



Cooperative Extension *nEXT* *Generation* update

August 8,
2016

Welcome to the *nEXT Generation* update newsletter!

This communication is intended to provide updates on the *nEXT Generation* project's progress and provide an additional venue for our valued partners to share questions and feedback. Keep an eye on your inbox every three weeks for the latest installment!



Chancellor Cathy Sandeen visiting county Cooperative Extension offices

Throughout the summer, I will visit county UW-Extension offices to connect with local staff and partners, and learn about the impactful programs happening around the state. During these visits, I also hear questions and concerns about the *nEXT Generation* project from UW-Extension staff, county and municipal partners, clients and more. This invaluable feedback from these visits will be shared with and considered by those working on the *nEXT Generation* project.

On visits to counties like Lafayette, Lincoln, Taylor or Oneida, I have met farmers who used UW-Extension resources to improve their businesses; organizations who tap into Cooperative Extension educators and volunteers to strengthen their communities; 4-H youth gaining life skills to position them as tomorrow's leaders; and more. Each visit emphasized the impact and importance of Cooperative Extension programs around the state, and the necessity of advocating for our programs with local and statewide decision-makers. I look forward to continued conversations as I visit other county programs throughout August.

What's the word from county dialogues?

The Cooperative Extension *nEXT Generation* project co-sponsors have met with more than 30 county and tribal partners to discuss questions and concerns about the upcoming reorganization. After these important and valuable conversations, a few key themes have emerged:

- Concerns about proportionality and balancing power dynamics within multi-county areas; making sure staffing is balanced between counties with different levels of resources
- Need for clarity regarding return on county investment
- Need for specifics of implementation, like staffing, roles, position descriptions and county oversight structures, before counties can begin to plan for 2018 budgets
- Concerns about staffing changes in the interim: covering current vacancies, retaining staff who may be considering career changes, and recruiting quality staff while the media paints a bleak picture of careers in Cooperative Extension
- Need for communications support: talking points to help explain the value of Cooperative Extension to legislators and county board colleagues, and to answer constituent questions about the coming changes



At many of the dialogues, county partners also emphasized the importance of the work Cooperative Extension does in the counties and the necessity of that link to the University of Wisconsin in rural areas. These dialogues have shown us that our work is valued and important, and counties want to engage in

the conversation to make sure the end result of the *nEXT Generation* project keeps Cooperative Extension strong.

Chancellor Sandeen to host county executive conversations

In an effort to provide updates on the *nEXT Generation* project and continue the dialogue with county representatives about the opportunities and challenges of reorganization, Chancellor Cathy Sandeen will host two county leadership conversations. These conversations, on August 16 in Waukesha and August 17 in Eau Claire, will be open to county officials and Cooperative Extension faculty and staff.

Stay in touch with the nEXT Generation project

Keep an eye on your inbox for this newsletter, which will be published every three weeks and will include updates on work group progress and other important project developments. And please send any questions, comments and concerns to nextgencommunications@ces.uwex.edu.

Cooperative Extension nEXT Generation project communicationscommittee produces regular email updates for external Cooperative Extensionpartners, highlighting updates and new developments in the nEXT Generationreorganization project.

Email feedback or ideas to nextgencommunications@ces.uwex.edu

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