylvania agriculture teachers provided by the results of this study can be divided into five sections that focus on different aspects of each individual teacher.
**Individual teacher profile.**

The first of these sections is the general demographics of Pennsylvania agriculture teachers. As summarized in Table 4.2, data was gathered on the gender, age, and ethnicity of the individual respondent. All 171 individuals in the study answered the demographic items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Gender, Age, and Ethnic Profile of Individual Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Question</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-65</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+ Races</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another set of demographic questions, posed to the respondents, focused on teaching experience. Teachers indicated their total years of teaching experience, total years of agriculture teaching experience, and the total years teaching at their current program. This data is depicted in Table 4.3. Another item in this set of demographic
questions was whether or not the participant lived in the school district they currently
teach. Of the 171 total participants, 76 respondents (44.4%) reported that they live in the
school district while the other 55.6% (n=95) do not teach in the same school district that
they live.

Table 4.3

*Overall Teaching Experience and Agriculture Teaching Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Mean (yrs)</th>
<th>Median (yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Teaching</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Teaching Agriculture</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total at Current Program</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A third section of the personal demographic data focused on the method of
certification and institution at which agriculture training was received. The certification
data is summarized in Table 4.4. Looking specifically at the institutions where training
was received, 69% (n=118) indicated The Pennsylvania State University as the institution
of training, whereas 9.4% (n=16) responded with Delaware Valley College as their
training institution. In addition to the two listed training institutions, 21.6% (n=37)
indicated that they attended other institutions to receive agricultural education training.
These institutions spanned across 11 different states and also included other teacher preparation programs in the state of Pennsylvania.

Table 4.4

*Teacher Certification Method*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification Method</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-Year Program</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post baccalaureate Certification Program</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Method (Occupational Competency Assessment, Instructional Add-On, teacher Intern Certification, or Emergency Certification)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fourth section of the demographic data collected from the 171 respondents focused on extended contracts. A total of 96 respondents (56.1%) indicated that they do have extended contracts while the rest of the respondents, representing 43.9% (n=75) of the total, do not have extended contracts. Of those that do have an extended contract, the median number of days in the extended contract was found to be 20 days. Due to the extreme skewness in the data, the mean number of extended contract days does not accurately represent the results of this questionnaire item.
The final section of individual teacher demographic data used to develop this profile of Pennsylvania teachers zeroed in on each individual’s involvement in both agriculture education processional organizations and other organizations outside the scope of agriculture education. In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators (PAAE) is the state’s professional agriculture education organization. In contrast, the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) is the national professional agriculture education organization. Participation in these two organizations is outlined in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

*Agriculture Education Professional Organization Involvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators (PAAE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Members</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Members</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The final question used to gather personal data of Pennsylvania agriculture educators looked outside the scope of agricultural education and allowed participants to list other professional organizations they were involved with at the time. An extensive list was compiled that included over 50 professional organizations across the state, region, and nation. The most popular organizations included National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), and the National Education Association (NEA).

**Agricultural program profile.**

In addition to an agriculture educator profile, demographic questions also developed a profile of Pennsylvania secondary agriculture education programs. The school profile can be classified as two subsection: instruction and curriculum as the first and FFA as the second. The first part of the program profile focused on the instruction and curriculum aspects of the program. As summarized in Table 4.6, the total enrollment, unduplicated agriculture enrollment, and the number of agriscience educators varies greatly from school to school. The final aspect of the survey results that contributes to the curriculum aspect of the program profile is whether or not schools employ a Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Vocational Director. Sixty-two respondents indicated that the school district does employ a CTE or Vocational Director while the remaining 63.7% (n=109) does not.
Table 4.6

*School Enrollment, Unduplicated Agriculture Program Enrollment, and Number of Agriculture Educators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Profile Question</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total School Student Enrollment</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unduplicated Agriculture Student Enrollment</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Agriculture Educators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second aspect of the program profile focuses on FFA. Of the 171 respondents, 94.2% (n=161) said there is an FFA chapter in good standing present in the program and the remaining 5.8% (n=10) does not have a chapter in good standing with the state association. Just as results for the number of unduplicated students varied greatly, so do the number of chapter FFA members, which ranged from 8 to 600 members. The mean number of FFA members was almost 81 students but due to the extreme range, the median of 50 FFA members is a more accurate representation. The last component of this profile focused on FFA alumni chapters and booster clubs for the FFA and agriculture program. Thirty respondents (17.5%) indicated that a chapter or booster club was present while 141 (82.5%) indicated that this component of the program was absent.
Profiles of teachers with no advisory boards.

Since 16 participants indicated that no advisory council was currently utilized, statistical analysis and comparison between those who do and those who do not have an advisory council would not be valid. However, there are aspects of the 16 respondents that do not have an advisory council that differ from the general profile previously outlined. The mean years of teaching for the 16 participants without an advisory council is slightly over 16 years. Looking solely at the 16 without advisory councils, 18.8% (n=3) have extended contracts while the remaining 81.2% (n=13) do not have an extended contract. Additionally, 25% (n=4) of the 16 individuals without an agriculture advisory council are PAAE members with the remaining 75% (n=12) who are not members.

NAAE membership is even lower with only 2 of the 16 indicated that they are members.

One difference also surfaced when the entire program and FFA are analyzed. Four (25%) of the 16 programs without an advisory council do not have an FFA in good standing.

The 16 respondents who indicated that no advisory council was present were then asked to identify barriers that prevented the utilization of a council. They were asked to check all answered that applied to their current situation. Table 4.7 summarized the responses of the 16 individuals. There was also an “Other” selection that participants could write in their own response. Many of the responses simply gave more detail on the selections they made in the previous items or clarified what other entity served the same
A common response that did surface from 4 participants was that that particular agriculture program was not approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, eliminating its eligibility for state and federal funding.

Table 4.7

*Barriers to Implementation and Utilization of Secondary Agriculture Education Advisory Councils*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not essential to my program</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not approved by other administration entities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other entities serve the same purpose</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not had time to organize a council</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Program; council not yet organized</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not approved by my school principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospective members are too busy to participate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not understand the purpose of advisory councils</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not understand how to organize advisory council</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings for Objective 2- Composition of Advisory Councils

Objective two of the study was to describe the composition of advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs. There were 241 participants in the frame and of those individuals included, 171 responded to the survey. Of the 171 participants, 16 indicated that they do not have advisory councils present at their program. Since no advisory council was present, the 16 individuals were not asked items regarding the composition and operation of the advisory council at the program. The remaining 155 respondents were asked to share the composition of the advisory council to the agriculture program.

As depicted in Table 4.8, the results of the study revealed various details as to the composition of Pennsylvania secondary agriculture education advisory councils. Results on the number of voting members and non-voting (ex-officio members) were then compiled to outline the total council size.
Table 4.8

*Voting, Non-Voting, and Total Membership for Pennsylvania Advisory Councils*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Mean (Members)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voting Advisory Council Members</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Voting (Ex-officio) Advisory Council Members</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Advisory Council Membership</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demographics of the members outlined by the previous questions were addressed in subsequent items on the questionnaire. Respondents first addressed the representatives from the school administration. Table 4.9 shows who from the school administration attends the advisory council meetings. Omitted from the table are the open-ended responses that participants indicated were present. The additional write-in administration members included Guidance Counselors, Curriculum Director, and members of the school board.
Table 4.9

*School Administration Representatives to the Agriculture Education Advisory Council*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Administration Representatives</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Principal</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Assistant Principal</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTE or Vocational Director</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Superintendent</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administration does not attend meetings</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents also indicated the other members that are present on the advisory council. As depicted in Table 4.10, respondents indicated that there is a wide array of representatives that compose the advisory council. Again, in this case, there was an option to write in other representatives that served on the board. The representatives listed under the “Other” category included local college and university professors, local government officials, former agriculture teachers, alumni representatives, teachers from other schools, and extension agents.
Another aspect analyzed from the data was the term length aspect of the advisory council composition. Forty-one (26.5%) of those 155 respondents who indicated that an advisory council was in place responded that there are term lengths for advisory council members. The other 73.5% (n=114) indicated that there were no term length guidelines in place for the council members. Looking closer at the 41 respondents who indicated that there were term lengths present, 82.9% (n=34) said the term length was the same for
all members while the remaining 17.1% (n=7) indicated term length was not the same for all members. Additionally, the average term length was found to be approximately three years, which was also the most popular term length reported by the participants.

Additional questionnaire items delved into the selection process of advisory council members. One-third (n=51) of the participants indicated that approval is needed from school officials regarding the selection of advisory council members while the remaining two thirds (n=104) responded with “No”, approval is not needed regard the selection of new members. Three different methods of selection were posed to the respondents: elected, appointed, or other. Seventeen respondents (11%) indicated that members are elected. The majority of the members though were appointed, as was indicated by 74.2% (n=115) of the participants in the study. The remaining 14.8 % (n=23) designated the selection process under the “other” category, which included responses such as opening it to any community member willing to serve as well as personally inviting others to serve.

The final aspect dealing with the selection process of advisory council members was who actually selected the advisory council members. Table 4.11 shows the distribution indicated by the responses provided. Again, an “other” category was present, which yielded responses such as community members aid in the selection, other teachers, and special committees that are formed for the selection process.
The final section of the questionnaire, designed to gather results for the composition of Pennsylvania secondary agriculture education advisory councils, focused on the agricultural sector specifically. As seen in Table 4.12, participants responded to an 8-point Likert-scale item, which rated each respondent’s level agreement with the statement: “The members of my local agriculture education program advisory council represent the agricultural industries in the school district.” The response with the highest frequency was Strongly Agree, yielding 34.2% (n=53) of the responses.
Table 4.12

Agreement with Statement that “The members of my local agriculture education program advisory council represent the agricultural industries in the school district”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Statement Agreement</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Agree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Strongly Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final aspect of the questionnaire that addressed objective 2 asked participants to first identify the agricultural industries present in the school district’s geographic area.

The item was immediately followed by a similar question, only the subsequent item prompted respondents to identify the agricultural industries represented on the secondary agriculture education program’s advisory council. These responses were then totaled and ranked. As seen in Table 4.13, the ranks are similar with the only difference being that plant systems and agribusiness systems were switched between the industries in the school district and the industries represented on the advisory council.

51
Table 4.13


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Career Pathway</th>
<th>Rank of Major Agriculture Industries in School District</th>
<th>Rank of Major Agriculture Industries on Advisory Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agribusiness Systems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Systems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Service Systems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Products and Processing Systems</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Systems</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Systems</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power, Structural, and Technical Systems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings for Objective 3- Program of Work of Secondary Agriculture Education Advisory Councils**

Objective three of the study was to describe the program of work undertaken by advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agriculture education programs. Of the 155 respondents who indicated that there was an advisory council in place, 19.4% (n=30)
indicated that “yes”, there is a program of work in place. The other 80.6% responded with “no”, indicating that there is an advisory council present but no program of work exists.

The program of work by definition, serves as a guiding force for the operation of the advisory council. Further survey items investigated deeper into the operation of advisory councils. As seen in table 4.14, data on the number of yearly meetings held was gathered from each participant who is currently utilizing an advisory council.
Table 4.14

Number of Yearly Meetings held by Pennsylvania Secondary Agricultural Education Program Advisory Councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Meetings</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another aspect investigated was the funding level for advisory council activities and the source of this funding, if available. Approximately 81% (n=125) of the respondents indicated that the program’s advisory council does not receive any funds from any source. The remaining 19.4% (n=30) participants did receive funds for advisory council initiatives. The majority of those councils who do receive funds indicated that the funds are provided through the general fund of the school district. This composed 9% (n=14) of the 155 total respondents. Five teachers (3.2%) indicated that funds for advisory council activities come from a chapter or program budget. Four teachers (2.6%) indicated that funds for the council are generated by fundraising efforts. The remaining seven respondents, or 4.5%, selected “Other” as their source of funding and the responses
by these individuals stated that funds were obtained through other school accounts present to fund initiatives like advisory councils.

The last question pertaining to the operation of advisory councils was who was in charge of taking official minutes for the advisory council. Table 4.15 outlines the responses from the 155 respondents who answered this item. The most common response was that the agriscience instructor keeps the minutes at the meetings. The “Other” category includes a variety of answers that teachers did not feel fit the provided answers. These included FFA members, different committee members, as well as other members that are on the council already.
Table 4.15

*Person In Charge of Minutes During Advisory Council Meetings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person In Charge of Minutes</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriscience Instructor keeps minutes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A secretary on the council keeps minutes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other person in charge of keeping minutes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrator keeps minutes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other member of the council keeps minutes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No meeting minutes are kept</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Professional development on advisory councils.**

Past studies indicated that professional development and in-service training on advisory councils and community involvement are high priorities for both new and veteran teachers. The notion of professional development was addressed in the questionnaire. An 8-point Likert-scale item ranging from 1-Very Strongly Disagree to 8-Very Strongly Agree was used to gauge if professional development is needed on advisory councils for Pennsylvania agricultural educators. As seen in Table 4.16, responses range across all areas. However, the two highest responses were “Mildly Agree” and “Moderately Agree.”
Table 4.16

Participant Likert-scale Responses to the Statement: “Professional development is needed on advisory councils for agricultural education in Pennsylvania”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert-Scale Item</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Very Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Mildly Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Mildly Agree</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Moderately Agree</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Strongly Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Very Strongly Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the Likert item, another question in the survey asked the participants what form they would prefer this professional development to be in. Respondents were able to select all that apply to their situation. As summarized in Table 4.17, the professional development methods and mediums varied. However, the highest response was for the written publication on advisory councils.
Table 4.17

*Professional Development Methods Preferred by Secondary Agriculture Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Method</th>
<th>Frequency (f)</th>
<th>Percentage of Total (n=155) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Publication</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ Day Workshop</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hour Workshop</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeklong Graduate Class</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings for Objective 4- Secondary Agriculture Teacher Perceptions**

The last objective in the study was to describe the educator perceptions of Pennsylvania secondary education advisory councils. As summarized in Table 4.18, respondents rated their opinion on the 8-point Likert scale that ranged from 1-Very Strongly Disagree to 8-Very Strongly Agree. This item was answered by all 171 total participants in the study. The table summarizes the average responses of each Likert-scale item. The items included on this question focused on the beliefs and notions held by agriculture teachers about the use and purpose of advisory councils.
Table 4.18

*Rank Order of Advisory Council Characteristics by Level of Participant Agreement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank of Level of Agreement&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Likert Item</th>
<th>Average&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Communication between the agriculture teachers and the advisory council members is important.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The members of an agricultural education advisory council should represent the local industries found in the school district.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advisory councils are important to the overall success of the agriculture program.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I could use my advisory council more than I currently do.</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It is the advisory council’s obligation to present recommendations for the agricultural education program to the school board.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It is the agriculture teacher’s responsibility to ensure that the advisory council meets regularly.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Advisory councils should be used to determine curriculum decisions.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The recommendations made by my advisory council result in changes to the agricultural program.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My program is constantly improving because of the work done by my program.</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>All changes to the agriculture education program should originate form advisory council recommendations.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Advisory councils are not helpful in conducting a successful agricultural education program.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Advisory councils are a hindrance in conducting a successful agricultural education program.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>: These are ranked from highest average to lowest average based on the average Likert-scale results.

<sup>b</sup>: Averages are based on the eight point Likert-scale (1-Very Strongly Disagree, 2-Strongly Disagree, 3-Moderately Disagree, 4-Mildly Disagree, 5-Mildly Agree, 6-Moderately Agree, 7-Strongly Agree, 8-Very Strongly Agree)
To investigate the perceptions related to the influence and work done by the program’s advisory council, two items were used. The first, as summarized in Table 4.19, gathered data on how much influence the agriculture advisory council current has in making decision about the curriculum, program, FFA, and Supervised Agricultural Experience. The second item, outlined in Table 4.20, addressed how much influence the participant thinks the advisory council should have in making decisions about the same four factors. The items were identical between the two questions, allowing a comparison to be made between the current influence and the level of influence the council should have in the program.
Table 4.19

*Perceptions on the Level of Influence the Advisory Council Currently has on the Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decisions by Advisory Councils&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determining courses to be offered</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining the objectives of the agriculture program</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring new instructors or teachers</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of working, travel, or other budget funds</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approving courses of study</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing courses of study for content relevance and accuracy</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the equipment, tools, and supplies needed for the program</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the facility modifications needed</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing instructional materials</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting as a communication link between the general public and the your program</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing recommendations to the local governing school board</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the agricultural program</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with FFA Chapter activities</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program activities (ie Placement, etc)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>: Averages are based on a 5-point Likert scale (1-No Influence, 2-Limited Influence, 3-Some Influence, 4-Moderate Influence, 5-Extreme Influence)
Table 4.20

*Perceptions on the Level of Influence the Advisory Council SHOULD have on the Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decisions by Advisory Councils&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determining courses to be offered</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining the objectives of the agriculture program</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring new instructors or teachers</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of working, travel, or other budget funds</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approving courses of study</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing courses of study for content relevance and accuracy</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the equipment, tools, and supplies needed for the program</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the facility modifications needed</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing instructional materials</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting as a communication link between the general public and the your program</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing recommendations to the local governing school board</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the agricultural program</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with FFA Chapter activities</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program activities (ie Placement, etc)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>: Averages are based on a 5-point Likert scale (1-No Influence, 2-Limited Influence, 3-Some Influence, 4-Moderate Influence, 5-Extreme Influence)
Table 4.21 addresses the differences gathered between the two items. The discrepancies gathered show the difference between how much influences the councils should have and how much they currently do. A positive change would indicate that teachers perceive that for that specific aspect of the program, the advisory council should have more influence than they currently do in the program.
Table 4.21

*Rank Order of Perception Discrepancies Between the Influence that SHOULD be present and Influence Currently by the Advisory Council*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Decisions by Advisory Council</th>
<th>Mean Discrepancy&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hiring new instructors or teachers</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Providing recommendations to the local governing school board</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assisting with Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program activities (ie Placement, etc)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Approval of working, travel, or other budget funds</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Acting as a communication link between the general public and your program</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Identifying the facility modifications needed</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Approving courses of study</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assisting with FFA Chapter activities</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Determining the objectives of the agriculture program</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Evaluating the agricultural program</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Determining courses to be offered</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reviewing courses of study for content relevance and accuracy</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Identifying the equipment, tools, and supplies needed for the program</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Reviewing instructional materials</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>: Difference represents the mean of what councils should do minus the mean of what councils currently do in the program
Summary

The results of the study indicated that the utilization of Pennsylvania secondary agriculture education advisory councils is consistent with prior research conducted on the entire country (Dormody, Seevers, & Clason, 1996). The composition of the advisory councils was also determined from the results found in this study. Also, the program of work undertaken by councils was defined by the collected data. Lastly, Likert-scale items were used to address the teacher perceptions of advisory councils, which indicated that teachers in Pennsylvania have, on average, a high favorability with many of the functions of an advisory council but feel that the advisory councils should have more influence in all areas of the program than what they currently do.
Chapter 5 - Conclusions

Prior research and study indicated that the implementation and use of advisory councils varies from state to state. With little information specifically for the state of Pennsylvania, little is known about its current use and implementation of advisory councils. This descriptive study gathered specific data to gain a pulse on advisory councils in Pennsylvania.

Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to describe how Pennsylvania agricultural education programs use and perceive agricultural education advisory councils. The study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. Determine the utilization of advisory councils by Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.

2. Describe the composition of advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.

3. Describe the program of work undertaken by advisory councils of Pennsylvania secondary agricultural education programs.

4. Describe secondary agricultural educator perceptions of advisory council utilization.
Conclusions for Objective One

The current utilization of advisory councils in Pennsylvania was found to be similar to the national average of 90% as determined by Dormody, Seevers, and Clason (1996). Approximately 91% of the 171 respondents indicated that an advisory council was currently being utilized. The remaining 9.4% do not currently utilize an agriculture education advisory council in the program.

As data for the utilization was gathered, a profile of those who do not have an advisory council was gathered. It was concluded that obvious differences existed in some areas between the Pennsylvania agriculture teacher population and those that do not have an advisory council in place. Looking at all the respondents, it was indicated that in 43.9% (n=75) of the state’s programs, there is an extended contract in place for the agriculture instructor that has a median length of 20 days long. It was also concluded that 62.6% (n=107) of the participants are PAAE members and 53.8% (n=92) indicated that they are NAAE members. In terms of FFA involvement, 94.2% (n=161) indicated that there is a chapter in good standing currently in place.

A summary of those participants who indicated that there is no advisory council in place concludes that 18.8% (n=3) have an extended contract. In terms of PAAE and NAAE involvement, 25% (n=4) are PAAE members and 12.5% (n=2) are NAAE members. The last conclusion for those participants who indicated no advisory council
was in place was that 75% (n=12) indicated that an FFA chapter in good standing was in place.

In terms of barriers that exist for these programs that do not have programs in place, the top barrier indicated was that advisory councils are not essential to the program. Another top responses that surfaced in the “other” category where respondents would write in personal responses was that the program was not an approved program with the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**Implications for objective one.**

Even though Pennsylvania’s implementation of advisory councils is representative of the entire nation, prior research indicated that all programs should utilize advisory councils in secondary agricultural education programs (Whaley & Sutphin, 1987). The barriers that were concluded from the study show that the top reason an advisory council is not in place is that an advisory council is not essential to the program. Agriscience teachers seem to understand the purpose of an advisory council and the way by which a council is organized. However, these two barriers were on the questionnaire yet yielded zero responses, eliminating these two barriers as a possible explanation for not having a council in place. Instead, respondents perceive advisory councils as a non-essential aspect of the program. With this being the top response, the results show that agriscience teachers were either not educated on their importance during
pre-service instruction and certification or professional development on advisory councils has been deficient in the state.

The written-in response stating that the program is not approved so a council is not in place also implies that there is association between advisory councils and the program approval process in Pennsylvania. This response was common among teachers who do not have an advisory council in place. Teachers are under the impression that advisory councils serve only as a piece of the program approval process and that they are only in place as a compliance step.

The widespread lack of involvement in the both the state and national professional organization is an area of concern as well. Both organizations offer professional development on various areas in agriculture education but with a large percentage without membership, many are not present at these events to reap the benefits these programs offer. It also implies the idea that teachers are not willing to add more responsibility to their already busy schedules, even if it is for their professional benefit. The idea arises that if teachers are not participating in organization that focus entirely on the development of their personal careers, would teachers still spend the time and effort on other aspects of the program like community involvement, Supervised Agriculture Experience, and FFA.
Recommendations for practice.

The importance and need for advisory councils must be clearly articulated to the teachers. Teachers who currently do not incorporate the benefits of an advisory council into the program will be given the chance to gain insight to their importance. Others who do currently use one but feel it is simply a compliance item will benefit as well as this articulation will aim to dispel the notion that advisory councils only serve as a this purpose. Educating teachers that advisory councils offer a proven benefit to the community, school, and program will help increase their utilization.

Conclusions for Objective Two

Variations existed across the state on the compositions of Pennsylvania’s secondary agriculture education advisory councils. It was concluded that on average, Pennsylvania agriculture advisory councils are composed of eleven members; nine voting and two non-voting (ex-officio) members. In terms of advisory council composition, the top four school administrative representatives were found to be the School Principal (n=91;53.2%), School Assistant Principal (n=34;19.9%), CTE or Vocational Director (n=32; 18.7%), and the School Superintendent (n=31;18.1%).

Decker and Decker (2003) found that advisory councils must reflect the community and its ideals so that these ideas can be ingrained in the program. It was
concluded that representatives from the agriculture industry, former students, parents of current students, school administration, and parents of past students were found to be the top five stakeholders represented on the secondary agriculture education advisory council. Since each community is different and includes a diverse culture, ethnic background, and array of people, different sectors of the agriculture industry were represented on the advisory council as well from program to program (Caffarella, 2002).

Agriscience teachers strongly agree that the agriculture industries found in the community should reflect the industries taught in the school’s agriculture programs. This opinion was reinforced as teachers responded by noting which industries were in the local community and which was represented, yielding only a slight difference of one switched pair between the two different data ranks.

Another concluded characteristic of the composition of Pennsylvania agriculture education advisory councils was that 41 respondents (26.5%) indicated that term lengths for advisory members were set. Upon closer analysis, the terms lengths were the same for all members 82.9% of the time and were an average of three years in length. Overall advisory council approval by the school board was only needed by approximately one third of the respondents and most often, the advisory council were selected by the agriscience instructor, existing committee, or the principal.
**Implications for objective two.**

Communities across the state contain an extremely drastic difference in the type and kind of agriculture industry present. This constant variation should be reflected in the secondary agriculture education advisory council. Many teachers indicated that the industries in the community and the industries represented on the advisory council do coincide, implying that agriculture programs are attempting to keep this representative population serving on the advisory council. As the industries change, ideally so should the advisory council.

Even though teachers indicated this opinion, it was still concluded that only 41 out of the 171 respondents indicated that term lengths were in place. Agriculture is a dynamic industry and by not replacing members periodically, this implies that the secondary agriculture education advisory council may not represent the new and upcoming industries in the community, which are the areas students should be trained for in the program.

**Recommendations for practice.**

The importance of maintaining a representative advisory council must continually be articulated through preservice education of agriculture teachers and professional development of current teachers. By educating others on the importance of a
representative advisory council, teachers may be more willing to set term lengths to keep the council members changing and representative of the community.

**Conclusions for Objective Three**

According to Phipps et al. (2008), advisory councils can assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of secondary agricultural education programs that focus on the program objectives and goals. The council’s involvement often includes input on curriculum, facilities, and evaluation procedures. A program of work helps to guide the council to address the objectives and goals of the overall program. It was concluded that only 30 respondents (19.4%) indicated that a program of work was present. When examining who keeps the minutes at the meeting, it was concluded that the top two individuals recording the meeting minutes were either the agriscience instructor (n=75) or a selected council secretary (n=55).

An average of two secondary agriculture education advisory meetings are held each year, which was the most common response collected from the respondents (n=126). Only 20 respondents indicated that more than two meetings were held annually. Only 19.4% (n=30) of advisory councils received funding to conduct advisory council meeting and work. This funding came from the school’s general budget, the chapter or program budget, fundraising efforts, or other minor sources.
With regards to professional development, Sorensen et al. (2010) recommended that workshops on community involvement with advisory councils would help combat the inservice need of teachers. Pennsylvania teachers mildly to moderately agree that professional development is needed on advisory councils. Looking specifically at the desired types of professional development, the top three responses were a written publication, a half-day workshop, and a one hour workshop.

**Implications for objective three.**

With only 19.4% of advisory councils using a program of work, the issue of how councils achieve their goals and objectives arises. A program of work is the guiding force that enables councils to address the major areas of concern and move progressively towards a common goal. Without a program of work, there is little to no guidance for the council and its work. This lack of planning and use of a program of work also implies the idea that programs are not fully utilizing the advisory council to its full potential. Similarly to previous implications, a program that views the council as simply a compliance item will not expend the time and resources to organize a fully functional council, complete with a program of work and detailed goals and objectives. Instead, a council will be organized exclusively for the sake of the program approval process.

The professional development aspects of the results imply that even though a large majority of teachers do utilize an advisory council, the idea that professional
development is needed on this idea is still shared by most teachers. Again, teachers seem to know that advisory councils are not being used to their full potential at the moment. In a positive light, the interest and desire for advisory council professional development implies that teachers want to use the councils more and attempt to strengthen the community-program relationship.

**Recommendations for practice.**

Professional development should be offered to Pennsylvania secondary agriculture educators in the form of a written publication. Also, instruction and training on how to properly utilize and implement a program of work for the advisory council should be added to both the professional development as well as preservice agriculture teacher education programs.

**Conclusions for Objective Four**

Agriculture educators in the state of Pennsylvania perceive the use and function of an advisory council as a vital aspect of the program. The top three items agreed upon by respondents include that communication between the community and program is important, there is a need for a representative advisory council that represents the local agricultural industries, and the idea that advisory councils are important to the overall success of the program. These three items discuss the overarching influences and were
highly agreed upon across the participants. On the eight-point Likert-scale all three of these items averaged between the mildly agree and moderately agree categories.

In addition, the responses for how much the advisory council should influence the program and how much it currently is were compared. The top three responses that showed the biggest difference between what influence the council should have verses what they actually have were hiring of new instructors or teachers, providing recommendations to the local governing school board, and assisting with Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program activities. The top six answers dealt with program influences while many of the responses with little difference between the actual influence and the influence that should be present dealt with curriculum and instructional aspects.

**Implications for objective four.**

The fact that teachers perceive advisory councils in a positive light is encouraging and implies that teachers do see some need in their existence. However, the averages for the first perception item were not as high as they should be considering the proven benefits of engaging the community in the program. While teachers see and understand why an advisory council is in place, the actually workings of the advisory council often doesn’t reflect the perceptions of teachers. With less than one fifth using a program of work and several participants indicating that councils were present as a compliance item,
teachers may perceive advisory councils as useful but not all of them follow through with their opinions and beliefs on community involvement.

Furthermore, the conclusions based off of the second set of perception data indicate that across the board, teachers feel that advisory councils should have more influence on all areas of the program than what they currently do. Also, many of the top answers dealt with overall program changes and influence while the lower responses with closer answers between what should be done and what is done pertained to the curriculum specifically. This trend that exists implies that advisory councils are being used in the curriculum aspects of the program but in terms of program wide characteristics of the program, the council is not influencing these areas as heavily. Many of these top answers that display a large discrepancy are not explicit requirements of the program approval process while many of the items pertaining to curriculum are specifically laid out in the program approval process.

**Recommendation for practice.**

With such a large number of teachers viewing advisory councils in a positive light, it is recommended that professional development also include improvement of a current advisory council. Some teachers need explanation on how to effectively use a council but others are looking simply to improve upon the one already in place. In
addition, teachers must be instructed to use the council to influence all aspects of the program, not just the items required for the approval process.

**Overall Recommendations for Practice**

Community involvement in the agriculture education program is essential but not always an easy aspect to incorporate (Decker & Decker, 2007). To help involve community stakeholders and maintain an effective advisory council, it is recommended that professional development be provided to Pennsylvania agriculture teachers. Based on the results of the study, this professional development should be in the form of a written publication and distributed to all secondary agriculture teachers. This professional development must focus on clearly describing the purpose and importance of an effective advisory council. Furthermore, the document should describe how a program of work could help guide the council’s progress on goals and objectives.

Instilling the importance of community involvement in the state’s preservice teachers is another recommendation. By educating the young teachers of tomorrow on the importance of advisory councils, the common goal of creating agriculture programs that represent the local communities will be started early. The young teachers will include this aspect of community-program involvement in their teaching philosophies and be more prone to utilizing the resources in the community. Also, future professional
development can be focused on improvement rather than articulating the importance of the councils if preservice teachers are educated during their initial training.

A final recommendation is that teachers who are currently utilizing an effective advisory council must share their best practices with others. The experiences of others can be beneficial to both preservice and current teachers as they build a program with the community in mind. Best practices and ideas for improvement are often welcomed more when they come from a fellow teacher rather than another source outside of the immediate agriculture teaching profession.

**Recommendations for Research**

The findings from this study have paved the way for future research in the realm of agriculture education advisory councils. First and foremost, research must be conducted to identify how secondary agriculture education advisory councils are achieving their goals and objectives when less than one fifth have a program of work in place. The program of work is what drives the council to achieve these items so future research must identify if there is something used in its place that serves as a guiding force. Also, investigation into the barriers preventing the use of a program of work should also be included as well. Understanding the barriers to implementation is
essential. By doing so, the barriers can be addressed in the professional development and help establish clear guidelines for achieving the councils goals and objectives.

A second area of future advisory council research should investigate the perceptions of the advisory council further. While many teachers indicated that they agree on the importance of advisory councils, little has been addressed on the issue and association with the program approval process. Items dealing specifically with this notion should be used to see if the use of an advisory council is largely due to program approval. Also, it appears that the results of this study indicate a strong involvement of advisory councils in the curriculum and instruction components of the program but not other areas. Further research should be conducted to identify the reason for this trend in the discrepancies.

Summary

The implementation and use of an effective advisory council is critical to all secondary agriculture education programs. While many programs are reaping the benefits the councils offer, Pennsylvania still views them as a compliance step in the program approval process and fails to utilize the council to its full potential. While this study provided a clear outline of the status of advisory councils in Pennsylvania, further research needs to address the key questions that were derived from the results. Only after
future research is conducted can all the issues with advisory councils be addressed in the state of Pennsylvania.
References as cited


Appendix A: Participant Email Transcripts

First Email: Sent 12/13 to all 241 participants

To: [Email]
From: "teachag@psu.edu via surveymonkey.com"

Subject: Advisory Council Questionnaire
Body: Dear [FirstName],

Good Morning! I hope the semester is ending well at [CustomValue]. As mentioned in the pre-notification letter that you should have received on Monday with the Teach Ag Lanyard, here is the link to the the survey on our research regarding advisory councils in agricultural education. We strongly believe that this could be extremely helpful to the entire Pennsylvania Agricultural Education Family, but only if you help us by completing the survey!

The questions in the survey are intended to learn more about your local advisory board/council/committee for your local agricultural education program. We recognize that in multiple teacher programs we will have feedback from multiple individuals on their program’s advisory council, but that is okay, we need everyone’s help!

The instrument will take 15-20 minutes to complete. Your response is needed, valued and appreciated. Here is a link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact myself or Dr. Foster at teachag@psu.edu or call 814-863-0192.

Sincerely,

Doug Masser, AEE Major
Penn State

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Second Email:  Sent 12/19 to remaining 145 participants that didn't respond.

To:    [Email]
From: "teachag@psu.edu via surveymonkey.com"

Subject:  Advisory Council Questionnaire Reminder
Body:  [FirstName],

Happy Holidays!! Recently you received an invitation to an important survey related to advisory councils for local agricultural education programs in Pennsylvania. Your response is very important to us and we would really appreciate your feedback by Friday, January 20, 2012.

You taking 15-20 minutes of your valuable time to complete this survey can add benefit to future generations of ag. teachers by furthering their understanding of advisory councils.

Here is a link to the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact myself or Dr. Foster at teachag@psu.edu or call 814-863-0192.

Thanks for your participation!

Sincerely,

Doug Masser, AEE Major
The Pennsylvania State University

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Third Email: Sent 1/3 to 7 participants whom started but didn’t finish the survey

To: [Email]
From: "teachag@psu.edu via surveymonkey.com"

Subject: Advisory Council Questionnaire Request
Body: [FirstName]

Happy New Year!! Thank you for starting the survey regarding your local agricultural education advisory council. However, a complete response from you is needed so that we can include your input.

We understand that this is a busy time of year but we would appreciate if you would take a few minutes of your time to finish completing the survey.

Here is a link to the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thank you for your participation and we sincerely appreciate your help as we work to improve Pennsylvania agriculture education!

If you have further questions, feel free to contact us directly at teachag@psu.edu or call 814-863-0192.

Sincerely,

Doug Masser, AEE Major
Penn State

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
To: [Email]  
From: "teachag@psu.edu via surveymonkey.com"

Subject: Thank You for your Advisory Council Survey Response  
Body: [FirstName],

Happy New Year!! We realize this is a busy time of year so we sincerely thank you for taking the time to provide us with your input on the short advisory council questionnaire to help the agricultural education profession in Pennsylvania.

If you have not responded, we know that you have an important perspective to provide as well so we ask that you please complete the survey by Friday, January 20th, 2012. To make sure that we can provide the best information possible to the Pennsylvania Ag. Ed family, input from everyone is needed!

Here is a link to the survey:  
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

If you have further questions, feel free to contact us directly at teachag@psu.edu or call 814-863-0192

Thank you for your participation!

Doug Masser, AEE Major  
The Pennsylvania State University

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.  
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Final Email: Sent 1/12 to 99 participants

To: [Email]
From: "teachag@psu.edu via surveymonkey.com"

Subject: Advisory Council Final Reminder - Please Help

Body: [FirstName]

This is your final chance to provide your input on your local agricultural education program advisory council. Every program across the state is different and we need your help to gather a broad perspective on advisory councils that we can use to help the entire Pennsylvania ag. ed family!

If you would like your input included, complete the survey (click on the link below) by Friday, January 20th, 2012.

Here is a link to the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us directly at teachag@psu.edu or call 814-863-0192.

Thanks for your participation and I wish you the best!

Sincerely,

Doug Masser, AEE Student
The Pennsylvania State University

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Appendix B: Instrument

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Dear Pennsylvania Agricultural Educator:

Due to your position as a Pennsylvania secondary Agricultural Education instructor, you have been selected as an expert from which to gather critical information from regarding advisory councils for local agricultural education programs. The questions are intended to learn more about your local advisory board/council/committee for your local agricultural education program. We recognize that in multiple teacher programs we will have feedback from multiple individuals on their program’s advisory council. We need everyone’s help!

The purpose of this research is to describe how Pennsylvania agricultural education programs use and perceive agricultural education advisory councils. The extent that advisory councils offer support to agriculture programs varies greatly across the state. The study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. Determine the utilization of advisory councils by Pennsylvania agricultural education programs.
2. Describe the composition of advisory councils of Pennsylvania agriculture education programs.
3. Describe the program of work undertaken by advisory councils of Pennsylvania agriculture education programs.
4. Describe agriculture educator perceptions of advisory council utilization.

In order to help agricultural education in Pennsylvania, we ask you to fill out the following questionnaire. This questionnaire will provide us with valuable feedback about advisory councils. This research is a descriptive study for use as educators and is being facilitated by The Pennsylvania State University.

If you are willing to participate in this research, it will involve 15-20 minutes of your time. There are no known risks associated with your participation. In appreciation of your time, you have been provided a “Teach Ag Lanyard”. For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, please contact Mr. Douglas Masser at (570)809-3000 or Dr. Daniel D. Foster, 211 Ferguson Building, University Park, PA 16802, 814-863-0192 or email foster@psu.edu.

Completing this electronic survey implies that you are giving permission for the researcher to use the data you provide for research purposes. Your participation in this research is confidential. A coding system will be used and all responses will be aggregated to make it unable to identify individual responses. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of these data sent via the internet by any third parties. Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Please print this form for your records.

Thank you in advance for your time. We are looking forward to receiving your responses to the survey.

Sincerely,

Doug Masser
Undergraduate Student
Agricultural Education
Penn State University
1. Do you have an advisory council for your Agricultural Education program?

- Yes
- No
*2. Since you have indicated that you do not have an advisory council, please select the reason why not. Please select all that apply.

- Do not understand the purpose of advisory councils
- Do not understand how to organize advisory councils
- Have not had time to organize a council
- New Program; council not yet organized
- Not essential to my program
- Not approved by my school principal
- Not approved by other administration entities (County School Board, IU, etc)
- Other entities serve the same purpose (ie County Board of Education, IU units, etc)
- Prospective members are too busy to participate
- Other (please specify)
### 3. How influential has your advisory council been in making the following decisions?

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<th>Decision</th>
<th>No Influence</th>
<th>Limited Influence</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
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<td>Identifying the equipment, tools, and supplies needed for the program</td>
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<td>Acting as a communication link between the general public and your program</td>
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<td>Providing recommendations to the local governing school board</td>
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<td>Evaluating the agricultural program</td>
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<td>Assisting with FFA Chapter activities</td>
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<td>Assisting with Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Program activities (i.e. Placement, etc)</td>
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4. How many voting members are on your advisory council?

Members

5. How many ex-officio (non-voting) members are on your advisory council?

Members

6. How many advisory council meetings do you hold each year?

Meetings

7. Who from your school administration attends your advisory council meetings?

- School Principal
- School Assistant Principal
- School Superintendent
- School Assistant Superintendent
- CTE or Vocational Director
- My school administration does not attend our meetings
- Other (please specify)

8. Does your advisory council have a program of work?

- Yes
- No

9. Does your advisory council receive funds to conduct activities? If so, where do your funds come from?

- Our school district provides funding through general budget
- Advisory council is funded through chapter/program budget
- Advisory council is provided funding through fundraising efforts
- Our program advisory council does not receive any funds
- Other (please specify)
**10. Who is in charge of official minutes for your advisory council?**

- [ ] A secretary on our council keeps minutes
- [ ] Other member of our council keeps minutes
- [ ] Agriscience Instructor records minutes
- [ ] School Administrator records minutes
- [ ] Our committee keep no records of meeting proceedings
- [ ] Other (please specify)
11. We are interested in the composition of your advisory council, what types of members make up your advisory council? Please check all that apply:

- [ ] Current students
- [ ] Former students
- [ ] Teachers in the school district (other than agriculture)
- [ ] School administrators
- [ ] Parents of current students
- [ ] Parents of past students
- [ ] Representatives of local agricultural industries
- [ ] Representatives of local industries other than agriculture
- [ ] Other (please specify)

12. Do you have term lengths for advisory council members?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
13. Is the term length the same for all members?
- Yes
- No

14. What is the term length for advisory council members?
Years
15. Please rate your agreement with the following statement from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The members of my local agricultural education program advisory council represent the agricultural industries in the school district.
In the next two questions you will be asked how your community and advisory board reflect the National Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Pathways.

To help for clarity, here are the descriptions of each pathway:

Agribusiness Systems: Agribusiness is the coordination of all activities that contribute to the production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing and development of agricultural commodities and resources. This includes food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products and services. Agribusiness is a high-tech industry that uses satellite systems, computer databases and spreadsheets, biotechnology and many other innovations to increase efficiency and profitability.

Animal Systems: People who work in the animal systems pathway work to develop better, more efficient ways of producing and processing meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products. They study genetics, nutrition, reproduction, growth and development of domesticated farm animals. Some individuals inspect and grade livestock food products, purchase livestock or work in technical sales or marketing. Others advise agricultural producers on how to upgrade animal housing facilities properly, lower mortality rates, handle waste matter or increase production of animal products, such as milk or eggs. Animal care workers train, feed, water, groom, bathe and exercise animals. They also clean, disinfect and repair their cages.

Environmental Service Systems: People who work in the environmental service systems pathway are involved in water and air pollution control, recycling, waste disposal and public health issues. Environmental engineers and technicians conduct hazardous-waste management studies, evaluate the significance of the hazard, offer analysis on treatment and containment, and develop regulations to prevent mishaps. They design municipal sewage and industrial wastewater systems. They analyze scientific data, research environmental projects and perform quality control checks.

Food Products and Processing Systems: People who work in the food products and processing pathway discover new food sources, analyze food content and develop ways to process, preserve, package or store food according to industry and government regulations. They create new food products to meet consumer needs and inspect food-processing areas to ensure that sanitation, safety, quality and waste management standards are met.

Natural Resource Systems: People who work in the natural resource systems pathway perform a variety of tasks from helping to develop, maintain, and manage the forest and natural environment to catching and trapping various types of marine life for human consumption, animal feed, bait and other uses. Forest and rangelands supply wood products, livestock forage, minerals and water; serve as sites for recreational activities; and provide habitats for wildlife. Conservation scientists and foresters manage, develop, use and help protect these and other natural resources.

Plant Systems: People who work in the plant systems pathway study plants and their growth, helping producers of food, feed and fiber crops continue to feed a growing population while conserving natural resources and maintaining the environment. Individuals in this pathway also develop ways to improve the nutritional value of crops and the quality of seeds. They use genetic engineering to develop crops resistant to pest and drought.

Power, Structural, and Technical Systems: People who work in the Power, Structural and Technical Systems pathway apply knowledge of engineering, hydraulics, pneumatics, electronics, power, structures, and controls to the field of agriculture. They design agricultural structures as well as machinery and equipment. They develop ways to conserve soil and water and to improve the processing of agricultural products.

All information obtained from: AgrowKnowledge (n.d.). Career clusters. Website.
16. The following is a list of the National Career Pathways. Which are major agricultural industries in your school district? Please check all that apply:

- Agribusiness Systems
- Animal Systems
- Environmental Service Systems
- Food Products and Processing Systems
- Natural Resources Systems
- Plant Systems
- Power, Structural and Technical Systems
- Other (please specify)

17. The following is a list of the National Career Pathways. Which of the major agricultural industries are represented on your advisory council? Please check all that apply:

- Agribusiness Systems
- Animal Systems
- Environmental Service Systems
- Food Products and Processing Systems
- Natural Resources Systems
- Plant Systems
- Power, Structural and Technical Systems
- Other (please specify)
18. How do you select advisory council members?

☐ Agriscience Instructor
☐ Existing committee members
☐ School board members
☐ Principal
☐ Superintendent
☐ CTE Director
☐ Other (please specify)

19. How are new advisory council members selected?

☐ Elected
☐ Appointed
☐ Other (please specify)

20. Do you need approval from school officials regarding the selection of advisory council members?

☐ Yes
☐ No
**21. How much influence do you think an advisory council SHOULD have in making the following decisions?**

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<tr>
<td>Identifying the equipment, tools, and supplies needed for the program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying the facility modifications needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewing instructional materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting as a communication link between the general public and your program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing recommendations to the local governing school board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluating the agricultural program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assisting with FFA Chapter activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assisting with Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Program activities (ie Placement, etc)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**22. What other roles does your advisory council play in your agricultural program?**
23. Please indicate your agreement to the following statements regarding advisory council from Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Very Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory councils are important to the overall success of agricultural programs.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory councils are not helpful in conducting a successful agricultural education program.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory councils are a hindrance in conducting a successful agricultural education program.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The members of an agricultural education advisory council should represent the local industries found in the school district.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the agriculture teacher’s responsibility to ensure that the advisory council meets regularly.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All changes to the agricultural education program should originate from advisory council recommendations.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory councils should be used to determine curriculum decisions.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication between the agriculture teachers and the advisory council members is important.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is the advisory council’s obligation to present recommendations for the agricultural education program to the school board.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My program is constantly improving because of the work done by my program advisory council.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recommendations made by the advisory council result in changes to the agricultural program.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could use my advisory council more than I do now.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. What other thoughts do you have to share on advisory councils?
**25. Please rate your agreement with the following statement from Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Very Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development is needed on advisory councils for agricultural educators in Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**26. What form would you want that professional development for agricultural educators to be in? Please check all that apply:**

- [ ] Written Publication
- [ ] Webinar
- [ ] 1 hour workshop
- [ ] ½ day workshop
- [ ] Weeklong graduate class

Other (please specify)
27. What is your Sex?
- Male
- Female

28. What is your Age?
Age in Years

29. What is your Ethnicity?
- White/Non-Hispanic
- Black/Non-Hispanic
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- 2+ Races
- Other (please specify)

30. How many total years of teaching experience do you have?
Years of Teaching Experience

31. How many years of experience do you have teaching agriculture?
Years

32. How many years have you taught at your current program?
Years

33. How many Agriscience instructors teach agriculture at your school? Please include yourself.
Number of Agriscience instructors

34. Does your school district currently employ a CTE or Vocational Director?
- Yes
- No

35. What is the total enrollment size of your high school?
Number of Students in High School
**36. What is the total number of students enrolled in agricultural science classes at your school? Please provide a number for unduplicated enrollment**

Unduplicated Students in Agriscience Courses: ________________

**37. Do you live in the school district in which you currently teach?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**38. How did you become certified as an agricultural educator?**

- [ ] 4 year degree program
- [ ] Post Baccalaureate Certification Program
- [ ] Alternative method of certification (Occupational Competency Assessment, Instructional Add-On, Teacher Intern Certification, Emergency Certification, etc)

Other (please specify)

**39. What institution did you receive your agricultural education training through?**

- [ ] The Pennsylvania State University
- [ ] Delaware Valley College
- [ ] Other (Indicate Below)

Other (please specify)
*40. Do you have a FFA Chapter in good standing with the state FFA association in your program?

- Yes
- No
**41. What is the total enrollment of FFA members in your chapter?**

| Number of Chapter FFA Members: |

**42. Do you have an extended contract as the agricultural education instructor?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
43. Since you indicated that you had an extended contract, please indicate how many days long it is.

Days of Extended Contract

44. Do you have an FFA Alumni chapter or booster club?

- Yes
- No
45. Are you a member of the Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators (PAAE)?

☐ Yes
☐ No

46. Are you a member of the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE)?

☐ Yes
☐ No

47. Please list other professional organizations that you hold membership in.
Academic Vita of Douglas Masser

Douglas T. Masser
412 Main Road
Pitman, PA 17964
dtm5092@gmail.com

Education
Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Extension Education
- Production Option
- The Pennsylvania State University, University Park PA, Spring 2012
Honors in Agricultural and Extension Education
- Thesis Title: Utilization of Advisory Councils in Pennsylvania Secondary Agriculture Programs
- Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Daniel D. Foster

Related Experience
Research Assistant with the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education
- Supervisor: Dr. Daniel D. Foster
- Spring 2011 and Fall 2011
Student Teaching Internship at Upper Dauphin Area High School
Cooperating Teacher: Mr. Mark Dietrich
University Supervisor: Dr. John Ewing

Awards and Achievements
Evan Pugh Outstanding Senior Award
The Penn State Ag Council Leadership Award
Dean’s List
Alpha Tau Alpha, President
Collegiate FFA, Vice President

Activities
Short Term Study Abroad Experience in South Korea
Coordinated the Alpha Tau Alpha Teach Ag! Essay Contest