To: Rolando Flores, Dean  
Through: Jon Boren, Associate Dean/Director, Cooperative Extension Service  
From: Priscilla Bloomquist, Interim Department Head, Extension Family and Consumer Sciences  
Date: October 11, 2017  
Re: EFCS Action Plan in Response to External Program Review

The Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (EFCS) department completed an extensive faculty driven SWOT analysis and a review of existing collaborations across the college related to teaching, research and extension activities as part of the College of ACES strategic planning process. They also worked collectively to prepare a comprehensive self-study in preparation for the external program review which occurred in May. Using their previous work and the recommendations of the review team, they have enthusiastically engaged in this process. I am fully committed to supporting them as they begin implementing their “plan to plan.” However, some of the proposed actions are contingent upon additional, or a reallocation, of resources.

Overall, the external review was very positive, noting that EFCS has “served the state well but there are many opportunities to extend the strengths of the program to a deeper level of addressing many of the economic, social and quality of life issues facing the state.” Upon approval of the proposed action plan, the Extension faculty will begin working with the academic faculty to develop a cohesive strategic plan which focuses on increasing collaboration in order to leverage available resources thereby increasing our overall impact on the region.

Recommendations that the EFCS program considers priorities

1. Appoint an Assistant Department Head from Extension

(Fall 2017) Since the program review, an Extension Specialist accepted the position as the Interim Assistant Department Head. This individual will take a leadership role in bringing together the EFCS specialists (who are 100% responsible to provide programming content specific for Family and Consumer Sciences [FCS agents]) and county-based faculty in an effort to identify needs and strengthen existing programming, encourage cross program coordination between the academic and Extension faculty, and identify and assist in providing professional development opportunities for county agents involved in FCS programming.
2. Develop a Culture of Collaboration Between Extension, Teaching and Research

The program review process prompted EFCS faculty and staff to examine methods to build upon existing partnerships and increase collaboration both within and outside the department. In addition, faculty will be asked to identify current and planned collaborations in their annual allocation of effort forms.

- (Fall 2017) Provide food science and technology expertise and assistance in the development of a proposed MS degree in Food Science including provision of suggestions related to necessary facilities and equipment.
- (Fall 2017) Actively include FCS faculty in the search for the new Extension Family Life Specialist.
  - Seek Academic faculty input on the job description/qualifications.
  - Include one tenured FCS faculty on the search committee.
- (Spring 2018) In coordination with ACES Media Productions, develop a plan to provide an online resource page in order to facilitate and accelerate collaboration. The page should be designed to allow faculty to upload their own information and search:
  - Descriptions of current projects
  - Programming/research interests
  - Programming/research expertise of other faculty members. The department will need to build buy-in and the faculty will need to be trained to use the new resource page. Resources will need to be identified for the maintenance and update of the new resource.
- (Spring 2018) Develop a plan to provide presentations about EFCS to the other relevant academic faculty, other Extension departments, and Cooperative Extension Service (CES) in-service to create awareness and demonstrate ways to integrate programs from different disciplines.
- (Spring 2018) Expand on current collaboration with the Human Nutrition and Dietetic Science faculty to provide students opportunities to work on projects/or observe relevant Extension programs.
- (Spring 2018) Expand on current collaboration with the FSTE faculty and students to provide more exposure to Extension programming.
- (Fall 2018) Implement and monitor effectiveness of new EFCS resource page.
- (Fall 2018) Implement the departmental presentation plan and assess its effectiveness.

3. Increase Awareness, Reach and Create Partnerships at Local and State Levels

Currently, EFCS enjoys an environment of high morale among faculty who are committed to the ACES mission and are collaborative and supportive of one another. Although the department has experienced faculty shortages and changes within administration, they have worked together to develop an action plan that identifies building on community resources with existing and new partners, developing/increasing volunteer programs, and expanding awareness through the use of social media.

- (Fall 2017) Work with ACES Media Productions and UCOMM to develop a plan to increase coverage of EFCS programming activities and impacts.
- (Fall 2017) Develop a plan to expand on current social media campaign.
- (Fall 2017) Develop a coordinated plan to build on the relationship with Burell College of Osteopathic Medicine to include;

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating
o Working with “pre-med” cohort to build understanding of the role of Extension in the provision of community health programming and to provide hands-on experiences in delivering programs.

o Providing the “pre-med” cohort with opportunities to volunteer to assist county extension offices with Health Fairs around the state.

o Continue to work Burrell faculty to develop a curriculum built upon a series of modules that will be available for county agents and trained volunteers to deliver in their respective counties. Example: Guide to Over-the-Counter Medications.

• (Fall 2017) Develop a grant-writing capacity building plan which leverages current ACES/NMSU resources.

• (Spring 2018) Explore the opportunity to develop and deliver technology based train-the-trainer programs on specific content areas in wellness to provide training for county employees, as well as employer organizations to expand reach, create community partnerships and reduce burden on agents for delivery.

• (Spring 2018) Meet with appropriate representatives of the College of Health and Social Services to explore potential collaborations.
  o Build on that meeting by developing a joint action plan related to community health programming.

• (Spring 2018) Continue to work with Presbyterian Medical Services to develop a plan to expand and sustain the evidence-based health programs outside of Dona Ana County using the paraprofessional model.

4. Develop a Clear Relationship with the 4-H

Prior to the program review, an Extension Department Head for the 4-H and Youth Development Program Unit was hired. This individual met with the EFCS Department Head and the Specialists to discuss potential areas for collaborations. Outside funding sources have been identified and the two units are working together to build health and wellness programs that can be delivered within 4-H programming.

• (Fall 2017) Explore annual opportunities to provide workshops in collaboration with Academic faculty at the State 4-H Conference and the Senior Leadership Retreat.

• (Fall 2017) The Interim EFCS Department Head will participate, as much as possible, in the hiring process for the 4-H Statewide Volunteer Agent.

• (Spring 2018) Develop a plan to work with the 4-H state office on wellness-related programs that can be delivered through the 4-H infrastructure.

• (Fall 2018) Explore opportunities to utilize the 4-H infrastructure to roll-out programming which targets financial literacy.

5. Increase Opportunities for Revenue Generation

The review team noted that, although EFCS funding appears to be sound and that it has a history of success in obtaining grant funding, there has been a loss of grant funding due to loss of faculty and demands on the (previous) department head that prevented strategic planning. The EFCS faculty identified potential funding streams. These ideas will be presented to and discussed with the Extension Director and College Dean as fee-based programs have not historically been utilized. Current practice allows for cost-recovery (excluding recovery for salaries) under limited circumstances. The department
is seeking the development of specific policy guidelines that could be used across Cooperative Extension to facilitate a robust discussion about this approach as well as compliance upon official adoption of the guidelines.

- (Fall 2017) Build upon the successes of the fee-based food industry related certification courses: Better Process Control School (BPCS), Food Safety Modernization Act Preventative Controls Qualified Individual (FSMA PCQI), and Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Alliance (FSMA PSA), and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) to name a few.
  - Training can be extended to include Extension faculty who may serve as coaches to industry.
  - Courses can be offered that attract economic niche industries in New Mexico.

- (Spring 2018) Develop a plan to expand the use of existing equipment, such as the BodPod body fat testing equipment.

- (Fall 2018) Develop a plan to promote program certified Extension faculty/staff in offering fee-based training for other states and Mexico. For example, Extension currently has three Master Level trainers certified in the Chronic Disease Self-management Programs. These trainers are authorized to train workshop leaders who then are authorized to lead community-based workshops.

6. Improve Evaluation and Impact Reporting

EFCS Specialists require program evaluations and impact statements from the county agents for annual reports, grant proposals, and presenting findings to stakeholders. Accountability for evaluation is suggested for agents as well as specialists.

- (Spring 2018) Develop a programming evaluation resource. EFCS has a newly hired Specialist with strong skills in evaluation and impact measurement. This individual is taking leadership on creating the resource to increase the ability of and ease in the reporting and sharing of information.

- (Spring 2018) Ensure buy-in from across EFCS. This topic area will be addressed at the upcoming CES In-Service Conference scheduled for January 2018.

- (Fall 2018) Work with leadership to offer professional development opportunities to train agents and Specialists so they are comfortable conducting evaluations and writing impact statements.

- (Fall 2018) Develop a plan to evaluate all current departmental programs based on county needs and determine whether to continue, expand, or eliminate each program. Using the information we receive from the evaluations to determine next steps is key to improving programs.

7. Improve Communication between Specialists and County Agents

The review team noted a lack of clarity as to how communication occurs within the Extension system. Strong communication channels are extremely important for flow of information. In the past few years, the Extension reporting system changed from having county agents sign onto Specialists’ program areas which made it easy for Specialists to gather needed information on county programs. This situation has led to a breakdown in communications as Digital Measures does not allow access for Specialists to obtain county reports that provide information for reports, grant proposals, and impact statements.

- (Fall 2017) Develop an online resource to facilitate communications. EFCS has two new Specialists who are creating an online resource to increase effective communications between campus and county-based Extension professionals.

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator, NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating
• Allow for the provision of feedback from program evaluations.
• Allow for the sharing of program materials – both Specialists and county agents.

• (Fall 2017) Work with Extension Administrators to encourage accountability for communication and sharing of reports in order to ensure success.
• (Spring 2018) Develop a plan to establish the National FCS Master Volunteer Program in counties with FCS agents to extend reach and improve/enhance communications at several levels.
  • (Spring 2019) Identify one-county agents willing to incorporate the National Volunteer Program into their communities so that FCS programs are available
• (Fall 2017) Promote and increase use of established social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter).

8. Build Teams to Address Core Issues across Disciplines, Departments and Colleges

The review team noted that Extension and academic faculty appear to operate in silos. Additionally, there are untapped opportunities to strategically build collaborations and teams to address issues. Challenges are that the EFCS department is one deep in Specialist faculty and these professionals have statewide responsibilities. Further, when faculty members are on leave, or terminate from the university, there is a gap that is detrimental to the program and building momentum for programs. Also, when faculty positions are vacant there are lost opportunities to continue current grant funding as well as pursue new funding.

• (Spring 2018) Work with academic faculty to identify programs that provide support and build on the strengths of Extension.
• (Fall 2018) Identify program commonalities across disciplines, departments and colleges to bring in research dollars that build evidence for Extension programs.

Recommendations which EFCS has less control over implementing

9. Investigate Methods to Increase the Recruitment and Retention of FCS Agents

EFCS is prepared to supply information and assistance as it is requested by the District Department Heads as they coordinate the effort to address this issue.

10. Return SNAP-Ed to EFCS

SNAP-Ed is a valuable program. The reviewers noted that it is a weakness that it is not under the leadership of the EFCS department. Discussions about developing a path to moving the program back to EFCS should be initiated.
11. Health and Wellness training for county elected officials could be facilitated by EFCS through NM-EDGE

EFCS has the capacity and willingness to participate, should EDGE be interested pursuing this option.

**What we don’t agree with:**

The review team recommended that FTES have 75% Extension and 25% research appointments to help integrate academic faculty on programs that build support and strengthen Extension.

We disagree with this recommendation for several reasons. The EFCS department is one deep in Specialist faculty so individuals are already spread thin. Although EFCS faculty and staff are not required to apply for outside funding, they all spend a significant amount of time seeking grant dollars for program sustainability. This is in addition to publishing, developing/delivering programs, writing curriculum, working with national organizations, and traveling at the state and national levels. Specialists are encouraged to participate in research activities (including the exploring collaborative opportunities with academic faculty) and are required to address research/grant-writing as part of their allocation of effort.

In the brief time that I have been working with the EFCS faculty, I have witnessed first-hand, a group of talented, committed individuals who are developing and delivering quality programming that empowers people and changes lives even when given limited resources. Moreover, they are actively exploring ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system. I consider it a privilege to work in support of their efforts as they move forward with this process.