Policy Statement - The most important asset of the Association is the employees. Professional development opportunities provide for the continued growth and learning of employees and, in turn, enhance their contributions to the organization. The Association stresses the importance of and encourages professional development; and includes strategies for meeting the growth and learning needs of employees.

Strategies - Effective professional development strategies involve the employee, his/her supervisor, the Association, and Extension Administration. Cornell faculty may also be consulted.

Employee Responsibilities – Any staff member has the responsibility to seek out clarification of roles and accountabilities at any time there is doubt or confusion surrounding performance expectations through the supervisor or Association. Staff members should also be proactive in providing input to the goals and priorities surrounding their positions.

Performance Development – All supervisors are expected and required to initiate a yearlong performance development process with supervised staff. The Association reserves the right to be the final decision-maker in setting position goals, roles and accountabilities including expected levels of performance. This process may include and is not limited to:

- Setting individual goals reflective of and aligned to Association and program priorities;
- Developing a performance plan for each individual to address priorities;
- Reviewing individual progress periodically to adjust to changing needs or unexpected challenges that may be affecting achievement of expected results;
- Providing feedback when performance is not meeting expectations in order to effect change from a corrective viewpoint and not a disciplinary action;
- Intervening when corrective feedback has not been successful, including disciplinary actions; and
- Conducting an annual assessment of employee achievements and challenges in order to plan coming year’s goals, priorities and development of an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP).

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) – Since positions within the Association are diverse and employees bring unique skills, knowledge, and abilities to each position, performance development strategies must be designed according to the needs of the individual and the position. Individualized Learning Plans are built on the initiative and needs of the individual employee. Financial and leave requirements are subject to approval of the Association in accordance with policies contained herein and funding available. The plan should be centered on the skills and credentials needed to perform positions established by the Association and outlined in the employee's position description and may include:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County

Policy 311
• Graduate degree programs;
• Formal coursework and degree programs;
• Non-formal education such as workshops, seminars, study tours, guided readings, work with mentors, and intern programs;
• Learning new skills and building expertise while on the job to improve individual and Association capacity or gaining of special certifications.

Conferral of Professional Title as a Cornell Cooperative Extension Professional Educator - Educators with the title of: Extension Executive Director, Extension Issue Leader, Senior Extension Educator, Extension Team Coordinator, Senior Extension Resource Educator and Extension Resource Educator are hired for an initial term of up to 2 years and are required to have annual performance reviews and an in-depth review at least every four years which contains review of professional development plans and activities. Conferral of title from the Director of Extension shall be granted with the initial employment of a professional educator by an association. Cornell Cooperative Extension professional titles will expire automatically upon separation of employment from the extension association, promotion to a new title or transfer to another association. Professional title may also be terminated at any time, for any reason, via written communication from the Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension to the employee and Executive Director. Conferral of title is not employment. However, it is a system standard that anyone in certain professional educator positions is required to have a current title conferred by the Director of Extension. For Executive Directors, conferral of title must be renewed at least every 4 years as part of the in-depth review process.