

17 December 2015

Dear county and tribal nation partner,

I am writing to provide you with the most current information about the upcoming reorganization of University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension.

As chancellor of UW Colleges and UW-Extension, I have had the opportunity to meet many of you over this past year. Based on these conversations and my own observations, I have come to deeply appreciate and value the important role Cooperative Extension plays in our counties, tribal nations, and the state of Wisconsin. I want to assure you that I consider this reorganization one of the most critical undertakings in our history. I will be working closely with Dean and Director Richard Klemme and his team as we all work through this process together.

As I'm sure you are aware, Cooperative Extension received a \$3.6 million permanent reduction in state funding. Our reorganization, called *nEXT Generation*, is in response to that. But even before the budget cut, Cooperative Extension leaders, faculty and staff had been exploring new ideas and new structures that would continue to support our mission and build a strong organization for the future. As I have heard from many of you, we need to develop modern systems that serve the millennial generation and generations to come.

Cooperative Extension faculty and staff have spent the past eight months developing a **draft plan** that allows us to continue our important work within our new financial reality—and doing so in a way that creates an organization that is more relevant, flexible and digital.

We're approaching some important milestones in this project, so I'd like to update you on our process and goals. Here's what will happen next:

- The draft plan for the reorganization will be finalized and sent to me for review around **December 18**.
- Once I have reviewed the draft plan, I will share it with you for feedback. (It would be very helpful if you would provide specific feedback, for example, how you would prioritize Cooperative Extension programs in your county or tribal nation.) I assure you I will read and consider every piece of feedback I receive.
- In **January or February 2016**, I will appoint a steering committee, project manager, and project lead to address the many details of implementing the plan. We expect this part of the process to take approximately six months.

- We will begin to implement changes in **summer 2016**, but not all of the changes will occur right away. We anticipate it will take a year or more to complete a reorganization that is this complex and impacts so many partners in such important ways.
- Most personnel changes will likely occur in **late 2016 and early 2017**.

I want to assure you that in addition to reorganizing how we deliver programs at the local level, we also will be planning changes in our relationships with other UW institutions and in our administrative and program operations in Madison. All our work will be geared toward building a stronger future while reducing expenses.

Throughout this process, your input is essential. We'll be seeking specific feedback that helps us determine how to best implement the eventual reorganization. We'll continue to work closely with you throughout the implementation planning process this spring.

Together, we've built Cooperative Extension into an organization that continues to be a model across the U.S. Now, we have the opportunity to create a new model for a new era.

Very sincerely yours,



Cathy Sandeen
Chancellor, UW Colleges and UW-Extension