

BECOMING
THE BEST
EXTENSION
SERVICE

*The Strategic Plan for 2001-2005:
Pursuing Excellence
by Connecting with Iowans*

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

Table of Contents

Iowa State University Extension Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies	2
Characteristics of an Engaged ISU Extension	3
Extension Strategies to Achieve the University's Goals	3
Connecting with Iowans: The Iowa 2010 Strategic Plan	5
Measuring Progress: Performance Indicators	5

Becoming the Best Extension Service

The Strategic Plan for 2001-2005: Pursuing Excellence by Connecting with Iowans

Iowa State University Extension builds partnerships and provides research-based learning opportunities to improve quality of life in Iowa. We believe in quality, access, diversity, and accountability. We are dedicated to engagement, entrepreneurship, and local presence.

Iowa State University is the state's land-grant institution with the mission of learning, discovery, and engagement. Historically, ISU Extension has led the university in its formal engagement mission to Iowans. With an ISU Extension presence in every county, ISU Extension continues to engage the people of Iowa with education and information through six program areas.

Agriculture and Natural Resources. ISU Extension provides research-based information and education to agricultural producers, landowners, and agribusiness personnel to enhance the value of Iowa's agricultural industry, increase rural vitality, and protect the state's natural resources.

Business and Industry. ISU Extension links Iowa businesses and manufacturers with ISU specialists and research, community resources, training, assessment, and technical assistance for increased productivity and competitiveness.

Communities. ISU Extension helps organizations and local governments develop and build their capacity to make Iowa communities better places to live and work.

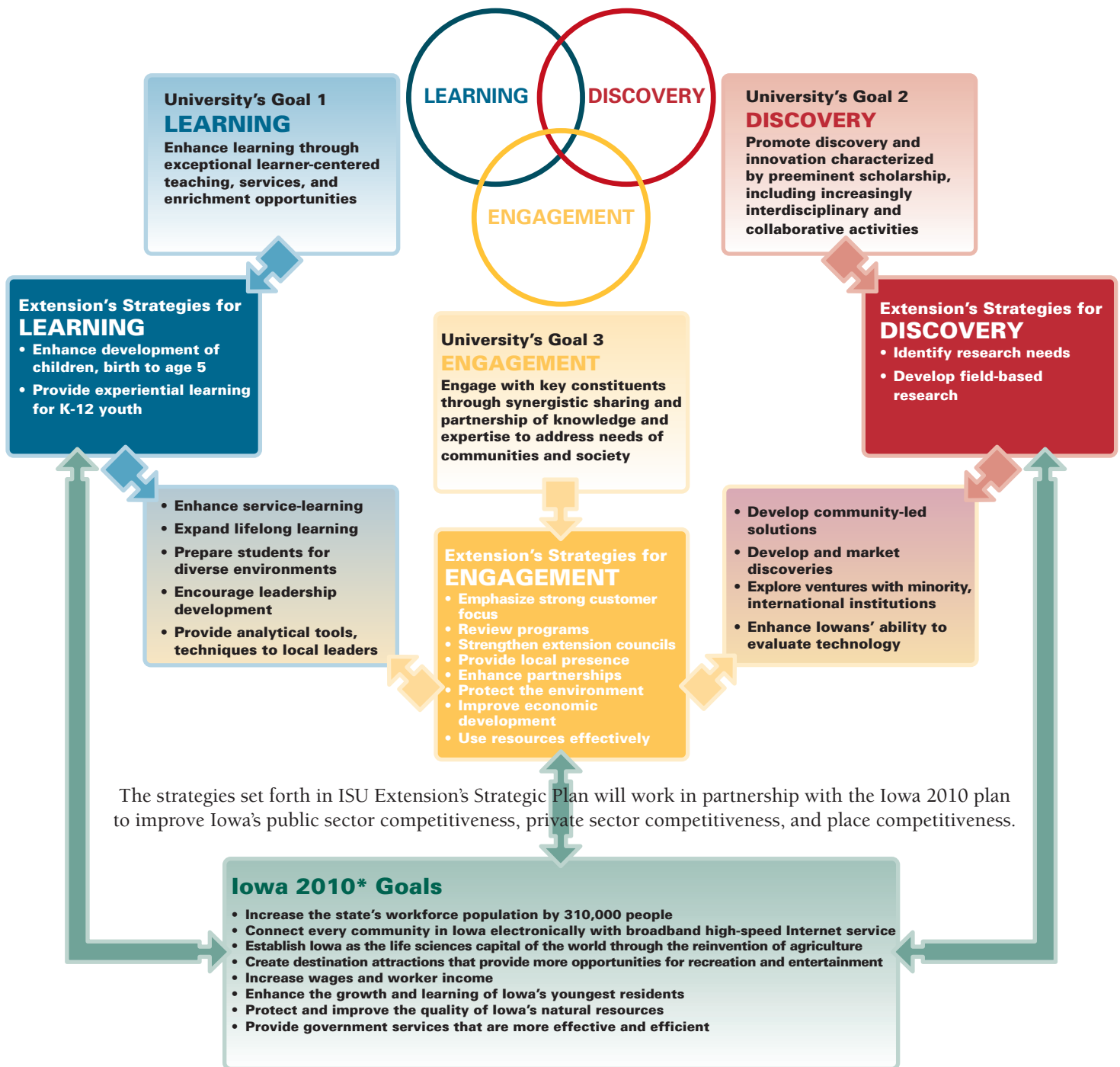
Families. ISU Extension offers education for families, professionals, and volunteers to build healthy family environments through meaningful behavior change.

4-H Youth Development. ISU Extension offers hands-on learning and science-based programs to help youth gain skills, confidence, and positive self-esteem so they can become successful, caring adults.

Continuing Education and Communication Services (CECS). CECS leverages resources and adds value to the programs and related materials needed by lifelong learners. CECS leads the development and delivery of ISU credit and noncredit courses, institutes, seminars, conferences, workshops, and ISU Extension program materials to learners around the world.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2001-2005

Goals and Strategies



*Iowa 2010 is a plan for Iowa's future that was created by Iowans through the Governor's Strategic Planning Council.

Characteristics of an Engaged ISU Extension

Iowa State University has embraced the characteristics of an engaged institution to more effectively fulfill its mission of learning, discovery, and engagement. As an engaged institution, ISU Extension has the following characteristics:

- An entrepreneurial spirit to develop the organization's human capital, an active desire to link customers to research and education, and a flexible infrastructure to respond to today's multi-layered challenges; key elements include
 - Confident and diverse staff possessing a high-level of problem-solving abilities, empowered to act
 - The capacity to offer customers direct access to cutting-edge research through information technology and a responsive staff
 - A flexible infrastructure that links interdisciplinary teams and information technology for problem-solving and education at the local level
- The ability to build and develop partnerships with organizations, agencies, and educational institutions that share ISU Extension's commitment to the people of Iowa
- The ability to effectively use information technology and resources to connect with customers
- The ability to anticipate stakeholders' future needs and improve ISU Extension's core competencies to meet those needs with applied education and services
- Proactive involvement with Iowans and their communities in assessing and meeting their challenges and opportunities, including those challenges and opportunities related to the changing and diverse cultures in this state
- Strong linkages between engagement, discovery, and learning to benefit Iowans
- Strong connections to policy-makers and decision-makers who appreciate the value of lifelong learning to Iowa citizens, families, businesses, and communities

- The vision to use staff expertise, diverse thinking, two-way partnerships and collaboration, and a team culture to provide customers with a balanced mix of knowledge-based and skill-based education and services

Extension Strategies to Achieve the University's Goals

The university's strategic plan sets forth three goals that set the stage for the work of ISU Extension.

- Enhance learning through exceptional learner-centered teaching, services, and enrichment opportunities.
- Promote discovery and innovation characterized by preeminent scholarship, including increasingly interdisciplinary and collaborative activities.
- Engage with key constituents through synergistic sharing and partnership of knowledge and expertise to address needs of communities and society.

ISU Extension Strategies for Learning (including but not limited to the following)

- Provide learning opportunities for parents and child care providers to enhance the development of children from birth to age 5.
- Provide experiential learning opportunities for K-12 youth by building partnerships with schools and communities to deliver life skills development curricula in school and out-of-school settings. Increase collaboration with the College of Education.
- Enhance service-learning experiences for university students through hands-on community service opportunities that complement their career objectives.
- Expand targeted lifelong learning programs related to the university's strengths and to the needs and desires of lifelong learners, including Iowa's youth. Partner with other land-grant universities and educational institutions to obtain necessary expertise.
- Prepare students for diverse professional environments in communities and a globally interdependent world.

*ISU Extension Strategies for Discovery
(including but not limited to the following)*

- Identify needs and challenges of consumers and businesses, and assist researchers with appropriate field-based information to address those concerns.
- Collaborate with researchers to develop field-based research efforts that enhance the state's place competitiveness, public sector competitiveness, and private sector competitiveness.
- Develop community-led solutions that address the most challenging societal and economic issues facing Iowans.
- Educate citizens about developing and marketing their innovative and value-added discoveries.
- Explore new ventures for joint programming with minority and international institutions.

*ISU Extension Strategies for Engagement
(including but not limited to the following)*

- Continue to emphasize a strong customer focus to determine program priorities.
- Implement a formal review process for extension programs. This review will incorporate benchmark measures related to the business sector, customer satisfaction, impacts and results, revenues, and costs.
- Strengthen relationships with supporters, such as the Iowa Association of County Extension Councils,¹ Citizens for Extension,² and Citizens Advisory Council³ to improve extension programs at the state and local level.
- Strengthen the partnership with county extension councils⁴ to positively engage Iowans, and increase and enhance recognition that ISU Extension provides local presence for the university and is the "front door" to ISU.

- Enhance partnerships with organizations, agencies, and educational institutions that share ISU Extension's commitment to the people of Iowa.
- Assist Iowans in understanding and using practices to protect and enhance the environment.
- Assist Iowans in starting new businesses to improve economic development in the state.
- Use resources effectively and efficiently. This could include
 - analyzing ISU Extension's "niche" for each program area;
 - prioritizing extension programs, moving resources to programs that are most effective, and dropping programs of lesser impact;
 - reallocating resources—staff, time, money—as necessary to meet short-term needs;
 - producing, allocating, and leveraging resources with external programs and committed partnerships, for long-term success;
 - dedicating a portion of existing resources to generate revenue from external sources;
 - involving staff, individually or as part of a team, to obtain external fees, contracts, and grants;
 - completing a cost analysis of extension programs;
 - discovering innovative funding sources;
 - increasing revenue generation for those with the ability to pay;
 - utilizing user fees as a market test for programs.
- Provide local leaders with analytical tools and techniques in local policy development and government decision-making.
- Encourage and pursue positive leadership development for youth, communities, and organizations in Iowa.
- Enhance Iowans' ability to evaluate, use, apply, and access available information, education, and technology.

Each ISU Extension program area should address strategic issues such as determining whom to serve, identifying the competition, and identifying strategic resources that it possesses.

Connecting with Iowans: The Iowa 2010 Strategic Plan

As an engaged institution, ISU Extension builds upon and enhances the university's intersecting goals of learning, discovery, and engagement. In doing so, ISU Extension connects the university to the people of Iowa and provides a link to the goals of the Iowa 2010 Strategic Plan developed by the Governor's Strategic Planning Council. The council gathered input from thousands of Iowans across the state to develop recommendations that will change the face of Iowa.

Iowa 2010: A Strategic Planning Initiative sets goals for Iowa that address the following:

- Public sector competitiveness—taking action to ensure that government and education in Iowa are effective and efficient
- Private sector competitiveness—taking action to ensure that Iowa will maintain economic vitality and current industry, and attract new business and jobs
- Place competitiveness—taking action to ensure that Iowa is viewed as a great place to visit and to live

The strategies set forth in ISU Extension's Strategic Plan will work in partnership with the Iowa 2010 plan to improve Iowa's public sector competitiveness, private sector competitiveness, and place competitiveness.

Measuring Progress: Performance Indicators

ISU Extension will annually measure progress on its strategic plan goals using a number of key indicators. A set of key benchmark measures will serve to assess ISU Extension's progress.

Input Benchmarks

- Grant, contract, and user fee revenue as a fraction of total operating budget at all levels
- County, state, and federal appropriations as a fraction of total operating budget at all levels
- Total FTEs in Extension (faculty, P&S, merit, county-paid)
- Staff employed on term appointments or a percentage of total staff
- Number of volunteer hours spent in program implementation

- Number of programs/activities carried out that involve customers/clients and partnering organizations and agencies in the planning and implementation

Output Benchmarks

- Number of programs delivered
- Number of customer/client contacts as a percentage of total clients possible (level of market penetration in relation to resources available)
- Proportion of underrepresented customers/clients as compared to proportion of state's underrepresented population
- Number of new partnerships formed (e.g., multi-agency efforts, public-private)
- Number and length of user sessions on Extension Web pages
- Number of units (e.g., children served by child care providers, acres, animals) represented by customers/clients
- Number of ISU Extension programs being duplicated by other states
- Number of programs with minority or international focus

Outcome Benchmarks

- Documented positive change in communities (e.g., increase in participation, population growth)
- Documented positive change in businesses' operation
- Documented positive change in an organization's behavior and/or structure
- Documented positive behavioral change by individuals
- Increase in certifications and distance education courses and degrees

Notes

¹Iowa Association of County Extension Councils officially organized in January 1998 to be a strong voice for extension councils across the state. A board of directors, elected by the state's county extension council members, guides the association.

²Citizens for Extension is a coalition of citizens willing to be advocates for ISU Extension. These local extension supporters have knowledge of effective ISU Extension programs and share those successes with decision-makers at various levels.

³Citizens Advisory Council meets twice per year to provide counsel to ISU Extension's vice provost and administration. Each of the 30+ Iowans on the council serves a three-year term.

⁴County extension councils are the grass roots governing body for the nation's Cooperative Extension System. Each of Iowa's 100 county extension districts has an elected, nine-member council. Members serve four-year terms.

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