

**State Board of Agricultural Research and Education  
Comprehensive Review of the  
NDSU Extension Service**

**Submitted to the 65<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly Budget Section**

**March 21, 2018**

Contents

Executive Summary..... 3

Introduction and Background ..... 5

    PHASE ONE: SBARE Review..... 5

    PHASE TWO: Legislative Review in Conjunction with Governor’s Office ..... 6

    NDSU Extension Service Mission ..... 7

    SBARE Review Committee: Phase 1 Executive Summary ..... 9

SBARE Extension Review: Phase I Recommendations and Progress To Date..... 10

    Organized Citizen Input..... 10

    Educational Programs ..... 11

    Organizational Structure..... 13

    Funding ..... 15

    Branding, Public Relations and Marketing..... 16

SBARE Extension Review: Phase II Recommendations and Progress To Date..... 18

    Mission..... 18

    Existing programs..... 18

    Efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods for existing programs ..... 18

    Potential program changes..... 19

Appendix 1. Phase I Extension Review Committee Report..... 21

    Phase I Committee Members ..... 22

    Executive Summary, Phase I ..... 22

    Purpose ..... 23

    Components reviewed and recommendations ..... 24

Appendix 2: Phase II Extension Review Committee Report ..... 28

    Phase II Committee Members ..... 29

    Background: ..... 30

    Executive Summary, Phase II. .... 31

## Executive Summary

In late 2016, the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education began the process of conducting a comprehensive review of the NDSU Extension Service. The scope of the review focused on 1) Organized Citizen Input, 2) Educational Programs, 3) Organizational Structure, 4) Funding, 5) Changing Needs of Our Customer, and 6) Branding, Public Relations, and Marketing. This review process began on December 20, 2016. Review committee representatives included a broad cross section of stakeholders, SBARE members, and North Dakota citizens. The review process included both face to face meetings and the use of video conferencing technology to allow the committee to thoroughly review each aspect of the scope of the required committee work. During the 65<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, Senate Bill 2020 instructed the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education to conduct a study of the NDSU Extension Service in consultation with the Governor's Office. The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education was to study the duties and responsibilities of the North Dakota State University Extension Service and the study was to include a review of the mission, existing programs, the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery methods for existing programs, and potential program changes. The review proceeded in two phases, with Phase 1 concluding in June, 2017 and Phase 2 concluding with the submission of a draft report to SBARE in November, 2017. The culmination of both phases included the development of this final report.

Key recommendations from Phase 1 included encouraging the Extension Service to more actively engage in gathering input from stakeholders and citizens across all levels of the organization, recommending that the Extension Service continue to focus on transformational education, delivering programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H and youth development, family and consumer sciences, and community vitality. In addition, the committee also recommended that the Extension Service improve communication with decision makers and the public about its' collaborative relationships with agencies and industries in the state. Related to Organizational Structure, the committee recommended that the Extension Service improve efforts to clarify the role of county, area, and state specialists; be more deliberate in staffing plans so as to coordinate with campus-based departments and research extension centers to ensure needed expertise is available to stakeholders. With regard to Funding, the committee recommended that the Extension Service review and update the 'NDSU Extension Financial Partnership Between County and State Base Policy' and that the organization also seek to increase the use of fees or grants to provide cost recovery for programs. Related to the Changing Needs of Our Customer, the committee recommended that the NDSU Extension Service focus efforts on engaging 18-35 year old and 36-49 age demographics as these demographics will be vitally important to the future of the organization. Related to Branding, Public Relations, and Marketing, the committee recommended that the Extension Service develop a plan to better inform legislators and decision makers about the organization, increase the resources available for branding and marketing, and evaluate the current name and tag line. Lastly, the Phase 1 committee also recognized the need for further work. Related to the future of the organization, items that required further exploration and deliberation included, 1) the organization's administrative structure, 2) the state, area, and county staffing and programmatic structure, and 3) the sustainability of the current funding model which includes a blend of funding from counties, state and federal governments, as well as grants and contracts.

The Phase II committee met face to face three times. The committee made several recommendations and supported several recommendations and ideas brought forth by Director Boerboom. These included efforts to streamline the administrative structure in the NDSU Extension Service; efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods through restructuring Extension agent and area specialist roles, and to seek opportunities to engage younger age demographics with increased

emphasis on technology; and efforts to develop a more sustainable funding model by restructuring county partnerships.

In late 2017 and early 2018, the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education also solicited citizen input on priorities for the upcoming legislative session, as is their mandate. The board received nearly 150 pieces of written or oral testimony related to the NDSU Extension Service. The testimony is not summarized in this report but is available on the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education web site. Broadly, this testimony emphasized the importance of Extension to the citizens of North Dakota and highlighted the value of the local presence of Extension in communities across the state.

A significant amount of time was spent discussing the *NDSU Extension Financial Partnership Between County and State Base Policy*. This is the governing policy that forms the agreement between the NDSU Extension Service and county governments for funding local county offices. Much of the discussion centered around how to fund county programs equitably in a state with a wide variation in county populations especially in light of the budget reductions facing the NDSU Extension Service. Various funding models and cost share arrangements were considered. The Phase I committee reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of staffing models used by neighboring states, including how some states had moved to a regionalized system. One model which was considered was requiring low population counties to consider merging or sharing with a neighboring county or to pay a greater share of the cost of the Extension agent positions. However, after much testimony from Extension constituents, the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education asked Dr. Boerboom to work with the North Dakota Association of County Commissioners to come up with a common funding formula and common cost share agreement for all counties regardless of population. The target cost share in the draft agreement is a 40:60 (county:state) split of the salary and benefit costs for the Extension agent position. At the time of this writing, a final agreement has not been reached between the NDSU Extension Service and the North Dakota County Commissioners Association.

Concurrently with the review efforts in Phase II, members of the NDSU Extension Service administrative team were also working to address recommendations made by the Phase I committee. This report contains an update of the progress which has been made to date in implementing these recommendations, as well as background information and context to familiarize the reader with the mission, legislative mandates, and role of the Extension Service in the state of North Dakota.

The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education believe that the recommendations brought forth by the committees are sound and, when fully implemented, will allow the NDSU Extension Service to continue to serve the citizens of the state by providing transformational education, reaching broad cross sections of constituents, and serving as an unbiased source of information. SBARE also recognizes the importance of the review process especially as it relates to gathering organized citizen input and to conducting periodic reviews of the agencies it directs.

## Introduction and Background

On November 3, 2016, during a regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board for Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE), a motion was made by Keith Peltier “that SBARE requests the NDSU Extension Service to hire a facilitator to explore this review, form a Review Committee, and conduct a comprehensive review process of the NDSU Extension Service.” The motion carried, and the review process began December 20, 2016. The first phase of the review, described below, was facilitated by an independent consultant, Donna Rae Scheffert, president of Leadership Tools, Northfield, Minn. Mike Beltz, SBARE member, was review committee chair.

During the 65<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, SB 2020 instructed SBARE to conduct a study in consultation with the Governor’s Office. The bill requested specific items be studied, as follows:

### **SB 2020**

**SECTION 15. STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION – NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE STUDY - BUDGET SECTION REPORT.** During the 2017-18 interim, the state board of agricultural research and education, in consultation with the governor's office, shall study the duties and responsibilities of the North Dakota state university extension service. The study must include a review of the mission, existing programs, the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery methods for existing programs, and potential program changes. The state board of agricultural research and education shall report its findings and recommendations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the North Dakota state university extension service to the budget section of the legislative management by March 31, 2018.

Since the original process was already under way, the review proceeded in two phases: phase one as the work before the legislative request, and phase two as the process that included consultation from the Governor’s office. The review was completed in January 2018. The report of findings and recommendations was reviewed and approved by SBARE on March 16, 2018 and presented to the budget section of legislative management on March 21, 2018.

### PHASE ONE: SBARE Review

Once review committee membership was determined, the NDSU Extension Service developed a website for the committee to which logistics, operating guidelines, meeting schedule, membership roster, meeting agendas and minutes, and resource materials by meeting date were posted. The address is <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/sbare/ndsu-extension-service-comprehensive-review/phase-1>. This website will be referred to as “phase one website” hereafter.

#### **Comprehensive Review Committee Guidelines**

A document detailing the purpose, core value, membership, role, basic principles of committee membership and operating procedures is available at the phase one website. The scope of the review focused on 1) Organized Citizen Input, 2) Educational Programs, 3) Organizational Structure, 4) Funding, 5) Changing Needs of Our Customer, and 6) Branding, Public Relations, and Marketing.

#### **Review Committee Membership**

The committee was comprised of current and past SBARE members, and citizens who were representative of the subject matter and program areas of the NDSU Extension Service. The committee roster is available at the phase one website.

### **Meeting Schedule**

Four face-to-face and three videoconference meetings were held during phase one. The meeting schedule, meeting notes and supporting documents are posted on the phase one website.

### **Resources Presented**

At the review committee's request, NDSU Extension provided detailed data including analysis of demographics, needs assessments summaries, budget analysis, program design and delivery methods, etc. Each request was addressed, and all of the information is available on the phase one website, organized by the meeting at which it was presented.

Draft recommendations were presented to SBARE by the review committee in July 2017.

## **PHASE TWO: Legislative Review in Conjunction with Governor's Office**

In August 2017, SBARE reorganized the review committee to begin the second phase of the process. Documentation of phase two is contained within the SBARE website at <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/sbare/ndsu-extension-service-comprehensive-review/phase-2>. This website will be referred to as "phase two website" hereafter.

### **Areas for In-Depth Review**

In addition to the items identified in SB2020 (mission, existing programs, the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery methods for existing programs, and potential program changes), the committee specifically explored 1) the organization's administrative structure, 2) the state, area, and county staffing and programmatic structure, and 3) the sustainability of the current funding model which includes a blend of funding from counties, state and federal governments, as well as grants and contracts.

### **Review Committee Membership**

SBARE reorganized the committee to include five members from the phase one committee (Mike Beltz, Neal Fisher, Greg Lardy, Keith Peltier and Lyle Warner), one Governor's Office representative (Jace Beehler), SBARE member (Sen. Jerry Klein) plus two at-large members.

### **Meetings**

Three face-to-face committee meetings were held during phase two on August 16, September 8 and October 19, 2017 and were facilitated by Mike Beltz as committee chair. Agendas and minutes for these meetings are on the phase two website. Public input was taken about Extension's organizational structure and funding during the August 16, 2017 meeting.

### **Resources Presented**

Additional requests for information were provided. Those documents are available on the phase two website.

### **Post Review Committee Input**

Additional public testimony (43 oral and 112 written) in support of Extension and Extension needs were received during SBARE's biennial stakeholder input sessions that are used to receive input on research and Extension priorities in preparation for the legislative session. A summary of that testimony is available on the SBARE website which is <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/sbare/2017-stakeholder-input-1>.

## NDSU Extension Service Mission

The original mission of the NDSU Extension Service mission was described as through Extension's help "men and women may develop within themselves the ability to bring about a better condition in the community."

Thomas Cooper, North Dakota's first Extension director, 1914-1917

Today, the mission of the NDSU Extension Service is to provide science-based education that improves the economics, health and communities for North Dakotans.

### **Extension's creation and affiliation with Land Grant Universities.**

The NDSU Extension Service (NDSU Extension) has a rich history of extending the resources of North Dakota's land-grant university to the people throughout the state. A land-grant university is mandated by federal law to educate the people of its state and solve problems through academic, research and Extension programs. A land-grant university has a threefold mission: teach students, conduct research, and educate citizens of the state to improve their lives.

NDSU Extension complies with and functions under federal, state, and county mandates in accomplishing its mission.

**Federal Law.** In 1862, the Morrill Act established land grant universities for academic instruction and the Hatch Act of 1887 established the agricultural experiment stations at the land grant universities. The Smith Lever Act of May 8, 1914 established a system of cooperative extension services, connected to the land-grant universities, in order to inform people about current developments in agriculture, home economics, and related subjects. The Act's language includes the following excerpts: "...cooperative agricultural extension work between the agricultural [land-grant] colleges...and the United States Department of Agriculture, in order **to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects related to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same.**

**Extension work moreover shall consist of the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in said colleges, ...and imparting to such persons information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications, and otherwise; and this work shall be carried on in such manner as may be mutually agreed upon by the Secretary of Agriculture and the state agricultural college or colleges receiving the benefits of this Act."**

USDA's Administrative Handbook for Cooperative Extension Work (CHAPTER III. Section D. 2. Smith Lever, 1994) further defines these educational activities as:

“These funds are allocated to the State Cooperative Extension Services in order to aid in the diffusion among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to Agriculture, Natural Resources, Food and Nutrition, Family Education, Rural Development, Energy, and 4-H Youth Development.”

**State Law.** NDSU Extension has numerous state mandated functions defined by North Dakota Century Code that support specific agricultural and family interests, training, and support functions.

Extension responsibilities for commodity elections for barley, corn, dry pea and lentil, canola, sunflower, soybean and wheat.

**4.1-02-04. Election of county representative.** (barley)

**4.1-04-04. Election of county representative.** (corn)

**4.1-07-04. Election of county representative.** (dry pea and lentil)

**4.1-09-05. Election of county representative.** (sunflower)

**4.1-09-06. Election of county representative.** (canola)

**4.1-11-04. Election of county representative.** (soybean)

**4.1-13-05. Election of county representative.** (wheat)

Extension’s responsibilities for pesticide applicator training.

**4.1-33-07. Commercial and public applicator's certification.**

**4.1-33-12. Private applicators - Certification.**

Extension responsibilities in assisting the state soil conservation committee in their duties.

**4.1-20-06. Extension service assistance to state soil conservation committee – Duties.**

Defines authorization, budgeting, programming, and management of Extension agents.

**11-38. County Agents.**

The state of North Dakota accepts the provisions of the federal Smith Lever Act.

**15-12-09. Legislative assent to certain Acts of Congress and acceptance of grants thereunder.**

Defines a process to appoint regional dairy diagnostic teams.

**15-12-28. Dairy diagnostic teams.**

Defines the agreement from the Department of Human Services for Extension to design educational programs for families.

**50-06-06.10. Family life education program.**

**County Government.** Counties have authority to levy funds to support Extension work and an Extension agent per NDCC 11-38. This chapter defines the supervision of the Extension agent, budgeting, reporting, and other administration. As defined, the county and NDSU Extension jointly fund the Extension operations in the county. The cost share agreement titled “NDSU Extension Financial Partnership Between County and State” serves as the base policy for all counties in the state and has been endorsed by the North Dakota Association of Counties and the North Dakota County Commissioners Association.



## SBARE Review Committee: Phase 1 Executive Summary

In late 2016, the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education convened a committee to conduct a comprehensive review of the NDSU Extension Service. The committee, made up of twelve people, met face to face and via video conference seven times in early to mid-2017 to become familiar with the mission, organizational structure, funding, programming, and other aspects related to the NDSU Extension Service. The committee explored and made recommendations in six broad areas core to the NDSU Extension Service. These areas included 1) Organized Citizen Input, 2) Educational Programs, 3) Organizational Structure, 4) Funding, 5) Changing Needs of Our Customer, and 6) Branding, Public Relations, and Marketing. The committee made a total of 30 recommendations related to these areas.

The specific recommendations are detailed in the final report that follows. Broadly, in the area of Organized Citizen Input, the committee made several recommendations that encouraged the Extension Service to more actively engage in gathering input from stakeholders and citizens across all levels of the organization. This includes a recommendation to solicit organized statewide input every five years. In the area of Educational Programming, the committee recommended that the Extension Service continue to focus on transformational education, delivering programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H and youth development, family and consumer sciences, and community vitality. The committee also recommended that the Extension Service improve communication with decision makers and the public about its' collaborative relationships with agencies and industries in the state. In the area of Organizational Structure, the committee recommended that the Extension Service improve efforts to clarify the role of county, area, and state specialists; be more deliberate in staffing plans so as to coordinate with campus-based departments and research extension centers to ensure needed expertise is available to stakeholders. The committee also recommended that the Extension Service establish a pilot program with counties to share staff and expertise. Related to Funding, the committee recommended that the Extension Service review and update the 'NDSU Extension Financial Partnership Between County and State Base Policy' and that the organization also seek to increase the use of fees or grants to provide cost recovery for programs. Related to the Changing Needs of Our Customer, the committee recommended that the NDSU Extension Service focus efforts on engaging 18-35 year old and 36-49 age demographics as these demographics will be vitally important to the future of the organization. The committee also recommended that the Extension Service optimize the use of delivery methods to best engage stakeholders in program delivery. Related to Branding, Public Relations, and Marketing, the committee recommended that the Extension Service develop a plan to better inform legislators and decision makers about the organization, increase the resources available for branding and marketing, and evaluate the current name and tag line.

Lastly, the committee also recognized the need for further work. Related to the future of the organization, items requiring further exploration and deliberation include, 1) the organization's administrative structure, 2) the state, area, and county staffing and programmatic structure, and 3) the sustainability of the current funding model which includes a blend of funding from counties, state and federal governments, as well as grants and contracts. These items require additional exploration to determine how to best meet the needs of North Dakota citizens as the organization moves forward toward the future.

## SBARE Extension Review: Phase I Recommendations and Progress To Date

### Organized Citizen Input

Extension’s educational programming is intended to be grassroots, locally driven and arise out of identified needs by citizens. Extension uses organized citizen processes to receive this input. Extension administration encourages formally-organized advisory councils within counties, but has not required them. The major roles of an advisory council are to work with county Extension staff to conduct needs assessments, serve as advocates of Extension and North Dakota State University and assist with communicating the value of Extension to local citizens and decision-makers. Extension program teams receive input on statewide needs through the agents and specialists who have received input from their clientele. This information is used to develop signature programs and team plans of work. Many state-level programs have formal advisory councils that provide input on program needs and directions. The NDSU Extension Service also conducted a statewide needs assessment in fall 2015, which was focused on state needs and did not directly target Extension needs.

**Key Findings:** The rationale for why and how citizen input is gathered and formal needs assessment process used were reviewed and compared to other states. Local advisory councils were deemed as highly valuable in guiding local Extension programs and connecting agents with local stakeholders and the use of advisory councils needs to increase. The process for the statewide Community Forums and results were reviewed. The frequency of statewide needs assessment was insufficient. Citizens have multiple opportunities to provide feedback and agent and specialist survey results indicate high satisfaction levels by Extension users. The SBARE process also provides a statewide opportunity for input and establishing Extension priorities. The committee emphasized the need for continued engagement and noted the need to clarify the misperception that Extension only programs in agriculture. Extension also needs to clearly market Extension’s identity.

A. Organized Citizen Input Recommendations	Progress to date: 2-1-18
1. If a county advisory council is not in place, then it should be strongly encouraged, when appropriate.	Twenty one counties had active advisory councils prior to the review. Extension has set a goal of 42 counties with active advisory councils by December 2018. To assist agents in forming councils, staff revised “Working Effectively with Advisory Councils and Other Leadership Groups” (Aug 2017) and provided online training.
2. It is imperative that Extension staff at the county, area and state level have engagement with multiple stakeholders.	Building relationships and working with stakeholders is a core value for Extension. This engagement is a point of emphasis during new staff orientation and it is being reiterated with messaging to current staff as it is a basis of transformational education. Engagement will be addressed in future branding efforts.
3. Inform citizens that there is a process for stakeholder input.	The best process to fully communicate input options is under deliberation. Input into the SBARE needs assessment process was initiated in fall 2017 and resulted in substantial citizen input. An internal marketing committee will make recommendations for continued communications.
4. The NDSU Extension Service will have a process for organized statewide input every five years	Based on the successful forums in 2015, which were held at 11 communities, forums will be scheduled for fall 2020.
5. NDSU Extension should develop a statewide advisory council modeled on the guiding principles from University of Minnesota Extension. The council will be advisory to	The University of Minnesota was contacted for insights and policies/procedures. An organizational website was completed

<p>Extension administration with a similar function to the REC advisory boards. The council will not be advisory to SBARE.</p>	<p>and initial members have been recruited. The first meeting is scheduled for April, 2018.</p>
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**Educational Programs**

Extension staff are challenged to meet the diverse needs and expectations of residents from all ages and walks of life. High quality educational programs require that the staff are prepared to work in environments that involve significant time, work and meetings with Extension users combined with delivery of technical information. The combination of developing these trusted working relationships and educational programs results in people making decisions that improve their farm, ranch, family or community. This is described as transformational education and benefits the public as a whole. Service and content transmission (sharing information) are areas that consume considerable staff time. These activities are likely to have high value to local constituents, but may produce results that are less visible to key leaders and decision-makers like county commissions, legislators, other governmental leaders and even Extension administration. State and area specialists provide leadership in developing and delivering programs, but they cannot educate all constituents directly. Specialists use a combination of training agents and industry or agency partners to deliver programs in addition to directly delivering programs to clientele. Extension also provides support for agents and specialists to use social media and distance delivery technology to engage audiences.

**Key Findings:** Extension approaches adult education by using the transformational education model. A description and examples of all 4 quadrants of the model was presented, including program examples. Many organizations provide information, and anyone can google a topic. However, Extension provides quality programs that lead to behavior change as a result of the transformational model and techniques.

Just as society’s needs have changed over the years, so has NDSU Extension. In North Dakota, agriculture continues to be a key factor in the economy and the majority of Extension programming relates to agriculture. However, NDSU Extension continues to adapt to the needs of its clientele, and North Dakota constituents are concerned about a variety of key issues facing our citizens. Helping North Dakotans lead productive lives and build stronger communities has been part of the Extension history and remains important today. By addressing the critical needs of North Dakotans in 10 areas, Extension remains relevant for all citizens today.

- Leadership and Civic Engagement
- Livestock Management
- Crop Management
- Natural Resource Management
- Horticulture and Forestry
- Farm Business Management
- 4-H Youth Development
- Personal and Family Finance
- Human Development and Family Science
- Nutrition, Food Safety and Health

Extension programs are results oriented and they are evaluated to provide data to prove Extension programs are changing behaviors, policies and practices, and making a positive difference in the lives of constituents. Misconceptions were identified and clarified: Extension does not duplicate the efforts of other agencies. Extension is often invited or contracted with to deliver educational programs in partnership with state agencies. The Family Nutrition Program is one example where grant funds from the Department of Human Services provide 100% of salary and operating for these county based staff. Most state agencies target policy and regulation, while Extension targets prevention education with skills and knowledge to prevent problems, increase efficiencies and change behaviors. Prevention saves money, time and is an efficient method to address critical issues for North Dakotans. Educational programs for public and private good were also clarified. Educational programs make a difference to the individual involved (private good). Programs also benefit the general public (public good) by saving tax dollars, responding to droughts and disasters, and making individuals, families and communities in ND strong.

<p><b>B. Educational Program Recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>Progress to date: 2-1-18</b></p>
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<p>1. Extension continue allocation of resources among program areas as approximately 55% agriculture and natural resources; 20% 4-H youth development; 20% family and consumer sciences; and 5% community vitality.</p>	<p>Although Extension realigned family and consumer sciences with community vitality under the new program title Family and Community Wellness, Extension will continue to allocate resources at these approximate levels. Minor deviations may result because of funding changes such as the loss of grant funding. Suggested allocations have been integrated into current planning and funding discussions. As new issue teams are formed to address critical state issues (i.e. farm financial stress) adjustments will require contributions from multiple program areas/disciplines.</p>
<p>2. Different levels of expertise will be provided at county, area and state levels to meet North Dakota’s needs.</p>	<p>Recent input to SBARE from citizens and from county commissioners has emphasized continued support of Extension agents at the county level with support from specialists. Extension will continue to support this model.</p>
<p>3. Extension should continue its approach of focusing on transformational education.</p>	<p>Transformational education was emphasized at the Extension 2017 fall conference and district meetings. The new PEARS (Program Evaluation and Reporting System) adopted in 2018 reinforces transformational education. Transformational education will be a new component of marketing efforts.</p>
<p>4. Extension should continue to balance efforts among information, facilitation, content transmission and high impact programs based on North Dakota residents’ needs.</p>	<p>In keeping with the transformational education model, Extension will continue to use a blend of information, facilitation, content transmission and high impact programs to achieve outcomes that affect conditions.</p>
<p>5. Extension should continue to use research and evidence-based information and processes as it conducts educational programs in agriculture and natural resources, community vitality, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth development.</p>	<p>Extension is respected as a source of trusted, nonbiased, science-based information and education. Consequently, Extension’s information is valued and credible. Extension will continue to provide this information to serve the citizens of North Dakota.</p>
<p>6. Extension has an educational mission and should continue to collaborate with other willing agency partners that provide regulation, intervention services and other programs.</p>	<p>Extension collaborates with agencies and other partners to increase efficiency and serve the educational role and reach across the state that partners lack. Department of Health, Department of Public Instruction, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rural Development and Farm Service Agency are recent examples of collaboration where Extension was able to fulfill our educational mission.</p>
<p>7. Extension should improve communication to decision makers and the public about its collaborative relationships with other agencies and industries.</p>	<p>Extension understands the need to increase the understanding of decision makers and public about the value and efficiency of collaborative relationships and will use this report in part to achieve that outcome.</p>
<p>8. Extension should continue to provide educational programs in all of its four program areas, i.e. agriculture and natural resources, community vitality, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth development, based on the needs assessments received from Extension stakeholders.</p>	<p>Extension will continue to respond to priority needs in these program areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture and Natural Resources</li> <li>• Family and Community Wellness (this program area is the new combination of existing Community Vitality and Family and Consumer Sciences programs)</li> <li>• 4-H Youth Development</li> </ul>

## Organizational Structure

The NDSU Extension Service develops and delivers educational programs and services through a statewide network. Administrators provide oversight to the four program areas and personnel. State specialists develop and provide leadership for programs. Most specialists are on the NDSU campus and often hold faculty positions in academic departments with joint research or teaching appointments. Area specialists develop and lead programs for the county staff in their respective region and are often located at Research Extension Centers. Local Extension agents serve all 53 counties in the state and the four Native American reservations. Agents deliver programs to meet the needs of the people in the counties they serve. Agricultural Communications is a unit affiliated with Extension and Extension also supports staff within the Agriculture Budget Office.

**Key Findings:** The organization includes local education by agents, supported with expertise by specialists, and coordinated by administration. Roles and responsibilities of each position were reviewed. Joint appointments with the University of Minnesota and South Dakota State University for six specialists were viewed as an efficient method to serve specific needs. Committee members interviewed surrounding state leaders to understand strengths and weaknesses of their systems. Findings indicate that regionalization may allow specialization, but local connections are lost. In-state interviews disclosed that agencies value collaboration with Extension and that county commissioners support agents. The role of agents in local delivery is valued by and was endorsed along with its rationale, but small counties may need to share agents. Staffing levels and programming were reviewed. Extension administration shared a survey of workplace culture at NDSU Extension, which showed that Extension rated high in all 12 areas of adaptability, mission, involvement and consistency. Agent turnover has trended downward in recent years. The organization is adopting a digital system for program planning and reporting (PEARS) which will improve program effectiveness and administrative efficiency. NDSU has an adequate (efficient) administrative and support structure in place. Extension’s delivery of programs was found to be proportional to ND diversity based on face-to-face contacts.

C. Organizational Structure Recommendations	Progress to date: 2-1-18
<p>1. Increase internal and external communications on area and state specialists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The responsibilities of state and area specialists in providing leadership, expertise, training and developing of Extension programs supports the Extension mission and delivery through Extension agents. The connections among specialists and agents enable the reciprocal flow of information. These responsibilities and relationships need to be clearly communicated so Extension staff and Extension users effectively and efficiently access Extension programs and information. The titles used by Extension for state and area specialists should be reviewed to minimize confusion. The roles and responsibilities of area specialists to the mission of the Research Extension Centers (REC) where they are stationed should be reviewed. Their primary responsibility should be to the Extension mission.</li> </ul>	<p>To address the public confusion that exists on the responsibilities of area specialists, the title “area specialist” will be simplified to “specialist”. Internally, specialists will be described as campus-based specialists or off-campus specialists. The majority of off-campus specialists have a work station at a Research Extension Center (REC). The state-level expectations of off-campus specialists have been shared with REC directors. The increased emphasis on state responsibilities will reduce requests for redundancy in staffing among RECs. New expectations will avoid the creation of “super agents”. Along with reviewing the roles of specialists, updated positions descriptions are being drafted and will be implemented in 2018.</p>
<p>2. Extension should be deliberate in staffing plans so that positions are coordinated among departments, RECs, or other positions so resources are deployed effectively across the system and state. Planning needs to include Extension, department and REC administration; advisory councils; and SBARE.</p>	<p>The refilling of any current vacancies will continue to be reviewed to optimize the use of staff resources. A current example of a potential staff change includes two RECs with departmental input. Legislative initiatives involving new staff requests for RECs through SBARE will require greater deliberation on the need within the system rather than the individual need of the REC.</p>

<p>3. Expand state partnerships in niche and/or specialty areas to create synergy and make more resources available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDSU Extension has been a regional leader in collaborating with other states for joint specialist positions with current agreements for five long-term and one temporary specialists. Extension should continue to seek opportunities to enter partnerships with other states to create synergy and make more resources available in niche and/or specialty areas (and to increase efficiency).</li> </ul>	<p>Extension continues to seek opportunities, which often arise with vacancies, to partner with neighboring states to hire staff to serve limited need programs, specialized disciplines or distinct geographies. This increases our efficiency when a full-time position cannot be justified, but a shared position provides needed expertise. Seven positions are currently shared with UMN and SDSU in sugarbeet, potato, sheep, nutrition, gerontology. In addition, Extension benefits from collaborating with regional and national Extension partners on numerous programs (i.e. 4-H, ag economics, weed science, etc.).</p>
<p>4. The responsibilities and expertise of Extension agents needs to be based on the county needs. The county staffing model should remain flexible to maintain service to every county. Decisions will be made in consultation with county commissioners. Decision factors may include needs, population, agents in neighboring counties, etc., and willingness to pay for support.</p>	<p>Extension has drafted “Criteria for Filling NDSU Extension Agent Positions” to guide prioritization of vacant Extension agent positions. A revision to the Base Policy for financial partnerships with counties was drafted and shared with county commissioners. Goals of the revision included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To maintain access of all county residents to NDSU Extension programs</li> <li>○ To achieve greater focus and specialization</li> <li>○ To maintain 4-H program access in every county</li> <li>○ To enable greater efficiency and sharing of agent and other resources among willing counties</li> <li>○ To sustain an economically viable county staffing model</li> </ul> <p>Greater agent specialization was not supported by commissioners nor was merging of counties with smaller populations. Endorsement of a modified agent funding model where all counties are treated the same is being sought from county commissioners. The modified funding model will provide greater sustainability and will allow priority vacancies to be filled. Extension agent position descriptions will continue to be discussed in partnership with commissioners to ensure county needs are addressed.</p>
<p>5. Extension services should be shared between or among counties based on programmatic needs and availability of fiscal resources in consultation with counties. (This needs to be reflected in the base policy with counties).</p>	<p>Extension services will continue to be driven by local needs and in consultation with county commissioners. Stakeholders clearly voiced how they value their Extension agent and their desire to maintain services in their counties.</p>
<p>6. Extension should pilot innovative models with interested counties to share staff and expertise.</p>	<p>Extension will remain open to novel staffing models in consultation with counties. Extension would like to pilot “enhanced” local Extension programs where specialized programs are supported by local soft funding and implemented for fixed time periods. Extension is also examining efficiencies in conducting commodity elections and private pesticide applicator training.</p>

## Funding

The funding base for the NDSU Extension Service is a combination of county, state, federal, grant and contract funds. Each of these funding sources brings opportunities and challenges, but collectively provide the financial capacity and leveraging capability for the organization to accomplish its mission and purpose.

**Key Findings:** Extension had an adjusted (post allotment) biennial budget for 2015-2017 of \$53,651,270 with 51% from state general funds, 21% from county funds, 14% from federal funds and 14% from grants and contracts. Expenditures are primarily for staff because of Extension’s educational role with 82% for salaries, 15% for operating, 1% for equipment and 2% of other expenses. Extension agents are funded under a uniform base policy with counties. The policy is titled “NDSU Extension Financial Partnership between County and State.” The base policy defines that 50% of salary and all fringe benefits are paid by Extension and 50% of the agent salary is paid by the county plus other office operating expenses. The base policy was supported county commissioners who were interviewed. The base policy was endorsed as an effective framework to provide equitable partnerships and guidelines between counties and NDSU Extension in supporting county-based Extension programs. Salary expenditures were reviewed by program area. County programs and the agriculture and natural resources program area combined to account for 69% of total salary expense. Extension’s grants and cost recovery processes were reviewed and examples from each program area demonstrated how fees are being used to augment the delivery of Extension programs.

<b>D. Funding Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date: 2-1-18</b>
<p>1. NDSU Extension should review and update the “NDSU Extension Financial Partnership between County and State Base Policy” in consultation with appropriate members of the N.D. Association of Counties. The funding options should be prioritized based on Extension’s preference, and a section should be added for options when a county has the funds to fill a position but Extension doesn’t.</p>	<p>Extension has drafted a revised base policy and has shared this draft with a majority of counties at this time. These meetings have included how the cost share agreement may increase the county obligation to support their Extension agent(s). The funding options have been prioritized.</p>
<p>2. NDSU Extension should seek to increase the use of fees or grants to provide cost recovery for programs, especially when the programs have significant private value.</p>	<p>Extension has and will continue to seek greater cost recovery, especially for programs that have private good as primary outcomes. Following the practice of many states, 4-H has implemented a participation fee to aid in supporting the cost of programming. Extension will use 2017 data as a benchmark to assess progress.</p>

## Changing Needs of Our Customer

New mediums of access and delivery of educational material continue to evolve. Many of these opportunities are driven by technological change that provides greater access to information via the web, social media and on-line learning resources. Some research suggests that people want high touch with high tech. How new technology is integrated with traditional programs to achieve transformational learning needs to be considered.

**Key Findings:** Trends on public use of internet and social media by age group indicated increasing use of technology, but distinct differences by age and platforms. Given Extension’s mission is still transformational education, Extension users and staff were surveyed on preferences of receiving information and delivering information, respectively. A high percentage of current Extension users prefer traditional delivery methods, but Facebook, texting, webinars, and websites were other technologies frequently mentioned. Extension reported the diversity of delivery approaches and technologies that are currently being used by specialists and agents and fit with different outcomes such as creating awareness, conveying information, or resulting in implementation. The committee discussed that the transfer of information must be relevant, customized to receptive customers, and fit the context of the situation/issue, as one size does not fit all. It needs to be both high tech and high touch. Extension’s training on program development, the use digital communication tools and skills in using these tools averaged over 4 on a 0-7 scale. However, nearly 2/3rds of staff perceive barriers to greater use of digital communication tools and list the first barrier as lack of time and the second barrier for agents is that the audience is not receptive. In total Extension staff reported over 13

million indirect contacts with North Dakotans through various media and technologies in 2016. Across all delivery platforms, approximately 265 Extension staff are supported by only 14.7 FTE of Agriculture Communications staff.

<b>E. Changing Needs of Our Customer Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date: 2-1-18</b>
1. Extension must be seen as tech savvy/credible, so continued focus on meeting the changing needs of the customer is recommended.	Extension concurs with this recommendation and has internally identified an enhanced web and technology presence as a top priority for SBARE’s consideration. Distance education, dynamic web presence, and social media will be emphasized with issue teams along with individual programs.
2. Extension should determine ways to engage 18- to 35-year-old residents, as they are our future audience.	Extension is communicating this need with staff for future program efforts. An efficient tracking method needs to be established.
3. Extension should determine ways to engage the age demographic of 36 to 49 years, the decision-makers.	Extension is communicating this need with staff for future program efforts. An efficient tracking method needs to be established.
4. Extension should optimize the use of delivery methods (who, what, why, how) to best engage stakeholders in the delivery of their programs.	Distance education and social media will be emphasized with issue teams. However, the success of transformational education may still include educational methods that rely on in-person programs and activities.
5. Technology strategies should be made in the context of the content/issue from the customer perspective.	Extension agrees that the needs of the audience will drive the technologies used for the educational program.

### Branding, Public Relations and Marketing

Effective branding ensures that people will know who you are and what you do. Throughout the review process there were many times when committee members and surveys of the general public found that Extension programs and were not readily identifiable by the public. This issue was also noted in the last study of Extension in 1997. Branding, marketing and promotional work is often a significant budget item for businesses, but no such budget is available to a state agency.

**Key Findings:** The NDSU Extension Service has a history of high awareness among North Dakotans. Based on the Copernicus study in 2008, 83% of North Dakotans heard of Extension compared to 38% nationally and 83% of North Dakotans were aware of 4-H, but only 22% knew it was part of Extension. A new branding effort of NDSU Extension is underway and materials were reviewed. Because of the educational role of staff, Extension employees are a major part of Extension’s branding. Current marketing efforts to legislators, commissioners and others were reviewed and include: annual highlights (hard copy report), county narratives by agents, legislative updates by district, and infographics highlighting outcome-based programs. Despite these efforts, many decision makers lack a good understanding of Extension’s mission, structure and value. Comparisons with other state Extension programs in the region indicate that the resources allocated to branding and marketing are not adequate.

<b>F. Branding, Public Relations and Marketing Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date: 2-1-18</b>
1. NDSU Extension should develop a plan to inform state legislators and county commissioners on the mission, structure and impacts of Extension. This may include formal meetings, activities of advisory councils and informal testimonials from citizens.	County commissioners: Discussions of agent staffing changes have been initiated with county commissioners and county commissioners have been engaged to provide input to SBARE. Ongoing engagement is needed for the legislative process.



	<p>State legislators: Following the completion of the SBARE review, Extension will launch education and meetings with legislators on the reinvention of Extension highlighting mission, purpose (transformational education), structure, and impacts.</p> <p>Advisory councils and public: Following the completion of the SBARE review, educational materials will be developed for county advisory councils and the public and meetings will be held by agents.</p>
<p>2. Increase the resources that the NDSU Extension Service is securing and allocating to branding and marketing.</p>	<p>Extension is evaluating how to adjust the existing budget to increase communications staff or projects for marketing in an efficient and effective manner.</p>
<p>3. NDSU Extension Service staff members are expected to get out, and to create awareness and relationships to connect with people in their service area as an important marketing strategy.</p>	<p>Extension emphasizes personal communication and relationship building in existing new staff orientation. An increased emphasis will be made with all staff on the critical nature of this marketing strategy.</p>
<p>4. Extension engage in a process to evaluate the current name and tag line, and other naming options.</p>	<p>The name change to NDSU Extension is planned and requires State Board of Higher Education approval and changes to ND Century Code, which will be best handled as a change in the Extension budget bill.</p>

## SBARE Extension Review: Phase II Recommendations and Progress to Date

Based on the results of the Phase I Review Committee, the Phase II Review Committee was specifically asked to focus on the following areas: 1) the organization’s administrative structure, 2) the state, area, and county staffing and programmatic structure, and 3) the sustainability of the current funding model which includes a blend of funding from counties, state and federal governments, as well as grants and contracts. The committee met with Director Boerboom three times (August 16, September 8, and October 19). During the course of the meetings, Director Boerboom reported on the progress which had been made to address the recommendations from the Phase I Review Committee.

### Key Findings

The following outlines the Phase II Review Committee’s findings and Extension’s responses to date. The findings and responses which follow are outlined into sections based on the language and areas identified in SB 2020.

<b>Mission – findings</b>	<b>Progress to date: 2-1-2018</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension provides science-based, non-formal education with transformational outcomes</li> <li>• NDSU Extension Service is fulfilling its federal mission; no duplication of mission or mission creep was found</li> <li>• Extension is fulfilling multiple state mandated functions</li> <li>• Extension collaborates with counties to fulfill local needs based on local input</li> <li>• Extension collaborates with federal and state agencies to fulfill educational objectives and is not duplicating the mission of other agencies; partnerships are created at the invitation of other agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension is continuing to leverage partnerships with federal and state agencies to efficiently and effectively deliver programs in response to state needs.</li> <li>• Extension district directors are in direct dialogue with county commissioners on filling existing vacancies based on county needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Existing programs – findings</b>	<b>Progress to date: 2-1-2018</b>
<p>Extension’s program areas serve the diverse needs of North Dakotans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension programs in Ag &amp; Natural Resources (ANR), Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), 4-H Youth Development, and Community vitality (CV) serve critical needs of North Dakotans to improve their economic, health, and communities</li> <li>• FCS and CV program areas will be combined to achieve greater administrative efficiency; the new unit title is Family and Community Wellness (FCW)</li> <li>• Extension will increase the use of issue-based teams to improve responsiveness and program effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On January 1, 2018, the Family and Consumer Sciences and Community Vitality program areas were combined under the program Family and Community Wellness with administrative oversight of a single program leader.</li> <li>• The first issue team was initiated on farm financial stress and they held co-hosted the <i>Life Beyond Breaking Even: Farm Economy Summit</i> in January 2018.</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods for existing programs – findings</b>	<b>Progress to date: 2-1-2018</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local input drives programs and maintains responsiveness to local issues</li> <li>• Local delivery is valued and effective because it adapts information to local conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension has set a goal of 42 counties with active advisory councils by December 2018.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restructuring of county staffing model and base policy is in process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Modifications will increase the efficiency of state funding, which is leveraged with county funding</li> <li>○ Flexibility will be supported to provide opportunities for specialization to enhance effectiveness and program focus at the county level</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Restructuring roles and responsibilities of area specialists as off-campus specialists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To increase efficiency of funding by strategically placing specialists at RECs</li> <li>○ To increase the effectiveness of program support provided by off-campus specialists</li> <li>○ To improve coordination with campus-based specialists</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increased targeting of younger demographics of adult audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revised base policy proposal has been shared with a majority of the counties and is under consideration with ND Association of Counties.</li> <li>• Area and state specialists will be referred to as off- and on-campus specialists, respectively, and their roles and responsibilities are being clarified to improve their support to Extension agents and the public.</li> <li>• Extension will increase the use of technology in program delivery to reach younger age demographics.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential program changes – findings</b></p>	<p><b>Progress to date: 2-1-2018</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative restructuring should be evaluated to optimize efficiency while maintaining effective support of staff, programs and accountability to federal, state, county and external partners.</li> <li>• County staffing should be sustained to respond to local needs in partnership with counties although the funding model needs to be sustainable.</li> <li>• Increased citizen input should be pursued to ensure Extension programs are developed to serve the needs of local, regional and state needs across all program areas.</li> <li>• Improved efforts to educate the public about Extension and an increased statewide marketing effort are needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 1, 2017, county administration was restructured from four into three districts with the reduction of one district director.</li> <li>• January 1, 2018, the Family and Consumer Science and Community Vitality program areas were combined under Family and Community Wellness with a single program leader, reducing administration by 0.5 FTE.</li> <li>• January 1, 2018, the Extension Leadership Team was restructured for efficiency.</li> <li>• In partnership with the ND Association of County Commissioners, the base funding model is proposed to be modified to increase the proportion of county funding to fund Extension agents. This would be implemented for the 2019 county budget year. The initial proposal to encourage merging of smaller counties was withdrawn after public input to SBARE (Senator Klein motion passed at 1-12-18 meeting was to treat all counties the same). The current proposal under consideration by the ND Association of County Commissioners has all counties using the same funding model. The option for counties to share agents or merge remains.</li> <li>• The number of county advisory councils will be increased to further increase local engagement and responsiveness. A state-level ‘Citizen Advisory Council’ is forming and first meeting will be held in April 2018 to formalize ongoing citizen input. A state-wide needs assessment will be conducted every 5 years.</li> <li>• Extension will have an increased budgetary commitment to communicating Extension’s mission, programs and outcomes. An internal marketing team has been formed and is developing strategic plan by April 2018.</li> <li>• The name NDSU Extension Service will be changed to NDSU Extension to avoid confusion with service providing</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension is adopting PEARS (Program Evaluation and Reporting System) which will enhance the organization’s ability to plan, develop and report impacts of programs and improve staff efficiency.</li> <li>• Extension should increase their emphasis on cost recovery for specific programs to supplement funding.</li> </ul>	<p>agencies. This will be accomplished through both SBHE processes and the budget bill for NDSU Extension in the next legislative session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEARS was launched January 1, 2018.</li> <li>• A 4-H participation fee was instituted October 2017 and a review of other educational programs is underway to assess capacity for additional cost recovery.</li> </ul>
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**Final summary:** As a result of the review, the committee made several recommendations and supported several ideas and options brought forth by Director Boerboom. These included efforts to streamline the administrative structure in the NDSU Extension Service; efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods through restructuring Extension agent and off-campus specialist roles, and to seek opportunities to engage younger age demographics with increased emphasis on technology; and efforts to develop a more sustainable funding model by restructuring county partnerships. These recommendations were sent to SBARE for final review and discussion (February, 2018).

SBARE voted on March 16, 2018 to support the final report and believes these changes will allow the NDSU Extension Service to continue to meet the needs of North Dakota citizens by delivering transformational education. Furthermore, these changes will position the organization to continue to be an unbiased source of science-based information for North Dakota citizens well into the future.

Appendix 1. Phase I Extension Review Committee Report

**Extension Review Committee Report**

**Submitted to the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education**

**July 27, 2017**

### Phase I Committee Members

**Mike Beltz, SBARE, Committee Chair**

**Josh Askvig, ND AARP**

**Lee Briese, Crop Consultant**

**Bill Davis, USDA Rural Development**

**Dean Entzminger, Logan County Commissioner**

**Neal Fisher, ND Wheat Commission**

**Lance Hill, Bank of North Dakota**

**Greg Lardy, NDSU Agriculture**

**Keith Peltier, SBARE**

**JoAnn Rodenbiker, SBARE**

**Leann Schafer, ND 4-H Foundation**

**Lyle Warner, SBARE**

### Executive Summary, Phase I

In late 2016, the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education convened a committee to conduct a comprehensive review of the NDSU Extension Service. The committee, made up of twelve people, met face to face and via video conference six times in early to mid-2017 to become familiar with the mission, organizational structure, funding, programming, and other aspects related to the NDSU Extension Service. The committee explored and made recommendations in six broad areas core to the NDSU Extension Service. These areas included 1) Organized Citizen Input, 2) Educational Programs, 3) Organizational Structure, 4) Funding, 5) Changing Needs of Our Customer, and 6) Branding, Public Relations, and Marketing. The committee made a total of 30 recommendations related to these areas.

The specific recommendations are detailed in the report that follows. Broadly, in the area of Organized Citizen Input, the committee made several recommendations that encouraged the Extension Service to more actively engage in gathering input from stakeholders and citizens across all levels of the organization. This includes a recommendation to solicit organized statewide input every five years. In the area of Educational Programming, the committee recommended that the Extension Service continue to focus on transformational education, delivering programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H and youth development, family and consumer sciences, and community vitality. The committee also recommended that the Extension Service improve communication with decision makers and the public about its' collaborative relationships with agencies and industries in the state. In the area of Organizational Structure, the committee recommended that the Extension Service improve efforts to clarify the role of county, area, and state specialists; be more deliberate in staffing plans so as to coordinate with campus-based departments and research extension centers to ensure needed expertise is available to stakeholders. The committee also recommended that

the Extension Service establish a pilot program with counties to share staff and expertise. Related to Funding, the committee recommended that the Extension Service review and update the 'NDSU Extension Financial Partnership Between County and State Base Policy' and that the organization also seek to increase the use of fees or grants to provide cost recovery for programs. Related to the Changing Needs of Our Customer, the committee recommended that the NDSU Extension Service focus efforts on engaging 18-35 year old and 36-49 age demographics as these demographics will be vitally important to the future of the organization. The committee also recommended that the Extension Service optimize the use of delivery methods to best engage stakeholders in program delivery. Related to Branding, Public Relations, and Marketing, the committee recommended that the Extension Service develop a plan to better inform legislators and decision makers about the organization, increase the resources available for branding and marketing, and evaluate the current name and tag line.

Lastly, the committee also recognized the need for further work. Related to the future of the organization, items requiring further exploration and deliberation include, 1) the organization's administrative structure, 2) the state, area, and county staffing and programmatic structure, and 3) the sustainability of the current funding model which includes a blend of funding from counties, state and federal governments, as well as grants and contracts. These items require additional exploration to determine how to best meet the needs of North Dakota citizens as the organization moves forward toward the future.

## Purpose

### a. SBARE motion Nov. 3, 2016

Keith Peltier made a motion that SBARE requests the NDSU Extension Service to hire a facilitator to explore this review, form a Review Committee, and conduct a comprehensive review process of the NDSU Extension Service.

### b. SB 2020

**SECTION 15. STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION – NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE STUDY - BUDGET SECTION REPORT.** During the 2017-18 interim, the state board of agricultural research and education, in consultation with the governor's office, shall study the duties and responsibilities of the North Dakota state university extension service. The study must include a review of the mission, existing programs, the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery methods for existing programs, and potential program changes. The state board of agricultural research and education shall report its findings and recommendations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the North Dakota state university extension service to the budget section of the legislative management by March 31, 2018.

## Components reviewed and recommendations

### c. Organized citizen input

#### i. Recommendations

1. If a county advisory council is not in place, then it should be strongly encouraged, when appropriate.
2. It is imperative that Extension staff at the county, area and state level have engagement with multiple stakeholders.
3. Inform citizens that there is a process for stakeholder input.
4. The NDSU Extension Service will have a process for organized statewide input every five years.
5. NDSU Extension should develop a statewide advisory council modeled on the guiding principles from University of Minnesota Extension. The council will be advisory to Extension administration with a similar function to the REC advisory boards. The council will not be advisory to SBARE.
  - a. From UMN Extension Guiding Principles: The Citizens' Advisory Committee is a network of citizens who believe in the mission and values of Extension, who reflect the diversity of Minnesota's communities, who are willing to advise Extension administration at the big picture level, and who are willing to assist with grassroots support-building. The purpose of this committee is to provide feedback and perspective to Extension administration by serving as the eyes and ears of Extension's diverse clientele in communities throughout Minnesota, and to support Extension's public relations and advocacy goals for greater awareness and access.

### d. Educational programs

#### i. Recommendations

1. Extension continue allocation of resources among program areas as approximately 55% agriculture and natural resources; 20% 4-H youth development; 20% family and consumer sciences; and 5% community vitality.
2. Different levels of expertise will be provided at county, area and state levels to meet North Dakota's needs.
3. Extension should continue its approach of focusing on transformational education.
4. Extension should continue to balance efforts among information, facilitation, content transmission and high impact programs based on North Dakota residents' needs.
5. Extension should continue to use research and evidence-based information and processes as it conducts educational programs in



agriculture and natural resources, community vitality, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth development.

6. Extension has an educational mission and should continue to collaborate with other willing agencies that provide regulation, intervention services and other programs.
7. Extension should improve communication to decision makers and the public about its collaborative relationships with other agencies and industries.
8. Extension should continue to provide educational programs in all of its four program areas, i.e. agriculture and natural resources, community vitality, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth development, based on the needs assessments received from Extension stakeholders.

**e. Organizational structure**

i. Recommendations

1. Increase internal and external communications on area and state specialists
  - a. The responsibilities of state and area specialists in providing leadership, expertise, training and developing of Extension programs supports the Extension mission and delivery through Extension agents. The connections among specialists and agents enable the reciprocal flow of information. These responsibilities and relationships need to be clearly communicated so Extension staff and Extension users effectively and efficiently access Extension programs and information. The titles used by Extension for state and area specialists should be reviewed to minimize confusion. The roles and responsibilities of area specialists to the mission of the Research Extension Centers (REC) where they are stationed should be reviewed. Their primary responsibility should be to the Extension mission.
2. Extension should be deliberate in staffing plans so that positions are coordinated among departments, RECs, or other positions so resources are deployed effectively across the system and state. Planning needs to include Extension, department and REC administration; advisory councils; and SBARE.
3. Expand state partnerships in niche and/or specialty areas to create synergy and make more resources available?
  - a. NDSU Extension has been a regional leader in collaborating with other states for joint specialist positions with current agreements for five long-term and one temporary specialists. Extension should continue to seek opportunities to enter partnerships with other states to

create synergy and make more resources available in niche and/or specialty areas (and to increase efficiency).

4. The responsibilities and expertise of Extension agents needs to be based on the county needs. The county staffing model should remain flexible to maintain service to every county, but it may not mean that an agent is located in each county. Decisions will be made in consultation with county commissioners. Decision factors may include needs, population, agents in neighboring counties, etc., and willingness to pay for support.
5. Extension services should be shared between or among counties based on programmatic needs and availability of fiscal resources in consultation with counties. (This needs to be reflected in the base policy with counties).
6. Extension should pilot innovative models with interested counties to share staff and expertise.

#### **f. Funding**

##### **i. Recommendations**

1. NDSU Extension should review and update the “NDSU Extension Financial Partnership between County and State Base Policy” in consultation with appropriate members of the N.D. Association of Counties. The funding options on page two should be prioritized based on Extension’s preference, and a section should be added for options when a county has the funds to fill a position but Extension doesn’t.
2. NDSU Extension should seek to increase the use of fees or grants to provide cost recovery for programs, especially when the programs have significant private value.

#### **g. Changing needs of our customer**

##### **i. Recommendations**

1. Extension must be seen as tech savvy/credible, so continued focus on meeting the changing needs of the customer is recommended.
2. Extension determine ways to engage 18- to 35-year-old residents, as they are our future audience.
3. Extension determine ways to engage the age demographic of 36 to 49 years, the decision-makers.
4. Extension optimize the use of delivery methods (who, what, why, how) to best engage stakeholders in the delivery of their programs.
5. Technology strategies should be made in the context of the content/issue from the customer perspective.

## **h. Branding, public relations and marketing**

### **i. Recommendations**

1. NDSU Extension should develop a plan to inform state legislators and county commissioners on the mission, structure and impacts of Extension. This may include formal meetings, activities of advisory councils and informal testimonials from citizens.
2. Increase the resources that the NDSU Extension Service is securing and allocating to branding and marketing.
3. NDSU Extension Service staff members are expected to get out, and to create awareness and relationships to connect with people in their service area as an important marketing strategy.
4. Extension engage in a process to evaluate the current name and tag line, and other naming options.

Appendix 2: Phase II Extension Review Committee Report

**Extension Review Committee Report**

**Phase II**

**Submitted to the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education**

**November 6, 2017**

Phase II Committee Members

**Mike Beltz, SBARE, Committee Chair**

**Jace Beehler, Office of the Governor**

**Neal Fischer, ND Wheat Commission**

**Senator Jerry Klein, SBARE**

**Greg Lardy, NDSU Ag Affairs**

**Keith Peltier, SBARE**

**James Schmidt, Stakeholder**

**Paul Thomas, Thomas Farms, Stakeholder**

**Lyle Warner, SBARE**

## State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE) Review of the NDSU Extension Service

**Background:** The 65<sup>th</sup> North Dakota Legislative Assembly instructed SBARE to review the NDSU Extension Service as indicated in Senate Bill 2020. The language from the bill appears below in italics. Emphasis added by the writing committee to delineate the scope and areas of the review.

*SECTION 15. STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION – NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE STUDY - BUDGET SECTION REPORT. During the 2017-18 interim, the state board of agricultural research and education, in consultation with the governor's office, shall study the duties and responsibilities of the North Dakota state university extension service. The study must include a review of the **mission, existing programs, the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery methods for existing programs, and potential program changes**. The state board of agricultural research and education shall report its findings and recommendations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the North Dakota state university extension service to the budget section of the legislative management by March 31, 2018.*

[Executive Summary, Phase II.](#) Based on the results of the Phase I Review Committee, the Phase II review committee was specifically asked to focus on the following areas: 1) the organization's administrative structure, 2) the state, area, and county staffing and programmatic structure, and 3) the sustainability of the current funding model which includes a blend of funding from counties, state and federal governments, as well as grants and contracts.

The committee met with Director Boerboom three times (August 16, September 8, and October 19). During the course of the meetings, Director Boerboom reported on the progress which had been made to address the recommendations from the Phase I committee. In addition, much discussion relative to the three areas of further need identified by the Phase I committee also occurred.

As a result of the meetings, the committee made several recommendations and supported several recommendations and ideas brought forth by Director Boerboom. These included efforts to streamline the administrative structure in the NDSU Extension Service; efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods through restructuring county agent and area specialist roles, and to seek opportunities to engage younger age demographics with increased emphasis on technology; and efforts to develop a more sustainable funding model by restructuring county partnerships.

The Phase II Review Committee believes these changes will allow the NDSU Extension Service to continue to meet the needs of North Dakota citizens by delivering transformational education. Furthermore, these changes will position the organization to continue to be an unbiased source of research-based information for North Dakota citizens well into the future.

The following outlines the Phase II Review Committee's findings and Extension's current and planned changes in response to recommendations from SBARE's Phase I Comprehensive Review Committee and subsequent discussions. The findings and responses which follow are outlined into sections based on the language and areas identified in SB2020.

- **Mission**

- Extension provides science-based, non-formal education with transformational outcomes
- NDSU Extension Service is fulfilling its federal mission
- Extension fulfills state mandated functions
- Extension collaborates with counties to fulfill local needs based on local input
- Extension collaborates with federal and state agencies to fulfill educational objectives
- Extension is not duplicating the mission of other agencies

- **Existing programs**

- Extension's program areas serve the needs of North Dakotans
  - Extension programs in Ag & natural resources (ANR), Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), 4-H Youth Development, and Community vitality (CV) serve critical needs of North Dakotans to improve their economic, health, and community conditions
  - FCS and CV program areas will be combined for administrative efficiency
  - Extension will increase the use of issue-based teams to improve responsiveness and program effectiveness

- **Efficiency and effectiveness of delivery methods for existing programs**

- Local input drives programming and maintains responsiveness to local issues
- Local delivery is valued and effective because it adapts information to local conditions
- Restructuring of county staffing is planned
  - To increase the efficiency of state funding, which is leveraged with county funding
  - Flexibility will be supported to provide opportunities for specialization to enhance effectiveness and program focus
- Restructuring roles and responsibilities of area specialists
  - To increase efficiency of funding
  - To increase the effectiveness of program support provided by area specialists
  - To improve coordination with campus-based specialists
- Increased targeting of younger demographic of adult audience
  - Extension will increase the use of technology in program delivery and to reach younger age demographics

- **Potential program changes**

- Administrative restructuring
  - Administration of FCS and CV program areas will be combined for efficiency
  - Restructuring county administration into three districts (from four) with three district directors for efficiency



- Restructuring the Extension Leadership Team for efficiency
- County staff restructuring
  - In partnership with the ND Association of County Commissioners, the base funding model will be modified to increase sharing of agents, merging of county programs, or increased county funding, especially in counties with low populations (<2,000)
- Increased citizen input
  - The number of county advisory councils will be increased to further increase local engagement and responsiveness
  - A state advisory council will be established to formalize ongoing citizen input
  - A state-wide needs assessment will be conducted every 5 years
- Improved efforts to educate the public about Extension and increased statewide marketing effort
  - Increased budgetary commitment to communicating Extension's mission, programs and outcomes
  - The name NDSU Extension Service will be changed to NDSU Extension to avoid confusion with service providing agencies
- Extension is adopting PEARS (Program Evaluation and Reporting System) which will enhance the organization's ability to plan, develop and report impacts of programs and improve staff efficiency
- Extension is increasing their emphasis on cost recovery for specific programs to supplement funding