Orientation to Extension

Introduction

Elected extension council members contribute immeasurably to the effectiveness of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach by helping to develop and implement local programs and securing needed resources. Extension programs are an important part of the outreach effort of Iowa State University. Council member input ensures that a planned sequence of educational experiences addresses county needs.

Through your work as a council member, you will use and further develop your communication skills and insights about local issues and problems. In addition, you will gain knowledge and satisfaction from developing educational programs that address locally identified priorities. Your focus on leadership will benefit both you and the communities you serve.

As an elected representative for the people of Iowa, you are responsible for understanding the law as it relates to extension. This notebook provides a brief history of extension; outlines the powers, duties, limitations, legal provisions, organization, roles, and operations of the council; and details extension district responsibilities related to Iowa’s open meeting and public records laws. Please use this notebook as a resource to help you through your term as an elected official.

Two Memorandum of Understanding's bind our work

1. ISU Extension and Outreach has a formal agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to explain federal and state partnerships.
2. ISU Extension and Outreach in turn has an MOU with each extension district as required by law, Iowa Code, Chapter 176A. The MOU is developed cooperatively with input from council members, the Iowa Extension Council Association, field and administrative extension staff. To learn more about the MOU, refer to Appendix 24.

Iowa State University

To understand extension, you first need to understand Iowa State University.

Iowa State University is the state’s land-grant university. The Morrill Act of 1862 established the land-grant system of universities in the United States to make higher education accessible to all people throughout the nation. The Hatch Act of 1887 established a system of agricultural experiment stations at land-grant universities devoted to mission-oriented research. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was designed “to aid in diffusing” information to the people. Thus, the three primary missions of the land-grant universities became:

- undergraduate and graduate education,
- fundamental and mission-oriented research, and
- outreach programs that extend the knowledge of the university beyond its walls to enrich the lives of all citizens.

Iowa State University: Mission, Vision, and Goals - Strategic Plan 2017-2022

Mission:
Create, share, and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place.
Iowa State's focus has always been its students. The university emphasizes learning by doing. ISU students take advantage of many opportunities to engage in real-world class experiences and cutting-edge research, to study in other countries, and to test their leadership skills in 800-plus campus organizations. They are tomorrow's leaders and problem solvers and they're ready to get started. In addition to educating students, Iowa State faculty and staff are conducting basic and applied research to improve lives and sustain the planet. They are boosting crop production, protecting natural resources, perfecting biobased fuels, refining wind turbines, designing human and animal vaccines, improving firefighting gear, fighting Parkinson's disease, fostering economic growth and development, strengthening forensic science techniques, assessing the effects of media violence, devising defenses against cyber attacks, enhancing the quality of life through the arts and humanities, and educating the leaders of tomorrow. As a member of the Association of American Universities, and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Iowa State is dedicated to conducting research and scholarship with local, national, and international impact.

As the land-grant institution in the very first state to adopt the Morrill Act, Iowa State University wholeheartedly supports the mission of sharing knowledge beyond the campus borders. It's no surprise that Iowa State pioneered the first statewide Extension Service in 1906. The extension experiment – universities actively transferring their research and expertise to every corner of every state – was immensely successful across America and remains so today. More than a million Iowans annually benefit directly from ISU Extension and Outreach programs.

As the world has gotten smaller, the scope of Iowa State's mission has increased. ISU faculty, staff, and students are dedicated to improving lives around the nation and the world. The Center for Statistics and Applications in Forensic Evidence is helping to improve forensic evidence to create a more objective criminal justice system. The Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods helps support a longstanding program to help Ugandans improve farming, launch home businesses, keep children in school, and build food security. Through these activities and many others, Iowa State presses forward, on a mission to help make the world safe and sustainable for generations to come.

**Vision:**

**Iowa State University will lead the world in advancing the land-grant ideals of putting science, technology, and human creativity to work.**

Iowa State University has the talent and the facilities to lead the urgent, global quest for solutions. Providing these solutions and preparing the next generation of leaders and problem solvers requires efforts from across campus. It is the combination of all of our academic colleges, units, and departments that create the community of scholars necessary for this work. This university is and always has been a community of practical, hard working problem-solvers. Major investments in new research and educational facilities and an outstanding tradition of cross-disciplinary research bring all of ISU’s colleges and departments together with global partners. Iowa State is dedicated to the belief that with hard work and innovation, future generations will have ample food and fuel, good health, and a safe, bountiful planet.

**Priorities:**

**Demand for an Iowa State education is at an all-time high, thanks in part to first-rate programs, a rich student experience, excellent faculty and staff, a beautiful campus, affordable access, and high job-placement rates.**

**Goal 1:** Ensure access to the ISU Experience – including an exceptional education offering practical, global, and leadership experiences that shape the well-rounded citizens and informed critical thinkers needed in the 21st century.
Goal 2: Enhance the university’s research profile by conducting high impact research that addresses the grand challenges of the 21st century.

Goal 3: Improve the quality of life for all Iowans through services and programs dedicated to economic development and the promotion of healthy communities, people, and environments.
- SUBGOAL 3.1 Increase the number of Iowa public, private, and non-profit sectors that receive direct assistance or benefit from engaging with the university’s programs, services, and initiatives
  - Metric S3.1A Impact of ISU Extension and Outreach programs (e.g., number of Iowans participating in research-based educational programming in the areas of agricultural and natural resources, community, youth, family, and economic development)

Goal 4: Continue to enhance and cultivate the ISU Experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued by the university and each other.

See the full plan at http://strategicplan.iastate.edu.
For an Iowa State University organizational overview, see Appendix 1.

What Is Extension?
The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension System as a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture and the nation’s land-grant universities. Subsequent state legislation enabled local governments or organized groups in the nation’s counties to become a third legal partner in this endeavor.

The extension system was created to be a dynamic institution that would modify its programs and outreach in response to new knowledge, changes in client needs, and alterations in the socioeconomic landscape. The Smith-Lever Act’s simple, yet enduring charge is to:

“. . . aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture . . . home economics, and rural energy, and to encourage the application of the same . . . extension work shall consist of the development of practical applications of research knowledge and giving of instruction and practical demonstrations of existing or improved practices or technologies in agriculture . . . home economics, and rural energy, and subjects relating thereto to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting information on said subjects through demonstrations, publications, and otherwise and for the necessary printing and distribution of information . . .”

Each partner – local, state, and federal – has considerable autonomy in funding, staffing, and programming. Extension provides direction for research and education efforts and speeds application of research information and discovery. Two-way communication between those who work for extension and those who use it ensures researchers and educators of an early awareness of issues.

Nationally, thousands of extension professionals and paraprofessionals, and millions of volunteers, support this partnership and magnify its impact. Strong linkages with both public and private external groups are crucial to extension’s strength and vitality.

The following facts help answer the question, “What is extension?”
- Extension is educational in program content and methodology, not regulatory or financial. It is attached administratively to the land-grant university system and is a major part of it, rather than being attached directly to state government.
• Extension provides informal, noncredit education conducted primarily beyond the formal classroom for all ages.
• Extension educates by helping people identify and understand their needs and problems and use new technology or information to solve them.
• Extension features the objective presentation and analysis of factual information for decision making and application by people themselves.
• Extension functions as a nationwide educational network and resource through local offices that are semi-autonomous units accessible to and subject to influence from local citizens.
• Extension involves cooperative but not necessarily equal sharing of financial support and program development among its partners.
• Extension involves funding and administrative relationships that permit educational programs directed at broad national purposes, yet serve specific needs and priorities locally.

**ISU Extension and Outreach Mission and Purpose**

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach carries Iowa State’s land-grant mission throughout the state -- everywhere for all Iowans. We serve as a 99-county campus, connecting the needs of Iowans with Iowa State University research and resources. We provide education and partnerships designed to solve today’s problems and prepare for the future.

**Our Mission:** ISU Extension and Outreach builds partnerships and provides research-based learning opportunities to improve quality of life in Iowa.

**Our Purpose:** ISU Extension and Outreach has as its core purpose to engage citizens through research-based educational programs.

**Our Partnerships:** ISU Extension and Outreach accomplishes its goals by developing diverse and meaningful partnerships.

**Our Impact:** Through our purpose and partnerships, ISU Extension and Outreach provides relevant, needs-driven resources and as a result, creates significant impact in the state of Iowa.

**A Strong Iowa campaign:** We use the Strong Iowa message campaign to simplify our mission statements when we talk about ISU Extension and Outreach. This helps Iowans understand who we are and what we do. We start by telling them WHY we do what we do.

• We want a strong Iowa.
• Our role is to be everywhere for Iowans.
• We serve as a 99-county campus, connecting the needs of Iowans with Iowa State University research and resources.
• Our goal is to provide education and build partnerships designed to solve today's problems and prepare for the future.

**Programs Aligned with ISU Colleges**

We deliver on our purpose through program areas aligned with Iowa State University colleges:

• 4-H Youth Development in K-12 youth outreach across Iowa State University
• Agriculture and Natural Resources in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
• Community and Economic Development in the College of Design
• Human Sciences in the College of Human Sciences
How ISU Extension and Outreach Operates

We have over 1,000 faculty and staff on campus and across the state in 100 county offices. Some are Iowa State University employees and others are county employees. There are 17,000 Iowans who volunteer for ISU Extension and Outreach. Nine hundred local citizens serve on county extension councils, providing grassroots direction for program development in communities across Iowa. To learn more about the history of extension in Iowa, see Appendix 2. For an ISU Extension and Outreach organizational overview, see Appendix 3a-b.

County Services

The County Service unit of ISU Extension and Outreach provides the support, expertise and resources of Iowa’s land-grant university to county-based educational programs, extension councils and staff members. See Appendix 3c for the County Services Strategic Plan.

Changing to Meet Changing Needs

When extension began, the focus, as defined by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, was on agriculture and home economics. As the number of people involved in agricultural production has declined, as diverse populations in urban centers have increased, and as research and technology have become more sophisticated, the focus of extension education programs has shifted.

Today, ISU Extension and Outreach is guided by a set of fundamental principles identified and agreed upon by state and county staff, faculty, administrators, council members, and others. These principles guide organizational decisions, structure, and behavior. Action items provide collective focus, and identified priorities provide a path for actions.

Fundamental Principles

Our core purpose is to engage citizens through research-based educational programs. We extend the resources of Iowa State University across our state. We accomplish our goals by developing diverse and meaningful partnerships. Through our purpose and partnerships, we increase the ability of Iowans to make informed decisions by applying relevant, needs-driven resources to create significant impact in our state.

Our Action Items

- Invest in meaningful partnerships.
- Refine a system to identify emerging and current needs collectively.
- Develop and support a structure to sustain professional development.

Our Priorities

- Partnerships and collaborations
- Planning and coordination systems
- Professional development
- Needs assessment

(Source: Leadership Summit Report, ISU Extension and Outreach, www.extension.iastate.edu/content/planning-documents)