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Agriculture and Natural Resources Challenges and Opportunities

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It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us; we were all going directly to Heaven, we were all going the other way." -

-- **Charles Dickens**

Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to your strategic planning session. I do hope my comments provide insight for your discussion and deliberations. My interest in strategic planning started when I served as chair of the environmental scanning committee of the Strategic Planning effort with the NC Cooperative Extension Service in the early 90's. Since that time, I have used environmental scanning techniques/strategies to stay ahead of the curve ball. I use a variety of reports, newsletters, meetings, journals, newspapers and magazines to help provide insight about the future.

A few years ago (2000), a movie called *A Perfect Storm* premiered based on historical events in the 1997 book The Perfect Storm by Sebastian Junger. This book and movie tell an exciting story of men against the sea when weather, the ocean tides, etc caused an extraordinary storm in the North Atlantic. How many of you have seen that movie/or read the book? I would like to use that visual title and suggest that over the past few years the perfect storm has occurred in America – It was not just Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 or Gustav and Ike in 2008. It is also the hurricanes of rising deficit spending, war on terrorism, housing foreclosures, loss of manufacturing jobs, increased energy costs (up to \$4.00/gal gasoline), trade deficits, stock market meltdown, bankruptcy, mergers, increasing world food crises, and so forth. . Therefore, the last eight years may have indeed been the best of times for some but the worst of times for many. It is also a time that provides opportunities for Cooperative Extension to step up to the plate and hit a home run.

Outline of Presentation

Now how do we do that? In my presentation, I will cover the following

- Stages of 1890s Extension
- Leadership and Organizational Change
- Our People and their Needs
- Trends
- Opportunities for 1890s
- Changing Expectations for Extension Faculty

In 2008, we are six years from celebrating the centennial of the Smith Lever Act that created the Cooperative Extension System in 1914. Over time, organizations grow and evolve thru various stages. Since the initiation of federal funding in 1972 for 1890 Extension Programs, I would suggest that we have evolved thru several stages:

Stages of 1890 Extension Evolution since Federal Funding

I. Entrepreneurial 1972 – 1977 – organization seeks viability

Rural Development Act of 1972- Title V

- Funding provided to 1890's thru the 1862s
- Memorandum of Understanding required

II. Emerging 1977- 82 – Organization seeks credibility

Food and Agriculture Act of 1977

Funding came directly to 1890s

III. Establishment 1982 -1997 – Organization seeks stability

Agriculture and Food Act of 1981

National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Act of 1994

- Association of Extension Administrators (AEA) Organized,
- Facilities Funding Initiated
- Recognition of 1890s as fifth Extension region,
- AEA Strategic Plans developed

IV. Erosion and/or Return to Roots 1998- 2008 – Questions about relevancy

Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998 (ARRERA)

- Matching non-federal cost share required
- 1890 Program Teams organized
- Extension Benchmarks of Excellence Established,
- Scholarship of Engagement

V. Enhancement /Elevation Stage 2008- A more competitive environment

Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008

- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Road Map for Research, Education and Extension

Strategic planning and futuring helps prevents erosion and propels you forward thru the erosion stage (Create 21 and new Farm Bill). Strategic planning is a way to help cope with the perfect storm of trends and events. Two recent examples of strategic planning efforts are the Virginia State University School of Agriculture, Strategic Plan 2007-2012¹ and the Tennessee State University Academic Master Plan 2008-2028- *Envisioning the Future through the Lens of Our Heritage.*² If fully implemented, these plans will profoundly change their institutions. Likewise, I trust that the plan you are developing will also provide you a challenging roadmap for the future.

So today, we are eight years into the 21st Century, ten years from the legislation mandating non-federal matching requirements for 1890 Extension and Research Programs and thirty-six years from the 1972 inaugural federal funding for the 1890 Extension and Research Programs. We have come a long way but have a long way to go, when we consider the current issues, trends and the environment facing us in land-grant universities. Three particular issues facing 1890s are:

- Using *limited resources* (money, people, time, etc) to develop educational programs that produce appropriate outcomes/impacts
- Identifying, recruiting, developing and retaining *appropriate faculty and staff*
- *Rapid response* to social, demographic, economic, technological and environmental changes

Perspective on Leadership and Organizational Change

Dealing with these issues, is sometimes like walking in the wrong direction on a moving walkway or walking up the down escalator. Both are dauntless tasks. Before I discuss some of those demographic, social, economic, technological and environmental changes affecting agricultural and natural resource programming, I would briefly like to focus on leadership and organizational change- a prerequisite for developing an innovative strategic plan and necessary for short and long-term implementation. You do not want to develop a strategic plan just for the library shelf – effective planned change should be the measuring rod. During my tenure as Administrator at TSU, I have used four books as guides to help propel organizational change:

- Leading Change, John Kotter, 1996

- Who Moved My Cheese?, Spencer Johnson, 1998
- Good to Great, Jim Collins, 2001
- The World Is Flat, Thomas Friedman, 2005

In this perfect storm environment, I believe we need to have a perspective on leadership and organization change that includes – continually evaluating the quality and quantity of our cheese and timely searching for new cheese supplies before the old supply is eaten (Who Moved My Cheese?)³

Second, we need to make sure right people are on the bus and in the right seat (Good to Great).⁴ Third, recognize that center of the world is not necessarily Atlanta, and may not be New York or Washington, DC but is where ever intellectual, technological and/or financial capital is created and controlled (The World is Flat).⁵

Here is a brief summary of the Eight-Stage Process⁶ of Creating Major Change from Leading Change:

1. Establishing a Sense of Urgency
 - Examine the market and competitive realities
 - Identifying and discussion crises, potential crises, or major opportunities
2. Creating a Guiding Coalition
 - Putting together a group with enough power to lead the change
 - Getting the group to work together like a team
3. Developing a Vision and Strategy
 - Creating a vision to help direct the change effort
 - Developing strategies for achieving that vision
4. Communicating the Change Vision

- Using every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies
- Having the guiding coalition role model the behavior expected of employees

5. Empowering Broad-Based Action

- Getting rid of obstacles
- Changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision
- Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions

6. Generating Short-Term Wins

- Planning for visible improvements in performance, or “wins”
- Creating those wins
- Visibly recognizing and rewarding people who made the wins possible

7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

- Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that don't fit together and don't fit the transformation vision
- Hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision

8. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

- Creating better performance through customer and productivity-oriented behavior, more and better leadership, and more effective management
- Articulating the connections between new behaviors and organizational success
- Developing means to ensure leadership development and succession

Our People and their Needs

Mother to Son by Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps.
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.



- Drop out rates – 33% for AA⁷
- Prison Population – 1:60 for whites 1:25 for AA⁸
- Under-prepared students
- AIDS and chronic diseases including obesity⁹
- Decay of family structure
- Loss of land ownership
- Un-employment and under employment¹⁰
- Loss of homeownership –foreclosures¹¹
- Decline in net worth
- Sustainability of small and African-American farmers¹²
- Globalization¹³
- Water quality and quantity¹⁴
- Browning and Graying of America¹⁵

These issues are consistent with the AEA Strategic Plan – *Setting the Pace for the Next Millennium*, November 1998, Updated in 2006. In 2007 sixty-two Extension Directors and Administrators ranked problems and necessary program actions¹⁶ as:

- Create pathways to energy independence – 89%
- Assure an abundant and safe food supply-85%
- Sustain profitable plant and animal production systems-84%
- Prepare youth, families and individuals for success in the global workforce and all aspects of life -84%
- Assist in effective decision-making regarding environmental stewardship - 82%
- Help U.S. residents to become physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy-82%
- Assist communities in becoming sustainable and resilient to the uncertainties o economics, weather, health and security- 58%.

Opportunities for 1890's

Still I Rise by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
.....
Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise
I rise
I rise.

- Fifth Region Recognition by USDA¹⁷

"When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion." -- Ethiopian proverb

Collectively, the 1890 region (18 universities) is a powerful force

- National Institute Food and Agriculture (NIFA)¹⁸
- Collectively the integrated teaching/research/extension faculty and staff makes Colleges of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences potentially one of strongest on campus (integration Effort at TSU)¹⁹
- Facilities funding for technology and infrastructure²⁰
- Specialization (discipline) and comprehensive (community based)
- Engagement Scholarship /w all colleges and schools²¹
- Urbanization – where people are and where problems are- urban gardening, community resource and economic development (ANR needs to be relevant)
- Faith Based Initiative – And still I rise- spirit of the people
- Community Service and Service learning
- Strengthening Linkages with African countries and their universities²²
- Identifying, recruiting, developing and retaining appropriate faculty and staff/succession planning²³
- Outreach to the Hispanic community and international immigrants
- Using soft touch and high technology to reach our people
- Aggressively linking minority landowners to forestry management initiatives²⁴
- Selecting an appropriate role in helping your state use enormous private forestry resources in global climate change²⁵

- Using technology and distance education to effectively reach limited resource clientele in your state and in Africa
- Letting Go of Stuff – personal and organizational
- Innovation and Creativity/ Futuring²⁶
- Leadership, Team Building and Succession Planning²⁷
- New faculty and staff not a bad thing (Generation X)
- Retaining Institutional Memory of Retiring Baby Boomers²⁸
- Celebrate Small Victories-Enjoy the journey
- Accountability – Outcomes/Impacts²⁹
- Communication/Communication/Communication (A Science Road Map for Agriculture)³⁰

Changing Extension Faculty Expectations

- Increase Expertise in Discipline – PhD required
- Plan of Work- Extension Signature Program /w Logic Model
- Professional Development Plan (10% of time devoted to “Sharpening the Saw”)
- In-service Training via Distance Education
- CSREES Funding Workshops
- Contracts and Grants
- Applied Research and Publication in Journal of Extension
- Peer Reviewed Publications and Fact Sheets
- Participating in an eXtension Community of Practice (COP)
- Aggressively Using the Resources of the Southern Rural Development Center
- Embracing University Engagement Scholarship
- Systematic Evaluation/ Documentation of Outcomes/Impacts to Key Decision Makers

Summary

- Colds vs. Pneumonia
- Our Purpose Driven Work³¹
- Change, Change, and more Change- Social, Demographic, Economic, Technological and Environmental Changes
- Integration and Interdependence (A Science Road Map)
- Accountability and Documentation of Impacts/Outcomes

End Quote: "No individual has any right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it." -- George Washington Carver

My challenge to you - As an Extension professional working at an 1890 university, you have no right to work or a career without leaving behind distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through that university. Good luck with your strategic planning efforts!

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