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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ALABAMA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE ASSESSMENT CENTER RATINGS
AND SUBSEQUENT COUNTY AGENT-COORDINATORS'
JOB PERFORMANCE RATINGS**

by

D. RAY RICE

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in the Department of Educational Leadership
in the Graduate Schools of The University of Alabama and
The University of Alabama at Birmingham**

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

1996

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
GRADUATE SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Degree Ed.D Major Subject Educational Leadership

Name of Candidate D. Ray Rice

Title An Examination of the Relationships Between the Alabama Cooperative
Extension Service Assessment Center Ratings and Subsequent County
Agent-Coordinators' Job Performance Ratings

The purpose of this study was to investigate relationships between ratings received by assessees who participated in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for County Agent-Coordinators and their performance appraisal ratings following each of the first 3 years after appointment to this position. Both the Assessment Center process and the performance appraisal process were investigated for racial and gender bias. Finally, this study considered the relationship between individual skill variables comprising the assessment process and the overall rating received by assessees to determine if any of the variables, singly or in some combination, significantly influenced overall Assessment Center ratings.

Data were collected from the personnel records of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. Fifty-one County Agent-Coordinators were selected, each of whom had participated in the Assessment Center and had at least 3 years experience in this position.

ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences were utilized. For the primary investigation, the dependent variable

was the overall Assessment Center ratings as evaluated by raters trained in Assessment Center procedures. Independent variables were the race and gender of the assessees, the twelve variables assessed in the Assessment Center, and the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal for county agent-coordinators. For the second analysis, the dependent variable was the annual performance ratings and the independent variables were the overall Assessment Center ratings, gender, and race.

The descriptive findings revealed that the Assessment Center did predict county agent-coordinators' performance at the .05 level of significance following the first year of service, and at the .056 level following the second year's service. There was no relationship for the third year. There was no discrimination by gender or race for either the Assessment Center or the annual performance appraisal. Of the twelve skill variables evaluated in the Assessment Center, persuasiveness, oral communication, decision making, written communication, likability, and perception provided 73.9 % of the total variability. However, all twelve, with the exception of assertiveness (.0879 level) were significantly related to the overall Assessment Center rating when examined individually.

Abstract Approved by: Committee Chairman *Joseph A. Glorla*
Committee Chairman *Richard S. Odemski*
Program Director *Boyd Rogan*
Date *4/10/98* Dean of Graduate School *Jean Haden*
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to those individuals who contributed their time, talents, and skill toward the completion of my dissertation.

To Dr. Eugene Golanda, co-chair, for his friendship, guidance, encouragement, and patience in directing me throughout the doctoral program.

To Dr. Richard Podemski, co-chair, for his guidance, professional and practical suggestions in directing the course of this study.

To Dr. Boyd Rogan, member of the committee, for his encouragement, support, and helpful consultation in completing this study.

To Dr. Lydia Alexander, member of the committee, for her comments, guidance, and assistance toward this study.

To Dr. Jim Buford, member of the committee, for his assistance, statistical knowledge, friendship, and direction toward the completion of this study.

To Dr. James Smith, member of the committee, for his comments, aid in obtaining the data, historical knowledge about the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, and counsel for this study.

To Dr. Jim Wilmonth for his aid with the statistical analysis and advice toward this study.

To Sherri Edwards for her patience and aid in insuring this study was in the appropriate format.

To my parents, George W. and Elaine Williams Rice, who taught me the value of an education, hard work, and finishing difficult goals. I express my love and appreciation.

To my daughters and sons-in-law, Rachel Jawon, Steven Schaefer, Candace Michelle, Dwain Turner Sealy, and especially my first grandchild, Ashtan Laurel Sealy, a special thanks for their faith, support, and understanding during the years I was attending school.

Finally, to my wife, Jeannine Bass Rice, who supported me throughout the doctoral program. I would like to thank her for taking care of the family and other responsibilities that allowed me the necessary time needed to devote to my studies. Without her love, patience, encouragement, and support I could not have obtained this goal. Through her love and support, she gave me the strength and inspiration to achieve this goal.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Overview

The mission of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service is to apply researched-based knowledge to the concerns of the public within the state and to design programs to help Alabama citizens improve their quality of life. The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service receives funds from federal, state, and local governments to establish and maintain active units in each of Alabama's 67 counties. The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service is a division of Auburn University, which is a component of the national land-grant college system.

Land-grant colleges were established in 1862 by an Act of Congress. The basic provision of the Act states:

Sec. 4. And be it further enacted, That all moneys derived from the sale of the lands aforesaid by the States to which the lands are apportioned, and from the sales of land scrip hereinbefore provided for, shall be invested in stocks of the United States, or of the States, or some other safe stocks, yielding not less than five per centum upon the par value of said stocks; and that the moneys so invested shall constitute a perpetual fund, the capital of which shall remain forever undiminished, (except so far as may be provided in section fifth of this act,) and the interest of which shall be inviolably appropriated, by each State which may take and claim the benefit of this act, to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and

practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life. (Statutes at Large, 1863, p. 504)

Their intended role was to conduct research to develop knowledge about agriculture, mechanics, and other subjects that would help citizens improve their quality of life and also to teach them how to apply this knowledge. Land-grant colleges began fulfilling this mission but soon realized that most people were not coming to the colleges to acquire the available information and were not benefiting adequately from research. A system was required to take this knowledge directly to the people. In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act was passed by Congress to establish such a system.

The passage of the Smith-Lever Act established the Co-operative Extension Service. The basic provision of the Act states:

Sec. 2. That cooperative agriculture extension work shall consist of the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting to such persons information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications, and otherwise; and this work shall be carried on in such a manner as may be mutually agreed upon by the Secretary of Agriculture and the State agricultural college or colleges receiving the benefits of this Act. (Statutes at Large, 1915, p. 373)

This is unique legislation in that it provides for the cooperation of local, state, and national governments in making available educational information outside of the conventional classroom setting. This action required professional educators to take research knowledge from land-grant colleges directly to the people. Today, this is achieved through tours, demonstrations, meetings, newsletters, news columns, conferences, radio and television broadcasts, and through many other teaching methods. Over the years the mission of the Cooperative Extension Service has

changed as the problems and needs of its constituent citizens have changed. Fewer people are living on farms and in rural areas, so the Cooperative Extension Service's mission has been broadened to provide information to a more diversified citizenry throughout the United States.

The mission of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (ACES) is to apply its knowledge base to address issues of concern to the people of Alabama and beyond. ACES programs are designed to improve quality of life; enhance economic and community development; strengthen individuals, families, businesses, governments, and organizations; and to implement research findings, accordingly (Thompson, 1991).

Background of the Study

The current organizational structure of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service became effective on November 1, 1992. This reorganization established nine districts within the state of Alabama with seven to eight counties in each district. Each of the 67 counties has a county agent-coordinator (CAC) assignment with administrative and supervisory responsibilities. Each CAC is responsible for supervising one to ten county extension agents and one to four secretaries.

County Agent-Coordinator Job Analysis

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the landmark court cases which followed, the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines caused the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service administration to recognize the need to develop job analyses (see appendix D) for county agents. Job analyses were needed so a performance appraisal system could be developed that could evaluate agents' performance. A job analysis was developed for each program area of responsibility for county agent and county agent-coordinator

positions. The areas of responsibility were agriculture, home economics, 4-H and youth, community resource development, special programs, and county agent-coordinator. This study explored the county agent-coordinator aspect of the job analyses.

Content validity was the method used in validating the job analysis. The specific tasks, the frequency of performing these tasks, amount of time spent or allocated to performing these tasks, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform each task were established by a committee of agents. Each task had a level of criticality established as well as the minimum level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for agents. A determination was made between agents' skills that would be taught on the job, those that might be taught on the job, and those individuals were expected to have for each task.

The job analysis was developed through an eight step process (see appendix D) by a committee of 30 county agents representing each of the five program areas and the county agent-coordinator position. Subsequently all county staff were provided a copy of the committee draft job analysis for their position. Each agent was requested to identify tasks they actually performed and add tasks that were not covered by the committee's job analysis for their position. The process concluded with a job analysis for each county agent program area and county agent-coordinator position as well as a performance appraisal system for county agents.

Assessment Center

An Assessment Center process has been used in Alabama since 1981 to aid in the selection of county agent-coordinators. The process generates specific recommendations about the promotability of agents, and it evaluates the specific

strengths and weaknesses of agents' management skills. Assessment Center personnel do not determine if a candidate will be promoted; instead, candidates are ranked according to established standard indices of performance.

The Assessment Center was developed by the Extension Associate Director, Human Resources, using the content valid job analysis for the county agent-coordinator position. The tasks identified in the job analysis for county agent-coordinators were used to develop the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center exercises for county agent-coordinators. CACs were asked to provide input for changes they believed were needed to simulate CAC on-the-job problems. Their suggestions were used to make modifications in the Assessment Center exercises and provide content validity.

County agent-coordinators, district agents, and Auburn University faculty members currently serve as assessors. This pool of assessors is both race and gender inclusive, and there is an attempt to match the race and gender of assessors with that of each of the six candidates participating in each Assessment Center. All assessors received prior training to help ensure consistently reliable assessment ratings.

Various exercises in the Assessment Center are designed to provide a basis for evaluating the potential managerial skills of candidates and for evaluating their ability to lead a diversified county program. Participants in the Assessment Center are rated on each of 12 skills (see appendix A) believed to be related to management: oral communications, written communications, collaborativeness, adaptability, likability, planning and organizing, decision-making, leadership, persuasiveness, perception, assertiveness, and need for approval. Ratings obtained by candidates in each of these 12 areas are used by the assessors to place candidates in one of the following four

categories (see appendix A): (1) should exceed normal expectations; (2) should meet normal expectations; (3) meeting normal expectations is questionable; and (4) presently does not possess knowledge and skills needed to successfully perform the job duties of county agent-coordinator. A consensus of the three assessors is required for each rating.

Each of the 12 variables is weighted equally to arrive at an overall rating for the Assessment Center. A low rating in any one variable will not prevent an individual from obtaining an overall favorable rating. Some activities in the Assessment Center carry a different weight for an individual variable. For example, with the variable, oral communication, an individual's group discussion score is weighted at four for oral communication, while the in-basket interview is weighted at two for oral communication. The higher the number, the greater value that activity is weighted for that variable's score. Assessors review together their individual scoring for each candidate. They discuss individual strengths and weaknesses and come to a consensus on the overall rating of each individual's performance.

The Assessment Center has a "blind" assessment category, designed to minimize the possibility of bias. Assessment results on any specific candidate are not known to the assessor until the process is completed. All exercises are designed to apply equally to men and women, and to all candidates irrespective of race. These steps are taken to assure fairness to all individuals seeking to be promoted to county agent-coordinator.

The opportunity to be assessed by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for County Agent-Coordinators is available to any person associated with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service who meets the following

qualifications: (1) an earned master's degree; (2) 39 applicant evaluation points (see appendix C); (3) current standing as an associate county agent, county agent, or a faculty member at Auburn University; and (4) a performance appraisal score of seven or higher on his or her most recent performance appraisal rating. When a candidate has met these four minimal requirements (see appendix B), the candidate writes a letter to the ACES Associate Director-Human Resources, to request their participation in Assessment Center. When approximately six candidates have indicated a desire to be assessed, the ACES Associate Director-Human Resources organizes an Assessment Center.

County agents and associate county agents receive applicant evaluation points through educational attainment, academic average, scholarly achievement, and tenure with ACES (see appendix C). In the category of educational attainment, agents receive 20 points for an earned Ph.D., 15 points for an M.S., and 10 points for a B.S. degree. Through academic averaging an agent receives six times his or her grade point average, using a three-point system, with a maximum of 15 possible points in this academic achievement category. In the scholarly achievement category (see appendix C), an agent can receive a maximum of 15 points. This category is divided into five sections with three points possible in each of these areas: (1) membership in an approved honor society; (2) scholastic honors awarded upon graduation with a B.S. degree; (3) authorship or co-authorship of a publication and/or article in a scholarly journal; (4) attendance and successful completion of institutes and conferences or training of several weeks' duration, usually on a university campus, where credit or a certificate is awarded; and (5) other awards or recognition including special awards by commodity, trade and farm organizations, chambers of commerce, professional

societies, etc. Up to three points can be earned in each of these five sections up to a maximum of 15 total points. The final category considered for evaluation points is tenure with ACES. Academic employees receive 1.2 points per year of employment with ACES and for approved military service with a maximum of 50 points possible. The total number of points possible for all five categories is 100. These points are used for eligibility for promotion to associate county agent, county agent, county agent-coordinator, extension district agent, and to attend the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for county agent-coordinators.

To be promoted to the county agent-coordinator position, an individual must meet the following qualifications: (1) have a master's degree; (2) be an associate county agent, county agent, or have a position as an Auburn University faculty; (3) have a performance appraisal score of seven or higher on the most recent performance appraisal rating; and (4) participate in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for county agent-coordinator and receive a rating of one, two, or three. Participants who receive a rating of two or three must take academic classes in the area or areas that were identified as weak by the Assessment Center. When these four qualifications are met by more than one individual, the individual with the most applicant evaluation points must be offered the position.

Performance Appraisal System

The performance appraisal system for Alabama Cooperative Extension Service county agents was initiated in the fall of 1976. The performance appraisal system for county agent-coordinators was developed at the same time and using the same process as the job analysis. The performance appraisal system was developed utilizing the tasks identified in the job analysis under the leadership of the Extension Associate

Director, Human Resources. A committee of county agent-coordinators met to develop the performance appraisal instruments used to measure the skill levels for all tasks performance by county agent-coordinators. All county agent-coordinators were provided a copy of the performance appraisal instrument and asked to identify tasks that they performed but were not evaluated by the instrument. The inputs for all county agent-coordinators were used to make changes in the performance appraisal instruments and provide content validity.

The performance appraisal system applies job-related criteria (see appendix D) to determine the quality of education programs and administrative performance conducted by each county agent-coordinator. CACs are evaluated on their administrative responsibility as well as their educational program delivery. There are five criteria (see appendix E) that rate the administrative skills demonstrated during the evaluation period of one year. These five criteria are planning and organizing, personnel and staff development, personnel management and staff development for academic staff, leadership and directing, and reporting and evaluation.

The performance appraisal was initially administered by the district agent-coordinator, but this position was phased out in the 1980s, and district agents with program responsibility assumed this task. Since the reorganization in 1991 (see appendix F), CACs are rated by each extension district agent who rates CACs' performance for programmatic and administrative skills.

Performance appraisal is a continuous process (see Appendix F) involving observation and monitoring throughout the year, and culminating in an annual interview at the close of the calendar year. Extension district agents rate CACs' efforts based on the predetermined criteria set out in the Counseling Guide (Smith,

1989). CACs are rated for their administrative responsibility in the areas of planning and organizing, personnel and staff development, personnel management and staff development for academic staff, leadership and directing, and reporting and evaluation.

A performance appraisal rating of each CACs provides a perceived indication of his or her administrative effectiveness. When the two assessments (performance appraisal of CAC administrative responsibility and CAC Assessment Center ratings) are compared, a relationship should exist between the two, that is, the average rating received for the administrative portion of the performance appraisal rating and overall rating candidates received in the Assessment Center. Does an individual's rating in the performance appraisal and the Assessment Center, that were both developed from the job analysis, have any relationship to each other? This study attempted to determine the predictability of the Assessment Center ratings of individuals that sought to be promoted to the county agent-coordinator position.

Other factors such as gender and race may have a relationship to performance also. Gender and race factors should be examined independently and concurrently for a relationship to CAC performance appraisal rating and the Assessment Center rating.

History of Extension Services Prior to 1964

A brief review of the history of Cooperative Extension Service in Alabama reveals some differences and disparities related to gender and race in its early years. This review will clarify the need for a study of the selection and promotion procedures now in place. This historical review will view the period from the inception and beginning of Cooperative Extension Service in the state up until the court litigation of the 1960s.

This information was largely gathered by means of an interview on July 17, 1995, with Dr. James Smith, Director of Personnel with ACES at Auburn University since 1979. Dr. Smith, an African American, began his extension career in 1965 with what was then called the Negro Extension at Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University. Dr. Smith is a reliable source for describing the nature of the organization before and after its change. Dr. Smith was an employee of the Alabama Cooperative Extension during this time and was involved with the Strain v. Philpot court case as Assistant Director for Personnel. No tapes were made of the interview; the following derives solely from the investigator's notes. Support documentation for Smith's description of the ACES' bifurcated organization was compiled from personnel materials archived in Duncan Hall at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. As a collateral participant in the litigation of the 1960s, and as an avid follower of those events, Smith is without question a reliable subject for such information.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service was a combination of two land-grant colleges that were established by two separate Acts of Congress. The first act established a land-grant college system in 1862 primarily serving white Americans, and the second act established a second land-grant college system in 1890 primarily serving African Americans. The Act of 1890 reads, "Land-grant colleges and Tuskegee Institute." The 1890 Act of Congress used the term Negro to describe individuals of African descent.

Prior to 1965 there were two separate cooperative extension services in Alabama. The 1862 Cooperative Extension Service was located at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now Auburn University, and the 1890 Cooperative Extension Service was located at Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University. Each Extension

Service had its own personnel structure and lines of authority which were similar but separate.

At the 1862 Extension Service located at Auburn, each of Alabama's 67 counties had a county agent who was always a white male with at least a B.S. degree in agriculture. This position was responsible for administrative functions at the county level and all programming of the 1862 Extension Service. Assistant county agents were also white males with a B.S. degree in agriculture; they reported directly to the county agent. Some counties had more than one assistant county agent, all of whom reported to the county agent in their county.

Each county also had a home demonstration agent who was a white female with a B.S. degree in home economics. This position was responsible for the home economics programs and also reported to the county agent. In addition, most of the counties had an assistant home demonstration agent who also held a B.S. degree in home economics and was supervised by the home demonstration agent.

This structure always had a white male with an agricultural degree in the county agent's position as supervisor in each of Alabama's 67 counties. All local staff, including the secretaries, were supervised by the person in this position. Females could be promoted to a home demonstration agent position, but they still reported to the county agent.

The second administrative level of supervision was at the district level. The State was divided into four districts with a district agent who was always a white male with at least one degree in agriculture; the district agent was responsible for the 16 or 17 counties in his district. These district agents were administratively and programmatically responsible for all aspects of the organization.

Assistant district agents were white males with an agricultural background who worked with the county agent and assistant county agent in implementing agricultural programs. They reported to the district agent.

Associate district agents were white females with a home economics background. This person worked with the home demonstration agent and assistant home demonstration agent to develop and implement programs. These associate district agents were responsible for the home economics program within their districts and reported to their district agent.

The Tuskegee Extension Service at Tuskegee Institute had its own administrative structure. Its county office was supervised by a Negro county agent who was always a black male with at least a B.S. degree in agriculture. The Negro county agent, all three words being inseparably a part of his title, was the first line supervisor for the county office and was responsible for all programs administered. Assistant Negro county agents were black males who held at least a B.S. degree in agriculture and who reported directly to the Negro county agent.

The Negro home demonstration agent had at least a B.S. degree in home economics and was responsible for the home economics programs in their counties but reported administratively to the Negro county agent. There were no assistant Negro home demonstration agents.

This structure always had a black male with an agricultural degree in the Negro county agent's position. Each county always had a male in the top administrative position. This person was responsible for the supervision of all staff and for all agricultural and home economics programs conducted within that county.

The Negro district agent was responsible for all administrative and agricultural programmatic functions. This position was always held by a black male with an agricultural background. This was the second level of supervision in that organization chart. Because Tuskegee Extension Service served only 14 counties across the Black Belt in Central Alabama, no other counties in Alabama had a Negro Extension Service.

The associate Negro district agent was responsible for the home economics program within her district. These agents were always black females with a home economics background. They worked with the associate home demonstration agent in developing and implementing programs within the district. They reported to the Negro district agent.

The 1862 Extension Service and Tuskegee Extension Service were separate organizations but with similar organizational structures. They were not equal in size, pay, personnel, or in the number of counties served. They did occasionally work together on some programs, but with no formal organizational connection. These two extension services worked in these separate organizational structures from their inception in the early 1900s until they were integrated in 1965.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service and the Tuskegee Extension Service were integrated because of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Both Extension Services received Federal funds and were required to integrate by the United States Secretary of Agriculture or lose all Federal support.

When the two extension services were integrated in 1965-1966, they were reorganized into the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The integration of the two systems resulted in many changes in administrative functions, positions, and titles. The title of county agent was changed to county extension chairman. This position

was always held by a white male. The title of associate home demonstration agent was changed to associate county extension chairman; this position was always filled by a white female. The responsibilities of the county extension chairman were the same as the previous county agent, and the associate county extension chairmen duties were the same as those of the previous home demonstration agent. The assistant county agent's title was changed to extension farm agent and the associate home demonstration agent became the extension home agent.

The Negro county agent title was changed to extension farm agent and the Negro home demonstration agent was changed to the extension home agent. No Negro county agents became a county extension chairman, nor did any Negro home demonstration agent become an associate home demonstration agent. Thus, the 1965-1966 reorganization resulted in a system in which all administrative positions were held by white males, and all the home economics leadership positions were headed by white females.

District agents became district extension agents and assistant district agents became district extension agents. Associate district agents became associate district extension agents. The change in title did not alter their responsibilities.

At the time of the integration (1965-1966), there was only one Negro district agent and he resigned because he did not want to work for the integrated Extension Service. The Negro associate district agent became a specialist. Specialists had statewide responsibilities in one program or subject area. This reorganization resulted in a district level of supervision led totally by whites.

Because there were no black personnel in a supervisory position in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service in 1966 at the county, district, or state level of

administration, a civil rights suit was filed. This suit became Strain v. Philpot in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Eastern Division. The results of this suit and consequent court orders required that the system be dramatically altered to allow both blacks and females to assume administrative responsibilities at the county and district levels.

Reorganized ACES Organizational Structure

On June 11, 1976, the United States District Court for the Middle District Of Alabama, Eastern Division (Court) approved a reorganization plan (see appendix F) for the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. This plan resulted in the Strain v. Philpot suit. This plan altered the structure for supervision and management of ACES programs and personnel at the district level.

This reorganization formed three geographic districts, each with a district agent-coordinator and five district agents with specific program supervision responsibilities (agriculture and natural resources, home economics, 4-H, community resource development, and special programs). District I included the 22 counties north of Jefferson County and included Jefferson and Shelby Counties. The remainder of the state was divided north to south with 22 eastern counties in District II and 23 western counties in District III. This reorganization created 15 district agent-programs and three district agent-coordinators who would operate out of the three districts. These district agents supervised approximately 340 county agents.

At that time, the ACES carried out programs in four distinct program areas with most counties having at least four agents. These program areas were agricultural, home economics, 4-H and youth, and community resource development. Most agents

had primary responsibility in one program area and were supervised by a district agent who had direct responsibility for that program area.

By 1987, ACES experienced significant changes both in the number of county and district agents and in the way in which it operated. Due to concerns about federal funding and reductions in county funding, the number of county agents was reduced to 270, thus resulting in several counties having only one or two agents. The remaining county agents were expected to do more interdisciplinary programming, as opposed to working primarily in a single program area. By 1989, there were many retirements among district agent-coordinators and district agent-programs. These positions were not refilled due to uncertainty about future funding and a desire to formally change the focus of the district agent-programs' responsibilities to include total program and personnel management supervision.

In 1987 ACES Director, Dr. Ann E. Thompson, created a committee to make recommendations for strategic changes in the organization and operation of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. This committee recommended that the state be divided into six districts with the remaining six district program agents serving as district agents. This proposal was intentionally modified due to the unusually large span of supervision the proposed plan imposed. Each district agent would have had direct or indirect supervisory responsibility for 185 to 219 staff members.

The plan (see appendix F) ultimately recommended to the Court established nine extension districts led by a district agent whose primary responsibility was the leadership, management, and supervision of all programs and field staff personnel within his or her district. This configuration was promoted because it provided the most equitable balance of individual employees for supervision, counseling, and

evaluation while effectively balancing the number of county staff units to be managed at the same time. A major responsibility of district agents is to train agents to become extension educators and to supervise agent performance in all program areas. A secondary role of the district agent is to help manage the nonhuman resources (travel, supplies, postage, equipment, etc.) within the district.

Priority consideration for promotion to district extension agent was given to the six individuals who were then serving as district program agents. Also consistent with existing Court orders, special efforts were made to recruit qualified black candidates. The administration desired to increase the number of blacks and females in district level management positions to the same level as that which existed in the county level management positions (Thompson, 1991).

History of Court Orders

United States District Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr., of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Eastern Division (Court), ordered on September 1, 1971, that all county extension units should be integrated and that the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service staff should be representative of and reflect the total percentage of African Americans in the state of Alabama. This order attempted to correct and eliminate the past effects of discrimination that had occurred before 1971.

Part of the order applied to the filling of the positions of county extension chairman (county agent coordinator) with any person other than the former Negro county agent or Negro home demonstration agent who was best qualified according to objective standards such as educational background and tenure. The standards which ACES adopted to determine qualified individuals are now known as Applicant

Evaluation Points and consist of educational attainment, academic grade point average, scholarly achievement, and tenure with ACES.

In February, 1978 plaintiffs in Strain v. Philpot filed a motion for further relief primarily concerning the appointment of a black female as a district agent coordinator. Plaintiffs objected to the probationary review forms used at that time for evaluating employees who were promoted or whose job responsibilities had changed. On September 14, 1978, the Court ordered that the defendants (ACES) be enjoined from applying the vague, subjective, and discriminatory criteria and probationary review forms then in use for evaluation of such employees. The Court further ordered defendants to formulate suggested criteria and procedures for evaluating employees' performance which, when applied, would form a valid basis for promotion or dismissal.

As a result of this case, it was determined that the Applicant Evaluation Point system, when used alone as the basis for promotions, was too subjective and resulted in the promotion of staff members who might not be fully qualified to assume additional responsibilities. ACES consequently developed and submitted to the Court for approval a Performance Appraisal System and a Probationary Counseling Plan for use in promotion and dismissing employees. Both plans were approved by the Court on December 29, 1978.

One of the requests of the Strain v. Philpot plaintiffs in 1983 sought to enjoin ACES from using the Assessment Center process and more specifically to prevent the appointment of an individual as district agent coordinator in District I. The Assessment Center that was implemented in 1981 had been used as a partial means to fill this position and the county agent coordinator positions within the ACES. The

Assessment Center was used to determine if individuals had the minimum skills needed to become a first line supervisor. The plaintiffs' motion for permanent injunction with regard to the Assessment Center was denied by the Court. The Court stated that the Assessment Center did not have the effect of discrimination against blacks, and the Assessment Center was approved as a means of determining a staff member's individual strengths and weaknesses for a particular job. The Assessment Center was also upheld as a method of assisting employees in overcoming weaknesses and improving in other areas (Smith, 1984).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the relative predictive ability of the Assessment Center with regards to future administrative performance of agents as indicated through annual performance appraisals. It was equally important to examine for any significant bias in performance appraisal evaluations and Assessment Center ratings based on race or gender. It was also important to learn if certain skills, singly or in combination, measured in the ACES Assessment Center for CAC's process were more predictive than others of overall Assessment Center ratings.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

This study examined the relationship of a County Agent-Coordinator's Assessment Center results with performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years of his or her performance as a county agent-coordinator (CAC). Specifically, the predictive potential of the Assessment Center was examined. This study also examined for any significant bias based on gender or race in the performance appraisal evaluations and ACES Assessment Center ratings. The investigative question was, "Do individuals perform on the job in relationship to Assessment Center predictions?"

Performance levels were determined from relative ratings on annual evaluations. Assessment ratings of individual skill areas on variables comprising the assessment process were compared singly and in some combination with the overall Assessment Center ratings. The performance of CACs is rated in five categories on a scale from 1 to 11. The categories examined were planning and organizing, personnel and staff development, personnel management and staff development for academic staff, leadership and directing, and reporting and evaluation.

More specifically, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. To determine if the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years are bias free in regards to gender and race.
2. To determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process is bias free with regard to gender and race.
3. To determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process when compared to the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years are bias free in regards to gender and race.
4. To determine if certain skills in the Assessment Center are more predictive than others of an overall Assessment Center rating, singly or in combination.
5. To determine if the overall Assessment Center ratings are predictive of the administrative performance for any of the first 3 years after appointment to the CAC position based on the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal ratings.

General Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

County agent-coordinator: The county extension agent responsible for the administrative function of a county Cooperative Extension office.

District agent-coordinator: The employee at the district level responsible for the administrative functions of a district of 22 or 23 counties until 1991.

District agent-program: The extension employee at the district level responsible for program management of either agriculture and natural resources, home economic, special programs, 4-H and youth, and community resource development.

Extension agent or county agent: An employee of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service working at the county level who carries out educational programs.

Extension district agent: The employee at the district level responsible for the administrative and programmatic function for a district of seven or eight counties after 1991.

Extension programs: The educational activities carried out by county agents specifically in the academic and/or field disciplines of agriculture and natural resources, home economics, 4-H and youth and including community resource development.

Extension Service: The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service which is a part of the land-grant university system.

Extension Specialist: An employee of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service working at the state level who carries out educational programs in a specific subject area.

Definitions Related to Assessment Center Activities

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

Assertiveness: The extent to which an individual positively and forcefully states a position without being hostile or destructive.

Assessee: An individual who has met the minimum qualifications for the county agent-coordinator position. These qualifications include master's degree; 39 applicant evaluation points; current positions as associate county agent, county agent, or a member of the Auburn University academic staff; and a performance appraisal score of 7 or higher out of a possible 11 on the most recent performance appraisal.

Assessor: An individual selected from a pool of individuals holding a position as county agent-coordinator, extension district agent, or Auburn University faculty member, and who has received appropriate assessment training.

Collaborativeness: The extent to which a candidate is willing to modify his or her behavior to reach a goal; the ability to adjust his or her approach to a particular situation, obtain goals, or to support the group working toward its goal.

Decision making: The process involving a positive act of choosing between two or more possible courses of action. Behaviors to be evaluated are willingness to make decisions and the ability to make quality decisions.

Leadership: The process of motivating others to perform tasks effectively without evoking resistance or arousing hostility. Leadership styles used depend on the given situation.

Likability: The extent to which one is approved or respected by others. This is rated by peer evaluation and through the subjective reaction of each assessor to the candidate.

Need for approval: The extent to which an individual requires to have his or her behavior approved by coworkers or a higher authority before taking action.

Oral communication: The ability to present an oral report and personally communicate on a one-to-one basis. The primary focus is the actual verbal behavior--the use of an appropriate introduction, the method and style of presentation, the organization of ideas, the use of a summary and conclusion, and the quality of the individual's voice. The secondary focus is nonverbal behavior, such as hand gestures, use of notes, eye contact, and appearance of nervousness.

Overall Assessment Center Rating: A consensus rating, derived by three assessors for an assessee over the latter's performance, on the 12 Assessment Center criteria.

Perception: The extent to which an individual can perceive subtle cues in the behavior of others toward the individual.

Persuasiveness: The extent to which an individual makes an impact on others; an individual's ability to get other group members to consider the thoughts, ideas, and opinions of the individual.

Planning and organizing: The extent to which one organizes work and the quality of short- and long-term plans. It is the process that gives form, order, and structure to the work. The components of this variable include identifying needs and issues of clientele, setting objectives, establishing priorities, and coordinating the planning process to ensure timely achievement of group tasks.

Written communication: The extent to which one can effectively express ideas in writing. The primary focus will be the candidate's knowledge of the overall program development process to include needs identification, priority setting, marketing techniques, strategic planning, and other concepts relevant to program

planning. Secondary factors to be considered are length, appearance, spelling, grammar, attention to conventional usage, and style.

Definitions Related to Performance Appraisal

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

Counseling Guide: The performance appraisal instrument that contains job-related criteria used in rating county agent-coordinators (Smith, 1989).

Performance appraisal: The process of rating the appropriateness and effectiveness of county agent coordinators' administrative work.

Performance appraisal score: The numerical score obtained from the use of the Counseling Guide in rating county agent-coordinators' administrative activities by the district agent or extension district agent.

Delimitations of the Study

Numerous variables could have influenced the relationship between annual performance appraisal scores on administrative skills received by county agent-coordinators (CACs) during their first 3 years in the CAC position and the overall rating they received from the Assessment Center earlier. To control for some of these alternative explanations, an ex post facto research design was used for this study. The major weaknesses of ex post facto research design are (1) the inability to assign individuals randomly to treatment levels, (2) the inability to manipulate the independent variables, (3) the inability to assign individuals who receive a rating of four (presently does not possess knowledge and skills needed to successfully perform the job duties of county agent-coordinator) in the Assessment Center to the CAC position, and (4) the risk of interpreting correlation as causation. These weakness are

apparent in this study because the extension agents could not be assigned randomly by gender or race.

Two important factors influenced the data in this study. Agents were not randomly selected to participate, but had to achieve a level of performance on the performance appraisal score, and they had to be an associate county agent, county agent, or Auburn University faculty member associated with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. Additionally, they had to elect to apply to participate in the Assessment Center. Low performers (below 7 on annual performance appraisal), as well as those not interested in becoming a CAC, did not participate in the Assessment Center. These two groups of individuals were not promoted to the CAC position, nor did they have any part in this study. Equally important, individuals who received a rating of four from the Assessment Center were not promoted to the CAC position and were not a part of the study unless they participated in the Assessment Center at a later time and obtained an overall rating of 3 or better. The fact that these two groups of individuals were not a part of the study did effect the data, inasmuch as the CACs examined here were not randomly selected.

Other delimitations of this study include (1) the number of years of performance appraisal rating use in comparison to the Assessment Center results, (2) the use of data only from the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center, (3) the relation and applicability of findings to other Cooperative Extension Services, and (4) the relation and applicability of the findings to other assessment centers.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the study are limited to the ACES Assessment Center. Limitations discussed here are substantive ones only, as opposed to procedural limitations treated earlier in this chapter. The results of this study should not be used to draw conclusions about the accuracy or predictability of any other assessment center. This includes those that assess CACs in other extension services through the United States and for assessment centers used by other organizations. The results of the performance appraisal instrument that does not discriminate based on gender or race relates to the one ACES uses to assess the performance of these, nonrandom CACs. No reference can be made as to whether other assessment centers or their performance appraisal instruments are discriminatory in regard to gender or race.

Other limitations of this study include (1) the changes in the rating of CAC performance, from the district agent coordinators to extension district agents due to the changes in the structure of the organization, (2) the changes in the individual in the rater positions due to retirements and promotions, (3) the changes that have occurred in the performance appraisal instrument due to reorganization, (4) the fact that there were either three or nine districts and that raters in each district might rate differently, and (5) the limited number of CACs that have been promoted to the position while using the Assessment Center.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of this study are as follows:

1. The Assessment Center assumed essential skills required in a county agent-coordinator position.

2. The rating by assessors of individuals participating in the Assessment Center were nonbiased and were consistent in their manner of serving even though different assessors were used.
3. The county agent-coordinators' performance appraisal instrument included all essential skills needed to be an effective CAC.
4. Various extension district agents evaluated consistently and accurately in rating the county agent-coordinators' performances.
5. As the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service has gone from one organizational structure to another there have been no significant differences in ratings of CACs.

Summary

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, established by an Act of Congress in 1914, is part of the national land-grant college system. This Act created a means of delivering researched-based knowledge to the public. This legislation provided for a partnership of the local, state, and national governments in providing information to the public that could enable them to improve their quality of life.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service has experienced many changes in its administrative structure. The first-line supervisor in the present administrative structure is County Agent-Coordinator. County Agent-Coordinators are in each of the 67 counties in Alabama. One of the criterion for promotion to this position is receiving a rating of three or less, on a scale of four, in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center.

This study compared the placement categories an individual received from the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center with their annual performance appraisal rating for the first 3 years after they were promoted to County Agent-Coordinator. The data for the study were obtained from personnel records (see appendix G). This study was intended to help determine the extent to which the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center results were predictors of future success and if Assessment Center results and the performance appraisal system were bias free with regards to gender and race. This study also determined the relative value of the Assessment Center variables, singly and in combination, in predicting the Assessment Center's overall ratings.

The performance appraisal system for the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service that is currently being used to assess county agent-coordinators' performance was initiated in the fall of 1976. This system utilizes job-related criteria to determine the quality of each agent's performance as it relates to their job description. The performance appraisal is administered by the district agent-coordinator and by the extension district agent under the new organizational structure that occurred in 1991. Performance appraisal is a continuous process that involves observation and monitoring throughout the year with an annual rating provided each year.

Generalizability of the results of this study is limited to the Assessment Center evaluations obtained by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service that were in place at the time of the study. The findings cannot be extended to other assessment centers or different Extension Services.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Introduction

Assessment centers are considered by many to be one of the major new developments occurring in the human resource field in the past 25 years (Ross, 1985). They were first introduced to business in 1958. Since then thousands of public and private institutions have conducted assessment centers for selection, development, training, and certification purposes (Ross, 1985; Olshfski & Cunningham, 1986). The use of assessment centers by professionals and practitioners involved in selection and development of managerial personnel continues to increase (Harris, Becker, & Smith, 1993; Kwarteng, 1986).

Managers, students, engineers, salespersons, military personnel, rehabilitation counselors, school administrators, and blue-collar workers all have been assessed by assessment centers (Gaugler, Rosenthal, Thornton, III, & Bentson, 1987; Howard, 1986). More than 20 years ago, the Management Process Study of Bray, Campbell, and Grant (1974) demonstrated that certain characteristics were relatively stable and could thereby be measured. This was part of the reason for the widespread use of assessment centers as a way to identify potential managers (Ritchie & Moses, 1983). Assessment centers in the public sector have been embraced as a selection method which meets civil service exam criteria and has high predictive validity. In California

it is estimated that one out of every four local municipalities has conducted an assessment center within the last two years (Ross, 1985).

Assessment centers apply a process in which several observational techniques are used to evaluate a group of candidates along a number of previously determined behavioral dimensions (Ross, 1985). The techniques can include written tests or interviews but generally use simulated job exercises (Gomez & Stephenson, 1987). Participants take part in group and individual exercises that simulate the activities of the position to which they wish to accede. A team of trained assessors observes each participant and makes judgments of performance in each category (Ross, 1985). The assessors pool their observations to form a final judgment (Gomez & Stephenson, 1987). This is usually done after each assessor has scored each participant individually.

Corporations initially began using assessment centers to select employees for management positions. In recent years, many organizations also began using assessment centers for management development. These are two different processes, but they are not self-exclusive (Nichols & Hudson, 1981). Assessment centers can be used as an excellent tool for management selection, as well as to identify skills an individual needs to develop. The assessment center certainly has a role in both management selection and development processes, but it would be a mistake to rely solely on this process for making selection or development decisions. Other factors should also be considered when using assessment center results. An individual's record of performance, previous job-related experiences, educational experience, and so forth, are important factors in the selection process. When assessment centers are used as a development tool, they can identify the skill strengths and weaknesses of each

candidate. With this information candidates can receive training that will develop skill in their deficit areas (Nichols & Hudson, 1981).

Definitions

Assessment centers conduct standardized evaluations of behaviors based on multiple inputs with multiple-trained observers who use various techniques (LaRue, 1989). Thornton and Byham (1982) defined an assessment center as

a comprehensive, standardized procedure in which multiple assessment techniques such as situational exercises and job simulations (i.e., business games, discussion groups, reports, and presentations) are used to evaluate individual employees for various purposes. (p. 1)

It is a process in which individuals can participate in a series of situations which simulate accurately what they will be expected to do. Assessment centers test by using situational or simulation exercises, and multiple-trained assessors process information in a fair and impartial manner (Jaffee & Sefcik, 1980). They use scenarios and open-ended problems to allow participants to display behaviors which are noted by the assessors. The assessors then gather to discuss and seek consensus on the behaviors demonstrated by each participant before reaching any final decision about the career potential of the participants (Cunningham & Olshfski, 1985).

The Task Force on Assessment Center Guidelines (1989) has adopted this definition:

An assessment center consists of a standardized evaluation of behavior based on multiple inputs. Multiple-trained observers and techniques are used. Judgments about behavior are made, in major part, from specifically developed assessment simulations.

These judgements are pooled by the assessors in a meeting among the assessors or by a statistical integration process. In an integration discussion, comprehensive accounts of behavior and often ratings of it are pooled. The discussions result in evaluations of the performance of

the assesses on the dimensions or other variables which the assessment center is designed to measure. Statistical combination methods should be validated in accord with professionally accepted standards. (LaRue, 1989, p. 18)

What is an assessment center? The answer is not simple, and it depends on who you ask. "It is a process in which individuals have an opportunity to participate in a series of situations which resemble what they might be called upon to do in the real world." They are tested by situational or simulation exercises, and multiple-trained assessors process information in a fair and impartial manner (Jaffee & Sefcik, 1980). They can be used in entry-level positions, and for teachers, salespeople, and management positions. The major limiting factor is the cost associated with using assessment centers to gather information about a person's skills (Jaffee & Sefcik, 1980).

History

Assessment centers have a long history. The quest for a reliable method of identifying people with a potential for success is not new. It was developed first for the military, refined for the business community, and eventually applied in the public sector (LaRue, 1989).

Simple performance tests were used to measure individual differences in behavior in the early 1900s. Some of these tests were used to predict the job performance of individuals. The German army was the first to use the assessment center process to select officers in the 1930s. The German model was the first to attempt to use both multiple assessment techniques and multiple assessors to evaluate complex behavior (Thornton & Byham, 1982).

While German military psychologists were the first to explore the idea of using simulations to assess the behaviors of candidates for particular jobs in the military, the success the Germans realized in candidate selection was recognized by the British War Office Selection Board. The British further developed the model and used it to identify British army officer candidates during World War II (Milstein & Fiedler, 1989).

The assessment center concept came to the United States at approximately the same time the United States army, through the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), assembled several scientists during World War II to select people for dangerous intelligence assignments. After the war, the Civil Service Selection Board used the OSS process to select entrants to the administrative class of the Civil Service. Not only was the objective to pick successful administrative candidates but also to pick those who would eventually rise to assistant secretary (Keil, 1981).

Independent of the above developments, a new turn in American business recruiting would one day coalesce into the present-day concept of the assessment center. In the 1920s, Donald S. Bridgman was charged with developing the American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) recruitment program. Bridgman's early studies demonstrated that rank in the college graduating class was a valid predictor of an individual's later success in the company. These early studies were used later to develop the first modern-day assessment centers in 1956 at AT&T (Bray et al., 1974). Through these assessment centers AT&T evaluated 422 newly hired men over an 8-year period. This was the most fully realized assessment center to that point, and the follow up data were impressive. The assessment center identified 85% of the individuals who would later achieve mid-level management. This demonstrated the

high predictive value of the assessment center (LaRue, 1989). Since this early use by AT&T, industry has incorporated the concept until over 2,000 American organizations are using assessment centers for a wide variety of purposes. Their use includes identification of management potential, selection, placement, career management and training, and promotion (Gaugler, Rosenthal, Thornton, & Bentson, 1987).

Almost 20 years ago the Management Progress Study (MPS)(Bray et al., 1974) demonstrated that certain characteristics were related to subsequent progress in management, that these characteristics were relatively stable, and that they could be reliably measured. This led, in part, to the widespread use of assessment centers as a means of identifying further management potential (Ritchie & Moses, 1983; Taylor, 1984).

Public Education Use of Assessment Centers

In public education in 1975, The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), recognizing the need to identify and develop educational administrators, worked with the American Psychological Association to develop a plan for developing the NASSP Assessment Center Project. Twenty years later more than 50 member organizations that serve school districts and universities are using this method and its instruments (Milstein & Fiedler, 1989). Through these assessment centers more than 2,000 participants have been assessed (Wendel, 1986).

Research gives more support to the assessment center as a technique for managerial assessment than to any other practice, according to Thornton and Byham (1982). This is why NASSP helps school systems establish assessment centers for assessing school leaders. School systems must agree to cover the cost of operating assessment centers and are expected to utilize the results of the assessments (Lepard,

1986). Assessment centers were introduced into the field of public education in the 1970s. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), in conjunction with the American Psychological Association, developed an assessment center model. This pilot project demonstrated an approach to selecting potentially successful administrators, and consequently led to extensive use of assessment centers in public education (Gomez & Stephenson, 1987; Wendel & Uerling, 1989).

Shilling (1986) states that assessment centers are important because the single most critical factor in an excellent school is an outstanding leader. Not only does the assessment center concept provide a service to local school systems in assisting in the selection of effective principals, but if used properly, it nurtures and develops those with ability who aspire to be leaders (Shilling, 1986). This can be done if school systems are in the business of assessment to make a positive difference for people.

Assessment Center Operations

Directors of assessment centers must establish credibility, pay attention to detail, apply safeguards, maintain public support, and make the assessment experience humane (Burlison, 1986). The content of assessment activities should be based on on-the-job behavior. This behavior should be predictive of subsequent on-the-job performance (Kelley, 1986). Assessors must be trained to observe this behavior and make decisions about the abilities of each candidate.

While receiving training to become an assessor, administrative skills can be improved (McCall, 1986). According to Baughman (1986), assessors must master every aspect of the assessment process before participating in an assessment center as an assessor. This requires a large investment of preparatory time by each individual planning to become an assessor.

If an assessment center is to be used to its potential, then the promotional policy and an associated set of procedures must reflect the full integration and implementation of the assessment center in the promotional process and personnel system. Training and appraisal are necessary to integrate the assessment center process with other personnel functions. Time, money, and other resources will be required to use an assessment center to identify potential candidates for leadership positions. Farmer (1986) states that for the assessment center to significantly enhance the decision-making process for promotional decisions, its implementation should be done with full knowledge that other functions of the personnel process will have to be altered.

Feedback to the participants is an important aspect of the assessment process. It provides the participants with both written and oral information about their strengths and weaknesses (Landholm, 1986). Regardless of their performance and subsequent assessment, participants learn much about themselves. This information helps participants make career decisions and identifies skills that need attention before landing that first leadership position (Wendel, 1986).

Advantage of Assessment Centers

The principal advantage of assessment centers is simple: they work (LaRue, 1989). In general, the techniques used in an assessment center provide more information about the candidate's probable success in an organization than any other methodology available. The assessment center should be patterned after real, on-the-job experiences. This provides the assessor with an added appreciation for what the position requires. Likewise participants can get a good preview of the work expected, and if they do not like what they see, they can quietly drop out of the competition. A

final, and vital, advantage is that assessment centers have provided more opportunity for minorities than traditional interview methods (LaRue, 1989).

Another advantage for using assessment centers is that they help ensure that the right person is hired. The cost of hiring the wrong candidate is too high for an organization to risk otherwise (Hanson & Balestreri-Spero, 1985). The cost of using an assessment center is justified by the mutual returns of appropriate placements and reduced turnover (Milstein & Fiedler, 1989). A compelling reason for using an assessment center, in fact, is that it is cost-effective. The process is job-specific and accurately tests skills that were previously only identified or estimated. Candidates can be tested for communication skills through role-playing exercises that require them to perform in a public relations risk situation. This information is certainly helpful in selecting a candidate required to work closely with the media (Collins, 1990).

In general, past studies have shown that assessment centers have accurately predicted managerial success in a number of organizations. They have gained wide acceptance as tools in the selection of managers. Russell (1985), in reviewing extensive research, indicated a positive relationship between assessment center ratings and subsequent success as a manager. Most research of assessment centers has demonstrated the usefulness of the centers in predicting success regardless of educational level, prior assessment center experience, race, or gender (Schneider & Wallich, 1990). Schneider and Wallich's study further stated that in addition to the obvious purposes of promotion and selection of administrators, assessment centers are useful in the training, development, and career planning of participants.

The popularity of assessment centers may be attributed to the feedback that is provided to the participants. This information about the assessee's strengths and

weaknesses enables them to assess career potential and improve skills by attending workshops and taking classes (Schnider & Wallich, 1990). Milstein and Fiedler (1989) stated that literature indicated that participating in an assessment center also allows assesseees and assessors feedback to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses. The data from the assessment center can, therefore, be used to provide a focus for in-service training. This in turn leads to professional growth and development of both assessors and assesseees. The individual participant's self-esteem and expectations are elevated as a result of participating in an assessment center. Candidates associate their selection to participate in the assessment center to their worth to the organization. They then seek to perform both in the assessment center and later on the job at a level higher than before (Turnage & Muchinsky, 1984).

The use of assessment centers can have a positive effect on the entire management group in terms of personal development, organizational cohesiveness, and other critical elements of organizational effectiveness. Another benefit is that more managers are interested in improving their own effectiveness as managers (Joines, Lorthridge, & Hayes, 1986).

Disadvantages of Assessment Centers

The high cost of personnel, in both time and money, is the most prevalent disadvantage in assessment center implementation. Costs include resource requirements for travel, accommodations, materials, and salaries. Due to the expensive and time-consuming nature of this training, there is a tendency to use a limited number of assessors (Milstein & Fiedler, 1989). This can result in assessor burnout, which was reported as a serious problem in a study by Milstein and Fiedler (1989). Therefore, multiple trained observers are necessary. The assessment center needs to be

designed by outside specialists who have knowledge and ability to direct and perform the steps of job analysis, development of exercises, and staff training (Kolb, 1984). The expenses to cover these preassessees costs were \$1,500 to \$2,500 when using the NASSP model (Milstein & Fiedler, 1989). Without a model to follow, these start-up expenses could be much higher.

An assessment center will usually take at least three days for each assessor: one day for training, at least one day for assessing, and one more for making a decision (LaRue, 1989). Knowing the qualities sought for a position is not enough; a number of exercises must be designed to measure these qualities. Preparing for assessment center exercises may require seeking help from a consultant who is experienced with the organization and functions of the assessment center (Collins, 1990).

There is a more subtle but significant disadvantage. The assessment center was designed to be a staff development and promotion tool. The people being assessed already belonged to organizations whose unique goals they understood. When the assessment center is used as a hiring tool, the key element of organizational orientation is absent. This results in a loss of reciprocity in the interview process.

This loss of reciprocity has several negative consequences. For one thing, it sometimes scares off the best candidates. For example, suppose the leading candidate cracks a joke or two. The response of the assessors? not even the hint of a smile, no more than a scribbled notation and attentive glance. Who would want to work for such humorless automatons?

Unless the assessment center is based on close-to-fact job situations, candidates could walk away from a grueling day playing stressful and ambiguous games without any better idea of what the job entailed, or what their potential boss was looking for, that when they arrived. (LaRue, 1989, p. 21)

Results of assessment centers can be over-emphasized. When people are either "passed" and qualified for advancement, or "failed" and learn that their career opportunities are limited, employees may be disappointed and cause a moral and

motivational problem for the managers of the organization (Nichols & Hudson, 1981).

Another problem is when an assessment center is used in the place of the interview process for bringing in new employees, candidates can walk away from a grueling day playing stressful and ambiguous games without any idea of what the job entailed, or what their potential employer was looking for. Interviews ideally should be reciprocal, and assessment centers do not provide that kind of setting. The assessment process can be unfair to outside applicants and a waste of their time (LaRue, 1989).

Problems With Assessment Centers

Turnage and Muchinsky (1984) observed that one of the fundamental problems in assessment center research involves the measurement of effective work performance using reliable and objective rating of on-the-job behavior. Although virtually every validation study has used supervisory ratings of both performance and potential, "problems with supervisors' ratings are legion," including biases of leniency, halo, and restriction of range (Thornton & Byham, 1982). Reliable and valid criteria of managerial job performance need to be identified, and then research needs to be conducted to determine if assessment center evaluations can predict their standards of success on the job (Turnage & Muchinsky, 1984).

There has been some concern about participants possibly falsifying their performance at an assessment center. Can candidates role-play and change their behavior to match the expectations they perceive of the assessors? Some researcher believe candidates can learn to match their behavior to the expectations they perceive of the assessors. These researcher do not believe performance of assesseees can be predicted because assessment centers can not predict non performance factors that

influence performance. An individual's performance not only depends on his or her skills, but also on interest, motivation, or opportunity. Assessment centers do not measure motivation, they measure skill level and potential. But the knowledge of skill level can be of critical importance in job performance. Therefore, assessment centers can be useful for management by identifying the skills of participants for which they were designed (Jaffee & Sefcik, 1980).

Research concerning assessment centers is not as extensive when compared with alternative predictors like biographical data, peer nominations, or training and supervisory ratings. Studies by Klimoski and Strickland (1977) found evidence that preassessment ratings of performance and potential can produce higher correlations with subsequent performance and potential ratings than the assessment centers method (Turnage & Muchinsky, 1984).

The validity of assessment centers has been brought into question. It could be argued that being selected to participate in an assessment center may reinforce the feelings of self efficacy for competent managerial candidates. Therefore, the apparent validity of assessment centers relates to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Another explanation for assessment center success is that high performers in the centers are thus predicted to be high performers in future managerial roles (Klimoski & Brickner, 1987). Certainly, more research is needed to determine the validity of assessment centers. This is apparent when Russell (1985) states that assessors are apparently not doing what assessment center architects thought they were doing. The procedures are useful for predicting managerial success but validity remains a puzzle (Klimoski & Brickner, 1987).

Validity

Numerous studies have found the validity of assessment center ratings to be consistent and reliable (Neidig & Neidig, 1984; Schmitt, 1977; Schneider & Schmitt, 1992). This has led to an increase in the use of assessment centers (Schmitt, Noe, Meritt, & Fitzgerald, 1984). Sackett and Dreher (1984) contend that content validity is an appropriate means of showing the job relatedness of an assessment center if designed appropriately. Assessment centers work when they are operated as they were intended. Raters should be selected and trained appropriately, and efforts to maintain quality control in the implementation of the center should be made on a continuous basis (Schmitt, Schneider, & Cohen, 1990). The number of dimensions assessors observe can potentially influence the assessment of individuals (Gaugler & Thornton, 1989). Gaugler and Thornton's findings supported the contention that assessors have a limited capacity to process information and that the greater the complexity of the judgment task, the more prone it will be to cognitive biases.

Even with all the positive studies of assessment centers there are some concerns. Sackett (1987) and Sackett and Dreher (1982) questioned whether content validity alone was sufficient to establish the job relatedness of an assessment center, concluding that more research is needed to better understand the evaluation process and the impact of variations in the evaluation process.

There are two assessment center methods for generating ratings. In the traditional approach, known as the behavioral reporting method, assessors report only behaviors that occurred in each exercise and then make overall ratings for each dimension that is assessed in each exercise. The exercise-dimension method involves an intermediate step wherein assessors provide a rating for each dimension that is

assessed in each exercise (Thornton, 1992). Harris, Becker and Smith's (1993) study examined the hypothesis that using a scoring method requiring assessors to think in terms of dimensions may alleviate the problem of cross-situational consistency. Their finding was unclear whether behavior really differs from situation to situation or whether assessors are unable to accurately rate behavior because of their own schema-based processing or candidates' limited behavioral opportunities and behavior is thus truly quite consistent across situations. Shore, Thornton, and Shore's (1990) study built on previous research by suggesting that final dimension ratings can be valid measures of underlying constructs. Concerns about the lack of construct validity of within-exercise dimension ratings should be dispelled since these are not used for decision-making purposes. Organizations should consider providing assessors with broad categories for grouping dimensions as a way to improve the reliability and validity of assessor judgments (Gaugler & Thornton, 1989; Shore et al., 1990).

Neidig and Neidig's (1984) findings support the purpose of multiple exercises in assessment centers. Multiple exercises are not simply providing additional opportunities for behavior observation. Each exercise is carefully designed to increase the degree of job representation, and each exercise confronts the participants with different demands. Sackett and Dreher (1984) examined the internal construct validity of assessment centers using multiple exercises and failed to satisfy construct validity requirements. Neidig and Neidig (1984) concluded the use of multiple validation strategies may be desirable, but the failure of internal exercise ratings to satisfy construct-validity requirements does not preclude the job relatedness of the assessment center method.

There have been some concerns also about gender and race composition of assessment center groups and how this affects assessor ratings. In the Schmitt and Hill (1977) study, the data suggested that the ratings for black females may be adversely affected by the gender and race of other members of their group on variables such as forcefulness, communications skills, and performance in group exercises. These results were of marginal statistical and practical significance.

Although much has been written about the validity of assessment centers, almost all of the published research is based entirely on male samples. However, two studies focused on women who were in nonmanagement positions at the time of assessment and who were being evaluated for potential to succeed in lower level management jobs. The 1975 Moses and Boehm study found that the overall assessment rating was significantly related to progress in management and that the success rate for women was comparable to that of men (Ritchie & Moses, 1983).

Assessment center results can be used as a sample of job behavior or as a sign of future job performance. Sackett and Dreher (1984) stated that,

When an assessment center is being used to determine whether a candidate is currently able to perform important job behaviors without additional training, the center is being used as a sample of job performance, and a content validity strategy is appropriate. When an assessment center is being used to select individuals who will need additional training and/or experience before being able to perform adequately in the target job the center is being used as a sign of job performance. (p. 190)

The first study to validate the results of an assessment center was one by Schmitt et al. (1984) used to select school administrators. The studies conducted by Schmitt et al. indicated positive relationships between school administrators' assessment center category results and subsequent job performance as rated by

supervisors, teachers, and support staff. The Management Assessment Center of the Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida, revealed that all the validity correlation coefficients were positive, and except for one, all were statistically significant (Gomez & Stephenson, 1987).

Assessment centers appear to be examples of selection procedures for which content validity is most appropriate. Most use a sampling of job content to show content validity. Sackett (1987) demonstrated how these sample materials are presented and how candidate responses to these materials are also critical considerations in making judgments about content validity. The traditional content-oriented approach focuses on a job analysis to identify important dimensions of the targeted managerial positions. The job analysis is used to either purchase or develop appropriate simulation exercises. The argument that the assessment center process is job related on the basis of exercise design represents a very weak support of construct validity (Bycio, Alvares, & Hahn, 1987; Sackett & Dreher, 1984).

There are a variety of highly inferential steps involved in the procedures of observing candidate performance in a multiple exercise and make numerous trait ratings to generate an overall predictions of an individual performance in an assessment center. The logic of this process depends on the accurate measurements of the traits or constructs viewed as central to being a successful manager (Sackett & Dreher, 1982). Sackett and Dreher found virtually no support for the view that the assessment center technique generates dimensional scores that can be interpreted as representing complex constructs such as leadership, decision making, or organizational intelligence.

Summary

Assessment centers have become renowned for attempting to select employees who might perform successfully in management positions. Many practitioners argue that assessment centers are better utilized for management development purposes than for management selection.

Assessment centers were started in the early 1900s by the German military. They were first used to select officers in the 1930s and were later recognized by the British War Officer Selection Board and the Office of Strategic Service in the United States military. AT&T evaluated 422 newly hired men over 8 years when this business began using assessment centers. Their use has steadily grown and many studies have been conducted on their reliability as a selection instrument.

The many beneficiaries of assessment centers include students, engineers, salespersons, military personnel, rehabilitation counselors, school administrators, and blue-collar workers (Gaugler et al., 1987). The best assessment centers provide valuable feedback information to each candidate about their strengths and weaknesses.

Assessment centers are a process whereby several observational techniques are used to evaluate a group of individuals along a number of behavioral dimensions that one might be expected to perform in the real world. A team of trained assessors observes each individual and makes judgements about their performance in each area. The assessors score each participant individually and then meet and form a final collective judgement on each individual.

The advantage of assessment centers is that they work. In general, they provide more information about the candidate's probable success in the organization. They also provide valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of the

candidate. If this information is provided to the individual being assessed, they can use it to improve skills that are weak. In some instances assessment centers appear to provide opportunities for minorities that traditional hiring or promotional methods lack.

The major disadvantage of using assessment centers is the cost. It is a very grueling process for candidates and some top applicants may be disenchanted or turned away by the impersonal process. Candidates may consider it a waste of their time when they are not selected to the position. Assessment centers should be used as part of an interview process that provides valuable information to the employer and the candidate.

Assessment centers are designed to be valid predictors of success. Most research has shown positive results in numerous studies. It is generally agreed that raters should be selected and trained with effort made to maintain quality control in the implementation of the assessment center.

CHAPTER III

Methodology and Procedures

Introduction

This study was a descriptive correlational investigation, the primary purpose of which was to investigate the relationships between ratings received by participants in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (ACES) Assessment Center for county agent-coordinators (CACs) and the performance appraisal ratings these participants received during each of the first 3 years after appointment to the CAC position. It was also important to determine that there was no racial or gender bias that occurred for either the performance appraisal or the Assessment Center appraisal. This study additionally considered the relationship between the rating received on administrative areas of the performance appraisal ratings and their rating received through the ACES Assessment Center for gender and race bias. Finally, this study considered the relationship between the individual skill areas on variables comprising the assessment process and overall ratings received by participants in the Assessment Center to determine if any of the 12 variables, singly or in some combination, significantly influenced the overall rating received by the candidates.

Data were collected through the use of personnel records of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. This was accomplished by obtaining individual ratings received in each of the 12 skill areas plus the overall ratings received by 51

individuals who had participated in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for CACs. Individuals promoted to the CAC position were identified along with their race and gender. Only the portion of their annual performance appraisal ratings directly relating to administrative skills was examined for the first 3 years following their appointment to the CAC position. The administrative skills assessed were planning and organizing, personnel and staff development, personnel management and staff development for academic staff, leadership and directing, and reporting and evaluation.

There were five objectives of the study:

1. To determine if the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years are bias free in regards to race and gender.
2. To determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process is bias free with regard to gender and race.
3. To determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process when compared to the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years are bias free in regards to gender and race.
4. To determine if certain skills in the Assessment Center are more predictive than others of an overall Assessment Center rating, singly or in combination.
5. To determine if the overall Assessment Center ratings are predictive of the administrative performance for any of the first 3 years after appointment to the CAC position based on the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal ratings.

Selection of the Population

The population for this study was all CACs who participated in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center and were promoted to the CAC position between 1980 and 1989. One hundred and twenty-seven individuals have participated in 22 assessment center sessions. Of the 63 promoted to the position of CAC, 51 have held the CAC position for 3 or more years. Three years was used because it provided enough time in the CAC position to demonstrate job performance over time. Although some CACs have had more experience, the use of a three year time frame resulted in a reasonable population size. To have used more years of service would have reduced the population size. Therefore, the population for this study consisted of 51 CACs who participated in the Assessment Center and had at least 3 years experience.

Research Design

A descriptive correlational study was used to obtain data in the nature and strength of the relationships between the variables in the study. The research for this study was accomplished by utilizing two basic instruments: the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service performance appraisal system, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension Assessment Center for county agent-coordinators. The performance appraisal system was developed using the 1978 "Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures," which has the force of law in employment discrimination cases (Buford, 1991). It states,

There should be a job analysis which includes an analysis of the important work behavior(s) required for successful performance and their relative importance, and, if the behavior results in work product(s), an analysis of work product(s). (Federal Register 43, 1978)

The performance appraisal system was based on a job analysis that identified the duties performed and skills required of an extension county agent-coordinator (Smith, 1981). The validation of the system was accomplished in 1977 by Dr. James Smith, Associate Director-Human Resources with Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (Smith, 1981).

This study was designed to investigate whether a candidate's ability to complete various exercises in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center as rated by assessors is an acceptable predictor of his/her potential for the first-level managerial work of a county agent-coordinator. This study also determined if certain skills, singly or in combination, measured in the ACES Assessment Center for CAC's process were more predictive than others of overall Assessment Center ratings and if there were significant differences in performance appraisal results and Assessment Center rating attributable to gender or race. Basically this study denotes the variable from which predictions were made (the Assessment Center category rating) as X and the variables whose values were estimated (the average of planning and organizing, personnel and staff development, personnel management and staff development for academic staff, leadership and directing, and reporting and evaluation categories of the job performance rating) as Y, and determined the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables of this bivariate population and how the relationships was expressed with an estimation equation. This methodology thus follows the steps in a criterion related validity study where ratings on a selection test or "predictor" are related to some measure of job success which is the "criterion." The study also examines the effect of race and gender on the relationship between Assessment Center performance and actual job performance afterward. When

determining if the Assessment Center was bias free in regards to gender or race and which of the skill variables, singly or in combination, were more predictive of the overall Assessment Center rating, the variables from which predictions were made (gender, race, and skill variables) as X and the variables whose values were estimated (the assessment category) as Y, and determines the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables of this bivariate population and how the relationship was expressed with an estimation equation. This is known as “differential validity” (Buford, 1991).

Sample

The sample included 51 county agent-coordinators in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service who had participated in the Assessment Center and held the position of a CAC for at least three years. Data were collected by the ACES Personnel Office during 1983 through 1993.

Data Analysis

Data for Assessment Center ratings and job performance were provided by the ACES Personnel Office, and was coded and entered into a data set for computer analysis. The statistics were computed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X). Each research question was analyzed as follows.

Analysis 1

The MANOVA stepwise multiple regression was the statistical procedure employed to determine if the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years were bias free in regards to gender and race. An estimating equation for $Y = a + bx + bx^2 + bx^3$ was generated where as follows:

$$Y = \text{actual job performance rating (1-11)}$$

X_1 = assessment category (1-3)

X_2 = gender (m=1, f=2)

X_3 = race (w=3, non-w=4)

Analysis 2

ANOVA regression and hierarchical approach was the statistical procedure employed to determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process was bias free with regard to gender and race. An estimating equation for $Y = a + bx + bx^2$ was generated where as follows:

Y = assessment category (1-3)

X_1 = gender (m=1, f=2)

X_2 = race (w=3, non-w=4)

Analysis 3

The MANOVA stepwise multiple regression was the statistical procedure employed to determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process when compared to the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years was bias free in regards to gender and race. An estimating equation for $Y = a + bx + bx^2$ was generated where:

Y = assessment category (1-3)

X_1 = performance by gender (m=1, f=2)

X_2 = performance by race (w=3, non-w=4)

Analysis 4

The MANOVA stepwise multiple regression was the statistical procedure employed to determine if certain skills in the Assessment Center were more predictive than others of an overall Assessment Center rating, singly or in combination. An

estimating equation for $Y = a + bx + bx_2 + bx_3 + bx_4 + bx_5 + bx_6 + bx_7 + bx_8 + bx_9 + bx_{10} + bx_{11}$ was generated where as follows:

Y = assessment category (1-3)

X_1 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_2 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_3 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_4 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_5 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_6 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_7 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_8 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_9 = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_{10} = skill variables ratings (1-5)

X_{11} = skill variables ratings (1-5)

Analysis 5

The MANOVA stepwise multiple regression was the statistical procedure employed to determine if the overall Assessment Center ratings were predictive of the administrative performance for any of the first 3 years after appointment to the CAC position based on the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal ratings. An estimating equation for $Y = a + bx$ was generated for each year where as follows.

Y = actual job performance rating (1-11)

X_1 = assessment category (1-3)

X_2 = race (w=3, non-w=4)

Additional statistics were used to generate the correlation coefficient (r), the coefficient of determination (r^2), and the standard error of estimate (Se).

Instrumentation

The data were analyzed using quantitative analysis to determine if there was a significant positive relationship between the rating received by individuals who participated in the Assessment Center for CACs and each of their first 3 years' mean rating of their annual performance appraisal and if both were free of gender and racial bias. The analysis determined if any of the 12 skill variables, singly or in some combination, significantly influenced the overall rating received by the candidates in the Assessment Center. The data for the analysis was collected from the personnel files of the individuals who participated in the Assessment Center and were selected for the position of CAC. The annual performance ratings were obtained from Dr. James Smith, Associate Director-Human Resources. These records were approved for use by Dr. Ann Thompson, Vice President for Extension and Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service in the time frame examined. The names of individuals or counties were not used to prevent identification of any individual in the study.

Validation of the Instrument

The predictive model of criterion-related validity was used to determine the correlations between the Assessment Center and performance appraisal results and to determine if both were free of gender and race bias individually and in combination. This method employs correlations, known as validity coefficients, to describe the degree and direction of relationship between a predictor and a criterion. The predictor was derived from a summation of the skill ratings obtained by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Assessment Center for CACs by the subjects of the study, and

the criterion consists of their subsequent job performance ratings. The degree of the relationship between these two variables is an indicator of the validity of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for prediction of CAC performance.

The criterion consist of the subject's job performance ratings. Job performance ratings were obtained by means of the annual performance appraisal for each of the first 3 years after promotion. The annual performance instrument was developed to evaluate CACs' performance in the administrative/ supervisory function of the CAC position.

The predictive model of criterion-related validity was also used to determine if correlations between the 12 skill variables, singly or in some combination, significantly influenced the overall rating received from the Assessment Center and if the Assessment Center is bias free for gender and race. This method employs correlations, known as validity coefficients, to describe the degree of relationship between a predictor and a criterion. The predictors were derived from overall ratings received by gender and race and the 12 individual skill ratings obtained by the ACES Assessment Center for CACs by candidates of the study, and the criterions consist of their subsequent overall Assessment Center rating.

The criterion consist of the candidate's overall Assessment Center ratings determined by assessors of the Assessment Center. Overall ratings were obtained from combined assessments of several job related activities during the ACES Assessment Center as evaluated by assessors. The ACES Assessment Center for CACs was developed to predict CACs' performance in the administrative/ supervisory function of the CAC position.

Summary

This study determined whether the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for CACs accurately predicts future job performance of a CAC following any of the first 3 years at this position based on annual performance ratings, and that this predictability was bias free with regard to gender and race. Prior to determining the predictability of the Assessment Center for future performance, it was important to discover both the performance appraisal and the Assessment Center appraisal system themselves were bias free on the basis of gender and race. Finally, this study investigated relationships between individual skill variables comprising the assessment process, singly and in combination, with the overall ratings received by participants in the Assessment Center.

CHAPTER IV

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Introduction

This study was a descriptive correlational investigation, the primary purpose of which was to investigate the relationships between ratings received by participants in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (ACES) Assessment Center for County Agent Coordinators (CACs) and the performance appraisal ratings these participants received during each of the first 3 years after appointment to the CAC position. It was also important to determine that there was no racial or gender bias that occurred for either the performance appraisal or the Assessment Center appraisal. This study additionally considered the relationship between the rating received on administrative areas of the performance appraisal ratings and their rating received through the ACES Assessment Center for gender and race bias. Finally, this study considered the relationship between the individual skill areas on variables comprising the assessment process and overall rankings received by participants in the Assessment Center to determine if any of the 12 variables, singly or in some combination, significantly influenced the overall ranking received by the candidates.

Data were collected through the use of personnel records of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. This was accomplished by obtaining individual ratings received in each of the 12 skill areas plus the overall ratings received by individuals

who had participated in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for CACs. Individuals promoted to the CAC position were identified along with their race and gender. Only the portion of their annual performance appraisal ratings directly relating to administrative skills was examined for the first 3 years following their appointment to the CAC position.

There were five objectives of the study:

1. To determine if the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years are bias free in regards to race and gender.
2. To determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process is bias free with regard to gender and race.
3. To determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process when compared to the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years are bias free in regards to gender and race.
4. To determine if certain skills in the Assessment Center are more predictive than others of an overall Assessment Center rating, singly or in combination.
5. To determine if the overall Assessment Center ratings are predictive of the administrative performance for any of the first 3 years after appointment to the CAC position based on the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal ratings.

Relationship of Independent Variables to Dependent Variable

The purpose of this study was to describe the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. On investigating relationships of

gender and race to administrative performance as a CAC, gender and race were independent variables and annual administrative performance ratings were the dependent variables. On investigating the Assessment Center, the dependent variable is the overall rating received from the ACES Assessment Center for CACs, and the independent variables are gender, race, the ratings received on the annual performance appraisal for each year of the first 3 years after a candidate is promoted to the CAC position, and the 12 variables, singly and in combination, as measured in the Assessment Center. This analysis examined race and gender differences to determine if significant statistical differences appear among these independent variables.

Personal and Demographic Variables

Information was collected on the following variables: gender, race, the 12 skill areas appraised in the Assessment Center, and job performance appraisal ratings. The performance appraisal ratings on each individual were collected for each of the first 3 years after the individuals were promoted to the CAC position. Findings regarding relationships of the variables follow.

Gender

Out of the 51 Extension employees that were included in this study, 35 (68.6%) were males and 16 (31.4%) were females. Data on gender are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Gender Distribution of Assesses

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	35	68.6	68.6
Female	16	31.4	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0

Race

Forty-three (84.3%) of the individuals in this study were white; 7 (13.7%) of the individuals in this study were black; and 1 (2%) individual in this study was of another race. This study combined the seven black and the one other of another race for a total of eight (15.7%) nonwhite individuals in this study. The data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Race Distribution of Assesses

Race	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
White	43	84.3	84.3
Nonwhite	8	15.7	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0

Overall Assessment Center Rating

The overall performance of the assesseees was represented on the following 4-point scale: 1 = should exceed normal expectations, 2 = should meet normal expectations, 3 = meeting normal expectations is questionable, and 4 = presently does not possess knowledge and skills needed to successfully perform the duties of CAC.

This study did not include the fourth rating because no individual was promoted with this rating unless that individual took additional recommended courses and then participated in another Assessment Center for CACs and received a rating of one, two, or three. Seven (13.7%) of the individuals in this study received a rating of one in the ACES Assessment Center for CACs. Category one is for individuals who were expected to exceed normal expectations for the CAC position. Twenty-seven (52.9%)

of the individuals in this study received a rating of two. Category two is for individuals who should meet normal expectations for the CAC position. Seventeen (33.33%) of the individuals in this study received a rating of three in the ACES Assessment Center for CACs. Category three is for individuals who were expected to experience difficulty. Data on the overall Assessment Center ratings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution for Overall Assessment Center Ratings as Rated by Assessors

Performance Rating	Number of Assesseees	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 = Should exceed normal expectations	7	13.73	13.73
2 = Should meet normal expectations	27	52.94	66.67
3 = Meeting normal expectations is questionable	17	33.33	100.00
Total	51	100.00	

Assessment Center Ratings by Gender

Five (71.43%) of the individuals in this study receiving an overall ranking of one were males, and two (28.57%) were females. Eighteen (66.66%) of the individuals in this study receiving an overall ranking of two were males, and nine (33.33%) were females. Twelve (70.59%) of the individuals in this study receiving an overall ranking of three were males, and five (29.41%) were females. Data on Assessment Center Rankings by gender are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution for Assessment Center Rating by Gender

Assessment Center Rating	Male	Female	Total
1	5	2	7
2	18	9	27
3	12	5	17
Total	35	16	51

Assessment Center Ratings-Gender Percentages

Five (14.29%) of the 35 males and 2 (12.50%) of the 16 females in this study received an overall ranking of one. Eighteen (51.43%) of the 35 males and 9 (56.25%) of the 16 females in this study received an overall ranking of two. Twelve (34.29%) of the 35 males and 5 (31.25%) of the 16 females in this study received an overall ranking of three. Data on the percentage by gender of the Assessment Center ratings are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Percentage by Gender of Assessment Center Ratings

Assessment Center Rankings	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	n	%	n	%
1	5	14.29	2	12.50
2	18	51.43	9	56.25
3	12	34.29	5	31.25
Total	35	100.01	16	100.0

Assessment Center Ratings by Race

Six (85.71%) of the individuals in this study receiving an overall ranking of one were whites, and one (14.29%) was nonwhite. Twenty-two (81.48%) of the individuals in this study receiving an overall ranking of two were whites, and five (18.52%) were nonwhites. Fifteen (88.24%) of the individuals in this study receiving an overall ranking of three were whites, and two (17.76%) were nonwhites. Data on Assessment Center Ratings by race are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Frequency Distribution for Assessment Center Ratings by Race

Assessment Center Rating	White	Nonwhite	Total
1	6	1	7
2	22	5	27
3	15	2	17
Total	43	8	51

Assessment Center Ratings-Racial Percentages

Six (13.95%) of the 43 whites and one (12.50%) of the 8 nonwhites in this study received an overall ranking of one. Twenty-two (51.16%) of the 43 whites and five (52.50%) of the eight nonwhites in this study received an overall ranking of two. Fifteen (34.88%) of the 43 whites and two (25.00%) of the eight nonwhites in this study received an overall ranking of three. Data on the percentage by race of the Assessment Center rankings are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution of Assessment Center Ratings-Racial Percentages

Assessment Center Rankings	<u>Whites</u>		<u>Nonwhites</u>	
	n	%	n	%
1	6	13.95	1	12.50
2	22	51.16	5	62.50
3	15	34.88	2	25.00
Total	43	99.99	8	100.00

Skills Measured in the Assessment Center

The variable performance of each assessee was represented on a 5 point scale: 1 = low, 2 = below average, 3 = average, 4 = above average, and 5 = high. On oral communication skills, 2 individuals (3.9%) received a rating of two, 22 (43.1%) received a rating of three, 26 (51%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. On written communication skills, 2 (3.9%) received a rating of two, 27 (52.9%) received a rating of three, 21 (41.2%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. In the category of collaborativeness, 5 (9.8%) received a rating of two, 25 (49%) received a rating of three, 20 (39.2%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. In adaptability, 4 (7.8%) received a rating of two, 28 (54.9%) received a rating of three, 18 (35.3%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. In the category of likability, 1 (2%) received a rating of two, 21 (41.2%) received a rating of three, 24 (47.1%) received a rating of four, and 5 (9.8%) received a rating of five. In planning and organizing, 2 (3.9%) received a rating of one, 10 (19.6%) received a rating of two, 17 (33.3%) received a rating of three, 18 (35.3%) received a rating of four; and 4 (7.8%) received a rating of

five. In decision making, 9 (17.6%) received a rating of two, 32 (62.7%) received a rating of three, 9 (17.6%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. On leadership, 9 (17.6%) received a rating of two, 28 (54.9%) received a rating of three, 13 (25.5%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. On persuasiveness, 7 (13.7%) received a rating of two, 27 (52.9%) received a rating of three, and 17 (33.3%) received a rating of four. On perception, 5 (9.8%) received a rating of two, 26 (51%) received a rating of three, 18 (35.3%) received a rating of four, and 2 (3.9%) received a rating of five. On assertiveness, 2 (3.9%) received a rating of one, 5 (9.8%) received a rating of two, 24 (47.1%) received a rating of three, 19 (37.3%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. In the twelfth category, need for approval, 1 (2%) received a rating of one, 7 (13.7%) received a rating of two, 22 (43.1%) received a rating of three, 20 (39.2%) received a rating of four, and 1 (2%) received a rating of five. The data are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Achievement Levels of Skill Variables

Variable Skills	<u>Achievement Levels</u>					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Oral Communication	--	2	22	26	1	51
Written Communication	--	2	27	21	1	51
Collaborativeness	--	5	25	20	1	51
Adaptability	--	4	28	18	1	51
Likability	--	1	21	24	5	51
Planning and Organizing	2	10	17	18	4	51
Decision Making	--	9	32	9	1	51

Table 8 (continued)

Variable Skills	<u>Achievement Levels</u>					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Leadership	--	9	28	13	1	51
Persuasiveness	--	7	27	17	--	51
Perception	--	5	26	18	2	51
Assertiveness	2	5	24	19	1	51
Need for Approval	1	7	22	20	1	51

Performance Appraisal Ratings

Performance appraisal ratings were collected on listed administrative skills for the first, second, and third years after individuals were promoted to the CAC positions.

These data are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Performance Appraisal Ratings

Year	Means	Standard Deviation	Frequency
1	8.228	.7058	51
2	8.367	.7787	51
3	8.1482	1.3587	51

Findings

Each research question was analyzed separately.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 sought to determine if the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years was bias free in regards to gender and race.

Performance Appraisal Ratings by Gender

There was no significant difference in performance appraisal based on gender that occurred during any of the three years following appointment to the position of CAC. The multivariate test of significance using the MANOVA mode of the SPSS-X statistic with no interactions with gender as the effect was applied: Year 1, F was 2.0946 with a significance of F at .1542; Year 2, F was 1.9392 with a significance of F at .1700; and Year 3, F was 2.0691 with a significance of F at .1567. These data are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Performance Appraisal Ratings by Gender

<u>Year 1</u>			
Gender	Means	Standard Deviation	
Male	8.1326	.7333	
Females	8.4375	.6110	
Population	8.2282	.7058	
Eta = .2025	f = 1.9392	Eta squared = .0410	significance of f = .1542
<u>Year 2</u>			
Gender	Means	Standard Deviation	
Male	8.2651	.8164	
Female	8.5894	.6587	
Population	8.3669	.7787	
Eta = .1951	f = 1.9392	Eta squared = .0381	significance of f = .1700

Table 10 (Continued)

	<u>Year 3</u>	
Gender	Means	Standard Deviation
Male	7.9651	1.5787
Female	8.5487	.5051
Population	8.1482	1.3587
Eta = .2013 f = 2.0691 Eta squared = .0405 significance of f = .1567		

Performance Appraisal Ratings by Race

There was no significant difference in performance appraisal based on race that occurred during any of the 3 years following appointment to the position of CAC.

The multivariate test of significance using the MANOVA model of the SPSS-X with no interactions with race as the effect was applied: Year 1, F was .1103 with a significance of F at .7413; Year 2, F was .0001 with a significance of F at .9903; and Year 3, F was .7256 with a significance of F at .3985. These data are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Performance Appraisal Ratings by Race

	<u>Year 1</u>	
Race	Means	Standard Deviation
White	8.2140	.7008
Nonwhite	8.3050	.7768
Population	8.2282	.7058
Eta = .0474 f = .1103 Eta squared = .0022 significance = .7413		

Table 11 (Continued)

<u>Year 2</u>		
Race	Means	Standard Deviation
White	8.3674	.8130
Nonwhite	8.3638	.6052
Population	8.3669	.7787
Eta = .0017 f = .0001 Eta squared = .0000 significance = .9903		
<u>Year 3</u>		
Race	Means	Standard Deviation
White	8.0781	1.4538
Nonwhite	8.5250	.5600
Population	8.1482	1.3587
Eta = .1208 f = .7256 Eta squared = .0146 significance = .3985		

Thus, it was determined that the performance appraisal was bias free in regard to gender and race.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 sought to determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process was bias free with regard to gender and race.

Gender Bias of the Assessment Center

There was no significant difference in the overall rating of CACs in the Assessment Center based on gender. The regression approach using the ANOVA mode of the SPSS-X with gender as the main effect was applied, F was .456 with a significance of F at .503. The hierarchical approach using the ANOVA mode of the SPSS-X with gender as the main effect, F was .004 with a significance of F at .951. These data are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Assessment Center Ratings by Gender

Regression Approach	F = .456	Significance of f= .503
Hierarchical Approach	F = .004	Significance of f = .951

Racial Bias of the Assessment Center

There was no significant difference in the overall rating of CACs in the Assessment Center based on race. The regression approach using the ANOVA mode of the SPSS-X with race as the main effect was applied, F was .038 with a significance of F at .847. The hierarchical approach using the ANOVA mode of the SPSS-X with race as the main effect, F was .105 with a significance of F at .748. These data are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Assessment Center Ratings by Race

Regression Approach	F = .038	Significance of f= .847
Hierarchical Approach	F = .105	Significance of f = .748

Thus, it was determined that the Assessment Center was bias free in regard to gender and race.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 sought to determine if the Assessment Center evaluation process when compared to the administrative portion of annual performance appraisal ratings for the first 3 years was bias free in regards to gender and race.

Correlations of Assessment Center Ratings and Performance Appraisal Ratings by Gender

There was no significant difference in the overall rating of CACs in the Assessment Center when correlated to the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal for the first 3 years, based on gender. The multivariate test of significance using the MANOVA model of the SPSS-X with no interactions with gender as the effect was applied: Year 1, F was 2.11547 with a significance of F at .139; Year 2, F was .27052 with a significance of F at .765; and Year 3, F was .0637 with a significance of F at .938. These data are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Assessment Center Rating Correlations with Performance Appraisal Ratings by Gender

<u>Year 1</u>			
Gender	Rating One Means	Rating Two Means	Rating Three Means
Male	8.848	8.052	7.955
Gender	Rating One Means	Rating Two Means	Rating Three Means
Female	8.285	8.633	8.146
Population	8.687	8.246	8.011
f = 2.11547	Significance of f = .139		
<u>Year 2</u>			
Gender	Rating One Means	Rating Two Means	Rating Three Means
Male	8.992	8.294	7.919
Female	8.585	8.646	8.490
Population	8.876	8.411	8.087
f = .27052	Significance of f = .765		

Table 14 (Continued)

<u>Year 3</u>			
Gender	Rating One Means	Rating Two Means	Rating Three Means
Male	8.780	7.865	7.776
Female	8.750	8.587	8.400
Population	8.771	8.106	7.959
$f = .0637$	Significance of $f = .938$		

Correlations of Assessment Center Ratings and Performance Appraisal Ratings by Race

There was no significant difference in the overall rating of CACs in the Assessment Center when correlated to the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal for the first 3 years, based on race. The multivariate test of significance using the MANOVA model to the SPSS-X with no interactions with race as the effect was applied: Year 1, F was .26098 with a significance of F at .772; year 2, F was .59523 with a significance of F at .558; and year 3, F was .19947 with a significance of F at .820. These data are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Assessment Center Ratings Correlations with Performance Ratings Appraisal by Race

<u>Year 1</u>			
Race	Rating One Means	Rating Two Means	Rating Three Means
White	8.635	8.195	8.073
Nonwhite	9.000	8.468	7.550
Population	8.687	8.246	8.011
$f = .26098$	Significance of $f = .772$		

Table 15 (Continued)

<u>Year 2</u>			
Race	Rating One Means	Rating Two Means	Rating Three Means
White	8.905	8.406	8.096
Nonwhite	8.700	8.434	8.020
Population	8.876	8.411	8.087
$f = .59523$	Significance of $f = .558$		
<u>Year 3</u>			
Race	Rating One Means	Rating Two Means	Rating Three Means
White	8.750	7.980	7.954
Nonwhite	8.900	8.660	8.000
Population	8.771	8.106	7.959
$f = .19947$	Significance of $f = .820$		

Thus, it was determined that the Assessment Center ratings when correlated with the performance appraisal ratings were bias free for gender and race.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 sought to determine if certain skills in the Assessment Center rating were more predictive than others of an overall Assessment Center rating, singly or in combination.

Relationships of Individual Skill Variables Ratings to Assessment Center Ratings

There was a statistically significant relationship between 11 of the 12 skills and nearly a statistically significant relationship with the twelfth in the assessment center when examined singly and the overall rating received in the Assessment Center. The multivariate test of significance using the MANOVA model to the SPSS-X with no interactions with the 12 skills ratings was applied: Persuasiveness, T was 7.351 with a

significance of T at .0000; Oral Communication, T was 3.813 with a significance of T at .0004; Likability, T was 3.496 with a significance of T at .0010; Planning and Organizing, T was 3.206 with a significance of T at .0024; Perception, T was 3.104 with a significance of T at .0032; Collaborativeness, T was 2.820 with a significance of T at .0070; Written Communication, T was 2.729 with a significance of T at .0089; Decision Making, T was 2.629 with a significance of T at .0115; Leadership, T was 2.585 with a significance of T at .0128; Need for Approval, T was 2.348 with a significance of T at .0231; Adaptability, T was 2.298 with a significance of T at .0260; and Assertiveness, T was 1.742 with a significance of T at .0879. These data are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Individual Skill Variable Ratings as Related to Assessment Center Ratings

Skill Variables	T	Significance of T
Persuasiveness	7.351	.0000
Oral Communication	3.813	.0004
Likability	3.496	.0010
Planning and Organizing	3.206	.0024
Preception	3.104	.0032
Collaborativeness	2.820	.0070
Written Communication	2.729	.0089
Decision Making	2.629	.0115
Leadership	2.585	.0128
Need for Approval	2.348	.0231
Adaptability	2.298	.0260
Assertiveness	1.742	.0879

Relative Predictability of Combination of Skill Variables to Overall Assessment Center Ratings

There was a statistically significant relationship between six combined variables of the Assessment Center and the overall rating received in the Assessment Center. The multivariate test of significance using the MANOVA model of the SPSS-X statistic with no interactions with the multiple regression was applied: Persuasiveness, oral communication, written communication, decision making, likability, and perception accounted for 73.79% of the predictability of all 12 variables. These data are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Relative Predictability of 12 Variables in Combination as Related to Assessment Center Ratings

Variables	Additive Value of Predictability
Persuasiveness	51.48%
Oral Communication	61.98%
Written Communication	67.24%
Decision Making	70.54%
Likability	72.50%
Perception	73.79%
<u>Variables That Did Not Significantly Predict</u>	
Planning and Organizing	
Assertiveness	
Adaptability	
Collaborativeness	
Need for Approval	
Leadership	

Research Question 5

Research Question 5 sought to determine if the overall Assessment Center Ratings were predictive of the administrative performance for any of the first 3 years after appointment to the CAC position based on the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal ratings.

Relationship of Performance Appraisal Ratings and CAC Assessment Center Ratings

There was a statistically significant relationship between performance appraisal ratings following the first year of performance of CACs and overall performance ratings received from Assessment Center raters. There was nearly a statistically significant relationship with the second year's performance, but there is no significant relationship of the third year's performance appraisal and the overall rating received from the Assessment Center. The multivariate test of significance using the MANOVA model of the SPSS-X statistic with no interactions with the performance rating was applied: Year 1, F was 4.238 with a significance of F at .025; Year 2, F was 3.193 significance at a .056 level; and Year 3, F was .721, with significance at a .495 level. Findings of relationships between Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center ratings and administrative performance appraisal of CACs are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Performance Appraisal Ratings as Related to Assessment Center Ratings

Year	F	Significance of F	Frequency
1	4.238	.025	51
2	3.193	.056	51
3	.721	.495	51

Summary of Findings

The general findings described in this chapter are as follows:

1. There were no significant gender or racial differences in administrative performance appraisals following any of the first 3 years after appointment as a CAC.
2. There are no significant gender or racial differences in performance of CACs in the Assessment Center.
3. There were no significant gender or racial differences in correlations of Assessment Center ratings and administrative performance ratings following any of the first 3 years after appointment as a CAC.
4. Of the 12 skill variables included in the Assessment Center all except assertiveness were significant (at .05 level) in predicting the overall Assessment Center rating.
5. Of the 12 skill variables included in the Assessment Center when considered in combination, six account for 73.79% of the total variability. These are persuasiveness, oral communication, written communication, decision making, likability, and perception.
6. Assessment Center ratings were predictive of CAC administrative performance appraisal following the first year of appointment, and quite predictive of the second year of performance as measured by performance rating.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to answer the following research questions:

1. Is the performance appraisal system used by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service that evaluates administrative performance bias free with regards to gender and race?
2. Is the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for County Agent-Coordination rating process bias free with regards to gender and race?
3. Is the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for County Agent-Coordination rating process when compared to the administrative portion of the annual performance appraisal scores for the first 3 years bias free in regards to gender and race?
4. Are certain skills, singly or in combination, as measured in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for County Agent-Coordinator's process more predictive than others of overall Assessment Center ratings?
5. Are Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center ratings predictive of future administrative performance of County Agent-

Coordinator's as determined by Alabama Cooperative Extension Service performance appraisals?

It was important to understand as accurately as possible the relative predictive ability of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (ACES) Assessment Center with regards to future administrative performance of agents as indicated through annual performance appraisals. It was equally important to examine for any significant bias in performance appraisal evaluations and ACES Assessment Center ratings based on race or gender individually and if the Assessment Center ratings are biased, based on the performance appraisal evaluations. Additional needs were to determine if any of the 12 variables, singly or in combination, had a greater impact on the overall rating received by the candidates.

Procedures

Delimitations

Numerous variables could have influenced the relationship between annual performance appraisal scores on administrative skills received by County Agent- Coordinators (CACs) during their first 3 years in the CAC position and the overall rating they received from the Assessment Center earlier. To control for some of these alternative explanations, an ex post facto research design was used for this study. The major weaknesses of ex post facto research design are (1) the inability to assign individuals randomly to treatment levels, (2) the inability to manipulate the independent variables, (3) the inability to assign individuals who receive a rating of four in the Assessment Center to the CAC position, and (4) the risk of interpreting correlation as causation. These weaknesses are apparent in this study because the extension agents could not be assigned randomly by gender or race.

Two important factors influenced the data in this study. Agents were not randomly selected to participate but had to achieve a level of performance on the performance appraisal score, and they had to be an associate county agent, county agent, or Auburn University faculty member associated with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service. Additionally, they had to elect to apply to participate in the Assessment Center. Low performers (below 7 on annual performance appraisal), as well as those not interested in becoming a CAC, did not participate in the Assessment Center. These two groups of individuals were not promoted to the CAC position, nor did they have any part in this study. Equally important, individuals who received a rating of four from the Assessment Center were not promoted to the CAC position and were not a part of the study unless they participated in the Assessment Center at a later time and obtained an overall rating of 3 or better. That these two groups of individuals were not a part of the study did effect the data, inasmuch as the CACs examined here were not randomly selected.

Other delimitations of this study include (1) the number of years of performance appraisal rating use in comparison to the Assessment Center results, (2) the use of data only from the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center, (3) the relation and applicability of findings to other Cooperative Extension Services, and (4) the relation and applicability of the findings to other assessment centers.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the study are limited to the ACES Assessment Center. Limitations discussed here are substantive ones only, as opposed to procedural limitations treated earlier in this chapter.

The results of this study should not be used to draw conclusions or assume the accuracy of predictability of any other assessment center. This includes those that assess CACs in other extension services through the United States and for assessment centers used by other organizations. The results of the performance appraisal instrument that does not discriminate based on race or gender relates to the one ACES uses to assess the performance of these, nonrandom CACs. No reference can be made as to whether other assessment centers or their performance appraisal instruments are discriminatory in regard to gender or race.

Other limitations of this study include (1) the changes in the rating of CAC performance, from the district agent coordinators to extension district agents due to the changes in the structure of the organization, (2) the changes in the individual in the rater positions due to retirements and promotions, (3) the changes that have occurred in the performance appraisal instrument due to reorganization, (4) the fact that there were either three or nine districts and that raters in each district might rate differently, and (5) the limited number of CACs that have been promoted to the position while using the Assessment Center.

Assumptions of the Study

The findings in this study were based on five assumptions:

1. The Assessment Center assumed essential skills required in a county agent-coordinator position.
2. The rating by assessors of individuals participating in the Assessment Center were nonbiased and were consistent in their manner of serving even though different assessors were used.

3. The county agent-coordinators' performance appraisal instrument included all essential skills needed to be an effective CAC.
4. Various extension district agents evaluated consistently and accurately in rating the county agent-coordinators' performances.
5. As the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service has gone from one organizational structure to another there have been no significant differences in ratings of CACs.

Population of the Study

The data this study examined were obtained from agents' personnel records following their participation in the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for CACs and from annual performance appraisals for the administrative skills following each of the first 3 years after promotion. The population for this study was the CACs who participated in the Assessment Center between 1980 and 1989. One hundred and twenty-seven individuals participated in 22 Assessment Center sessions during this period of time. Of the 63 promoted to the position of CAC, 51 have held the CAC position for 3 or more years. These 51 CACs' performance become the basis for this study. The data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-X). ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression were the statistical procedure employed.

Summary of Findings

There was very clearly a positive relationship between CACs' annual performance appraisal scores for administrative skills for the first year after promotion and Assessment Center ratings. There was a low but positive relationship the second year, but no statistically significant relationship, at the .05 level, for the third year.

There were no significant correlations at the .05 level between the race and gender variables and performance appraisal scores for the first 3 years after being promoted. Females scored somewhat, but not significantly, higher than males in each of the 3 years (.1542 level in Year 1, .1700 level in Year 2, and .1567 level in Year 3). There was even less of a relationship when examining the effects of race. Whites received somewhat higher scores than nonwhites during the second year, but the level of significance was .9903, clearly not statistically different. Nonwhites received higher scores than whites during the first and third years. The Year 1 level of significance was .7413, and at Year 3 it was .3985. Again, there was no statistical difference between scores of whites and nonwhites.

There were no significant correlations at the .05 level between the gender and race variables and Assessment Center rating of CACs. Males' ratings were .01 higher than females in the overall rating received from the ACES Assessment Center. When gender was the main effect the level of significance was .951. Whites' ratings were .09 higher than nonwhites in overall rating received from the ACES Assessment Center. When race was the main effect the level of significance was .748. Again, there was no statistical difference between scores of males and females nor whites and nonwhites.

There were no significant correlations at the .05 level between the gender and race variables and Assessment Center rating when compared to the annual performance appraisal scores for the first 3 years after being promoted. Males who received an overall rating of one, scored somewhat but not significantly higher than females in each of the 3 years. Females who received an overall rating of two and three, scored somewhat but not significantly higher than males in each of the 3 years. Analysis on

an annual basis, males and females overall rating from the Assessment Center were different, but not enough to be significant at the .05 level. The level of significance was .139 for Year 1, .765 for Year 2, and .938 for Year 3. Whites who received an overall rating of three in Year 1 and an overall rating of one and three in Year 2, scored somewhat, but not significantly, higher than nonwhites. Nonwhites who received an overall rating of one or two in Year 1, an overall rating of two in Year 2, and all three of the overall ratings in Year 3, received scores somewhat, but not significantly, higher than whites. The level of significance was .772 for Year 1, .558 for Year 2, and .820 for Year 3.

There was clearly a positive relationship between 11 of the 12 variables that comprise the Assessment Center ratings, when analyzed individually and the overall Assessment Center rating. Persuasiveness, oral communication, written communication, collaborativeness, adaptability, likability, planning and organizing, decision making, leadership, perception, and need for approval were significant at the .05 level. The remaining, assertiveness had a level of significance at .0879.

There was very clearly a positive relationship between the 12 variables that comprise the Assessment Center ratings, when analyzed in combination. When the 12 variables were analyzed in combination, persuasiveness, oral communication, decision making, written communication, likability, and perception contributed 73.73% of the total relationship.

Conclusions

The data from this study indicate the ACES Assessment Center has predicted administrative performance of these CACs as indicated by the annual performance appraisal process used by ACES during the first year (at .05 level) and during the

second year (at .056 level) after appointment to the CAC position. In the third year there was no significant difference between those who had earlier received a rating of one, the highest rating, and those who received a rating of three, the lowest rating. The results may have been influenced by the fact that those who received a rating of two or three were required to take university classes in the skill areas of weakness identified by the Assessment Center. These classes, along with other effects of on-the-job training received during the first 2 years, may have strengthened individual performance ratings for administrative skills to the same level comparatively as those who received a rating of one when participating in the Assessment Center.

Due to the traditional white male dominance of the previous Extension Service years, these findings were somewhat surprising. The absence of discrimination by race or gender is one of the more uncontestable findings of the study. Although females scored slightly higher than males in the first and third years of their annual performance appraisals, the difference was not at the .05 level of significance. Likewise, nonwhite candidates actually outscored white candidates following the first and third years of their annual performance appraisals, but not at the .05 level of significance. The second year performance evaluation was basically even between whites and nonwhites with an F of .0001 and .9903 significance.

The data from this study indicate the ACES Assessment Center has been bias free with regard to gender and race. The level of significance between females and males was .951. The level of significance between whites and nonwhites was .748.

The data from this study indicate that the ACES Assessment Center, using the annual performance appraisal scores the participants received during the first 3 years

after appointment in the CAC position, was bias free with regard to predictability of performance on the basis of gender and race. The levels of significance between females and males were as follows: Year 1 after promotion, .139; Year 2 after promotion, .756; and Year 3 after promotion, .938. The levels of significance between whites and nonwhites were: Year 1 after promotion, .772; Year 2 after promotion, .558; and Year 3 after promotion, .820.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center for CACs assesses the administrative potential of individuals in 12 areas of interpersonal and organizational endeavor. When the 12 variables were analyzed singly, individuals who received higher scores in 11 of the 12 variables consistently received higher overall ratings from the Assessment Center. When investigating the strength of these variables, all were significant at the .05 level with the exception of assertiveness significant at the .0804 level. The leadership style promoted by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service is more one of teamwork than single-minded leadership per se. It is very probable that assessors view the assertive individual as one who could expect problems in a team environment.

When the 12 variables were analyzed in combination, 6 had the greatest impact in the overall ratings received in the Assessment Center. They were persuasiveness, oral communication, decision making, written communication, likability and perception. These six variables accounted for 73.79% of the total Assessment Center rating. Individuals judged to have performed well in these skills were more likely to receive higher overall ratings in the Assessment Center.

The ACES Assessment Center for CACs did predict future administrative levels of performance as determined by the annual performance appraisals of CACs for the

first year following appointment (significant at .025) and, in spite of outside influences effecting the results, at a level of significance at .056 the second year. The Assessment Center appears to have reasonably predicted future administrative performance of an individual during the first 2 years in the CAC position.

The ACES Assessment Center for CACs and the administrative part of the annual performance appraisal for the first 3 years following appointment to the CAC position were bias free with regards to gender and race. Performance appraisal had levels of significance for gender of .1542, .1700 and .1567; and for race .7413, .9903, and .3985 during Years 1, 2, and 3. The Assessment Center had a level of significance for gender of .951 and for race .748. The Assessment Center when compared to the annual performance appraisal scores, had levels of significance for gender of .139; .765 and .938 and for race .772, .558 and .820 during Years 1, 2, and 3 after promotion to the CAC position.

Eleven of the 12 Assessment Center variables when analyzed singly, had a significance at the .05 level in determining the overall rating an individual received from the Assessment Center. Persuasiveness, oral communication, likability, planning and organizing, perception, collaborativeness, and written communication were significant at less than the .01 level. Decision making, leadership, adaptability, and need for approval were significant at the .05 level. Assertiveness was the only variable of the 12 with a level of significance above the .05 level, and it was .0879. It would appear that scores received on 11 of the 12 variables could be used to predict the overall rating an individual might receive from the Assessment Center.

However, when the 12 variables were analyzed in combination for relative strength in predicting the overall Assessment Center rating, persuasiveness, oral

communication, decision making, written communication, likability, and perception accounted for 73.79% of the total variability.

Recommendation of This Study Anew

If this study were initiated anew, this researcher would examine the relationships between the 12 variables in the Assessment Center and the annual performance appraisal score during the first 3 years. Comparison of relationships, if any, between these skills as measured in the Assessment Center, and performance appraisal to the six skills that comprised most of the variability in the Assessment Center ratings might possibly reveal that very different skills are valued in these two processes. This, in turn, might have led to suggestions to weigh certain skills measured in the Assessment Center higher than is currently apparent. Likewise, the study of these results of the relationship might have suggested some revisions in the appraisal system process.

Recommendations for Practice

1. This study should be used by those individuals who conduct the ACES Assessment Center for CAC's evaluation for possible changes in future Assessment Centers. This study suggested that oral communication, decision making, written communication, persuasiveness, likability, and perception, in aggregate, comprise the majority of the predictability of the Assessment Center. It should be determined if these skills should possibly receive greater consideration or should some skills be eliminated. Possibly some relative weighting changes should be made regarding overall ratings.

2. Assessment Center personnel should study the relationships found in this study between assessment center skills that appear to be more highly predictable of

overall Assessment Center ratings and the relative predictability of these same variables in determining future administrative performance as a CAC. There may be some discrepancies.

3. Those who are assigned responsibility for designing and evaluating the performance evaluation process for CACs might wish to examine these findings.

4. Assuming maintenance of some controls, and continuing evaluation of results, the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service should continue to use the Assessment Center to determine whether an individual should be placed in a pool for promotion to the CAC position. The Assessment Center has quite accurately predicted the initial administrative performance of CACs.

5. ACES should develop and implement an assessment center for Extension district agents and other administrative positions requiring personnel supervision. Court approval should be sought for this aspect of the selection process for this position as well as for CACs. If successful, such an assessment center might reasonably determine whether individuals in question have the skills necessary to assume this position they are seeking.

6. All individuals who are interested in participating in any assessment center should be allowed to do so; information obtained from such appraisal can be used to formatively counsel with individuals in developing career goals. Such information might also be useful for validating affects of different programs of study.

7. The results of this study should be presented to the United State District Court for the Middle of Alabama, Eastern Division. ACES has an Assessment Center that has been bias free regarding race or gender and has quite accurately predicted future initial performance of individuals in the CAC position.

Recommendations for Further Studies

1. This study should be replicated in other states using assessment centers.
2. This study should be replicated using another group of ACES CACs. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (consolidation of the former extension services at Auburn and A & M University) will employ 20 to 25 new CACs who have participated in the Assessment Center. A study should be conducted in 3 years of this new group of CAC to compare results to this study. If a second study had similar findings it would further validate the reliability of the ACES Assessment Center in predicting performance of CACs.
3. A study should be conducted to determine if the scores received by associate agents and county agents with their annual performance appraisal for programming, have any relationship with the rating received in the Assessment Center and the scores received on the administrative part of the performance appraisal after they are promoted. If there is a relationship between performance appraisal scores in programmatic areas and administrative performance, then performance appraisal scores could be used as part of the selection process for an individual to be promoted to the CAC position.
4. A study should be conducted to determine if the courses taken by individuals that score two or three in the overall rating by the Assessment Center have any impact on the scores received on the annual performance appraisal. If courses taken have a positive relationship with the annual performance appraisal, then these courses should be required prior to assuming the CAC position.
5. A study should be conducted to determine the cost benefit ratio of the Assessment Center. The cost benefit ratio of the Assessment Center is needed to

determine if the cost of utilizing the Assessment Center is beneficial to ACES or if other selection procedures should be developed.

6. A study should be conducted to determine if the 12 skill variables included in the Assessment Center singly or in combination, have a relationship, positive or negative, with the annual performance appraisal scores for the first 3 years after assuming the position as CAC. This information might suggest whether revisions in the annual performance appraisal system are needed.

7. A study should be conducted to determine if the six skills that determine most of the Assessment Center variability are the same skills that might be found to be strongly and positively related to performance appraisal ratings. This information might suggest whether revision is necessary in the weighting of some of the variables in the Assessment Center to reflect their value to the predictability of the Assessment Center's overall rating.

8. A study should be conducted to determine if relationships exist between the total number of applicant evaluation points and the overall Assessment Center rating. Applicant evaluation points are determined by degree earned, grade point average, tenure with ACES, and scholarly achievement. These variables could have a significant relationship, singly or in combination, with the performance appraisal rating. Presently tenure potentially represents 50% of the total applicant evaluation points. If tenure makes no significant difference after 15 years then adjustment should be made not to award applicant evaluation points for tenure after 15 years. Other changes should be made awarding applicant evaluation points depending on the finding of the study.

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APPENDIX A

Alabama Cooperative Extension System Assessment Center Forms

Assessor - Candidate Assignments

Because of time limitations, all assessors will not have the same opportunities to observe each candidate. The assessor who observes a specific candidate the greater number of times will have the primary responsibility for guiding the discussion concerning that candidate during the evaluation period. Thus, each assessor will have two candidates for whom he/she has primary responsibility.

Each candidate will have a name plate indicating his/her number (1 through 6). The number on the name plate will be large enough to be recognized easily by the assessors from a distance.

CANDIDATES

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Lead Observer</u>
1		A
2		B
3		C
4		A
5		B
6		C

ASSESSOR ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Assessor</u>	<u>Discussion Portion of Presentation Exercise</u>	<u>Blind Assessment</u>	<u>Personal Interviews</u>	<u>Moon Crash</u>	<u>In-Basket Interview</u>
A	1 & 4	2 & 5	1 & 4	2 & 5	3 & 6
B	2 & 5	3 & 6	2 & 5	3 & 6	1 & 4
C	3 & 6	1 & 4	3 & 6	1 & 4	2 & 5

Note: All assessors will observe all candidates during the presentation portion of the group presentation exercise.

Schedule of Assessment Center Activities

7:00-7:30	Orientation			D
7:30-8:30	In-Basket Situations			D
8:30-9:45	Group Discussion Exercise (Presentation)			D A, B, C
9:45-10:00	Break			
10:00-11:00	Situational Exercises		Personal Interviews	
	1, 2, 3	D	4 Room A	5 Room B 6 Room C
11:00-12:00	Personal Interviews		Situational Exercises	
	1 Room A	2 Room B	3 Room C	4, 5, 6 D
12:00-1:15	Lunch Break			
1:15-2:00	Moon Crash Exercise			D
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6			A, B, C
2:00-3:00	Peer Assessment		In-Basket Interviews	
	1, 2, 3	D	4 Room B	5 Room C 6 Room A
3:00-4:00	In-Basket Interviews		Peer Assessment	
	1 Room B	2 Room C	3 Room A	4, 5, 6 D

Code: A, B, C - Assessors

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - Assesseees

D - Director

ASSESSOR _____

CANDIDATE _____

DATE _____

NUMBER _____

ASSESSOR CONSOLIDATED RATING INFORMATION FORM

Listed below are the variables and the related activities from which the assessor can consolidate his/her rating information. The importance of the activity is indicated by the number of stars. Four stars indicate a source of major importance.

VARIABLE	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
<u>Oral Communications</u>	Group Discussion Problem**** (Presentation phase)	
	Personal Interview***	
	Desert Survival**	
	Incomplete Sentence 30*	
<u>Written Communications</u>	Blind Assessment of Situational Problems****	
	Incomplete Sentences 10 & 38	
<u>Collaborativeness</u>	In-Basket Interview****	
	Group Discussion Problem** (Discussion phase)	
	Personal Interview**	
	Desert Survival**	
	Incomplete Sentences 14, 25, 42, 54, & 58	
<u>Adaptability</u>	Group Discussion Problem****	
	In-Basket Interview***	
	Incomplete Sentences 14, 21, 25, 37, 42, 45, & 54*	
	General Opinion of the candidate's adaptability to the entire assessment center**	
<u>Likability</u>	General opinion of the candidate's likability based on your observation during the entire assessment center****	
	Peer Evaluation*	

VARIABLE	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
<u>Planning & Organizing</u>	In-Basket Interview****	
	Incomplete Sentences 2, 15, 27, & 29	
<u>Decision Making</u>	In-Basket Interview****	
	Desert Survival**	
	Incomplete Sentences 9, 43, & 57	
<u>Leadership</u>	Group Discussion Problem****	
	Desert Survival****	
	Blind Assessment of Situational Problems**	
	Peer Assessment*	
	Incomplete Sentences 6, 18, 25, 29, 42, & 53*	
<u>Persuasiveness</u>	Group Discussion Problem****	
	Desert Survival****	
	Personal Interview**	
	In-Basket Interview*	
<u>Perception</u>	Group Discussion Problem****	
	Personal Interview***	
	In-Basket Interview***	
<u>Assertiveness</u>	Group Discussion Problem**** (Discussion phase)	
	Personal Interview**	
	In-Basket Interview**	
	Incomplete Sentences 13, 17, 26, 33, 45, 50, & 55*	
<u>Need for Approval</u>	Group Discussion Problem**** (Discussion phase)	
	Personal Interview**	
	In-Basket Interview**	
	Incomplete Sentences 13, 45, 50, & 55	

**ACES Assessment Center
Rating Sheet**

Date _____

Candidate's Name _____

Title _____

Assessor _____

	Variables	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High
1	Oral Communication					
2	Written Communication					
3	Collaborativeness					
4	Adaptability					
5	Likability					
6	Planning & Organizing					
7	Decision Making					
8	Leadership					
9	Persuasiveness					
10	Perception					
11	Assertiveness					
12	Need for Approval					

EVALUATION:

1. Should exceed normal expectations _____
2. Should meet normal expectations _____
3. Meeting normal expectations is questionable _____
4. Presently does not possess knowledge and skills needed to successfully perform the duties of County Agent-Coordinator _____

APPENDIX B

Minimal Requirement for Promotion to CAC Position

APPOINTMENTS TO COUNTY AGENT-COORDINATOR POSITIONS

The procedure for filling County Agent-Coordinator positions is as follows:

- (1) The position will be announced internally to all ACES academic staff using the same procedures as explained in the section on selection and hiring procedures for county agents.
- (2) If local funding is not sufficient to refill the CA-C vacancy, the position will be announced that it “must be filled from within the current county staff.” If there are no qualified applicants within the county, one of the staff members will be appointed as “interim CA-C” until adequate local funding can be secured.
- (3) If local funding is sufficient to refill the vacancy, and there are only three or less other agents in that county, the position may be announced that “if filled from someone outside the current county staff, the applicant must have subject matter competency in (a specified area)”. This is necessary in order to ensure proper program balance in counties with small staffs.
- (4) Applicants will be evaluated on the following criteria:
 - (a) Must have a master’s degree
 - (b) Must be at least an Associate County Agent
 - (c) Must be an ACES staff member
 - (d) Must have received at least a 6.0 on most recent annual appraisal
 - (e) Must have successfully completed the CA-C Assessment Center

In the event there are two or more applicants for a CA-C position who meet all of the qualifications listed above, the applicant evaluation score (points) will be used to make the appointment.

APPENDIX C

Process for Determining Applicant Evaluation Points for Participation in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System Assessment Center and CAC Promotion

HOW POINTS ARE CALCULATED

Points are calculated using the following criteria:

- A. Degree -- BS = 10 points, MS = 15 points, PhD = 20 points
- B. Grade Point Average -- computed on a 3.00 scale. Multiply times 6 to a maximum of 15 points
- C. Tenure with ACES -- allow 1.2 points per year of service with ACES including military service to a maximum of 50 points.
- D. Scholarly Achievement -- 5 categories:
 1. Membership in honor societies -- example, Gamma Sigma Delta, Omicron Nu
 2. Scholastic honors -- this includes graduation with honors and other awards based primarily on scholastic achievement.
 3. Publications and articles in scholarly journals -- this includes publications such as Journal of Extension, Journal of Animal Science, Extension publications, technical papers presented, etc.
 4. Attendance and successful completion of institutes and conferences such as the National Extension Summer School. This includes training of several weeks duration, usually on a university campus, where credit or a certificate is awarded.
 5. Other awards and recognition

RECORD OF SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT

Name _____

Date _____

1. Membership in honor societies--This includes Gamma Sigma Delta, Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Delta Pi, Omicron Nu, etc. A more complete list can be found in the official bulletin of the universities that you attended. Do not include social and service fraternities or recognition societies.

Name of Honor Society

Year Elected to Membership

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Scholastic honors--This includes graduation with honors, and other awards based primarily on scholastic achievement. Do not include Dean's list.

Nature of Honor

Institution

Year of Award

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

3. Publications and articles in scholarly journals--This includes publications such as Journal of Extension, Journal of Animal Science, Experiment Station Bulletin, Extension publications, technical papers presented, etc. Do not include articles in popular magazines, news articles, and others of a similar nature.

Name of Article or Paper

Journal of Proceedings

Year Published

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. Attendance and successful completion of institutes and conferences such as the National Extension Summer School. This includes training of several weeks duration, usually on a university campus, where credit or a certificate is awarded. This may or may not be a part of a degree program.

Name of Program

Location

Year Completed

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- 5. Other awards and recognition--This includes special awards by Commodity, Trade, and Farm Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, professional societies, etc. for outstanding service in a particular area, and awards made by or under the auspices of the Alabama or National Association of County Agricultural Agents (after 1966), the National Association of Extension Home Economists (after 1966), and the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Employees Organization.

<u>Nature of Award</u>	<u>Year of Award</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

AWARDS APPROVED FOR POINTS

Alabama Commission on Aging	
Recognition Award	June, 1981
Auburn Alumni Association	
ACES Award of Excellence	March, 1982
AACAA	
Achievement Award	March, 1981
Public Information Award	February, 1988
AAEHE	
Florence Hall Award	May, 1981
Outstanding Service Award	May, 1981
Hall of Fame Award	May, 1986
Home Economics Merit Award	
(Combined AAEHE, 4-H Award 5/81, Rookie Award 2/84, and	
Home Economics Merit 2/84, into the above award)	
ACESEO	
Meritorious Award	March, 1982
ALAE 4-H A	
Distinguished Service Award	March, 1981
Alpha Pi Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi	
State Merit Award	1982

RECOGNITION OF HONOR SOCIETIES

Gamma Sigma Delta	National Recognition Society
Omicron Nu	Association of College Honor Societies
Kappa Delta Pi	National Recognition Society
Alpha Zeta	National Recognition Society
Alpha Kappa Mu	Tuskegee Institute
Kappa Omicron Phi	University of North Alabama
	Samford University
	Tennessee Tech. University
	University of Southern Mississippi
	University of Mississippi
Phi Kappa Phi	Association of College Honor Societies
Phi Upsilon Omicron	University of Alabama
Alpha Lambda Delta	Association of College Honor Societies
Alpha Tau Alpha	National Honorary Ag. Education
Phi Eta Sigma	National Freshman Honorary

APPENDIX D

Job Analysis Validation Report and County Agent-Coordinator Job Analysis

JOB ANALYSIS VALIDATION REPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING
COUNTY LEVEL POSITIONS*

County Agent-Coordinator
County Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources
County Agent-Home Economics
County Agent-4-H and Youth
County Agent-Community Resource Development
County Agent-Special Programs

Prepared by:

James L. Smith
Head, Staff Development

October, 1977

*This report also addresses the development of job analyses for other position classifications within the organizational structure of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service.

INTRODUCTION

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the landmark court cases which followed, the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and the EEOC guidelines have raised the general level of knowledge and the sensitivity to equal employment opportunity. Employers who seek to discriminate legitimately among individuals who differ in their qualifications are understandably anxious to have personnel policies and procedures which lead to decisions that are neither arbitrary, whimsical, or unrelated to actual job requirements and organizational needs. Over the last decade, there has been an unending stream of legal challenges to employee selection procedures because of their adverse impact. More recently and with increasing frequency, personnel procedures such as selection procedures and performance appraisals have adversely affected people who are considered minorities. Therefore it is important and highly significant that valid personnel procedures be developed and implemented which are job related and legally defensible. The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service recognized this need and in an attempt to develop job analyses for position classifications, a selection process, and a performance appraisal system, the ACES administration initiated a job validation study beginning in 1975. The ACES administration was cognizant of the fact that the job analysis was the backbone of any selection process and performance appraisal system. In order to execute this task, content validity was used as the validation process for developing the job analysis. In initiating this project, the primary purpose was to determine the specific jobs staff members performed, the frequency of performing these jobs, the amount of time spent or allocated to performing these jobs, the specific tasks under each job, and the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform each task. Also, it was important to determine the level of criticality of each job and decide which knowledge, skills, and abilities were minimum requirements, distinguish between those which would be taught on the job and those that may be taught on the job.

METHODOLOGY

An in-depth analysis of each job classification was planned for all county level positions including four program areas; namely: agriculture and natural resources, home economics, 4-H, community resource development, and special programs. An analysis was also conducted for the position of County Agent-Coordinator. The job analyses were designed to provide data necessary for subsequent development of a selection process and a performance appraisal system. These data included the following for each position classification:

1. Specifications of the duties and tasks performed by incumbants
2. Determination of the circumstances and conditions of which the duties were performed
3. Determination of the level of difficulty of each duty
4. Identification of critical duties
5. Specifications of performance standards
6. Determination of level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful performance of the job
7. An identification of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed when hired and those that would be taught on the job

Eight steps were used in developing job analyses for the positions identified above:

1. A committee composed of thirty county staff members, six each representing the five program areas identified major jobs, tasks, percent of time expended to perform each job, methods used to perform jobs and tasks, and the knowledge

skills, and abilities needed to successfully perform jobs/tasks. The committee also identified the critical nature of each job and distinguished between the knowledge, skills, and abilities which were minimum requirements and those which were not. This information was prepared by the committee in written form as the first phase in the development of the job analysis.

2. All county staff members were provided a copy of the results prepared by the thirty-member committee and were requested to identify the jobs they actually performed with special attention to specific jobs which were unique to their job assignment. They were also requested to add tasks, jobs, knowledge, skills, and abilities and method of performing jobs to the information they received.
 3. All county staff members developed an individual analysis of their jobs and sent them to Head, Staff Development.
 4. Head, Staff Development reviewed all analysis of jobs sent in by county staff members, deleted duplications and devised a job analysis for the six county level positions which reflected input from all county staff members.
 5. A fifteen-member committee was appointed composed of county staff members and the committee was requested to review, modify, revise, and finalize job analyses for each county level position.
 6. After the fifteen-member committee completed its report, the job analyses were given to the district supervisory staff for their review, modification, and recommendations.
 7. Nine counties were randomly selected and visited by Head, Staff Development to further discuss, review, modify, and finalize job analyses for each position classification.
 8. After meeting with staff members in nine counties and recognizing their input, job analyses were then finalized and validated by the district and administrative staffs and became the official documents to serve as the basis for the ACES selection process and performance appraisal system.
- * Job analyses for the specialist staff, district staff, state leaders, associate directors, staff group heads, and administrative staff were developed by the incumbent.

Below are the tasks, knowledge, skills and abilities listed by the county staff during the initial development of the job analysis for the position classification of CA-C, CA-ANR, CA-HE, CA-4-H, CA-CRD, and CA-Special Programs.

AGRICULTURE

Tasks

1. Develop a plan of work
2. Recruit and train volunteer leaders in crop production, management, and marketing
3. Prepare and distribute educational materials
4. Assist producers with calibration of pre emerge equipment
5. Advise farmers to soil test
6. Employ leaders to involve producers in countywide insect control program
7. Provide leaders, producers, and agricultural clientele with research information on seed, pest control, and other production information related to agriculture, soil, and forestry.

8. Visit producers to assist with marketing problems
9. Evaluate crop programs and report the results
10. Provide publicity to news media concerning programs
11. Involve leaders in implementing crop production program and the program planning process
12. Encourage participation in yield contests
13. Conduct daily meetings on nutrition using dairy specialists
14. Visit dairymen to assist with better home grown feeding supplies
15. Furnish producers with lists of proven sires
16. Encourage producers to save more and better replacements for animals
17. Visit producers to assist with better record-keeping
18. Visit and assist producers with better herd health programs
19. Send monthly dairy letters to producers
20. Recruit and train volunteer leaders in livestock production, management, and marketing
21. Educate producers on increase in weaning and selling weights
22. Visit homeowners to assist with soil fertility
23. Visit homeowners to assist with landscaping and ornamental horticulture
24. Visit homeowners to identify and help control crop and livestock diseases
25. Visit and work with whole farm demonstrators
26. Inform producers of the best time to sell livestock and crops
27. Keep public up-to-date on pesticide and dangers of pesticide
28. Cooperate with and involve organizations, agencies, and leaders in efforts to more adequately plan and develop county resources
29. Meet with commodity groups to formulate annual programs' plan of work
30. Participate in professional improvement activities
31. Follow proper office management procedures
32. Provide farmers with information on forestry
33. Conduct public relations program
34. Implement affirmative action program
35. Conduct radio, TV programs, and write newsletters

AGRICULTURE

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. Knowledge of the program development process
2. Knowledge of leadership development in all phases of crop production, skills in recognizing important teaching situations, and knowledge of enterprises and materials developed for each enterprise
3. Technical knowledge in agriculture and natural resources
4. Ability to organize and motivate people
5. Ability to work with people regardless of race, creed, color, sex or national origin
6. Knowledge of the socio-economic level of groups, their aspirations, desires, and what they have identified as their problems
7. Technical knowledge in plant and soil science, herbicides, and insecticides
8. General knowledge of economic functions in agricultural engineering
9. Effective communication skills, oral and written
10. Knowledge of leadership development
11. Skill in recognizing important teaching situations
12. Technical knowledge in Extension methods, philosophy, and objectives

13. Knowledge of SEMIS and other reporting systems
14. Technical knowledge of marketing techniques
15. Technical knowledge in animal selection, breeding, production, and nutrition
16. Knowledge of vegetable production
17. Knowledge of pest control and management
18. Knowledge of public relations techniques
19. Knowledge of proper office management procedures
20. Knowledge of professional improvement opportunities
21. Ability to work with people of various educational, ethnic, socio-cultural backgrounds
23. Knowledge of ACES affirmative action procedures and process
24. Ability to cooperate and work with others

HOME ECONOMICS

Tasks

1. Identify and recruit leaders for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs
2. Develop county plan of work
3. Conduct leader training meetings
4. Conduct special interest meetings
5. Conduct standard food and nutrition programs
6. Make other appropriate contacts
7. Participate in continuous professional development and improvement
8. Implement administrative and other office functions
9. Conduct radio programs, write newsletters, prepare TV programs
10. Handle direct requests, office calls, telephone/home visit conferences
11. Prepare home economics subject matter programs, publications, visuals
12. Keep public informed on home economics programs available to them
13. Keep informed on current home economics trends
14. Attend and participate in professional meetings
15. Participate in staff and individual conferences
16. Cooperate with other phases of Extension's programs
17. Prepare regular and special reports
18. Prepare forms in evaluation of home economics programs
19. Provide homemakers with information on foods and nutrition, family life, family resource management, housing and equipment, home furnishings, clothing and textiles and health education
20. Assist homemakers with record-keeping
21. Follow proper office management procedures
22. Conduct affirmative action program
23. Develop and implement an effective public relations program

HOME ECONOMICS

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. Knowledge of the program development process
2. Knowledge of leadership development process
3. Ability to organize and motivate people
4. Ability to collect, analyze, and use data effective/objective
5. Identify problem-solving techniques
6. Knowledge of the teaching and learning process
7. Technical knowledge in all subject matter areas to include -- foods and nutrition, clothing, housing, home furnishings, home management, family life and health

8. Ability to communicate effectively
9. Knowledge and skill in visual design
10. Knowledge of the organization and operation of the EFNEP program
11. Knowledge of evaluation techniques, SEMIS, orientation
12. Ability to budget time
13. Skill in communication, both oral and written
14. Knowledge of filing systems
15. Ability to cooperate with others
16. Knowledge of proper office management procedures
17. Knowledge of professional development opportunities
18. Knowledge of affirmative action guidelines and procedures
19. Ability to work with people regardless of race, creed, sex, color or national origin
20. Ability to cooperate and work with others

4-H AND YOUTH

Tasks

1. Organize and conduct 4-H club meetings
2. Develop a plan of work
3. Recruit, train, utilize, and recognize volunteer leaders
4. Prepare educational materials
5. Train and involve 4-H youth in council planning
6. Prepare 4-H'ers for award programs beyond the county level
7. Plan for professional growth and development
8. Plan and conduct county activities, contests, and awards programs
9. Promote 4-H program through public relations
10. Secure and maintain financial support for 4-H club program
11. Supervise 4-H project work
12. Perform administrative and office functions
13. Report and evaluate programs
14. Conduct county project eliminations
15. Plan and implement educational tours
16. Prepare and submit reports
17. Follow proper office management procedures
18. Provide 4-H members information in agriculture, home economics, CRD, leadership development, and citizenship

4-H AND YOUTH

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. Knowledge of parliamentary procedures
2. Knowledge of the program development process
3. Skills in obtaining classroom discipline
4. Ability to understand and stimulate 4-H'ers interest or desire to learn
5. Knowledge of effective public relations techniques
6. Knowledge of various subject matter, educational materials, visual aids, and art principles
7. Knowledge of county situation, present and future needs
8. Knowledge of the leadership development process
9. Skill in problem-solving
10. Knowledge of requirements to participate in various awards programs

11. Knowledge of appropriate subject matter such as agriculture, home economics, leadership development, and etc.
12. Ability to organize and motivate people
13. Knowledge of effective communication skills and the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
14. Managerial ability
15. Skill in 4-H record-keeping
16. Skill in human development
17. Ability to budget time
18. Knowledge of filing system
19. Knowledge of SEMIS report
20. Ability to evaluate program
21. Ability to prepare and submit reports
22. Knowledge of the teaching/learning process
23. Knowledge of the EFNEP program
24. Effective interpersonal relations
25. Ability to collect, analyze, and use data effectively
26. Knowledge of leadership development
27. Knowledge of community resource development process
28. Knowledge of ACES' affirmative action process
29. Ability to work with people regardless of their race, creed, color, sex, or national origin
30. Ability to cooperate and work with others

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Tasks

1. Determine, locate, and identify leaders for program planning, implementation, and evaluation
2. Develop plan of work
3. Recruit, train, and utilize volunteer leaders
4. Involve leaders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes
5. Recognize leaders for jobs well done
6. Locate and list all resources, setting priorities, developing time-tables on priority needs
7. Develop and design human resource leadership programs
8. Identify list of appropriate list of resources
9. Evaluate and publicize CRD efforts
10. Promote value and results of working together for total resource development
11. Provide on-going educational and public relations programs to inform public of all activities
12. Recognize leaders
13. Evaluate programs in CRD
14. Conduct CRD programs in community resource, inventory and analysis, public issues and policies, community organization, community leadership, and state and local government
15. Conduct affirmative action program

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTKnowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. Knowledge of the program development process
2. Knowledge of community development process
3. Effective interpersonal relationships
4. Believe in and practice public relations
5. Continue efforts in professional improvement
6. Proficient communication skills - know of and how to use public information and research
7. Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
8. Knowledge of SEMIS reporting system
9. Ability to organize and motivate people
10. Knowledge of the community development process
11. Knowledge of the leadership development process
12. Knowledge of ACES affirmative action procedures
13. Knowledge and skills in public relations
14. Ability to work with people regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin
15. Ability to cooperate and work with others
16. Knowledge of proper office management procedures
17. Knowledge of ACES' professional improvement guidelines and procedures

SPECIAL PROGRAMSTasks

1. Develop plan of work
2. Conduct field crops programs - corn, cotton, soybeans, pastures, and demonstrations
3. Conduct livestock, beef, cattle, dairy, swine, and poultry demonstrations
4. Recruit, train, and recognize volunteer leaders
5. Develop an effective public relations program
6. Conduct special programs in farm management, service buildings, home gardening, marketing, limited resource enterprise, and whole farm demonstrations
7. Conduct programs in commercial horticulture and implement Project H.E.L.P.
8. Provide information on ornamental horticulture
9. Provide information on community resource development
10. Conduct short-term programs
11. Prepare and submit reports
12. Plan and design day camps
13. Plan and design programs in housing
14. Plan and design programs in clothing
15. Plan programs in rural housing
16. Plan programs in soil fertility, soil testing, fertilizer usage
17. Plan programs in cotton, forage and pasture, grain
18. Follow proper office management procedures
19. Participate in professional development activities
20. Conduct affirmative action program

SPECIAL PROGRAMSKnowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. Knowledge of Extension methods and procedures
2. Knowledge of public relations techniques
3. Knowledge of vegetable production and effective communication
4. Knowledge of the teaching/learning process
5. Knowledge of the program development process
6. Competence in problem-solving process
7. Knowledge of housing needs
8. Knowledge of the principles of public relations
9. Knowledge of vegetable consumption and storage
10. Knowledge of the leadership development process
11. Technical knowledge in various commodity groups
12. Knowledge of health needs
13. Knowledge of ornamental and designs
14. Knowledge of clothing construction
15. Knowledge of home care and effective interpersonal relationship
16. Technical knowledge of ornamental horticulture
17. Knowledge of landscape designs
18. Knowledge of agencies in the community, their services, and locations
19. Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
20. Background in scientific and technical data regarding the special program
21. Ability to organize and motivate people
22. Training in technical subject matter including agronomy, livestock, marketing, engineering, entomology, plant pathology, horticulture, farm management, and other fields
23. Ability to work with people regardless of race, creed, color, sex, and national origin
24. Ability to cooperate and work with others

JOBS FOR COUNTY AGENT-COORDINATOR

1. Contact County Commissioners for appropriations, space, etc.
2. Report to County Commission on Extension activities
3. Serve as Secretary to RD Committee
4. Hold weekly Extension conference
5. Assign work for secretaries
6. Report on Extension activities to County Cattleman's Association
7. Report on Extension activities to County Farm Bureau
8. Provide leadership for County Extension Council
9. Prepare weekly news release for column
10. Prepare special news stories
11. Meet with State Legislators
12. Coordinate work of Auburn Legislative Committee
13. Coordinate work with other USDA and county agencies
14. Supervise part-time 1890 Extension Agent
15. Coordinate Farm/City Week with Farm Bureau and other farm organizations or groups and civic organizations
16. Coordinate and prepare quarterly request for specialist assistance
17. Prepare weekly crop report for Agricultural Statistician
18. Serve on County Disaster Committee

19. Conduct county soil testing program, including the receiving and forwarding of samples to Soil Testing Laboratory and sending letter to person after receiving copy of soil test report in which nutrient deficiencies are pointed out
20. Attend bi-monthly meeting of Board of Directors of County Farm Bureau and provide information when requested
21. Recruit and interview prospective secretaries when vacancies occur
22. Assist with the interview of prospective farm agents when vacancies occur
23. Assist in training clerical staff and farm agents
24. Prepare agenda for weekly Extension conference
25. Review minutes of weekly Extension conference
26. Work closely with County ASCS Committee and serve on committee when needed
27. Survey office supplies, publications, furniture and equipment in addition to supervising requisition and placement
28. Prepare weekly schedule of work for secretaries
29. Hold individual conference with agents and secretaries and frequent conference with agents on programs of work
30. Prepare regular and special reports in addition to providing requested information for questionnaires
31. Attend and participate in professional meetings
32. Do professional reading weekly
33. Recruit and train leaders for different phases of Extension program
34. Prepare annual and long time programs of work
35. Prepare annual reports
36. Evaluate Extension programs
37. Keep District Chairman advised of administrative problems, needs, etc.
38. Implement policies and procedures as related by the DA-C and the Director
39. Teach the importance of maintaining effective public relations
40. Teaching the elements of good office management
41. Teach the concept of long-range county programming
42. Keeps all county staff informed on matters affecting them that have been communicated through the chairman
43. Coordinate joint efforts of staff in developing POW, annual reports, and long-range county program
44. Arrange joint staff efforts for effective reporting to Commissioners' Court
45. Coordinate staff efforts in developing, implementing, and reporting related to county affirmative action plan
46. Coordinate staff efforts to implement programs in areas where responsibilities are not clearly defined
47. Prepare and submit reports involving other staff members when appropriate or when requested by the district chairman or the director
48. Cooperate with other staff members in all matters for which cooperative effort is needed
49. Cooperate with district and state offices by submitting reports, providing information, and carrying out special assignments as requested

The validation study also identified the following physical characteristics needed for successful performance of all jobs.

1. Should be able to speak in English in an understandable voice
2. Should be able to hear normal conversations
3. Should be able to climb stairs (an area when the county office is upstairs and an elevator is not available). This characteristic was

discussed in light of employment of the handicapped and of course it was determined that compensation had to be made for handicapped employees when necessary or appropriate.

4. Should be able to lift up to 25 pounds (necessary to carry projectors, slide sets, etc. to meetings).

A total of 377 agents participate in this study.

After meeting on numerous occasions with the various committees, selected county staff, district supervisory staff, and members of the administrative staff, the following major jobs were identified along with the percent of time needed to perform each major job in a successful manner at the county level:

Program Planning	-	10
Program Implementation-		70
Reporting & Evaluation-		5
Office Management	-	5
Professionalism	-	5
Public Relations	-	5
TOTAL		<u>100</u>

Attached is the final job analysis for the following position classifications at the county level:

1. County Agent-Coordinator*
2. County Agent-Home Economics
3. County Agent-4-H
4. County Agent-Community Resource Development

The job analysis for the position classification of County Agent-Special Programs was eliminated.

*Not a full-time position. The amount of time assigned to this job classification depends largely on the number of staff members in the county unit. Also, since the Coordinative role was a new concept at the county level, the job functions were addressed and formalized within the field of management; therefore, the knowledge, skills, and abilities domain were developed by the Head, Staff Development and Head, Management Operations.

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

TITLE: County Agent-Coordinator
JOB ANALYSIS COMPLETED ON: May 23, 1980 (Updated 09/22/88)

RELATIONSHIPS: District Agent-Coordinator (for administration)
Reports to: District Agent-Programs (for programs)

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENT: M.S. degree in Agriculture, Home Economics, or closely related areas; attainment of rank of County or Associate County Agent in one of the program areas.

JOB SUMMARY: The County Agent-Coordinator manages the County Extension unit and is the contact person with local governing bodies. The Coordinator provides leadership for the program development process, and in cooperation with appropriate District Agent-Program(s), provides leadership to agents in achieving program objectives, and promotes teamwork among the county staff. He/She recruits, selects, trains, and directs clerical staff. Further, the Coordinator is responsible for measuring accomplishments against plans, and for coordinating timely reporting of program accomplishments. Moreover, the County Agent-Coordinator provides necessary administrative support to ensure effective program delivery. The CA-C also assumes responsibility in one or more program areas.

APPROVAL:

District Agent Date

District Agent Date

District Agent Date

Associate Director-Field Operations Date

Director Date

Over

COUNTY AGENT-COORDINATOR
DEFINITION OF MAJOR JOBS IN THE ANALYSIS¹

Planning

The CA-C selects, from among alternative courses of action, the mode of operation for the county unit. This includes the determination of administrative objectives, establishing priorities, and providing effective leadership in coordinating the overall planning process.

Organizing

The CA-C develops a procedural process for planning, implementing, and evaluating program activities. This includes the organization of the county Extension council and the organization of the county Extension office.

Personnel Management and Staff Development

The CA-C recruits, selects, trains, evaluates, and develops clerical staff, and participates in these activities for the academic staff.

Leading and Directing

The CA-C guides, motivates, communicates, leads, and directs staff in the accomplishment of objectives. He/she develops a teamwork approach for planning, implementing, and evaluating various job responsibilities within the county unit.

Reporting and Controlling

The CA-C measures accomplishments against plans and corrects deviations as needed. He/she reports program accomplishments and the achievement of objectives to appropriate supervisory and administrative personnel and publics.

¹ In the case of assigned agents, these management functions are shared with the district team in accordance with established procedures and specific delegation of program authority.

Critical or important duties necessary for successful job performance, grouped under major jobs	Importance
A. PLANNING*	
1. Provides leadership and coordination to the staff in developing the long range program and annual work plan; ensures that programs are planned in accordance with affirmative action plan.	1
2. Provides leadership for setting priorities, planning events, activities, and other responsibilities not clearly defined that involve more than one program area.	1
3. Plans for office space, supplies, telephone service, secretarial service, and other administrative support for staff.	2
4. Plans for continuous program services during temporary absences of other staff members.	1
B. ORGANIZING*	
1. Provides leadership and coordination for organizing the County Extension Councils and other advisory groups.	2
2. Organizes office and other physical facilities, and assigns secretarial staff.	2
3. Provides leadership for organizing events, activities, and other responsibilities not clearly defined that involve more than one program area.	1
4. Works with the Auburn University county support committee.	1
C. PERSONNEL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT*	
1. Recruits, selects, and trains secretarial staff; participates in selection, recruiting and hiring academic staff.	2
2. Counsels with staff on plans for taking leave.	2
3. Participates with appropriate District Agent(s) in probationary counseling and annual performance appraisal of academic staff.	2
4. Participates with appropriate District Agent(s) in setting performance standards and goals for county staff members.	2
5. Conducts probationary and annual performance appraisal of county support staff.	2

Critical or important duties necessary for successful job performance, grouped under major jobs	Importance
6. Participates in orientation of new staff members.	1
7. Introduces prospective new employees to appropriate county governing bodies prior to employment.	1
8. Monitor staff on study leave.	1
D. LEADING AND DIRECTING*	
1. In cooperation with appropriate District Agent, guides and coordinates staff in accomplishing planned goals; ensures that programs are implemented in accordance with affirmative action plan.	2
2. Communicates effectively with staff through individual and staff conferences and by other means.	2
3. Serves as first-line manager for professional staff using coaching and leadership techniques; builds a relationship of trust and confidence within the county staff unit.	1
4. Encourages group participation and team work in goal setting and decision making.	2
5. Provides leadership to County Extension Advisory Council.	1
6. When appropriate, represents the county unit and Auburn University to individuals, groups, organizations, and county government for budget requests.	2
7. Explains and implements ACES' policies and procedures in the county.	1
E. REPORTING AND EVALUATION*	
1. Provides leadership and coordination for preparation of reports.	1
2. Provides leadership for reporting accomplishments to county governing body, Extension Council, and other advisory groups and individuals.	1
3. Continually observes and monitors overall program activities and corrects and/or reports deviations as necessary, including those relating to the affirmative action plan.	1

*These functions are interdependent and overlapping. The total percentage of time devoted to the management process will be determined by the DA.

Knowledge, skills and abilities which are necessary for successful job performance.	Needed for Duty(ies) Indicated
1. Working knowledge of the discipline of management, and understanding of management functions.	All duties
2. Working knowledge of management and proper roles of District Agents and CA-C.	All duties
3. Ability to guide the program planning process in the county.	A
4. Ability to make rational decisions.	All duties
5. Ability to establish priorities and objectives.	A and B
6. Ability to organize county activities within the context of the organizational structure and management system of ACES.	B
7. Ability to work with individual and groups in accomplishing objectives.	All duties
8. Ability to provide guidance and leadership to staff.	C and D
9. Skill in establishing mutual trust and confidence among staff members.	C and D
10. Skill in establishing team work to accomplish objectives.	C and D
11. Skill in implementing new policies and procedures.	C and D
12. Ability to measure accomplishments against plans and correct deviations as appropriate.	E
13. Ability to identify and correct deviations from plans, as appropriate.	E
14. Knowledge of the concepts of authority and responsibility.	All duties
15. Working knowledge of ACES' policies and procedures regarding recruitment and selection of non-academic staff.	C
16. Working knowledge of ACES' policies and procedures regarding performance appraisal.	C
17. Working knowledge of ACES' policies and procedures regarding performance appraisal.	C

Knowledge, skills and abilities which are necessary for successful job performance	Needed for Duty(ies) Indicated
18. Skill in counseling on matters pertaining to annual, sick, and study leave and job performance.	C
19. Working knowledge of ACES' administrative policies and procedures.	All duties
20. Knowledge of office and space management.	A-3
21. Skill in public relations.	B-6
22. Skill in formulating recommendations to appropriate supervisory and administrative personnel.	All duties
23. Skill in use of available mass media (newspaper, radio, television).	A, D
24. Working knowledge of Extension program development process.	All duties
25. Skill in organizing and maintaining County Extension Council & other advisory groups.	A, D
26. Working knowledge of Title VI requirements for parity in programming activities.	A-1, D-1

KEY TO CODESImportance

- 1 = An important duty but not critical. It is desirable for effective job performance. Consequences of poor performance of this duty are not severe or major.
- 2 = A critical duty. Consequences of poor performance of this duty are severe and major.

APPENDIX E

Forms Related to Annual Performance Appraisal for County Agent Coordinators

EXTENSION COUNTY AGENT PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SCORESHEET

PAP-2

Name _____ Title _____

Race _____ Sex _____ County _____

Evaluation Period: Beginning _____ Ending _____
.....

G. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING
XIII. Provides Effective Leadership & Coordination for County Team _____

COMMENTS: _____

H. PERSONNEL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT
XIV. Provides Effective Supervision and Staff Development Opportunities for Support Staff _____

COMMENTS: _____

XV. Provides Effective Personnel Management & Staff Development for Academic Staff _____

COMMENTS: _____

SCALE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----

I. LEADING AND DIRECTING
XVI. Establishes/Maintains an Environment Where Staff Members Working Together Can Carry Out Planned Activities, Achieve Objectives and Accomplish Results _____

COMMENTS: _____

J. REPORTING AND EVALUATION
XVII. Reports and Evaluates Extension Educational Programs Effectively _____

COMMENTS: _____

SCALE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----

JUSTIFICATION FOR RATINGS

*EMPLOYEE Date: _____

COUNTY AGENT-COORDINATOR Date: _____

EXTENSION DISTRICT AGENT Date: _____

EXTENSION DISTRICT AGENT Date: _____

REVIEWED BY _____ Date: _____
EXTENSION ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR -
FIELD OPERATIONS/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

*The staff member will sign the PAF-2 to indicate participation, not necessarily agreement
The Staff member may appeal performance rating using appeal procedure outlined in performance appraisal handbook.

PART G - PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

The County Agent Coordinator is responsible for overall planning and organizing functions at the county level. The County Agent Coordinator is also responsible for organizing and maintaining an effective advisory board, organizing program committees, county plan of work, affirmative action, providing adequate office space and secretarial services for staff and working effectively with the County-Auburn Committee. The County Agent Coordinator is responsible for administration of the overall county office.

CRITERION 13 - Provides Effective Leadership & Coordination for County Team

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>The CAC does not provide any leadership, coordination for county staff. Does not provide leadership in organizing/maintaining county advisory board and program committees. Does not provide leadership in developing, preparing and writing the county POW, provides no coordination for preparing annual work plan for agents. Gives no leadership to affirmative action. Does not provide continuous program services during temporary staff absences and other admin. support. Does not establish program priorities, actions & events. Does not organize and/or work with County-Auburn Committee. Does not provide opportunity for staff to recruit, train, involve & recognize volunteer leaders.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does a poor job of providing leadership/coordination for county staff. Provides poor leadership in organizing/maintaining county advisory board and program committees. Provides poor leadership & coordination in developing & writing county POW and agents annual work plan. Gives ineffective leadership to affirmative action. Does a poor job of establishing priorities, activities & events. Provides very little program services in the absence of a county staff member. Does a poor job of providing adequate office space, supplies, secretarial services and communication with staff and other admin. support. Does a poor job of working with the County-Auburn Committee. Does a poor job of providing opportunities for staff to recruit, train, involve & recognize volunteer leaders.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>It is evident that the CAC provides satisfactory leadership/coordination for county staff. THE CAC does a satisfactory job in organizing & maintaining an effective county advisory board & program committees. Provides effective leadership in developing & preparing county POW and agents annual work plan. Provides effective leadership to affirmative action. Gives satisfactory leadership to establishing priorities, activities & events. Plans for continuous programs & services during temporary staff absence. Provides adequate office space, supplies, secretarial services & communication for staff as well as other admin. support. Is effective in working with the County-Auburn Committee. Does a satisfactory job of providing opportunities for staff to recruit, train, involve and recognize volunteer leaders, youth and adult.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>CAC is highly effective in providing leadership/coordination for county staff. The CAC does an excellent job of organizing & maintaining an effective county advisory board/program committees. Provides excellent leadership in developing & preparing county POW & agents annual work plan. Is highly effective in setting priorities, planning activities & events. Gives effective leadership & coordination to county affirmative action efforts in program delivery. Highly efficient in providing admin. support to staff such as secretarial help, supplies, office space, etc. Does an excellent job of working with County-Auburn Committee. Does an excellent job of providing opportunities for staff to recruit, train, involve & recognize volunteer leaders - youth and adult.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does an outstanding job of providing leadership/coordination for county team. The CAC does an exceptional job of organizing & maintaining a highly effective & efficient county advisory board/program committees. Provides outstanding leadership in developing & preparing the county POW and provides exceptional leadership in coordinating the preparation of agents annual work plan. Does an outstanding job of setting priorities, planning activities & events. Does an outstanding job of providing sufficient admin. support for staff to include secretarial help, office space, supplies, etc. Communicates effectively with staff. Does an outstanding job with County-Auburn Committee. Does an outstanding job of providing opportunities for staff to recruit, train, involve & recognize volunteer leaders - youth & adult.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>						

PART H - PERSONNEL & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The County Agent Coordinator is responsible for recruiting, selecting, training (including orientation) and supervising support staff at the county level. The County Agent Coordinator is also responsible for conducting probationary counseling and performance appraisals with support staff to help them develop into a productive staff member.

CRITERION 14 - Provides Effective Supervision and Staff Development Opportunities for Support Staff

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>The CAC does not provide any supervision for support staff. Will not recruit, select and train support staff. Falls to conduct probationary counseling and performance appraisal with support staff as appropriate. Does not provide any opportunity for support staff to develop professionally.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does a poor job of providing supervision to support staff. Does a poor job of recruiting, selecting & training support staff. Does a poor job of conducting probationary counseling & performance appraisal with support staff. Provides very little opportunity for support staff to improve professionally.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does a satisfactory & acceptable job of supervising support staff. The CAC is effective in recruiting, selecting & training support staff. The CAC does a satisfactory job in conducting probationary counseling & performance appraisals. There is evidence of effective communication with staff & encouragement to continue to develop professionally. Promotes teamwork and cooperation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does an excellent job of supervising support staff. The CAC does an excellent job of recruiting, selecting & training support staff. Does an excellent job of conducting probationary counseling & performance appraisals. There is evidence of excellent & effective communication with support staff. Support staff is encouraged to continue to develop professionally and the CAC provides opportunities for support staff to achieve professional goals. Does an excellent job of promoting cooperation & teamwork.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does an outstanding job of supervising support staff. There is evidence that the CAC has a <u>systematic process</u> for communicating with support staff. <u>Highly effective motivational</u> techniques are used to help support staff develop professionally & achieve career goals. Does an outstanding job of recruiting, selecting & training. Is highly efficient & effective in counseling & coaching during probationary review & performance appraisal. Does an outstanding job of promoting teamwork & cooperation among staff.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>						

CRITERION 15 - Provides Effective Personnel Management and Staff Development for Academic Staff

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>The CAC does not implement any personnel management functions for academic staff. Does not participate with DA in recruiting, selecting, orientating & training academic staff. Does not help DA staff set performance standards & goals for academic staff. Does not participate with DA in probationary counseling & performance appraisal of academic staff. Does not counsel academic staff regarding all leave. Does not counsel on in-service training & professional improvement/development opportunities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does a poor job of providing effective personnel management & staff development opportunities for academic staff. Is lacking in participation with DA in recruiting, selecting & orientating/training academic staff. Does very little in working with DA to set performance standards & goals for academic staff. Does an inadequate job of working with the DA in probationary counseling & performance appraisal for academic staff. Does a poor job of counseling staff on leave. Provides very little counseling to help academic staff to participate in in-service training & other professional development/improvement opportunities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does a satisfactory job in personnel management & staff development regarding academic staff. The CAC works with the DA in recruiting & selecting staff. Orientation is provided new employees in a satisfactory manner. Academic staff is given opportunity to participate in professional improvement/development activities. Encourages staff to participate in in-service training. Works with DA to set performance standards & goals for academic staff. Assists DA in probationary counseling & performance appraisal of academic staff. Does a satisfactory job of counseling with academic staff on leave.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC provides personnel management & staff development functions for academic staff in an excellent manner. The CAC does an excellent job of helping DA recruit, select, train & orientate academic staff. Does an excellent job of encouraging academic staff to participate in appropriate professional improvement/development opportunities. Helps DA in an exceptional way in assisting academic staff in setting professional standards & goals. Does an excellent job of working with DA in probationary counseling & performance appraisal of academic staff. Is highly effective on counseling regarding leave, in-service training, etc.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does an outstanding job in personnel management & staff development functions. The CAC is exceptional in working with the DA in recruiting, selecting, orientation & training of academic staff. Does an outstanding job of encouraging academic staff to participate in professional improvement/development activities. Assist DA in a highly exceptional manner in helping academic staff set performance standards & goals. Is outstanding in probationary counseling, performance appraisal with academic staff. Is outstanding in counseling academic staff on leave & participation in in-service training.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>						

PART I - LEADING AND DIRECTING

The County Agent Coordinator manages the County Extension Unit and is the contact person with local governing bodies. The County Agent Coordinator is the first line manager for the County Office. The County Agent Coordinator has the overall responsibility to guide the staff to accomplish its goals and objectives. It is the County Agent Coordinator's responsibility to establish an office atmosphere that results in teamwork, motivation, cooperation, and mutual trust among staff. The County Agent Coordinator is also responsible for effective resource acquisition and management in the county office. He/She keeps district staff informed on resource needs and other areas of support. Also, the County Agent Coordinator has the responsibility to insure that the ACES policies and procedures are carried out effectively.

CRITERION 16 - Establishes & Maintains an Environment Where Staff Members Working Together Can Carry Out Planned Activities, Achieve Objectives and Accomplish Results

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>The CAC does not provide any guidance for staff in accomplishing programs & other county objectives. Does not ensure parity in program delivery to clientele (affirmative action). Does not provide nor encourage effective communication among staff & district office. Does not explain nor carry out ACES policies & procedures. Does not represent ACES with county government and other relevant agencies. Provides no leadership to county advisory board & program committees. Does not acquaint & manage county resources. There is no evidence of teamwork, cooperation, motivation & mutual trust among staff. Does not keep district office informed.</p>	<p>The CAC does a poor job of guiding staff in achieving objectives & accomplishing program & other goals. Does a poor job of ensuring parity in program delivery. Is lacking in providing an effective atmosphere which promotes communication, motivation, teamwork, cooperation & mutual trust among staff. Does a poor job of representing ACES with local government & other relevant agencies. Is lacking in explaining & carrying out ACES policies & procedures. Provides very little leadership to county advisory board & program committees. Does a poor job of acquiring & managing county resources. Does a poor job of keeping district office informed on county needs & status of resources.</p>	<p>The CAC provides guidance to staff in achieving county objectives & accomplishing program results & other goals in a satisfactory manner. The CAC ensures parity in program delivery to clientele in an acceptable manner. Is satisfactory in providing an atmosphere which generates & promotes effective communication, cooperation, mutual trust & instruction among staff. Is satisfactory in representing the ACES with county government & other relevant organizations. Does a satisfactory job in explaining & carrying out ACES policies & procedures in the county. Does a satisfactory job of providing leadership to county advisory board & program committees. Is satisfactory in acquiring & managing resources for county staff. Keeps district staff informed of resources needs & status.</p>	<p>The CAC provides excellent guidance to staff in achieving county objectives & accomplishing program results & goals. There is evidence of program parity to clientele in an excellent manner. The CAC does an excellent job of providing an atmosphere that generates & promotes teamwork, cooperation, mutual trust, communication & motivation among staff. Does an excellent job of representing ACES to county governing body & other relevant agencies & organizations. Does an job of explaining & carrying out ACES policies & procedures. Is highly effective in securing & managing resources for county staff. Does an excellent job of keeping district staff informed on resource needs & status.</p>	<p>CAC is highly efficient & outstanding in helping county staff achieve objectives & accomplishments, program results & goals. There is evidence of parity in program delivery to clientele. New audiences were reached. There is evidence of <u>special effort to reach</u> the unreached & hard to reach audiences. The CAC does an outstanding job of providing an office atmosphere conducive to encouraging & promoting effective communication, motivation, mutual trust, & cooperation. Represents Auburn University & ACES highly effectively with county governing bodies & other relevant agencies & organizations. Does an outstanding job of explaining & carrying out ACES policies & procedures. Is outstanding in securing & managing county resources. Is outstanding in keeping district office informed on needs.</p>						

PART J - REPORTING AND EVALUATION

The County Agent Coordinator is responsible for reporting to the various publics, organizations, government agencies, advisory boards, program committees and other relevant support groups, regarding the status, accomplishments, results and impact of Extension educational programs and efforts on clientele. The County Agent Coordinator is held accountable and responsible for evaluating and monitoring extension teaching methods, techniques, subject matter content, as well as the overall educational delivery process used to teach clientele, and make modification as appropriate.

CRITERION 17 - Reports and Evaluates Extension Educational Programs Effectively

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>The CAC does not report extension educational efforts to appropriate support groups, governmental agencies & other relevant organizations. Provides no leadership in preparing special accountability reports for feedback. Does not report on achievements, accomplishments & program impact to appropriate agencies, groups & organizations. Does not evaluate Extension educational efforts. Does not observe & monitor program activities & correct/modify program efforts. Does not report to district office.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC does a poor job of reporting educational efforts to appropriate support groups, governmental agencies & other relevant organizations. The CAC is lacking in providing leadership for preparing accountability reports. Does a poor job of reporting on achievements, accomplishments & results. Does a poor job of evaluating Extension educational efforts. Does a poor job of observing & monitoring program activities to correct/modify program efforts. Does a poor job of reporting to district office.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The CAC provides leadership for reporting educational efforts & accountability to appropriate support groups, governmental agencies & relevant organizations in a satisfactory manner. Prepares special accountability reports satisfactory. Does a satisfactory job of evaluating educational efforts. Observes & monitors program activities to correct/modify program efforts satisfactorily. Does a satisfactory job of reporting to district office.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>CAC does an excellent job of reporting educational efforts, accomplishments/results to governmental agencies, support groups & relevant organizations. Does an exceptional job of preparing special accountability reports. Does an excellent job of evaluating educational efforts. Observes & monitors program activities to correct/modify program effort in an excellent manner. Is highly effective in reporting to district office.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>CAC does an outstanding job of reporting educational efforts, accomplishments, results to governmental agencies, support groups & relevant organizations. Does an outstanding job of preparing special accountability reports. Does an outstanding job in evaluating educational efforts. Observes & monitors program activities to correct/modify program effort in an outstanding fashion. Is exceptional in reporting to district office.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>						

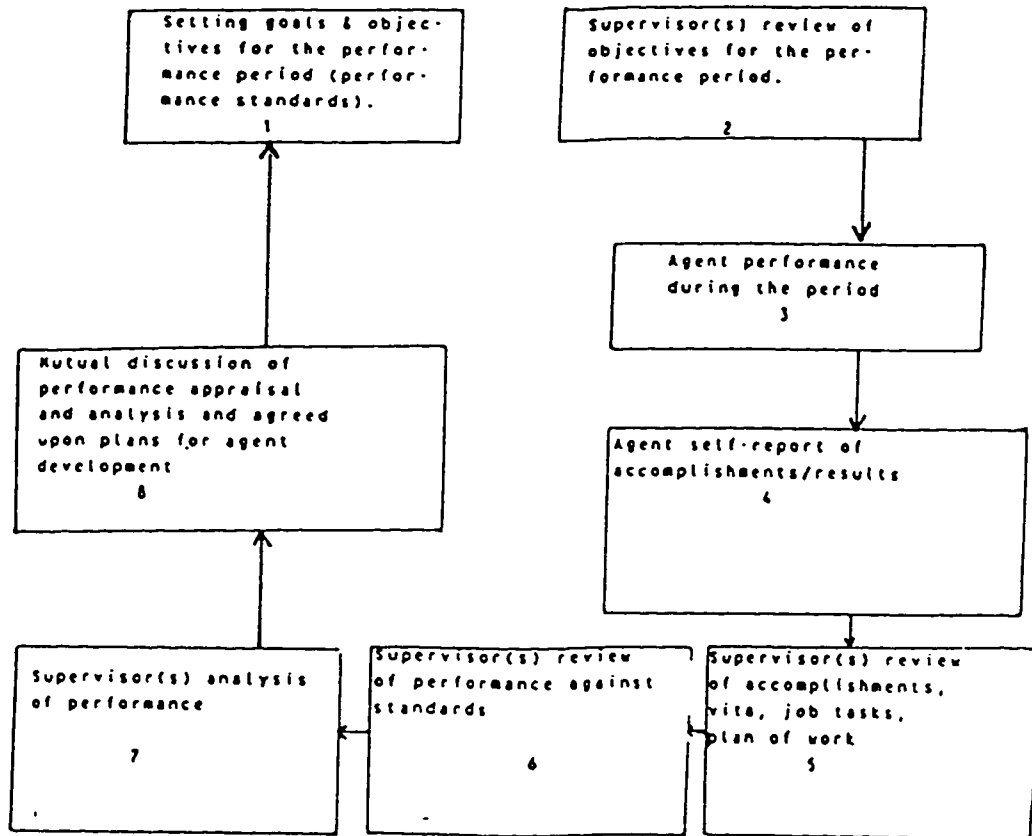
An explanation of the numerical rating in the Counseling Guide and Score Sheet is as follows:

- 1— Fails to meet any requirements of the job, task, or criterion as stated and defined in the Job Analysis and Plan of Work. Performance is at an unsatisfactory level and is not acceptable.
- 2-3-4— Does not meet the basic minimum job requirements and standards of performance of the job, task, or criterion as stated and defined in the Job Analysis and Plan of Work.
- *5-6-7— Meets acceptable job requirements and standards of performance of the job, task, or criterion as stated and defined in the Job Analysis and Plan of Work. Performs job requirements in a satisfactory manner.
- 8-9-10— Exceeds the job requirements and standards of performance of the job, task, or criterion as stated and defined in the Job Analysis and Plan of Work. Performs all job requirements in an excellent manner.
- 11— Substantially exceeds the job requirements and standards of performance of the job, task, or criterion as stated and defined in the Job Analysis and Plan of Work. Performs all job requirements in an outstanding and exceptional manner.

*While a score of five (5) is denoted as being acceptable, it does indicate minimal effort, accomplishment, or results. In view of this, a written warning may be issued when a staff member receives a total weighted score of less than six (6). Accompanying the written warning will be specific corrective actions (in writing) which must be undertaken to improve job performance in area(s) of concern. The appropriate supervisor(s) will conduct a conference with the staff member to review, discuss, and explain the corrective actions and establish a time frame in which these actions must be accomplished.

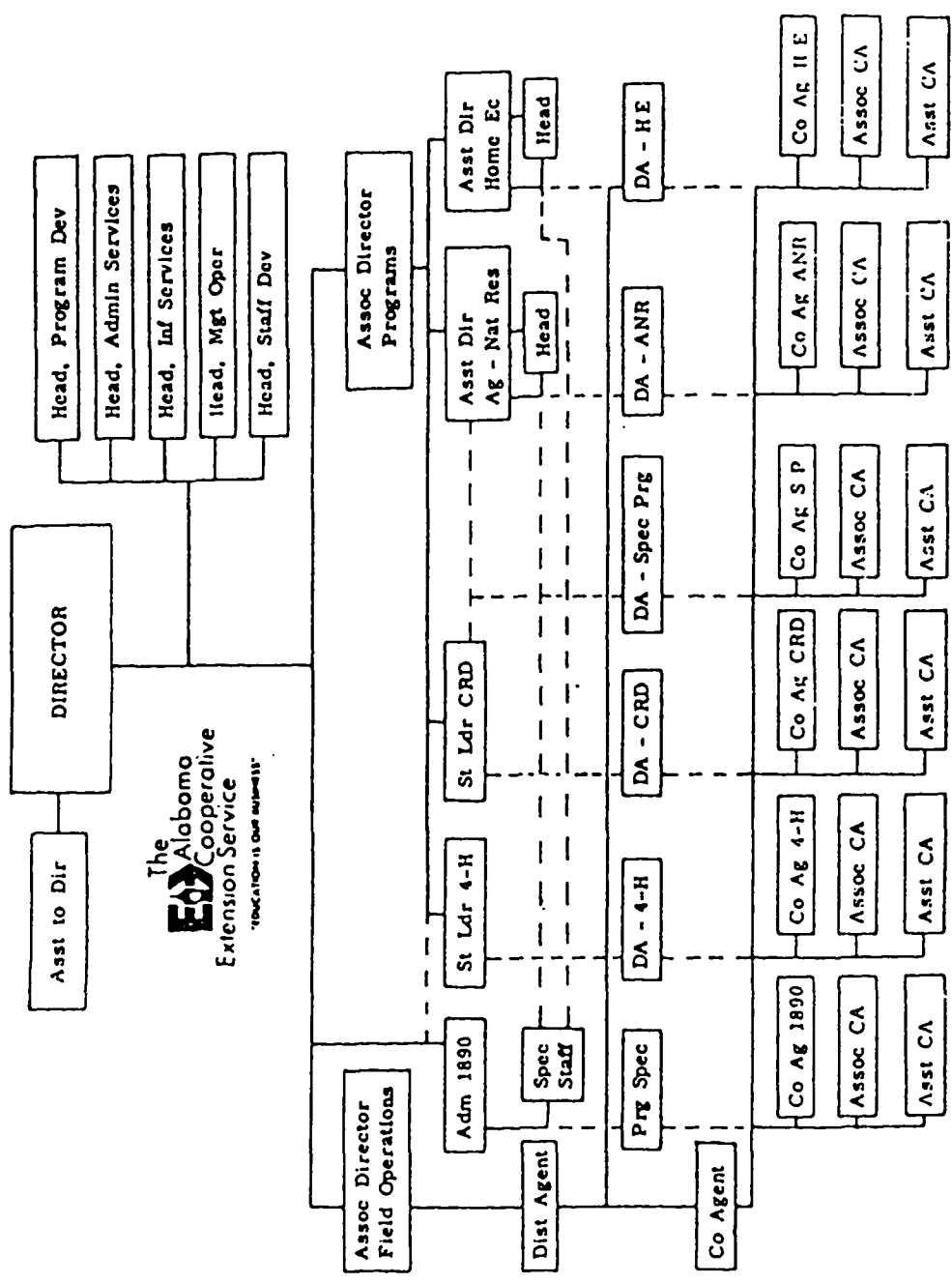
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ANNUAL CYCLE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL,
ANALYSIS, AND PLAN FOR THE ACES STAFF

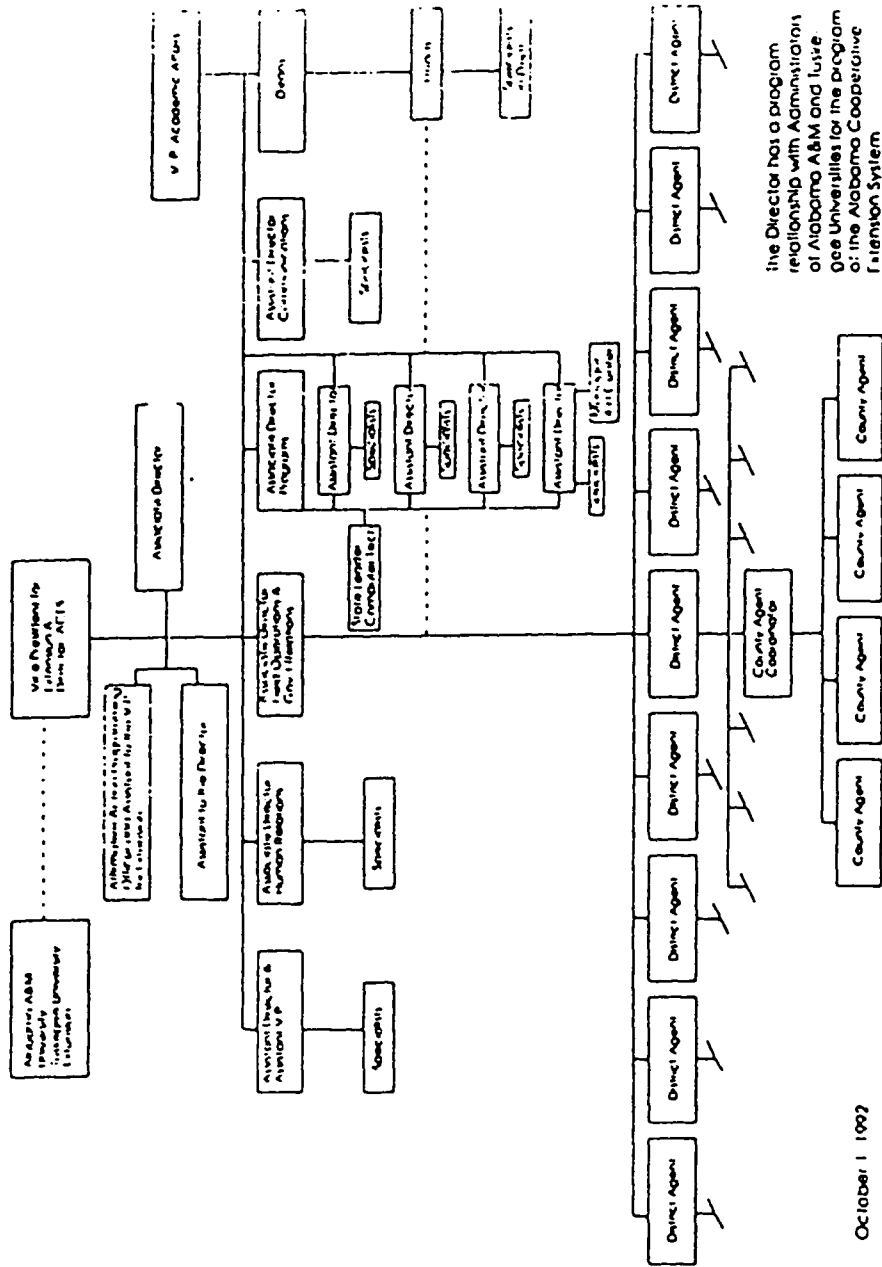


APPENDIX F

Organizational Chart of Alabama Cooperative Extension Service



Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Auburn University Organization Chart



the Director has a program relationship with Administrators of Alabama A&M and Louisiana State Universities for the program of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System

October 1 1992

APPENDIX G

Request to Obtain Data for Study and Permission to Use Data for Study

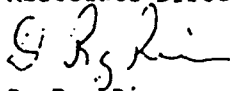
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 Alabama
Cooperative
Extension Service

STATE HEADQUARTERS / SELMA DISTRICT OFFICE
BLDG 100 / CRAIG FIELD AIRPORT & INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX
P O BOX 1026 / SELMA, AL 36702-1026
TELEPHONE (205) 875-3232
FAX (205) 875-3234

May 3, 1994

TO : Dr. James L. Smith, Extension
Associate Director, Human Resources



FROM: D. Ray Rice
Extension District Agent

RE : COUNTY AGENT-COORDINATOR ASSESSMENT CENTER RESEARCH

I would like to request the following items for my Research.

1. Assessment Center Ratings for each of the present CACs who have participated in the Assessment Center, either before or after their CAC appointment.
2. The number of years with ACES when they were appointed to the CAC position and the year they were appointed.
3. Performance Ratings in Categories 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 for each year they have been CAC, but not before the Assessment Center was in use.
4. The Weighted or Profile Score each of the District Agent for each year. Start when the Assessment Center began to be used in the selection of CACs.
5. The section of the original Court Order placing Cooperative Extension Service under the Court Order.
6. The section of the Court Order approving the use of Assessment Center for CACs eligibility.

Thanks for your assistance in securing this data.



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EA Alabama
Cooperative
Extension Service

STATE HEADQUARTERS - PERSONNEL
1ST FLOOR DUNCAN HALL
AUBURN UNIVERSITY, ALABAMA 36849-5615
(205) 844-5324

March 16, 1993

D. Ray Rice
Extension District Agent
Post Office Box 1096
Selma, Alabama 36702-1096

Your request is approved to obtain the annual Performance Appraisal scores and Assessment Center ratings of individuals who have been promoted to the position of County Agent Coordinator from 1980. This approval is with the understanding that the information will remain confidential, and that all data are presented so individual identities nor individual counties are compromised.


By copy of this letter, I am requesting that Dr. James Smith, Extension Associate Director, Human Resources provide you access to the records needed to get this data. Good luck with your dissertation and I look forward to reviewing the results of this study. Let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Best Wishes.

Ann Thompson

Ann E. Thompson,
Associate Provost, Vice President for Extension &
Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service

cc: Dr. James Smith

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Cooperative
Extension
System

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**GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM
DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM**

Name of Candidate D. Ray Rice

Major Subject Educational Leadership

Title of Dissertation An Examination of the Relationships Between the
Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Assessment Center Ratings
and Subsequent County Agent-Coordiators' Job Performance Ratings

Dissertation Committee:

August K. Leland, Chairman _____

Richard S. [Signature], Chairman _____

James Z. Smith _____

Lynia L. [Signature] _____

Director of Graduate Program Boyd Rogan

Dean, UAB Graduate School Jan T. [Signature]

Date 6/10/96