

Final Report of the Extension Strategic Staffing Steering Committee May 1, 2015

Background

In 2012 Florida Extension completed a long range plan, *Shaping Solutions for Florida's Future: The UF/IFAS Extension Roadmap 2013-2023*. This Roadmap focused our organization on the future and challenged us to remain relevant to Floridians through renewed commitment to our mission, vision, and fundamental values. As an organization that supports change through transformational educational programming, our future efforts must continue to provide high quality, relevant education and science-based expertise to solve Florida's contemporary problems, while documenting program impacts and remaining accountable to stakeholders, supporters, and funding agencies.

Our Extension Roadmap calls for us to identify and develop high-priority programs that address Florida's economic, social, and environmental issues; maximize organizational efficiency and effectiveness; invest in UF/IFAS Extension's human capital; increase visibility; and demonstrate the impact of UF/IFAS Extension. Teams are tackling the big issues contained within seven high priority initiatives by redefining programs and implementing new strategies to maximize impact.

The future of UF/IFAS Extension must be informed by a strategic approach to allocate the organization's human resources in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This approach should position our resources in a way that allows the most significant issues faced by our clientele – today and in the future – to be effectively addressed by expert teams using multifaceted strategies. Such an approach will ensure optimal use of resources and provide significant returns on investment through community and citizen impacts. Historically, vacant positions in Extension have typically been refilled in a way that continued the previous areas of focus. However, declining budgets in recent years have led to a net loss of Extension faculty at the county and state levels. These human resource challenges, in conjunction with the opportunities and needs associated with continuing changes in society, technology, and the agricultural and natural resource sectors, provided the context for the discussions of the Strategic Staffing Steering Committee.

The Committee fully embraced its charge from Dean Place to develop a proactive strategy for allocating Extension's current and future human resources in the most effective, efficient, and impactful way in the coming years. This charge was driven by the need for Extension's educational programs to provide meaningful solutions to general audiences and specialized clientele, while fulfilling our responsibility to optimally manage organizational resources at all levels. Dean Place asked the Committee to consider a number of specific topics as it pursued its work, including opportunities for:

- Advancing and strengthening faculty expertise;
- Ensuring high quality, recognized educational programs that demonstrate the scholarship of extension;
- Openly sharing faculty expertise throughout the organization;
- Re-examining all types of educator and county and district administrative positions;

- Better positioning Extension’s human resources for proactive programming to address emerging needs, while also being responsive to ongoing requests for assistance;
- Strengthening current partnerships, while seeking new opportunities for expanding funding for Extension;
- Enhancing the value of Extension in the eyes of stakeholders and policy makers;
- Proactively addressing Extension’s human resource needs in the future;
- Obtaining internal and external input on strategic staffing directions;
- Modifying salary models and clarifying the costs of Extension programming; and
- Increasing administrative efficiency and effectiveness in the organization.

Committee Procedures

The Committee held its initial meeting in late January 2014 and held seven additional meetings during the next 12 months, including three face-to-face meetings and two retreats at the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center in Apopka that each spanned portions of two days. The committee benefitted from the detailed summary notes of the UF/IFAS Extension Leadership Team Retreat held in May 2013. Recent staffing plans developed by Extension organizations in Maryland, Iowa, and Alabama were also examined. In addition, administrative approaches for evaluating county faculty as followed in five southern states (Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, and North Carolina) were reviewed.

While the Committee membership provided a broad and diverse set of perspectives on Extension and staffing considerations, input was also sought from UF/IFAS Extension faculty and unit leaders, as well as stakeholders. Online surveys were administered through Qualtrics for each audience. The purpose of these surveys was to gather feedback on the preliminary ideas under consideration by the Committee. The estimated response time was 15-20 minutes, depending on the extent to which the respondents provided comments on each section of the instrument. The first survey was sent in October 2014 to UF/IFAS department chairs, center directors, district Extension directors, county Extension directors, and all remaining state and county faculty and state Extension specialists. The number of respondents varied across the individual quantitative items on the questionnaire from 245 to 290. Ten comment boxes were provided at various points throughout the questionnaire, and the number of participants who entered comments in these boxes ranged from 45 to 158. A summary of the data from the UF/IFAS faculty survey can be found in Appendix C.

The Committee also felt that feedback on preliminary staffing ideas was needed from stakeholders. The questionnaire designed for UF/IFAS Extension employees was modified for this purpose. Two approaches were taken to gather this feedback with the online questionnaire. First, county Extension directors were asked to provide the questionnaire link to six key stakeholders in their counties. Suggested participants included members of their overall Extension advisory committee and others that represented the diverse needs and views of their clientele. In addition, all members of the UF/IFAS Regional Advisory Committees received an invitation to complete the questionnaire. Stakeholders received the questionnaire via email in January 2015. The number of stakeholder respondents varied across the individual quantitative items on the questionnaire from 190 to 207. Two

comment boxes were included in the stakeholder questionnaire, and the number of participants who entered comments in these boxes ranged from 113 to 128. A summary of the data from these stakeholders can be found in Appendix D.

Underlying Principles and Values

The overall goal of the Committee was to increase the value and impact of Florida Extension. We focused on the human resources needed to maintain fundamental strength, while also considering strategies for ensuring an even stronger and more valued Extension organization in the future. The work of the Committee was driven by the following principles and core values, which are also listed in the Extension Roadmap:

- UNIQUE PURPOSE – commitment to the land-grant tradition of bringing the best teaching, research, and extension to the people of Florida;
- EXCELLENCE – organizational effectiveness and efficiency that lead to relevant, high-quality, research-based educational programs for Florida’s citizens;
- INTEGRITY – fiscal responsibility and service to all that is characterized by mutual respect and honesty;
- COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP – the expertise needed to address important issues and extend the reach and depth of Extension programs;
- LIFELONG LEARNING – ongoing personal development of Extension faculty, volunteers, and stakeholders;
- DIVERSITY – personnel diversity and access to Extension programs by all;
- RESPONSIVENESS – timely, research-based, practical, and relevant solutions;
- INNOVATION – contemporary program designs and delivery strategies;
- COMMUNICATION – open internal and external communication; and
- GLOBAL REACH – integration of local, regional, national, and international perspectives.

Assumptions

The Committee identified the following assumptions as the framework for its work:

- a. Implementation of a new strategic staffing plan for Florida Extension will not automatically reduce the number of county faculty positions currently in place. However, some of these positions are expected to shift to other position types as needs shift and new opportunities develop in the coming years.
- b. The new staffing plan should position Florida Extension to effectively provide the educational programs needed by 21st century clientele, including a commitment to diversity within the organization and among the audiences served.
- c. The new staffing plan must align with Extension initiatives and organizational priorities, as outlined in the 2013-2023 Florida Extension Roadmap.
- d. The new staffing plan must elevate the overall collective capacity of state and county faculty to deliver high quality educational programs.
- e. Gaps currently exist in Florida Extension’s programming efforts, particularly where multidisciplinary approaches are needed (see Appendix A).
- f. Adequate state specialist capacity and expertise will be needed in all programming areas to generate research-based solutions for clientele problems and support local and regional programming.

- g. Because of the sophisticated and advanced needs of some clientele, agents may need a higher level of expertise to provide effective programming for these target audiences.
- h. New staffing approaches and position types must meet the needs of current clientele and new programming audiences.
- i. No single staffing model will be applicable statewide; some components of the new staffing plan will be more appropriate in some areas of the state, depending on clientele needs.
- j. The strategic staffing plan must allow flexibility and adaptability as clientele needs change in the future.
- k. A strong county presence and partnership must be maintained.
- l. Based on their individual areas of expertise, local Extension agents must be able to routinely deliver programs across county lines.
- m. New agent training programs must be designed to enhance program quality and impact. In addition, differentiated levels of in-service training will be needed to develop and support the efforts of the various types of Extension agents, state specialists, and those with new administrative responsibilities. High quality training opportunities provided by outside agencies and vendors should be included in a broad matrix of professional development options available to Extension faculty.
- n. New and redirected resources will be needed to implement the new staffing plan, which may require changes in the proportion of funds allocated to people and programs.
- o. Educators at all levels need adequate staff support and operating funds in order to deliver high quality Extension programs.
- p. Florida Extension must expand partnerships with other universities; public and private sector organizations; non-governmental organizations; and local, state, and federal agencies.
- q. Extension should expand collaborations across the University of Florida to strengthen and better organize the research and outreach capacity needed to support Extension programming.
- r. The new staffing plan should be implemented incrementally, with the highest need areas addressed first.
- s. Stakeholder buy-in will be essential for successful implementation of a strategic staffing plan.
- t. The larger than usual number of retirements expected in 2016, due to changes in UF benefit payout, will provide an opportunity to begin implementing a new strategic staffing plan.

Recommendations

Using data from internal and external audiences as a guide, the committee offers the following recommendations:

- a. Reconfigure the Extension agent types to include redefined county agents (CAs), multicounty agents (MCAs), regional specialized agents (RSAs), and state specialized agents (SSAs). (See Appendix B.)
- b. Maintain a strong and visible Extension presence in every county through productive state-county partnerships. County agents and multicounty agents should

comprise the majority of agent positions in Florida Extension. Hire RSAs and SSAs on a strategic and selective basis, as suggested by priorities outlined in the 2013-2023 Florida Extension Roadmap.

- c. Revise the Extension salary model to align with the four recommended Extension agent position types. Provide additional salary as one moves from county agent to multicounty agent, regional specialized agent, and state specialized agent. The salary basis for agent classification and education level should also be updated.
- d. Develop, share, and consistently use guidelines for determining the type(s) of agent positions needed in a given geographical area. Develop job descriptions that clearly differentiate the roles and responsibilities of each position type, including state specialists.
- e. Provide 100% extension appointments to SSAs, but expect them to allocate 20-30% of their time conducting applied research in the form of Extension demonstrations and trials in collaboration with other agents and state specialists.
- f. Provide professional development programs and opportunities that address the crosscutting and unique needs of specialists and the four types of agents. Professional development programs should develop agents into experts in all areas of responsibility.
- g. Seek legislative funds to support the hiring of additional RSA positions in food systems, water, natural resources, and community resource development.
- h. Where multiple RSA positions exist in the ANR program or other areas, have this team of RSAs serve as the statewide leadership team for that area and work directly with the respective state program leader in coordinating programming at all levels.
- i. The demanding administrative expectations of CEDs in heavily populated counties and/or those with complex administrative structures (e.g., Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, and Pinellas) may prevent those CEDs from delivering educational programs. CEDs in such counties who are able to deliver programs should focus their educational programming efforts on community development, as CED expertise allows.
- j. Classify all CED positions as permanent status-accruing. Ideally, CEDs should be hired at Agent IV, and if not, they will need to deliver educational programs that warrant promotion. CEDs hired without Extension experience will need to deliver educational programs to support promotion and acquisition of permanent status.
- k. Assign CEDs the primary responsibility of conducting the annual performance evaluations of agents in their counties. These evaluations will be reviewed by the respective DED before they are shared with the agent. Replicate the joint evaluation approach currently used with state faculty housed at RECs. These annual evaluations are led by the center director and jointly completed with the respective department chair. Provide training to CEDs to ensure a smooth transition to this model. Revise the CED evaluation form to include this redefined CED leadership role.
- l. In addition to general oversight of the county faculty evaluation process to ensure consistent application of performance standards, DEDs should focus their efforts on leading statewide initiatives and on mentoring and assisting CEDs in the areas of maintaining county relations, enhancing revenue, improving/expanding facilities, supervising personnel, mentoring faculty, analyzing stakeholder needs,

determining programming directions, enhancing community engagement, responding to input from advisory committees, identifying and pursuing new opportunities, engaging in relevant professional development, and all other aspects of effectively leading and managing the county office. DEDs will also partner with center directors or department chairs and state program leaders in conducting the annual performance evaluations of RSAs and SSAs.

- m. Allow successful CEDs without a doctoral degree to be eligible for DED positions. This would also eliminate the requirement that DEDs qualify for the rank of professor.
- n. Carefully evaluate the technical and programming expertise of applicants for Extension agent positions to ensure sufficient expertise.
- o. In most cases CAs will share their subject matter expertise across county lines. The basis for this shared effort should be programming versus time allocations. However, county funding and local needs will dictate the extent of multicounty programming provided by a particular agent.
- p. County agents should devote approximately 60% of their time and effort to proactive educational programming and about 40% of their time responding to citizen and stakeholder requests and inquiries.
- q. Provide adequate program and clerical staff support to all agent positions. Develop guidelines for minimal levels of program and clerical support after a careful analysis of needs for each position. Provide some types of support (e.g., marketing, program evaluation, social media use) at a district or regional level.
- r. Provide program assistants for those programs with a large number of volunteer participants (i.e., 4-H, Master Gardener, and FCS). Establish a minimum threshold, based on the number of volunteers, program scope, and number of program participants. Provide at least one program assistant for each agent in horticulture and 4-H, based on the above criteria. (Note: Program assistants for nutrition programs are generally available through federal grant funds.)
- s. Provide at least \$7,000 per agent each year for program operating and delivery funds. (The source of these funds will vary.) This figure is based on the following estimates: conference travel (\$2,300), dues (\$350), books/subscriptions (\$100), program materials/demonstrations (\$200), fuel (\$800), conference registration (\$600), postage (\$50), computer software and hardware (\$500), printing/promotional materials (\$400), communication devices (\$720), mobile Wi-Fi hot spot (\$460), and office supplies (\$1,000).
- t. Provide one clerical staff position for no more than three agent positions.
- u. Encourage unit leaders to invite input from county faculty when evaluating state specialists and ensure that specialist performance ratings accurately reflect effort and impact.
- v. Engage the Extension Dean's Office and state program leaders with unit leaders in prioritizing and strengthening the extension contributions of the unit. Focus this effort on the collective extension portfolio of the unit and not on individual faculty performance.
- w. Provide training designed to increase communication and collaboration among all agent types and specialists. More effectively use the seven Extension initiative teams to strengthen the linkages between county faculty and state specialists.

- x. Involve agents at the onset of grant projects led by state specialists. Include direct costs in grant budgets for agent time and materials, as appropriate.
- y. Renew the state-county faculty experience, which provides the opportunity for state specialists to spend time in a county Extension office.
- z. Encourage unit leaders to ensure that every state specialist in their unit is an active member of an initiative team.
- aa. Periodically survey unit leaders, agents, DEDs, and state program leaders to identify current critical gaps in state specialist capacity. Encourage unit leaders, including DEDs, to meet annually with state program leaders to discuss state specialist needs. The staffing options outlined in this report should be strategically applied to address these gaps.
- bb. Include clear expectations for contributing to extension programs in all state faculty position descriptions, including those without an extension appointment.
- cc. Develop a major Extension branding and marketing initiative – one that involves the consistent integration of marketing strategies to provide a uniform message to clientele. This initiative must provide county faculty with the tools and resources needed to effectively market Extension to their target audiences.
- dd. Review the vacant positions generated by the 2016 change in benefits payout with DEDs, state program leaders, and appropriate unit leaders to ensure that newly released positions align with the goals of the strategic staffing plan.
- ee. Where appropriate, appoint affiliate or courtesy extension agents to county offices or extension districts to create synergistic relationships that will improve program delivery capacity. (Note: An affiliate extension faculty member is a UF employee whose appointment is not in a county operations unit. Courtesy faculty members are not employed by UF.)

Implementation

The Committee acknowledges that discussion of a new Extension strategic staffing plan has created some concern among Extension faculty, primarily due to the unknown changes in future Extension positions. Thus, an effort must be undertaken to assure all Extension personnel that this staffing initiative has been an effort to positively and proactively design Extension's personnel structure for the future, and reductions in budget and/or the number of Extension faculty did not prompt this initiative and will not drive its implementation. The Committee recommends that the new strategic staffing plan be implemented incrementally as opportunities to do so become available through retirements and resignations. With this in mind, the new staffing plan can be implemented more quickly if new revenue enhancement initiatives are successful as opportunities to gain greater organizational efficiency are explored. Full transparency and open communication will be essential in garnering support for the new staffing plan from Extension faculty and administrators, clientele, partners, and supporters. Further, implementation efforts should align with the organizational goals and high priority initiatives for Florida Extension as outlined in the 2013-2023 Extension Roadmap. Most importantly, as the new staffing plan is implemented, we must never lose sight of the overarching goal of creating an Extension organization in Florida that is unparalleled in providing solutions to the citizens of the State through exceptional educational programs.

Committee Members

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(Committee Co-Chair)

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Appendix A: Perceived Capacity Gaps in Extension Programming as Identified by the Committee (not prioritized)

- Energy (home, commercial, farm, and production)
- Water (lack of state specialists who can develop tools for local educators)
- Community resource development / economic development
- Workforce preparation for youth and adults
- Land use policy and planning
- Online delivery of educational programs (software applications, using social media as a teaching platform, educational technology, mobile apps)
- Policy development expertise by Extension educators
- Bilingual skills and cultural diversity of educators, educational materials in Spanish
- All commodity areas, including vegetable crops in south Florida
- Team delivery of educational programs
- State specialist support for youth development, particularly in the areas of youth protection policies, economic impact of positive youth development, and diversity
- Sea grant (estuary health, ecosystems, coastal)
- Soil health expertise
- Social scientists (behavior change experts, reporting and evaluation, strategic communications – regional expertise is needed)
- Agriculture and food systems (people with this broad perspective, entrepreneurship)
- Staff support for agents
- County Extension director training and management competencies
- New agent training and a comprehensive professional development system
- Land-based natural resources
- Small farms
- Families
- Regional gaps in traditional programming areas (e.g., citrus, livestock, vegetables, etc.)
- Regional IT, marketing, grant, and evaluation support

Appendix B: Extension Agent Descriptions (draft)

County Extension Agent

(Includes agents paid with state, county, or grant funds, or any combination thereof)

Duties and Responsibilities

A County Extension Agent develops, implements, and evaluates scholarly educational programs in a designated focus area(s) corresponding with Florida Cooperative Extension priorities to help people acquire knowledge, develop problem-solving skills, and change or improve practices to meet their needs. A County Extension Agent works cooperatively with the appropriate State Program Leader, the County Extension Director, and the District Extension Director to develop a county program in the area of responsibility. Such programs are an integral part of the total county extension effort.

Basic responsibilities of a County Extension Agent include:

- Works with local advisory committees to identify and prioritize educational needs.
- Follows a sound programming process (e.g., a logic model with SMMART objectives and measurable outcomes and impacts).
- Develops and executes a plan of work.
- Recruits and trains volunteer leaders.
- Acquires extramural funding to support the extension program.
- Collaborates with state specialists and other agents at all levels.
- Engages in ongoing professional development in both content and delivery methods.
- Uses appropriate and varied program delivery methods.
- Provides evidence of positive practice change by target audiences.
- Reports program accomplishments, outcomes, and impacts.
- Communicates program success to the community and stakeholders.
- Allocates at least five percent of his/her time to 4-H programming.

Qualifications

An earned bachelor's degree is required; a master's degree is preferred. If hired with only a bachelor's degree, the agent must make significant progress (>50% complete) toward completion of a master's degree within the first five years of employment. Degree should be in an academic area closely related to the position subject matter assignment.

Administration

The County Extension Agent is based in a county extension office. The agent is administratively responsible to the County Extension Director (CED) and the District Extension Director (DED). Promotion and permanent status are acquired through the Extension District.

Multi-county Extension Agent

Duties and Responsibilities

A Multi-county Extension Agent has the same basic responsibilities as a County Extension Agent (shown above), with the following modifications:

- The position scope includes responsibility for developing, implementing, and evaluating a scholarly extension program in more than one county within the assigned area of program responsibility.
- When compared with a County Extension Agent, a Multi-county Agent operates with a higher level of programmatic expertise.
- Secures more grant funding to support his/her program, compared with a county Extension agent.

Qualifications

An earned master's degree is required. At least 2 years of extension or practical experience is preferred. Degree must be in an academic area closely related to the position subject matter assignment.

Administration

The Multi-county Extension Agent is based in a county extension office. The agent is administratively responsible to the CED of the home county plus the DED. CEDs in other counties served by this agent will provide input to the agent's annual performance review. Promotion and permanent status are acquired through the Extension District.

Regional Specialized Extension Agent

Duties and Responsibilities

A Regional Specialized Agent (RSA) has the same basic responsibilities as a County Extension Agent (shown above), with the following modifications. The RSA:

- Operates with a higher level of programmatic expertise compared with a County Agent or Multi-county Agent.
- Conducts an extension program that serves a broad region of the state.
- Contributes to the development, implementation, and evaluation of regional and statewide scholarly extension programs.
- Provides leadership in program development in an area of expertise, including:
 - The development and dissemination of educational materials;
 - Support of extension faculty in the region and state; and
 - Professional development for extension agents.
- Provides information, training, and mentoring for extension agents in his/her area of expertise.
- Participates in collaborative practical and applied research projects associated with his/her area of expertise.
- Secures more grant funding to support his/her program, compared with a regional multicounty agent.
- Serves on a statewide Extension program leadership team.

Qualifications

A master's degree and 5 years of extension education experience or equivalent are required; A Ph.D. is preferred. Degree must be in an academic area closely related to the position subject matter assignment.

Administration

An RSA is based either in a county extension office, at a Research and Education Center (REC), or within a unit or center on the UF campus. Depending on home location, an RSA is administratively responsible to the DED and either the CED of the home county, the REC director, or the unit/center leader. Promotion and permanent status are acquired through the Extension District in which the agent is located.

State Specialized Extension Agent

Duties and Responsibilities

A State Specialized Agent (SSA) has the same basic responsibilities as an RSA (shown above), with the following modifications. The SSA:

- Develops and implements practical and applied research projects associated with his/her area of expertise.
- Acquires a greater amount of extramural funding to support his/her extension program, compared with an RSA.

Qualifications

A master’s degree and 5 years of extension education experience or equivalent are required; A Ph.D. is highly preferred. Degree must be in an academic area closely related to the position subject matter assignment.

Administration

An SSA is based at a Research and Education Center (REC) or within a unit or center on the UF campus. The agent is administratively responsible to the DED and the REC director or the unit/center leader. Promotion and permanent status are acquired through the Extension District in which the agent is located.

Comparison of Extension Agent Positions				
Component	County Agent	Multicounty Agent	Regional Specialized Agent	State Specialized Agent
Funding	County/state	County/state	State	State
Location	County	County	REC	Dept/REC
Degree	BS, MS preferred	MS	MS, doctoral degree preferred	MS, doctoral degree highly preferred
Experience	Some experience preferred	>2 yrs of Extension or other experience preferred	>5 yrs of Extension or other experience required	>5 yrs of Extension or other experience required
Supervised and evaluated by	CED with review by DED	Lead CED with review by DED	Center director and DED	Dept chair or center director & DED
Position	PS	PS	PS	PS
Appointment	100% extension	100% extension	100% extension	100% extension
Programming geographical area	County	Multiple counties per agreement	Designated region of the state	Statewide
Grant funding expectations	>\$4,000/yr	>\$8,000/yr	>12,000/yr	>\$20,000/yr
Responsibilities	Local programming	Multicounty programming	Regional programming in a major Extension program area, partner with state specialists and SSAs in delivering in-service training to CAs and MCAs	Statewide programming in a specialized area, partner with state specialists and SSAs in delivering in-service training to CAs and MCAs

Note: This table outlines standard procedures applicable to the agent types, but exceptions may occur.

Appendix C: Key Findings from the UF/IFAS Faculty and Unit Leader Survey

Assumptions Guiding the Staffing Plan Committee Discussions	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Extension will have a strong and visible presence in every county supported by effective state-county partnerships.	10	79
Extension educational programs will be frequently delivered across county boundaries to maximize programming impact and efficiency.	7	82
Extension will be well positioned to meet the needs of 21 st century clientele.	13	70
Extension will have a greater future capacity for delivering educational programs that address clientele needs.	12	66
Extension faculty at all levels will need higher levels of subject matter expertise, in addition to the ability to design and deliver high quality educational programs.	5	83
The optimal staff configuration in the various geographical areas of the state will vary, based on demographics and clientele needs.	3	93
High quality professional development programs, differentiated by faculty type, will be needed by all Extension faculty.	2	95
High quality Extension programs at all levels will require adequate staff and operating funds.	0	99
New and redirected financial resources will be needed to fully implement this strategic staffing plan.	3	84
High priority programming areas will require strategic human and financial resource investments.	1	95

Note: Respondents could also choose “Neither Agree nor Disagree.”

Themes contained in the additional comments provided by respondents on the above assumptions (n=95):

- High agent expertise will be needed in the future, but expertise currently strong.
- County faculty and state specialists need to communicate and collaborate more.
- Programs must be locally relevant and effective. County agents can also help in meeting regional needs. More effective collaboration among all agents is needed.
- Professional development programs should develop agents into experts.
- More effective marketing of Extension and its programs is needed.
- Counties have inadequate operating funds and staff support.
- Today’s organization has insufficient capacity to meet the needs of our large, diverse audiences.
- Success in meeting the needs of commercial agriculture is the key to Extension’s success.

Themes contained in the additional comments provided by respondents on the table describing the four agent types (n=158):

- The agent types, including state specialists, must be clearly differentiated with respect to responsibilities, qualifications, location, geographical responsibility, supervision roles, evaluation procedures, and other areas. A clear primary supervisor is needed in all cases.
- Expectations for securing and managing grants need to be carefully considered. Generally, grant work comes at the expense of programming time and effort, and some agent types are better prepared to secure grant funding.
- Travel costs and time for those agents above the county level (i.e., MCA, RSA, SSA) could be prohibitive.
- County programming must remain strong, regardless of the staff structure.
- Each Extension program area needs a well-defined leadership team.
- All agent types and state specialists must work together.
- RSAs and SSAs should be expected to publish in scholarly journals.

Preliminary Staffing Ideas	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	% Agree or Strongly Agree
County agents and multicounty agents should comprise the majority of non-state specialist positions in Florida Extension and work in a collaborative and complementary manner with RSAs and SSAs.	7	81
Emphasis should be placed on increasing the number of Regional Specialized Agents (RSAs) and on hiring a targeted number of new State Specialized Agents (SSAs) where gaps have been identified.	21	62
Guidelines should be jointly developed, shared, and consistently used when determining the type of agent position(s) needed in a particular geographical location.	1	92
A careful analysis of significant existing and emerging programming gaps should be conducted, and the staffing options outlined in this report should be strategically applied to address these gaps.	3	88
State specialists and all agent types, particularly the RSA and SSA positions, should have strong technical expertise.	1	91
When multiple RSAs are in place in a particular subject matter area, those RSAs should serve as the leadership team for that subject matter area in partnership with SSAs and state specialists in that area and under the guidance of the respective state program leader.	10	75
The leadership roles and responsibilities of CEDs should be elevated to include county faculty mentoring and annual evaluation.	13	68
Educational programming responsibilities for County Extension Directors (CEDs) in large counties and/or complex administrative structures should be optional.	17	60

The responsibilities of DEDs should be refocused on assisting the CED in building strong county and multicounty relationships, ensuring consistency in the evaluation procedures for county faculty, and providing leadership for special initiatives in Florida Extension.	11	68
Candidates for DED positions should qualify for the rank of professor or Agent IV, with a doctoral degree preferred.	11	74
The staff and financial support needed for providing high-impact Extension programs should be clarified and addressed in future budget allocation decisions.	0	93
District-level support staff should be appointed in crosscutting areas, such as IT, evaluation, marketing, and media.	4	84
Florida Extension should design and implement a major marketing and branding initiative.	8	75

Note: Respondents could also choose “Neither Agree nor Disagree.”

Appendix D: Key Findings from the Extension Stakeholder Survey

- A large majority of respondents (76%) reported using Extension services on a weekly or monthly basis. Similarly, 80% of respondents indicated that they recommend Extension services to others on a weekly or monthly basis.
- Respondents reported using Extension services for an average of 21.4 years.
- Extension products and services typically used, as reported by respondents, included research-based information (75%), adult education programs and meetings other than certifications (60%), individual consultations (58%), pest and/or disease diagnosis (54%), 4-H/youth programs and/or meetings (42%), and certification and licensing programs (39%).
- Preferred formats for receiving Extension programs and services included face-to-face group trainings (74%), online information (65%), on-site visits (62%), individual consultations by phone (50%), printed newsletters (47%), printed reports (38%), and online training (27%).
- Respondents reported that they used Extension services for both business/enterprise needs (74%) and personal/family needs (62%).
- Based on item mean scores, respondents agreed that Extension information and services are (1) up to date and relevant, (2) delivered in a timely fashion, (3) useful and relevant, (4) unbiased, and (5) easy to understand.
- Respondents agreed with the following statements:
 - I am very satisfied with the programs and services provided by Extension.
 - Extension is an important source of information for my business/enterprise needs.
 - Extension is an important source of information for my personal/family needs.
- Respondents neither disagreed nor agreed with the following statement: “Extension agents don't have the time required to meet the needs of their clientele.”
- Respondents disagreed that Extension agents need more practical knowledge and experience.
- Based on item mean scores, respondents agreed with the following statements:

- Extension has a positive and visible influence in my county.
- In the future, Extension will need to be more visible and impactful in my county.
- My Extension office has good support from county government.
- In the future, strong county-state partnerships will be essential in Extension.
- Extension personnel in my county have adequate levels of subject matter knowledge and expertise.
- In the future, Extension personnel will need higher levels of subject matter expertise.
- Extension personnel in my county are excellent teachers.
- Extension personnel in my county provide meaningful and relevant programs and information.
- Future Extension programs must be more meaningful and relevant to clientele.
- In the future, greater capacity for providing Extension programs and services will be needed.
- Extension agents in my area provide effective programs and services to clientele in nearby counties.
- In the future, Extension agents will need to frequently share their time and expertise with clientele in nearby counties.
- The current types of agent positions in my local Extension office are effective for meeting clientele needs.
- In the future, more specialized agent positions will be needed to address the educational needs of clientele.
- Future personnel and operating funds in my local Extension office should be increased to support expanded programming.
- Respondents neither disagreed nor disagreed with the following statements:
 - In the future, Extension personnel will need higher levels of educational expertise.
 - The current capacity for providing Extension programs and services in my county is adequate.
 - Current personnel and operating funds for my local Extension office are adequate.
- The primary educational sources used by respondents included online sources, industry associations and professionals, printed sources, and state and federal agencies.
- The following themes were contained in the comments (n=113) about ways that Extension could better serve their needs:
 - More convenient (location and hours) and up-to-date facilities.
 - More educational resources that are up-to-date and available online and through social media.
 - More agents who provide more programs and demonstrations, have greater expertise, meet face-to-face with clients, focus on clientele needs, have more industry involvement, connect with state specialists, support community initiatives, and are better supported. Many commented that Extension has been very helpful to them.