PennState Extension

Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Penn State Extension Strategic Plan

Contents

Vision: (Aspiration)

Penn State Extension will be a transformative educational organization, the premier Cooperative Extension System in the US, and a world leader in non-credit education and consulting.

Mission: (How)

Penn State Extension is a modern educational organization dedicated to delivering science-based information to people, businesses, and communities. We provide access to face-to-face and online education to our customers—when they want it, where they want it, and how they want it—to help them address problems and take advantage of opportunities for improvement and innovation. Partnering with and funded by federal, state, and county governments, we have a long tradition of bringing unbiased support and education to the citizens of Pennsylvania. We make a difference locally through focused engagement, and more widely to customers connecting in the digital landscape.

Purpose Statement: (Why)

We believe that all people should have access to science-based information.

> **Goal 1: Educational Delivery:** Develop and deliver consistently high quality and valuable learning experiences, across a broad array of learner-centereddelivery strategies.

Objective 1.1: Increase reach and access: Offer a program portfolio of education that provides comparable education opportunities for both in-person and online learners.

Action Items:
- 1.1.1 – Ensure implementation of a focused and standardized product line, which includes centrally supported product development and support resources, and guidelines for development, delivery, and quality control.

- 1.1.2 – Increase online education portfolio and product offerings, which includes identification of relevant programs, and allocation of necessary subject matter expertise on program teams and strategic unit resources.

- 1.1.3 – Develop a streamlined process and criteria to identify and evaluate new product lines, technology, and delivery methods with the goal of scalable and broader organizational implementation.

- 1.1.4 – Develop training opportunities and professional development plans to provide subject matter experts the necessary skill sets and tools for successful program development and delivery of both in-person and online learning.

Objective 1.2: Enhance learning experiences: Deliver a world-class educational experience for learners across all touchpoints of the engagement experience.

Action Items:
- 1.2.1 – Improve customer experience across educational delivery methods and platforms (e.g. website, registration systems, etc.) to provide learners a seamless experience and a single point of access for all programming, resources, and engagement opportunities.

- 1.2.2 – Define goals and standards for world-class experience, requirements for implementation, and continued evaluation plan across all customer experiences.

- 1.2.3 – Develop infrastructure to support end-to-end Spanish-speaking customer experience,

including translation, marketing, platforms, and customer service touchpoints.

- 1.2.4 – Utilize Salesforce to fully integrate all customer data, program activity data, marketing, and customers inquiries to increase visibility of data, insight, and opportunities to better manage customer relationships.

Objective 1.3: Provide lifelong learning opportunities: Create enhanced learning pathways or journeys that offer learners the opportunity to connect educational experiences across a lifetime.

Action Items:
- 1.3.1 – Develop infrastructure to support blended learning experiences to ensure offline and online experiences can be bundled for seamless marketing, delivery, testing, and tracking of experiences.

- 1.3.2 – Develop infrastructure to support learning journeys/tracks to provide a managed or automated learning continuum from one experience to the next, including seamless marketing, delivery, testing, and tracking of experiences.

- 1.3.3 – Develop infrastructure to support the delivery of certification and credential experiences to ensure seamless development, consistent delivery and tracking to a single database.

> **Goal 2: Engagement and Relevancy**: Develop programs that meet the needs of clientele and stakeholders, engage new and existing audiences, advance agriculture-related sciences, and the long-term viability of agriculture.

Objective 2.1: Develop Relevant Programs: Utilize the Program Development Process (PDP) to ensure program teams are developing and prioritizing targeted and relevant programs, which are delivered consistent with the organizational plan for delivery.

Action Items:

- 2.1.1 – Engage department/University faculty in the PDP to promote curricular coherence and integrate research and extension priorities.

- 2.1.2 Work with College Leadership to change Promotion and Tenure guidelines to include and reward faculty for Extension work, to document and ensure percent effort in all three mission areas of the college are valued, rewarded, and funders receive a ROI on their financial support of Extension programs.

- 2.1.3 – Create and implement a process to ensure resources (human and financial) align with current and changing stakeholder and organizational priorities.

- 2.1.4 – Implement a timely standard peer review process to ensure accuracy, consistency, relevancy, and avoids duplicative content, and is culturally appropriate.

- 2.1.5 – Ensure all program teams and support units work collaboratively to complete the PDP and deliverables every three years with emphasis placed on program improvement, increased relevancy, organizational sustainability, and engagement with appropriate external stakeholders.

Objective 2.2: Increase awareness and participation: Develop and implementmarketing strategies to reach new customers and more deeply engage currentcustomers across Extension programs and services.

Action Items:

- 2.2.1 – Develop life-long, workforce/personal development training program portfolios/learning pathways or journeys/micro credentials working with specific sectors/interests.

- 2.2.2 – Ensure organizational positioning/brand message is consistently communicated by all employees and employees understand their role as brand ambassador.

- 2.2.3 – Utilize the PDP process documents to capture comprehensive program and research impacts that can be used to inform decision making and create targeted impact reports and success stories.

- 2.2.4 – Promote and cross-market educational programs and services through automated marketing, in-person customer engagement, and through training for employees and advocates.

- 2.2.5 – Develop and implement an organizational social media strategy.

- 2.2.6 – Develop comprehensive marketing campaigns to target identified new audiences, to increase customer reach and diversity, and meet/exceed USDA Civil Rights requirements.

Objective 2.3: Implement ongoing evaluation: Strive for constant program improvement and relevancy through ongoing program evaluation.

Action Items:
- 2.3.1 – Implement regular program evaluation and reporting process that provides metrics around relevancy to target audiences, economic/social impact, and ROI, and results in program improvement, program churn, increased relevancy, positive changes in behavior and organizational sustainability.

- 2.3.2 – Implement defined best practices, delivery formats, usability standards, and quality metrics for all programs and products to maximize program quality, consistency, and brand recognition.

- 2.3.3 – Implement strategy and process for pulling impact data from Salesforce, program evaluations, and program teams and integrate into the PDP documents to provide comprehensive information for decision-making and create targeted impact reports and success stories.

Objective 2.4: Increase external stakeholder engagement: Build mutually beneficial relationships that advance stakeholder success and build engagement, support, and advocacy for college and Extension programs and funding.

Action Items:
- 2.4.1 –Communicate organizational value proposition and impacts to funders, advocates, primary stakeholders, and staff, to build awareness and support.

- 2.4.2 - Perform an organizational, targeted satisfaction survey of external funders, advocates, and primary stakeholders.

- 2.4.3 – Implement recognition programs for key stakeholders, advocates, volunteers, and funders to acknowledge their contributions to the success of Extension.

- 2.4.4 – Ensure stakeholders are appropriately engaged in the PDP.

> **Goal 3. Operational Effectiveness:** Optimize the use of organizational resources and ensure the financial sustainability of Penn State Extension.

Objective 3.1: Improve decision-making: Ensure operational, programmatic, and financial decisions are responsive to organizational and program needs; are supported by data, proven experience, or research; and are aligned with the mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Action Items:
- 3.1.1. Ensure decision-makers have access to accurate and timely data necessary to inform decision-making processes.

- 3.1.2: Ensure decisions are weighed against the mission, vision, and strategic plan.

- 3.1.3: Develop regular and on-going methods for encouraging feedback during decision-making processes, and meaningfully engage those impacted by decisions.

Objective 3.2: Enhance and Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness: Identify and remove internal barriers to success.

Action Items:
- 3.2.1: Identify, evaluate, and address administrative policies, procedures, processes, and other issues that impact Extension's ability to achieve organizational goals.

- 3.2.2 - Identify, evaluate, and address programmatic policies, procedures, processes, and other issues that impact Extension's ability to achieve organizational goals.

- 3.2.3 - Develop regular and on-going methods for encouraging feedback to ensure all employees have a voice in identifying internal barriers and potential solutions.

- 3.2.4 - Identify and implement efficiency improvements, including standardizing operating procedures that recognize and accommodate unique, local circumstances.

Objective 3.3: Optimize financial model: Ensure the Extension financial model advances the organizational vision and goals, positioning the organization for long-term growth and success.

Action Items:

- 3.3.1: Develop and use a financial model that defines a return on investment and revenue generationstrategy; is aligned with the mission, vision, strategic plan, and organizational and program priorities;encourages innovation; and promotes timely responses to current issues.

- 3.3.2: Create and implement a process to ensure resources (physical, human, intellectual, and financial) alignwith the mission, vision, strategic plan, and organizational and program priorities.

- 3.3.3: Ensure the financial model leverages Extension, College, and University resources.

Objective 3.4: Enhance organizational structure: Review and adjust the organizational structure to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, connection to research, and impact through the implementation of the organizational mission, vision, strategic plan, and priorities.

Action Items:

- 3.4.1: Review organizational structure regularly to identify opportunities for improved efficiency andeffectiveness, stakeholder engagement, connection to research, and impact.

- 3.4.2: Develop statewide programming and operational staffing plan based on strategic plan, program development process, and organizational priorities.

Goal 4: Employee Satisfaction: Increase the diversity of Extension's workforce, employee engagement, satisfaction, and trust.

Objective 4.1 - Advance inclusion: Implement strategies that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization.

Action Items:
- 4.1.1 – Require extension employees to participate in ongoing diversity training opportunities to introduce a culture of respect and inclusion that values the experiences and perspectives of all team members.

- 4.1.2 - Support and encourage the development of communities of practice and affinity groups that align with key issues that impact the organization or the stakeholders we serve.

- 4.1.3 – Implement strategies to recruit and retain a more diverse group of employees, representative of the make-up of the Commonwealth.

Objective 4.2 - Improve communications: Develop and implement comprehensive internal communication plans that ensure concise, clear, timely, relevant, and consistent communications at all levels across the organization.

Action Items:
- 4.2.1 - Create and execute unit level communication plans that will provide two-way communications and organizational updates from their leadership, including progress on implementation of extension strategic plan.

- 4.2.2 – Create advisory committees for staff, educators, and faculty to provide opportunities for increased communication and collaboration.

- 4.2.3 - Expand cross-unit and team communication and collaboration.

Objective 4.3 - Define roles: Clarify employee roles in the organization.

Action Items:
- 4.3.1 - Create new employee orientation training that defines the organization mission, vision, structure, employee roles, and available resources in the organization.

- 4.3.2 – Establish and implement best practices to support accountability across the organization and incorporate as part of the performance management process.

- 4.3.3 – Communicate pathways and opportunities for promotion and advancement within theorganization.

- 4.3.4 – Communicate and ensure transparency regarding the leadership model and decision-making processand authority within specific roles within the organization.

Objective 4.4 - Support employees: Support employees in achieving their full potential.

Action Items:
- 4.4.1 - Ensure the annual employee evaluation process provides sufficient feedback and direction/expectations for employees' success and advancement.

- 4.4.2 – Create and implement a mentoring program for all new employees to establish a connection to available resources and help new employees effectively learn the Extension system.

- 4.4.3 – Identify and invest in employee professional development opportunities that increases core job skills and targets growth opportunities across Extension.

> **Goal 5. Support a Sustainable and Integrated Food System**: Penn State Extension will be a leader in education and problem solving across the food system, create solutions to challenges facing our Food Supply Chain and address the need for a consistent and sustainable supply of safe, healthy, and accessible food.

Objective 5.1: Best Practices: Provide research and educational programs to support the integrated components of the food system across the diversity of communities, from producer to consumer, including best practices for agricultural production, processing, marketing, and distribution systems, to increase competitiveness, solve problems, and enhance sustainability.

Action Items**:**
- 5.1.1 – Translate the latest research into best production practices and education for agricultural sectors to maximize profitability and production, while minimizing environmental impacts.

- 5.1.2 – Translate the latest research into best processing practices and education to increase implementation of food safety practices and regulatory awareness and compliance.

- 5.1.3 - Identify threats and opportunities in the food supply chain (production, processing, marketing, and distribution) and engage supply chain experts across the university to develop solutions.

Objective 5.2: Innovation: Provide innovation, new technologies and management tools, and community-based solutions at all scales of agriculture to improve efficiency, capacity and competitiveness of food producers, processors, and aggregators**.**

Action Items**:**
- 5.2.1 – Engage College and University faculty in applied research around new technologies, mechatronic solutions, and management tools for use throughout the food supply chain, with a focus on production, harvesting, and processing.

- 5.2.2 – Provide greater collaboration with industry partners to further enhance the creation and adoption of precision agriculture technology in Pennsylvania.

- 5.2.3 – Provide research and application to help the food system, keep forests healthy, waterways clean, soils fertile and productive, ecosystems vibrant and whole, and help urban and rural communities thrive.

Objective 5.3: Workforce Issues: Provide the agricultural and supporting industry sectors learning paths to assist with attracting, training, and retaining an informed, diverse, and safe workforce.

Action Items:
- 5.3.1 – Develop strategies to promote and attract students into careers in agriculture.

- 5.3.2 - Develop life-long, workforce/personal development learning paths/microcredentials working with specific sectors/interests that target entry level, middle, and upper management.

- 5.3.3 – Provide agricultural safety training for employers, employees, and emergency responders.

- 5.3.4 – Provide research-based practices to improve agricultural production, packaging, and processing facilities to enhance employee effectiveness, satisfaction, and health.

Objective 5.4: Systems Coordination: Enhance opportunities for research, education, and cooperation around sustainability, food, health, and food access across the diversity of Pennsylvania communities.

Action Items:
- 5.4.1 – Develop innovative value-added uses and new products to expand consumer markets for targeted agriculture sectors.

- 5.4.2 – Provide applied research and education regarding the relationship and potential between food, health, and chronic diseases.

- 5.4.3 - Provide education and best practices for enhanced value chain coordination and accessibility of Pennsylvania agricultural products.

- 5.4.4 – Provide research-based information on the food system to the public to increase awareness and agricultural literacy.