University of Arizona - College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Cooperative Extension - Strategic Planning Process

This overview summarizes the planning process for the development of the Strategic Plan for UA Cooperative Extension from 2009 - 2013. The model to develop our plan was adapted from John M. Bryson, “Strategic Planning for Public and Non-Profit Organizations – A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement” (1995, 2004). The following is a list of the steps used in this planning process model.

STEP 1: Initial Plan Agreement
STEP 2: Mandates and Cultural Norms
STEP 3: Mission/Vision/Values
STEP 4: Partners and Stakeholders (SWOT)
STEP 5: Strategic Issues for Cooperative Extension
STEP 6: Strategy Formulation to Manage Strategic Issues
STEP 7: Strategy and Plan Review and Adoption
STEP 8: Description of Organization in the Future
STEP 9: Implementation
STEP 10: Strategy and Planning Process Reassessment
Initial Plan Agreement (Step 1)

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension will create a Strategic Plan, through the year 2013, that sets organizational priorities, develops goals and objectives for enhancing Cooperative Extension’s relevance, viability and sustainability with Arizona citizens. The creation of an organizational strategic plan is spearheaded by the UA Extension Administrative Team (EAT) and will include input from County Extension Directors and CALS Department/Unit Heads, Faculty, Staff, Stakeholders, Partners and Extension Advisory Boards.

The UA Cooperative Extension Strategic Plan is a conceptual model that defines the specified intentions and directions of our organization. Therein, it is:

- An organizational plan for reaching and achieving future goals and objectives that substantiate our organizational vision and mission;
- A strategy that is aligned with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and University of Arizona strategic plans;
- A long-range plan that incorporates the evaluation and monitoring of our strategic goals and objectives;
- A strategy that allows the organization to succeed in overcoming internal and external risks and threats;
- A plan that embraces participation, at different and various levels, of all organizational members in its development;
- A process that incorporates the needs and aspirations of its partner organizations and stakeholders;
- A process that stimulates new ideas and innovations, is rational, and is adaptable;
- A tool used for monitoring the effectiveness of programmatic teams and the incorporation and deletion of program themes or signature areas;
- A device that provides evidence of institutional commitment to moving the organization forward in a logical and priority-based manner;
- A plan that embraces organizational diversity;
- A guide used for identifying performance indicators and cost recovery opportunities.
Mandates and Cultural Norms (Step 2)

Mandates identify what is formally and informally expected by Cooperative Extension's stakeholders, partners and funders. Formal expectations are legislative in nature as they prescribe what must or should be done under governmental or organizational codes and regulations. Informal expectations are contained in Cooperative Extension's cultural norms or expectations of key stakeholders. These mandates help us stay aware of their implications for our actions and resources as we create Cooperative Extension's Strategic Plan.

Mission/Vision/Values (Step 3)

Mission Statement: This statement clarifies Extension's purpose and expresses why we are doing what we do.

Vision Statement: Describes how Extension should look when we are working extremely well in relation to our environment and our key stakeholders.

Values Statement: This statement expresses how Extension conducts itself and which values we operate from, both within Extension and with our clientele/stakeholders.

Partners and Stakeholders (Step 4)

Pre-Plan Documents:
(These will all become website links as the information becomes available.)

In this stage, information is compiled to form SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) reports. The reports will include information obtained at strategic planning workshops conducted in 2008:

- 4-H Youth Development
- Family, Consumer and Health Sciences
- Agriculture, Natural Resources, IPM and Horticulture

Additional Pre-Plan Research: During the process of generating the strategic plan, additional research will be collected from:

1. UA Strategic Plans
2. CALS Strategic Planning Documents
   a. 2005-2009 CALS Strategic Plan with assumptions and rationale (September 2005)
   b. Amendment to 2005-2009 CALS Strategic Plan (July 2008)
3. County CE Strategic Plans
   a. Cochise County Strategic Plan 2007-2009
   b. Maricopa County Strategic Plan 2009-2014
   c. Navajo County Strategic Plan 2008-2010
   d. Pinal County Strategic Plan 2008-2010
   e. Yavapai County Strategic Plan 2005-2008

4. Stakeholder Input
   a. Arizona Cooperative Extension Road Map
   b. Linking Counties and Campus (2008 Powerpoint – Dr. C. Hutchinson)

5. CE Staff Input

6. CE Advisory Boards Input

7. Working Groups and Logic Models
   (internal site; password protected – username cals, password ua)

8. State Initiatives and Logic Models
   (internal site; password protected – username cals, password ua)


10. Strategic Opportunities for Cooperative Extension (NASULGC, 2007)

11. Strategic Opportunities for Cooperative Extension – Executive Summary
    (NASULGC, 2009)

12. Strategic Opportunities for Cooperative Extension (APLU, 2010)

13. Other Relevant Sources of Input

**Strategic Issues for Cooperative Extension (Step 5)**

A strategic issue is a fundamental policy question or critical challenge affecting the organization's mandates, mission and values, product or service level, and mix, clients or users, cost, financing, structure, processes, or management.

The purpose of this step is to identify the fundamental policy choices facing the organization. Two basic outcomes from this step:

1. List of Strategic Issues faced by the organization
   
   - What is an issue? (Phrased as a question that the organization can do something about)
   - What factors make it a strategic issue?
   - What are the consequences of failure to address the issue?

2. Arrangement of the list of issues in order of priority

Strategic Issues will be identified using information we are collecting, summarizing and analyzing feedback through surveys, meetings, workshops with County Extension Directors and Department Heads, faculty, staff, stakeholders and partners.
Identification of Strategic Issues
Executive Summary

A strategic issue is a fundamental policy question or critical challenge affecting the organization's mandates, mission and values, product or service level, and mix, clients, or users, cost, financing, structure, processes, or management. The purpose of describing strategic issues is to identify the fundamental policy choices facing the organization (Bryson 2004).

In the CE Strategic Planning Process, Strategic Issues were identified using information collected through surveys, meetings, and workshops with County Extension Directors and Stakeholders including clientele, partners, collaborators, faculty, staff and volunteers. The following is a summary of two surveys completed this year. Details are available for Extension Faculty upon request.

2008 CED Strategic Issues Survey:
In fall of 2008, a survey was conducted with County Extension Directors to obtain their input regarding major Strategic Issues for Arizona Cooperative Extension to address, factors that make it a strategic issue, consequences of failure to address the issue and priority ranking for issues from high to low. The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey and 7 CEDs responded to the survey.

The major high priority strategic issues identified through this Survey were environmental, agricultural, community and human health sustainability, the need to improve effectiveness of CE programs as contributors to preparing youth, adults, families and communities for success in a global economy, plan for effective recruitment and retention of volunteers, and diminished viability and visibility of Cooperative Extension Programs.

The factors that made these issues strategic were increased population growth, finite natural resources including water and land, economic downturn with large number of families living in poverty, loss of CE resources including funding, personnel and programs, too many program focus areas.

The identified consequences of failing to address these issues included diminished knowledge and skills of the public leading to crop yield losses; degradation of natural resources; reduced health status of individuals and communities; weakened economies especially in rural areas; lack of adequately trained faculty, staff and volunteers to meet clientele needs and demonstrate strong program impacts which will result in diminished future financial support for Cooperative Extension.
**2009 Stakeholder Survey:**

The 2009 stakeholder survey had 366 respondents: 248 non-University employees and 118 University faculty and staff. In all responses and categories, the results were similar between the two groups. The highest response came from UA faculty followed closely by those who identified themselves as volunteers; then UA staff with ranchers/growers and advisory board members rounding out the top five. Female responses were almost double that of male with a majority of respondents in the 50-59 year age group followed closely by the 40-49 and 60+ year age groups. In terms of respondent’s relationship to Extension, of the 118 UA employees, 63 were faculty and 55 were staff. Non-UA respondents were dominated by volunteers (63) with grower/rancher (29) and advisory board members (27) the only other categories with more than 15 responses. Most respondents identified themselves living in urban areas (136) but that was closely followed by rural residents (125) with suburbanites trailing far behind (62). Following is a list of the key questions and the top five responses to each.

The Strategic Goals were ranked:

1. Support the positive growth and development of children and youth
2. Ensure safe, profitable and sustainable food and fiber
3. Help Arizona communities plan for changing demands on our natural resources
4. Develop leadership skills to ensure sustainable community capacity
5. Assist individuals, families and youth to become physically, mentally, emotionally and financially healthy

**Strategic Goal #1: Help Arizona communities plan for changing demands on our natural resources**

1. Impact decision making and policy on limited water supply
2. Impact decision making and policy on natural resources
3. Sustain profitable and efficient plant systems
4. Enhance economic vitality
5. Impact decision making and policy on agricultural security

**Strategic Goal #2: Ensure safe, profitable and sustainable food and fiber**

1. Impact decision making and policy on limited water supply
2. Sustain profitable and efficient plant systems
3. Impact decision making and policy on agricultural security
4. Sustain profitable and efficient animal systems
5. Connecting youth with the outdoors
Strategic Goal #3: Develop leadership skills to ensure sustainable community capacity

1. Enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education
2. Enhance citizenship & leadership
3. Connecting youth with the outdoors
4. Enhance community vitality / Enhance sound financial management (tied)

Strategic Goal #4: Support the positive growth and development of children and youth

1. Enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education
2. Enhance healthy living
3. Connecting youth with the outdoors
4. Enhance citizenship & leadership
5. Enhance sound financial management

Strategic Goal #5: Assist individuals, families and youth to become physically, mentally, emotionally and financially healthy

1. Connecting youth with the outdoors
2. Enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education/
   Enhance healthy living (tied)
3. Enhance sound financial management
4. Enhance family & child development and care giving

List the top three issues in Arizona that Cooperative Extension needs to address. Limit your answer to three and please use one or two word answers.

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Strategy Formulation to Manage Strategic Issues (Step 6)

As the key Strategic Issues are identified we will be collecting, summarizing and analyzing feedback. Performance Goals will be developed for each Strategic Issue. As we move to the next stage of the strategic planning process, we will be brainstorming action strategies for each of the goals.

Strategy and Plan Review and Adoption (Step 7)

Description of Organization in the Future (Step 8)

Implementation (Step 9)

Strategy and Planning Process Reassessment (Step 10)