OSU Extension Regionalization - Summary

OSU president Ed Ray has proposed (been approved) creation of four divisions that will cover all university colleges that are aligned with three signature areas of distinctiveness: **Healthy People, Healthy Planet, and Healthy Economy** – see handout. Given the current budget shortfalls, he has charged each division to come up with restructuring plans that align programs and services by April 1, 2010. For statewide public services (Experiment Stations, Extension, and Forestry Research), the plan should achieve $3 M in 2009-2010 and $6 M in 2010-2011.

**OSU Extension Plan**

OSU Extension must gain efficiencies through multi-county relationships by developing a regionalization model that should be adopted by July 1, 2010 and all transitions completed by 2013 as follows.

- A grouping of counties with similar characteristics and common geographic location will form a region, but these regions are not predicated by the existing clusters
- As many as 6 to 7 counties per region recommended.
- A staffing plan for program delivery will be designed specifically for each county, region and the state
- Administrative assignments will be designed for the unique features of each cluster.
- Program delivery may overlap into neighboring clusters where sensible.

(1) Each county would be initially assigned two Extension educators (if county funding is sufficient to provide a concurrent level of support infrastructure)

- One for **natural resources** and one for **youth and family** – both just general in scope
- Charged to develop
  - strong local relationships,
  - managing volunteer programs,
  - conducting needs assessment, and
  - delivering general educational programs
  - Forge local long-term relationships
- Must be stable during budget fluctuations
- Must be protected if they do not fit well with university promotion process

(2) Regional specialists with professorial rank

- Experts in subject matter
- Position identified as the region’s highest priority
- Curriculum development, program delivery, impact assessment
- Scholarly output expected

Hosting of regional specialist may be by application by counties (Extension advisory councils & Board of commissioners) since they already know the contribution that Extension faculty make to their community.

Different administrative models will be used for each region depending on needs, staff numbers, and local input. Might require a county coordinator and a regional supervisor in different configurations

For this process to work considerable work is needed for implementation

1. Determine number of regions (regional directors + program leaders + staff chairs)
2. Complete staff assessment by December 1, 2009 by program leaders
3. Build staffing plan by March 1, 2010 to be approved by director by April 1, 2010
4. Form implementation teams having members from all Extension groups including Extension Councils and Extension associations with completion plans by March 1, 2010
5. Form application teams for each region to design leadership structure by June 1, 2010

Other models considered but not selected included:
- Status Quo Model,
- Hub and Spoke Model,
- Discipline Driven Shared Model

**PROs of the Adaptive Integration Model**
- Possibly would not need to relocate too many people
- Counties likely to invest county funds across county lines or trade faculty across lines
- Additional county “buy-in” due to their interest and ability to host a specialist
- Increased visibility for Extension in the host county
- Specialists could contribute to meeting local needs but still have educators in non-hosting county to help with needs assessment and program planning and delivery
- More likely to be accepted by counties/districts (who will have the option of retaining specialists if they can support them)
- May create a situation where counties/districts are willing to “bid” on hosting specialist positions, or would be easier for Extension to set a specific level of support required for a county to host a specialist position
- Would allow specialist to be stationed where it makes the most sense from a geographic or audience-proximity perspective
- Maximum program coverage given reduced numbers of faculty/staff
- Specialists could concentrate on developing programs and conduct research important to the entire region.
- Local educators would help specialist with needs assessment and program planning and delivery
- Fewer faculty = lower cost
- Provides stable support for key volunteer programs
- Provides opportunities for faculty members who would prefer a generalist position, and for others who would prefer a specialist approach
- Would be sufficiently distinct from what we currently do so that our clientele may be more likely to recognize the implications of the funding reduction forcing it
- May increase grant opportunities (via enhanced focus among specialists)
- May open the door to charging for “specialist” services

**CONS of the Adaptive Integration Model**
- Dispersed specialist somewhat complicate administration, but this should be manageable
- Specialists may spend too much time on host county needs and not enough time on other counties
- Some counties may be reluctant to provide funding for faculty that are not housed there
- Could obligate more state and federal funds to long term commitments through tenure track lines and multiple-year contracts; less budget flexibility

Please help us today in these three areas:
1. In the face of these recommendations, what suggestions do you have that can help make this model successful and get Lincoln county maximum representation in the new model?
2. What other programmatic recommendations/suggestions can you give us that will help our visibility and relevance in the community given our dire budget shortfall in the biennium 2009-2011?
3. We need your help to rally support of the endowment fund we established. What can the advisory council do to promote the endowment fund, given that this fund is going to be more important in the face of the upcoming regionalization model?