The Vice President's

Conversation on the Future

of Extension

Summary Report
- Visioning Phase -

December 2015

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Phase II: Visioning Methods & Metrics

During May-July 2015 there were 15 opportunities to share ideas
- **12** in-person workshops held throughout the state
- **2** virtual (including a Tweet-Up)
- **1** online survey

Nearly *400* individuals participated in those conversations

Those individuals represent one or more of the following groups:

OSUE Employees

Approximately
40% *of*
participants

- OSUE Volunteers
- OSUE Clientele & Customers
- OSUE Partners
- CFAES Colleagues
- Donors to CFAES & Extension
- State Extension Advisory Council (advisory group to OSU Extension)
- Vice President's Advisory Council (advisory group to CFAES)
- Ohio Elected Officials
- County Commissioner Association of Ohio
- Industry, Organization, and Community Leaders

The participants, across the 15 conversations, generated more than 3,000 data points (individual ideas, thoughts, & opinions)

A team spent 400+ hours qualitatively analyzing those data points, resulting in the following summary document.

***Important Note*: This summary is to be used as tool to further discover and explore the future possibilities by engaging in discussion around the information provided by OSUE employees, stakeholders, and partners. *It is <u>not</u> intended to serve as a definitive guide or strategic plan for the future of OSU Extension.* We each play an important role in envisioning and creating the future. Be sure to do your part to keep the conversation going!**

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Guiding Principles
– Recurring themes of importance and identity for OSUE

Behaviors & Practices that Maximize the Image, Reputation, & Impact of OSUE

ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY	*Let's Ponder*
– Seek research-based, unbiased, practical, reliable solutions – Be intentional in managing how we present and how others perceive OSUE – Maintain transparency on all levels	– What practices does OSUE need to maintain or adopt to achieve the highest level of organizational integrity? How might this affect OSUE partnerships, funding, or other aspects of OSUE business?

LEVERAGING HUMAN CAPITAL	*Let's Ponder*
– Continue to grow knowledge and skill base of people within the organization – Provide resources and support for all employees - including personnel - related to support, program, and administration – Develop leaders across all levels – Encourage employees to explore and employ strategies to maintain health, well-being, and life balance	– How can the organization identify and utilize the strengths and talents of the employees? – What resources and opportunities can the organization provide to allow the employees to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills, including leadership development?

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS	*Let's Ponder*
– Continually seek non-traditional, new partners – Bring people together to identify and utilize resources, collaborations, and partnerships to achieve desired outcomes – Utilize larger system (OSU, land grants, extension organizations, community colleges, etc.) resources to help provide solutions – Maintain a strong, comprehensive volunteer base; provide training/ engagement opportunities and resources for them to be effective – Leverage strengths of partnering entities	– How can the organization continue to seek out new and relevant partnership and collaboration opportunities? What can we do to cultivate these relationships?

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Guiding Principles:
Thinking & Attitudes that Build OSUE's Sustainability & Success

FUTURE FOCUSED	*Let's Ponder*
– Foster a culture that encourages open-minded, positive attitudes and thinking related to futuring, innovation, and increasing capacity for change – Continually scan the external environment (i.e. client, demographic, community) to identify emerging trends and issues – Cultivate a culture that encourages individuals to be adventurous and exercise informed risk-taking – Conduct continuous assessment and improvement of educational programs/services	– How can the organization encourage its employees to develop, maintain and employ future focused thinking and activities? How might that impact our priorities and practices? How might this impact our funding, our partnerships, and your daily activities? – At a team/unit level, what things can you and others do to engage in a futuring mindset? How will these activities impact your team's direction and outcomes? – What can you do as an individual to develop a capacity to be future focused?

SERVICE MINDSET	*Let's Ponder*
– Work within communities to proactively determine needs and engage people to address those needs; serve as an interface between communities, organizations, and the University – Utilize research-based education for outreach and engagement with communities, providing value-added opportunities and solutions – Rapidly respond to critical individual and community needs – Foster and maintain a commitment to excellent customer service – Continue to prioritize providing educational solutions, support, and leadership of grassroots efforts within communities – Build resources and communities of practice around state, regional, and national initiatives	– What does a "service-mindset" mean to you? – What can the organization do to give individuals the freedom to operate under a service-centered mission (as opposed to a profit driven mission)? – Consider and discuss the implications and potential outcomes of the following statement: *"OSUE's currency is not measured in dollars; rather it is measured in the positive outcomes and impacts of its educational efforts."*

Guiding Principles:
Thinking & Attitudes that Build OSUE's Sustainability & Success, cont.

FLEXIBILITY & ADAPTABILITY	*Let's Ponder*
– Work beyond geographic and subject matter boundaries; be responsive to emerging needs; consider global-based issues and impacts – Remain flexible, nimble, and responsive to environment, clientele, stakeholders, partners, and funders – Pursue integrated and holistic approach to problem-solving and programming – Effectively understand and utilize technology programs and services	– How can OSUE operate in a way that is nimble, flexible, and quickly responsive to needs? How might this impact organizational bureaucracy, the use of technology, and the allocation of resources? – What can the organization do to support our work outside of geographic boundaries and with other disciplines?

Needs fundamental to all other needs...

CULTURE & SOCIETY

- Respecting evolving cultural differences (rituals, norms, practices, religion, and beliefs)
- Creating a culture that values education, research, and engagement to provide solutions that address and prevent problems, as well as innovation that discovers possibilities
- Fostering an understanding of worldwide interconnectedness (economically, environmentally, culturally)

ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

- Technology
- Healthcare
- Education
- Healthy Foods
- Energy
- Equitable distribution across the state and among socio-economic groups

Needs of Ohioans...

HEALTH & HEALTHCARE

- Prevention education to achieve health and well-being
- Understanding, preventing, and treating substance abuse
- Resources and care for elderly
- Nutritious, plentiful, and safe food supply
- Innovative approach to delivery and coordination of healthcare
- Understanding, preventing, and treating emotional, cognitive, and mental health issues
- A shift in paradigm and practice of healthy behaviors and healthcare delivery methods

EDUCATION & CAREER

- Utilizing science, arts, and humanities-based information and experiences
- Workforce training for specific technical skills and trades (partnerships among business, industry, and education)
- A balance between technology and personal interaction
- An understanding of how to evaluate and synthesize information and knowledge
- Flexible and diverse educational delivery system that accommodates life-long learning

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

- Skills to help people foster innovation related to...
  o Food production practices
  o Creativity
  o Healthcare
  o Economic development
  o Education and career

- Keeping up with technology

- An understanding of how to live with and create a balance related to the use and application of technology

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, COMMUNICATION, & LEADERSHIP

- Strong and effective leaders (in business, government, and communities)

- Communication/interpersonal/social skills in both personal and professional practices

- Capacity to build and maintain relationships in both face-to-face and technology interactions

- Support networks

- Individuals acting as connectors to bring people together for problem-solving and team building

- The capacity to navigate complex and diverse issues

CIVIC/GOVERNMENT ENGAGMENT & SECURITY

- Increased security for data (personal, government, financial, big data, health)

- Proactive and preventative measures to mitigate crime and terrorism

- Control by and reliance on government: A balance in presence and influence

- Accountability: Checks and balances of government activity

- Efficiency and accuracy in operations to reduce waste, lower cost, and improve services in all levels of government

- An understanding and practice of good citizenship (adult, youth, and leaders)

- A practice of service for the "common good"; social responsibility

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

- A dynamic business community with vigorous entrepreneurship and small business development

- Public/private collaborations

- Support for businesses

- A strong, diversified, and resilient economy

- Innovation for economic development including venture capital and increased philanthropic support

- Strong sustainable infrastructure (transportation, communication, technology)

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

- A healthy external environment
- An understanding of how to prevent and mitigate negative impacts of climate change
- Good water quality
- Good air quality
- Environmentally friendly and sustainable energy sources
- Clean and healthy soils
- Sustainable waste disposal practices (recycle and repurpose)
- Sustainable agriculture

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

- An understanding and appreciation of personal responsibility
- A belief in one's self and one's own abilities; a feeling of personal value/worth/purpose
- Management of personal resources and finances
- To maintain a sense of self-reliance
- To be flexible, resilient, and adaptable
- To embrace the practice of life-long learning
- The ability to manage personal behavior/thoughts
- Downtime for personal enjoyment, play, and recreation (work/life balance)
- To embrace a positive and optimistic mindset
- Psychological resilience (coping and problem-solving skills)
- Knowledge, research, and problem-solving skills for making decisions

OPPORTUNITIES:

How can OSUE – now and in the future – find solutions for the needs?

Opportunities: Sharing Research-Based Information & Skills
HEALTH & WELLNESS – Understanding individual and medical rights – Wellness among aging population – Empowering individuals to care for themselves – Preventative measures (vaccines, diet, lifestyle, attitudes) – Nutrition – Food safety and food security – Emotional, cognitive, and mental health issues

RESOURCEFULNESS
– Food preservation methods
– Basic living skills (food prep, safety, cleanliness)
– Financial literacy
    o Personal finance management (budgeting, savings, and investing)
    o Home ownership (equity, financing, and affordability)
– Personal decision making, prioritizing, planning, and managing

SOCIAL SKILLS, COMPETENCIES, & RELATIONSHIPS – Family dynamics – Parenting education – Interpersonal skill development – Understanding and managing conflict – Effective communication – Creative thinking to generate innovative solutions to problems/issues – Psychological resilience – Decision making skills – Citizenship - civic responsibility – Interpersonal development issues related to technology – Effectively navigating change – Managing personal online presence and reputation – Mindfulness training

LEADERSHIP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Building relationships and interacting with others in a positive way
- Navigating complex, diverse, and divisive issues and information
- Understanding group dynamics and practicing effective group leadership
- Problem-solving abilities; self-motivation
- Decision making (in a career/leadership role)
- Exploring career options based on individual interests
- Employability skills (trade/technical and interpersonal skills)
- Preparing youth for the workforce
- Providing educational opportunities leading to accredited/accepted certification

AGRICULTURE

- Farmland preservation and land use
- Urban farming
- Navigating rapidly changing technology to utilize real-time data to impact agricultural on-farm decisions
- Awareness and literacy (understanding significance and relevance of agriculture to food and environmental systems)
- Food production and safety
  - o Collaboration on food production practices to generate more food at better quality
  - o Exploration of new food sources
- Encouraging and assisting young farmers

COMMUNITY VITALITY & ECONOMICS

- Understanding regulations and economy
- Understanding and practicing sustainability
- Understanding food systems (supply, demand, distribution, food security)
- Creating entrepreneur-friendly environments
- Effectively dealing with and managing change
- Developing a mindful and proactive perspective for planning
- Understanding the impact urban growth and land use issues
- Decision making, cause and effect, and global impacts

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Monitoring and interpreting research databases for environment: air, soil, water quality
- Recycling, repurposing, and conservation
- Understanding implications of food production practices, energy development, water management, and air quality
- Understanding and adapting to the effects of climate change

Opportunities: Maximizing OSUE's Educational Impact

ENGAGEMENT

- Utilize the most effective educational strategies, including technology and distance learning
- Create programs/delivery methods designed to engage a variety of audiences (multiple languages, skill sets, life stages)
- Seek balance between technology and personal interaction
- Utilize experiential-based education for practical application
- Seek innovative approaches (open source)
- Synthesize information (research and big data)
- Support one-on-one educational and learning efforts conducted through coaching
- Coordinate empowerment teams (interdisciplinary) around issues
- Develop customized services (for groups and individuals - including concept of N=1)
- Provide free or affordable access as needed by youth and families
- Translate research and big data for practical use by individuals and communities
- STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) for youth audiences
- Create education certification and CEUs in a variety of topics
- Serve as a resource center
- Serve as a knowledge broker – building links and creating connections, sharing ideas in research and practice to solve problems

OPERATIONAL

- Establish a networking system within OSUE to help mitigate duplication of efforts
- Provide resources and support needed for employees to effectively carry out job responsibilities
- Customize messaging based on context/audience/need/group to increase communication effectiveness
- Continue to incorporate and utilize current technology
- Manage in-house data security
- Document the value and impact of our research and educational efforts

CONNECTORS

- Intentionally focus on connecting groups, people, etc. across all levels
- Facilitate conversations and community/group problem-solving
- Build sense of "community" and belonging
- Encourage change through community involvement
- Educate the public about divisive issues/food production/water quality/animal welfare
- Connect businesses and education

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IMAGE & REPUTATION

Marketing Strategies (communicating our brand)

- o Employ marketing experts
- o Paid advertising
  - ▪ Direct marketing (to a specific audience)
  - ▪ Television
  - ▪ Billboards
- o Using social media
- o Use volunteers to help spread message
- o Exposure to a broad audience
- o Intentional in sharing value and impacts
- o Central marketing plan (not locally-based or generated) to create awareness among Ohioans about Extension's programs and impacts
  - ▪ Target to keep Extension highly visible; no longer remain the "best kept secret"

Reputation & Customer Satisfaction (how we want to be perceived)

- o Organizational Integrity
  - ▪ Un-biased, reliable, accurate, credible information source
  - ▪ Friendly, open-door policy, trusted, transparent
  - ▪ Accessible, responsive, inclusive
  - ▪ Research-based, field tested, practical, useful

Educational & Organizational Approach

- o Innovative, efficient, technologically competent
- o Forward thinking, continually scanning trends to address evolving needs, progressive, pro-active, holistic
- o Utilize a blending of educational strategies that encompasses personal/face-to-face connections and technology
- o Provider of life/interpersonal skills development for all ages; leadership training and development
- o Supporting the growth of agriculture in Ohio
- o Connecting people with the information they need; customized problem-solving
- o Strong collaboration (internal and external); interdisciplinary; partnerships with business and industry
- o Involved and integrated into community; identifying and meeting local needs
- o A library of programs, resources, and services accessible both in-person and on-line
- o Subject matter experts; specialized people tackling societal needs/issues; developing niches; process specialists

Extension's Connection to the University

- o   Utilizing local Extension offices to recruit potential OSU students
- o   Representative of University at large, the local connection to OSU
- o   All university departments engage in Extension activity and house Extension personnel
- o   Aligned with University mission
- o   Known and respected within OSU

Why Extension?

- o   A great return on investment; cost effective; value added
- o   Primary source of solutions through education
- o   Premier Extension service in the United States; respected internationally
- o   Seen as an organization that is open and responsive to customer needs
- o   Leading educational catalyst; innovative change agents
- o   Educational leader with influence in many topic areas (health/wellness, land use, workforce development/training, food safety/environment, research and education)

DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Utilizing Current & Emerging Technologies

- o   Materials available online 24/7, on-demand
- o   Digital delivery with software for real-time language translation
- o   Apps for any device with access to all content
- o   Utilizing the cutting edge technologies and applications to communicate with clientele and deliver educational information (tech-integrated products, drone diagnostics, personalized devices)
- o   Technology experts to create templates/platforms to be used by educators to easily develop apps and tech-based applications for research based information (disease diagnostics, identifying health issues)
- o   Create OSUE TV network (e.g. createtv.com)

Evaluation & Assessment

- o   Constantly monitoring our technology-based delivery methods to ensure continued effectiveness and value
- o   Evaluating and monitoring level of accessibility across the state and across demographics
- o   Model best practices for demonstrating impacts/measurable results

Utilizing Collaboration to Expand Impact

- o   Use volunteers to provide educational information
- o   News media (for articles, e-magazines, newsletters)
- o   Collaborating with partners across the globe to generate answers and solve problems
- o   "Hub" like approach to bringing together a community based network of residents, organizations, and businesses that support one another to meet the needs of the community/neighborhood
- o   Holistic

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- o Extension programs integrated into school systems to further youth development
- o Utilize concept of train the trainers
- o Working with business/industry providing educational information to meet training needs

Educational Engagement

- o Personalized, responsive delivery
- o Central clearinghouse of individuals who are familiar with every facet of the organization who connect people with educator/specialists and help individuals sort through problems and issues (accessed via web, email, or 411-type service).
- o "Uber" like approach utilizing Extension professionals to select and be dispatched to address needs
- o Personalized consultations, virtual or in-person
- o Individualized reward/tracking system for individuals using Extension information/services
- o Kiosks of information in public places
- o Utilize multiple engagement methods and strategies simultaneously
- o Resource center with office space and technology for community to use
- + **Immersion Model of Education**
  - Hands on, experiential education (Montessori style, demonstrations)
  - Tours or trips for education and service
  - Research plots and shared results
- + **Virtual Learning**
  - Facilitated and/or on-demand access
  - Meetings can occur in-person, virtually, or hybrid of both depending upon logistics of those involved
  - Online community platforms available via multiple devices
  - Utilizing virtual web based interaction platforms for communication and virtual program delivery (e.g. Skype, Google, FaceTime, Zoom)
  - Social media - access point to communicate and share educational material
  - Create our own social media platform
  - Video-based instruction and communication, can include short single topic learning modules.
  - An easily accessible, understandable, and intuitive web presence
  - Utilize 3-D technology and/or holograms
  - Database of interactive extension fact sheets that is searchable, timely, and continually updated (ebooks, or other interactive documents)
- + **In-person, Face-to-Face Interactions**
  - Local Delivery
  - Providing educational opportunities and resources onsite (schools, businesses, neighborhoods, fields)
  - Coaching
  - Travel within region or other defined area to conduct and share educational information
  - Community events
  - Decentralized Extension offices – perhaps multiple locations throughout a county/region, redefining the concept of "local"
  - Family oriented events
  - Camps and Clubs

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Collective Organizational Attributes (*Below: the first level dash represents the collective organizational attribute; the second level bullets represent the potential impacts for employees*)

- ***Big Picture and Forward Looking Focus and Thinking***
    - o Understanding complexity
    - o Critical thinking/ problem-solving skills
    - o Visionary leadership
    - o Constantly surveying environments
    - o Futuring mindset

- ***Sustainable Business Model and Operation***
    - o Maximizing resources by understanding the value and contribution of resources (i.e., human capital, funding, partnerships, volunteer base)
    - o Grant-writing
    - o Fundraising and philanthropy specialists

- ***Cultural Intelligence***
    - o Working across cultures (locally, regionally, statewide, among groups)
    - o Global cultural awareness
    - o Some employees will be multi-lingual

- ***Agile and Responsive***
    - o Ability to connect people; relationship-building; understanding people's needs to expand the circle of resources
    - o In addition to specializations, there will be organizational capacity to work as generalists, operating in a holistic manner embracing a familiarity with many topics
    - o Flexibility and adaptability; open minded
        - ▪ The ability to both blend and differentiate work and personal responsibilities
    - o Knowledge base and skills evolve as communities evolve
    - o Highly proficient skills in use of current and emerging technology

- ***Approachable, People-Focused, and Demonstrating Personal Integrity***
    - o Relationship building; understanding of people; inclusive
    - o Passion for helping and serving others
    - o Friendly and approachable
    - o People of integrity that hold themselves accountable
    - o Interpersonal skills
    - o Communication (written and verbal)
        - ▪ Conflict management/negotiation
        - ▪ Good listener
    - o Mindset/Attitudes that include:
        - ▪ Self-motivated; intuitive; proactive
        - ▪ Life-long learners

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- - Team oriented
  - Entrepreneurial/creative/innovative
  - Resourceful
- − *Educational Integrity*
  - o Employees will have expertise and up to date knowledge on relevant topics and critical and emerging issues
  - o Utilizing fundamental research principles and methods through conducting, analyzing, reporting, and interpreting research
  - o Understanding how people learn
    - Excellent teaching and facilitation skills
    - Understanding group dynamics
    - Execution of teaching methodologies and tools (virtual and face to face)

Logistics of Work

- o Home based employees; mobile and virtual working options
- o Extension is a hub of regional branches collectively serving the state
- o If regional structure is predominant, at least one employee is located among local geographic distributions
- o Regional content experts
- o Blurring of traditional boundaries allowing personnel to deliver educational information from anywhere
- o Blurring the boundaries of collaboration/networking across subject matter areas
- o Office staff working as a team
- o Technologically-advanced office space
- o If a team-based issue response structure is employed, employees are hired in teams to round out and diversify team knowledge, skills, and abilities
- o Utilize contract employees for special projects and activities
- o Crisis response/first responder teams available to be quickly mobilized
- o Need balance of identity and workload between OSU and community needs
- o Utilize a strong and effective volunteer core
- o Re-evaluation of educational credentials needed to serve as educators (should Master's degree be required?)
- o Urban and rural apprenticeships
- o Unified mission and vision

Resources Needed

- o Equitable distribution of tools and resources
- o Adequate technological support for employees
- o Maximizing higher education opportunities beyond OSU to increase employee skills and knowledge; more virtual degree opportunities for employees
- o Fair compensation as it relates to colleagues and industries (including corporate world)
- o Employees rewarded for excellence
- o Adequate resources for program development and delivery

- o Academic and physical freedom to identify and address community and individual needs
- o Provide more opportunities for employees to become licensed and credentialed in specific areas

FUNDING & FUNDERS

Philosophy of Funding

- − *Maintaining Integrity*
  - o There was an overwhelming response that OSUE maintain integrity through its funding sources by continuing to provide educational information that is research-based and unbiased.

- − *Operational Considerations*
  - o Funding directed toward specific and special projects
  - o Small scale testing of various funding models (e.g. pilot offices)
  - o Revisit overall funding allocation (including administrative costs) to provide more educational resources including people and products where needed
  - o Intentional in retaining funding for a core of fundamental programs
  - o Diversified funding stream composed of a collection of sources
  - o Helping local stakeholders understand Extension's funding model as it relates to overall University funding
  - o Continue to scan environment to provide cutting edge techniques and resources

Integral to Successful Funding

- o Demonstrate the scope of the programs/services
- o Demonstrate impacts and measurable results
- o Demonstrate and integrate into communication the research-based impact of programs/services
- o Deliverables
- o Accountability
- o Continually validate and communicate value including clientele satisfaction

Potential Examples/Sources

- o Business and Industry
  - ▪ Corporate partnerships or sponsorships

    e.g. Health care and insurance providers; workforce training for business and industry; business development

- o Public funding
  - ▪ Federal, State, Local

    State and federal agencies, including but not limited to: ODA, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Ed.

- Levy
- o Grants
- o Philanthropy
  - Foundations
  - Private donations (endowments)
  - Work with OSU development/advancement
- o Fees/charges for programs/courses/services/certifications/consultancy (individuals, businesses, 'Uber' model, team paid to solve a specific problem)
- o Web-based courses and products (live, packaged)
- o Subscriptions to OSUE tools and resources (e.g. 4-H books, instruments, diagnostics)
- o Greater use of volunteers to expand and leverage educational reach
- o Increase local funding
- o Commercialization of products
  - Technology creation and licensing
  - Curriculum development and licensing
- o Other universities
- o The Ohio State University (tuition, CFAES)
- o Advertising revenue

SCOPE OF OFFERINGS
Programs and Services

Educational Focus Areas

- – ***Food and Food Systems***
  - o Traditional agriculture and beyond
  - o Urban gardening; home gardening
  - o Food production; food safety
  - o Food security (i.e. food deserts, childhood hunger)

- – ***Human Synergy***
  - o Healthcare
  - o Nutrition and wellness
  - o Strengthening families; family dynamics
  - o Life skills; resilience; self-sufficiency
  - o Interpersonal skills; relationship building; communication

- – ***Community and Business Vitality***
  - o Urban/sustainable development
  - o Community planning
  - o Workforce development; job transition/career change
  - o Energy
  - o Business development and assistance; entrepreneurship education
  - o Economic development
  - o Regional land use planning

- ***Group Systems Development***
    - o Coalition building/strengthening
    - o Facilitator skills building/strengthening
    - o Leadership development
    - o Citizenship; social responsibility

- ***Personal Economies/Finance***
    - o Financial planning
    - o Wealth management
    - o Retirement
    - o Use of and adaptation to evolving planning/organizing technology

- ***Engaged Ecosystems***
    - o Environment
    - o Climate
    - o Natural resources
    - o Water quality and management (Urban drought)
    - o Air quality and management

Integral to Success of Programs and Services

- o Collaborating with other educational institutions (i.e. secondary technical schools, post-secondary)
- o Partner with entire University, all departments
- o Harnessing the knowledge across the University to provide educational information to clientele
- o Inclusive; cognizant of diverse cultures; intergenerational
- o Living, operating, and educating in a global marketplace
- o Scan environment and engage public to determine educational needs and priorities; community needs assessment programs
- o Continuous improvement mindset in evaluating programs/services portfolio
- o Nimble and responsive; focused; prioritized
- o Less emphasis on program area division
- o Fewer offerings; more focused services
- o Flexible program templates for use statewide
- o Issue-based programs, cross program collaboration
- o Non-traditional programs "think outside the box programs"
- o Expansion of 4-H (i.e. adult programs/projects); personalized and individualized youth projects

Services (encompasses services we provide and broader strategies to reach a larger goal)

- o Specialized certification programs
- o Referral experts
- o Consultation, personalized services
- o Applied research
- o "Hub" concept connecting community needs with specialists/educators
- o Connecting students of higher education to communities for research and learning
- o Evaluation
- o Utilizing/interpreting big data for educational purposes
- o Train the trainer

Local ⟷ **Employee Location** ⟷ *Statewide*

The "County Educator" with Extension workers located in county offices has been a mainstay of the Extension system for much of our 100 year history. What is the ideal model for where Extension employees are physically located in the future? In our Conversation on the Future of Extension, employee location emerged as a dynamic tension. We could ask, what does "local" mean? Utilizing the idea of county as the definition of local will likely need to change as our communities change. Could local also mean a neighborhood, city, metro area, or region? One can see a local presence as important if Extension is to serve as an interface between communities and OSU, if volunteers are the heart of program delivery, and if a demand driven agenda is a focus. On the other hand, could regional hubs for Extension workers increase efficiency, facilitate collaboration, and leverage teamwork? In this model, there might be a smaller subset of employees dispersed with local partners - however local is defined. Employee location is important and will likely prove to be a tension for the future. Regardless of the outcome, it is clear that viewing the county office as the main focus for employee location may need to be reconsidered. Some aspects of Extension work in the future will require individuals in communities, other situations could likely benefit from teams of employees deployed from regional offices, the OSU campus, or beyond.

Specialized Knowledge ⟷ **Knowledge Base** ⟷ *Generalist Roles*

Should Extension workers of the future be specialists or generalists? In a recent gathering of Extension leaders from across the nation, a case was made for supporting the role of Extension workers in envisioning, creating and maintaining partnerships. This fits well with an argument for Extension and Extension professionals serving as connectors in communities, helping individuals and groups sort through increasingly complex issues, navigate resources, and determine ways to best address pressing needs. So, how could this impact the educational credentials needed for Extension workers? As we move forward, will Extension professionals need in-depth knowledge in certain subjects and issue areas? Or will our strength lie in our ability to bring together the right mix of experts who can bring specific knowledge and resources to a problem - Extension workers who have the ability to connect people, build relationships, understand needs, and facilitate a holistic approach to solving community issues? Content expertise that is research-based and draws on the resources of a University has been an important part of Extension's educational mission, and is likely to remain so in the future. Leveraging the deep expertise of the University and applying that to research-based solutions is a critical part of the OSU and Extension mission. Sometimes that expertise can come from the larger University, and other times, the expertise may need to be on the ground, in communities. With better access to knowledge and increasingly complex challenges for individuals and communities, there is tension between the role of Extension workers as specialists - with deep subject matter expertise, or generalists - with broad expertise.

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Niche ⟵ **Educational Offerings** ⟶ **All Things to All People**

If given the chance, "Tip" O'Neill, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, may have very well said the same thing of Extension as he did of his occupation: "All politics is local". Extension work has a history of engaging a spectrum of partners in addressing a wide variety of issues and concerns. A view of these various local efforts through a wide-angle lens most likely reveals what looks like an organization with designs to be, quite literally, all things to all people. Yet Extension is known for its ability to bring people together to address concerns in ways those folks would not have worked together otherwise. Extension's strength is its ability to serve as a convener, an unbiased facilitator. And upon closer inspection, much of the work we do could be grouped into several broad, albeit far-reaching, categories such as food, health, sustainability, youth development, etc. A continuing struggle for Extension professionals involves knowing how the work they are engaging in complements the larger, over-arching pursuit or niche for which the larger enterprise is known. Additionally, being able to communicate such knowledge to our various publics is also an ongoing challenge.

High Tech ⟵ **Delivery Methods** ⟶ **High Touch**

Learning styles are many and far-ranging, and opportunities for learning are as varied as there are learning styles. Extension has prided itself on maintaining an office in every county in Ohio - representing a physical presence where learning can occur. Moreover, our history is rich with examples of face-to-face and hands-on learning, such as study tours and field demonstrations. Such methods can provide participants with face-to-face, real-time, hands-on learning opportunities for sharing and learning. Yet, learners today contend with more demands on their time. They may not find the county office open at times convenient for their schedules, and the time involved in a traditional face-to-face Extension workshop means time away from the countless other events and obligations demanding their attention. Couple this with ever-increasing innovations in technology, and it becomes clear that opportunities for engaging learners in new and creative ways must be a part of our portfolio of educational delivery. It seems that nearly every day we are introduced to new and improved tools that enable connecting for learning in a 24/7 world. Mobile devices allow us to engage any time and in virtually any place. Content expertise is also at one's fingertips. And while this technology is convenient, it does not completely replace the desire to relate to others in real time and in a traditional, face-to-face setting. Technological advancements have evolved, and so too has Extension programming, to include the use of such technologies; blending methods for many programs and audiences.

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Centralized ←———— **Organizational Administration** ————→ **Local Autonomy**

When it comes to educational program development, local-based professionals know the local political environment and can maneuver local realities that are critical to program success. Ensuring that each of the local offices has the freedom and flexibility to pursue opportunities is critical to the long-term sustainability of Extension. However, working together can help avoid re-inventing the wheel in areas such as: programming, hiring and personnel management, and financial management and accounting. Programs conducted using similar curriculum and evaluation tools enable broad, state-wide impact and evaluation, demonstrating a more broad impact. Personnel management and evaluation procedures that are consistent across the state foster fairness for employees and help ensure alignment with broader University goals and priorities. Moving forward Extension will continue to be challenged to balance more centralization with the benefits of local autonomy.