

University of Missouri Extension Plan of Work: 2020–2024

Edited from the
“Lincoln University of Missouri and University of Missouri Columbia
Combined Research and Extension Plan of Work”
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I. Plan Overview

1. Executive Summary

University of Missouri Extension strives to better the lives of Missourians through programs focused on achieving impacts in Agriculture and the Environment, Youth and Family, Business and Community, and Health and Safety. We develop and deliver high-priority research projects and educational programs to address needs identified by our stakeholders. We reach nearly a million Missourians every year through campus faculty and County Extension offices working throughout the state’s 114 counties and the city of St. Louis.

We incorporate the use of technology into innovative service and product delivery systems, online resources for our stakeholders, and data mapping, visualization, and reporting tools. Funding from competitive grants, gifts, and fee generation exceed the resources appropriated from our state, federal, and county partners. Our goal is to be reliable, responsive and relevant. We accomplish that goal by providing research-based knowledge to Missourians aligned with their priorities of improving community economies, health, and education outcomes.

2. FTE Estimates

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
FTE	242.0	242.0	242.0	242.0	242.0

II. Merit/Peer Review Process

University of Missouri Extension faculty understand that peers ensure quality as they work through their core duties to educate (deliver research-based programming), create (develop and improve programs and services), and connect (ensure programming is responsive and relevant). Critical steps to ensure quality and impact through internal scientific and peer review include peer- and expert stakeholder-reviewed assessments of local need within program areas; peer- developed and reviewed program area plans of work and prioritization; peer-reviewed evaluations of program impacts; peer-observation and coaching of teaching; and peer-review of curricula, online courses, and publications. External peer review is expected for new or significantly revised curricula, online courses, and publications. Further, extension faculty annually develop individual plans of work and reports of accomplishments which are reviewed by their peer-faculty directors (disciplinary and regional). Finally, extension faculty work within an academic three-rank system, and criteria for promotion in rank require external academic peer review; internal faculty peer review; and external stakeholder review.

III. Stakeholder Input

1. Actions to Seek

Extension stakeholder feedback is regularly sought by the University of Missouri Extension. Missouri state statutes establish elected and appointed County Extension Councils in each of the 114 counties, bringing together over 1,600 Missourians from a variety of stakeholder and partner backgrounds, to meet monthly with faculty, provide guidance on university programming, and annually approve local plans of work. The county councils elect regional and state councils which provide regular feedback at all levels of the university.

In addition, each county is served by a County Engagement Specialist extension faculty member, whose core duties include establishing connections to farm, business, health, and youth stakeholder groups, policy makers, and interested community members. These groups are solicited to provide feedback on local priorities, needs and opportunities. Extension Field Specialists and State Specialists further build connections to the industries, producers, and policy-makers relevant to their disciplines in order to regularly solicit feedback and build understanding of needs.

Finally, regular "community conversations", "Mizzou to You", "Mizzou Central" (at the state fair) and other events invite public participation and reflection on the university's role in supporting communities. Licensed tools for surveying (e.g., Qualtrics and Engagement Cloud), are used for feedback following programming and surveying participants about experiences and suggestions for the university extension and other activities.

2. Methods to Identify

County Engagement Specialists, Regional Directors, and members of Extension Councils lead efforts to identify general community groups and individuals for meetings, events, surveys, and other methods of collecting public input. These faculty and partners stay connected to diverse populations within their communities and must actively solicit ideas and feedback related to local annual program plans. In addition, all faculty are expected to identify and connect to key groups within their disciplinary space, such as commodity groups, state/local associations, and leaders. Finally, our online e-Commerce tools for purchasing publications, registering for programs and courses, and other services provide opportunities for participants to create an online profile and opt-into regular communication, surveying, and other methods of input.

3. Methods to Collect

Periodic comprehensive statewide needs assessments (including community conversations, quantitative analyses, and external reviewers) are conducted by the university to fulfill its strategic plan related to extension and outreach. Senior administrators from Extension and partner colleges meet periodically with community members - frequently visiting all counties in county commission meetings and extension council meetings. These meetings are locally advertised and open to the public. Extension, college, and university leaders and faculty also regularly meet with state agencies (e.g., Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health and Senior Services); with commodity groups (e.g., soy, corn, dairy, pork, cattle); key agriculture groups (e.g., Farm Bureau, MFA); and other key partners (e.g., state associations for schools, hospitals, and business).

In addition, new duties have been assigned to County Engagement Specialists and Regional Directors to better connect with traditional and non-traditional community members and groups in order to ensure the university serves local needs. These individuals meet monthly with public extension councils to collect stakeholder input and receive feedback on needs assessments and program plans.

4. How Considered

Stakeholder input is considered and applied in all levels of planning for extension. Statewide needs assessment informs the university-wide strategic plan, including the compact for Engagement and Outreach, providing a pathway for addressing critical needs through measurable goals and strategies. Discipline-specific feedback informs annual program area plans of work, adjusted based on feedback and evaluation. Then local feedback informs county and regional program priorities and annual plans approved by county councils. Finally, stakeholder feedback informs individual faculty annual plans of work and adjustments based on participant feedback and surveys. At all levels, extension faculty are evaluated based on their ability to connect to stakeholders and the positive impact their work has.

IV. Critical Issues

1. Economic Opportunity

Context: Missouri's economy ranks 33rd in the nation and just 42nd for economic growth. Missouri's economy continues to shift from producing goods to offering services. The Healthcare, Information Technology, Education and Professional Services sectors lead in new job creation. Many businesses and agriculture industries find the pool of skilled, in-state workers unprepared for jobs in these sectors. They expect this skill shortage to increase over the next decade. Approximately 15% of adults and 21% of children in Missouri live below the poverty line. Twenty-eight percent of Missourians experience housing cost burden (greater than 30% of income).

Goal: We seek to develop innovative partnerships for economic and workforce development that will grow opportunities for Missourians, expand the University's economic impact, and double the agriculture economy by 2030 while sustaining natural resources.

Term: Long

Science Emphasis Areas:

Agroclimate Science

Bioeconomy, Bioenergy, and Bioproducts

Environmental Systems

Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems

Youth Development

2. Educational Attainment

Context: Missouri has an 87.8% high school graduation rate, but only ranks 25th for overall education due to low numbers of graduates seeking post-secondary training. Only twenty-eight percent (28%) hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The Missouri Hospital Association's 2016 Annual Workforce Report shows Missouri's shortage of trained health care workers reflects national trends. This report also shows that healthcare is the largest growing workforce sector. Without adequate high-speed internet, portions of Missouri do not have the capacity to participate in on-line or hybrid-methodology educational opportunities.

Goal: We seek to increase engagement with pre-K-12 students by providing educational opportunities in agriculture and other sectors, while introducing them to the value of higher education.

Term: Long

Science Emphasis Areas:

Education and Multicultural Awareness

Family & Consumer Sciences

Youth Development

3. Healthy Futures

Context: Missouri ranks 40th in America's Health Rankings. High rates of smoking, low rates of dental care as well as increases in drug deaths, low birthweight infants and excessive drinking contribute to the low ranking. Missouri ranks 36th for the number of mental health providers and 41st for dentists. Missouri is the 17th most obese state and the rate of obesity continues increase. Opioid overdoses caused one in every 65 deaths (951) in Missouri during 2017. Forty-six percent of Missouri census tracts contain a food desert. The number in Missouri experiencing hunger has doubled in the past decade, with over 16% of the state considered food insecure.

Goal: We seek to improve the health of Missouri communities and increase positive health outcomes through education related to nutrition and other health behaviors.

Term: Long

Science Emphasis Areas:

Education and Multicultural Awareness

Environmental Systems

Family & Consumer Sciences

Food Safety

Human Nutrition

Youth Development