

# Department of Communications

## Strategic Plan Summary

2010 – 2014

The Department of Communications and Agricultural Education strategic plan has been developed to guide our initiatives during the next five years (2010 – 2014). The plan was created utilizing goal teams to identify goals and draft related action plans. Each goal team had a unit leader liaison who presented drafted action plans to the unit leaders and department head for review. Unit leaders then prioritized the goals and presented the full action plan in November 2009.

The Department of Communications and Agricultural Education's mission is to improve the quality of life and standard of living for Kansans by

- creating, managing and delivering research-based information, and
- offering research and teaching in agricultural and environmental communications and agricultural education.

The core values of the Department of Communications and Agricultural Education are to

- provide the highest level of service and education to clients and students;
- anticipate and respond to the needs of clients and students;
- improve ourselves personally and professionally;
- foster teamwork as we work toward common goals; and
- collaborate more fully with clients and students.

The goals for the department have been prioritized in four tiers to provide greater direction for timing and process. A complete copy of the Department of Communications and Agricultural Education strategic plan for January 2010 – December 2014, can be found

at <http://www.communications.k-state.edu/about-us/strategic-plan-2010-2014.html>

# Academics

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Tier 1:

**Develop a focused research agenda and identify research opportunities** – Faculty members will identify and develop individual research agendas, collaborate on and engage in multi-disciplinary grants and seek funding opportunities that align with 2025 and department priorities. This plan is ongoing.

**Expand/Foster Departmental Master's Program(s)** – Recruit graduate students, develop assistantship funding, identify adjunct faculty and continue course development. This plan was created in August 2012.

**Student Recruitment** – Gather student input, develop a better web presence and develop key recruitment messages. This plan was to be completed by July 2010. The revised completion date is June 2013 for those parts of the plan that do not require ongoing attention. The academic web development action plan was incorporated in August 2011.

Tier 2:

**Student Retention/Effective Advising** – Discuss key recruitment and retention efforts and identify next steps.

Completed:

**Develop and revise ACJ/Environmental Option Curriculums** – Identify necessary program competencies for graduates, evaluate data gathered and incorporate new competencies into program. Submit course changes through appropriate college and university processes. This was completed in 2012.

**Extension Education bachelor's program** – Appoint a team to look at the need to establish an extension ed undergraduate program. *The academic team determined that this initiative would require too many resources not directly related to the department's mission.*

**Establish Master's Program** – Develop a distance Master's program for communications and ag education utilizing resources from Kansas State University other land-grant institutions. This was to be completed by October 2010. Due to delays in the approval process, program implementation is targeted for August 2012. As of August 2011, the proposal is going through the final stages of the approval process. Initial marketing of the program is occurring. Staff needs to be identified. *This has been completed and students are being accepted into the program.*

Revised August 2012

# Collaboration

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Tier 1:

**Collaborate more with campus and external units** – Build relationships and collaborate better with similar university communication units such as communications and marketing, IT, central mail and printing. Nurture collaborative efforts with academic departments on campus, other universities, national programs, and professional organizations. Progress on this is ongoing.

**Increase information flow among units and departmental members** – Increase information flow among units to include sharing current and upcoming project descriptions and status with unit managers and peers. Each unit should hold regular staff meetings where information is exchanged among employees and shared at unit leader meetings. Meeting minutes will be published in a timely manner on the department Web site. This is an ongoing effort.

Completed:

**Communications institute** – Develop a committee to determine the feasibility of creating a communications institute that would create a communications consortium at the university. *The hiring of a new Vice President of Communications and Marketing, the collaboration has improved such that an institute was no longer needed to bring unity.*

**Coordinate how information is shared among units within KSRE and the College** – Establish a system for collecting information from internal and external units about upcoming events, new programs, research agendas, etc. This information would be shared to better promote the organization and increase involvement. *This was accomplished via the presidential updates.*

**Create campus communications award** – In concert with the Division of Communications and Marketing, create a communications program to provide communication awards across campus to individuals displaying good communication practices/efforts. *It was determined this is beyond the department and falls on the university.*

# Extramural Funding

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Tier 1:

**Development** – Work with College of Agriculture and KSU Foundation representative to develop funding priorities and strategies for securing funding from donors.

**Grant and contract funding** – Develop a mechanism for identifying funding opportunities and sharing them with faculty and staff. Training should be identified and promoted to department members. Emphasize collaboration with other universities, institutions and departments and identify team members prior to funding opportunities arising.

**Inventory** – Develop an inventory and disposal process that will efficiently and effectively dispose of old office equipment and furniture as well as put it into a system that will allow quick location of items in the department. This project includes annual inventory, identifying adequate storage to cycle items through the process and ultimately develop purchasing plans/schedule.

**Promotion of departmental services** – Develop and administer client surveys to ascertain our current service standard and rating, identify changing client needs, and evaluate the ability to add or remove services. Develop materials that can be used to promote our services to the organization, the university and possibly other institutions. Train ALL employees to promote ALL department services. Place communication staff on KSRE program focus teams.

# Infrastructure

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Tier 2:

**Leadership Development and Training** – Develop and implement an attrition plan for leadership within the department.

Completed:

**Continuity of operations planning** – Develop a department-level emergency plan, provide training on security. *The department developed a continuity of operations plan for avian flu. The plan can be easily adapted for other emergency or crisis situations.*

**Green initiative and stewardship** – Distribute information about energy conservation, recycling and promote good environmental stewardship. *This is ongoing university effort.*

**Department Guidelines** – Update and post department guidelines. *This action plan was removed or is missing.*

# Marketing

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Tier 1:

**Demonstrate public value of KSRE/College in state/region/nation** – Identify top impacts and create legislative report. Develop organization marketing strategies and promote them with consistent branding and style. Develop guides for style and branding and implement usage for consistent organization promotion.

Completed:

**KSRE and College new employee orientation packet** – Create a packet of communication materials (branding and style guides, department brochure, toolkit, simple schedule of charges, etc.) to be given to new KSRE and college employees. *Responsibility for activity determined not to lie with the department but at higher administrative levels.*

# Training

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Tier 1:

**Customer Service** – Establish high quality and friendly customer service as area of focus for all department employees. Provide customer service training to employees and identify positions to serve as initial points of contacts within the department. Survey clients and evaluate satisfaction with services received.

Tier 3:

**Professional development opportunities for departmental staff members** – Identify staff needs for professional development including updating teaching skills, technology skills, time management, staffing issues, and delegation issues.

Tier 4:

**Professional development for stakeholders and external clients** – Identify professional development needs for faculty at regional community colleges and individuals who are engaged in informal teaching. Develop overall training plan for spokesperson, interview, crisis and message development training.

Completed:

**CMS Training** – Update and create CMS training materials and modules to be delivered face-to-face and via distance methods in a variety of settings. *Training is now a regular offering within K-State Research and Extension.*

**Hands-on training offered at annual conference on media technology** – Complete by October 2010. Train agents and specialists how to use audio and video technology to enhance Web sites and presentations. *Hands-on training was offered at KSRE annual conference.*

# Web Enhancement

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Tier 1:

**Image database** – Identify software and then create an image database containing images that can be used by organizational staff on Web sites, in newsletters, publications, and other promotional and informational pieces. Establish procedures and policies for access and use of image database and train end users. *2012: Software has been purchased and images uploaded. Training for staff and clients is pending.*

Tier 2:

**Improve accessibility of information** – Research, review and identify new technologies for delivering and distributing information to targeted audiences while also serving a diverse population. Develop widgets, mobile applications and podcasts. Utilize tagging, RSS, blogs, comments and bookmarks to promote or share posted materials.

Completed:

**Develop CMS 2.0** – Free up programming and designer time to begin work on updating the KSRE and College sites. They should be accessible using mobile technology and include interactive user tools, social network links, and ecommerce. *Some items on this plan, such as mobile technology, have been collapsed into other action plans.*

**Maintain and improve the Web site for academic programs** – Improve the academic site to better serve and engage current and prospective students by utilizing social media, interactive tools, and publishing student testimonials. *This plan was collapsed into other action plans.*

**Standardize information categories across departmental Web sites (converging topics)** – Appoint review team to evaluate current Web site topics, identify more consistent and few topics to use across all sites, and conduct focus groups to gather feedback on usability of site. Establish media categories that will match delivery method(s). *A team was formed and practices put in place to keep departmental pages more current and consistent.*

**Enhance KSRE Web presence and content standards** – Evaluate and refine Web standards, monitor sites for adherence to set standards, respond to feedback and conduct an audience evaluation of the KSRE Web site. *This was removed from the department plan as a result of the development of a university CMS system in 2012.*

# Work-Life Balance

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Tier 1:

**Work-Life balance programs for Department of Communications and Agricultural Education employees** –Conduct assessment to determine department member’s interests and wants.  
Appoint a committee to identify work-life balance initiatives and share them with department members.