

Extension Review Committee Report

Phase II

Submitted to the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education

November 6, 2017

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Phase II Committee Members

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State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE) Review of the NDSU Extension Service

Background: The 65th North Dakota Legislative Assembly instructed SBARE to review the NDSU Extension Service as indicated in Senate Bill 2020. The language from the bill appears below in italics. Emphasis added by the writing committee to delineate the scope and areas of the review.

*SECTION 15. STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION – NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE STUDY - BUDGET SECTION REPORT. During the 2017-18 interim, the state board of agricultural research and education, in consultation with the governor's office, shall study the duties and responsibilities of the North Dakota state university extension service. The study must include a review of the **mission, existing programs, the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery methods for existing programs, and potential program changes**. The state board of agricultural research and education shall report its findings and recommendations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the North Dakota state university extension service to the budget section of the legislative management by March 31, 2018.*

Executive Summary, Phase II. Based on the results of the Phase I Review Committee, the Phase II review committee was specifically asked to focus on the following areas: 1) the organization's administrative structure, 2) the state, area, and county staffing and programmatic structure, and 3) the sustainability of the current funding model which includes a blend of funding from counties, state and federal governments, as well as grants and contracts.

The committee met with Director Boerboom three times (August 16, September 8, and October 19). During the course of the meetings, Director Boerboom reported on the progress which had been made to address the recommendations from the Phase I committee. In addition, much discussion relative to the three areas of further need identified by the Phase I committee also occurred.

As a result of the meetings, the committee made several recommendations and supported several recommendations and ideas brought forth by Director Boerboom. These included efforts to streamline the administrative structure in the NDSU Extension Service; efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods through restructuring county agent and area specialist roles, and to seek opportunities to engage younger age demographics with increased emphasis on technology; and efforts to develop a more sustainable funding model by restructuring county partnerships.

The Phase II Review Committee believes these changes will allow the NDSU Extension Service to continue to meet the needs of North Dakota citizens by delivering transformational education. Furthermore, these changes will position the organization to continue to be an unbiased source of research-based information for North Dakota citizens well into the future.

The following outlines the Phase II Review Committee's findings and Extension's current and planned changes in response to recommendations from SBARE's Phase I Comprehensive Review Committee and subsequent discussions. The findings and responses which follow are outlined into sections based on the language and areas identified in SB2020.

- **Mission**

- Extension provides science-based, non-formal education with transformational outcomes
- NDSU Extension Service is fulfilling its federal mission
- Extension fulfills state mandated functions
- Extension collaborates with counties to fulfill local needs based on local input
- Extension collaborates with federal and state agencies to fulfill educational objectives
- Extension is not duplicating the mission of other agencies

- **Existing programs**

- Extension's program areas serve the needs of North Dakotans
 - Extension programs in Ag & natural resources (ANR), Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), 4-H Youth Development, and Community vitality (CV) serve critical needs of North Dakotans to improve their economic, health, and community conditions
 - FCS and CV program areas will be combined for administrative efficiency
 - Extension will increase the use of issue-based teams to improve responsiveness and program effectiveness

- **Efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods for existing programs**

- Local input drives programming and maintains responsiveness to local issues
- Local delivery is valued and effective because it adapts information to local conditions
- Restructuring of county staffing is planned
 - To increase the efficiency of state funding, which is leveraged with county funding
 - Flexibility will be supported to provide opportunities for specialization to enhance effectiveness and program focus
- Restructuring roles and responsibilities of area specialists
 - To increase efficiency of funding
 - To increase the effectiveness of program support provided by area specialists
 - To improve coordination with campus-based specialists
- Increased targeting of younger demographic of adult audience
 - Extension will increase the use of technology in program delivery and to reach younger age demographics

- **Potential program changes**

- Administrative restructuring
 - Administration of FCS and CV program areas will be combined for efficiency
 - Restructuring county administration into three districts (from four) with three district directors for efficiency
 - Restructuring the Extension Leadership Team for efficiency
- County staff restructuring

- In partnership with the ND Association of County Commissioners, the base funding model will be modified to increase sharing of agents, merging of county programs, or increased county funding, especially in counties with low populations (<2,000)
- Increased citizen input
 - The number of county advisory councils will be increased to further increase local engagement and responsiveness
 - A state advisory council will be established to formalize ongoing citizen input
 - A state-wide needs assessment will be conducted every 5 years
- Improved efforts to educate the public about Extension and increased statewide marketing effort
 - Increased budgetary commitment to communicating Extension's mission, programs and outcomes
 - The name NDSU Extension Service will be changed to NDSU Extension to avoid confusion with service providing agencies
- Extension is adopting PEARS (Program Evaluation and Reporting System) which will enhance the organization's ability to plan, develop and report impacts of programs and improve staff efficiency
- Extension is increasing their emphasis on cost recovery for specific programs to supplement funding