

***Executive Summary:***  
**White Paper for New Model of Multidisciplinary Program Development**

Beverly Coberly, Associate Vice Provost

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Economic, environmental and social problems are complex. To effectively address such problems, extension organizations should be prepared to use aligned or integrated multi-disciplinary approaches and programming.

To be vibrant and effective in today's environment, MU Extension must focus on developing and offering programs capable of addressing complex societal issues. This requires collaboration within extension and with external organizations.

When extension programs focus on societal issues, they demonstrate the promise and power of the land-grant mission. In doing so, they increase visibility and understanding of the land-grant mission.

Extension programs will support the vision and mission of the organization, which the strategic plan strives to realize. Guided by the strategic plan, program integration offers a framework to ensure that programs effectively and efficiently respond to Missourians' needs.

To respond to the needs of Missourians, it is important that MU Extension assesses the changing landscape to gauge how customer, social, environmental and economic needs are shifting.

The above concepts clarify direction and encourage us to work together to determine strategies and programs that will lead extension to be a valued, trusted and respected organization in the 21st century.

### **Proposed program development solution**

Extension should express fewer organizational program priorities and focus resources to address complex societal issues. This means we must revitalize our current program development structure to refocus on sound program development theory for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating.

A key first step of the program integration process is to clearly identify economic, environmental and social issues that define complex problems. This process uses a variety of tools and techniques including:

- Needs assessments with engaged stakeholders
  - Extension councils and other advisory boards
  - City, county, state and national legislative bodies
  - Community groups, commodity groups, partners, funding agencies, etc.
- Situational analysis and environmental scanning using secondary state and national databases and literature reviews
  - Community Commons, OSEDA, census, etc.
  - Understand current MU research priorities (Broader Impacts)
- Program development strategy revised
  - Sound program development theory that includes:

- market analysis with potential revenue streams
- identifying financial resources and limitations — including workforce and partnerships — to develop, implement, evaluate and report programs
- available curricula and research to guide curricula development; program delivery and outcome evaluation strategies
- appropriate training to conduct programming
- new partnerships and resources within the university, our external community partners, investors and stakeholders

### **Leading the effort**

Program integration committee and associate vice provost

- Monitors processes
- Allocates resources
  - Program areas
  - Support units
- Ensures accountability
  - Awards and recognitions

Directors or other designees will provide programmatic leadership to:

- Identify appropriate needs assessment strategies and analyze information captured
- Identify and analyze appropriate common data sets and assumptions
- Create clearly defined situation statement for social, economic and/or environmental condition outcomes
- Understand intersection of research, trends, partnerships and implications related to resource allocation (people and financial resources)
- Determine organizational priorities
  - Information needed to set organization priorities
  - Analyze capacity to respond
  - Focus collaborative programs on priority issues
  - Align resources with organizational priorities
    - who, what, how, when, why
    - predict and monitor social, economic and environmental return on investment
- Create multi-disciplinary programs to address the complex societal needs
  - Ad hoc program integration teams where needed
  - Follow program development theory
  - Evaluate and report impact

### **Overall guidance**

- A multidisciplinary program development facilitator position will be created to serve as a conduit among and between issues, directors, resources, multidisciplinary program development and implementation and the associate vice provost.
- An annual program leadership summit will be held to engage the directors, top extension leadership and designated faculty to determine organizational priorities for multi-disciplinary, integrated programs.
- Leadership summit participants will explore the underlying data and societal trends; determine potential programmatic responses; evaluate what is feasible that we could do together to address the identified complex issues. Participants will develop a short proposal for top extension leadership to consider funding for development and programming that will address

- highest priority issues in the near term.
- Ad hoc teams may lead multidisciplinary efforts and seek additional external resources.

### **Support mechanisms for multidisciplinary, integrated programming**

- Campus and community links needed to support multidisciplinary, integrated programming
- Faculty and staff expectations for responding to organizational priorities for multidisciplinary, integrated programming
- Affirming organizational priorities for multidisciplinary, integrated programming through strategic communications and awards and recognition
- Efforts will require focused funding, and additional revenues and partnerships are expected
- Training toward multidisciplinary, integrated program efforts for faculty and staff

### **Summary**

For MU Extension to realize its vision and mission in the 21st Century, the organization must recognize that the traditional response to address an issue by a single discipline often fails to fully capture the complexity of societal issues. Each individual discipline offers vital expertise and experience. The key is to collaborate and create a multi-disciplinary response to complex societal issues — one that is responsive, relevant and reliable.

Program integration is about how we operate. An integrated approach reaches beyond traditional extension program areas and teams to capitalize on capacities within extension, the university system and beyond. Working purposefully across programmatic lines will set MU Extension on course to meet the future innovatively with learners and partners.

Attachments:

Budget

Multidisciplinary Program Development Facilitator Expectations