

Dean Karl Martin WCA Presentation (Feb. 7)

History of the Project:

- As part of the 2015-17 Wisconsin state budget, a \$250 million cut to UW System impacted every UW campus and program in the state.
- For UW Cooperative Extension, this meant a permanent \$3.6 million annual budget deficit.
- Recognizing that the organization could not sustain its current operations with a cut this large while remaining good partners with county leadership, we embarked on the *nEXT Generation* reorganization project to streamline Cooperative Extension and position ourselves to better meet Wisconsin's changing needs.
- At the end of last summer, divisional leadership changes were made, including at the Dean-level, to address a number of challenges and to reboot the project.

nEXT Generation Process:

- Chancellor Sandeen launched the process with the organizing principle of making Cooperative Extension more relevant, flexible, and digital. This includes:
 - Creating a new institutional model that allows the organization to tackle emerging issues in Wisconsin with timely research and education.
 - Ensuring the institution remains accountable and transparent stewards of taxpayer dollars.
 - Embracing and implementing digital programming solutions to provide critical educational resources to more people across the state.
- Three Executive Sponsors, a Project Steering Committee, and a Project Management Team have been appointed. Over 100 individuals from Cooperative Extension and external stakeholders have been named to work groups.
- The Integration Work Group was created in the Fall of 2016 to synthesize the deliverables and feedback from the various 9 workgroups (that ran from the Summer-Fall of 2016) to shape and propose a reimagined model of Cooperative Extension.
- A bit of background on the decision-making process:
 - The IWG sends their recommendations to the Executive Sponsors, who then review and solicit feedback.
 - Once approved by the Executive Sponsors, final recommendations are given to UW Extension leadership for approval.
 - Implementation and implementation planning for decisions begin only after final approval.
- A cornerstone of the process is soliciting feedback from county partners and other stakeholders/funding partners at major project milestones.
 - This February feedback period is the first of many opportunities to provide feedback over the spring of 2017. The recommendations today focus specifically on county partnerships.
 - Additional areas of Cooperative Extension, including campus partnerships, will be included in future feedback processes.
- We understand that county budgets operate on a calendar year and vary on when they begin

planning their budgets for the following year. The project is aiming to have concrete information for our county partners this spring so they can begin their budget planning processes.

February IWG Recommendations Overview:

The Integration Work Group identified six core recommendations related to the structure and staffing for county offices in the future. These six recommendations are detailed on subsequent pages. We suggest reading these recommendations sequentially as the concepts presented in each lay the groundwork for subsequent recommendations.

- Maintaining an Extension Office in Every County
- Restructuring Geographic Administration
- Connecting Counties/Tribes with Regional & Statewide Resources
- Differentiating County/Tribe-Based Educational Positions
- Sharing Educational Positions Across Counties/Tribes
- Establishing New Agreements Between Counties & Cooperative Extension

February Recommendations:

- **A Cooperative Extension office should be maintained in every county that is willing to commit to continued funding and facility space for Cooperative Extension staff.**
 - To successfully accomplish the organization's mission, it is critical to maintain an Extension Office in every county that wants to continue partnering with Cooperative Extension.
 - Cooperative Extension recognizes the value of keeping the shortest distance possible between the people of Wisconsin and the Extension staff delivering programming to them.
 - Dedicated, local office space is necessary for every staff member that the county is co-funding.
- **Administrative services should be restructured to be multicounty area rather than county-by-county.**
 - Currently, counties provide an average of 40% of the salary and fringe costs of County Department Heads and/or County Directors.
 - These positions average between 30-100% of their time on administrative duties, rather than delivering programming as an educator.
 - The recommendation is to create an Area Extension Director position to consolidate administration and better nurture county relationships while serving as a conduit to the broader Cooperative Extension network of resources.
 - These administrative positions would be fully funded by Cooperative Extension, allowing county funding to go directly to supportive staff delivering programming in their communities.
 - These Directors would be responsible for working directly with counties on MOUS and contracts.
 - One item we are specifically soliciting feedback on is whether this role should have dedicated office space within one county of the multi-county area, or should have floating office space in every county.

- Cooperative Extension would phase out the positions of Regional Directors and County Department Heads/Directors.
 - This would eliminate a layer of administrative bureaucracy, and allow for area directors to specialize their administrative work to their area
 - These changes would reduce the number of staff involved in administration (moving from over 100 staff to ~30).
- **Regional and statewide resources should be made more readily available to communities**
 - Under the current Cooperative Extension county delivery model, counties have limited access to regional and statewide resources provided by the Cooperative Extension.
 - Resources include subject matter specialists based in Cooperative Extension centers and other four-year UW campuses around the state.
 - Counties typically do not get access to these programs if they do not fund a position in that subject matter.
 - With access to these resources, counties should be better able to address emergent issues through new or adapted programs quickly and efficiently.
 - Continuing to invest in positions based at UW campuses, Cooperative Extension would create regional outreach and research positions that will be primarily funded by Cooperative Extension.
 - Counties will still have access to educational programs of these regional and state-wide experts, even if they are not funding or housing these positions directly.
 - These resources would potentially be embedded in counties, tribes, on UW campuses and Extension centers, but will serve broad audiences based on local, regional, and statewide needs.
- **County-based educator positions should be differentiated to provide more flexibility for county partners.**
 - Cooperative Extension staff currently serving in the role of “educator” complete a variety of tasks -- from administrative to instructional to research -- and also have a variety of qualifications -- from bachelor’s degrees to PhDs.
 - In some cases, the tasks do not match with qualification requirements.
 - Additionally, the current structure does not allow for flexibility for county partners in regards to how their programs are delivered.
 - Three different roles would be created to meet the diversity of county needs, as well as ensure job responsibilities are aligned with clearly articulated qualifications.
 - **Associate Extension Educators:** Staff with a high school diploma or bachelor’s degree, focusing on teaching, delivering programs, and providing educational services that leverage curricula and educational materials developed by statewide resources.
 - **Extension Educators:** Staff with a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree focusing on adapting programs developed by statewide resources to be most relevant to the residents of the county/tribe and delivering those programs to the resident.
 - **Program Coordinators:** Staff with a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree

focusing on operational support to volunteers and instructors delivering a specified program within a county/tribe structure.

- The differentiating of these roles, rather than the “one-size-fits-all” approach, will increase the applicant pool size and ensure local residents have an increased opportunity to apply for local Cooperative Extension positions.
- Counties will be able to share educational positions across counties.
- We anticipate that these changes will require a transition period.

- **Multicounty educational positions should be formally created to provide broader access to quality services.**
 - Within the current Cooperative Extension model, counties around the state informally share resources with neighboring counties.
 - Throughout the *nEXT Generation* feedback process, employees have voiced a strong desire for more specialization in their content area to further their professional development and improve their local programming.
 - Working with the newly proposed position of Area Extension Director, counties would have an opportunity to increase the variety of services being provided to their communities.
 - Counties/tribes would not need to invest in a full FTE for every program area; they would have the option to fund partial staff.
 - Given that designated areas are only intended primarily as administrative boundaries for Cooperative Extension, counties/tribes need not share staff only within those boundaries. A county could share a positions with its neighbor, even if they are not within the same administrative area.
 - Staff would have increased opportunities within their designed expertise and across a wider array of disciplines, as well as the ability to share their expertise across multiple counties/tribes.

- **New and updated agreements should be developed between county partners and Cooperative Extension to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective service delivery.**
 - Currently, contracts between Cooperative Extension and individual counties are signed annually to outline program services and funding expectations.
 - These contracts are inconsistent from county to county and often need to be renegotiated throughout the year when there is a change in staff status.
 - To ensure transparency and good customer service, counties would sign a multi-year Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) as a supplement to the annual contracts.
 - These MOUs would be standardized and would identify the types of positions, services, and programs Cooperative Extension would provide to counties, as well as resources counties will provide to Cooperative Extension.
 - The MOU will also outline general approval processes (e.g., hiring process & authority for new staff, approval process for annual contracts) and expectations for how the counties and Cooperative Extension will interact.
 - To ensure stability in educational services for the county, Area Extension Directors would also develop an annual contract with the counties that will identify the FTE and

types of positions the county is funding (e.g., 1.0 FTE of 4-H Youth Development Program Coordinator), but would not contain the names of staff in those positions.

- o The annual contracts would also include a standardized fee structure set by Cooperative Extension based on the discipline and position level. (e.g., 1.0 FTE of 4-H Youth Development Program Coordinator would cost \$XYZ but 1.0 FTE of a Master Gardener Program Coordinator would cost \$ABC).
 - The annual contracts will guarantee counties will now know their all-in costs for the contracts with Cooperative Extension at the beginning of the year, and will not need to adjust their budgets mid-year unless they decide to increase or decrease the FTE for their positions.
 - This flat fee would include travel funding, fringe benefits, salary adjustments and professional development expenses.
 - These position fees would be relatively standard across the state; however, would be adjusted based on economic indicators to account for differences across counties.
 - The standardized fees have not been determined, as the *nEXT Generation* process is currently in the feedback stage, but are looking for feedback regarding this change in approach to a fee-based structure.

Next Steps:

- Feedback on these recommendations will be provided to the Executive Sponsors, as well as the Integration Workgroup.
- Recommendations, as part of this feedback period, may be finalized and provided for a formal decision.
 - o Formal decisions will be made throughout the spring of 2017 to ensure efficient implementation in a timely manner.
 - o These decisions will be communicated broadly, including in the internal/external newsletters.
- Because the feedback will inform final recommendations and plans, there is not a schedule for implementing these recommendations at this time.
- Implementation for the project will follow a rolling schedule, with certain aspects building upon others.
- Many recommendations would require a period of transition if they are implemented.