EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

MAY 15, 2008 • COLUMBUS, OHIO

Strategic Plan 2008

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Dear Colleagues,

It is with anticipation toward a successful, rewarding journey that we launch OSU Extension’s new strategic plan.

This plan charts our course and positions us to reach more people than ever before. It allows us to focus on key issues of the state: education, health and the economy.

Ohioans move through uncertain waters today, and they need Extension’s rich resources even more now than in 1914, the year we began. We’re positioned to help the people of our state navigate nutritional issues, rising energy costs, strained financial resources, the need for an educated workforce, environmental concerns, and the list goes on.

“The sooner we learn to be jointly responsible, the easier the sailing will be.” — Ella Maillart

Now that we have set our course, we need everyone’s involvement to implement our plan. Many of you contributed to its creation, through participation in spring conferences, teams and surveys.

We need all of you to help us prepare for our second 100 years, recharged, refocused, sailing together. I look forward to your input into this living document.

Sincerely,

Keith L. Smith
Associate Vice President, Agricultural Administration; Associate Dean, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; Director, Ohio State University Extension; and Gist Chair in Extension Education and Leadership

“It is not the ship so much as the skillful sailing that assures the prosperous voyage.”
— George William Curtis
**mission:**
Engaging people to strengthen their lives and communities through research-based educational programming.

**IMPROVING LIVES:**
We connect with people in all stages of life, from young children to older adults. We work with families and children, farmers and business owners, community leaders and elected officials to build better lives, better businesses, and better communities to make Ohio great. OSU Extension delivers targeted, relevant, research-based information and programs to meet the needs of Ohioans at a local level.

— Keith L. Smith

**vision:**
OSU Extension is a dynamic educational entity that partners with individuals, families, communities, business and industry, and organizations to strengthen the lives of Ohioans.

**As Extension professionals, we:**
- Focus on critical economic, environmental, leadership, and youth and family issues.
- Engage people in lifelong learning.
- Apply knowledge and practical research to the diverse needs and interests of Ohioans in rural, suburban, and urban communities.
- Extend resources of The Ohio State University.
- Recruit and develop volunteers to multiply Extension’s efforts while developing their leadership potential.
- Enhance teamwork through networking and connectedness.
- Link youth, family, and community needs to scholars in Ohio and nationwide.
- Teach with cutting-edge strategies using new technologies and approaches.

**In Extension we value:**
- Excellence in educational programming.
- Grassroots programs that engage local people in solving problems and addressing challenges.
- Unbiased research-based information.
- Practical education that helps people help themselves.
- Timely responses to clientele concerns.
- Credibility with clientele and funders.
- Honesty and integrity in our work.
- Teamwork within offices, with clientele, and with our educational partners.
- Flexibility/adaptability in local programming.
- Programming without discrimination and employment of people representing the diverse population of Ohio.
Focused on Issues
Extension research and programs will be aligned to bring solutions to targeted statewide and national issues through Signature Programs that transfer the latest creative and innovative thinking.

Clusters
Each Extension professional has an area of specialized expertise that can be shared across county lines to better utilize their skills. Offering programming within clusters will allow residents to receive the latest specialized knowledge from the most informed educator in the area. Sharing operational resources will provide counties with the opportunity to operate more efficiently.

Professional Development
A professional development plan that enhances core competencies will provide Extension employees with the knowledge and skills they need to transfer new discoveries and provide educational programs to residents. The adoption of core competencies will assure our professionals are prepared to effectively deliver programs that can reach across the state and nation.

Marketing and Communication
Extension must reach residents who need its resources to inform them of what information is available and how to access it. Through targeted marketing and communication strategies, residents will learn how to access Extension’s vast resources.

Technology to Support Services and Programs
Extension will increase the use of technology to expand access to services and programs. Directing resources to support web sites, application of new media formats, and programs to train clientele on the use of technology will enhance the variety of and access to Extension programs and research.
Entrepreneurial Activity to Generate Sustainable Funding

Extension has the capacity to increase its value with existing and potentially new audiences. As new and existing programs are recognized by residents, the awareness that OSU Extension is the premier source to find answers will drive additional funding from our current and new stakeholders.

Collaboration

Partnerships have always been the hallmark of Extension’s outreach and engagement success. It is our intention to strengthen our heritage with our current partners while expanding new partnerships through modeling a diversity that matches the diversity present in Ohio.

Accountability

To be a national leader requires accountability within Extension and to our stakeholders and clientele. Metrics within this plan will provide measurable impacts to share with stakeholders, as well as measures that will direct future programming and the success of Extension professionals.

Plan Implementation Results in Five Key Benefits

- Increased financial resources
- Technological infrastructure and systems to support program delivery
- Employees who support critical organizational functions
- Programs that support the key issues of stakeholders through interdisciplinary approaches
- Extension professionals who are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for community-based programming informed by a global economy

THE SIX PERFORMANCE GOALS

1. Helping to build Ohio’s future
2. Defining Ohio State University Extension as the nation’s leading Extension program
3. Positioning Extension as the education and research resource for Ohio citizens
4. Developing and sustaining world-class Extension professionals
5. Creating a more diverse and inclusive Extension community
6. Improving the quality of teaching and learning engagements
As determined through the use of statewide clientele surveys, three key issues currently affecting Ohio citizens are the Economy, the quality of their Health, and Education. Across the breadth of four interdisciplinary Impact Areas, OSU Extension will focus teaching and outreach programming to engage with stakeholders to address these critical issues. Based upon local success, we will replicate programming across the state to meet local needs and to advance the progress achieved in initial programming implementation … we will build upon our experience and success to further address the needs of Ohioans.

EXTENSION IMPACT AREAS:

Strengthening Families and Communities: OSU Extension teaches people how to apply science in their daily lives in order to make informed choices about everything from finances to healthy living to food safety.

Preparing Youth for Success: As Ohio’s economy shifts from an industrial to a knowledge base, its young people need advanced skills in innovation and application of new technologies. OSU Extension’s 4-H Youth Development programs are perfectly positioned to deliver skills in communications, math, science, and research.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment: Ohio’s diverse agricultural, horticultural, and forestry industries contribute more than $94 billion to the state’s economy every year. OSU Extension assists with technology, marketing, and educational programming, protecting Ohio’s position in the global marketplace.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities: Innovation and entrepreneurship will drive Ohio’s move to the new knowledge economy—and OSU Extension is uniquely positioned to help. Extension’s economic, small business, and job development programs are tailored to local community needs in every county, whether metropolitan, rural, or a combination.

A few examples of Extension programs that successfully address Ohio’s issues—many more could be included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMY</th>
<th>Strengthening Families and Communities</th>
<th>Preparing Youth for Success</th>
<th>Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment</th>
<th>Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To help strengthen local businesses, Extension’s First Impressions program assisted 33 communities in understanding how they are seen in the eyes of visitors.</td>
<td>Real Money. Real World reached 2,400 young people in 12 counties and taught them the basics of financial management and the realities of the cost of living.</td>
<td>Recycling shrink-wrap from boats created 48,000 guardrails covering 47 miles of highway and kept 240 tons of plastic out of landfills.</td>
<td>The South Centers at Piketon added $4 million to the Southern Ohio economy through Endeavor Center’s launch of 19 new businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>Strengthening Families and Communities</th>
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<td>Extension’s work with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) reached 5,500 people in 2005–06 FY, with 80 percent of participants showing an improvement in nutrition practices and 74 percent improving how they manage resources.</td>
<td>Acres of Adventure brought science to kids in 20 after-school programs through fun, interactive activities that taught them about everything from insects to production of clothing.</td>
<td>Ohio’s $4.13 billion green industry depends on its labor, 70 percent of which is Spanish speaking or Hispanic in origin. An Extension survey provided the industry with needed information about the workforce to facilitate training and communications.</td>
<td>SmallBizU, an online training course for small businesses and entrepreneurs, reached 270 people in its first year with information on money, marketing, and management.</td>
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<th>HEALTH</th>
<th>Strengthening Families and Communities</th>
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<td>The 901 participants in Be Healthy Now in Hancock County lost a combined 9,024 pounds in 12 weeks—the estimated equivalent weight of Ohio State’s defensive line, coaching staff, and cheerleaders.</td>
<td>A partnership between Extension, OSU College of Optometry, and the Columbus Foundation piloted a program in three counties to address preschoolers’ vision screening. They are investigating the use of volunteers and 4-H members to conduct the screenings.</td>
<td>A new economic tool developed by Extension—the nitrogen rate calculator—is helping farmers lower fertilizer use, resulting in an estimated 60-million pound reduction in nitrogen use, a benefit to drinking water quality.</td>
<td>As Ohio State research shows the health benefits of berries, Extension works with growers to feed this growing value-added market.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The strength of Ohio State University Extension is found within its ability to deliver locally driven programming. In Ohio this means a presence in each of Ohio’s 88 counties in partnership with county commissioners. Extension programming is delivered by professionals who work to address the needs of the local community. Extension also addresses global issues. Three key issues that face the residents of Ohio and the nation include economic stability, healthy lifestyles, and educational success. The nature of these complex key issues requires programming that is holistic and increasingly multidisciplinary.

OSU Extension will continue to be positioned as a national leader in programming and research due to the interaction of its professionals across disciplines to expand their subject matter expertise. By strengthening its ability to focus the skills and abilities of personnel, OSU Extension will expand its research and delivery of the latest knowledge, while maintaining an emphasis on local programming needs.

**PERFORMANCE GOAL: DEFINING OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AS THE NATION’S LEADING EXTENSION PROGRAM**

**STRATEGY 1:**
Prioritize statewide issues that Extension intends to address.

*Action Steps*
- Extension Administrative Cabinet will determine two or three key issues to be addressed on a statewide basis through implementation of Signature Programs.
- Extension Administration will create Impact Area Leader positions and assign responsibility to provide administrative leadership for interdisciplinary programming to impact each of the identified key issues.
- Programming dollars will be allocated to support statewide teams addressing the identified key issues.
- Extension professionals will report outputs and impacts in one or more of the statewide key issues within their individual performance review documents.
- Professional development will be provided for Extension employees and volunteers related to statewide key issues.
- Extension Administration will guide yearly needs assessment to determine emerging critical issues.
- Extension will monitor and use futuring processes that will forecast cutting-edge applied, theoretical, or evaluative research opportunities.

**STRATEGY 2:**
Expand the organizational capacity to use technology as a method to deliver and engage clientele.

*Action Steps*
- Information and resources relating to the key issues will be easily accessed by Extension professionals and clientele through the Extension state web site.
- Professional development training will be provided to maintain core competence within Extension to create and distribute web-based curriculum and materials.
- Through partnerships with CFAES, establish new technology support positions, such as, online instructional design specialist, web development positions, or chief technology officer to provide support for program and research development.
- In coordination with CFAES create an Extension help desk to assist professionals with technology related issues.
- Provide training modules to shift to a standardized technology systems application.
- Funding to support application of technology will be based on annual review to ensure that staffing, professional development, and equipment needs are identified and met.

**STRATEGY 3:**
Secure funding to implement the Extension strategic plan.

*Action Steps*
- In partnership with CFAES create three development positions to increase Extension endowments and giving in partnership with the Philanthropic Community Foundation.
- Increase funding for programming through establishment of grant writing and procurement positions.
- Increase cost recovery revenues by setting targets for individual performance within annual performance review and providing rewards for professionals who meet their targets.
- Increase the percent of dollars returned to Extension Administration on designated cost recovery activities.
- Increase stakeholders’ funding as they recognize Extension as the leader in providing solutions to key statewide issues.

**Key Metrics**
- Creation of interactive web site by 2009; 60% of Extension professionals access self-directed learning modules by 2012.
- By 2014 raise $50 million in additional financial support.
- 100% of counties will report clientele impacts in at least one Signature Program by the end of 2009.

**LAUNCHING THE STRATEGIC PLAN SEE YOURSELF IN EXTENSION’S FUTURE**
PERFORMANCE GOAL: POSITIONING EXTENSION AS THE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH RESOURCE FOR OHIO CITIZENS

As part of this land grant university, Ohio State University Extension is responsible for bringing the knowledge of the university to the people of Ohio. One method of disseminating information is directly from Extension professionals to individual citizens. Another method requires Extension to partner with supporting organizations to reach their audience with targeted educational programming and research. Regardless of the method, citizens must understand who Extension is, what we offer, and how best to access our resources.

Extension has been called by many who first learn of our capacity and resources as the university’s “best kept secret.” Being a secret does not benefit the citizens of Ohio nor OSU Extension. Access to new knowledge is vital to the economic health and educational well-being of us all. A critical result of positioning OSU Extension as a primary source of the latest knowledge will be to increase the creation of opportunity for all residents. Another benefit of increased connections with clientele will be Extension gaining additional financial resources necessary to grow and enhance the knowledge bank it maintains and delivers across this state, nation, and the world.

STRATEGY 1: Increase the awareness and use of Extension programs, products and research by effectively marketing their value and benefits.

Action Steps
• Develop and implement targeted messages for prioritized audiences to raise the awareness and appreciation of Extension programming and research.
• Provide marketing and educational resource support for Signature Programs.
• Create and maintain consistent marketing templates for promotional and educational materials.
• Provide training and technical assistance to increase the organization’s skill in application of marketing techniques.
• Build a new generation web presence that will serve as an easily accessible clearinghouse for connection to Extension professionals, research, and educational materials.

STRATEGY 2: Increase and build sustainable partnerships with national, state, and local agencies to target research and educational priorities leading to increased funding.

Action Steps
• Conduct market research to assess community need and identify agencies to build partnerships with in order to serve that need.
• Build the capacity within Extension personnel to understand the importance of sustainable relationships with state and local leaders.
• Connect Extension professionals with foundations, cooperative organizations, and other potential partners.
• Increase awareness and recognition of Extension programs with decision makers to increase funding.
• Increase the capacity of Extension to attract faculty in other colleges through contracts that focus research and programs on Extension’s targeted key issues.
• Educate partners and stakeholders on the availability and use of the eXtension web-based initiative.

STRATEGY 3: Increase Extension professionals’ ability to perform research.

Action Steps
• Require all Extension teams to apply a research agenda.
• Engage community stakeholders in applied research.
• Provide applied research training for all Extension professionals to enhance research skills and establish research teams.
• Assist Extension professionals in linking achievements to professional development rewards such as promotion and tenure.
• Implement an annual Extension research colloquium.
• Create a research coordinator position to provide solutions for the further development of applied research.

Key Metrics
• Increase by 15% the number of citizens utilizing OSU Extension resources by 2013.
• Ensure that 40% of Extension faculty publish research findings each year.
PERFORMANCE GOAL: DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING WORLD-CLASS EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS

Ohio State University Extension professionals are identified as leaders among their peers across the nation. This fact is evident in the number of professional presentations and journal articles produced each year by Extension professionals. It is also evident in their ability to produce timely educational programming and address current issues important to clientele.

As Extension endeavors to increase its focus on emerging issues and critical needs, it becomes increasingly important to provide the support necessary for Extension professionals to excel. These support resources include research-based curriculum, the ability to focus on their highest skills, and reduced time spent on administrative matters.

Extension intends to expand efficiencies into the operational dimensions of the organization so professionals can maximize the application of their creative and innovative talents. This will increase the ability of Extension to create research-based information and deliver information that matches the targeted needs of residents.

STRATEGY 1: Identify, develop, and implement standardized curricula.

Action Steps
- Develop standardized Extension teaching curricula in ready-to-use written and electronic based formats to accompany new Extension programs.
- Train Extension professionals on the strategies and delivery of new curricula.
- Include tools with metrics in new curricula to measure the impact of programming.

STRATEGY 2: Develop and implement a specialist model that provides research and subject-matter expertise to address the identified programmatic needs of counties, clusters, and statewide teams.

Action Steps
- Collect and summarize programmatic needs of counties, clusters, and teams.
- Determine the deliverables needed to meet programmatic priorities.
- Contract with appropriate university, college, and non-university entities for educational deliverables through assistant directors.
- Distribute deliverables for local use.
- Evaluate performance of academic departments through the continued implementation of the accountability document.

STRATEGY 3: Develop staffing patterns that effectively meet the needs of communities through programmatic and administrative clusters.

Action Steps
- Implement a shared programmatic expertise and specialization model within clusters.
- Identify shared program or administrative needs through assessment processes.
- Match clusters’ current programmatic and operations expertise with prioritized needs.
- Identify and align staffing to address gaps in programmatic and operational practices.

STRATEGY 4: Transition to a competency-based approach to human resources.

Action Steps
- Research, develop, and implement a core competency model aligned to Extension’s strategic plan.
- Instruct the organization about competencies and their use in human resource management functions.
- Develop and implement plans for a competency-based approach to human resource functions including an evaluation component.
- Improve Extension professionals’ use of technology to support and leverage Extension programming.
- Train Extension professionals in skills to effectively create and deliver on-line instruction.
- Provide and support Extension educators with the skills and knowledge to document impacts using cutting-edge research and evaluation methods.

Key Metrics
- All employee performance is reviewed against competency model by 2011.
- Staffing models for Extension units are based on clientele needs by 2014.
PERFORMANCE GOAL: CREATING A MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE EXTENSION COMMUNITY

Extension research and programming is committed to enhancing agriculture and the natural environment, preparing youth for success, strengthening families and communities, and advancing employment and income opportunities for all residents of Ohio. Historically these programs have found the greatest response from rural audiences. The need to deliver this programming in rural communities remains the same today, but must be expanded to reach urban and suburban communities in an ever-increasing number.

There is also a need to increase access to Extension programming for underserved audiences (for example, urban/metro, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, and those with limited income). To better serve this expanded diverse audience it is important for Extension to establish employee diversity that models the state demographics.

STRATEGY 1:
Increase stakeholders’ understanding of the need for and the benefits of clientele expansion.

*Action Steps*
- Help advisory committees and county commissioners to understand Extension’s commitment to serving a more diverse clientele through a lesson plan that shares the findings of stakeholder reports including Battelle, Century 21, and Fisher Professional Services.
- Develop and implement a best practices model to assist Extension professionals to successfully engage with new audiences.
- Work with Urban/Metro Advisory Team (UMAT) and Change Agent State Catalyst Team to identify staffing and programming needs.

STRATEGY 2:
Develop and implement a plan to recruit and hire new employees that reflect the diversity of the state.

*Action Steps*
- Emphasize program reviews and needs assessments through diversity reviews every four years to identify gaps in meeting the hiring plan standards.
- Support award programs, such as the John Stitzlein Award for Diversity, to recognize excellence in diversity programming.
- Implement an internship program to attract bachelor’s degree professionals to prepare for an Extension career while completing a master’s degree program.
- Provide annual training for staff to become engaged in serving a diverse and global society.

STRATEGY 3:
Enhance Extension’s utilization of volunteers.

*Action Steps*
- Develop support systems to assist a rapidly changing volunteer corps.
- Develop and implement strategies to strengthen Extension professionals’ skills and competence to support volunteers in community-based organizations.
- Identify volunteers with strong communication, conflict management, leadership, and decision-making skills to serve as mentors to new volunteers.
- Provide a diversity/cultural training component within the volunteer training curriculum.

Key Metrics
- A hiring plan to diversify all staffing levels will be developed and implemented by 2010.
- Fifteen racial and ethnic minority candidates will complete the internship program by 2014.
- A lesson plan for all advisory committees and county commissioners will be developed and implemented by 2010.
- Annually document and communicate across the system new strategies implemented to engage community volunteer efforts.
**PERFORMANCE GOAL: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGAGEMENTS**

The strength of Extension as an outreach and engagement component of the university lies in the teaching, research, and subject matter expertise of Extension professionals and volunteers. Extension has set an agenda that delivers community-based programs to expanded audiences, focuses on key statewide issues, and encourages an entrepreneurial spirit. Employees must be equipped with the skills necessary to achieve excellence in community-based programming that is informed by a global economy.

As Extension seeks to establish sustainable funding through partnerships with collaborative organizations, agencies, and governmental officials, accountability measures will need to be met. Extension clientele and partners expect excellence in teaching and learning engagements, and it is the responsibility of all Extension professionals to meet those expectations. Therefore, accountability for teaching, research, evaluation, and reporting quality must be achieved.

**STRATEGY 1:**

Increase accountability for targeted programming excellence through performance evaluation metrics.

*Action Steps*
- Include the following in performance reviews:
  - Diversity-related requirements
  - Contribution to statewide key issues programming
  - Contribution to Signature Programs
  - Web-based materials
  - The presence of a research project
- Increase evaluation of team educational programs, products, and newsletters.
- Identify and link key words within the reporting system to statewide key issues.
- Evaluate methods of program implementation based on the learners’ environment.
- Use performance review models that incorporate a system of weighted assessments.
- Incorporate multiple teaching methods to address the diverse nature of multiple learning environments, including the use of technology in providing distance-teaching opportunities.

**Key Metrics**
- New performance evaluation metrics are implemented in all annual performance reviews by 2009.
- Three credit courses will be identified and piloted by 2011.

**STRATEGY 2:**

Offer credit courses and increase continuing education offerings.

*Action Steps*
- Complete a state and national needs assessment to identify opportunities to deliver for-credit courses.
- Train Extension professionals in the creation and delivery of for-credit courses, when appropriate, and continuing education offerings.
Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA.

Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension

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http://extension.osu.edu

“A ship is safe in harbor, but that’s not what ships are for.”
—William Shedd

These dialogues and documents have contributed to this plan: Extension’s White Paper; Battelle Phase II External Recommendations; Communications on Centers; Civil Rights Compliance Review; 21st Century Document; Brand Standards Manual; Battelle Report; Marketing materials for Community Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Creating Jobs Theme, Educational Capacity Theme, Communities/Family Theme, Food and Health Theme, Rural/Urban Interface Theme, Natural Environment Theme, and the Green Industry and Ag Theme; Spring Conference Strategic Issue Feedback; Annual Conference Roundtable Sessions; Monthly Pulse Surveys; AEDE Reports and the Fisher College of Business Report.