UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension

LONG RANGE PLAN

2012 – 2016
UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension is part of a nationwide educational network that brings research-based information to communities—an "extension" of the personnel, resources, and programs of academia and the federal government. The extension network in Florida is a partnership of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and county governments.

In conjunction with the Florida Cooperative Extension System Long Range Planning Process conducted at the state level in 2011, Sarasota County Extension implemented an online survey and convened a community listening session to obtain community feedback on the future direction for extension. The online survey, which was distributed to thousands of Sarasota residents through Sarasota County Extension, Sarasota County, and program partners was open for responses from April 14, 2011 to June 1, 2011 and received 257 responses. The listening session was held on May 12, 2011 and included 62 participants as well as assistance and county staff.

Sarasota County Extension utilized this feedback to report to the state Long Range Plan Steering Committee and develop a local Sarasota County Extension Long Range Plan. Results of both the survey and listening session were evaluated side-by-side to identify key themes, high priorities, and strategy direction. Detailed results from the survey and listening session are included in the appendix to this document.

The Sarasota County Extension Long Range Plan 2012–2016 provides direction to the Sarasota County Extension team focused on two general areas for a four-year horizon. The plan identifies WHAT educational programming Sarasota County Extension should provide based on priority issues identified by the community. The plan also identifies HOW Sarasota County Extension should deliver programming and outreach to the community. This two-pronged direction comes directly from community feedback that Extension provides excellent programming in several core areas, but that this programming does not reach a sufficiently broad reach to generate significant community outcomes.

The WHAT component of the Sarasota County Extension Long Range Plan identifies the core programming areas for local educational initiatives. Community feedback indicated that Sarasota residents want the Extension team to focus on a few priority areas that are not well-served by other organizations. These include Water and Landscape Practices, Environment and Natural Resources, and Local Foods and Agriculture. Community Feedback also supported continued Extension programming for Youth, and called for new Extension offerings related to Comprehensive Planning/Growth Management. These WHAT areas represent the core programming area for Sarasota County Extension. While there was some interest in Extension providing programming related to Jobs/Economy, Health/Wellness, and Family Finances, the community did not consider these to be appropriate major focus areas for Extension.

The HOW component of the Sarasota County Extension Long Range Plan addresses the challenge of making extension relevant and valued by a wider range of the Sarasota community, so that our educational message is available to more and can achieve greater impacts. The focus here is on attracting new audiences and bringing Extension programming into the community—at new locations and at a variety of times. Another focus is use of technology and media to broaden awareness about Extension initiatives. Finally, a new role for extension is emphasized here—going beyond traditional educational programming delivery and serving as a community convener and facilitator for university research and services.

The UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension Long Range Plan 2012-2016 was adopted by the UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension Overall Advisory Committee in August 2011. Implementation of the plan began informally upon adoption, and more formally through development of faculty work plans in December 2012. The plan is intended to complement and support the goals and plans of the Florida extension system, Sarasota County, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The document is intentionally simple and to-the-point, providing clear, concise and actionable direction on the major focus areas for the Sarasota County Extension team.

Evangeline "Van" Linkous
UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension Director

### OVERVIEW

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### SUMMARY

#### WHAT – PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS
- Water and Landscape Practices
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Youth
- Local Foods and Agriculture
- Comprehensive Planning/Growth Management
- Other Supportive Programming: Jobs/Economy, Health/Wellness, Family Finances

#### HOW – PROGRAM DELIVERY AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES
- Enhance Outreach Overall for Greater Impact
- Broaden Program Delivery Strategies to Better Serve Community
- Improve Marketing and Media Presence
- Serve as Community Convener and Facilitator for University Research and Services
- Reach New Audiences
- Leverage Partnerships
- Enhance Role of Volunteers

#### APPENDIX A
Survey Results: Summary as of May 12, 2011 Listening Session

#### APPENDIX B
Listening Session Results

#### APPENDIX C
Listening Session Agenda
WHAT

WATER AND LANDSCAPE PRACTICES
> Promote water quality and conservation
> Enhance awareness of Florida-Friendly landscaping benefits and strategies
> Strengthen awareness of ways residents and youth can help protect the coastal and marine environment
> Improve programming focused on proper home use of pesticides and fertilizers
> Create awareness about appropriate management of insects, diseases, and weeds

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
> Educate youth about natural resources and enhance opportunities for youth to get outdoors
> Promote conservation of wildlife habitat and endangered species
> Enhance community efforts related to energy conservation
> Provide education on how to live more sustainably

LOCAL FOODS AND AGRICULTURE
> Support provision of fresh and nutritious food options and nutrition education in schools
> Generate increased awareness about locally-grown foods
> Provide education on food safety issues

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING/GROWTH MANAGEMENT
> Provide education to citizens and youth on sustainable growth and land use
> Provide up-to-date training to local government decision-makers (such as Planning Commissioners) on land use regulations
> Enhance citizen and decision-maker awareness of the community impacts of land use decisions
> Facilitate community-based policy discussion

HOW

ENHANCE OUTREACH OVERALL FOR GREATER IMPACT/REACH
> Generate awareness of the Extension program in general
> Focus on community-based outcomes related to Extension’s core mission
> Revisit programming and initiatives with limited audiences in favor of approaches with broader reach
> Adapt programming and program delivery regularly to stay relevant in response to new local government initiatives, community trends, emerging technology, and customer interests
> Improve data collection and reporting related to program outcomes and reach

BROADEN PROGRAM DELIVERY STRATEGIES TO BETTER SERVE COMMUNITY
> Offer more night and weekend classes
> Offer classes throughout community, especially libraries and South County, and de-emphasize programming at Twin Lakes Park
> Provide information at community events and destinations through tabling and demonstrations

IMPROVE MARKETING AND MEDIA PRESENCE
> Maintain website with up-to-date information about current programs and critical community issues
> Provide program updates via electronic newsletters and email
> Produce television and radio spots
> Better advertise programming through local media (especially TV and radio)
> Enhance social network/media presence
> Provide reader-friendly publications on topics of interest
> Provide class handouts and PowerPoint slides on website, with regular updates

SERVE AS COMMUNITY CONVENER AND FACILITATOR FOR UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND SERVICES
> Convene stakeholder groups on Extension-related issues to improve community outcomes
> Bring University research and services to the community in a practical, action-oriented way

REACH NEW AUDIENCES
> Diversify and expand youth programming
> Improve outreach to minority and low-income groups
> Provide programming for families
> Offer evening and weekend classes for families and working adults
> Reach out to newcomers to make them aware of Florida-Friendly practices and Extension services
> Provide a greater breadth of CEU offerings for professionals, focusing on educational opportunities not otherwise offered in the region

LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS
> Focus on opportunities to leverage collaborations and avoid duplication of services
> Enhance ability to reach youth through partnerships with schools and other organizations serving youth
> Offer classes at community center, libraries, and churches

ENHANCE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS
> Grow capacity of volunteers to support outreach efforts
> Extend educational offerings throughout community by utilizing volunteers to offer more programming in a greater variety of locations
APPENDIX B

Listening Session Results

Program areas ranked as “High Priority”

62 ATTENDEES
1. Youth – 31 votes
2. Environment/Natural Resources – 26 votes
3. Water – 25 votes
4. Local Foods and Agriculture – 15 votes
5. Comprehensive Planning/Growth Management – 13 votes
6. Jobs/Economy – 9 votes
7. Health/Wellness – 7 votes
8. Tie for 8 with 2 votes each – Energy and Family Finances

APPENDIX C

Agenda

FLORIDA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM AND SARASOTA COUNTY EXTENSION

LONG RANGE PLAN LISTENING SESSION
Thursday, May 12, 2011
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
Commissioner Jon Thaxton, Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners

EXTENSION LONG RANGE PLAN INITIATIVE
Evangeline Linkous, Sarasota County Extension Director

BREAKOUT SESSION
Facilitation by Sarasota County Extension Agents

> What are the strengths of our community and what do we value about our community?
> What trends and issues are impacting our community?
> Which of these trends and issues represent the most significant threats to our community and what we value?
> Of these threatening trends and issues, which can/should be addressed through Florida Extension educational programs? What priority should be placed on each issue and concern?
> How do you think Extension should deliver these educational programs?

BREAK

SURVEY RESULTS AND COLLABORATIVE FEEDBACK
Presentation and facilitation by Evangeline Linkous, Sarasota County Extension Director

> Results from Long Range Plan Survey
> Refine feedback from the Breakout Session and Survey

BREAK

WRAP-UP
Evangeline Linkous, Sarasota County Extension Director

APPENDIX A

Survey Results: Summary as of May 12, 2011

Listening Session

Educational needs ranked as “High Priority” by 60% or more of respondents

BASED ON 257 RESPONSES
1. Water quality and conservation – 84%
2. Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ education – 77%
3. Protecting the coastal and marine environment – 77%
4. Proper home use of pesticides and fertilizers – 76%
5. Energy conservation – 76%
6. Educating youth about natural resources – 71%
7. Conservation of wildlife habitat and endangered species – 71%
8. Fresh and nutritious food options and nutrition education in schools – 71%
9. Education about how to live more sustainably – 66%
10. Control of insects, diseases, and weeds – 65%
11. Awareness of locally-grown foods – 64%
12. Getting youth outdoors to appreciate nature and agriculture – 63%
13. Sustainable growth and land use – 62%
14. Food safety – 61%
15. Helping youth develop science, math, and technology literacy – 61%
16. Helping youth develop an interest in learning – 61%
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