COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

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EXTENSION-CAMPUS CONNECTIONS FORT COLLINS, CO

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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This internship considers connections between CSU Extension and Campus, especially the connections between Agents and Faculty/Staff as individuals. CSU's VP of Engagement and Extension has been making plans and taking actions to improve the effectiveness of CSU Extension, including the relationships of field agents to faculty and staff on campus. There is a need for Extension field agents, specialists, and those with Extension appointments to have a more cohesive relationship. There are gaps within the system, redundant work, and expertise not being utilized due to lack of centralized communication within Extension.

This internship focuses on what tools, resources, and information would be valuable to agents and faculty in supporting connections between Extension and Campus. Main efforts include:
-Researching existing tools and resources to identify any shortcomings.
-Interviewing a broad group of faculty and agents to gather insights and perspectives on the challenges of connection, past successful collaborations, and what needs exist to facilitate and support connections going forward.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

The goals of this internship were to identify tools, information, and resources that could facilitate and support Extension-Campus Connections. To support this goal, the following efforts were carried out:
-Conduct a Case Study of the Wolf Education Collaboration
-Conduct interviews with faculty and agents to record their thoughts, perspectives, and needs relating to connections.
-Confirm or Update lists of Extension Appointments within WCNR and CAS

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

As a student in the Masters of Natural Resource Stewardship program focusing on Ecological Restoration, I am interested in incentivizing and leveraging restoration activities by private landowners to facilitate improved ecological processes on the landscape scale. This internship has provided insight into the power of Extension in connecting with and supporting communities and landowners, as well as the importance of leveraging those connections to pursue iterative networks of relationships with a broad spectrum of stakeholders who can initiate real world positive change at multiple scales.

WHAT YOU DID

30 interviews were conducted with Campus Faculty/Staff and Extension Agents, where thoughts and perspectives on Extension-Campus connections were recorded. Interviews were analyzed to identify common trends among respondents, which were ranked by number of respondents and number of responses for each trend. A ranked list of *accomplishments, keys to success, areas for improvement, and tools needed* was generated and detailed in the final report.

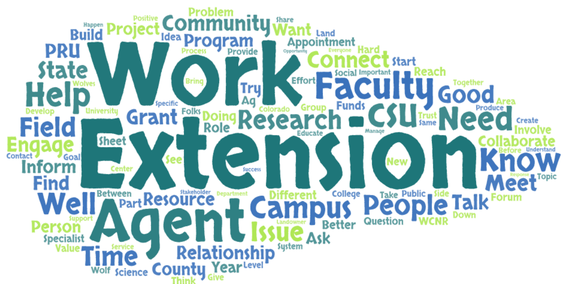
A survey was created for WCNR Faculty and NR PRU members, to assess specializations, research needs, and ongoing projects/programs of individuals, as well as to determine if additional connections were desired. 28 survey responses were recorded, analyzed, and included in the final report.

An investigation was conducted into current Extension Appointments held within WCNR and CAS. Dean's offices, department heads, and Appointment Faculty were contacted to attempt to create an up-to-date list of Appointments within each college. The results of this effort were detailed in the final report.

13 external organizations were researched to determine what tools and resources were being used for connection and engagement. This included 6 state extensions as well as various universities, and 2 centers within CSU.

The results of these efforts were condensed into a final report for use by the Office of Engagement and Extension. In addition, we presented our main lessons learned to the VP of Engagement and Extension.

Figure 1. (Word Cloud Generated from Interviews)



WHAT YOU LEARNED

Sustainable, personal relationships are essential for the Extension-Campus model to work. Individuals value and identify personal relationships as a key ingredient to the success of long-term Extension-Campus connections.

Building strong relationships takes time and energy. There is a need for *central connectors*, individuals who value Extension-Campus connections, facilitate mutually beneficial relationships, and who compel engagement and alignment among stakeholders.

Tools, resources, and information may aid and enhance connections, but they will not replace relationships, and are not desired as a replacement to personal relationships.

Current connection tools are missing, difficult to find, and out of date. Individuals desire easy-to-use and easy-to-find tools and resources, that provide information on individual specializations, programming needs, and research goals.

Individuals overwhelmingly express a need for more opportunities to meet in person as opportunities to form relationships and to better understand the needs and goals of others at CSU. Opportunities to bolster 2-way communication at Forum, PRU meetings, and through small working groups should be prioritized.

Successful collaborations, such as the Wolf Education Collaboration, can offer valuable insights into key ingredients of success for future collaborative efforts between Extension and Campus.

NEXT STEPS

Research additional collaborations between Campus, Extension, and Communities, to better understand the key ingredients for these successful efforts.

Utilize recommendations from Final Report to develop tools, resources, and information that facilitate and support Extension-Campus connections.