Introduction

On Tuesday, June 24th, Wednesday, June 25th and Thursday June 26th, University of Florida/IFAS Extension held a workshop in St. Pete Beach, Florida to discuss Urban Extension. Thirty-six county faculty, county Extension directors, Extension specialists and Extension administrators attended the meeting. This sub-committee has been tasked with examination of the discussions regarding staffing from the workshop.

Facilitators identified six themes that had emerged during the Urban Extension workshop. It was agreed two of the themes staffing and time management were being addressed by separate task forces and that we should dedicate our limited time to themes not already being addressed. **There were, however several noteworthy areas of our discussions that pertained directly to Urban Extension.** Please see appendices for references to specific exercises and panel discussions (Appendix A), as well as vignettes of position postings provided by featured speakers, including Dr. Deno De Ciantis with Penn State University Outreach (Appendix B).

In reviewing the data, several larger themes regarding staffing emerged. These themes can be condensed to the following:

1. **Who?** What skill sets are desired to support the expansion of Urban Extension?
2. **What?** What is the end goal of each position, and how do we define expectations for new (or re-aligned) roles for Agents/Contractors/CED’s/Support staff?
3. **How?** How do we fund these new positions?
4. **Where?** In what locations are new personnel to be based, and in what areas will they serve?

**Who?**

The Urban Task Force Vision generated by the summit referred to, “flexible staffing models and delivery approaches” as goals of Urban Extension. The terms most often used to describe the type of staff required to achieve that flexibility fell into three basic categories, “Non-Traditional” Agents/Contractors, re-defined CED’s, and Support staff.

Discussion of the qualifications of Agents/Contractors focused on the following skill sets:

1. Specialists with expertise in urban issues, economics, etc.
2. Agents able to serve as “Flex Agents”—able to move from project to project rather than serving in a single program area.
3. Agents who fulfill Urban Extension’s need for diversity.
   a. Multilingual Staff
   b. Agents whose cultural experiences are applicable to diverse urban populations
   c. Agents whose delivery methods are relevant to the “culture” of urban areas
4. Agents who can leverage “soft-skills”.
   a. Communication
   b. Networking
   c. Focusing on specific goals and deliverables, rather than subject matter
   d. Facilitation skills
   e. Relationship building
*Note: The definition of “soft skills” is still under discussion by the task force as a whole, and by this sub-committee. Additional exploration of this skill set as it pertains to Urban Extension (in particular) is warranted. Additional definitions from various sources may be found in Appendix C.*

5. Agents trained/qualified in non-traditional program areas/topics through delivery of IST’s

6. Contractors able to:
   a. Perform non-traditional assignments (e.g. fund raising, marketing, etc.)
   b. Leverage Program management skills
   c. Develop partnerships with corporate entities, municipalities, County government, etc.
   d. Gain sponsorships from corporate entities

7. Agents/Contractors who are not required to follow traditional reporting, tenure track, or educational models.
   a. Short-term issue-based hires
   b. Non-tenured Agents

Discussion of the CED role revolved around an evolution of the role regarding the following:

1. Reduce program requirements for CEDs
2. Develop a “pilot” urban CED position with an Administrative assignment focusing on:
   a. Partnership development
   b. Multi-department oversight
   c. Possible Regional oversight

Discussion with regard to support staff focused on the following:

1. County Faculty and State specialists skill sets to align with:
   a. Specific community needs
   b. County needs
   c. Regional requirements
2. Increased IT support staffing was spoken of as a high priority.

What?
Our discussions and exercises determined a number of desired goals for potential staff. However, Eric Simonne’s definition of Urban Extension defines two of our general goals as, “… to help community leaders and elected officials to 1. Establish quality control on the services provided by all “teaching groups” and 2. Provide data/feedback on how all the community-based groups are changing/addressing the community issues.” The workshop participants explored the means that Agents/Contractors/Staff might use to achieve these goals, including:

1. Building Partnerships
   a. Build partnerships with groups working in areas that line up with Extension goals (slow food movement, etc.)
   b. Connect and collaborate with local communities in order to tailor both delivery strategies and products.
   c. Cooperate with local, state and regional partnerships
      i. Partner with cities to offer impactful issues based programs
      ii. Position themselves at the crossroads where people, cultures, issues, opportunities, and resources converge
d. Leverage relationships with:
   i. Urban organizations
   ii. NGO’s
   iii. Faith based organizations
   iv. Cities/other municipalities
   v. State agencies
   vi. Governor/Legislators
   vii. Other universities/higher education
   viii. League of cities
   ix. Florida association of city and county managers
   x. Urban Extension lobbies

e. Develop collaborative strategies/planning with traditional and non-traditional audiences.
   i. From the panel discussion from Deno De Ciantis, “For quite a while I was meeting with these foundation
      people, cultivating a relationship and getting to know them while telling them about what we were doing
      without asking for money. It’s getting to the point now where foundations approach us with ideas of
      things that they want. It’s about figuring out their priorities and working with them.”

2. Designing a rural urban interface
3. Promoting the Land Grant Mission
   a. Develop an urban Land Grant mission

4. Marketing Extension
   a. Discussions identified the need for Specialized staff to address the following:
      i. Development of social media strategies
      ii. Research and development of Mass media strategies
      iii. Develop branding and co-branding strategies

5. Reporting
   a. Report short term deliverables
      i. Staff would be rewarded for innovation/responsiveness

How?
Various funding means for Urban Extension staffing were discussed. A major theme that resulted from discussions was the need
to develop “Non-traditional” funding to pay for these roles. Some possible funding areas involved:

1. Finding new pots of money including the following:
   a. Becoming ‘go-to’ expert for funding agencies
   b. Being paid for services, using NPDS as an example
   c. Making donations easier by using an EIN and UF funding website to streamline processes...think Kickstarter...
   d. Buying a “hired gun,” to get corporate sponsors
   e. Developing Sponsorship for all programs
   f. Arranging for a piece of all grants to be routed to Extension
   g. Convincing NIFA to initiate an Urban Extension initiative
   h. Utilizing University Booster organizations for fund raising
2. Creating Entrepreneurial Models
   a. Creating economic value to local government
   b. Adapting existing programs to non-traditional audiences, emphasis on youth
   c. Reviewing/adapting the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) model for applications
      http://www.uroc.umn.edu/programs/index.html
3. Creating internal financial strategies including:
   a. Shifting/spreading funds allocations
   b. Developing a Faculty invoice incentive program
   c. Dropping low-impact programs

Where?
The discussion as to the definition of the Region Specialist Role and the logistical, economic and organizational challenges that frame the wider adoption of that role are currently in flux. Other discussion topics included the geographic and demographic challenges of Urban Extension and what focus areas should they have. Discussion topics included:

1. Regional Specialized Agents
   a. M.O.U.’s needed to define relationships
   b. Non-traditional hires: not subject matter driven
   c. Staffing with expertise and regional strategies
2. Geography and demographics
   a. Higher population density
   b. Different systems and infrastructure to contend with
   c. Redefine where new hires will be working within county. Ex. Urban RECs
   d. Multilingual and diversity agents
3. Focus areas
   a. Identification of unique issues facing urban communities
   b. Help community leaders and elected officials to establish quality control on the services provided by all “teaching groups” and provide data/feedback on how all the community-based groups are changing/addressing the community issues.
   c. Identifying and responding to the needs of non-agrarian audiences
   d. Complexity of issues: Project based agenda, more issue driven
Introduction
On Tuesday, June 24th, Wednesday, June 25th and Thursday June 26th, University of Florida/IFAS Extension held a workshop in St. Pete Beach, FL to discuss Urban Extension in Florida. Thirty-six county faculty, county Extension directors, Extension specialists and Extension administrators attended the workshop facilitated by alumni of the Natural Resources Leadership Institute. The workshop objectives were to:

1. To identify strategies to move urban Extension towards the best possible future by overcoming process constraints and emphasizing opportunities.
2. To develop a shared understanding of urban Extension in Florida and how it interacts with/compliments traditional Extension.

Workshop Opening
The workshop began with an hour of activities designed to set a positive collaborative tone for the rest of the workshop. Dr. Charles Vavrina and Dr. Nick Place welcomed participants and Dr. Place encouraged members of the organization to look forward and consider several challenges listed below.

1. Develop clear and attainable goals about what urban programming means for us and how we can put “University of Florida flair” on that.
2. Consider how we can do these things in ways that mutually benefit the organization and constituents.
3. Be champions for urban programming.

Opening activities included introductions, an explanation and clarification of the meeting agenda and objectives and participant-generated expectations for the meeting and group norms (Appendix A).

Overview Presentation and Panel Discussion
Dr. Brad Gaolach from Washington State University Extension and Dr. Deno De Ciantis with Penn State University Outreach and Extension gave presentations summarizing the state of Urban Extension in their respective systems. They detailed struggles and successes in adopting or adapting new models to urban environments and audiences. They spoke about lessons learned and setbacks along the way and how they integrated with traditional Extension. A copy of each presentation is available at http://district4.extension.ifas.ufl.edu/UrbanExtension.html.
Appendix B

Position Vignettes

In addition to the qualifications and requirements highlighted by workshop participants, several position descriptions Dr. Charlie Vavrina received in response to a request sent to the National Urban Leaders Network have been included in this synopsis. The question posed was, “At UF we’ve talked about an emphasis on soft skills for a possible “new” model urban Extension agent. Does anyone have a job description/announcement for this more responsive, resilient, broader based agent?” The following are excerpts from those responses.

From Ohio State University Extension

POSITION: Regional Director

Regional Director, Operations Central Region/Urban Metro and Associate Chair, Department of Extension (12 month tenure eligible)

Ohio State University Extension is seeking a highly motivated leader for the Regional Director, Operations for the nine counties in the Central Region of the state.

SUMMARY OF DUTIES

The overall role of the Regional Director, Operations, is to provide leadership to the Extension operations within the Central Region comprised of 9 counties, including all matters affecting personnel, finance, public relations and business operations.

The second overall role is to serve as a leader for urban program expansion in the numerous metropolitan areas across Ohio. As Associate Chair, the Regional Director works closely with the Department Chair in carrying out responsibilities associated with promotion and tenure development/direction.

The Regional Director, Operations, works collaboratively with the OSU Extension administrative cabinet and Extension employees, numerous advisory committee members, volunteer stakeholders, public officials and other community leaders and volunteers in the region. This position reports to the Associate Vice President, Agricultural Administration I Director, Ohio State University Extension.

From Washington State University Extension Kitsap County

POSITION: Extension Regional Specialist

Official Title: Extension Regional Specialist, rank E-2 (equivalent to assistant professor), full-time, 12-month appointment. This is a non-tenure track faculty position that is eligible for promotion in rank according to established WSU Extension policies. The incumbent will become a member of Extension’s Community & Economic Development Program (CED) Unit.

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

This faculty position will serve as a catalyst in community and economic development research and capacity building within the primary industry sectors of Kitsap County, with particular emphasis on food systems and manufacturing efforts in the advanced-composites industry.

Responsibilities:

- Work with community organizations, local government, state/federal agencies, tribes and local businesses to implement community economic, natural resources and small farms/food systems projects.
Facilitate work among WSU and other resources resulting in extramural funding proposals that create new ways to meet community opportunities.

Work with other extension faculty in the Puget Sound to foster agricultural, natural resources, community and youth programs.

Deliver consultation and educational workshops to public, private non-profit agencies and/or community improvement groups.

Maintain a working relationship with WSU faculty, County staff and Tribal staff as well as a working knowledge of federal, tribal, municipal, state, and regional government resources.

From Washington State University Extension

POSITION: Community Sustainability Specialist

Official Title: Regional Extension Specialist.
Working Title: Community Sustainability Specialist.

Recruitment limited to current WSU Employees. First consideration will be given to employees holding an appointment with WSU Extension. This position is a 12-month, non-tenure track faculty position with a rank of E-2 (equivalent to Assistant Professor), but the successful finalist may be appointed with rank and tenure commensurate with their current appointment. The person in this position will be part of WSU Extension’s Community & Economic Development unit.

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

This position is responsible for leading program development in community sustainability statewide but with a geographical emphasis on urban areas in western Washington. The person in this position will work with urban public, non-profit, and neighborhood decision-makers across organizational and political boundaries to advance social equity, economic vitality, and environmental quality in accordance with community priorities.

Responsibilities:
May include any or all of the following:

Provide leadership for Extension project development in community sustainability with an emphasis in the following:

- Local/urban neighborhood leadership development and better public governance
  - Promotion of a diverse local/urban neighborhood economy to include strong local food systems
  - Local/urban neighborhood environmental stewardship.
- Facilitate work among Extension and WSU educators, resulting in funding proposals that create new ways to meet community sustainability goals.
- Coordinate efforts with WSU Extension’s Community & Economic Development Specialist; Latino Community Development Specialist; the Division of Governmental Studies and Services; the Small Business Development Center staff, and the WSU University Center of the North Puget Sound. Act as a member of WSU Urban Extension Team.
From Pittsburgh Metro Research & Outreach Center

POSITION: Research & Outreach position Title: Director, Pittsburgh Metro Research & Outreach Center

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

3-year appointment to elevate PSU presence in Allegheny area

- Work to get top leaders at right places
- Allegheny Council others
- Connection/surveillance
- Connect local industry research to faculty
- (Early) help concept metro center data prog & research engage w/stakeholders - Issues/needs with PSU Solutions
- Lead study committee
- Staff or lead with faculty member

From Ohio State University Extension Franklin County

POSITION: Franklin County Extension Director Program Director

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Provides overall strategic leadership for the Franklin County OSU Extension Office:

- Perform all administrative functions within the county unit: administrative head; ensure public funds are handled within defined legal parameters; manage appropriated and non-appropriated funds; understand OSU/OSUE guidelines and policies; serve as communication link among local, regional, and state offices; stimulate dynamic and creative programming focused on critical issues; facilitate intra-office communication; organize local advisory committees; participate in organizational trainings and meetings related to the role of CED; work closely with the Regional Director to ensure a comprehensive, dynamic, and sustainable county office.

- Secure legislative and fiscal support for the county unit including: maintain ongoing accountability to County Commissioners and other elected officials and funders; assist the Ohio State University Development Office in locating donors for unit program delivery; prepare annual budget with input from staff and advisory committees; coordinate presentations to public decision makers; represent and promote Extension at key county events; emphasize public involvement, networking and awareness of Extension’s contributions in meeting county and City of Columbus needs; provide leadership in collaboration with county staff to seek and secure grants, contracts and other sources of funding to support local program and office operations.

- Provide personnel support within the county unit including: interpret and implement OSU and OSU Extension human resources policies; serve as immediate supervisor to all unit staff (except educators and EFNEP PAs); participate in the hiring of educators; hire staff as needed; maintain vacation and sick leave approvals were appropriate; model effective listening, oral and written communication skills; provide timely coaching and feedback; and conduct annual performance reviews of direct reports; foster a positive work environment; promote teamwork and encourage interdisciplinary programming; and conduct regularly scheduled staff meetings to promote communication and interdisciplinary efforts.

- Encourage the identification and delivery of programs that meet unique urban needs in the greater Columbus metropolitan area. For example, promote using multi-disciplinary programming approaches that address such issues as the development of new local food microenterprises using vacant lots, provide workforce skills for increasing job opportunities for Central City Community clientele, and advance the need for increasing OSUE’s metropolitan footprint in education programming by exploiting mass media outlets such as public television and radio, and metropolitan newspapers. Serve as a core member of the Extension in the City Team Efforts.
Appendix C

Definitions of Soft Skills

Definition 1

Soft skills are personal attributes that describe an individual’s ability to interact with others. Soft skills, also known as people skills, complement hard skills to enhance an individual’s relationships, job performance and career prospects.

Unlike hard skills, which comprise a person’s technical skill set and ability to perform certain functional tasks, soft skills are interpersonal and broadly applicable across job titles and industries. Many soft skills are tied to an individuals' personalities rather than any formal training, and are thus considered more difficult to develop than hard skills.

Soft skills are often described in terms of personality traits, such as optimism, integrity and a sense of humor. These skills are also defined by abilities that can be practiced, such as leadership, empathy, communication and sociability (Rouse, 2014).

Definition 2

From the Department of Labor ODEP website, 2014

According to the 2007 Every Promise, Every Child: Turning Failure into Action report, a large percentage of young people preparing to enter the workforce over the next two decades are significantly lacking in the “soft” or applied skills — such as teamwork, decision-making, and communication — that will help them become effective employees and managers. In addition, in a Job Outlook 2008 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE), the top characteristics looked for in new hires by 276 employer respondents were all soft skills: communication ability, a strong work ethic, initiative, interpersonal skills, and teamwork. Lastly, the Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC) found that while credentials (degrees and certificates) are important, it is the development of soft skills (those that are more social than technical) that is critical to developing a strong, vibrant workforce.

Interestingly, research also suggests that soft skills are not just important for first-time employees. According to a poll released in June 2008 by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), many workplace soft skills have become more important for the experienced professional. These skills include critical thinking/problem solving, leadership, professionalism/work ethic, teamwork/collaboration, and adaptability/flexibility.

According to the National Collaborative for Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), the development of soft skills is identified as a critical component for success in activities such as civic participation and youth leadership in addition to school- and work-based learning experiences. The Guideposts for Success, developed by NCWD/Youth in collaboration with its funding agency, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), clearly indicate the need for all youth to have exposure to training focusing on job seeking and workplace basic skills.

To further explore this important issue, ODEP convened a group of distinguished U.S. businesses in 2007. During the discussion, participating companies identified the following competencies as key to the success of young workers: Communication; Networking; Enthusiasm and Attitude; Teamwork; Problem Solving and Critical Thinking; and Professionalism. It was at this meeting that the leaders at ODEP thought materials should be made available to youth service professionals to assist them as they prepare all youth, including youth with disabilities, for employment.
**Communication**

Communication skills are ranked FIRST among a job candidate’s “must have” skills and qualities, according to a 2010 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Communication skills are important to everyone - they are how we give and receive information and convey our ideas and opinions with those around us. Communication comes in many forms:

- **verbal** (sounds, language, and tone of voice)
- **aural** (listening and hearing)
- **non-verbal** (facial expressions, body language, and posture)
- **written** (journals, emails, blogs, and text messages)
- **visual** (signs, symbols, and pictures)

It is important to develop a variety of skills for both communicating TO others and learning how to interpret the information received FROM others. Knowing our audience and understanding how they need to receive information is equally important as knowing ourselves.

**Enthusiasm**

...an enthusiastic employee will typically show up on time, show interest in his or her job, and demonstrate a willingness to listen, learn, and try new things. In customer service settings, an enthusiastic employee will approach customers proactively and offer assistance or seek out tasks and projects when there is down time. This positive attitude helps employees go above and beyond to get along with co-workers and managers – even difficult ones – and respond to constructive criticism with maturity and willingness to improve. Overall, an employee with enthusiasm comes across as someone who wants to be at work and who is willing to do what it takes to get the job done.

**Teamwork**

Teamwork involves building relationships and working with other people using a number of important skills and habits:

- Working cooperatively
- Contributing to groups with ideas, suggestions, and effort
- Communication (both giving and receiving)
- Sense of responsibility
- Healthy respect for different opinions, customs, and individual preferences
- Ability to participate in group decision-making

When employees work together to accomplish a goal, everyone benefits. Employers might expect to “see” this in action in different ways. For example, team members in the workplace plan ahead and work cooperatively to assign tasks, assess progress, and deliver on time. They have professional discussions during which differing approaches and opinions might be shared and assessed in a respectful manner.
Even when certain employees end up with tasks that were not their first choices, jobs get done with limited complaints because it is in the spirit of teamwork and with the overall goal in mind. A leader or manager may often serve as the teamwork facilitator. In this case, team members participate respectfully in discussion, carry out assigned tasks, and defer to the leader in the best interest of the goal. Consensus is wonderful, but not always possible, and an assigned leader will often support and facilitate the decision-making necessary for quality teamwork to exist.

The activities in this section seek to teach participants about the importance of teamwork

**Networking**

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” This common expression is the basis for understanding the importance of networking as a strategy for career development and exploration...A personal network is that group of people with whom you interact every day – family, friends, parents of friends, friends of friends, neighbors, teachers, bosses, and co-workers. With these people, information and experiences are exchanged for both social and potential professional reasons. Networking occurs every time you participate in a school or social event, volunteer in the community, visit with members of your religious group, talk with neighbors, strike up a conversation with someone at the store, or connect with friends online.

**Critical Thinking**

Employers say they need a workforce fully equipped with skills beyond the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic to grow their businesses. These skills include critical thinking and problem solving, according to a 2010 Critical Skills Survey by the American Management Association and others.

Problem solving and critical thinking refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems. This doesn’t mean you need to have an immediate answer, it means you have to be able to think on your feet, assess problems and find solutions. The ability to develop a well thought out solution within a reasonable time frame, however, is a skill that employers value greatly.

**Professionalism**

Professionalism does not mean wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase; rather, it means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. It means communicating effectively and appropriately and always finding a way to be productive. Employers want new workers to be responsible, ethical, and team oriented, and to possess strong communication, interpersonal, and problem solving skills. Wrap these skills up all together and you’ve got professionalism.

As today’s labor market becomes more and more competitive, jobseekers will need to continually find ways to stand out from the crowd. There are few things an employer values more than employees who carry out their duties in a professional manner. Professionalism isn’t one thing; it’s a combination of qualities. A professional employee arrives on time for work and manages time effectively. Professional workers take responsibility for their own behavior and work effectively with others. High quality work standards, honesty, and integrity are also part of the package (U.S. Department of Labor ODEP, 2014).
Definition 3

Excerpt from Top 10 Soft Skills for Job Hunters
People skills and relationship-building are key to success

Today’s service economy and the ascendance of work teams in large organizations puts a new premium on people skills and relationship-building,” Portland-based human resources expert Lori Kocon says. “And with business being done at an increasingly fast pace, employers also want people who are agile, adaptable and creative at solving problems.”

Kocon advises all job candidates -- especially those who aspire to managerial positions -- to get in touch with their soft sides. Some of the most common soft skills employers are looking for and will be assessing you on include:

1. Strong Work Ethic-Are you motivated and dedicated to getting the job done, no matter what? Will you be conscientious and do your best work?

2. Positive Attitude-Are you optimistic and upbeat? Will you generate good energy and good will?

3. Good Communication Skills-Are you both verbally articulate and a good listener? Can you make your case and express your needs in a way that builds bridges with colleagues, customers and vendors?

4. Time Management Abilities-Do you know how to prioritize tasks and work on a number of different projects at once? Will you use your time on the job wisely?

5. Problem-Solving Skills-Are you resourceful and able to creatively solve problems that will inevitably arise? Will you take ownership of problems or leave them for someone else?

6. Acting as a Team Player-Will you work well in groups and teams? Will you be cooperative and take a leadership role when appropriate?

7. Self-Confidence-Do you truly believe you can do the job? Will you project a sense of calm and inspire confidence in others? Will you have the courage to ask questions that need to be asked and to freely contribute your ideas?

8. Ability to Accept and Learn From Criticism-Will you be able to handle criticism? Are you coachable and open to learning and growing as a person and as a professional?

9. Flexibility/Adaptability-Are you able to adapt to new situations and challenges? Will you embrace change and be open to new ideas?

10. Working Well Under Pressure-Can you handle the stress that accompanies deadlines and crises? Will you be able to do your best work and come through in a pinch (Lorenz, 2009)?

