Executive Leadership Conference

On June 14-15 we look forward to welcoming executive directors and board presidents (or their designee) to campus for the Executive Leadership Conference. The general theme of the conference is building successful collaborations, and includes plenary as well as breakout sessions. Board presidents will have the opportunity for open dialog with CCE Director Chris Watkins during a two-hour session on the first day. There will be a session on our new system strategic plan, updates from state 4-H Director Andy Turner, and the keynote session on the second day will focus on Ag in the Classroom.

Strategic Plan

Work continues on our new system strategic plan. As part of the input-gathering process board members, association staff, and Extension administration were sent an electronic survey which closed on May 31 with a little over 40% completion. The information gathered from the survey, as well as the “ValuesJam” online blog discussion, and other outreach efforts, will all contribute to the second phase in the process. We will transition from broad-stroke information gathering to honing in on key themes that have arisen in this process, via work teams and focus groups, in order to begin articulating a vision for the enhancements we want to see for the future. The work teams will be comprised of multiple stakeholders from across the state, including staff, board members, advisory committee members, faculty, and administration.

New Accounting Platform Chosen

Cornell Cooperative Extension has long utilized ACCPAC as our basic accounting software platform. Over the past year a team of campus and county CCE
representatives has been exploring alternatives to ACCPAC that would better meet current needs. After extensive review, vendor presentations, testing and evaluation the team has recommended a product by Blackbaud. The implementation plan for our financial system project - now named BEAR (BlackBaud Extension Accounting Resources) – is given below. The hope is to have the scope of work details finalized and a signed contract between Extension administration and Blackbaud by mid-June.

<table>
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<th>Phase</th>
<th>Typical Duration</th>
<th>Influencing Factors</th>
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| Plan  | 2-3 weeks        | • Ability to identify and schedule project resources  
                        • Ability to identify milestone dates  
                        • Ability to finalize project plan |
| Design| 1 – 2 months     | • Availability of resources for design team meetings and associated tasks  
                        • Length of discussion required to finalize future-state business processes  
                        • Complexity of business processes  
                        • Ability of multiple teams agreeing on common standards and processes  
                        • Complexity of existing system mapping |
| Test  | 3 - 6 months     | • Number of data sources and test runs  
                        • Availability of project resources to review and validate data conversions  
                        • Availability of project resources to review and validate and business processes |
| Deploy| 2 - 4 weeks      | • Complexity of and desired support during go-live activities  
                        • Number of employees requiring end-user training  
                        • Duration of post-conversion assistance required |

All of the SBN Finance Leads will be involved during the design, testing and deployment phases of the implementation, and David Rutherford from CCE Cortland will be working with the group to represent an executive director perspective. There will also be a small user group that we call on as we get into the testing phase.

If you have questions, please contact Jen Holleran, Assistant Director for Business Operations, at 607-254-6359.

**Updating Constitutions**

Association constitutions should be reviewed every three years in order to incorporate changes that may be made at the system level as well as to reflect any desired changes in local practice. The process is straightforward: start with the most recent template from the Leadership Support page on
the CCE staff website, add any proposed local changes, and send to CCE administration for review and further discussion if necessary. Once the Board of Directors and CCE Administration have signed off, the constitution is ready to go before the association’s voters at the annual meeting. Since the process can take some time depending on circumstances, this is a good time of year to get started.

**AR Agreements**

Association boards often empower the executive director to sign contracts and agreements on behalf of the association. However, the annual Memorandum of Agreement between the association and county government (AR Agreement) or its local equivalent, and the annual agreement between the association and Cornell University (BR Agreement) are fundamental legal documents that should be approved at the board’s annual organizational meeting and signed by the president.

**USDA Civil Rights 4-H Program Audit**

As a system which is supported in part by federal funds, Cornell Cooperative Extension is subject to USDA Civil Rights Reviews. The USDA has informed us they will be conducting a Title VI civil rights compliance audit of the NYS 4-H program August 14-18, 2017.

We anticipate a review of state and county level 4-H program, camp, club, activity, and event data and mailing lists of youth participation by race, gender, and ethnicity. The USDA team will review the data to determine our compliance with federal civil rights policies and obligations relative to eligible minority youth populations in the state. The USDA team will also meet with CCE staff on and off campus to gain staff view of our work. These meetings will include 4-H extension employees, Executive Directors, State 4-H specialists, 4-H program leaders, and others as the USDA team deems necessary and appropriate.

Extension administration has assembled a Civil Rights Review Team on campus to help the system prepare for our upcoming program audit. Please direct any questions to Sarah Dayton, Assistant Director, Organizational Development and Accountability sfd3@cornell.edu