

University of Illinois Extension:  
A Catalyst for Change  
(presented to the Board of Trustees March 23, 2011)

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3. For nearly 100 years, University of Illinois Extension has been a *catalyst for change* ... for individuals, families, businesses and communities throughout Illinois.

And now U of I Extension is changing to better meet the needs of the people of Illinois ... and to better serve the University, as well.

4. Showing the way forward ... Whether it's maintaining a safe water supply ...

5. keeping kids focused on their future ...

6. or preventing chronic health problems ... Extension provides life-changing education that keeps small individual issues from becoming intractable societal issues.

7. Working with communities to develop local food systems.

8. Fostering entrepreneurship in the inner city.

9. Helping new immigrants transition from being new residents ... to productive citizens ... more quickly and easily.

10. What sets Extension apart from other local education providers is that programs are based on the latest research findings from the University of Illinois, where good ideas flow in **every** direction.

11. Science-based education flows **from** the University's top-tier research programs to Extension program audiences.

In turn, audience members provide valuable feedback that keeps researchers focused on meeting today's – and tomorrow's – societal needs.

12. No matter what the issue, Extension has the infrastructure and the hometown connections to bring the right people to the table ... in every part of the state.

13. Chronic health problems disproportionately affect minority and low-income populations. But research has demonstrated that the food-stamp-eligible families who have taken part in Extension nutrition education programs eat more fruits and vegetables...

14. ... make healthier choices ... stretch their limited food dollars further ... and exercise more. All of which reduces the incidence of chronic disease -- and societal healthcare costs -- over time.

15. Through U of I Extension's Cook County Jail garden, inmates develop valuable job skills as they earn certification as Master Gardeners. They raise tons of produce ... and learn positive ways to deal with stress and frustrations, thus reducing the recidivism rate.

16. Extension's Early College Outreach programs provide early intervention so that children of disadvantaged families build the skills and confidence they need ... to be the first in their families to succeed in college.

17. The University also benefits from U of I Extension's Early College Outreach efforts... when limited-resource students who are bright and motivated set their sights on an education at the University's Urbana, Chicago or Springfield campus.

18. K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education is another high priority for the U of I ... and Extension's STEM programs have been getting results *for years!*

19. In fact, recent research at Tufts University showed that boys and girls who are involved in Extension's 4-H program do better in science, technology, engineering and math ... and are more likely to pursue careers in science.

20. Operation Military Kids is a special 4-H program offered in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense and the nationwide Extension system.

21. So that no matter where their families move – or what's happening on the home front – children of active-duty personnel and reservists can gain the benefits of 4-H. In a supportive community of young people and caring adults who provide the stability and continuity they need.

22. You probably know that the U of I and Extension are part of the nationwide Land-Grant University system – and our partnerships with peer institutions enhance our national and global reach.

The University's Land-Grant mission involves teaching, research and Extension education to make life better, healthier, safer and more prosperous ... for all of Illinois.

23. The mission is the same as always ... but Extension's audiences and delivery methods continue to change with the times. With the right mix of high-tech and high-touch programming, Extension is moving into new program areas – and reshaping some of its traditional emphases -- strategically investing in new delivery models that provide just-in-time education for audiences that need specialized research expertise.

24. You would expect Extension staff to work with producers and land-owners – and, of course, they do. But online tool sets like FarmDoc also help investors and policy-makers arrive at *their own* best decisions based on recent, objective research data.

Current federal risk-management policies are heavily based on work done by Extension specialists right here in Illinois.

25. The impact of U of I Extension programming often extends thousands of miles beyond Illinois' borders.

Loss of nitrogen fertilizers in the Corn Belt contributes to the growth of dead zones in the Gulf of Mexico, putting the environment and entire industries at risk.

26. Recent research at the U of I's Urbana Campus has pinpointed where and how these nutrient losses occur on Midwestern farms. Extension specialists and educators package that new research knowledge ... to teach producers how to reduce the potential for nitrogen loss. The result: lower costs of production for Illinois growers *and* a safer, more sustainable environment for everyone.

27. Last year, U of I Extension staff recorded **2.8 million** face-to-face teaching contacts all across the state.

Just this month, Extension reached an *online* milestone: our websites surpassed **500-million** total page views, from the United States and all around the world.

And every one of those **half-a-billion** contacts ... creates top-of-mind awareness of the University of Illinois' commitment to groundbreaking research and relevant outreach programs.

28. Part of Extension's value lies in its network of programming and funding partnerships. In FY10, about \$14-million in funding from the University helped \$67-million in federal, state, local and grant funding.

29. Millions of people - all over Illinois - have been willing to invest in U of I Extension, through the passage of Extension tax referenda in 85 counties. Counties **with** a funding referendum are shown in color here.

Continuing to meet the needs of local residents is key to maintaining the support of county boards that levy those dollars ...

30. ... and to building additional local partnerships that extend the University's reach into communities large and small.

But the system only works if the State and the University are willing to match the local commitment to Extension.

31. Extension is reorganizing its field operations to ensure long-term financial sustainability: Reallocating funds and adding capacity for programs on the issues that matter most to the people of Illinois.

Statewide reach – statewide impact. Without Extension, it just doesn't happen.

32. The Stewarding Excellence at Illinois process led to a recent recommendation that Extension move out of its long-time home in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences ... and become a stand-alone unit of the Urbana campus. Another Stewarding Excellence project team recommended that Extension merge with the Urbana campus' Office of Public Engagement.

33. Either way, Extension's network of field offices and skilled professionals are scalable assets -- that eventually *could* be scaled-up to play an even greater role in community outreach programs across the entire University. In health sciences, business and many other fields.

The program-delivery infrastructure is already in place -- and it *works*.

34. In a speech to the City Club earlier this month, UI Board Chairman Christopher Kennedy envisioned the economic development engine the University of Illinois can become by bringing together our faculty experts with leaders of business and government to address our state's most challenging problems. Extension is uniquely positioned to help lead this effort.

35. U of I Extension's educational programming for the \$4-**billion** Illinois Green Industry is a prime example of how Extension currently supports economic development and industry.

As Chairman Kennedy suggests, Extension's highly successful program-delivery model could easily be adapted as the University reaches out to some of Illinois' other key businesses and industries.

36. As valuable as Extension is to the University and the people of Illinois – its future is in jeopardy. Extension does not generate tuition dollars ... so campus budget cuts have hit Extension programs much harder than any academic unit.

37. Extension has taken steps to ensure its own future – downsizing, prioritizing and reallocating resources to meet the most pressing societal needs for informal education.

38. Going forward, University of Illinois Extension programs will remain viable only if the current resource base is sustained and protected from further cuts.

39. Either way, the University is at a decision point: What do we want U of I Extension to be? Are we willing to make the base commitment needed to ensure that Extension

programs remain the cornerstone of the University outreach effort ... in communities throughout Illinois? And how should the funding flow?

*DITCH!!! 40. As you consider these questions, let's hear from some stakeholders on how Extension transforms lives.*

41. The Urbana campus of the University of Illinois has tremendous opportunities to reach audiences, not only in Illinois, but literally across the globe. People familiar with the Extension model are eager to apply it in new and innovative ways.

Assuming that the foundation of UI Extension can effectively be upheld, it can then serve as a basis for the University of Illinois to have profound impacts on society in ways we can only imagine.

Thinking about where that imagination and innovation might lead, we'll close with a real example of a program created at the University of Illinois by scholars who have seen the Extension model in action.