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**Sent:** Friday, May 19, 2017 2:17 PM  
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**Subject:** Voluntary Separation Incentive Program

Colleagues,

In the spirit of full and open communication, this is being sent to all Cooperative Extension employees.

Today we are launching a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) for currently employed Cooperative Extension ranked faculty members who meet a number of criteria. More information regarding the VSIP opportunity—including [eligibility criteria, separation options, and conditions—are available here](#). This is a completely voluntary program and is a supplement to the ongoing *nEXT Generation* reorganization process.

Below are a number of FAQs regarding the VSIP.

**Why is the VSIP being offered?**

As you are aware, Cooperative Extension is undergoing a comprehensive reorganization, *nEXT Generation*, to manage its \$3.6M base budget cut. UW-Extension leadership has created this VSIP opportunity to enhance our flexibility as we begin implementing changes from *nEXT Generation*. Several UW institutions have implemented a VSIP over the past two years and there has been expressed interest from our UW-Extension colleagues for a similar program.

**Is the VSIP being offered because the new organizational model intends to have no faculty?**

No. The Cooperative Extension VSIP is NOT an indication that the division, nor UW-Extension as an institution, will no longer have faculty. Our mission focuses on providing Wisconsin communities with education and services that are products of rigorous research and scholarship. Cooperative Extension and UW-Extension will continue to honor tenure and will employ faculty. Applying for VSIP is entirely at the discretion of the faculty member.

**Why aren't all employee categories eligible for voluntary separation?**

Only ranked faculty who meet all requirements are eligible for this VSIP because, at this point in the reorganization process, it is clear the roles of faculty are shifting. VSIP may help provide some flexibility as we accommodate these changes. All of our colleagues provide immense support and service to our institution, and the limited eligibility of the VSIP is not intended to single out one category of our colleagues based on performance or a shift in institutional priorities. We sincerely appreciate the role that all individuals play to ensure Cooperative Extension delivers on its research, teaching, and service mission.

### **Will everyone who applies be approved?**

The Cooperative Extension VSIP is not an entitlement or benefit. Chancellor Sandeen, upon the recommendations of Cooperative Extension Dean Martin and UW-Extension Provost Brower, will have ultimate authority for final VSIP decisions. Applications may be declined for a variety of reasons including the division's ability to provide critical community services after the applicant's departure.

### **I am eligible for the Cooperative Extension VSIP. Whom can I talk with to learn more about the possibility and the application process?**

Accepting the Voluntary Separation Incentive and terminating your employment with Cooperative Extension will have consequences with regard to your employee benefits. Once you have carefully considered the provisions of this program, consult with the Office of Human Resources. Please contact Tonya Messer at [Tonya.messer@uwex.uwc.edu](mailto:Tonya.messer@uwex.uwc.edu) or (608) 262-4857 or Jeanne Stuckert at [Jeanne.stuckert@uwex.uwc.edu](mailto:Jeanne.stuckert@uwex.uwc.edu) or (608) 262-1684.

### **How are county partners being notified about the offer of voluntary separation?**

Our county and tribal partners remain essential to ensuring Cooperative Extension services are provided to communities, businesses, and families around the state. We will be communicating to the counties and tribes through our traditional communication channels regarding this opportunity for our faculty, including the application criteria. Should a faculty colleague choose to take advantage of the VSIP, Cooperative Extension leadership will work with the impacted counties and tribes to ensure the county's priorities continue to be met.

### **What is the timeline for the Cooperative Extension VSIP?**

- **May 25<sup>th</sup> (2-3pm) & May 30 (11am-12pm):** Q/A wisline with Dean Karl Martin, Provost Aaron Brower, and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Jason Beier for any questions you may have regarding the VSIP. Call-in information will be sent to you in a separate communication.
- **June 23, 2017:** Deadline for eligible employees to apply for consideration.
  - Provost Brower and Dean Martin will review applicants and, with consultation from the Cooperative Extension Administrators, will submit recommendations to the Chancellor.
- **No later than August 1, 2017:** Chancellor's office will communicate final decisions to applicants.
- **On or before December 31, 2017:** All VSIP recipients will have received their benefits, allowing them to have fully separated from Cooperative Extension.

Cooperative Extension leadership will work out individual timing of separation with each VSIP participant.

Cooperative Extension leadership will work with counties and tribes affected by a VSIP to ensure a successful transition of services offered to their communities.

Changes to state budget require that we work to rebalance our resources to align more closely with institutional needs. I remain confident that these efforts will serve to enhance our ability to deliver on our mission of access and excellence.

Regards,

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