As the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan’s second year comes to a close, the Strategic Planning committee reviewed the Plan and developed the following progress report. It focuses on the overall organizational components of the Plan. Progress made towards Program Unit Goals and individual Program Team plans have been requested from the Program Team Leaders and will be provided in a separate report.

The committee would like to commend the Extension Director and his administrative team for their assertive efforts in implementing this Plan. The consensus of the committee is that substantial and meaningful progress has been made in many areas. The resulting changes have, by and large, increased the efficiency and effectiveness of Cooperative Extension both internally and externally. Understandably, there are goals and objectives that have not been implemented or only partially implemented, and others which need to be reevaluated. We are confident that these unresolved items will be addressed appropriately.

Mission, Vision, Core Values and Organizational Goals (Page 2)
Overall we believe that Extension’s organizational Mission, Vision, Core Values and Goals remain valid and appropriate. Furthermore, they together with the entire Strategic Plan have been properly communicated to the organization and every employee has had ample opportunity to learn and apply them. They continue to be publically available at clemson.edu/extension/about/index.html.

SWOT Analysis (Page 3)
The SWOT analysis represents a snapshot of the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at the time of the Plan’s creation and guided the Plan’s development. As a result of the Plan’s implementation many of the items identified have been improved or enhanced, a testament to the Plan’s validity. We have highlighted many of the successes and shortcomings below.

Organizational Chart (Page 4)
Aside from some changes that have yet to occur in the Core Program Divisions, the organizational chart (page 4) remains valid in basic structure.

Part One: Programmatic Framework (Page 5)
Significant progress has been achieved in program team realignment that improves the effected teams’ abilities to serve their respective clientele. First, the Agribusiness Division has been established and its leadership is in place. Second, consolidation of the Forestry and Natural Resources Team and the Water Quality Team into the Natural Resources Division has been achieved and its leadership is in place.
At this time, consolidation of the Agronomy, Horticulture, and Livestock and Forages Teams into the Agriculture Division has not yet occurred. This combination of teams needs to be reevaluated to consider the current and future budget climate and program goals.

One significant development not included in the Strategic Plan is that the Horticulture Team has split into a Commercial Horticulture Team and an Urban Horticulture Team. This separation allows more appropriate and specific training and evaluation for the two groups of agents based on the different clienteles served. Leadership for each of these teams is currently in place and the separation seems to be working effectively.

Part Two: Organizational Framework (Pages 8-10)

The tables below provide an overview of the progress made towards the Strategic Plan’s goals and objectives related to the overall organizational structure, policies and operations. Objectives are reported as Completed, Partially Completed, or Not Completed and approximate dates of completion are included when known. Brief descriptions of the completed efforts and needed action(s) are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective a: Reestablish full-time Support Staff in every county. Create a process for electronic banking and credit card acceptance. (short-term)</th>
<th>Partially Completed. Approximately 80% complete and still a priority. Funding limitations have prevented completion. The upcoming state budget request includes specific funding, under “Rebuilding Statewide Extension Programs,” that would help complete this objective if funded.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective b: Constantly review the evaluation process and make improvements as needed. (short-term)</td>
<td>Partially Completed. PTLs have been asked to update EPMS objectives to make them more specific and measurable. Most have done so. Need to complete the current evaluation cycle to validate changes.</td>
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<td>Objective c: Reduce overall number of Regional Lead Agents and redefine job duties and territories for regional lead system as deemed necessary by Administration. (short-term)</td>
<td>Completed (June 2016). 13 regions were reduced to 6 and RLA job duties were redefined. RLAs are in place except for one interim RLA. It is our understanding that the number of regions may be further reduced as deemed necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective d: Reorganize current Program Teams into 5 Core Program Divisions with 1 Core Program Division Leader each; thereby, reducing the number of Program Team Leaders to 5 while maintaining 8 Program Unit Coordinators. Core Program Division Leader should serve as the programmatic evaluator with a majority administrative responsibility. (short-term)</td>
<td>Partially Completed (June 2016). The agribusiness Division has been established. The Forestry and Natural Resources and Water Quality Teams have been consolidated into the Natural Resources Division. Leadership for both Divisions is in place. The Agriculture Division has not yet been consolidated due to funding limitations for the leadership position. The Horticulture Team was split into Commercial and Urban Horticulture Teams to better align with each groups clientele/audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective e:</strong> Ensure that proposed Core Program Division Leaders have supervisory input from the Extension Director. (short-term)</td>
<td>Completed (December 2016). All Program Division/Team Leaders now report directly to the Extension Director.</td>
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<td><strong>Objective f:</strong> Increase base travel allocations for County Agents and Extension Faculty as budget allows. (medium-term)</td>
<td>Not Completed. Budget constraints have not allowed implementation. Increases in state allocated operating funds will be needed to complete. The upcoming state budget request includes specific funding, under “Rebuilding Statewide Extension Programs,” that would help complete this objective if funded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective g:</strong> Ensure uniformity of operational procedures at all RBCs. (short-term)</td>
<td>Completed (June 2016) and Ongoing. RBCs were aligned with RLA regions, greatly improving uniformity and efficiency within each region. The PSA business office should continue to evaluate operating procedures and ensure uniformity and equity across the RBCs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective h:</strong> Revise hire back policy to ensure that retirees are rehired only to fill critical needs positions until they can be replaced with a permanent hire. (short-term)</td>
<td>Completed and Ongoing. Extension Administration is following this policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective i:</strong> Develop a mechanism for consistent revenue generation through Extension programs, with a % returned to Extension Administration for the purpose of reinvestment into the organization.</td>
<td>Completed (July 2016). Extension statewide programs guidelines were adopted into the policy manual and outline this mechanism.</td>
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**Goal 2: Improve system of administrative appointments**

| **Objective:** Recruit and fill all positions with administrative responsibility with the most qualified people (internally or externally) to ensure the highest level of quality and transparency in the organization. Competitively search where appropriate. (short-term) | Partially Completed. RLA positions were filled competitively from within the organization. Improvements should continue with future hires. |

**Goal 3: Develop a framework for rewarding excellence**

| **Objective a:** Define the Extension Associate title as a position that encompasses at least 80% Extension responsibility, maintains active participation in applicable Extension Program Units, and is evaluated by the Extension Director or Associate Director. (medium-term) | Completed (December 2016). The Extension Associate title was redefined as described through Clemson HR with implementation of the FLSA. Going forward only Extension employees will be allowed to hold this title. Options are being explored through HR to reclassify Non-Extension employees who currently hold the title. |
Objective b: Reward highly productive Faculty & Staff with performance based salary increases as funds allow. (medium-term)  
**Not Completed.** There are HR limitations at the University level that prevent this from happening. This topic is being discussed at the University level by request of President Clements.

Objective c: Perform market based salary adjustments when appropriate. (medium-term)  
**Not Completed.** However, opportunities are currently being explored.

Objective d: Implement revised Extension Agent promotion ladder as recommended by Extension Senate. (short-term)  
**Completed (2016).** The Extension Policy Manual has been revised to reflect this recommendation.

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Goal 4: Promote professional growth and development for all Extension personnel

Objective a: Improve onboarding, mentoring and in-service training programs to enhance early career success and retention. (medium-term)  
**Completed (2016) and Ongoing.** A formal Extension mentoring program has been implemented and its leadership is in place. The onboarding process has been improved.

Staff Development administered a training needs assessment and a number of mentoring recommendations were made. Staff Development and the mentoring team should continue to evaluate and improve these programs.

Objective b: Enhance cooperation between Core Program Divisions and Staff Development to promote participation in relevant internal and external training programs. (short-term)  
**Partially Completed.** Progress has been made and PTLs are working more closely with Staff Development to participate in, develop and encourage appropriate employee training programs.

Staff Development administered a training needs assessment and the results are available for review. Efforts to address training needs should continue.

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Goal 5: Strengthen reporting and evaluation systems

Objective a: Explore ways to develop a more functional evaluation and reporting system (Unify CUMIS, FAS and EPMS) (medium/long-term)  
**Not Completed but In Progress.** A focus group has been established and met on December 12, 2016 to guide the development of a more functional reporting system to replace CUMIS and improve its compatibility with FAS and EPMS.

Objective b: Create a process for employee input into evaluation of all levels of administration (Program Division and Unit Leaders, RLA, CC) within Clemson Extension Service. (medium-term)  
**Completed (2015-2016) and Ongoing.** A 360° assessment survey of the organization has been implemented. Assessment of organizational leadership was included. Surveys were sent out in late 2015 and the results were published in August 2015 (67% response rate). Similar assessments will continue periodically.

Future surveys should ensure greater anonymity for respondents to encourage response and forthright answers.

Objective c: Ensure that the appropriate Extension Administrators have meaningful input into the evaluations of all Extension Faculty. (short-term)  
**Partially Completed.** CAFLS/PSA leadership has stressed to Departmental Heads that Extension input should be appropriately considered when evaluating departmental faculty with Extension appointments. It is unclear how much weight this input is given.

More work is needed here, and requires commitment from highest levels of administration.

Objective d: Develop an institutional level database that  
**Not Completed.** This continues to be discussed and components will be included in the focus group developing the improved
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<th>Goal 6: Promote recognition and awareness of Extension</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective a:</strong> Convey a unified Extension brand in the delivery of all programs and services. (medium/long-term)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective b:</strong> Promote the use of Extension web-based strategies for program promotion, newsletters, and innovative communication strategies. (medium-term)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective c:</strong> Promote uniformity within Extension statewide programs – to include: competencies, fees and deliverables. Define the role and responsibilities of a State Program Coordinator (long-term)</td>
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<th>Goal 7: Demonstrate economic, social, and environmental impacts associated with the delivery of Extension programs</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> Utilize state-level staff and a software tool to quantify adoption of practices and the economic, social, and environmental impacts of programmatic participation through follow-up surveys and other feedback tools. (medium-term)</td>
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<th>Goal 8: Improve collaboration with other CAFLS and PSA units</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> Increase communication and cooperation by promoting a common administrative structure for the Land Grant missions of Extension, research, and instruction. (long-term)</td>
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Part Three: Resource Requests (Pages 10-12)
Significant progress has been made across the organization to filling the priority positions outlined in the Strategic Plan. We believe that Administration is on track with hires based on budgetary limitations and future budget requests. The Extension Director will provide a list of hires made since the Plan’s inception.

Equipment, technology and program materials are handled through the Program Teams and should be provided in team reports.

Part Four: Implementation (Pages 13-24)
This section outlines the specific goals, objectives, and strategies of each Program Team. The Extension Director has requested a progress report from each PTL on their individual team plans.

Improvement Needs:
In addition to the items specified above, the committee identified several key areas where improvement is still needed:

- Short-term and long-term metrics complementing the Programmatic Framework should be developed to determine progress toward each goal and objective. These metrics will ensure objective, quantifiable and reasonable assessments of each core unit and program. Each metric will address economic, environmental and/or social impacts of the goals and objectives set forth by the unit/program areas.

- Progress in the areas of marketing and branding of Extension and the innovative use of emerging technologies should continue.

- The new mentoring and onboarding programs need to be evaluated by the participants and Extension leadership to ensure that they are effective, equitable, and successful.

- Streamlining of impact reporting and evaluation systems, and the employee evaluation process is still a priority and needs to be completed.

- Changes in management structure (adjustment of PTL and RLA structure) seem to have been effective so far, although several tweaks and readjustments have been made. This structure and its leadership should be continually evaluated and adjusted as needed, but not to the detriment of progress and continuity.

- The creation of an urban horticulture program team is seen as a concerted effort to focus Extension programming on our state’s growing urban/suburban population. This focus should continue and expand into other program areas for Extension to have relevancy throughout the state.
• Support for programming that addresses local food systems, agricultural awareness, water resource education, youth development, etc. should continue to increase. These topics bridge multiple program areas and serve as key issues where we hold expertise valuable to external stakeholders, policy makers, and the citizens of our state and local communities.

• Since the Plan’s beginning, considerable strides have been made with regard to the organization’s internal communication through newsletters, emails, meetings, etc. It is evident, however, that additional improvement is needed. The leadership team which includes campus administrators, program division/team leaders, regional lead agents, and county coordinators, need to speak with a consistent, unified voice that clearly conveys the organization’s mission, vision, goals, policies and procedures, and expectations to each employee. Likewise, each employee should embrace his or her responsibility to hear and read the information conveyed, to actively seek truthful information, and to disregard gossip and speculation.

• Moving forward, it is critical for Extension to develop a staffing plan that addresses the organization’s carrying capacity in terms of employment, operations, facilities, etc. What constitutes “full employment” and how do we know when we have reached it? We need to be able to answer these questions to develop future budget requests, plan for new program opportunities, and prepare for inevitable budget reductions. If not addressed within the scope of the current strategic plan, this should be a priority for the next strategic planning committee.

Summary
Implementation of the Strategic Plan is on track to achieve its goals and objectives on time, if not ahead of schedule, with minimal deviation. This is no small task for an organization as complex as Cooperative Extension. Good budget years and cooperative relationships with allied organizations have aided in the successful implementation so far, but the majority of the credit belongs to the steadfast leadership of the Extension Director, support from his leadership team, and buy-in from the employees. The Director’s vocal support of the Plan has been followed up with organizational action, an occurrence appreciated by this committee and the employees of Extension. As a result, more organizational vision and synergy exists now than before the Strategic Plan was announced. The committee looks forward to the future achievements and improvements resulting from the Plan’s completion.

Respectfully Submitted by the Strategic Planning Committee:

S. Cory Tanner, Chair
Cory Heaton, PhD
Blake Lanford
Deon Legette
Mike Marshall, PhD
Matt C. Smith, PhD