

**DAC Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 29, 2020**  
**Microsoft Teams**

DAC members in attendance: Blake Naughton, Ashley Stokes, Darrin Parmenter, Lori Bates, Rochelle Platter, Wes Alford, Susan Baker, Jean Glowacki, Dan Goldhamer, Martha Thomas, Megan Griffith, Kerri Rollins, Tim Aston, CJ Mucklow, Bill Nobles, Jana Smilanich-Rose, Ruth Willson, Cary Weiner, Eric Hammond, Dennis Kaan, Glenda Wentworth, Marisa Bunning, Julee Stephenson

Absent: Kurt Jones, Jackie Paone

Guests: Darrin Goodman (absent)

*The meeting began at 1:01pm*

Address action items:

- Ashley said to remember to let leadership know if anyone needs help from the Chancellor on funding issues.
- There is a meeting with the new Provost coming up and she is excited about the land-grant mission. We will be doing a briefing for her soon and are really looking forward to that.
- Blake said that the Provost's focus is more interdisciplinary, she is a problem-solver, oversaw engagement work in the past, and just needs to understand at more of a logistical level. She has a background in nutrition, her academic career overlaps with our world, and he is excited about this connection. She wants to be a better supporter and has also committed to being part of Forum.
- Ashley said the support and passion for land-grant throughout campus leadership is there and for what Extension is and our mission. The leadership of the University is really committed to it.

Updates- Blake and Ashley

- Blake has been communicating on Reinvigorating the Mission, the Shared Services model, and launching the Blueprint for Diversity from DCT. There will be an overview coming soon of what Forum will look like at end of October. During updates today, he asked everyone to discuss: Are you hearing enough? Are we communicating enough to get across what's going on? Are we offering enough points for feedback? As we listen to our teams and communities with the Needs Assessment, we want to make sure we are prepared to have informed conversations and good insights. We are trying to be really transparent about the thinking on where we're going.
- The Deans and ELT are working to establish the framework for Strategic Transformation. There was a discussion about the audit we just completed for the organization. Blake has lots of appreciation for all who worked on that. The Extension Strategic Plan was acknowledged and we will give it to them in about a year. We need to figure out campus Strategic Transformation and then submit the Extension Strategic Plan after next year's Forum. We are determining what the details of the plan will be. We will try to connect what we are doing to the larger University picture.

- Enrollment at CSU Online is up 7%. Campus enrollment is down 3.5% overall, which is not good, but better than we thought it would be. The University will be involved earlier with the process for budget planning/tuition planning for Fall 21, FY22. It is important for Extension to make sure we're coming together as an organization with our priorities and needs so that during legislative moments we can make the case really strongly. The Engagement Collaboratives, Reinvigorate the Mission, and other initiatives we are working on are so that legislative partners will get the real narrative of what we are doing.
- Blake recently went to an event with CJ and legislators. He found they did not have a clear understanding of what we do so we are working on things like updating the Commissioners' Survey. Our goal is to tell our story in the coming years as we build our brand.
- Ashley said she is excited we will have comms to help us communicate with our elected officials.
- Ashley wants to reiterate that, as a state, we are seeing an increase in COVID cases and more activity right now. We need to make sure what we are doing is essential, and to be very careful about following Public Health guidance. If any issues come up, reach out quickly. Keep up with the contact lists and don't let up on the event plans. She said thank you for your diligence on those and to pass on your appreciation to everyone.
- Discussion
  - o Jean said that as more and more 4-H events come in, there is no real standard of what essential means. She is uneasy approving some even with being in line with county guidelines. Is there a message we can send out across the state that can make the process more standardized?
  - o Ashley said it is different across county to county, so one thing for the state is extremely difficult. People have been using judgement with communities on whether something needs to be in person. Just getting together is harder to be considered essential. Ask people to be careful and thoughtful.
  - o Jean agreed that it can't be exactly the same across the state. If county directors are approving, then for the most part we're moving forward or sending back for discussion before approving.
  - o CJ said we've done a good job so far. We can't do a lot in rural places without good internet so meeting in person is necessary.
  - o Bill said we need to be understanding of peoples' feelings and do the best we can to stay safe. We should leave it to the point of the County Directors and County Commissioners because they want Extension to be successful. We need to reach out and help where we can. The track record through Eastern Colorado is very good. We should keep doing what we're doing.
  - o Darrin asked where are these spikes in cases?
  - o Ashley said statewide- one example is New Mexico isn't letting Coloradoans in without quarantining. The increases could be urban-centric. There is definitely an uptick affecting Coloradoans. Our approach going county by county has served us well. At a NEDA meeting we heard that some are feeling extremely vulnerable due to a blanket approach. We all need to just keep paying close attention to what is happening in our areas.

- Blake said that, so far, all the events and travel he has seen have all made sense. There have been a few that are just to get people together, but we need to keep everyone safe so we need to find the balance. Larimer is spiking and there have been some institutional outbreaks. Missouri is not doing well with things.
- Dennis said that Washington, Yuma, and a couple other counties are showing some spikes and so officers are communicating with commissioners. We are working around it.
- Ashley said we need to be careful. She is seeing lots of requests and we need to help with being safe and conscious.
- Jean said agents are doing a good job, but it is hard when people just want to see each other.
- Ashley said campus said vehicles need to be 50% capacity with masks on and windows down if possible. Family units should ride together. We need to use best judgement and, if at all possible, don't have everyone go in cars together unless we have to for some reason.
- Eric put into the chat: Here is the data from the state for those who are interested: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/data/covid-19-dial/covid-19-dial-dashboard> COVID-19 dial dashboard | Colorado COVID-19 Updates
- Ashley said there is a Region meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> to talk about the Region restructuring further. We are not sure if will get to a final conclusion or not, but we are advancing the discussion. So far, we have gotten a lot of good feedback.

### Agents' Updates

Front Range- Eric and Jacki (Jacki unable to attend)

- Agent wanted to know, in response to the email about furloughs from the President, if Extension is opting out of that for now.
- Ashley said yes, we are opting out. Blake said yes, but we should steady ourselves for the risk if in FY22 we don't get the get out of jail free card. Opting out started out being just for State Class and is now also for all APs, so we are good for now. For County employees, though, it depends on the counties.
- Eric said another question was, "Can we get a concise list of resources that are available for grant writing and external funding?"
- Jana said we are interviewing for a Grants Management Coordinator position next week and that's one of the things this person will be doing. Our goal is to put together webpages and more robust resources.
- Blake said Jana has great ideas for this in the Shared Services Model.
- Jana said they are working on developing online tools and trainings as well.
- Eric said that most other concerns are being discussed on the weekly Y'All Call.
- Cary added that Martha has been adding funding updates in the bi-weekly Extension updates, so people should be sure to read those as well.

## Western Region- Darrin P and Glenda

- Darrin said he has gotten lots of comments recently from agents. There is a wish to go back to the bottom-up approach. If we are, it's not resonating with them. People have said there have been more speedbumps and stop signs, we are trying to please too many bosses, and field staff are concerned with organizational decision without field input, which is different than it had been in the past. One question is "will field staff have more or less buy-in going forward as far as regional restructuring and staffing?" There has been talk about consolidation of PRUs, and they do not want a top-down situation. COVID anxiety is only going to increase. Being outside right now is the biggest savior because in a couple months we're going to be stuck inside. How we deal with continuing our job but managing the additional stressors needs to be addressed.
- Blake said he would love to discuss what we could do to help with the anxiety. There are more staff with kids at home which adds to the stress. He doesn't have a good answer, but we can think about the pacing and not doing too much at once. We have to keep some things moving, like the Communications Coordinator position, for example. He doesn't want agents to be left to their own devices and not have support so we need to think about how we can use the Needs Assessment and Shared Services so you can work more effectively. As we go to faculty status, it is more important to be peer-lead. Priorities are based on needs and each agent, county, etc. figures out the best way to address these. RDs will be like department chairs and will have a lot of voice. Evaluation of work based on peers rather than a boss is critically important. Blake wants to give support and for us to come together and build a better collaborative environment. This is not meant to be top-down.
- Discussion
  - o Tim said he is hearing questions about what these collaborations are and why areas are being reconsidered. There is a lot of change coming down and some people absorb better than others. We all need to move forward and communicate things better.
  - o Blake said the Regional Director issue is a priority, but there is no rush with the Engagement Collaboratives. Whether these are more helpful than PRUs or not we will think through. Those who don't feel involved are why we have done the Listen and Learn Sessions, but then the pandemic made everything harder to accept change. We have rough timelines and we can wait on some things. We aren't going to stand still, though, so he asked that everyone think about what is your view about what is agitating now and what we aren't ready for yet.
  - o Darrin said at CAD there were discussions on how to deal with change. How we are expressing change at the admin level is making people at the field uneasy. Some people are getting it and some people aren't. The pandemic plus new leadership is a big challenge. Everyone is being zoomed to death, but at the same time the connection is nice.
  - o Ashley said we are trying to preserve the big green arrows and being locally driven- that's what sets us apart in CO. There needs to be support and resources for that. We all need to help each other with burnout. We all work so hard and are used to it, but we need to think how we can help with uncertainty and the

moral dilemmas/decisions around time. We are here as a University and team to provide support. We have been discussing regional issues for a long time so we need to keep it moving even with all the extra stress from the pandemic.

- Blake said there is a lot happening at once and there are a lot of needs from people. He asked how to better address these needs, and Dan said maybe we should do an employee engagement survey.
- Darrin said there was an employee burnout survey a couple years ago. Working in 4-H is especially tough. He asked whatever happened with that survey, "did it just sit on the shelf?" Maybe the new leadership will listen.
- Jean said no, we never did any kind of follow up. She will send it out to the group.
- Cary put this in the chat: Burnout study from Goodwin et. al:  
<https://www.joe.org/joe/2015april/a2.php>
- Glenda said thank you to Blake and Ashley for their leadership. We just have to recognize that the pandemic hit right after meeting about new leadership and it changed the way that we are presenting, then summer events were hard due to having to be an enforcer. We all got to a place of being overwhelmed, busy, and detached. It is great that we are moving forward, but we can't discount the amount of stress COVID has put on our employees and offices.
- Kerri said some sort of climate survey would be a nice tool to use during Virtual Coffee, perhaps. In the past, organizational systems and processes weren't in Extension, but now the Needs Assessment and other initiatives are helping tie things together.
- Wes said we could certainly revisit concepts we talked about in February and how to deal with leadership change.
- CJ agreed that sending out a survey to see how things are going again could be helpful.
- Ashley said people are tired of surveys, but we could do another one to see how people are doing. If the group's okay with that, let's get more feedback on some things we touched on before.
- Blake asked if this type of survey would help with the issues Darrin brought up.
- Darrin said it might not be the best time for the survey with all the stress, but they are valuable and would help agents feel like their voices were heard. He is not sure about the response rate on top of a Needs Assessment. The initial survey sent out expressed that we're doing a good job with the needs of our community.
- Glenda said maybe Ashley has a follow up to the March and April surveys, just a small survey to take the pulse of the staff. Something like "how are you doing now that we've been into this for six months?" Just a way to provide staff a way to put their thoughts down. Short and sweet and maybe provide more insight.
- Ashley said maybe we could do an internal Needs Assessment? Maybe not right now, but as we move into next stages of the Needs Assessment we could make sure we are gathering input internally as well as externally so that it's more formal.

- Blake said we don't want it to be another layer of anxiety to do an internal assessment. He asked Cary if during Forum, we can give a picture of what incremental adjustment might mean and let people know not to worry so much about the pace of the progress. Blake is a big planner, but we could lower the temperature for the plan for 2021 and simplify our thinking and tasks for this fall.
- Cary said he appreciates hearing feedback on the Needs Assessment. He wants to reinforce the message that this is meant to empower communities and provide the structure we need. The County Program Plan coming from the Needs Assessment is encouraging engagement throughout. County staff can then get together and come up with a doable plan that goes out to stakeholders and commissioners. Program planning will be a big piece of the PLT discussion tomorrow, and what we're asking for is fairly simple and intended to be a starting point. NIFA has some requirements which are in line with our plan and everyone can do what they can. In 2021 we can tighten things up a bit. As far as individual plans, he doesn't know if they were used uniformly across the organization so it's a larger issue that requires more discussion and can be talked about at PLT.

#### Peaks and Plains- Dennis and Kurt (Kurt unable to attend)

- Some of the requests from the region relate to what we have been talking about. One question is about the vision of the State 4-H Foundation and how it will be staffed with the new Director of Development.
- Blake said Rochelle's position is Extension and Advancement and we are hiring another Advancement Coordinator. Together they will sure up what we are doing there, but details are still being worked out. Blake met with the CSU Foundation and Advancement and it will be a couple months before we have a finalized agreement as they are currently discussing where money is going.
- Dennis said another question is why does the 4-H PRU not have elected leadership?
- Jean said we have co-chairs who are agents and there will be a new group that will have regional representation to have agent input on specific issues related to policy, procedures, and the strategic plan. 4-H is set up differently, so it won't look the same, but that doesn't mean we don't want to find ways to have agent voice and leadership.
- Dennis said someone had a suggestion for the Regional structure change. The proposed south central region would be split to the SLV for one region and then the remaining counties outside of the valley would be the second region. In the north, Weld, Logan, Morgan, Lincoln and Elbert would be a region and the GPA would remain the as is.
- Ashley said we can bring that up in the meeting we're having on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### DCT Update – Dan Goldhamer

- The Diversity Blueprint is in the hands of Wes, Cary, Lori, Blake, and Ashley. The DCT is working on what success of the Blueprint looks like, and a draft language for that.
- Ashley said she is working with leadership from DCT. They met as a leadership team and also with the Directors/State Team and are dividing up various aspects to work on Goal 1. Much of the leadership is participating in professional development and nailing down details with various assessments we can take. The Blueprint is now being put into

action in the Division. At Forum we will have presentations around the Diversity Blueprint on where we are and where we are headed.

- Dan said we need to market the plan so that it is institutionalized, and "Diversity Blueprint" may not be the best title. In the news there has been some backlash around federal funding for some diversity trainings.
- Ashley said that we are working on that from the communications side and divisional side.

#### PLT Update- Cary

- Cary said that the RDs have made funding awards. Of the applications from the PRUs, most have received funding awards. He will share more details with PLT tomorrow and has shared with PRU leaders. He could share more widely if anyone is interested.
- PLT is introducing a new program planning framework. They are thinking about how PRU leaders will use this as support and then as how other individuals can start using it.
- Inger Johnson is starting to understand more about Extension. She is the new Head of Distance Education from CSU Online. She is working with some individuals who have expressed interest and is thinking through options for people. She is available as a resource. She is working on developing her own strategies on how to be most effective. Please reach out to her or Cary with related needs.
- Cary is planning to check in at the PLT meeting tomorrow about how we are holding PLT meetings regarding the cadence and types of discussion. Feel free to let Cary know if you have input.

#### Specialist Update- Marisa and Susan

- Marisa said there have been state health department discussions. In the area of nutrition, CSU Extension is interested in collaborating with CDPHE in offering CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program. The diabetes rate is on the increase in Colorado so we want to be more involved with that.
- In food safety, discussions are ongoing with the Manufactured Food Branch and Extension's Cottage Foods Team to make sure our educational materials align well with regulatory information.
- They have also been in contact with colleagues in the Communicable Diseases branch to make sure they are aware of the issues occurring with shortages of canning supplies and equipment and that a high number of Colorado residents are home canning for the first time and they may not be aware of the importance of following safe practices. In recent years, there have been cases of botulism in Colorado from improperly canned foods so we want to work together to prevent that from happening again.
- Susan did not have anything else to add but asked if there is any update on the project working on getting them an email list of specialists.
- Ashley said Megan has a list that we could compile.
- Ruth said there was an Extension specialist list and it became obsolete so we need new membership of who belongs on there.
- **Action Item:** Ashley said we will use the lists Jana and Megan have put together to make up this list. Megan said she would send out what she has and we will get it up and running as a communication tool.

### Digital Measures Update- Cary and Darin Goodman

- Cary said that while most Extension agents have made entries in Digital Measures, 34% of Extension agents have not made a single entry. They will be presenting to the Western Region soon to encourage reporting. The goal is to eventually get performance appraisals tied into Digital Measures, which might depend on faculty status. Darrin is looking at Workflow and working to produce reports. The sooner we can get reports to show people, the more people will understand the benefits of using the system.
- They have put together an advisory committee to review potential changes for 2021 and how to increase engagement with DM.
- Tim said that reports from DM are part of a larger requirement for Open Spaces so what Darrin has been getting out will be invaluable to the transition to that system.
- Cary said they are holding open Q&A sessions and they have been helpful. Those using them have mostly positive things to say about them.

### Human Resources Update- Lori

- Most questions have been regarding eligibility for the Families First Coronavirus Response act. They are currently working with 12 people on that for various reasons.
- If you missed the Y'all Call yesterday, there were two more retirement announcements: Assefa and Keith Maxey. They have been approved for early retirement for end of December. **Action Item:** Another virtual retirement celebration would be good to start thinking about soon, so we should get one on the calendar before the holiday season. We potentially have 7 people that might be retiring at the end of the year.
- The Communications Coordinator position got the President's approval. The Grant Management position is moving forward and interviews are scheduled for 10/15.
- Lori said maybe each retiree could have a small gathering like the one JoAnn had and the one in Adam's county for Thad because that was really fun.

### Professional Development Update- Wes

- Wes said WELD's four interns (Western Extension Leadership Development program) did a tremendous job with the program. Tammy, Amy, Barbie, and Melinda all had a virtual conference last week and they were the standouts in being able to talk about their innovative projects, their growth, and the feedback they got.
- Nominations for new internships for the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of WELD will be soon, so keep an eye out for that.
- A few weeks ago at the Y'All Call, Wes talked about working on a new system to get information to employees in a timely manner. He plans to start working with CADs to help onboard new employees.
- Forum is in full planning mode. It will be a great opportunity to talk about some of these changes that are happening during the sessions. He wants to capture and incorporate your voice to build systems and empower all of you. Please engage in those sessions as much as you can and encourage all the staff to do so as well.
- Instead of being during Forum, some PRUs will have meetings the week after Forum to build into their planning for the year. The joint board meeting will also be a week later.



- Ashley said if PRUs are going to have their meetings the next week it would be good to have them on the agenda for Forum so it's broadly known when they are.
- Wes said they should be on the Forum website.
- Interns will be showcased at Forum and he encourages everyone to check those sessions out. If we get together in the Spring, we'll do the poster presentations so everyone can see the work they are doing.

The next DAC meeting will be held on December 8th at 12

The meeting adjourned at 3:15