

To: All Extension Employees, Partners & Stakeholders  
 Date: June 4, 2014  
 Subject: NCCES Strategic Vision & Planning Initiative Update

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Dear Extension employees, friends and stakeholders,

The past month has been an exciting and historic period for Extension. The time we've shared celebrating the traditions and achievements of this proud organization and its people over the last century has been nothing short of inspiring. We were humbled by the participation and passion that was on display in Raleigh May 19-20.

As we wrap up an unforgettable Centennial Celebration, we are reaching out regarding the progress of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service's Strategic Vision & Planning Initiative. You are all valuable employees or partners of our organization, and we thank you for your dedication and patience as this initiative forges ahead!

### **PREVIEW of KEY THEMES**

Extension's Vision Initiative is still a work in progress (this list is not all-inclusive), but several transformative themes have emerged during the process and will play a central role in our future. First and foremost, we want to emphasize that our core program areas going forward will be **Agriculture, Food and 4-H Youth Development**. *\*The final plan will expound upon these core areas, share details regarding the structuring of programs within our core, and provide a comprehensive timeline for implementation with measurable benchmarks and goals.*

This is not the "final plan," but rather an overview of some key elements that will help pave our path to positive transformation. We aim to be as transparent as possible, as our first obligation is to our people, so we are sharing these strategic plan themes in advance of the final rollout. View our progress at [www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative).

- We plan to bolster employee satisfaction and create more professional growth opportunities through a variety of initiatives, such as an enhanced career ladder for agents;
- We'll develop commodity- and issue-based teams within our core program areas to improve our resources, increase interdisciplinary collaboration and strengthen county-campus relationships;
- We'll optimize our use of technology while remaining committed to hands-on, experiential education and personal service (creating a "high tech and high touch" Extension);
- We'll support the college's and university's strategic plans through our programs and services, which create wealth, provide practical solutions and exemplify a "think and do" spirit; and
- We'll work hand-in-hand with county and tribal government partners to explore and recommend staffing structures for each of our 101 local offices.

**We anticipate finalizing the strategic plan in July/August.** Many people dedicated time and resources to help lay the groundwork for our future; we owe it to them to make every effort to build a sound strategy for Extension (even if it takes a little longer than expected). We can't rush a plan that impacts so many people across the state.

By targeting our strengths and identifying where we are most needed and best equipped to provide expertise, we're ensuring that Extension will continue to be the leading source of research-based solutions in our state for another century. This is our enduring promise to you and the people of North Carolina.

We'll keep you informed throughout the final stages of this planning process – our future is bright! On behalf of Extension administration, we offer our sincerest gratitude; our people really are what make the difference.

All the best,  
 Joe Zublena, Tom Melton, Sheri Schwab & Mitzi Stumpf-Downing

(c: NCSU Administration, NC&T Administration, CALS Faculty & Staff, External Stakeholders)