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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE



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WYOMING

University of Wyoming
Cooperative Extension Service: A Plan for Excellence
The Strategic Plan February 2002

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University of Wyoming

Cooperative Extension Service: A Plan for Excellence

The Strategic Plan February 2002

“The application of knowledge is a unique contribution our institutions can make to contemporary society.”

Kellogg Commission on the future of state and land-grant universities. February 1999

Preface

More than two years ago, the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) began strategic planning. The organization recognized the necessity of periodically examining its programs and organizational structure in light of current needs and pervasive change. In preparing this plan, the legal mandates and historical roles of UW CES were considered, as well as the current circumstances and future opportunities. The resulting strategic plan is a proactive strategy to effectively guide extension education programs in the coming decade. As such, this plan represents the best thinking of the UW CES organization with input from clientele, local government partners, and the citizen-based Blue Ribbon Task Force. In addition, this plan addresses the current fiscal situation.

Introduction

As a land-grant institution and the only state university, the University of Wyoming has a responsibility to serve each individual, organization, and community in the state. When the Smith Lever Act of 1914 created the Cooperative Extension Service, it forged a partnership between UW and federal and county governments. Because of this legislation, UW CES has maintained a close community connection with each of the state’s 23 counties and the Wind River Indian Reservation. Although its roots are in agriculture, UW CES has broadened its educational mission to encompass many of the contemporary challenges facing Wyoming’s people and its rural communities.

A recent Kellogg Commission report, titled “Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution,” prompts land-grant universities to thoughtfully engage in important societal problems. The commission calls for focus on a range of issues captured by the phrase *education and the economy*. Members suggest a renewed focus on agriculture and food and a return to the land-grant roots in rural America, with an emphasis on current issues. They see an enormous health care agenda facing Americans and propose a new emphasis in urban revitalization and community renewal. Children, youth, and families face increasing challenges, indicating a substantial payoff for work that strengthens the family. The commission also suggests intensifying efforts to address environmental and natural resource issues. While the importance of various topics differs by region or state, UW CES will contribute to the solution of those problems that face Wyoming. Helping individuals and communities is our heritage, our mission, and our vision.

Like most other Wyoming institutions, UW CES has faced a number of challenges during the past 20 years. The demand for services has broadened and, in some cases, deepened. County offices are challenged to address a wide range of issues and needs raised by local residents. Traditional focus areas, such as agriculture and family and youth, are changing, and farms, ranches, and agri-businesses have grown significantly. Free trade has internationalized agricultural markets, demanding greater efficiency from producers, processors, and marketers. Agriculture is on the threshold of a new green revolution through biotechnology and bio-engineering. Information-providing technologies connect even the most

rural Wyoming communities to the rest of the country and the world. Society's changing opinions regarding the environment and natural resource use continuously play on a stage of conflict that involves public and private lands, the owners, and the users. The structure of families and the values they hold are fundamentally changing the fabric of society. Rapid growth in many communities and the failure of the state's economy to keep pace with regional and national economies is a difficult situation. As recognized in both the College of Agriculture Strategic Plan and the UW Academic Plan, finding a solution to these issues requires a greater contribution from UW CES in community resource development.

Against this backdrop of societal, economic, and technological change, UW CES is struggling financially. Funding for UW CES programs is a three-way partnership among the university, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and county governments. Federal funding has been flat or declining since the early 1980s. State funding through the UW Block Grant has been flat since the mid-1980s, with the exception of modest increases for salary adjustments. County funding for operations varies across the state, but for at least one decade, the majority of counties have not kept pace with price level changes. Many county educator and state specialist positions have been lost during the past 15 years. With unfilled positions, key program components are not available in some areas of the state. Program quality is the issue, and inadequate funding is cause for concern.

UW CES has a long-standing heritage of helping Wyoming citizens and communities respond to challenges and change. When necessary, UW CES has joined forces with its partners and clientele to address its own circumstances and renew itself. Past models and strategies have served the organization well, guiding significant impact for Wyoming communities and individuals. Changing needs and eroding funding provide the current stimulus to look to the future, assess the organization, and revitalize UW CES. This strategic plan places UW CES in a position to optimize its contributions to the university and assist Wyoming residents in dealing with the challenges they face.

The Planning Process

A 16-member planning team was assembled during the summer of 1999. The group was asked to develop a plan for UW CES that would strategically position the organization for greater impact and success during the first decade of the twenty-first century and to develop the most effective organization and staffing plan for UW CES.

Several conditions and facts were established to guide the planning team:

1. UW CES lacks the appropriated resources to fully staff itself under past staffing patterns. In counties where an educator or other position is vacant, this has caused serious problems because the organization is currently using 86 percent of its resources for personnel. Financial support for the organization, from technology to travel and professional development, is inadequate. In addition, UW CES has the lowest starting salaries of any system in the West. It is unrealistic to expect that the university, state, or federal government will save us. Additional funding will most certainly come from new or nontraditional funding sources, and one of the strategic outcomes of this planning process must be fewer UW-funded CES employees.
2. UW CES is an organization dedicated to meeting the educational needs of Wyoming citizens and communities. The overriding purpose of planning is to decide as an organization how we will identify and provide education to critical program areas. A key strategic outcome is to develop and implement a program delivery strategy and an organizational and administrative plan that will foster statewide delivery of targeted programs. Everything, including state office organizations, should be considered.

3. The university's central administration has expectations for UW CES. In the Academic Plan, a reference was made to broadening UW CES responsibilities for UW outreach.
4. Because the needs of greater university outreach must be considered, the UW CES focus needs to be narrowed rather than broadened. The organization's mission should be focused by the UW CES Strategic Plan. The national initiatives provide some guidance, as do needs assessments and the College of Agriculture Strategic Plan, but the guiding principle is this: It will be harder to defend duplicative or competitive programs against other publicly funded programs.
5. No one will lose his or her job because of refocusing and restructuring; however, the action plans will be largely implemented within three years and completely implemented within five years. Change will occur through reassignment and re-training, retirement, and resignation. Individuals will have assignment choices within the context of the action plans.
6. County partnerships will be respected and fostered; 4-H is clearly county administered and delivered, and it would be counterproductive to consider alternatives that would threaten county 4-H programs. County governments are an important partner politically and financially and will continue in that role.
7. A state and university priority, community development is an area of opportunity for UW CES. With our statewide network and outreach-oriented specialists, UW CES has much to offer. Both college and university plans call for a greater UW CES contribution in community development.

Responding to instruction, the planning team developed a draft plan that was shared internally, revised based on employee input, and shared with UW CES partners and stakeholders. The plan was again revised based on partner and stakeholder input. Draft III of the plan was reviewed by the Blue Ribbon Task Force, and revisions were based on Task Force recommendations and citizen input before the final plan was approved.

The strategic plan and specific tactical plans follow. Appropriately, the plan addresses organizational leadership, vision, mission, program initiatives, educational delivery strategy, and organizational structure.

Organizational Leadership

Several critical themes emerged during planning. More specific than values, these themes define how UW CES behaves as an organization, interacts with the state's citizens and communities, and accomplishes its mission. They are as follows:

Leadership. The motivating factor for UW CES' continual growth and improvement will be commitment to program excellence. Clientele needs will be met by planned, focused, integrated, impact-driven programs implemented through initiative teams. These interdisciplinary teams will work collaboratively with field-based educators and state specialists, in conjunction with community and clientele input. UW CES should foster and value teamwork throughout the organization.

Catalyst of change. Through cooperative efforts and collaborative partnerships, UW CES will facilitate positive change across Wyoming. Working together, the organization will assist people and communities to frame their futures.

Stakeholder input. UW CES will aggressively seek input on educational program development from diverse interest groups. County, regional, or statewide advisory councils may provide broad-based input. Needs assessments also will be used to determine program direction. Every five years, a statewide needs assessment will be conducted using focus groups and a random survey. On a rotating basis following the state assessment, an area needs assessment, including focus groups, will be administered to each county in the participating area. In addition to formalized input, emerging issues will be identified by initiative teams.

Partnering with decision makers. UW CES is refocusing to be more responsive to the needs of the state. Under the director's leadership, department heads and UW CES personnel will work with key county, state, and university decision makers and clientele. These partnerships are critical to UW CES success. All personnel, including department heads, administrators, state specialists, and field educators, will serve as liaisons with state, university, county, and community leaders. The UW CES director will serve as a liaison when working with decision makers and clientele.

Staffing. As positions become vacant, all job descriptions will be reviewed and evaluated. UW CES will focus hiring to meet the most pressing needs of the organization and the state.

Vision

The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service will be recognized and respected for providing lifelong learning opportunities for the people of Wyoming. With the land-grant university as our foundation, UW CES will be the leader in outreach education throughout the state. UW CES will actively involve Wyoming people, institutions, and communities as we provide learning for better living. We will be responsive to the needs, concerns, and aspirations of diverse audiences.

Mission

The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service provides lifelong learning opportunities for the people of Wyoming and empowers them to make choices that enhance their quality of life.

Values

Through its actions and decisions, UW CES shows a commitment to:

Relevance. We are a catalyst for addressing our clientele's critical needs and issues in a productive and timely manner.

Diversity. We embrace diverse audiences and programming efforts.

People. We value the people of Wyoming and work in partnership with them and their organizations, while remaining respectful of their needs.

Connectivity. We value our unique presence in Wyoming communities as the interactive arm of the University of Wyoming.

Autonomy and accountability. We encourage our personnel to be innovative and creative in program and initiative design, while remaining accountable to the statewide community.

Applicability. We value educational programming that focuses on the application of information, processes, and client needs.

Respect. UW CES will not make decisions for Wyoming residents but will present alternatives and assist in the decision-making process. All UW CES personnel will treat their clients and staff with dignity.

Program Initiatives

Organizational changes enhance program efficacy. For this reason, program priorities are the centerpiece of this strategic plan. UW CES' program initiatives, as identified by the strategic planning process, are determined by its mission and values, by its unique expertise, its proven capabilities, and by the changing needs of Wyoming's society and economy. The priorities support the public's interest in maintaining a globally competitive, economically vital, and environmentally sound Wyoming agriculture in coexistence with the nonagricultural population for whom issues of consumer well-being, resource distribution, and quality of life are crucial. Summaries of the five program initiatives to be pursued and developed follow.

Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Systems

Situation: The value of agriculture to Wyoming's economy approaches \$1 billion each year, and agriculture's contribution to open spaces, wildlife, and recreation is even greater. The largest component of Wyoming agriculture is the beef cattle industry, accounting for approximately 70 percent of all cash receipts and 86.5 percent of all livestock production. Sheep, lamb, and wool receipts in 1998 were \$29 million. Forage sustains the Wyoming livestock industry. Hay is the leading crop in Wyoming with 1998 production valued at \$185 million, mostly marketed through livestock. Specialized seed production, horticulture and organic products, genetically superior bred heifers, and value-added sugar beet production are other examples of programming needs. The ripple effect of Wyoming production agriculture is difficult to measure, but it is enormous in scope.

In recent years, conversion of agricultural lands into small holdings for nonagricultural uses has increased dramatically. Wyoming residents are following the national trend and moving their primary residences onto small semi-rural acreages. Urban homeowners are more interested in improving the value of their investments and surroundings with landscaping and other horticultural activities. Sustainable agricultural systems are those that are economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable over the long term. Support for this approach is growing; the challenge is to continue current lifestyles for future generations.

The sustainable approach provides a guide or template that evaluates new ideas, technologies, practices, and enterprises, as well as existing practices and agricultural systems. This approach is a reminder to take a long-term view and study interrelationships. Impacts on all three aspects of sustainability (economic, environmental, and social) must be considered when evaluating existing practices and new technologies in the context of the overall agricultural system.

Complex problems, such as non-point source pollution, marketing, and genetic engineering, currently face Wyoming forage, livestock, and crop production systems and require that educational programs be offered using an integrated-systems, multidisciplinary, team-based approach. These programs will provide participants with an enhanced understanding of a systematic method for decision making, as well as how day-to-day decisions can impact long-run viability. The integrated approach will require coordinated program development by UW CES educators. Interaction among educators, producers, and other stakeholders, together with partners in research and governmental agencies, is necessary to effectively promote the adoption of sustainable agricultural systems.

Agricultural markets are increasingly global, and food needs are growing with world population. Total meat consumption in developing countries is expected to double by 2020 (CAST, 1999)¹. The U.S.

population is expected to double by 2050, and prime land acreage is expected to shrink by 13 percent.

Agriculture has become more than food and fiber production. Genetic engineering is accelerating new product development and providing numerous opportunities. Plants specifically developed for use in pharmaceuticals, biodegradable plastics, energy, industrial lubricants, etc., will need to be evaluated for sustainable production, as well as for environmental damage and degradation of the soil resource.

Goal: Promote the adoption of sustainable agricultural systems through education.

Objective: Develop educational programming on sustainable forage-based livestock systems.

Justification: The profitability and sustainability of Wyoming's livestock industry depends on an inexpensive and abundant supply of high-quality forage. Over 95 percent of the nutrients consumed by Wyoming livestock is derived from home-grown forages. About half of the animal unit months (AUMs) required are from native range, while the remaining AUMs are from irrigated meadows, irrigated pastures, cropland hay, silage, and crop residues (Kearl, 1988)² (Kearl, 1989)³. Forages provide many sustainable benefits to agricultural systems. They are primarily perennial, giving continuous soil protection and requiring relatively fewer inputs and pesticides than other crops.

As in other competing states, there is an urgent need to reduce livestock production costs. The largest single cost is winter feed (average 60 percent of total cost) (USDA, 1993)⁴. In Wyoming, approximately 925,000 cows and replacement heifers are over-wintered (four-year average). Forages complement and supplement native range. Extending the grazing season with forages puts less reliance on stored forages, which are a more expensive source of nutrients.

Traditionally, profitability of livestock production systems has been largely influenced by the marketed commodity price. Profitability is essential for the production system to be sustainable. Along with decreasing inputs (costs), increasing outputs (production x price) is also important. Current livestock and carcass pricing trends dictate a thorough understanding of the end product to maximize value. Continual improvement of livestock genetics is important because most economically important traits are moderately to highly heritable. In addition, herd reproductive rates significantly impact enterprise outputs.

Strategies:

- Assess the relative costs and benefits of alternative methods of meeting seasonal livestock nutrient demands using low-cost forage sources and provide educational programs accordingly. UW CES must consider:
 - Various alternatives for extending grazing seasons
 - Tradeoffs associated with using private versus public forage sources
 - Alternatives for marketing and managing risk under alternative management systems
 - How livestock resource demands for nutrition, reproductive efficiency, and genetic improvement must be balanced with financial, human, wildlife, and range resource demands.
- Provide educational programs that improve the quality and efficiency of livestock production systems by considering genetic evaluation and herd improvement, evaluation of end product quality and yield, and improvements in reproductive efficiency.
- Demonstrate the viability of alternative management strategies and production options using on-site farm and ranch demonstrations. These projects will showcase alternative production

strategies on working farms and ranches, as well as contribute material for developing educational programs.

- Promote and support educational sustainable agriculture programs for youth.
- Pursue external funding opportunities for both on-site farm and ranch demonstrations, other applied research projects, and educational programming.

Outcomes:

- Reduced costs and increased returns for livestock operations through adoption of better forage use and other efficiencies.
- Increased value of livestock products.
- Increased awareness and use of risk-reduction strategies.
- Enhanced awareness of private land forage production and quality management strategies.
- Greater understanding among youth of efficient livestock production with forage and other available resources.
- Increased funding to support sustainable forage-based livestock education.

Objective: Offer educational programs on alternative crop and livestock systems and crop and livestock integration.

Justification: In addition to supporting livestock production, forages increase the sustainability of cropping systems by improving soils and enhancing soil conservation, water quality, wildlife, and recreational activities. Legumes in a rotation reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizer inputs with subsequent crops. Forages integrated into annual crop rotations provide an opportunity to diversify by adding livestock. Nontraditional livestock species may prove useful in Wyoming forage utilization schemes.

Wyoming has a competitive advantage over other states in consistent high-quality hay production, with favorable harvesting and curing conditions and lower costs of production. Wyoming hay is aggressively marketed through a haylist Web site, and hits on the site have averaged 110 per month during the past two years. Alfalfa is the leading hay crop, accounting for \$126 million in receipts from 1994 to 1998. (Wyo. Ag. Statistics, 1999)⁵. Yields can be increased with relatively few additional inputs, resulting in reduced cost per ton. Each 10 percent increase in alfalfa yield adds approximately \$7 million to Wyoming's agricultural production income (Kearl, 1988)⁶. The infrastructure, expertise, and resources are in place for promoting and marketing alfalfa, one of the most environmentally friendly crops. Wyoming's certified seed industry has grown phenomenally in recent years. Wyoming has an excellent climate for producing high-quality seed and the infrastructure to accommodate many more acres, in addition to specialty seed crops.

Total certified seed acreage increased from 12,905 acres in 1997 to 22,844 acres in 1999, an increase of 39 percent per year. Total value of certified seed to contractors was \$22.1 million (Univ. Wyo. Seed Cert. Serv., 1999)⁷.

With integrated weed management, the Leopold Center (Ann. Report, 1999)⁸ estimates herbicide use can

be reduced by 75 percent. Improved forage species have shown promise in reducing herbicide use when integrated with other methods for long-term noxious weed control (Whitson and Koch, 1998)⁹.

Strategies: A team approach and the sustainable model will be used to develop educational programs that provide producers and others with decision-making information regarding:

- Alternative crops, alternative rotations, value-added opportunities, and niche marketing. Examples include horticultural industries, organic certification, specialized seed crops, premium hay markets, fallow alternatives, and integration of livestock and cropping systems.
- Integration of cropping practices that mitigate non-point source pollution of surface water and groundwater, reduce erosion, and improve soils. Examples include using cover crops, conservation tillage, buffer strips, precision agriculture, fertilizer efficiency, and irrigation management.
- Development of an integrated approach to disease and pest management.
- On-site farm and ranch demonstrations and evaluations of new products and practices.
- Pursuit of external funding for on-site farm and ranch demonstrations and applied research on sustainable practices and economic development opportunities.

Outcomes:

- Increased net returns from adoption of alternative cropping systems.
- Increased awareness and use of risk-reduction strategies.
- Reduced soil losses through adoption of improved crop management.
- Increased water quality through environmentally friendly crop and soil management.
- Reduced pesticide use.

Objective: Educate rural and suburban landowners who operate on relatively few acres about best management practices.

Justification: Agricultural land is being converted into non-agricultural uses across the United States (Versterby et al., 1994)¹⁰ and the Rocky Mountain Region. Wyoming is predicted to follow suit, and the trend already is occurring in some counties. Population in the western Wyoming Rocky Mountain counties grew by 7 to 18 percent from 1990 to 1995 (Woods and Pole, 1996)¹¹, but all counties did not experience the same growth rate. Rocky Mountain counties containing or bordering national forest wilderness areas experienced population gains from 1970 to 1985 (Rudzitis and Johansen, 1989)¹², especially those regions with abundant public lands, wildlife, and open spaces.

Converting agricultural lands into small land holdings by nonresidents for recreation and investment potentials has increased dramatically in recent years. This trend, coupled with sales of Wyoming ranches and farms to people with non-agricultural interests who often continue managing the holding as an economic unit, likely will continue to increase.

In some communities, there has been a substantial increase in the number of homeowners building on small acreages. These individuals must be held to the same standards of land management as those who use soil and water resources.

Strategies:

- Develop collaborative partnerships with other agencies. Develop educational programs that provide resource management options and enterprise assessment techniques to rural and suburban landowners through these collaborative partnerships.
- Provide Web-based resources to assist small landowners with resource management, enterprise analysis, and ecological impacts.
- Develop educational programs that promote sustainable alternatives to pesticides for disease and pest management.
- Educate rural landowners to the impacts of land use practices on rural ecology.

Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of resource management options.
- Increased appreciation for ecological impacts of resource use practices.

Objective: Provide education to communities, homeowners, and youth in sustainable and environmentally sound horticulture practices.

Justification: Urbanization is expected to continue, and so is the need for horticultural education. An average of \$203 per capita per year is spent on landscaping, gardening, and horticultural products (USDA-ERS, 1999)¹³. This figure projects to over \$97 million in Wyoming.

The UW CES Master Gardener Program grew out of a movement in the early 1970s to provide research-based horticultural information to consumers via the land-grant system. The program emphasized growing plants by the principles of integrated pest management (IPM), sustainable agriculture, and horticulture. Recently, 118 certificates of recognition were sent to 84 active master gardeners. Approximately 160 master gardeners were trained in the past year.

Urban horticulture is one of the fastest growing and most inclusive parts of agriculture both nationally and in the state. Consumer misuse of pesticides and fertilizers is an important source of environmental pollution and contamination. Homeowners also contribute a potential for introduced noxious plants and the problems they pose for the ecosystem.

Strategies:

- Educate volunteers to assist with horticultural diagnosis, respond to inquiries, and make recommendations.
- Develop Web pages and 1-800 number communication models to answer basic horticulture inquiries.

- Promote sustainable horticultural education programs for youth.
- Provide education for homeowners and urban land managers in horticulturally adapted species, selection, care, and management.
- Deliver education in public and private landscaping principles and practices.
- Provide education in proper use and management of pesticides and biological products.
- Educate clientele in diagnosis, control, and mitigation of horticultural disease and insect infestations.
- Provide education to homeowners in the care, preparation, and storage of garden products.

Outcomes:

- Homeowners will use their knowledge of variety selection, fertilizer and pesticide use, and water efficiency to become economically and ecologically proficient.
- Homeowners will learn how to manage plant diseases, insect invaders, and weed problems, in addition to learning improved cultural practices for lawns, gardens, and ornamentals.
- Homeowners and urban land managers will adopt proper landscaping techniques to aesthetically and ecologically enhance their local environments.
- Homeowners will increase their awareness of pesticide safety and handling practices.
- Homeowners will use proper and safe practices to handle and store garden products.

Notes

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4-H and Youth Development

Situation: Numerous Wyoming communities have identified youth issues as a priority, and Wyoming's commitment to sustaining its 4-H program remains strong. More than 7,400 youth participate in the traditional 4-H club program. Search Institute research suggests the more developmental assets youth have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviors. Extension youth development programs build many assets over an extended period of time, including positive relationships with adults, parents, and teachers. Life skills education prepares youth to be contributing citizens.

4-H and youth development programs evolve from subject matter knowledge and skills, self-development, and social interaction among people of different backgrounds, experiences, and ages. Youth develop good work habits by sharing ideas and helping each other. Most project work is done in or near the home, so families can work and be together. 4-H projects are real-life experiences that help members take responsibility for their own actions.

According to the 1991 U.S. Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report, five competencies (resource management, ability to use information, ability to understand systems, technology use, and personal qualities) and three foundation skills (interpersonal, basic, and thinking) were found to be critical for future employment. 4-H and youth development activities nurture and instill these skills and qualities in Wyoming's young people, enabling them to become self-directing, productive members of society.

Wyoming is not immune to high-risk behaviors among its youth. The 1999 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance revealed how Wyoming fared in comparison to 41 other states. Wyoming ranked third highest in drinking and driving, current alcohol use, and drinking before age 13; second in the use of inhalants, injected drug use, steroid use, and suicide; and first in smokeless tobacco and cocaine use (Center for Disease Control, 1999)¹. When the majority of youth in a community are involved in structured activities, the incidence of these high-risk behaviors can be greatly decreased (Healthy Communities Healthy Youth, Search Institute, 1993)².

The Wyoming 4-H and Youth Development Program gives youth an educational opportunity outside of the classroom and collaborates with other youth groups and youth development and education agencies. In 1999, more than 17,000 contacts were made in nontraditional settings; however, there are 148,000 Wyoming youth, so 4-H has the potential to reach many more young people in the future.

Goal: UW CES will engage in educational programs and use trained volunteers to create supportive environments. Programming will give youth an opportunity to build assets and life skills essential for a productive, healthy lifestyle, and youth and adult interaction will enrich family relationships.

Objective: UW CES will foster asset building and life skills development in Wyoming youth through traditional 4-H delivery methods.

Justification: To be successful in today's world, young people must have basic life skills. Through traditional club work and project goals, 4-H members learn how to be effective leaders and citizens in their communities. 4-H educational programming fosters responsibility, builds strong character, and develops communication skills that are essential to building a productive workforce.

Strategies:

- Enhance activities that provide statewide learning opportunities for youth such as presentations, projects, contests, fairs, and leadership camps.
- Use the statewide 4-H and Youth Development Initiative Team to evaluate current project areas, activities, and events to determine program feasibility and recommend additions and/or eliminations.
- Use the National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum to provide guidance and up-to-date information to volunteer leaders and youth.

Outcomes:

- Enhanced life skills, such as strong character, responsibility, teamwork, communication, high self-esteem, and workforce preparation, for youth participants.
- Stronger family relationships.
- Recognition of youth as an important community resource.
- 4-H will serve as a recruitment tool for the University of Wyoming.

Objective: UW CES will benefit and complement the current 4-H program by offering life skills education to nontraditional audiences.

Justification: While 4-H projects and clubs will remain the backbone of UW CES development efforts, additional youth can be reached through collaboration with other community youth groups and nontraditional delivery methods.

Strategies:

- Take advantage of external resources, community collaborations, and alternative delivery methods to enhance the 4-H program.
- Seek external funding sources to assist in delivering programs to nontraditional audiences.
- Build collaborations with existing youth development organizations such as schools, school-to-work, youth services, and Ag in the Classroom.
- Enhance delivery methods to reach diverse youth audiences through innovative programs such as K-3, after-school, CYFAR, Healthy Communities and Healthy Youth, and youth entrepreneurship.
- Develop a reporting system to track youth reached by nontraditional youth development programs.

Outcomes:

- Improved life skills will help young people become capable and productive adults.
- Recognition of youth as an important community resource.
- Lower incidence of risky behaviors among youth due to educational programs and community collaborations that promote healthy behaviors.
- Stronger families and communities.
- Increased credibility and visibility of UW CES in communities.

Objective: UW CES will empower volunteers to become key players in 4-H and youth development programs.

Justification: Historically, UW CES has been effective in recruiting volunteers to assist with the high-quality 4-H program. In 1999, the Wyoming 4-H program recognized 2,767 volunteer leaders. This number represents at least one leader for every three youth. Long-term relationships between volunteer leaders and youth contribute to the success of the 4-H and Youth Development Program.

Strategies:

- Incorporate a variety of training methods, such as “train-the-trainer” and mentoring efforts, to effectively enable volunteer leaders to work with young people.
- Expand the volunteer base to assist with youth development programming efforts.
- Expand a volunteer recognition system to encourage and retain leaders in youth development programming

Outcomes:

- Long-term retention of quality leaders, resulting in a consistent and effective program.
- Greater use of trained volunteers to expand programming efforts in a time of limited resources.
- Interaction between adult volunteers and youth will instill positive behaviors.
- Provide a lifelong learning opportunity for adults through volunteer programs.
- Strengthened family relationships in a positive learning environment.

Notes

1. Center for Disease Control. 1999. *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – 1999* [web page, cited July 2002], <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss4905a1.htm>.

2. Blyth, D.A. and Roehlkepartain, E.C. 1993. "Building Community Strengths: Search Institute Study Examining the Impact of Communities on Youth." *Source Newsletter*, September.

Nutrition and Food Safety

Situation: Links between food, nutrition, and health are indisputable. Poor nutritional habits contribute substantially to four of the five leading causes of death and illness nationwide: heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke. While nutrition and food safety information is readily available, it is often inaccurate and not research based. Also, much of the mainstream nutrition information is confusing or misleading. UW CES is uniquely positioned to provide Wyoming communities with accurate, science-based, meaningful, and motivating nutrition and food safety information.

Wyoming residents are high risk for nutrition-related problems and complications. According to the most current standards, nearly 52 percent of adults are overweight, 72 percent do not engage in regular and sustained leisure-time physical activity, and 79 percent have inadequate fruit and vegetable intakes. Among Wyoming youth, 73 percent have inadequate fruit and vegetable intakes, and alarming proportions are following unhealthy practices, some of which can contribute to eating disorders. Sixty-one percent of females and 23 percent of males are trying to lose weight, and 9 and 4 percent, respectively, have vomited or taken laxatives to try to lose weight. In terms of physical activity among youth, 51 percent of females and 43 percent of males are not enrolled in physical education classes.

Because of Wyoming's rural status, most residents do not have easy access to registered dietitians and preventive and therapeutic health care services. Additionally, clinical dietetic counseling is not reimbursed by Medicare and many other insurance carriers. These facts limit local availability of nutrition information from nutrition professionals in Wyoming. UW CES educators can and do provide general food and nutrition information, and they are well connected to other community- and state-based resources. The information and connections prove invaluable to a wide range of clientele who are making better informed food- and nutrition-related choices.

Many Wyoming families and individuals are at nutritional risk because of limited resources. In 1998, the state's poverty rate was 12.1 percent. More than 26,000 Wyoming residents (5 percent of the population) receive food stamps, and 31 percent of Wyoming children who attend school qualify for free or reduced-price meals. The elderly, many of whom have limited resources, make up approximately 9 percent of Wyoming's population. In the 1998 Wyoming Hunger Study, emergency food providers reported a 20 percent usage increase. Prolonged use of emergency food supplies could lead to impaired health due to inadequate nutrient content and increase future health-care costs¹. Wyoming leads the nation in terms of having had the largest decline in income (\$5,600) over a 20-year period among the poorest families (lowest 20 percent)².

Food safety is a presidential and national CSREES initiative for good reason. Based on the disturbing rates of foodborne illness nationwide, Wyoming's annual burden translates into 568 serious illnesses that result in hospitalization, 133,000 cases of gastrointestinal illness, and nine deaths.

Goal: Improve the health of Wyoming citizens through wise nutrition and health decisions and safe food-handling practices.

Objective: Educate people about the benefits of active living and healthful eating.

Justification: In mid-1998, a think tank of 27 individuals, representing a range of education- and health-related disciplines at the community, state, and university levels, unequivocally endorsed UW CES as best qualified to organize, coordinate, and conduct an umbrella program that addresses the major

nutrition-related health risks faced by Wyoming adults and youth. The group supporting this effort has grown to a 57-member network, representing 12 local, state, and regional organizations, institutions, and trade groups; six programs within two Wyoming state government departments; 17 county-based UW CES offices; and seven departments or programs located on the UW campus in Laramie.

In terms of potential cost savings, effective nutrition education that focuses on obesity can substantially impact Wyoming's estimated \$69 million obesity-related health care costs and the additional \$58 million spent by Wyoming residents on ineffective weight loss ploys each year. Additionally, improvements in eating and physical activity attitudes and behaviors can reduce health-care costs related to decreased heart disease, stroke, certain forms of cancer, and diabetes.

Strategies:

- Partner effectively with key nutrition and health leaders at the community and state levels to focus on priorities, strengthen efforts, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes.
- Conduct nutrition and health education programs designed to lower health care costs or extend the health care resources of individuals and families by decreasing the risk of chronic disease.
- Provide Web sites and other targeted nutrition resources to Wyoming residents so they may obtain reliable, accurate, science-based information and make healthier choices.
- Counteract misinformation, confusing health claims, and changing lifestyles that negatively influence nutrition choices.
- Use appropriate media, information exchange systems, and educational activities to improve the general public's nutrition decision-making skills.

Outcomes:

- Improved nutritional health among Wyoming residents will translate into increased immunity, resilience, and physical and emotional vigor, reducing the severity of illness or length of time individuals are sick and enhancing quality of life. Health care costs for individuals, families, and the state of Wyoming are consequently lowered, and people's well-being is improved.
- Wise food choices practiced by limited resource families mean that food dollars last longer each month and provide healthy, nutritious meals.
- Money spent on products with misleading or fraudulent claims will be saved.

Objective: Limited resource individuals and families will acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behaviors for nutritionally sound diets, and this will contribute to their personal development.

Justification: With a statewide poverty rate of 12.1 percent in 1998 and more than 26,000 Wyoming residents receiving food stamps, UW CES will help families and individuals "eat better for less."

Strategies:

- Conduct nutrition education programs for limited resource audiences that improve food and

nutrition choices and skills and extend financial resources in five areas: basic nutrition, meal planning, shopping skills, food preparation, and food safety and sanitation. (An example is the current UW CES Cent\$ible Nutrition Program, funded by matching state and federal funds.)

- Establish a referral network and work collaboratively with agencies reaching limited resource audiences to strengthen the safety net entitlements provide.
- Seek outside funding sources to ensure continuation of educational programs.

Outcomes:

- Participants will make positive changes in food selection, improve their ability to manage food resources, and show improvement in one or more food safety practices.
- Newfound knowledge will lead to decreased hunger, increased food security, and decreased health care costs for participants.
- Outside funding coupled with stronger links to and collaboration with other agencies will lead to more individuals and families receiving sound nutrition information.

Objective: Encourage safe food-handling practices through collaborative educational programs.

Justification: At the county and state levels, UW CES is an essential partner in the Wyoming Food Safety Coalition (WFSC), a 70-member multi-institutional, multidisciplinary partnership that has become the primary source of food safety education throughout the state. The heart of WFSC is a core of 20 locally trained teams, each of which includes a county-based UW CES educator. In FY99, WFSC trained 215 supervisors, 1,180 food handlers, and 1,237 school-aged students; provided in-house training to 424 individuals; and reached 1,526 consumers through educational programs. Essential to WFSC's productivity and quality work is the support and coordination provided by UW CES at the state level.

Food safety at the consumer level is also a major priority. UW CES extension educators respond to thousands of food safety calls each year. Consumers need a reliable source for information on safe food-handling practices. There are increasing concerns of virulent bacteria, such as E.coli 0157:H7 and salmonella enteintidis, and for food preservation methods like irradiation and home canning.

Strategies:

- Partner with food safety leaders to strengthen educational outcomes.
- Conduct food safety education programs designed to reduce the incidence of foodborne illnesses and promote risk management in food service establishments.
- Implement technologies and respond to clientele food safety questions.

Outcomes:

- In an era when micro-organisms are becoming more virulent and more difficult to control and kill, better risk management practices in food service establishments and homes will result in fewer cases of food poisoning.

Objective: Identify and respond effectively to emerging issues and questions related to food, nutrition, and food safety that are important for Wyoming residents.

Justification: As a result of active research, the fields of food, nutrition, and food safety are changing rapidly. For example, recent research has yielded an astounding amount of information about phytochemicals, a category of substances hardly known 10 years ago. New food products regularly appear on store shelves. In addition to providing valuable information and legitimate products, these types of advances in research, coupled with keen public interest and a vigorous marketplace, also foster the rapid proliferation of nutritional misinformation.

UW CES can play a uniquely valuable role in achieving this objective. In addition to being ever alert to food and nutrition information circulating in the media, field-based UW CES educators are closely in tune with relevant issues developing within their communities. State-based specialists are well connected to sources of information in other states and at the federal level, as well as to state-level counterparts in other agencies and organizations.

Strategies:

- Monitor changes at the local, state, regional, and national levels that have important implications for Wyoming residents related to food, nutrition, and food safety.
- Work with counterparts in other agencies and organizations to effectively address important new issues and specific questions through the most appropriate and efficient channels.
- Provide consumers with research-based information in the form of peer-reviewed Web sites, educational programs, bulletins, resource materials, and professional expertise, so they have the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions.
- Adapt or develop and make available high-quality, science-based resources that address priority program areas or important emerging issues; examples of these resources include Wyoming-specific food and nutrition Web sites and online resources, handouts, bulletins, interactive teaching tools, and “train-the-trainer” presentation packages.

Outcomes:

- Informed decisions will improve health, save money otherwise spent on ineffective and/or harmful products, and reduce health-care costs associated with inappropriate therapies and with delay of legitimate treatment.
- Reduced stress on individuals and families resulting from improved health and money saved.
- Key issues and trends addressed proactively.
- Educational materials and programs adopted nationally because they effectively address priority areas and emerging issues.
- Wyoming residents make informed decisions because they have access to information that is accurate, science-based, meaningful, and motivating.

- Programs are funded or strengthened through dollars secured and collaborative efforts.

Notes

1. Whitman, Frederick. 1998. *Northwest Community Action Programs of Wyoming: Wyoming Hunger Study*. Worland, WY: Northwest Community Action Programs of Wyoming (NOWCAP).
2. Bernstein, J., McNichol, E., Mishel, L., and Zahradnik, R. 2000. *ibid.*

Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources

Situation: An educational programming initiative was established in this area to consider the profound influence of natural resource issues on the economy, quality of life, and “custom and culture” of Wyoming communities. Rangeland resource management and associated environmental issues permeate nearly every aspect of life in Wyoming. Livestock production is largely dependent upon native rangelands, which also provide critical wildlife habitat, water resources, oil, gas, mineral reserves, and recreational opportunities. Wyoming’s current economy is closely associated with the use of renewable and nonrenewable natural resources by U.S. and global economies. As a popular tourist destination, the state acts as a reservoir of rural and wildland resources.

Wyoming natural resources are abundant and diverse. A variety of ecosystems, from near-pristine wilderness, forests, and rangelands to urban landscapes, make Wyoming a unique and inviting place. Many consider Wyoming to be in a transitional period. Our emphasis has shifted from extractive and commodity natural resource development to an attempt to sustain these industries while providing for the amenities associated with Wyoming landscapes. Demand and expectations are often conflicting when determining appropriate management strategies for Wyoming’s wide-open spaces, wildlife, and public lands. Nearly half of the land in Wyoming is publically owned, and public sentiment, management policies, and regulations continually change. The demand for science-based information, education, and technical expertise in developing sustainable management strategies, evaluating public policy, and addressing complex natural resource issues is increasing in Wyoming. UW CES is uniquely qualified to address these issues. We are connected to the university and have a non-advocacy relationship with all interests. The public must have confidence that UW CES educators and specialists are both knowledgeable and objective in their development and delivery of educational programs.

As an “upstream state” with a small population and semi-arid climate, there is critical concern in Wyoming over water resources and the increasing demand from lower basin states. Water quality and quantity policies, particularly those related to non-point source pollution, continue to be crucial statewide issues.

The integrity of Wyoming’s natural resource base and the state’s diverse ecosystems will be a central focus of UW CES educational programs. Natural resource related educational programs will be designed to foster an understanding of Wyoming ecosystem functions as related to the people of the state and their economic viability. Educational programs will provide science-based options for resolving environmental and natural resource management issues and will incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving and conflict resolution. Educational program development will be a collaborative effort involving the university and clientele, including landowners, federal and state agency personnel, youth, conservation interests, industry representatives, and the general public.

Goal: UW CES will be the premier source of accurate, objective, and educational sustainable rangeland resource management programming.

Objective: Wyoming rangeland resource issues will be addressed through an integrated educational approach to meet the complex needs of statewide clientele.

Justification: Rangeland resource issues seldom respond to purely technological or single-discipline solutions. UW CES acknowledges that social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions also must be addressed in the resolution of rangeland resource issues. An institutional structure that promotes and

supports interdisciplinary approaches is necessary when developing educational programming.

Strategies:

- Educational needs assessment, program development and delivery, and evaluation will be accomplished by multidisciplinary rangeland resource program teams. These teams may include area extension educators, program specialists, UW faculty, stakeholders, and consultants.
- Applied research, demonstrations, and educational materials will promote an integrated approach to rangeland resource issues.
- State initiative teams and area rangeland resource program teams will be formed soon after the strategic plan's implementation.
- Applied research and demonstration sites, with accompanying educational materials related to integrated rangeland resource management, will be established in all extension areas within three years.
- Extension educators will receive in-service training opportunities to improve or maintain their knowledge of rangeland resource subject matter, current issues, and their proficiency in employing integrated management approaches.

Outcomes:

- Increased collaborative efforts among extension educators, faculty, clientele, and stakeholders.
- Improved efficiency and effectiveness in addressing clientele needs.
- Increased interaction among campus-based faculty and extension educators.
- Improved communication among faculty and academic professionals.

Objective: Rangeland resource issues in Wyoming will be addressed through participation and leadership in collaborative processes (i.e., coordinated resource management).

Justification: People who have diverse interests, cultural backgrounds, values, and technical expertise are passionately involved in Wyoming rangeland resource issues. Long-term solutions to these issues are realized only when all stakeholder interests are considered. The trend for public involvement in rangeland resource management decisions is increasing, and conflicting viewpoints are becoming more apparent.

With nearly 100 active coordinated resource management groups, Wyoming is widely recognized as a leader in resolving natural resource conflicts and improving stewardship. However, implementation of collaborative processes creates a significant demand for trained and competent facilitators, technical advisors, and process participants.

Strategies:

- Develop and provide expertise on conflict resolution to assist individuals, firms, and agencies in addressing natural resource conflicts.

- Expand UW CES' educational role to include facilitation, technical assistance, or representation as a stakeholder in the collaborative process.
- Extension educators (independent of discipline) will receive training in conflict resolution and participation in collaborative processes. Additional discipline specific and/or facilitator training may be provided to personnel involved in natural resource conflict resolution.

Outcomes:

- Improved communication among participants and the development of an appreciation for other viewpoints.
- Reduced rangeland resource conflicts.
- Increased use of collaborative processes to address rangeland resource issues.
- Reduced regulatory and litigious responses to rangeland resource issues.
- Resolution of rangeland resource conflicts.
- Realization that collaborative approaches are a more efficient use of public resources when compared to litigation and arbitration.

Objective: Educational programs will target nontechnical audiences to increase understanding and appreciation for sustainable rangeland resource management.

Justification: Public perceptions and opinions often drive rangeland resource issues and public policy responses. Rangeland resource conflicts are perennial in the absence of balanced and objective information. Public education is a proactive approach to minimizing rangeland resource conflicts, formulating sound public policy, and mitigating existing situations. An understanding and appreciation for rangeland resources, ecological processes, and sustainable management is life enriching, and developing this attitude in young people is vital.

Strategies:

- Use the entire media spectrum to disseminate information regarding ecological processes, successes in sustainable management, stewardship, multiple use of rangeland resources, economic contributions of natural resource industries, and UW CES' rangeland resource programming efforts.
- Promote and support educational rangeland resource programs for youth, including 4-H projects, wildlife habitat evaluation, range judging, Ag in the Classroom, and natural resource camps.
- Increase access to existing rangeland resource programming by encouraging participation from nontraditional audiences.
- Produce and disseminate news releases and other publications to educate the public about rangeland resources and management programs.

- Review and modify, as necessary, existing written and audiovisual natural resource education materials. Create new materials as the need arises and resources allow.
- Encourage broader participation in existing natural resource programming through expanded mailing lists and more effective advertising and marketing.

Outcomes:

- Increased appreciation, knowledge, and understanding of rangeland resource management by the general public.
- Increased participation by nontechnical audiences in rangeland resource issues and public policy debates.
- A more informed public capable of formulating an opinion on rangeland resource management issues.

Objective: Educational programs for Wyoming agricultural producers, landowners, and other rangeland resource managers will promote natural resource sustainability and stewardship.

Justification: The sustainable rangeland resource management involves economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable strategies, which also sustain the “custom and culture” of rural communities and agricultural production from natural landscapes. Sustainability is often the unacknowledged common ground between landowners, agricultural producers, conservationists, and public land managers. Extension educators are uniquely positioned to provide educational experiences that demonstrate this commonality when addressing Wyoming rangeland resource issues.

Strategies:

- Provide comprehensive educational programs in the following areas:
 - Sustainable grazing management (private and public rangelands, small acreage landowners)
 - Rangeland management and monitoring
 - Intensive non-native pasture management
 - Riparian management (non-point source pollution) and water quality
 - Integrated management of invasive species on wildlands (noxious weeds, insect pests, poisonous plants, etc.)
 - Wildlife habitat enhancement
 - Integrated management processes
- State and area rangeland resource specialists will stay abreast of research progress and trends related to the above strategies and will provide up-to-date information, educational programming, newsletters, etc., in a user-friendly form for clients and extension educators.

Outcomes:

- Improved long-term profitability, economic stability, and property values of Wyoming ranches.
- Increased adoption of sustainable rangeland resource management strategies.

- Reduced spread and impact of invasive species.
- Reduced non-point source pollution, improved fisheries habitat, and enhanced wildlife and recreation opportunities.
- Increased implementation of rangeland monitoring programs.
- Decreased influence of public policy on natural resource management decisions (monitoring information to support management strategies).
- Increased implementation of integrated management strategies.
- Reduced dependence upon public rangelands for livestock forage (improved economic stability).
- Increased knowledge, appreciation, and understanding regarding sustainable management strategies for small acreage landowners.

Objective: UW CES will provide educational programs that address public policy influences on rangeland resource management issues in Wyoming.

Justification: Public land management policies have a profound influence on Wyoming landowners, agricultural producers, and rural communities. The majority of Wyoming ranches are dependent upon forage from federal and state lands during some portion of the annual production cycle. The economic viability of many ranches (especially in western Wyoming) is directly dependent upon forage availability.

Strategies:

- Rangeland resource program teams will consider current policies in needs assessment and development and implementation of educational programs.
- Specific educational programs may be developed to address existing or potential policy decisions (i.e., threatened and endangered species, grazing permit renewal, rangeland reform, standards and guidelines for grazing, consumptive use restrictions, etc.).
- UW CES will collaborate with federal and state agencies and other stakeholders to ensure timely and objective responses to public policies.
- Rangeland resource specialists and program team members will monitor public policies that affect resource use in Wyoming and the surrounding region. Specialists and team members will develop educational programs and materials to explain policies to stakeholders and the general public.
- Emerging rangeland resource and environmental issues will be addressed with as little bias as possible by newly developed educational programs, as soon as reliable information is available.

Outcomes:

- Reduced negative impacts of public land policies on Wyoming landowners and agricultural producers.

- Increased development of sound rangeland resource management policies by land management agencies.
- Increased understanding and appreciation for public land policy influence on Wyoming landowners and agricultural producers.

Enhancing Wyoming Communities and Households

Situation: With its roots in agriculture and rural communities, UW CES is uniquely qualified and positioned to assist rural Americans chart a bright future. UW CES believes that individuals and families are the cornerstone of strong communities and, in turn, that strong communities can strengthen individuals and families. Stable communities also attract investment and outside industries; businesses choose to locate in places where their workers can be productive and secure.

Wyoming residents are known for being independent and industrious. Stagnation of the state's economy has deprived most Wyoming communities and their residents of the ability to prosper, and many communities have actually experienced a downturn (WY Business Plan and Steering Committee; Center for Budget and Policy Priorities Report, 2000)¹. Historically, the economic viability of Wyoming's small communities and rural households has depended upon the agricultural, mineral, and energy industries. These industries are no longer sufficient to sustain the economy and keep young people in the state. As a result, Wyoming residents and communities are and will continue to face fiscal challenges.

An estimated 70 percent of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck. In 1996, the national consumer debt exceeded \$1 trillion and one million households filed personal bankruptcies. Limited-resource agricultural households exist on income far below the average for all U.S. households and must rely heavily on alternative incomes (USDA, 2000)². A lack of financial knowledge contributes to poor financial choices that can harm both individuals and communities. Households that lack basic financial management skills are more susceptible to high debt, damaged credit records, and overpayment or underpayment of financial products and services. Due to the changing structure of our economy, financial knowledge is an essential survival tool. Family instability, increased foreclosure risks, and decreased equity in homes and local businesses threaten lower-income rural communities (Woodstock Institute, 2000)³.

The number of businesses failing with a loss to one or more creditors decreased annually from 1988 through 1994 but has increased annually since 1995. Wyoming's economy is resource dependent. While agriculture and the extractive industries always will be important, the future of Wyoming communities depends upon the economic diversity and sustainability of its business climate and its people.

The university's 1999 to 2004 UW Academic Plan recommends that UW CES expand its role in community resources and economic development. This mission and visibility in local communities will require greater citizen involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating extension programs. UW CES plays a unique role in addressing certain issues because it is the only outreach arm of the university located in every county.

Goal: Enhance Wyoming communities and the financial well-being of households through relevant integrated educational and resource management programs.

Objective: Community issues will be addressed using a multidisciplinary educational approach.

Justification: Rural areas are more isolated from knowledge sources and often lack the information necessary to make economic decisions due to their smaller populations and more specialized economic base. External forces affect Wyoming communities, as well. As the federal government gives more responsibility to states and state governments pass it to counties, problem solving and decision making will be vested at the community level. The need for a knowledgeable citizenry coincides with a responsibility to maintain economic, familial, and community integrity. Each community must decide whether and how it wants to seek economic growth and development.

The Wyoming Business Plan and Steering Committee notes that per capita income growth statewide from 1994 to 1996 was less than 60 percent of the national average. While neighboring states enjoyed a 13 percent job growth rate, Wyoming lagged behind with only an 8 percent growth rate. In a 2001 study of new business formation conducted by Wyoming Department of Employment, the survival rate of start-up businesses after four years in business with the same owner(s) was 37.1 percent⁴. The national average was 47.3 percent (SBA, 1998)⁵. Wyoming communities must diversify their economies to provide a solid base for the future. This can be accomplished through multidisciplinary, system-wide approaches that yield long-term, positive results when dealing with change.

Strategies:

- Identify emerging local and state issues and develop multidisciplinary teams to address these concerns through community collaboration and education programs.
- Assist state and community leaders in planning for demographic, population, and related policy changes.
- Provide leadership in educating Wyoming's community leaders, individuals, and households to better address issues affecting them.
- Analyze economic situations and policy changes to determine the economic impacts on local, county, and regional economies.

Outcomes:

- Greater partnerships and collaboration within communities.
- Improved problem-solving abilities through increased decision-making, leadership, and problem resolution skills in community leaders, youth leaders, and the volunteer support base.
- Economically strengthened communities through integrated, multidisciplinary approaches.

Objective: Decision-makers and enterprises will gain expertise to make better economic decisions, diversify economic activities, manage resources, and develop effective financial plans.

Justification: Managing agricultural businesses and household finances offers some unique and complex challenges. Income is irregular and uncertain and often includes other in-kind benefits. The farm, ranch, and home competing for surplus cash and household expenditures are often co-mingled with business expenses. Agricultural households find it difficult to manage family finances because of the large expenses required to sustain the family agricultural business. The majority of limited-resource ranch households rely heavily on additional off-farm and ranch income. Although many rural people have skills

and talents that could potentially generate income, they often do not have the information that can help them to develop economically viable alternative enterprises. New technologies and the change from an industrial-based economy to a service- and information-based economy have dramatically increased opportunities for micro-enterprises and home-based businesses. These businesses are recognized as viable income-generating opportunities.

Strategies:

- Deliver educational programs in enterprise development, including micro-enterprises, home-based businesses, and agricultural financial management, designed to teach how to establish and maintain an economically viable business enterprise and develop decision-making skills.
- Develop and support youth entrepreneurship and incorporate it into existing programs.
- Utilize all media outlets to increase residents' understanding of economics and the role of individuals, households, businesses, and institutions in building and maintaining a strong economy.
- Deliver educational programs in developing alternative enterprises.
- Deliver educational programs and training in integrated management designed to assist people in efficient resource management and alternative uses of existing resources.

Outcomes:

- Improved business management skills, resulting in decisions that contribute to a sustainable, diverse economy.
- Fostered entrepreneurial spirit in youth that can improve Wyoming employment possibilities and retain young people to fuel the economy.
- Traditional agricultural enterprises will complement economic diversity.
- Improved viability of existing businesses to compete at the national and/or global level.
- Improved economic opportunities for alternative agricultural household incomes.
- Increased opportunities for sustainable community development.

Objective: Increase Wyoming residents' knowledge and understanding of consumer and household economic issues by offering educational programs that focus on lifelong financial management and decision-making skills.

Justification: The 1997 UW College of Agriculture Strategic Plan states that with the changes in family structure and educational systems, traditional sources of knowledge and skills basic to independent living are decreasing. Financial education is a necessity for reducing poverty. Low-income households are challenged by lack of basic financial skills. People with limited resources are often unprepared for handling financial emergencies. As available credit increases, many lower-income households have access to credit but lack the knowledge to handle debt. Income inequity among Wyoming households has

increased since the 1970s. An analysis of income disparities by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute (January 2000)⁶ documented Wyoming as one of 18 states with large income gaps between the top fifth and the poorest fifth of families. Wyoming showed the largest gap—more than \$5,600. The poverty rate in Wyoming increased from 7.9 percent in 1980 to 12.1 percent in 1998 (Census Bureau, 2000)⁷. Credit card debt results in households that are more vulnerable to economic downturns, credit problems, and bankruptcy.

In some Wyoming communities, access to research-based, unbiased financial information and education is limited. Education for individuals at all income levels and at all stages of life is crucial for basic independent living, as well as quality of life enhancement.

Strategies:

- Deliver educational programs in agricultural and household financial management, including low-income financial management and youth and young adult financial management programs, designed to develop solid decision-making skills.
- Deliver educational programs and unbiased information to assist individuals in becoming smart consumers and making wise purchases.
- Use all media outlets to increase residents' understanding of economics and the role of individuals, households, businesses, and institutions in building and maintaining a strong economy.

Outcomes:

- Improved financial behavior and resource management skills will result in decisions that contribute to a sustainable economy.
- Improved consumer awareness, savings, and spending habits will increase net wealth and financial well-being of Wyoming households.
- Reduced personal debt will strengthen the economic security of Wyoming households.
- Improved decision-making skills.

Notes

1. Wyoming Legislature. Steering Committee for Business Development. 1997. *Vision for a New Economic Future: A Business Development Plan for Wyoming*. Cheyenne, WY: n.p.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. 2001. *Agricultural Income and Finance Situation and Outlook*. Food and Rural Economics Division. AIS-76.
3. Jacob, K., Hudson, S. and Bush, M. 2000. *Tools for Survival: An Analysis of Financial Literacy Programs for Lower-Income Families*. Chicago, IL: Woodstock Institute.

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5. U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. 1999. *The State of Small Business: A Report of the President, 1998*. Washington, DC: GPO.
6. Bernstein, J., McNichol, E., Mishel, L., and Zahradnik, R. 2000. "State Income Inequality Continued to Grow in Most States in the 1990s, Despite Economic Growth and Tight Labor Markets." *Pulling Apart: A State-by-State Analysis of Income Trends*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute and Center on Budget and Policy Priority.
7. U.S. Census Bureau. 2002. "Percent of Persons in Poverty, by State." *Poverty 1995* [web page, cited July 2002], www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/pov95/statepov.html.

Educational Model and Organizational Leadership

Rationale

If UW CES is to be effective, it must prioritize mission areas and focus its efforts. For more than 50 years, UW CES has been involved in diverse program areas, expanding beyond its initial audiences and mandates. At times, both supporters and critics of the organization have expressed dismay that UW CES has unrealistically tried to be “all things to all people.” It is a concern that since resources are limited, the organization might spread itself so thin that it would lack the depth and focus required for significant long-term impact in important areas. This problem appears acute in times of declining resources.

Nearly every aspect of the human experience is changing. Family and social structures are in flux. Political boundaries are blurring. Economies are global, and technology is obliterating many of the obstacles formerly posed by time and distance. UW CES is looking toward an organizational structure change to improve the quality of educational programs and the effectiveness of problem solving in a dynamic world.

The twentieth century model of UW CES served Wyoming residents well in a simpler era—when the state was establishing its basic economy and infrastructure, when exchange of goods and services was more local, when travel and communication were more restricted. To be relevant and effective in the twenty-first century, UW CES’ organizational structure must reflect the complexity of today’s issues. Problems are seldom bound by a single academic discipline, nor are they constrained by county and state lines. Accordingly, UW CES must respond to complex problems with integrated, multidisciplinary teams that work across county lines.

Cooperative Extension Service’s unique strength comes from its grass-roots beginning—a presence in every county—and UW CES remains committed to community-based educational programming. Addressing Wyoming residents’ educational needs will continue to serve as the cornerstone of the organization. The ideal structural model allows educators to develop the specialized knowledge to address the challenges of Wyoming residents and communities, while maintaining a connectedness to every citizen of the state. It addresses mission area initiatives in each community and minimizes travel and other non-program time losses. This model fosters educator and specialist responsiveness to community needs and challenges. And finally, the ideal structural model provides an open door to the university and its resources in each community of the state.

A “horizontal” organizational structure that emphasizes teams and subject matter integration and de-emphasizes hierarchy and fragmentation is needed. Programming should be concentrated on priorities where UW CES efforts will produce the greatest results. Following is the proposed UW CES structural model, which is built on existing strengths and provides for the interests of the three-way federal, state, and county partnership. The organizational structure requires UW CES educators to serve clientele across county lines and participate in regional or statewide team efforts. It encourages educators to work in areas where they have specialized training and experience and to develop one or two focus areas where they will have the greatest impact. Field educators will be actively involved in one or more of the regional, multidisciplinary program teams. Administrative structure also will change. Although the need still exists for budget oversight, personnel appraisal, and interaction with partners and clientele groups, much of the program leadership will be placed in the hands of teams, consisting of clients, field personnel, specialists, and administrators.

Educational Model and Field Organization

The traditional extension programming model placed two university extension educators (UEEs) in each county, one working in agriculture and the other in family and consumer sciences. Each educator served as a generalist and dealt with a broad variety of issues. As issues have become more complex, it has become difficult to address all problems from a general foundation. Constrained not in aspiration but by reasonable financial expectations, the following structural model is proposed for UW CES.

County and Community Presence: UW CES will have an office in each county. The office will be staffed by a minimum of two educators. One of these educators will focus on 4-H and Youth Development, the other on one or more of the other four initiatives. The 4-H and Youth Development Program will be county focused and organized; however, the other four program initiatives will be addressed by educators working in multicounty extension areas. This new structure organizes the state into nine multicounty extension areas. Educators will specialize in various initiatives and work across county boundaries within each multicounty extension area. For the greatest organizational impact, educators will work in initiative areas where they have specialized training and experience.

4-H and Youth Development Educators: The 4-H and Youth Development Initiative will be county developed and county focused. As a result, one position will be dedicated to developing the 4-H and Youth Development Program within each county. UW CES will fund half this county 4-H and youth development position. Most counties currently fund at least half of a 4-H and youth position to make this a full-time position. All counties will be invited and encouraged to provide the funding to make this a full-time position.

In most counties, UW CES currently shares the cost of youth program associates and educators. If a county is willing to fully support one full-time 4-H and youth development position, then the half-time state support for 4-H and youth development in that county may be dedicated to another initiative area, determined in consultation with the county government and area advisory teams.

Area Educators: Educators working in the other four initiatives (Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Systems, Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources, Nutrition and Food Safety, and Enhancing Wyoming Communities and Households) will provide educational programming in initiative foci within each of the nine extension areas. This will allow these educators to specialize to a greater extent and build more depth into educational programs. A minimum of one area educator will be located in each of the counties and on the Wind River Indian Reservation. Area and county needs will determine the initiative foci of educators located in each particular county. Approximately 15 percent of each area educator's time will be spent on 4-H and youth programming within his or her initiative foci and extension area. County government may provide additional area educators if needed.

The UW CES extension areas with the associated minimum complement of UW funded educators are:

- Hot Springs, Park, Big Horn, and Washakie Counties: 5 area educators and 4 4-H educators (one per county)
- Sublette, Lincoln, and Teton Counties: 4 area educators and 3 4-H educators (one per county)
- Fremont County and Wind River Indian Reservation: 3 area educators and 2 4-H educators (one per county)
- Uinta and Sweetwater Counties: 3 area educators and 2 4-H educators (one per county)
- Carbon and Albany Counties: 3 area educators and 2 4-H educators (one per county)
- Goshen, Platte, and Laramie Counties: 4 area educators and 3 4-H educators (one per county)
- Niobrara, Converse, and Natrona Counties: 4 area educators and 3 4-H educators (one per county)

- Johnson and Sheridan Counties: 3 area educators and 2 4-H educators (one per county)
- Campbell, Crook, and Weston Counties: 4 area educators and 3 4-H educators (one per county)

County Extension Coordinator: One educator located in each county will serve as the county extension coordinator. One of the area educators or the 4-H and youth development educator in the county will carry county coordinator responsibilities.

Each county will be staffed with a minimum of two educators. The 4-H and Youth Development Initiative will be addressed at the county level and one educator will be assigned to 4-H and youth development programming in each county. At least one area educator will be assigned to address one or more of the other four initiatives and will work within the extension area but across county lines. A county coordinator will administer the Cooperative Extension program in each county. A more specific description of the duties and responsibilities of these positions is contained later in this plan.

Specialists: In fall 2000, UW CES had about 24 full-time equivalent (FTE) specialist positions. (There are 24 positions spread among approximately 40 faculty and academic professionals). To provide funds for items such as area educator travel and expense, training and retooling of personnel, and increased technology demands, the number of campus-based specialists will be reduced by four FTEs, (from 24 to 20 FTEs) and the number of other extension-funded departmental staff will be reduced by two FTEs within the College of Agriculture. In addition to balancing state specialist and educator staffing, these personnel changes should be guided by program initiative priorities and reflect the focus and objectives of these initiatives. Each UW CES specialist will devote from 5 to 15 percent of his or her time to 4-H and youth development programming.

Program Leadership

In most cases, the previous UW CES model put program leadership in the hands of a single program leader assigned to statewide oversight for all UW CES programming. In other cases, three or four program leaders were each responsible for a core programming area.

The proposed model establishes a program leadership system that rests with area- and state-level teams. Since issue and education needs are seldom simple or of a single disciplinary nature, teams provide the interdisciplinary vision and range of expertise to develop the creative and comprehensive programming necessary to address complex issues.

Extension Area Teams: County educators, area educators, and the associate director (ex-officio) in each extension area comprise an extension area team. Area team responsibilities are:

- Education needs assessment within the extension area
- Program development and implementation
- Educational program evaluation
- Providing impact and accomplishment reports to state initiative teams

These teams will appoint or elect a chair and hold regular meetings, providing administrative updates and in-depth discussion of area issues programming. Team interaction will provide an opportunity for educational program planning and development of area-specific programs within initiatives.

State Initiative Teams: A separate team will be developed for each of the five program initiatives. State initiative teams will consist of UW department heads who supervise specialists within the initiative area, one area educator from each multicounty area, two specialists within the initiative area, and, potentially,

clientele representatives. The UW CES director, associate director, or other UW CES administrator will participate in an advisory/ex-officio role on this committee.

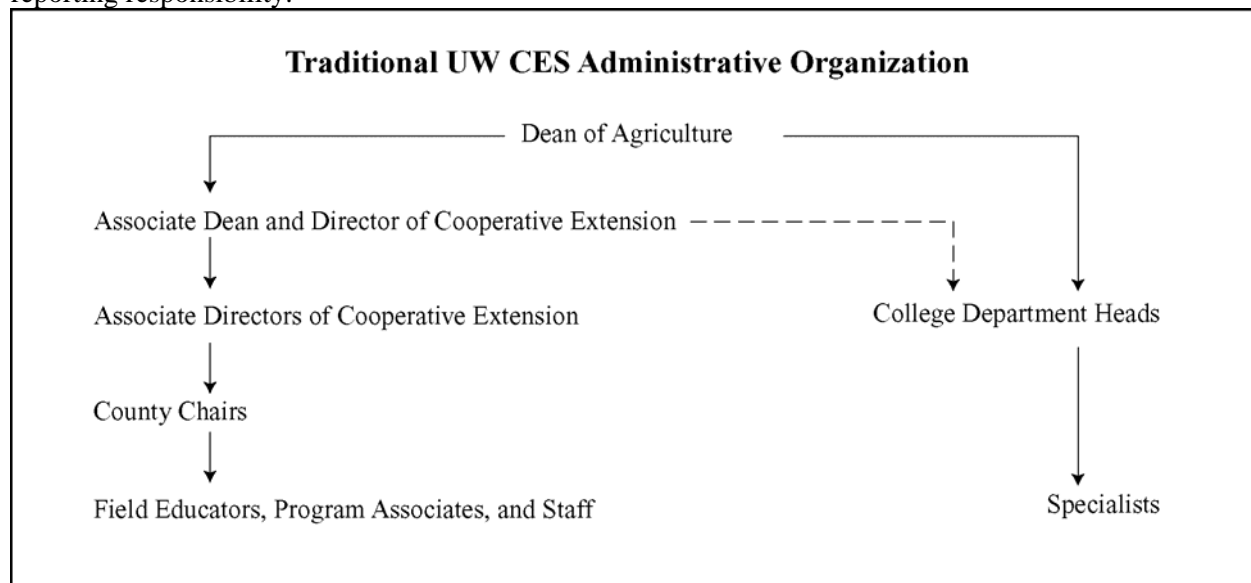
The committee leadership, accountability, and coordination will be administered by a chairperson elected by committee members for a two- to three-year term. This chairperson will change his or her job description to reflect the added duties and responsibilities of team leadership. The revisions in job description and duties will be taken into account on annual performance appraisals and during consideration of advancement and salary adjustments.

Issue Teams: Needs that require rapid response or proactive planning will emerge. When emerging issues affect major UW CES clientele groups and when UW CES has resources and expertise that can be used for the purpose, issue teams may be formed to address educational programming needs associated with the issue. Such issue teams may be formed by existing state initiative teams or may be created across initiative lines. Issue teams may be of short- or long-term duration, depending upon the nature of the issue. Cross-initiative teams will be approved by the director and/or associate director and will report to the director and/or a designated individual and the initiative team involved with the educational effort. Cross-initiative teams will receive administrative oversight and resource support from the director or a designated individual as needed and/or available.

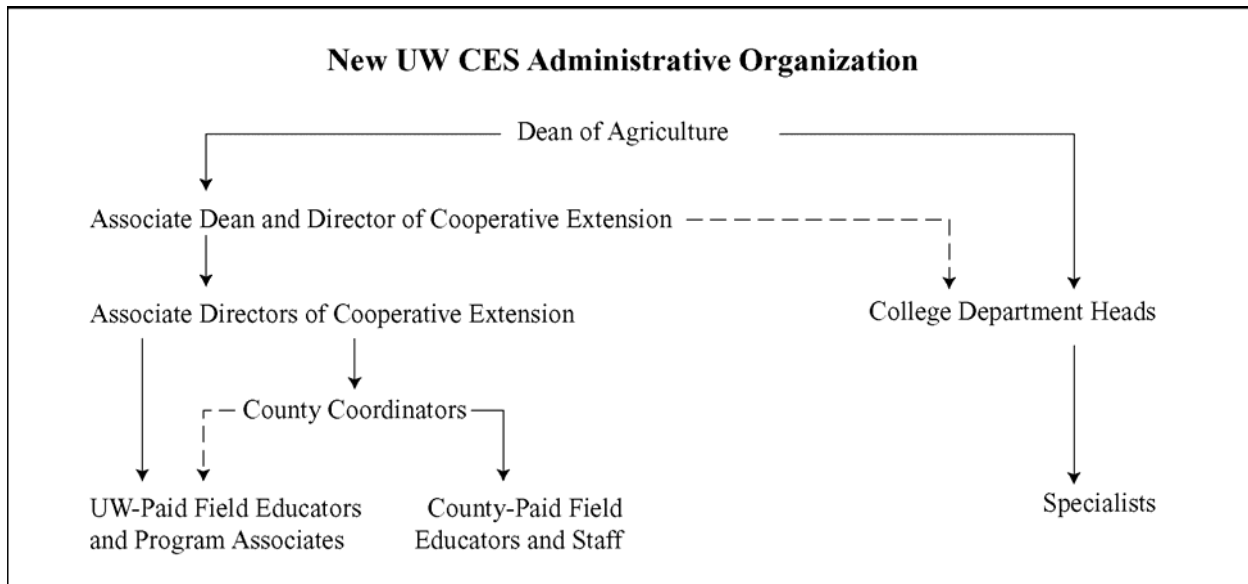
State Coordinating Committee: A State Coordinating Committee will be developed to provide guidance to the director in resource allocation among state initiative teams and other issues. This committee will be comprised of the chairs from each of the initiative teams.

Administration and Leadership

The traditional administrative model for UW CES is characterized in the organizational chart below. The solid arrows represent formal reporting and supervisory relationships. The dashed arrows represent working and oversight relationships without supervision. In the traditional model, the field educators, program associates, and staff are supervised by county chairs, who are, in turn, supervised by the associate directors. The associate directors report to the director and the director reports to the dean of agriculture. The specialists report to the department heads, who, in turn, report to the dean. There is a collaborative working relationship between the director of extension and department heads but no formal reporting responsibility.



Under the new administrative model (characterized below), educators and program associates who are university employees report to an associate director. Field educators, program associates, and staff who are county employees report to their county coordinator. Associate directors supervise county coordinators. County coordinators have a close working relationship to other educators working in the county program because they have responsibility to organize and oversee the county extension program. The supervisory patterns for specialists are unchanged from the traditional model. The responsibilities associated with each position in the administrative organization are described later in this plan.



Positions, Responsibilities, and Duties

County 4-H and Youth Development Educator: With the increasing need for youth programming beyond the traditional 4-H program, the title for all UW CES youth offices and personnel will be 4-H and Youth Development. 4-H will remain a basic part of the youth development effort. The county 4-H and youth development educator position may be held by a program associate or UEE, but usually will be held by a program associate.

County 4-H and youth development position responsibilities include:

- Coordinate the county 4-H program
- Deliver educational programs in 4-H and youth development
- Participate on state and area program teams

Area Extension Educators: Multicounty area educators will assume programming responsibilities within the other four UW CES program initiatives:

Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Systems
 Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources
 Enhancing Wyoming Communities and Households
 Nutrition and Food Safety

Generally, area educators will be designated to not more than two foci within initiative programming assignments. Each initiative may have several foci. Area educators and administrators will carefully consider needs when determining which initiative foci to staff within an extension area. Area extension educators will be primarily responsible for the program initiatives assigned within their extension area; however, they also will have responsibilities on state initiative teams and the State Coordinating Committee. An associate director will supervise area educators, and program leadership will come from leadership teams.

Because area extension educators have a more specialized role than traditional county educators, their responsibilities lie somewhere between county educators and state program specialists. They will work primarily within the multicounty extension areas and may work across area boundaries when issues and programs dictate that cross-area programming best addresses community needs and when resources are available. Area educators will be responsible for directing programs toward both youth and adult audiences. Area educator functions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Interfacing with researchers to provide contemporary information to area clientele
- Interfacing with state extension specialists, receiving training and information from state extension specialists, and bringing newfound knowledge to educational programs in response to clientele needs
- Interfacing with other area educators, state specialists, clientele groups, etc., in assessing the needs and issues of communities and counties for which he or she has programming responsibilities; developing and delivering programs in response to those needs and issues
- Providing subject matter training within area of expertise
- Assisting clientele with timely, accurate information and education as feasible, given resource constraints
- Providing program leadership and oversight for area and local programs in his or her area of expertise and interest
- Coordinating, marketing, and evaluating programs
- Addressing “immediate” educational needs of clientele in accordance with state initiatives (walk-and call-in traffic)
- Providing university outreach functions
- Working in conjunction with area and state teams to identify and facilitate implementation of educational programs in initiatives priorities

Area extension educators will be responsible for the program foci they are specifically assigned to within their extension area. They also will have responsibilities on area and state initiative and issues teams. As compared to a county assignment, an area educator assignment implies added travel and programming challenges. In recognition of this, area educators will receive a stipend equal to the county coordinator’s stipend. No individual, regardless of assignment, may receive more than one stipend.

Area Educator Travel and Program Considerations: Travel, expenses, and program delivery costs within counties will be largely the responsibility of the county that receives the programming. However, UW will provide some funding for travel between counties within extension areas. General overhead costs for the area educator (paper, telephone, office space, secretarial support, etc.) will be the responsibility of the county where the area educator is housed. Initial implementation of area educator positions will require the frequency of required cross-county travel to be examined.

In most instances, area educators will not be required to travel to counties within their areas on a weekly basis. Nor do area educators need to split their weeks evenly among the counties in their area. The county that houses the area educator will serve as a “home base,” with travel to other counties determined by

educational program needs. Area educators will not be provided an office in each county. Some initiative areas may require more travel during peak times of the year, i.e., horticultural area educators may need to be in area counties more frequently during summer months to respond to questions and samples brought to county offices.

Fundamental changes in educational opportunities, coupled with the rapid and ever-increasing media accessibility, require a move from instructor-generated models to learner-centered educational programs. Some extension educators see themselves as educators, while others view themselves as information providers. Extension must encompass both education and information-giving to establish successful learning partnerships. As programming is focused within the five initiatives, greater emphasis on in-depth program delivery should be implemented.

Area educators who work with specialists and other area educators on the same initiative team may develop curriculum, program materials, and evaluation plans, in addition to program delivery methods. Area educators may serve as facilitators when working with local professionals to provide information. Educational programs may be delivered using a variety of traditional and distance education methods that include on-site teaching, videotapes, computer video conferences, compressed video conferences, online courses, and telephone conferences. Questions from clients can be answered by using:

- A toll-free UW phone number that can be forwarded to the appropriate area educator
- E-mail to area educators
- Digital cameras that transmit images of samples electronically for visual inspection
- Telephone calls from county to county
- Fax-on-demand and interactive Web technologies that can optimize effectiveness, as well as offer time- and distance-related efficiencies

Educational programs should be delivered to groups within counties. Because it may not be feasible to work with small groups in all initiative areas, area programs on major issues may be held in a central location.

The university will provide a pool of funds to each extension area team equal to \$1,000 per area educator for travel between counties but within extension areas. The area team will assess initiative needs and allocate funds based on those needs. An additional \$750 per area educator will be held system-wide for area educator travel. The State Coordinating Team will work with the director to allocate those funds among program initiatives and extension areas.

County Extension Coordinator: The county coordinator is an assignment rather than an administrative appointment. County coordinators shall be assigned for an indefinite term based on annual evaluation and/or extended term renewal, as is the case with other field-based positions. The county coordinator has supervisory responsibility for clerical employees and other county staff. The associate directors will supervise university extension educators and university program associates.

County coordinators will be selected and assigned in much the same way county chairs are selected now. The director or associate director will solicit the interest of university extension educators and program associates in the county. Generally, program associates may be eligible for the county extension coordinator assignment after two years with UW CES. Then, the director or associate director will seek input from the county commissioners (or other public officials and clientele if the circumstance warrants). The director or associate director will assign the county extension coordinator responsibilities to one of the individuals under consideration. County extension coordinators will receive the same administrative stipend currently received by county chairs. The responsibilities of the county coordinators will include

acting as an area educator or county 4-H and youth development staff member and as a liaison between the county and UW CES (budgetary and commissioner interaction). When appropriate, county coordinators also will supervise county-paid staff and volunteers and link clientele and UW faculty.

Program Associates: It is the responsibility of the program associate to provide educational programming at the local or county level under the direction and oversight of a university extension educator or administrator. It is the responsibility of the UEE or administrator to direct needs assessment, provide program development expertise, and serve as a source of technical information. The program associate is responsible for delivery and operational organization of the program in question. Program associates will:

- Bring current and ongoing research results to clientele programs
- Interface with counterparts, extension educators, area educators, and state specialists as needed to develop progressive programming, using packaged program materials where appropriate
- Provide subject-matter training to volunteers and others on particular programs and delivery as needed
- Collaborate with other program associates, educators, field staff, and agency personnel on programs and projects as appropriate
- Assist clientele with timely, accurate information, given resource constraints
- Contribute to area-wide and local educational programs and initiatives as appropriate and feasible

The lack of a career path that would encourage program associates to progress to university extension educators is a significant concern for UW CES and those working as program associates. A committee will be organized and charged to address educational and career path opportunities for program associates.

Job descriptions between program associates and UEEs show a progression of increased responsibilities. Program associates will be supervised in the same manner as UEEs, except in 100 percent county-funded positions, which will be supervised by county extension coordinators.

Department Heads: Department heads will participate in the state initiative teams as part of their UW CES appointments. As team members, department heads will provide technical expertise, perceptions, and experience in extension resource allocation for educational programming. Department heads will serve as liaisons between their departments, UW CES, specialists, clientele, and university faculty. These individuals will provide administration, supervision, and evaluation of state program specialists.

State Program Specialists: State program specialists are College of Agriculture academic professionals and faculty who have a subject matter expertise and focus. A portion of their job description is assigned to UW CES programming. Such specialists will serve as members of program initiative teams and provide program development, delivery, and evaluation.

The specialists' clientele include: Wyoming citizens, educators, field staff, UW faculty, other state and regional specialists, and national program leaders. State specialist duties include the following:

- Interfacing with researchers to understand and assist with current and ongoing research projects
- Bringing current and ongoing research results into clientele programs, extension bulletins, and/or popular press articles as appropriate, with the overall goal of developing a better-informed clientele
- Interfacing with regional counterparts and national program leaders to forward program

initiatives, as well as educational programs that address national priorities, while using “already developed” program materials where appropriate

- Providing subject-matter training to educators, field staff, and interested others on specific techniques or concepts and/or national and regional issues as needed
- Collaborating with other specialists, educators, and field staff on programs and projects as appropriate, including off-campus research with field educators
- Assisting clientele with timely, accurate information as feasible, given resource constraints
- Providing program leadership and oversight for initiative programs as they arise or are necessary in an area of expertise
- Contributing to statewide and regional educational programs and initiatives as appropriate

Job descriptions should be written so that specialists with split appointments will be accountable for UW CES duties and will be required to fulfill them. Program teams will be an integral part of specialists’ job descriptions. State program specialists should have a minimum of 33 percent UW CES appointment. Three-way assignments (teaching, research, and extension) seldom work well, and it is recommended that such appointments be avoided whenever possible.

Funds will be set aside to contract specialists in initiative or critical short-term issue areas. Those specialists who are deemed to be of a long-term or permanent need may be hired in a faculty track. Monies currently used for partial faculty appointments (from which UW CES is not receiving the necessary support or input for specific initiative objective programming) shall be moved into a fund to finance specialists on contract. Such positions shall be based on a periodic (three to five year) renewal if performance and need dictates.

4-H and Youth Initiative Leadership: The 4-H and Youth Development Initiative will be led by a 4-H and youth development program coordinator who will be located on the UW campus. The duties of the coordinator include acting as a liaison between UW CES campus activities and youth programs in the field, program coordination, policy and liability issues, and service to the 4-H and Youth Development State Initiative Team. Program and resource development will be handled in conjunction with the 4-H and Youth Development State Initiative Team. In addition, at least half of the coordinator’s time will be devoted to state youth specialist responsibilities. 4-H and youth development specialists and county youth educators with more than one-half FTE of state support will provide state specialist support for the state 4-H and Youth Development Initiative.

Coordinators and Operational Specialists: These are reconfigured, but not necessarily new, positions. UW CES coordinators are as follows:

- 4-H and Youth Program Coordinator and Program Specialist (campus)
- 4-H Foundation and Grants Coordinator (campus)
- Communications Coordinator (campus)
- Staff Development and Federal Relations Coordinator (campus)

The responsibilities of the coordinators may include:

- Overseeing their specific areas
- Supervising their units
- Coordinating related activities
- Supporting, cooperating, and interacting with the UW CES director and field staff

It is obvious from strategic analysis and from internal and external input that there is a critical need for UW CES to improve its efforts and efficiency in marketing itself and making its programs and services clear to the public. This is necessary not only on a statewide basis, but for individual educators and specific programs. Many UW CES clients and much of the general public do not have a clear understanding of what the organization has to offer or what it does. Consequently, the director will investigate the most efficient method to meet this need. This may include, but not be restricted to, reconfiguring existing personnel and job descriptions, hiring new personnel, and/or contracting for services. The director will determine whether such personnel shall be part of the Office of Communications and Technology or report directly to the director.

It is also clear that services are required to assist UW CES in moving forward in technological services, both internally and in customer service. It is incumbent on the organization to become as efficient as possible in the use of technology, while at the same time doing its best to stay on the forward curve of the quickly changing technological picture. This move will require leadership from someone who is intimately knowledgeable in the field and has the talent to move an entire organization forward technologically. As in marketing, it shall be the responsibility of the director to investigate the technological leadership. This may include, but not be restricted to, reconfiguring existing personnel and job descriptions, hiring new personnel, and/or contracting for services. The director will determine whether such personnel shall be part of the Office of Communications and Technology or report directly to the director.

Grant writing and use of soft money to fund major portions of university operations have become standard practice. The strategic planning process illuminated the fact that many UW CES personnel and a large portion of clientele feel UW CES must be more active and successful in pursuing and obtaining grant funds. It also became clear that many field personnel do not have the time, training, or experience to be aware of the various granting sources; they are not skilled in writing grant applications or administering the grants when received. A grants coordinator would assist UW CES personnel in keeping abreast of grant sources and help with grant writing and administration. The person in this position would probably be the central grant writer in obtaining funds for UW CES, but it is expected that the majority of grants will be sought and obtained by initiative, issue, and area teams; field personnel; and program specialists. It is anticipated that such a position would return more to UW CES within the first two years than the cost of the position, either through direct grant writing or assistance to other UW CES personnel.

Associate Directors: There will be two associate directors whose primary responsibilities include:

- Personnel administration and supervision. The associate directors shall have direct administrative supervision of all area and county UEE personnel within their respective areas.
- Sharing responsibilities with the director for state operations, program liaison, and administrative oversight of UW CES in general.

Director: The state director will be responsible for:

- Organization
- External relations
- Campus relations
- Federal relations and accountability
- Associate dean duties
- Liaison with the College of Agriculture
- Planning, program liaison

- Budget
- General oversight of personnel
- State operations

The director may assign these and other duties to the associate directors and/or the federal relations coordinator as needed or as is expedient.

Plan for Transition

Area Teams and Assignments: The delivery model outlined in this plan suggests a different way of addressing clientele needs. Out of necessity, current educator and staff position descriptions and responsibilities will change. It is to be expected that this will require a period of transition and adjustment. Individual responsibilities within extension areas are of considerable importance to program quality concerns and individual educators. County youth assignments also may pose questions in some instances. Generally, it is anticipated that area teams will come to an agreement regarding initiative foci assignments within their respective extension areas. In circumstances where the area team is not able to resolve assignments by consensus, the associate director (working with the director) will make the decision. Regardless of the source of the decision, the degree credentials, experience, location, interest, and desire of the educator or program associate will be considered in position assignment.

When more than one employee expresses interest in an assignment, the employee not selected will be asked to accept another assignment. If more than one person is interested in an assignment and an alternate assignment is not possible, the director may allow an employee to work in an over-staffed location and program assignment until attrition reduces the FTEs in that area and assignment. Over-staffing in an extension area and program assignment will be considered a transitional circumstance with an expected duration of less than three years. Even so, it is hoped that resources will be available to provide more than the minimal number of UW funded-positions in each extension area.

Vacated positions will be advertised in accordance with the university and UW CES hiring practices, the structure and staffing model, and initiative issues and needs; they may be open for lateral transfer within the organization. An equitable and consistent system will be used to fill area and county positions. Job descriptions will be constructed to meet the needs of initiative programming. Area and initiative teams will provide input into position responsibilities and priorities.

As positions become available, resources will be reviewed and directed to meet initiative priorities and to facilitate flexibility and responsiveness. All educators, administrators, staff, faculty, and specialists will be expected to focus their efforts to fulfill initiative objectives. If training is necessary, personnel will need to develop a training plan in conjunction with the UW CES administration. The plan should enhance the employee's ability to further programming initiatives. Funds will be allocated as circumstances and budgets allow.

Partner Relations: UW CES will work closely with county commissioners, area advisory committees, and clientele to smoothly transition into this strategic plan.

Strategic Aspirations

The proposed staffing model meets the priorities of UW CES, and it can be implemented with current resources. This model provides personnel support that is comparable to current levels for a county-based 4-H program. Although staffing is not adequate to effectively address all of the initiatives in each

community, educators will provide minimal initiative coverage across the state. It is critical that UW CES acquire funding for additional staffing and support to more fully address the educational needs of clientele. As additional resources are attracted to UW CES from federal, university, state, county, or private sources, UW CES will grow in effect and value to Wyoming. Specialists and educators will aggressively work to attract soft funding to address local and statewide issues and, in so doing, leverage their contributions to the state.

UW CES Flexibility and Change

Structure must be flexible and re-evaluated regularly; therefore, it is not intended that this model be static or last forever. Future administration and UW CES planning committees must continue to examine the current structure to determine if educational needs can be addressed in a more efficient and productive manner, while retaining those items that continue to function well.

As state specialist and area educator positions open, the first source for evaluation and configuration of those positions should be the State Coordinating Committee and specific state initiative teams. In addition, information from needs assessments, as well as input from extension area advisory committees and other advisory groups, will provide the basis for decisions on position responsibilities and expectations. Guidelines will be developed as to whether resources should be used for hire or reallocated to other uses. If hiring is determined to be in the best interest of the organization, then a determination should be made as to the type and amount of FTE and assignment location.

Positions that receive UW CES support must return sufficient and useful products to UW CES operations and educational efforts. If this does not happen, lack of product return will be noted in performance appraisals and future resource allocations may be limited.

Internal and External Relations

Situation: Wyoming, like other states, is facing significant change. Issues, such as a reduced sense of community, aging and more diverse populations, widening economic disparities within communities and across the state, rural to urban shifts, concerns for environmental quality, and advances in science and technology, require that UW CES adapt its programming and delivery methods to address contemporary needs. Assessment of state, regional, community, and individual needs will shape educational programming. UW CES values the people of Wyoming and, as a service organization, client satisfaction is a top priority.

Communication technologies are rapidly evolving, offering new opportunities for expanding public access to information. If UW CES is to remain an effective link between relevant, research-based information and the citizens of Wyoming, it is imperative that the organization takes a leadership role in applying technology and information systems to lifelong education. Substantial resource commitments are necessary to remain current with changing technologies and delivery systems.

Competition for limited resources and public demand for greater accountability has increased with the expansion of publicly supported programs. UW CES must position itself to compete, to address high-priority issues, and to be accountable to each funding source in order to seek and maintain future dollars. Extension will build trust, establish new relationships, develop collaborations, and take the lead in making connections within the university and throughout the state. Avenues to increase visibility, promote educational programs, reach more diverse audiences, and report program impacts must be explored.

Goal: Ensure that Wyoming residents, the College of Agriculture, and the greater university recognize UW CES as a primary source of credible, applicable, research-based information.

Objective: UW CES will acknowledge Wyoming residents as clients pursuing knowledge and lifelong learning opportunities. Our clientele can expect programs that are timely, reliable, accurate, and practical through open and easy access to UW resources.

Justification: Competition in the marketplace is as real for UW CES as it is for a grocery store chain or a car dealership. Extension clientele have many educational options from which to choose such as information on the Web, professionally written books and periodicals, and dynamic trainings offered by private businesses. The quality of the service received makes an organization stand apart from the competition. A 1985 Research Institute of America study showed that 96 percent of unhappy customers never complain, but 90 percent of that group will never do business with the organization again¹. Each of these dissatisfied customers share his or her bad experience with at least nine other people. To effectively carry out its mission, UW CES must make client satisfaction a top priority.

Strategies:

- Serve as front-line offices for the University of Wyoming, ensuring that residents of the state have easy access to university information.
- Use existing links with 4-H, FFA, FHA, and other youth organizations to play an important role in university outreach.
- Provide up-to-date, high-quality public interest publications.
- Provide customer service training to personnel.

Outcomes:

- Increased audience size and enhanced UW CES image through emphasis on customer satisfaction.
- Enhanced UW image by UW CES serving as front-line offices for UW and promoting easy accessibility to the state's residents.
- Increased UW student enrollment numbers due to recruitment from 4-H youth programming.

Objective: UW CES will develop and deliver programs that address the recognized needs of a changing society, acknowledging the necessity for variation in program delivery in different parts of the state. An approach that emphasizes asking, listening, and serving is necessary to carry out the UW CES mission.

Justification: Wyoming residents and communities face challenges from economic, cultural, and social change. Although considered a rural state, 70 percent of Wyoming's population is classified as urban. The median age of Wyoming residents is forecast to increase by the year 2008, with 13 percent of the state's population predicted to be over the age of 65 and 40 percent predicted to be over the age of 45². The percentage of Wyoming's population living in poverty has increased during recent years to almost 13 percent (State of Wyoming Division of Economic Analysis, February 2002)³. UW CES must be sensitive to these changes and adapt its programming to address the needs of Wyoming's citizens.

Strategies:

- Develop a staff open to the diverse needs of varied audiences.
- Organize staff development programs to promote teamwork and build the leadership capabilities of the organization.
- Evaluate the current evaluation system to ensure that it provides appropriate incentives to meet organizational goals and that it encourages teamwork. In addition, it must not be too time consuming.
- Conduct comprehensive needs assessments and, using regional advisory boards, identify programming priorities.
- Make educational programming equally accessible to all citizens.
- Organize extension area advisory boards (one for each extension area) to advise UW CES on area needs and help guide the program.
- Request that the Wyoming County Commissioner Association form an extension committee to provide partners' advice to UW CES on the statewide extension program.
- Work directly with extension area advisory boards, county commissioners, and other agencies to ensure that community extension needs are met and that our programs do not duplicate those provided by other agencies or organizations. Preventing duplication is critical to enhanced innovation and creativity in programming.

Outcomes:

- A diverse staff that will extend the value of UW CES educational programming, resulting in attracting a broader, more varied audience.
- Local issues and needs will be more effectively addressed by working with advisory boards, thereby improving quality of life for Wyoming communities.

Objective: UW CES will utilize advanced communications technologies to deliver educational programs to Wyoming residents.

Justification: According to data from a Harris Interactive Survey, more than half of all American households report using a personal computer⁴. Of these PC users, 90 percent are connected online. Baby boomers and senior citizens have been identified as the fastest growing segment of the population making PC purchases and using the Internet. Rapidly evolving communication technologies offer new opportunities for expanding public access to education. The current state of Wyoming administration has stressed the importance of utilizing emerging technologies by making access to educational programs for all age groups a top priority. Compressed video, video conferencing, Internet bulletins, online courses, and virtual universities are all new avenues for expanding educational efforts. UW CES must take a leadership role in applying technology and information systems to lifelong education.

Strategies:

- Allow technology specialists to coordinate technology and educational delivery systems statewide.
- Develop a variety of program delivery methods that use advanced communications technologies.
- Commit resources to ensure that county and state offices keep pace with changing technologies.

Outcomes:

- Advanced communications technologies expand educational benefits throughout the state.
- Population reached by UW CES educational programming increases.
- Diverse audiences reached through easy access to information provided by UW CES.

Objective: UW CES will be recognized throughout the state as the premier provider of high-quality educational programs central to priority issues in Wyoming.

Justification: Lack of public awareness has been identified as a key issue facing UW CES. According to a 1996 survey conducted by Syndicated Research, Inc., 40 percent of all respondents surveyed were unaware of the existence of the Cooperative Extension Service⁵. Of those surveyed, 21 percent felt that UW CES programs lacked public awareness and needed promotion. UW CES must be able to communicate its educational message, promote itself, report on the impact of programs to clientele and funding sources, and be visible across the state (as well as within the greater university) in order to establish and maintain immediate recognition.

Strategies:

- Initiate a statewide marketing strategy that considers relevant information to develop a promotional campaign. This strategy may include developing a consistent look for all UW CES promotional materials.
- Provide marketing and public relations training and guidance for UW CES personnel.
- Communicate program impact information to all stakeholders.

Outcomes:

- UW CES will be highly visible across the state and commonly recognized for quality educational programming.
- Audience size will increase as more residents become aware of UW CES and utilize its lifelong educational opportunities.
- UW will be better served by increased visibility and availability.
- Funding sources will increase as the value and impact of UW CES educational programming is

recognized.

Objective: UW CES will explore alternative revenue sources to provide supplemental funds for educational programs.

Justification: UW CES faces shrinking revenues from traditional sources, while at the same time operational costs are increasing. The organization is currently using 86 percent of its budget for personnel, leaving little financial support for programming efforts, technology, travel, and professional development. UW CES needs to seek new funds from alternative sources.

Strategies:

- Utilize a grants coordinator to assist with finding project funds and program grants, as well as assisting teams, educators, and specialists in identifying and writing grants.
- Seek endowments to fund identified extension programs and/or positions.
- Explore the possibility of instituting user fees based on a cost-recovery model for programs, services, and goods.

Objective: UW CES will establish the strongest link possible between applied research and extension education.

Justification: Researchers benefit from UW CES and its clientele in assessing research needs, establishing links between researchers and potential cooperating producers, and efficiently disseminating research results. Extension and its clientele benefit from researchers and Research and Extension Centers when they generate practical knowledge and improve production and management. Many personnel at the Research and Extension Centers have extension appointments and, in many cases, serve as administrators at the centers.

Strategy:

- Increase coordination and cooperation between Research and Extension Centers and UW CES educators to improve the efficiency of personnel and other resources.

Outcomes:

- Improved efficiency in terms of personnel and other resources.
- Improved needs assessment and dissemination of research results.
- More inclusion of clientele.

Notes

1. Smith, J. 1994. *Marketing University Outreach Programs*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, Inc. p. 142.

2. Wyoming Division of Economic Analysis. 2002. "Wyoming Population Estimates and Forecasts." State of Wyoming [web page, cited July 2002], eadiv.state.wy.us/pop/pop.htm.
3. Wyoming Division of Economic Analysis. 2002. "Population, Income, Poverty Rate, and Health Insurance Status by State." Wyoming State Data Center Department of Administration and Information [web page, cited July 2002], eadiv.state.wy.us/wsd/wsd14.pdf.
4. "Half of U.S. Households use PCs." 2000. *Cyberatlas* [web page, cited July 2002], cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/demographics/article/0,,5901_301081,00.html.
5. Custom Syndicated Research, Inc. 1996. *Wyoming Information Sources Study*.

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