

Building a Sustainable Future for Appalachian Governance

The University of Tennessee

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Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: "Building a Sustainable Future for Appalachian Governance"

Grant Period: July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

Grantee Name: University of Tennessee Project Director: Dr. Tim Ezzell

Description of Project:

For the 2010 ATP project, students at UT addressed issues of governance facing Appalachian Communities. In an effort to gauge the effectiveness of governance region-wide and to identify localized trends and issues, students assessed case representative study communities in the five ARC subregions, identified important issues, and developed future scenarios. Based on these scenarios, students then developed recommendations to improve governance in each subregion.

Activities:

UT hosted a workshop at the Baker Center for Public Policy in October 2010 to determine characteristics of good governance and to develop scenarios related to potential governance issues. Participants met in breakout groups and plenary sessions to evaluate governance issues at four scales: local, state, national, and international. ATP students worked with local leaders, researchers, and stakeholders to explore the special challenges confronting rural Appalachian communities and to assess future governance in the region.

Based on these findings, UT students conducted a trends analysis for each of the five ARC subregions. Using case study communities from each subregion, the students identified current and future opportunities and concerns for these areas. Students then developed three future scenarios for each subregion (light, dark, and status quo), identified subregional priorities, and developed recommendations to improve rural governance, address possible or emerging issues, and create opportunities for economic growth.

Students presented these findings at a Baker Center in November, where they discussed their findings with experts and stakeholders. Results of these discussions were incorporated into the final recommendations.

Project Outcomes:

Students organized and facilitated a governance workshop at the Baker Center that included local and national experts, representatives from local, state, and federal agencies, and elected officials.

Students presented their research and findings at the ATP meeting in Washington and at the Baker Center in Knoxville.

Students developed and presented a poster at the ATP meeting in Washington.

Students shared results from the project with workshop participants and other stakeholders.

Problems Encountered:

No problems were encountered in the course of this project.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

Results from this project will be incorporated into the 2011 ATP project, which will assess subregional energy issues and develop future energy portfolios for Appalachian subregions.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Policy recommendations that resulted from this project include the following:

- Policy evaluations should be place-based
- Officials should evaluate development strategies of other mountainous regions as guides to economic development
- Governments (state and federal) should develop infrastructure to decrease geographical isolation
- Agencies should increase investment for research in natural gas
- Communities must improve human capital to build a strong workforce
- States must restructure the public education system so there is oversight to promote quality teaching
- Governments should promote vocational training and special education programs for tutoring and special assistance
- Investments, not subsidies, are needed to develop a local economic base from which the populous can benefit.

Attachments: