

University of Florida

- UF President Dr. Kent Fuchs will be joining us at the Extension Professional Associations Annual Conference in Daytona Beach on September 29 – 30, 2016 as our keynote speaker. He will be focusing on the 21st Century Land Grant University and Extension: Never Changing, Always Evolving.
- Dr. Heidi Radunovich of our Family, Youth, and Community Sciences Dept. is devoting 15% of her time to our “UF Engagement” initiative. Dr. Radunovich is currently exploring broad UF outreach activities that occur outside of IFAS. She will be focusing on assessing the big picture as well as developing relationships and partnerships between Extension and other UF Colleges and Institutes to broaden Extension’s direct reach throughout the state.
- UF Human Resources in consultation with our General Counsel’s Office determined that county extension faculty are exempt from the minimum salary threshold described in the Fair Labor Standards Act. We relayed this information to our county government partners and we have received no pushback to date.
- Faculty hiring continues at a fast pace. Seventy-five new state-level faculty were hired last year, and there have been 75 active and completed searches this year. (These numbers do not include county faculty hires.) Thirteen new faculty have been hired under UF’s “Pre-eminence” effort.

UF/IFAS

- UF/IFAS is preparing 2017 Legislative Budget Requests (LBRs). These LBRs will focus on: a statewide BMP research and extension initiative (\$2.5 Mill); Zika research and extension (\$4.2 Mill); Invasive Wildlife Response initiative (\$705 K); Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center in Live Oak upgrades (\$2.1 Mill); Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee upgrades (\$2.0 Mill); Tropical Research and Education Center in Homestead upgrades (\$3.9 Mill); Florida Palms Under Siege (\$1.6 Mill).
- UF/IFAS has instituted a 12% IDC policy for all commodity groups and foundations as of July 1 '16. There has been a significant communication effort with major commodity groups to answer questions and to help them understand how these funds are utilized to address costs of research and investments into facilities, infrastructure, etc.
- Two major issues facing our state at this time are mosquito-borne Zika and Blue-Green Algae which are in some areas of Southeast FL. There are major efforts being invested in research and extension to proactively address these issues along with a number of state agencies.
- Our main UF/IFAS Administration Building (McCarty Hall) is undergoing renovations that will take several years to complete. Currently, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Office is in temporary quarters as their floor is renovated. When that job is completed at the end of 2016, the Senior Vice President’s Office, IFAS Development, and the Offices of Research and Extension will move to an alternate location while their floors are renovated.

IFAS Extension

- Following a competitive process, IFAS Extension was awarded a 3-year contract worth at least \$31 million (of \$51 Mill available) to conduct SNAP-Ed programs throughout Florida.

However, there are a number of details that are still being worked out with FL DCF (Department of Children and Families).

- We now have five Water Resource Regional Specialized Agents on board. Four of them have PhDs. They are about to embark on a year-long orientation process. We expect this group of RSAs to work closely together as a team. They will conduct extension programs in their area of expertise and they will serve as a liaison between our state extension specialists and county faculty with water resource programs.
- We continue to implement our Extension Strategic Staffing Plan. We have developed a list of 15 new, high-priority extension positions to fill critical gaps in extension programming. Most of these positions are Regional and State Specialized Agents (RSAs and SSAs). We are now pursuing funding to fill as many as possible.
- Our plan to partner with the FFA Leadership Training Center in Haines City to create a new 4-H Camp has come to a halt as FFA has chosen to go it alone. We are continuing to use our three existing 4-H Camps to cover state needs, but the idea to create a fourth camp remains active.
- Our Revenue Enhancement Initiative implementation continues. Establishing UF cash and gift bank accounts in every county extension office has been slow but steady. The UF fiscal office has been very supportive of us in establishing E-Commerce sites that will be used at the local level for collecting revenue. A lot of training is required and it takes some time for county staff to “get it.” This is also requiring a higher level of leadership and management of our CEDs (County Extension Directors) which we are emphasizing through professional development and targeted strategic plans for each county related to programming, staffing, engagement and revenue enhancement.
- We are training our county extension faculty to use an “Event Budget Planning Tool” to determine if they should be charging a fee, and if so, how much. The most challenging concept to teach is the private-to-public value ratio of an extension event. Overall, the training has gone well and the receptivity to the idea has been good. Obstacles and reasons why not to charge have been presented but they do not dominate the discussion.
- USDA-NIFA Deputy Secretary Ann Bartuska visited the UF/IFAS Broward County Extension Service on Aug 10 with a focus on urban agriculture.
- Our unique public-private partnership with Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales (<https://boktowergardens.org/>) will be showcased during an open house on Sept 10. Extension has two RSAs (one with School Gardens and another with Community Gardens focus) as well as a state specialist focusing on food systems evaluation working at Bok.
- Beginning on September 1, we will be implementing a new \$20 4-H participation fee which will be specific to club members. Funds received will be split 50:50 between the state and county. State funds will cover general liability insurance policy as well as investment into regional and statewide events and activities.