**UF/Extension Engagement Opportunities**

**June 2016**

UF/IFAS Extension is the Front Door to the University of Florida. Because of our statewide network of County and Regional offices there are multiple opportunities to utilize this system of local faculty, facilities and relationships to identify local, regional and statewide needs and bring the vast expertise and research of the University of Florida to address issues and solve problems for the people of Florida.

**Overall considerations**

What is noted below are considerations of the various UF Colleges. Some of these are at the discussion and planning level while others are further along with actual grants, deliverables and educational programs. The College of Agricultural Sciences and the College of Veterinary Medicine are not included as these are already highly integrated into our overall UF/IFAS Extension programs.

To help move this along, UF/IFAS Extension has recently brought on Dr. Heidi Radunovich to serve in a part-time role as Program Director for UF Engagement. Her role will be to help facilitate collaborative opportunities and communication between UF/IFAS Extension and other UF Colleges that will serve to advance this overall UF effort.

**College of Arts**

Discussion is underway in regards to creating Regional Specialized Agent (RSA) positions in critical areas around the state for conducting arts-based educational programs. These would be focused on the arts broadly to include graphical arts, theatre arts, music, creativity, etc. Primarily this would be focused in areas that currently have limited opportunities in the arts arena. To fund this effort we are looking into potential donors who would be interested in endowments for people and resources.

We have an Arts in Medicine program that utilizes the arts to teach and engage people, particularly youth, in regards to health-related issues. We have found that this has been a very good mechanism to actively engage youth into these sometimes difficult issues that they deal with on an ongoing basis. Most specifically this program is collaborating with Extension in Franklin County/Apalachicola as well as Collier County/Immokalee to deliver programs to limited resource audiences.

**College of Business**

Collaborative work is underway with the Center for Entrepreneurship in a couple of areas. One effort is internally focused and provides educational and mentoring opportunities for Extension faculty to help them advance entrepreneurial and innovative ideas. External efforts include engaging the Center for Entrepreneurship with county governments and municipalities to provide training for employees of local government as well as entrepreneurs at the local level.

**College of Dentistry**

Preliminary discussions are underway to investigate collaborative grant opportunities for outreach education in the oral health areas. Oral health is a critical need in many parts of the state, particularly with limited-resource audiences in rural and urban areas. Grants that have a focus and/or expectation for community-based oral health provide collaborative opportunities for faculty of the College of Dentistry to connect with our local family and consumer science faculty on place-based education and promote access to dental care.

**College of Design, Construction and Planning**

A number of efforts are underway in this area. Namely, there has been significant collaborations along the Southwest Coast of FL. The emphasis has been to work with local governments (counties and municipalities) on planning and sustainability-related issues. The goal is to work towards development that has a long-term and sustainable focus which maximizes available land and resources with burgeoning population pressure.

Another effort is in the broad area of urban-agri-ism. There are multiple urban areas that desire the availability of locally-sourced foods. Through work with DCP and Extension, we’ve been able to work with these local governments and developers to incorporate systems and structures that provide for space and infrastructure that enables urban agriculture in a sustainable manner.

**College of Education**

There have been limited conversations at this point. However, this College has strong connections with many of the school districts around the state for practicums and internships.

**College of Engineering**

One area of engagement is with establishing Engineering Extension Centers located around the state. The first of these was opened in March ’16 in Sarasota County. This effort is designed to have MS-level engineers located at the local level to work with local governments, entrepreneurs and engineering-related companies. The local engineers would then connect back with engineering specialists at UF to help them deal with issues and needs that they are not able to address themselves. This effort is designed to help advance engineering efforts and job growth in these areas across the state. The overall goal is to have 6-7 Engineering Extension Centers geographically located around the state; and these would be connected with our local Extension offices to take advantage of collaborative opportunities.

The UF Transportation Institute (UFTI) is a major effort of the College of Engineering. Through collaboration with UFTI and Extension, we’ve been able to connect local governments to take advantage of multiple opportunities. This includes training, workshops, research on infrastructure needs and connecting with graduate students. A major collaborative grant has just been developed between UFTI and Pasco County to focus on transportation and infrastructure needs of this rapidly growing area; this resulted from our Pasco County Extension Director making the right connections to make this happen.

We’ve also been able to connect CoE students with internship opportunities at the local level. Local government has a need for additional help and expertise in a variety of engineering areas, and through internships of CoE students we are able to help meet many of these needs as well as provide real-world experiences to these students.

**College of Health and Human Performance**

There are currently two areas that are under consideration. The first is with Agro and Eco-tourism. Specifically there are opportunities to collaborate with CHHP faculty who have expertise in tourism and recreation. Agri and Eco-tourism are areas identified in the Extension Roadmap as statewide priorities; however, there is limited statewide expertise that currently exists within Extension to pull this off. Being able to utilize the expertise available in HHP would provide critical educational training and expertise for supporting and strengthening these local efforts. Extension’s overall goal is to have a well-established best management practices (BMP) program for Agro and Eco-tourism. We are currently investigating opportunities for LBR funding as well as potential grants to help get this jump-started.

Secondly, HHP have faculty who specialize in substance abuse, which is a major area within the family and consumer science program of Extension. We are working to link up these HHP faculty with our Family, Youth and Community Science faculty in CALS as well as our county-based FCS agents working in this area. Collaborative work would include grants that have an integrated community-based approach where placed-based educational programs could be conducted. There are also major training needs of our county faculty that these HHP faculty could help address.

**College of Journalism and Communications**

Areas under consideration include building upon the expertise available in science communication to perfect skills and ensure our Extension faculty are highly proficient when communicating the science underlying major vexing issues such as climate, genetic engineering, vaccinations, etc. In addition, this College has faculty with expertise in advanced educational technology such as second-life, gaming, etc., which are at the forefront of how educational programs will be designed and delivered into the future. Because Extension has a responsibility to reach and educate clientele via these new and innovative technologies, there are opportunities for collaboration on grants and contracts as well as joint educational ventures that aim to best utilize these current and forthcoming technologies.

**College of Law**

A major area being developed is in the areas of agricultural and environmental law. Currently, there is collaborative work being conducted on coastal extension issues with Florida Sea Grant, but otherwise this is an area that has limited faculty expertise and there is a major demand for this across the state with the various clientele groups we serve. In addition, another major area of need is with farm and estate transfers. The need is specifically focused on providing research-based educational programs that can meet the foundational educational needs of these constituent groups.

A long-term goal is to create a joint IFAS/College of Law faculty position. This person would conduct Extension programs and applied research in Ag law-related topics. Areas under consideration would include laws affecting land owners, succession planning, negotiating land leases, understanding and avoiding potential liability issues, etc.

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

Most recently the focus has been connections with CLAS faculty on issues associated with the impacts of drilling and fracking. This is a timely and critical issue for our state, and there is a major need for research-based information and education that will be used to educate the public and to guide decisions and policies on this highly contentious area.

**College of Medicine**

The UF Diabetes Center is a major initiative of this College. Because diabetes is so prevalent at the national and state level, there is a critical need for public education programs that will result in positive lifestyle changes. The Director of this Center and others understand this, and consequently are pursuing proactive opportunities to collaborate with our statewide family and consumer science faculty. This includes working on integrated grants and contracts that are focused on place-based education that will have an effect upon diabetes prevention and treatment.

Extension is a partner with CTSI to connect efforts across all of the Health Science-related Colleges with Extension. The purpose is to enable community-based education and applied research in various health-related areas. The Extension Associate Dean for Youth, Families and Communities is a member of the CTSI Steering Committee.

Collaborative grants which involve Extension and Health Sciences that are underway include: “Increasing the inclusion of Florida health disparity populations in research aimed at developing precision medicine interventions for oncology.” The One Florida Initiative was funded by the Patient Centered Outcome Research Institute (PCORI). The Extension Associate Dean for Youth, Families and Communities is a part of this grant, which connects IFAS faculty to the faculty at Health Sciences. This is leading to explorations to of translations science that can further inform the Science and Extension’s efforts in Health and Wellness within our FCS program.

**College of Nursing**

There has been a joint submission of a grant aimed to address cancer prevention, particularly among the farmworker population. If successful, there will be educational interventions targeted to this audience to determine most effective means for addressing this major health issue.

**College of Pharmacy**

Thus far collaborations have been in the area of marijuana issues; specifically involving health aspects connected to our Extension family and consumer science program.

**College of Public Health and Health Professions**

There has been a long-term collaboration among PHHP and Extension related to diet, health and wellness. Specifically, this has involved the FCS Agents in ten north central Florida Counties. Through this program they have collaborated on grants with PHHP faculty aimed to determine the most effective strategies that lead towards long-term lifestyle changes focused on health and wellness. These applied research programs have been very effective towards solidifying positive lifestyle changes among the program participants. The results have also been beneficial to help us understand where we should be investing our time and efforts. In addition, this collaborative work has served to increase the proficiency of FCS Agents to proactively work with clientele on health issues.

Recently, we have begun to partner with the community health center Health Street. We are now offering the cooking matters series in collaboration and are in discussion to begin holding other wellness and health programs at their facility. We also participate in their Our Community Our Health series, which connects medical researchers and clinicians to community members to share their expertise; the College of Journalism is also a partner on this effort. We are also exploring ways to have Health Street Community Health Workers provide basic screening and outreach in collaboration with local extension offices in the 17 counties they operate in.

A community engagement committee was also created comprised of campus partners and the various health sciences colleges. This is meant to explore health and wellness related outreach collaborations to the UF Health target population. The Extension Associate Dean for Youth, Families and Communities is a member of this committee

**UF Dean of Students Office**

In addition to Extension's efforts to collaborate with UF colleges, Extension specialists are also working with the UF Dean of Students Office to develop outreach programs targeting our incoming freshmen and their families. A needs assessment is currently being completed. Program development will begin this fall, targeting areas of greatest need for students and families to help with the adjustment to college.