Dear Colleagues,

Recently, you were made aware of a reduction in MU Extension’s allocated funding for FY19. While it is our goal to manage this reduction with minimal disruption to employee’s lives and the communities they serve, the reality is that some employees will be directly affected by this reduction.

As a courtesy to employees directly affected by the plan, all affected employees were informed before the rest of the organization was.

Please understand that for most of the affected employees, transition and training opportunities will allow them to move into new roles aligned with Missouri’s grand challenges. While some will view a new role as an exciting opportunity, others may have some hesitation. This is understandable, as each of us is unique in how we process difficult news.

As you learn about employees who have been directly affected by this situation, I ask that you be supportive and respectful. For me, this was a difficult decision to make. I can only imagine that for those affected, it presents even greater difficulty.

So, what exactly is the plan?

Our plan is guided by priorities that emerged from our statewide evaluation process. It is centered on Missouri’s grand challenges.

Rather than making across-the-board cuts, which reduce the effectiveness of all programming, it was determined that Missourians would be better served through strategic program cuts that preserve faculty funding aligned with Missouri’s grand challenges, while reducing funding in areas not as closely aligned with these challenges.

Throughout the winter and spring, we proactively began the implementation of our plan. We have consolidated work and work locations in extension’s on-campus offices to preserve funding for programming.

In the coming months, MU Extension’s Fire Rescue Training Institute, Law Enforcement Training Institute and Emergency Management programs will consolidate under a common administrative umbrella, to share operational expenses. Their program names will remain for public identity.

These types of administrative consolidation are consistent with actions over the past two years (continued)
where the organization has eliminated 46 administrative positions. While administrative consolidation efforts close much of the budget gap, adjustments in field operations are now necessary to close the remaining gap.

After considering program participation, reach and impact; programs that are duplicated or addressed by other entities; and programs that have lost presence and support from funding partners over time, it was determined we will phase out field programming associated with housing and family financial education. Central statewide resources in these areas will be maintained through grant funding that is already in place.

While two program areas are being discontinued, please understand that in addition to transition and training opportunities for affected faculty, the timeline for these extends throughout the next fiscal year. This provides time for people and communities to adjust. I am optimistic this transition can be relatively smooth.

I realize there are some who will disagree with my priority assessment or who feel personally hurt. This is to be expected with such decisions. The work being phased out was meaningful, made a difference and had value. There is great passion for these areas of specialty — as there is in all areas of specialty.

When we face challenges like this, I believe it is important that we pull together, support each other and rally towards a shared future with the big picture and common purpose in mind.

This is a great organization — one that remains committed to all things Missouri.

As always, I appreciate all you do to make Missouri better. Thank you.

Regards,

[Signature]