National Urban Leaders Network (NULN) Meeting

San Antonio, Texas

December 7-9, 2014

Meeting Notes

December 7, 2014: Day 1

Twenty urban leaders attended the National Urban Leaders Network (NULN) meeting in San Antonio, Texas, representing 14 states. The meeting opened with each leader introducing themselves and talking very briefly about some of their efforts in urban extension. Some of these efforts include:

* Youth Development for the under-served, under-privileged, and/or non-traditional audiences and college students engaged in serving these audiences
* Urban Agriculture/Local Foods
  + Student Gardens
  + Roadside farm stands
  + Engagement of master gardeners in this effort
* Water Resources
  + Green Infrastructure/Stormwater Management
  + Water Conservation
* Health and Wellness
* STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) Education

Jackie Van De Walle was the opening speaker. Jackie is on the State Urban Advisory Board and President of the Bexar County Leadership Advisory Board for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. She was very dynamic and exciting like most urban extension professionals. Jackie spoke of planting seeds of positive energy and knowledge, and having patience to wait for these seeds to grow. Jackie focused on Advisory Committee for Urban Programs. The Advisory Committee for Urban Programs at Texas A&M focuses on interpreting urban programs to stakeholders through annual personal updates of key stakeholders such as political leaders, quarterly newsletters, and establishing contacts with key staff of political leaders that are readily accessible and regularly updating these key staff. Jackie spoke mostly about giving under-served youth an opportunity and exposing them to the agricultural community. Some key quotes from Jackie include:

* ICE (Integrity, Caring, and Excellence)
* Network! Network! Network!
* Senior Centers (retirement communities) provide a great volunteer based
* Be consistent in your communication
* Executive summaries are important for documents provided to key stakeholders
* Youth can best sell the program (politicians with youth photo opportunities are key)
* Invite politicians out to see for themselves
* Use 4H ambassadors to market 4H to other youth
* Invite 4H alumni on Advisory Committee
* The smile is the international language that opens hearts and minds

Deno De Ciantis and Mary Jane Willis provided a brief update on NULN and the APLU (Association of Public and Land-grant Universities). The APLU is the overarching organization to guide the land grant universities. ECOP (Extension Committee on Organizational Policy) has representatives from all five extension regions (Northeast, South, North Central, West and 1890s). Two committees: Personnel Committee and Program Committee. Mary Jane Willis is co-chair of the Program Committee. The program committee plans to invite NULN to come and present our efforts to them. Mary Jane is a strong advocate of urban extension and NULN.

Dr. John Jacob spoke about reimagining university engagement in the 21st century. John is the director of the Texas Coastal Watershed Program, and Professor and Extension Specialist with a joint appointment with the Texas A&M Sea Grant Program and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service through the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Science. He referenced Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. He believes that most of Extension provides “Authoritative Advisement,” but should be more focused on “Engagement.” According to John, Extension is in an agricultural lock box. John is partnering with the University of Houston, an urban serving university. He spoke a lot about a complete remake of Extension similar to how Jane Jacobs turned urban planning on its head. He referred to Sea Grant and how Sea Grant had to go outside the box to start their program. NOAA is to Sea Grant as USDA is to Land Grant. The call for the creation of Sea Grant was made in Science Magazine. He is calling for an Urban Grant to fund “Professors in Practices” and “Community Agents.” He is calling for the universities to make the “Scholarship of Application” no less than the “Scholarship of Discovery.” John’s presentation lead to an excellent change of ideas. It was suggested that John join the NULN.

December 8, 2014: Day 2

Doug Steele, Director of Extension, for Texas A&M provided his thoughts on urban Extension. For urban Extension to be successful, funds cannot be diverted from agriculture Extension to fund urban. Texas has 26 million people with 23 million live in Metropolitan centers. Jim Collins (Good to Great) – great organizations are made of great people, not great programs. When the content does not match the context of the message, we have a problem. Cities are hiring their own Extension staff (urban agricultural specialist). Cities are trying to get our SNAP Ed funding. We need to partner with these groups instead of them hiring their own people. Seeking money for reaching un-reached youth – this could be in rural area. We don’t read the signs and get distracted with other things. What does Extension do in urban areas that we don’t already have? We form advisory groups that are connected to community groups to help them make better decisions. To extend knowledge and provide solutions. We need to create a new philosophy for urban extension. We translate knowledge but we need to provide transformational knowledge. It is a cultural issue. No strategic planning, Action planning is needed. “Family Consumer Science” nobody knows what this means. We need to change how we speak. “4H and Youth Development” nobody knows what this means. We need to talk about service learning instead. Research based curriculum that the kids use for learning. We don’t communicate well what we can do for urban youth. Developing community action plans – this is what we should be doing. We need eXtension and we need to drive legislators to this sight.

1. Feed our future (safe and reliable food)
2. Improving our health (eliminates chronic illness – obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and even cancer)
3. Protecting our environment
4. Enriching our youth
5. Strengthening communities (creating leaders is a big part of this)

If we don’t take advantage of these opportunities, we will not be here 10 years from now. We need to figure out how to enhance what other people are doing – partnerships are key. We need to work together to make urban extension successful. We need to provide incentives to move forward. We need to hire volunteer coordinators/managers, not content specialists. He presents funding in terms of Ag and Urban so everybody know how much is being spent on urban. Is the light at the end of the tunnel a train headed at us?

We need National Leadership for Urban Extension. We need a clear voice. We need to be heard. $300 million in funding from USDA for Land Grant

$350 million in funding for AFRI – ½ goes to non-land grant.

We should ask for $50 million for urban extension.

We have a loud voice but no clear message.

National urban food forum - could be the topic that kicks us off.

**Patrick Proden** spoke about Extension Reconsidered. Mobilize your community, community redevelopment. Imagining America’s Extension Reconsidered initiative invited deliberation about what CE could and should be in the 21st century. With support from Kettering and the National Issues Forums Institute, now planning a collaborative process to develop an "issue guide."

What is our story?

What are – and what should be – our larger purposes and ends in the 21st century?

What roles do – and what roles should – Extension play in addressing the problems of democracy?

**Sheldon Hammond** provided an update on the National Urban Conference in Atlantic, GA in May 2015. 201 submissions for posters and seminar abstracts. Tuesday afternoon after 4 pm we have space – ballroom or meeting room. We should know by Wednesday for acceptance of seminars and posters.

**Chris Obropta** presented a proposal for a National Urban Extension Network. Discussion followed. We are here and we are persistent. Maybe we should ask HUD or other funders what they want.

**Discussion of Actions Items:**

**Policy Action Plan:** Brad, Rusty and Charlie will provide Manami and Chris with their concepts on Urban Experiment Stations and Urban Extension Center. NULN has a google docs. The link will be emailed out to the group.

**Resources Action Plan:** Inventory of staff assets and funding has been created. Waiting to see if there is any overlap before sending it out. We need a web site.

**Stakeholders:** Rusty and Katherine will re-examine the need for a stakeholder plan and the actions in the plan. The Stakeholder Committee need to reach out to the CARET (Council on Agriculture Research, Extension and Teaching).

**Professional Development:** Brad will look into seeing if the existing web site for Western Extension can be used by NULN.

**Communication:** We have a google docs. We looked into eXtension COP but eXtension is not funding anymore COPs. We have a list serve. We have not developed a template. We have not developed a newsletter.

In the afternoon, we broke out into work groups to address several issues.

December 9, 2014: Day 3

Chris provide a logo for NULN and discussion followed.

Charlie led a discussion on the variations in thinking about urban versus rural.

Work Groups Reports:

Conference Committee: National Research and Extension Administrator Meeting in San Diego at the same time as National Urban Extension Conference. Tuesday evening reception in the ballroom from 4 to 6 pm. Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres. Mary Jane says list serve for program people and administrative people. Powerpoint presentation to tell people who we are. Ask attendees for information. Formal invites will be mailed. Email blast. Reminder at registration. Personal thank you notes will be mailed to people who attended. An announcement will be made at the last session prior to the reception. We will be asking $1,000 from each of NULN state to sponsor the reception. Chris and Mary Jane will prepare a letter to give their directors. Monday will be the NULN meeting 9 am to 4 pm.

Structure Committee: Continue to promote and increase our numbers. Possibly send out invitations to other states to participate. Expand the Steering Committee from 11 to add an ECOP representative and add an 1890 representative. The Steering Committee should have representatives from each region and the 1890s. No bylaws but operational principles will be created. Deno offered to be a co-convener to organize the monthly conference calls and run the Steering Committee. Joan and Brad offer to be the other co-conveners. One will be cycled off yearly. Minutes of the Steering Committee will be routed to the list server. The Steering Committee will continue to assemble this structure so we can present to ECOP and NIFA and others.

Promising Practices/Best Practices Committee: Western Urban Center will conduct a literature of urban best practices. Brad will resend the job description for the student doing this work for the Western Center. NULN participants will send Brad any information on publications they have on urban extension practices, centers, and projects.

Resource Committee: Committee members will scan for government, public and private funding that supports quality of life in cities – three week timeline. With each funder, their priority will be listed in the database. After we identify priorities, we will see where NULN fits. This all should be completed for the May meeting. Need time on the agenda.

Action Items:

NULN participants will send two to three success stories to Chris.

NULN participants will send info on urban extension publications to Brad.

~~Chris will send out sample letter for participants to provide their Directors.~~

~~Chris will send out the logos for group to vote on.~~

Chris and Mary Jane will send template for letter to Dean/Directors. Checks are due to Sheldon by January 15th.

Sheldon will send Chris costs for Georgia event.

Final Action Plans will go to Deno by March 1st.

Chris will build a web site.

Policy Action Team: Steve\*, Chris, LaDonna, Manami, Steve\*, Patrick

Resources/Stakeholders: Julie\*, Sheldon, Ray, Rusty, Kathleen, Katherine, Karol, Joe, Jan

Professional Development: Marie\*, Brad, Dolores, Jody, Walt, Eloisa, Charlie, Travis

Communications: Chris\*, Deno, Kat, Laquore, James, Mary Jane

Reception Planning Team: Jody\*, Manami, Chris, Sheldon, Ray, James