



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2024-2030

FROM THE DIRECTOR



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SDSU Extension Director

As a community, we understand the importance of adaptability as we work towards strengthening people and places for transformative change – for ourselves and future generations. At the same time, we remain steadfastly committed to our mission, vision and core values.

The individuals, families, businesses, organizations and communities we serve are living in an era of rapid change. SDSU Extension's unique strength is our ability to collaborate across disciplines statewide.

I called on the executive team and a committee of thought leaders from multiple disciplines to identify opportunities for SDSU Extension to fulfill our land-grant mission. The strategic framework outlined in this document is our commitment to:

- » Expand our core outreach and educational programs to address local and regional needs. We will continue to deliver research-based solutions to communities across South Dakota.
- » Identify creative solutions to improve food security and address the impacts of climate realities in South Dakota.
- » Maximize our impact by aligning our work with the vision for the future of South Dakota State University outlined in Pathway to Premier 2030.

In six years, our vision is that we will celebrate the fact that:

"South Dakota continues to be a highly sought-after place to work, live and play; in part due to the efforts of the committed, motivated employees of its outstanding land-grant university."

I hope you will join us with a shared belief in our growth opportunities and abilities to make a significant difference. I have so much hope for what we can achieve together.

BACKGROUND

State College officially became South Dakota State University July 1, 1964. Today, SDSU confers degrees from seven colleges representing more than 230 majors, minors and specializations. The institution also offers 39 master's degree programs, 16 Ph.D. and two professional programs.

In addition to the Brookings campus, the work of the university is carried out at sites in Sioux Falls, Pierre and Rapid City, and through SDSU Extension offices and Agricultural Experiment Station research sites across the state.

At the core of SDSU Extension's success is an extensive network of specialists and educators serving all 49 million acres of South Dakota, with eight regional centers and 62 county and tribal offices.

SDSU Extension relies on technology to offer educational programs to citizens. Combined with traditional face-to-face methods of learning, citizens can access SDSU Extension's online learning portal: extension.sdstate.edu.

We actively seek partners who can help us accomplish what we cannot do alone. Our partners include state and federal agencies, peer education institutions, community-based groups, nonprofit organizations, agricultural commodity groups, and volunteers. These partnerships benefit citizens by providing better service and efficiently using our state's precious and limited resources.

Our Vision

As the outreach arm of South Dakota State University, our state's land-grant institution, SDSU Extension serves as a lifelong network that provides farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, families, youth, and communities with research-based information and education necessary to positively impact quality of life, economic viability, and environmental surroundings.

Our Mission

SDSU Extension strengthens people and places through hands-on discovery, leading to transformative change.

Our Core Values

- » Educating
- » Empowering
- » Engaging

Core Programs



4-H YOUTH



Through 4-H programs, we provide experiences where young people learn by doing. Youth are our future leaders; what they learn and experience in 4-H will help them develop into contributing citizens who will give back to their communities.

- » Support the growth of young people by helping each child to steadily grow their life skills through projects and relationships.
- » Lead youth as they develop social skills through a mix of interest-led activities and building relationship skills that enhance their life and community.
- » Help youth explore career pathways that provide meaning and strengthen our state's future workforce.
- » Provide leadership training to influence relationships, helping youth gain the skills to be great leaders and followers.



AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



We create and provide innovative educational and applied research programs to support agricultural decision-makers, focusing on crops, livestock, horticulture and specialty crops, grasslands, habitats and water management.

- » Strengthen agricultural systems by engaging new audiences and advancing agriculture-related sciences.
- » Expand the adoption of precision agriculture technologies.
- » Identify creative solutions to improve food security and address the impacts of climate realities in South Dakota.
- » Improve the stewardship of South Dakota's water and native grassland resources on public and private lands by addressing the three P's of sustainability – people, profit and the planet.

Expand outreach and educational opportunities throughout South Dakota to address needs through collaborative partnerships utilizing the talents and resources of SDSU Extension, the communities we serve, and University faculty, staff, and students.



COMMUNITY VITALITY



We are a leader in empowering South Dakotans with the motivation, knowledge and skills to create stronger communities. We work together toward positive change by offering continuous learning opportunities, innovative processes and coaching.

- » Strengthen businesses through teaching communities to create an environment favorable to entrepreneurship.
- » Develop customized training to energize local leaders to improve community organizations and businesses.
- » Inspire diverse populations to create vibrant communities.



FAMILY, FOOD AND WELLNESS



We help individuals expand their knowledge to make healthy choices for themselves and their families. We partner with organizations and communities to improve support for healthy lifestyles to improve individual well-being.

- » Engage people in comprehensive, multi-disciplinary programs to improve emotional, financial and physical well-being. This work strengthens individuals, families and communities.
- » Promote positive changes in food access and consumption that result in improved health, with an emphasis on alleviating the burden of chronic diseases.

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

Stimulate and support innovative and creative solutions for the significant challenges affecting our citizens. We will collaborate across diverse disciplines to provide solutions that benefit multiple audiences simultaneously.

FOOD SECURITY

Food insecurity negatively impacts individual wellbeing and vitality of communities. To improve food security in South Dakota, we must focus our collective expertise and resources on strengthening food production, improving access to affordable food, and building the capacity of existing organizations that connect people to local foods.

- » Support the expansion of farm-to-school programs to provide nutritious food options to schoolchildren and benefit local food producers by creating new market opportunities.
- » Leverage nutrition incentive programs which pair valuable nutrition and health solutions with improved access to affordable, nutritious food.
- » Build the capacity of local food production systems by providing education and certification programs focused on improving the efficiency, profitability and resiliency of the agricultural systems and natural resources required for sustainable growth.
- » Develop resources to bridge critical gaps in our current food production systems and consumer behaviors. Key topics include succession planning for agricultural enterprises, reducing food waste and meeting food safety regulations and requirements.

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Changes in climate, both good and bad, impact every corner of South Dakota. Tackling current and future climate realities requires a combination of mitigation and adaptation actions to ensure we continue to have an adequate water supply, healthy ecosystems, and safe, nutritious food. Grasslands, soil and water are vital ecosystems for the future of our state.

- » Foster improved awareness and understanding of the importance of resilient ecosystems.
- » Deliver climate literacy education to youth, families, communities and those who work in the agricultural industry.
- » Improve conservation practices in urban communities.
- » Engage agricultural producers and industry professionals in continuing education to improve the balance between sustainability and profitability.
- » Advance educational efforts to support land use continuity.

R1 OUR WAY

South Dakota State University has a bold vision to elevate SDSU as a research university and pursue a pathway to achieve designation as an R1 Research University by Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

- » Increase integrated grant awards. Collaborate with non-extension colleagues on grant proposals that include multifunctional research, education and extension activities.
- » Increase the number of Ph.D. students graduating with SDSU Extension experience.



ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Continuing education and certification programs help fulfill growing workforce needs and contribute to economic growth in South Dakota.

- » Increase the number of educational programs offering official continuing education credits or microcredentials.
- » Expand current programs to engage entrepreneurs in continuous learning as they start, maintain and grow successful businesses.
- » Strengthen programs designed to help youth develop the technical and leadership skills necessary to become future employees and entrepreneurs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To develop programs that effectively connect with South Dakota's diverse residents, we strategically promote SDSU Extension and engage with those who share a common commitment to expanding educational opportunities.

- » Collaborate across agencies and disciplines to anticipate and innovatively respond to key needs related to food security, climate resiliency, and economic and workforce development.
- » Expand our collaborations in tribal communities, involve non-extension faculty in programs and create robust collaborative relationships.
- » Improve the utilization of SDSU Extension facilities in urban locations to engage with clientele, conduct educational programs and lead applied research.
- » Develop internal and external marketing and communication strategies to highlight the SDSU Extension brand.

EMPLOYEE SUCCESS

The university's shared core values—people-centered, creativity, integrity, diversity, and excellence—will drive employee success and a culture of leadership. The leadership team is committed to investing resources in prioritized workplace enhancements designed to improve employee retention.

- » Create and implement a mentoring program.
- » Strengthen the onboarding program.
- » Identify and invest in employee professional development opportunities focused on increasing core job skills and targeted growth opportunities.
- » Improve support for multidisciplinary work with clear employee expectations and formalized team leadership.
- » Empower faculty and staff to provide leadership appropriate for their role by improving ongoing training and feedback.
- » Improve communication about benefits.
- » Improve the website, extension.sdstate.edu, to provide a better user experience for internal and external audiences.



EDUCATING

EMPOWERING

ENGAGING



SDSU Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer in accordance with the nondiscrimination policies of South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Board of Regents and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Learn more at extension.sdstate.edu.

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