

Contribution and Significance of Research: Input from stakeholders is not only part of the newest federal legislation; it is an integral part of a quality program development strategy. Including input and participation from stakeholders can lead to better developed and more successful program efforts, and ultimately resolution of issues that face stakeholders. This is a critical issue given the requirements of several pieces of federal legislation in recent years. This paper serves to describe a process used at a land grant university to gather stakeholder input for setting research priorities. The purpose and objectives of the study are clearly described and the authors do an excellent job of providing background information.

Although there are many models that can be used, the researchers describe and use a model modified from Guba and Lincoln. The model and modifications of the model are well described in the paper. This comparison is particularly noted in Table 1, where the procedures used to complete the study are thoroughly described.

Questions for Consideration: As noted, this paper does an excellent job of describing the procedure used. However, several questions can be asked in order to better understand the study. First, what was the major determining factor in the decision to use the Guba and Lincoln model? Numerous other models might have been employed. Some insight into this decision might aid researchers in future decisions.

Second, how exactly were the themes developed? Qualitative research methods pose different challenges than quantitative methods. One of these challenges is how to 'interpret' the data. What pre-work has to be done with the data before it is subjected to the software? How are the data presented for interpretation?

Finally, how readily usable is this procedure for others? Does this strategy require an outside group to administer or can it be done 'in-house'? What type of training and expertise is needed?

Final Thoughts: Overall this paper is well written and contains relevant information for those who have responsibility for meeting the criteria of the most recent federal legislation. The model described has the potential to be replicated in a variety of locations. This work has important implications in the area of gathering stakeholder input.