

A National Framework for Urban Extension

**A Report from the
National Urban Extension Leaders**

December 2015 (Original Report, September 2015)



Steering Committee Members

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Introduction

In an effort to reinvigorate a national discussion and move toward a more sustainable and integrated approach to urban Extension, a group of mid-level administrators working in metropolitan areas across the country formed the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL). NUEL's Steering Committee prepared this report, *A National Framework for Urban Extension* for the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). In October 2015, ECOP approved NUEL as a Director/Administrator-approved group of Extension employees who cooperate in advancing the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension activities by being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally. Advancing urban Extension is now one of ECOP's top priorities.

The original report was submitted to ECOP in the autumn of 2015. It has been edited and updated to include the following tribute, current operational procedures, executive committee and officers' responsibilities, and final edits. The overall substance of the report remains unchanged. For current updates, please visit www.nuelaction.org.

Tribute



The NUEL Steering Committee acknowledges the significant contribution of Mary Jane Willis, former Associate Director of Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Mary Jane (1948–2015) tirelessly advocated for urban Extension. She devoted much of her professional life to serving as a champion for the establishment and development of the national urban Extension framework. Mary Jane's legacy will live on through the Urban Extension Initiative.

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I. Executive Summary

In an effort to reinvigorate a national discussion and move toward a more sustainable and integrated approach to urban Extension, a group of mid-level administrators working in metropolitan areas across the country began meeting in late 2013. This group is called the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) and has met four times in the last two years with additional monthly organizational conference calls. NUEL currently has active participation from 23 states. NUEL's acknowledged purpose is to advocate and advance the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension activities by being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally.

Through an assessment of national trends and a review of Extension literature, NUEL leadership identified three primary shifts influencing Extension's work in urban communities. These included demographic characteristics, community conditions, and urban-suburban-rural interdependencies. In addition to this external perspective, an internal strategic analysis resulted in common themes that have emerged in urban Extension: positioning, programs, personnel, and partnerships. While there are many similarities to Extension's work in all geographic settings, dynamic situations in cities and large metropolitan areas present unique challenges and opportunities as we bring Extension's history of innovation to the next 100 years.

The vision for the Cooperative Extension System (CES) outlined in the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was to do more than attend to the needs of agriculture and rural America; it advocated for a national Extension system that would improve the vitality of all communities to create a better America (Bailey et al., 1909; Gould et al., 2014; Rasmussen, 1989). In fact, CES's enabling legislation and its subsequent changes, one hundred years later, continue to reinforce the charge for the CES to serve all audiences no matter where they live (Henning, Buchholz, Steele, & Ramaswamy, 2014; Raison, 2014). In 1914, most of America's population lived in rural communities and on farms. However, today, more than 85 percent of the country's population lives in urban or metropolitan centers (Economic Research Service, 2015; US Census, 2015).

In the 1940s and 1950s, CES began piloting programs in cities. Programs were designed to test various methods to reach new and underserved audiences, address pressing urban priorities, and conduct research to address urban issues. In the mid 1990's, the Association for Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) incorporated an urban Extension effort in the form of the National Extension Urban Task Force to build a framework and make recommendations. While the report, *Urban Extension: A National Agenda (1996)*, communicated a clear set of goals and objectives, the recommendations were never fully implemented and a sanctioned or endorsed national urban or metropolitan agenda is still lacking. Yet, state Extension systems have been continually testing models for effective urban Extension positioning, personnel, programs, and partnerships; some states have significant urban Extension programs.

NUEL believes that if the CES is to achieve a level of success in the twenty-first century similar to twentieth century accomplishments, it must have a substantial presence in cities and metropolitan areas. NUEL recognizes rural and urban communities are mutually interdependent, and Extension programs should continue to reflect this fact. In order to embrace an effective urban Extension model, the CES need not abandon its

historic rural agendas. Few organizations are able to connect urban and rural knowledge, and resources to benefit an entire system nationally. Communities throughout the urban and rural spectrum struggle to find people who can help them understand and address issues they identify as important to the long and short-term well-being of their communities. Addressing these needs requires stable, ongoing, and growing partnerships within the CES, between universities of all types, the community, and key organizations. In expanding its service to all audiences, the CES can continue to provide invaluable education and service to the nation to improve the vitality of all communities.

NUEL seeks to build upon grassroots momentum by creating a more sustainable national urban Extension agenda through alignment within the CES Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). This kind of alignment would provide a voice for urban Extension at the national leadership level thus contributing to the strategic long-term value of urban Extension. This type of national advocacy would strengthen connections among states and regions to improve efficiencies and foster innovation.

II. Assessment of National Trends and the Urban Context

This report includes references to urban, metropolitan, or city Extension. For the purpose of this paper, these terms are being used interchangeably to refer to central cities, metropolitan and suburban areas that surround these cities, as well as other highly populated counties. This document summarizes national trends within an urban context, identifies urban Extension opportunities, and acknowledges historical developments. It also makes a case for the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) to integrate an urban Extension initiative lead by NUEL into its Program Committee's organizational structure and plan of work. With the extensive resource network of the nationwide Land-Grant University System, the CES must become better equipped to efficiently and effectively address complex urban priorities with solutions that are locally relevant, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally.

As the NUEL Steering Committee analyzed the importance of urban Extension, three major national trends were identified as relevant, specifically:

A. Demographics – America is More Urbanized

In the preceding 100 years since the passage of the Smith-Lever Act, the distribution of the American population has dramatically changed with an overwhelming majority of the population now living in and around metropolitan centers. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that by 2000 over 80 percent of the population lived in metropolitan areas and that this would continue to be an upward trend in the next 10 years (US Census, 2015). By 2013 the USDA Economic Research Service data showed that 85 percent of America's population resided in metropolitan counties (Economic Research Service, 2014) and the number of Americans living in metropolitan areas is projected to continue to grow.

This shift in the physical location of America's population has also been accompanied with a change in demographics of the population. In 2012 the U.S. Census Bureau announced that the national demographic projections over the next few decades showed that America will have an older and more diverse population (US Census Bureau Public Information Office, 2012). Because of these demographic changes, a high degree of ethnic and racial diversity both enriches and challenges metropolitan communities.

B. Community Conditions- What's Unique about Cities?

As the population of America moved to metropolitan areas, so did many of the most pressing national societal challenges. Cities and metropolitan areas are a mixture of cultures, attitudes, norms, and beliefs that have woven together to create a distinctive culture for each city or metropolitan area. Urban challenges are enormously complex with no simple solutions, and this unique culture adds an additional layer of complexity (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Boyer, 1996; Harriman & Daugherty, 1992; Urban Task Force, 1996a).

The complexities of metropolitan issues usually affect multiple entities and are often politically influenced. Most metropolitan areas encompass multiple governmental jurisdictions, governed by numerous city, county or regionally elected officials. Additionally, residents for these areas often elect the bulk of state and federal legislators

that represent the entire state. Some services, like planning and economic development are frequently coordinated across multiple jurisdictional boundaries and organized on a regional basis, while many health, social and educational services are provided only within single jurisdictions or smaller regional areas. Metropolitan areas frequently have not only multiple governmental service providers, but large numbers of non-profits providing information and other services that can act as partners or competitors for Extension.

For Extension, the complex socio-political landscape of working in these communities, the unique character of some of their issues, and the competition from other service providers will require a new Extension engagement model in the metropolitan areas.

C. Urban • Suburban • Rural Interdependencies

Urban and rural Americans are connected and interdependent. Complex issues do not stop at rural county lines or a city boundary (Henning et al., 2014). Metropolitan and rural areas share common social issues such as poverty and hunger, housing and homelessness, migration and population growth, and public safety and health. Well-functioning cities and suburbs, and a healthy and sustainable rural economy are both needed for shared success in the United States (Schwartz, 2015). Yet, the prevailing national narrative continues to address rural and urban issues as separate investments. A robust urban Extension presence could help bridge this disconnect and assist in building stronger connectivity between urban, suburban and rural communities.

III. Strategic Analysis: The Urban Extension Opportunity

Throughout its 100-year history, the CES has remained both a trusted and relevant source of science-based University outreach, developing many assets that position it to effectively embrace and work amongst metropolitan communities. The CES is respected for its objectivity, neutrality, and ability to connect people to research-based resources (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Henning et al., 2014; Urban Task Force, 1996a).

Common themes emerging in the literature on the unique aspects of urban Extension focus on:

- **Positioning:** How Extension is positioned at the national, state, regional, and city levels
- **Programs:** How Extension addresses the multitude of issues and priorities in the city
- **Personnel:** How Extension attracts, develops, retains, and structures competent talent
- **Partnerships:** How Extension collaborates to leverage resources for collective impact

The ability of the CES to respond and adapt to the changing demographics of the nation will require it to recognize and draw on the assets it has developed during its first century. At the same time, the CES will need to recognize the deficits or liabilities the system has in meeting unique aspects of metropolitan communities, and developing strategies to overcome them.

Positioning

- Extension in densely populated areas is referred to as urban, metropolitan, or city Extension. There is no consistent term or designation of the size of the city or region. Consistent terminology can be complicated by regional contexts, e.g. regions in the U.S. where urban is a euphemism for black and brown populations, or issues related to race relations.
- Extension operates in city or regional centers; city neighborhoods through shared/partnered offices; or through traditional county operations.
- Several studies have shown that urban populations have traditionally scored low on studies of their awareness of Extension as well as their use of Extension resources or participation in Extension programs. Another finding is that Extension is historically perceived as rural, with an agrarian focus that has consequently left many urbanites unaware of Extension's existence. As well, those with some knowledge of Cooperative Extension are also often skeptical that Extension has the expertise or commitment to apply its resources toward playing important roles in cities (Christenson & Warner, 1985; Jacob, Willtis, & Crider, 1991; Warner, Christenson, Dillman, & Salant, 1996).
- The disparity in awareness of and support for Extension compared to funding streams creates a pressing dilemma for Extension as urban communities steadily increase along with the need for researched based information and education (Henning et al., 2014; Raison, 2014).

Programs

- As communities changed due to expansion and shifts in populations, so did Extension programming. In the last half century the CES has diversified its educational programming portfolio in many ways to respond to the needs of people living in urban and metropolitan areas (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Christenson & Warner, 1985; Gould et al., 2014; Schafer, Huegel, & Mazzotti, 1992; Webster & Ingram, 2007).
- Program delivery methods and techniques must vary widely to take into account the rich urban tapestry of diversity and commonalities found in metropolitan and urban centers (Fehlis, 1992). The ability to effectively make adjustments to ensure programmatic relevancy and effective delivery will determine the future of Extension. Programs need to be targeted to key issues and audiences, and planned for visible impact (Rasmussen, 1989).
- Extension educational programming needs to continue to be grounded in research-based resources as well as community and resident needs. The adoption of emerging technologies offers opportunities for Extension to educate and connect with broader audiences (Dromgoole & Bleman, 2006; Mastel, 2014; Robideau & Santl, 2011).
- Applied research and engaged scholarship are integral to urban Extension. Engaged scholarship has been defined by a number of groups and individuals. In the report, *New Times Demand New Scholarship II* (2007), a group of research universities gathered to renew the civic mission of higher education describe engaged scholarship as “research that partners university scholarly resources with those in the public and private sectors to enrich knowledge, address and help solve critical societal issues, and contribute to the public good.”
- Serving the needs of large metropolitan areas requires an approach to content and delivery that differs from more rural communities. Currently, the majority of the curricula, delivery methods, and programming offered in cities and metropolitan areas is adapted from rural experiences and not uniquely developed for an urban audience. Although some of the materials and delivery methods adapt well, others do not. Urban audiences may have difficulty relating in meaningful ways to examples in teaching materials that were not designed from an urban perspective (Argabright, McGuire, & King, 2012; Borich, 2001; Gould et al., 2014; Krofta & Panshin, 1989; Webster & Ingram, 2007).
- In the metropolitan policy arena, there is demand for access to university-based engaged scholarship and applied research to inform decision-making. In the absence of university engagement, metropolitan areas must rely on private sector consultancies for input into policy processes, often at higher cost and uncertain reliability. We propose that new urban Extension programming embrace engaged scholarship and the use of applied research on topics and issues of interest to urban decision-makers, including those in local government, the nonprofit sector, and community organizations.
- A gap exists in quality research to assist urban Extension programmers to inform the development of educational programming to meet urban needs and to guide and ground our programs. While there are “promising practices” attached to urban Extension work, “best practices” are not yet identified and collated. More research and scholarly activity is required.

Personnel

- Extension faculty and staff working in metropolitan areas need the same core set of competencies as Extension professionals in other geographic settings. However, because of the “unique” community conditions described in the previous section concerning the *Assessment of National Trends and Urban Context* there are some additional skills and attributes needed by individuals and teams to address the needs of metropolitan constituents (Fehlis, 1992; Urban Task Force, 1996a; Webster & Ingram, 2007). For example:
 - Due to the magnitude of diversity in metropolitan areas, cultural competence and inclusivity are essential for all personnel. While this is an expectation throughout the Cooperative Extension system, the scope in urban areas intensifies the degree to which personnel apply related competencies (Krofta & Panshin, 1989; Webster & Ingram, 2007).
 - With more diversified funding portfolios, personnel must invest more time and expertise in sourcing and managing multiple resources on various timelines beyond county, state, and federal fiscal cycles (Krofta & Panshin, 1989).
 - While many Extension professionals are content experts first and program managers second, in the city, the need for Extension is so vast that many become more engaged in capacity building and management.
 - In the city, numerous public and private organizations compete for resources and audiences. This often creates an environment where Extension contends with organizations that invest in talent specifically for social media, managing grants and contracts, and other activities that require Extension personnel to advance multiple, rather than focused skill sets.
 - Like rural counterparts, Extension educators serving urban audiences should possess solid competitive planning, resourcing, and management skills. Additionally be culturally competent, have experience working with limited resource populations, and possess a foundational understanding of community development principles. They should be able to develop a targeted personal professional development plan supported and resourced from the university.
- For the CES to effectively work in metropolitan communities, the system needs to develop the professional skills of staff at all levels to work in a highly complex and integrated nature. The ability to work in transdisciplinary teams of experts while documenting both the CES impact and community change will be paramount (Urban Task Force, 1996a; Young & Vavrina, 2014). Extension personnel need to be embedded in the community as a trusted resource and serve in a unique position to function as neutral, trusted facilitators that bring people together to deliberate and deal with local issues (Kellogg Commission, 1998).
- Recruiting and hiring practices need to be developed to attract the CES’s next generation of professionals who have the skillset and passion to work on complex issues found in urban areas, against a backdrop of diversity. Hiring procedures need to be streamlined and improved to match staff skill sets appropriately to roles (Harriman & Daugherty, 1992). Mentoring and designing retention systems will be critical to ensure the next generation stays engaged with Extension.

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- The CES needs to embrace a flexible staffing model that incorporates a varied set of positions.
 - At times it will be necessary to employ a project driven hiring model allowing for a greater mix of core personnel and additional professionals with specific expertise necessary to address the broad array of metropolitan issues.
 - Unpaid staff or volunteers can serve as essential resources in urban Extension staffing models. These human resources often differ from those that the CES has historically utilized in rural communities. They are more diverse and often looking to engage in specific projects or for short-term commitments. The CES needs to develop models that are effective in recruiting this set of unpaid or volunteer staff, training them to effectively work with CES urban audiences, placing or engaging them in appropriate roles, and providing recognition and rewards (Fehlis, 1992).
 - In many urban Extension offices, the emphasis is on a few long-term programs supplemented by short-term, grant-funded projects. Going forward, urban Extension should be tailored to more applied research activities, engaged scholarship, and non-formal education for the staff of public and community organizations. This change would result in the need for staff with project development and management skills, rather than in-depth knowledge of a subject area.
 - With an emphasis on flexibility and responsiveness, engaging the public in applied research and contracted non-formal education activities is likely to require fewer full-time, tenured, or tenure-track faculty. Instead, a project model that purchases expertise on an as-needed basis may be more appropriate.

Partnerships

- Key partnerships in metropolitan areas include state and federal legislators who drive and approve funding for Extension. Not only does more of the population of the U.S. live in metropolitan and urban areas, but there are more federal and state legislators who support funding for the CES from urban/metropolitan areas than from rural areas (Krofta & Panshin, 1989).
- Local Extension initiatives benefit from developing strong metropolitan advisory councils to help build partnerships. Building strong relationships with key community decision makers and political leaders is an effective strategy to use when Extension is navigating a robust set of metropolitan-based partnerships engaged in short-term and long-term impacts (Henning et al., 2014).
- Metropolitan areas have a more complex network of governmental organizations, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, requiring a different way in which the resources of the entire Land-Grant University System can be accessed to help solve complex issues.
- Extension must form both program and funding alliances with government agencies, colleges and universities, foundations and non-governmental organizations, corporations/private businesses, and other organizations that share common goals and objectives.
- Multi-county and multi-disciplinary collaborations provide new opportunities. Extension needs to expand beyond traditional constituencies and foster multi-disciplinary partnerships to maintain its relevance and meet changing needs.

A national urban Extension initiative emphasizing a heightened awareness and priority in the CES requires innovation in these core areas. NUEL has developed Action Plans that incorporate and address these four themes (positioning, programs, personnel, partnerships) specifically as part of its larger body of work.

IV. A Call to Action

NUEL believes that if the CES is to succeed and achieve a level of success in the twenty-first century on par with what was achieved in the twentieth century, then it must have a substantial presence in cities and metropolitan areas. Now is the time for the CES to more fully incorporate the needs of urban and metropolitan audiences. To be successful in urban areas, the CES must be viewed as a credible source of education, training and leadership development. Its services must be closely linked to research-based educational initiatives and designed in culturally appropriate ways, diverse in scope, and relevant and responsive to community needs. The CES needs to offer community-centered and community co-designed solutions to address the multitude of issues facing our urban/metropolitan communities.

In expanding its services to reach all Americans, the CES can continue providing valuable education and services to the nation that improves the vitality of all communities. In order to embrace an effective urban Extension model, the CES need not abandon its historic rural agendas. The best way to honor and celebrate the past 100 years of the CES is to ensure its future. **Ensuring the future requires that the CES enhance its response to the demographic trend of urbanization.** It is imperative that we create a modified paradigm of learning innovations for the CES and co-create a vibrant and resilient twenty-first century Extension system that more fully serves urban populations. We are compelled to act as a unified system, one that supports both the present and the future.

Our current urban program models across the U.S. have a variance of approaches to meeting the needs of our urban audiences. In order for urban Extension programming to thrive we must accept that the most effective way for Extension to operate is in partnership with a well-developed group of organizations where roles are distinct yet missions are aligned; where visibility, credit and resources are shared. For this reason, Extension personnel need to be encouraged to invest their time, energy, and skill in developing and maintaining relationships with partner organizations for long term impact with their target audiences as well as engaging in programs, projects and initiatives which promote changes in policies and the overall socio-ecological model.

Currently, direct program delivery as a strategy for reaching urban area populations is not sustainable nor is it fully engaging its intended audience. A new, bold and different urban Extension program delivery strategy must be considered that is held to a new standard outside traditional Extension programming. It needs to allow for the design and development of alternate delivery methods that are directly relevant to urban constituents. Programming and other initiatives must begin to be more transdisciplinary in nature, and include a wider range of partners at a multitude of levels. While in urban markets there are a large number of small non-profits who provide direct services, they are often not conducting research or collating and analyzing promising practices. This is where the CES can add value and involve collaborations with a coalition of the willing from across the current Extension system but must also include other divisions, colleges, and departments across the land-grant system. The relevancy of urban programming is not found solely in one unit, but across the greater landscape as we work to effectively bring the university and its hands-on practical knowledge to the people. In this, we bring students, interns, graduate research assistants and other university resources to the community.

Specific professional development activities must be created to address the needs of Extension personnel in urban areas. The skill sets of urban staff must be significantly different than those of rural staff, a fact well documented in Extension literature (Fehlis, 1992; Harriman & Daugherty, 1992; Kellogg Commission, 1998; Krofta & Panshin, 1989; Urban Task Force, 1996b; Webster & Ingram, 2007; Young & Vavrina, 2014) A simple retrofit or one size fits all approach between rural and urban staff will not work respective of professional development. Opportunities for regular and consistent communication among urban staff across the country can assist in developing important support networks necessary for effective urban programming. Needs assessments specific to urban staff development requirements can assist in identifying topics that can promote this effort. Work is currently being done through NUEL to identify best management practices and to share these findings across the CES. In the past year, several webinars have offered topics such as “Extension in the City”, “Welcoming Millennial Professionals to Extension”, and “Next Generation Extension” among others that are providing new insights into urban Extension work.

We recognize funding has been in decline for decades throughout the CES at the local, state and federal levels. In the age of shifting populations and political re-districting efforts, worthy of mention is that congressional seats have shifted as population moves and impacts support for funding. With 85 percent of the U.S. population living in urban areas, a change in priority or a re-balance of resources must be considered within current and future funding structures. USDA funding is not the singular problem; additional monies must be found both inside and outside of the current structure to significantly enhance programming efforts and put forth new urban initiatives. In this arena, we recognize the importance of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the national framework and it’s embedded funding structures. Urban Extension in the future would benefit from the examination of how current funding structures are utilized and how existing funding lines can be transformed or created from idea generation, dialogue and fresh innovations to ensure they are more inclusive and complimentary. This could result in a positive increase in funding and partnership not only for urban audiences, but also for rural audiences as we work to serve diverse and underserved audiences across the country, something that is vital to our overall longevity in the CES.

To support these efforts and broaden the scope and bring CES to the stage, we recognize we are global citizens. We teach, we serve in a global world and market, fully realizing that the CES is one system and aligns to the interdependence of rural and urban populations and the reliance each have on one another. We also recognize that traditional CES programming strategies do not fully serve urban populations and realize changes system-wide need refinement. There is a need for urban advocates at the leadership level within the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) to support NUEL’s acknowledged purpose of advancing the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension activities by being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally. Representation of urban advocates in the deliberative process of dialogue is critical to successfully promote urban issues without disenfranchising people. There is also a need for recognition of NUEL and bringing together a core group of “urban champions” from across the country. In combination, this will create the structures necessary for building the bridge between the last 100 years and the next 100 years of the CES, ensuring urban populations are effectively served.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

NUEL seeks the endorsement of an urban National Urban Extension Agenda with identified leadership. NUEL seeks to provide this leadership and be recognized by the CES by aligning with the ECOP Program Committee. With this alignment, it will be possible to deliver a comprehensive set of actions that will enhance both the position of Extension in our urban areas as well as offer sustenance to the health of the entire system.

NUEL seeks ECOP's consideration of the following recommended actions:

1. ECOP approval of NUEL as a voluntary, regionally represented, and Director/Administrator-approved group of Extension employees who cooperate in advancing the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension activities by being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally, and organized as shown in a and b.
 - a. The NUEL plans to transition from an informal 12-member steering committee to a more formal 17-person steering committee with balanced representation from ECOP's five regions, as well as one representative from ECOP and one representative from NIFA.
 - b. Regional Urban Extension Member Caucuses will recommend steering committee representatives to the ECOP Regional Director/Administrator Associations who would select/confirm membership of the steering committee.
2. ECOP approval of and designation of a liaison from the ECOP Program Committee to NUEL.
3. ECOP approval of NUEL as the organizing/planning entity for the National Urban Extension Conference (to begin after the scheduled 2017 meeting in Minnesota).

V. Acknowledgements

The efforts of the individuals listed below are acknowledged in the preparation of the *National Framework for Urban Extension*.

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Appendix

A. Background, History & Future of Urban Extension: A Role for NUEL

The original concept for CES grew out of a national Report of the Country Life Commission (Bailey et al., 1909; Peters, 2002). The report released in 1909 called for

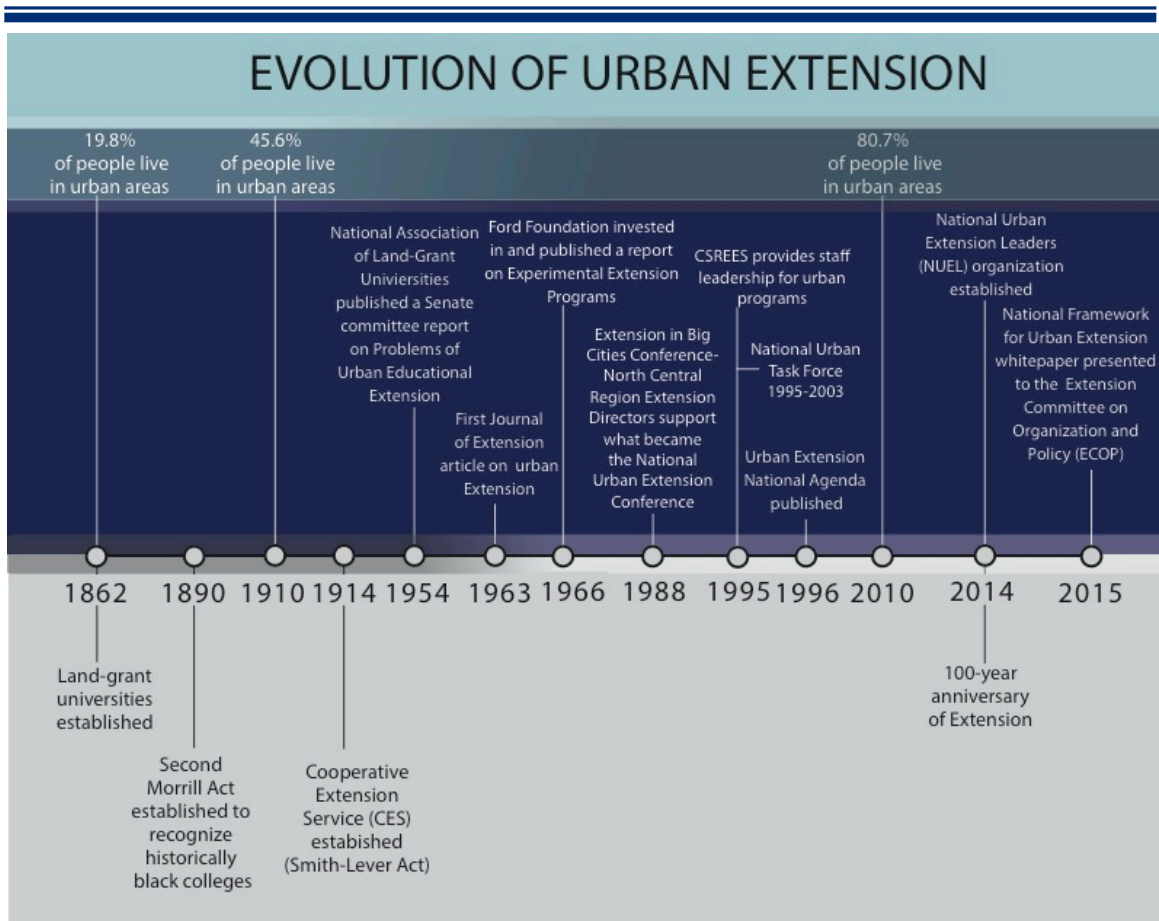
the expansion of new industries and economic interests; promotion of social cohesion; improved efficiency of local government; growth in a cooperative spirit that engaged people as participants and contributors; enhancement of games, recreation, and entertainment from native sources; preservation of the natural landscape and improved capacity of people to appreciate such beauty; creation of social centers where real neighborhood interests exist; and inspiring farmers, clergy, teachers, and others to answer the leadership call by lending their service to "up building the community" (Bailey et al., 1909).

In conclusion the commission members determined, "To accomplish these ends, we suggest the establishment of a nationwide extension work" (Bailey et al., 1909).

Following the broad scale recommendations of the Report of the Country Life Commission, the vision for the CES that was outlined in the 1914 Smith-Lever Act was to do more than attend to the needs of agriculture and rural America, it advocated for a national Extension system that would improve the vitality of all communities to create a better America (Bailey et al., 1909; Gould et al., 2014; Rasmussen, 1989). In fact, CES's enabling legislation, and subsequent changes to the Smith-Lever Act, continue to reinforce the charge for CES to serve all audiences no matter where they live (Henning et al., 2014; Raison, 2014). In 1914, most of the country's population lived in rural communities and on farms. However, today more than 85% of America's population lives in urban or metropolitan centers (Economic Research Service, 2015; US Census, 2015).

A review of the literature shows that beginning in the 1940s or 1950s, CES began piloting programming in cities; testing various methods to reach new and underserved audiences; seeking to address pressing urban priorities; and engaging in research to address urban issues (Ford Foundation, 1966). With almost 50 years of piloting and experimenting with working in cities, the CES has a rich history of working in cities to fulfill the primary mission of providing educational programming that translates science for practical application to empower people to change aspects of their practices, attitudes, behaviors, and lives (Blair & King, 2010; NIFA, 2014; Peters, 2002).

In the mid-1990s the Association for Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) ECOP incorporated an urban Extension effort in the form of the National Extension Urban Task Force to research and make recommendations. The report, *Urban Extension: A National Agenda* (1996), clearly communicated a set of goals and objectives, however the recommendations were never fully implemented. In the absence of a sanctioned or endorsed national urban or metropolitan agenda, state Extension systems have been continually experimenting with models for urban Extension positioning, personnel, programs, and partnerships.



In an effort to reinvigorate a national discussion, and move toward a more sustainable and integrated approach to urban Extension, a group of Extension mid-level administrators working in cities and metropolitan centers began meeting in late 2013. This group, called the National Urban Extension Leaders or more commonly referred to as NUEL, has met four times in the last two years with additional monthly organizational conference calls. At each of the meetings the group membership has grown. NUEL's acknowledged purpose is "to advocate and advance the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension activities by being relevant locally, responsive statewide, and recognized nationally."

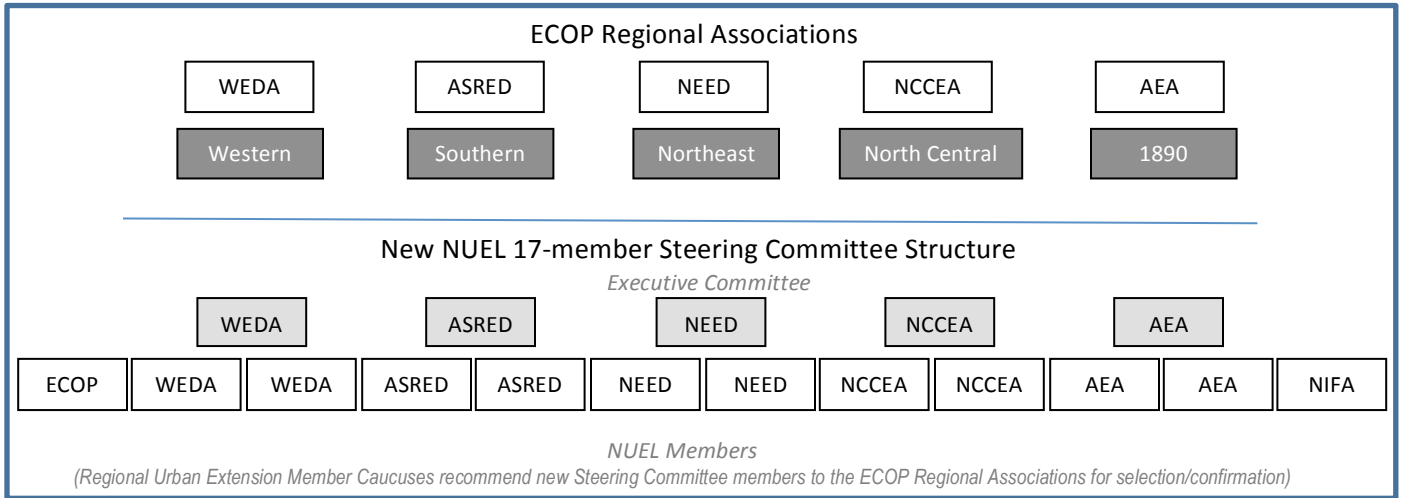
Transitioning to a new governance structure

The NUEL is led by a steering committee that includes representatives from 11 states, representative of ECOP regions. Three members of the steering committee serve as co-conveners and organize monthly conference calls for the steering committee.

The NUEL has a membership list that currently contains 80 members and an email list that reaches a much broader audience of about 125 CES administrators and other Extension professionals. In all, over 23 states have representation in NUEL.

The NUEL plans to transition from an informal 12-member steering committee to a more formal 17-person steering committee with balanced representation from ECOP's five regions, as well as one representative from ECOP and one representative from NIFA.

Regional Urban Extension Member Caucuses will recommend steering committee representatives to the ECOP Regional Director/Administrator Associations who would select/confirm membership of the steering committee. The Cooperative Extension Section, under the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Board on Agriculture Assembly, is structured in five regions that are internally organized into associations.



Existing NUEL Steering Committee members will be given the opportunity to continue their service within a specified term. As the structural transition takes shape, NUEL will update its current operational procedures accordingly to reflect these changes.

In addition to the formalized steering committee structure, NUEL has drafted operational procedures and action plans.

B. NUEL Action Plans for Urban Extension

Action Plans were outlined by the NUEL membership in early 2014. These plans have been and will continue to be updated and operationalized based on emerging opportunities that add integration, innovation, and connections with other key national Extension initiatives.

1. **Communication: Establish effective and efficient communication network.**
 - a. Stakeholders will recognize Extension as a research based best practice asset for addressing urban issues.
 - b. The National Urban Extension Network will establish an effective and efficient communication network to facilitate communication among all Urban Network members.
2. **Policy: Build national support within Extension on urban programming through policy research and advocacy.**
 - a. Develop four regional urban Extension position papers and urban Extension plans that foster collaboration among the land-grant universities within the region.
 - b. Develop a virtual research center in every region.
 - c. Develop and promote urban experiment stations and satellite centers/institutes/stations.
3. **Professional Development: Enhance professional growth of urban Extension employees.**
 - a. Develop successful systems for recruiting, hiring, and onboarding urban Extension staff.
 - b. Develop successful systems for formal and informal training, and updating current urban Extension staff.
4. **Resources: Expand resources to increase impact of urban Extension.**
 - a. To fund or support urban Extension initiatives, obtain Extension multi-state/-city grants, local foundation funding in CES.
 - b. Create a virtual repository of model program descriptions to be utilized by Extension and other interested people.
 - c. To better match staff skills with community needs; inventory staff assets and cross-reference with community needs for program match.
 - d. Increase quality of programming in order to justify program fees to consumers (cost recovery).
 - e. Build the national support within Extension that leads to alternative funding (non-USDA).
5. **Stakeholders: Create and expand new funding relationships at the federal level.**
 - a. Establish working relationship with ECOP and NIFA to assist in the effort to form other federal partnerships.
 - b. Identify and create connections (if not present) with federal agency program officers.
 - c. Continue and strengthen relationships with local, county and city governments.

C. NUEL Operational Procedures

The following operational procedures were drafted by the NUEL steering committee. They will be reviewed and updated with input from membership, other stakeholders, and the steering committee.

Article One ORGANIZATION

- 1.1 The name shall be the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL). These organizational guidelines pertain to the functioning of the organization.
- 1.2 The purpose of the National Urban Extension Leaders organization is to advance the strategic importance and long-term value of urban Extension and its related activities. No one will be denied participation in NUEL activities.
- 1.3 Membership: NUEL was meant to be a grassroots organization. Any Extension professional working in or responsible for Extension professionals working in urban or metropolitan communities that support the organization's purpose of working at the policy level are welcome to join. Members will be on the organization email list.

Article Two MEETINGS

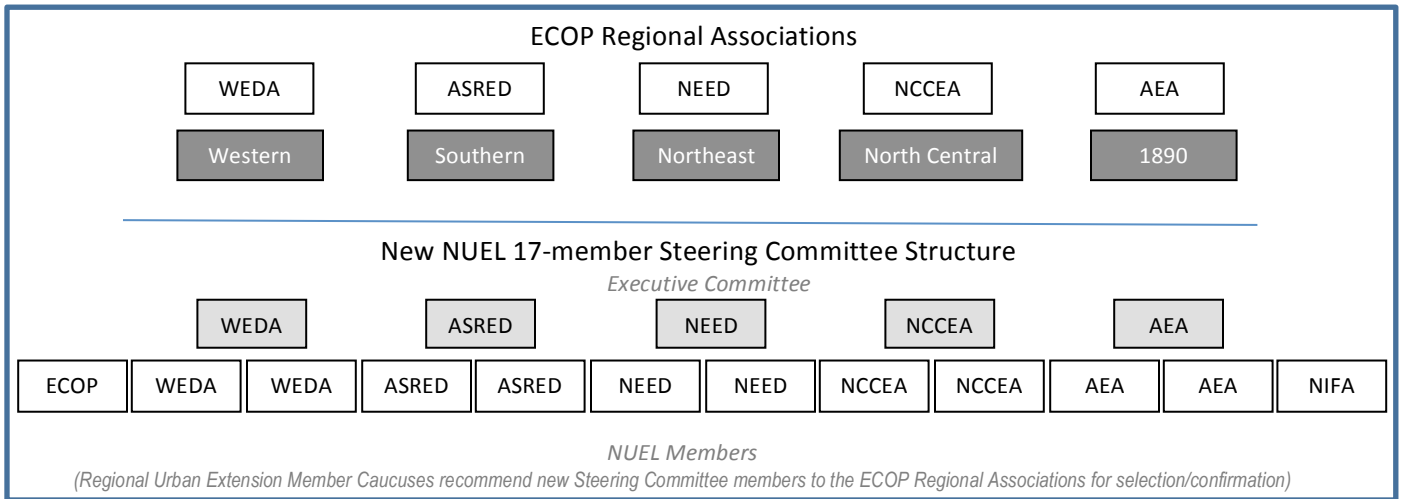
- 2.1 Meetings of the organization will be planned according to need but will not be less than twice per year.
- 2.2 At these meetings the organizational membership may recommend steering committee members, receive minutes and other relevant reports.
- 2.3 Meetings will be held in urban areas and move around the country so that each region is equally accommodated.

Article Three NUEL STEERING COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The steering committee shall be composed of 17 people including representatives as follows: three (3) from each of ECOP's five regions, one from ECOP, and one from NIFA. This group provides overall direction and assumes an active role in decision-making. The idea is to maintain a balanced representation from each region and to retain institutional knowledge. Regional Urban Extension Member Caucuses will recommend steering committee representatives to the ECOP Regional Director/Administrator Associations who would select/confirm membership of the steering committee.
 - (A) Fifty-one percent (51%) or more of the seated members of the steering committee shall constitute a quorum to take action on any matter brought before it.
 - (B) The affirmative vote of majority of all steering committee members present shall be required for approval of any action.
 - (C) The Chair shall be eligible to vote on any motion. In the event of a tie vote on any motion, the motion shall be considered defeated.

(D) Electronic meetings – Steering committee members may participate in a meeting of the steering committee by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment that permits all persons participating in the meeting to interact, and all persons so participating shall be deemed present at the meeting.

3.2 The NUEL Steering Committee will be led by an executive committee which includes one representative from each of ECOP's five regions. Terms of the executive committee will be one year; beginning with the annual meeting in December of each year. Elections will take place in the quarter before the annual meeting and will include Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Action Teams Coordinator, and National Urban Extension Conference Liaison. The role of the executive committee is to manage the planning and communications; plan agendas; maintain focus and act on behalf of the group in-between opportunities for broader decision-making.

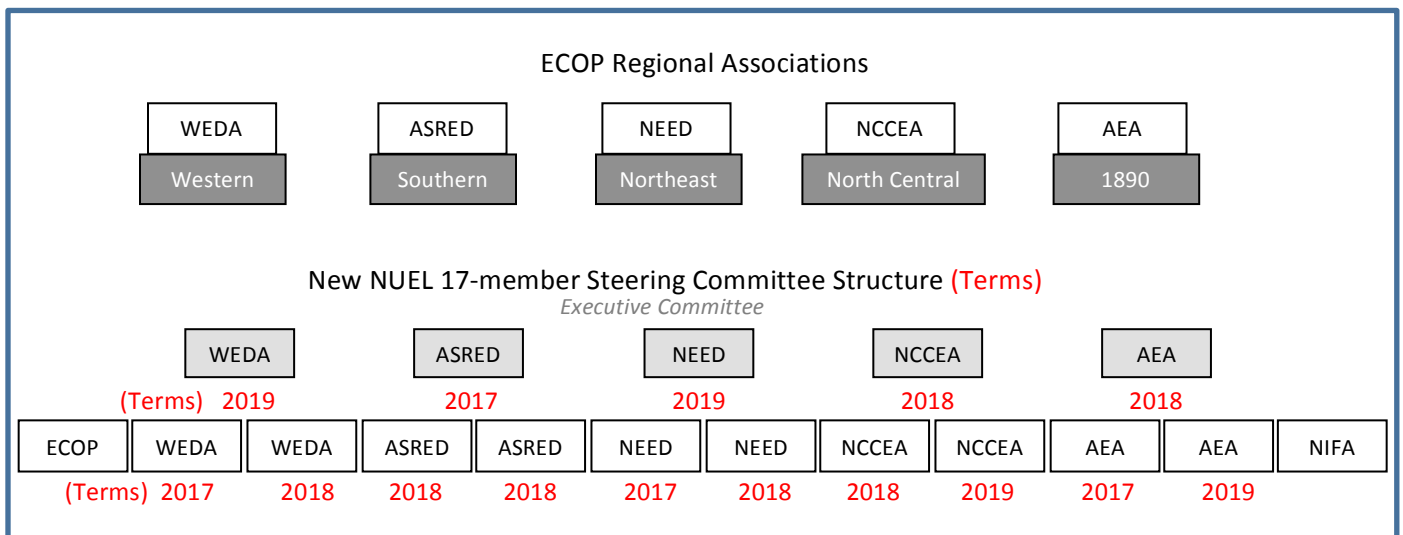


3.3 Regional Urban Extension Member Caucuses are made up of NUEL members from the five designate ECOP regions. They may organize in whatever manner is most effective for the region. Their recommendation of representatives from their region for the steering committee must be determined at least one month prior to the Regional Extension Directors/Administrators meeting and the NUEL meeting at which that individual plans to attend as a confirmed steering committee member.

3.4 The term of a steering committee member shall be two (2) years, beginning January 1, 2016, and can be renewed based on the desire of the Regional Urban Extension Member Caucuses, subject to approval of the appropriate regional Director/Administrator Association. Current steering committee members' names will be provided, by region, to the regional Chair and EDA team member for review and will be considered grand-fathered into the first terms, as described in the next two paragraphs, unless there are objections from a person's region.

The 15 Regional Steering Committee members will have staggered terms to provide a degree of continuity to the steering committee. Seven (7) positions will begin on even years (EVEN years are those years ending in an even number; see chart below) and eight (8) will begin on odd years (ODD years are those years ending in an odd number; see chart below). Every region will have one (1) EVEN year position and one (1) ODD year position. The Southern and North Central regions will have an additional EVEN year position, for a total of two (2) EVEN year positions. The Western, Northeast, and 1890 regions will have an additional ODD year position, for a total of two (2) ODD year positions for each region.

All EVEN year positions will begin in January 2016 with future terms beginning January of even numbered years (e.g. 2018, 2020, etc). To provide an additional level of original steering committee continuity, the eight (8) ODD year positions will have four (4) half serve positions with an initial three (3) year term (2016-1018); their next term beginning in 2019. The other four (4) positions will serve an initial one (1) year term (2016); their next term would begin in 2017. The positions serving an initial three (3) year term will be one each from the Western, Northeast, North Central, and 1890 regions.



3.5 The steering committee will meet monthly through conference calls or other communication technology. Special meetings may be called by a written request of any steering committee member with approval of the executive committee. A meeting reminder, including a tentative agenda, will be sent to all members at least one (1) week prior to each meeting. The agenda will be prepared by the Chair, with input from the executive committee. Any member may suggest items for inclusion on the steering committee meeting agenda by contacting the Chair.

3.6 All steering committee members are required to attend the scheduled meetings. The steering committee has the authority to remove any member if a member fails to attend two (2) consecutive unexcused meetings.

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- 3.7 When a vacancy occurs among the members of the steering committee, other than from normal expiration, members of that Regional Urban Extension Member Caucus shall make a recommendation to the Regional Association to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term. In the case of ECOP or NIFA, membership will be determined based on processes they decide to employ.
- 3.8 Additional steering committee memberships may be requested by Extension related entities, in writing, to the current NUEL Executive Committee prior to July 1 to be considered for steering committee membership the following year. The executive committee shall recommend to the current steering committee any additional steering committee memberships deemed suitable for consideration. The steering committee shall select potential new memberships and submit to the ECOP Program Committee for final approval.

Article Four NUEL ACTION TEAMS

- 4.1 NUEL conducts work primarily through Action Teams, the make-up of which are established or reviewed annually, or more often if needed, by the steering committee and active members.
- 4.2 There shall be five (5) standing Action Teams. These are: Policy, Communication, Resources, Professional Development, and Stakeholder.
- 4.3 Additional Ad hoc committees may be added based on organizational needs.
- 4.4 Active members will populate the Action Teams with at least one (1) member from the steering committee. Each Action Team must select Team Chair(s) who are responsible to ensure that work is completed and reported regularly to the steering committee.

Article Five AMENDMENTS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES

- 5.1 The steering committee shall have the authority to adopt, amend, and repeal these procedures. Any procedural adoption, amendment, or repeal made hereunder shall be effective upon approval by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the steering committee at a meeting where a quorum is present. However, amendments impacting regional representation will need the concurrence of all regional associations prior to implementation.
- 5.2 Issues not covered by these organizational procedures will be referred to *Robert's Rules of Order*.

D. NUEL Executive Committee & Officers' Responsibilities

The NUEL Steering Committee will be led by an executive committee which includes one representative from each of ECOP's five regions. Terms of the executive committee will be one (1) year beginning with the annual meeting in December of each year. Elections will take place in the quarter before the annual meeting and will include Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Action Teams Coordinator and National Urban Extension Conference Liaison. The general role of the executive committee is to manage the planning and communications; plan agendas; maintain focus and act on behalf of the group in between opportunities for broader decision-making. The specific responsibilities of each officer are as follows:

Chair

- Provide overall leadership for NUEL building a sense of teamwork and purpose
- Oversee arrangements for all meetings
- Call meetings of the following committees/groups :
 - Executive committee meetings
 - Monthly steering committee meetings
 - Bi-annual total membership meetings
- Prepare and distribute meeting agendas
- Preside over meetings
- Use parliamentary procedure to conduct meetings
- Appoint committees or action teams as needed
- Act as national NUEL representative, communicates with Vice-Chair to preside at meetings or to perform other Chair responsibilities if Chair is unable to carry out prescribed duties

Vice-Chair

- Preside at meetings if Chair is absent
- Carry out other Chair responsibilities if Chair is unable to perform them
- Assist Chair as needed
- Serve as membership Chair to:
 - Provide management of executive committee, steering committee and total membership lists
 - Provide new member orientation
 - Conduct membership recruitment
 - Plans ways to engage total membership participation in meetings, Action Teams and other activities

Secretary

- Responsible for NUEL Executive Committee, steering committee and total membership internal and external communications directed by Chair, executive committee or steering committee
- Keep an accurate written record of the executive committee, steering committee and total membership meetings
- Record and provide minutes of meetings
- Record meeting attendance

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- Support work of Vice-Chair's membership responsibilities
 - Write all official correspondences for NUEL as directed by Chair, executive committee or steering committee

Action Teams Coordinator

- Coordinates work of Action Teams
- Communicates regularly with Action Team Chairs
- Maintains an accurate list of membership of each Action Team
- Works in conjunction with Chair to create new Action Teams
- Makes sure Action Teams plans of work are up to date and accurately reflected on NUEL web site
- Collects regular reports on progress of Action Teams
- Provides oversight for Action Team reports at meetings

National Urban Extension Conference Liaison

- Will serve as NUEL official representative on the National Urban Extension Conference planning committee to ensure :
 - Communication between NUEL and the planning committee
 - That the goals of NUEL are represented, communicated, and carried out in the planning process
 - Continuity from conference to conference
- Provide leadership and oversight for future conference bid processes and site selection