

SHAPING SOLUTIONS FOR FLORIDA'S FUTURE

An Overview of the Extension Long Range Planning Process
(A joint effort of UF/IFAS and FAMU/CESTA)

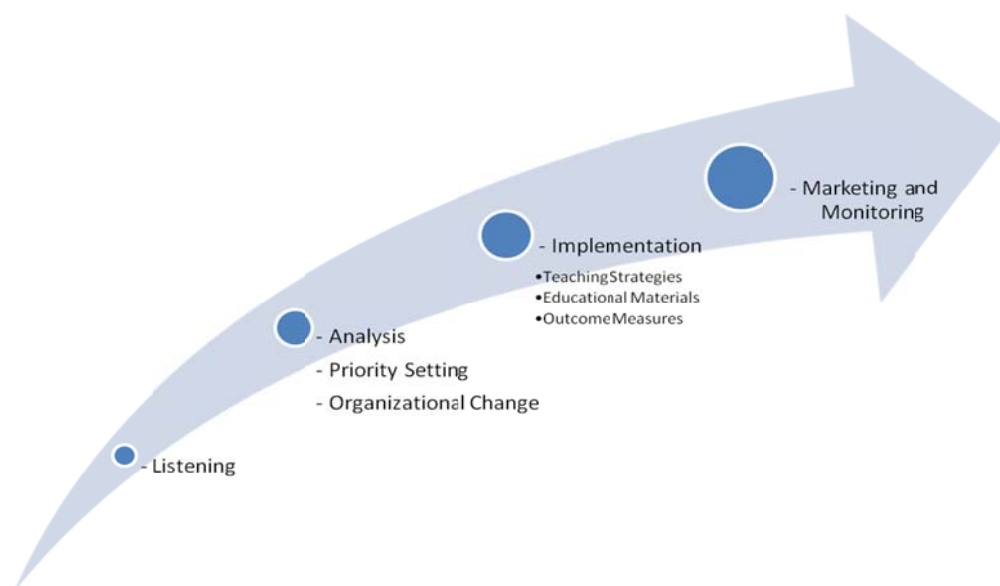
The Florida Cooperative Extension System is conducting a planning process that will shape Extension programs in Florida for the next decade. "As Florida emerges from the global recession, it is clear that the trajectory of the State's future will, and must, be different" (Florida Chamber of Commerce). The same applies to the Extension System. Florida Extension must have a clear path of action as an educational organization to support Florida's economy, environment, and people that is relevant and flexible to meet changing needs of Florida's communities.

Why are we engaging in this planning process?

1. It has been several years since we had a comprehensive long range planning effort and much has changed in Florida. When we consider our budget situation, advancements in technology and emerging issues, it is critical we reexamine our programmatic priorities and teaching strategies.
2. The outcome will guide resource allocation within Extension in the future.
3. This is an opportunity to forge new partnerships in support of our programs.

What is the process?

Listening will be at the core of Extension's long range planning effort. Extension seeks to acquire diverse viewpoints regarding the future of Florida and through careful analysis formulate priorities and operational procedures to achieve a future where Extension contributes positively to Florida's health and well-being. Extension is calling upon clientele, stakeholders, community leaders, advisory committees, and faculty to become involved in this process, which will involve four key steps.



Step One: How will we listen?

- **County listening sessions:** At the core of information gathering will be listening sessions in each of our 67 counties. Each county will engage traditional clientele, stakeholders, community leaders and the general public. Sponsored and led by the Overall County Extension Advisory Committee, the purpose of each listening session is to develop a community vision using the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - **What are the strengths of our community and what do we value about our community?** This question should be considered broadly and from the context of the specific segment of the community or industry you represent.
 - **What trends and issues are impacting our community?** This question should be considered broadly and from the context of the specific segment of the community or industry you represent.
 - **Which of these trends and issues represent the most significant threats to our community and what we value?**
 - **Of these threatening trends and issues, which can/should be addressed through Florida Extension educational programs? What priority should be placed on each issue and concern?**
 - **How do you think we should deliver these educational programs?**
- **Departmental and REC listening sessions by state faculty:** Each UF and FAMU department and center will do an internal scan of their Extension mission to compile the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the unit. Units will be asked to review relevant information from county listening sessions. Departments/RECs will be asked to involve their advisory committees as they examine future Extension priorities.
- **Focus groups:** Under the direction of the IFAS Public Issues Education Center, individuals in the community will be interviewed at select locations in Florida using a focus group format.
- **County government:** Extension Administration will employ an advisory committee of county managers and commissioners to assemble a list of local priorities for Extension. County Extension Directors will be encouraged to involve county government leaders in local listening sessions.
- **Partner agencies and industries:** Extension Administration will ask an advisory committee composed of partner agency representatives to share their needs and expectations of Extension. It is anticipated that Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Children and Families, Water Management Districts, and others will be involved in this process.
- **IFAS Regional Advisory Committees:** Each of the five IFAS Regional Advisory Committees will provide direct input at their meetings in 2011.
- **Individual comments:** Individuals will be invited to submit comments through the Long Range Planning website.

Step Two: How will this information be used?

After completing the above listening sessions, Extension Administration will conduct internal listening sessions with county extension directors, department chairs, and center directors to discuss their findings and to gather long range objective statements throughout the organization. Based on the county long range objective statements and internal scans of departments and centers, Florida Extension will formulate a statewide plan that reflects those educational priorities and future directions.

Step Three: How will we implement the plan?

Implementation of the plan will begin with the formation of interdisciplinary faculty teams to support programmatic priorities. These teams will provide leadership to identify appropriate teaching approaches, educational content/materials, and outcome/impact measures for the organization. Furthermore, the teams will analyze training needs for current faculty and will work closely with Extension Administration and unit leaders to identify areas where faculty expertise does not exist. Individual faculty plans of work will be developed with support from the faculty teams.

Step Four: How will we market and monitor the plan?

Under the guidance of the Extension Marketing Committee, a marketing plan for the Florida Extension System will be developed. The primary objective will be to communicate state-wide programmatic priorities. Target audiences will include Extension clientele and stakeholders. Marketing efforts will also focus internally within UF and FAMU, including Boards of Trustees.

Finally, Extension Program Leaders will develop a process for monitoring organizational progress and changing programmatic priorities.