

Outreach and Engagement at Tennessee State University

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Abstract

Tennessee State University has a rich history of public service and civic engagement—thus the motto *Think, Work, Serve*. Founded in 1912, Tennessee State University has grown dramatically from a small college to two campuses. We actively engage in adhering to the cornerstone of the land-grant universities: teaching, research, and outreach. Our charge is *Enter to learn, Go forth to serve*. We take seriously our responsibility to relate academic work to communities in ways that are mutually beneficial. Collaborative work in and with communities is consistent with the goal that we are a model urban university, provide leadership to others in all facets of integrating service with teaching and research, and engage educators, staff, and students in activities that benefit their communities as well as themselves. We aim to distinguish ourselves nationally as a campus that creates interdisciplinary approaches to generating and communicating knowledge that meaningfully contributes to the well-being of society.

Introduction

In *A Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, Doris Kearns Goodwin (2005) documented Lincoln's leadership, character, and success in holding this nation together during the Civil War. Often overlooked in Lincoln's extraordinary civil war leadership accomplishments are the creation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and signing the Justin Morrill Act of 1862, which created the nation's land-grant universities. Unfortunately, because of Jim Crow laws in the South and border states, descendants of the newly freed slaves were not able to attend these 1862 land-grant universities that provided education in agriculture and the mechanical arts for the common man. Recognizing this historic discrimination, Congress passed a second Morrill Act of 1890 creating separate and unequally funded land-grant universities. The eighteen 1890 land-grants, including Tuskegee University, have never received the federal, state, local, and private funding to make them equal to the 1862 flagship universities. Whereas Tennessee State University (TSU), for instance, was founded in 1812, the initial federal formula funds for Agricultural

Research and Cooperative Extension programs were not appropriated until 1972. State matching funds were not required until 2000. TSU did not receive state matching funds until 2006.

Tennessee State University is located in the heart of a metropolitan/urban area. Many of the communities that surround the campus have Title III schools, where students perform under grade level and need tutoring and mentoring. Families in the area are at and below the threshold of poverty and need help with using their limited resources. As an 1890 land-grant university, TSU makes a conscientious and deliberate effort to help these underserved, marginalized, and disenfranchised citizens. This has been our historic mission, hence our motto: *Think, Work, Serve*.

In 2002, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) released *The Extension System: A Vision for the 21st Century*, which challenged us to reflect upon our purpose, to examine our vision, and to determine whether we are prepared to cope with the changing world. The crucial question: Is Cooperative Extension established by the Smith Lever Act of 1914 prepared to deal with the crises, risks, and uncertainty of the twenty-first century? These issues include globalization, consolidation, integration, mergers, technological breakthroughs, and demographic changes. The Extension system responded to this question by embracing the concept of engagement. The challenge for Extension, of course, was extensive self-examination of our mission, and changing program directions, leadership, partnership, funding, and use of information technology.

While the term *outreach* is often used to mean extension, public service, service-learning, and/or engagement, it is important to clarify the differences. Extension is one of the tripartite land-grant missions of teaching, research, and extension. *Cooperative Extension* is a nationwide noncredit educational network. Each state and U.S. territory has a state office at the respective land-grant universities and a network of local or regional offices. Using a variety of program delivery strategies, we offer practical and useful research-based programs, resources, and publications in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community resource and economic development. *Public service* is the application of knowledge, skills, and resources of the university for the common good. *Service-learning* is a method of teaching that enriches learning by engaging students in meaningful service to their universities or communities through careful integration with established curricula. *Engagement* is a public service that occurs in a reciprocal and mutually

beneficial partnership between the university and the community. For Cooperative Extension, this is a humbling recognition that we may not be the first source contacted for help and questions, hence our significant investment in eXtension, a nationwide Web-based information management system that organizes the development of information by subject matter teams referred to as Communities of Practice (COP) around relevant topics. Currently, there are over thirty-five COPs working in a variety of subject matter areas.

This article discusses the organization and operation of service-learning and the Cooperative Extension Program's engagement initiatives at an 1890 land-grant university. For Cooperative Extension, it has involved a systematic effort over eight years using the eight-stage process from John P. Kotter's *Leading Change* (1996): establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture. We will conclude with some short-term and potential long-term impacts and outcomes.

Service-Learning

Service-learning is a method of teaching that enriches learning by engaging students in meaningful service to their universities or communities through careful integration with established curricula. Our mission is to (1) integrate valid service opportunities into academic courses; (2) respond to real community needs as identified by the community; (3) utilize reflection to combine service and learning; (4) collaborate across disciplines—involving faculty, students, administrators, staff, and community partners. The mission and goals of the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement fit perfectly into the university's strategic plan, which states, "The University will launch initiatives designed to greatly increase its students' awareness of social and civic responsibility."

Specific goals

1. Emphasize social and civic responsibility throughout the curriculum.
2. Emphasize social and civic responsibility in research and service activities of faculty and students.
3. Faculty in professional programs will work closely with advisory groups in their disciplines to ensure that students

receive real-world experience and that curricula are current and responsive to work-world needs.

4. Increase writing literacy, oral communication skills, and technological literacy through service to the community.

Relationship and Reciprocity between the University and Community

TSU has a rich tradition of service and an opportunity to instill in our students an ethic of caring and a sense of responsibility for making our world better. This is particularly crucial and urgent because the communities surrounding TSU are riddled with high poverty, increased infant mortality rates, ailing health conditions, unemployment and underemployment, and low-performing schools. The educational, economic, and social inequities, disparities, and injustices are just a few things that have brought and kept this community partnership together.

University partners include academic departments, research, Extension, elementary/middle/high schools, religious institutions, outreach and grassroots agencies, community-based institutions,

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the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. We include our partners before “going in” to the community to address needs. Community partners, advisory councils, key stakeholders, and leaders join us for meetings, serve on committees, inform us of major issues affecting neighborhoods, and help lead and guide the direction of outreach and programming. Our ultimate goal is to make the experience win-win and mutually benefi-

cial and to transform our university and our communities through sustainable community partnerships.

We serve as a bridge—uniting students and building stronger communities through the implementation of the charge. This bridge connects the needs of the community with the resources of the university, and links college students and student organizations to one another by successfully fulfilling the mission of the university.

Introductory and upper-division service-learning courses have been established in a wide variety of disciplines. Courses include but are not limited to dental hygiene, social work, psychology, education, engineering, urban geography, public speaking, English, neurological physical therapy, and nursing.

Additionally, the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement is promoting the Engaged Department Initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to develop participating departmental and interdisciplinary teams and to assist them in implementing strategies to: (1) train their faculty in service-learning pedagogy; (2) integrate service-learning into their curriculum; (3) include community-based work across teaching, research, and service; (4) include community-based experiences as a common expectation for majors; and (5) develop an action plan that will support change on the departmental level. The Engaged Department Initiative will be facilitated by a national expert in civic engagement and service-learning, staff members from the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, and Service-Learning Faculty Fellows. Significant time is given to team planning, and short sessions will be offered on topics such as

- The academic and civic knowledge and skills derived from community-based work
- Discipline-specific models of service-learning course development
- Supporting and assessing community-based work on both faculty and student levels
- Internal and external resources to support civic engagement
- The community partner as departmental resource
- The department as community resource.

The Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement exists to facilitate quality educational experiences through community-based service-learning. The center connects campus and community resources to create diverse learning experiences and to serve community needs. Its programs integrate the academic, service, and reflection components of service-learning by providing resources, including training and technical assistance, to students, faculty, and community. In doing this, the center advances TSU's goals of quality teaching, research, and service. Social justice is the

guiding principle for our practice in service-learning. We believe that

- TSU students, as future leaders of our community, deserve a real-world education that inspires social responsibility, cultivates respect for diversity, and encourages compassion for all.
- TSU should be a responsible, engaged member of the local community.
- Academic learning is strengthened by engaging in meaningful service and reflection.
- Education at TSU should be transformative, creating ethical and responsible community participants.
- All partners in the service-learning process should be engaged in teaching and learning, serving and being served.

See table 1 (pgs. 74-75).

Best Practices

We believe that one of the most fundamental “best practices” is developing and sustaining genuine relationships with community partners. We aim to maintain open and honest communication

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with partners. We seek input on what has worked and why and what needs to be modified. To that end, we will continue to utilize community organizations, leaders, stakeholders, and partners to help guide and shape the work that we do. This helps ensure that a sense of accountability exists at all levels. It also promotes cooperation, synergy, and commitment. Finally, it helps communicate to our partners that we value their insight,

input, and expertise as day-to-day front-line staff helping meet the needs of Tennessee’s citizenry.

One of the major challenges faced as we move engagement efforts forward continues to be making a connection with five public housing/low-income communities that surround the university campus. Currently, an established partnership with residents and related associations does not exist; rather, we work with clients that receive services from other community centers and agencies. Another challenge was the technological aspect of

a project that focused on an infrastructure to support computer and Internet use in a community outreach center. We were unable to fully meet some of the technological objectives in the available time frame. Finally, while our outreach efforts have increased, the visibility of extension and outreach programs continues to require aggressive marketing and promotion.

Campus Compact

Founded in 1985, the national Campus Compact and its current affiliate network of thirty-two state Campus Compacts, representing over 1,100 college and university presidents and some six million students, continue to build high-quality programs and services to promote campus engagement and build the skills and values of democracy. Campus Compact is an independent, non-profit higher education association. As the only national association dedicated to this mission, Campus Compact is a leader in building civic engagement into campus and academic life.

Tennessee State University is the host of the Tennessee Campus Compact (TNCC). We are the only historically black college or university to serve as host institution of a compact. President Melvin N. Johnson serves as the founding president and chair of the executive board. Higher education and other leaders from across the state gathered in Nashville on March 13, 2008, to sign TNCC's founding charter at a special Presidents' Roundtable during the Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education. Attending the ceremony were representatives of TNCC's twenty-seven charter member colleges and universities, along with senior representatives from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the Tennessee Board of Regents, the University of Tennessee System, and the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, as well as government, business, and community leaders.

TSU has emerged as a leader in academic service-learning through the efforts of its Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. Since its founding in 2005, TSU's Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement has developed service-learning courses across many disciplines; trained more than seventy-two faculty in service-learning pedagogy; and cultivated mutually beneficial partnerships with more than sixty-seven community organizations, including schools, churches, and other nonprofit organizations. Each year TSU averages thirty-one service-learning classes, involving more than 1,600 students in community engagement. Through TNCC all colleges and universities across the state

Table 1. Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Former and Existing Projects

Several federal, state, and local entities help fund the myriad of outreach efforts that are implemented annually. Some include the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Education Title III, Corporation for National and Community Service, and Tennessee Board of Regents. A brief description is provided below for illustrative purposes.

Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement				
Grant Name	Funder	Amount	Grant Activities	Grant Period
HUD Universities Rebuilding America Partnerships Grant-Camp Supercharge	U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development Universities Rebuilding America Partnerships	\$350,000	Provided a free academic enrichment summer camp in 2006 for 250 economically disadvantaged youth in New Orleans impacted by Hurricane Katrina. TSU students and faculty, along with New Orleans teachers, served as camp counselors, mentors, and instructors, leading the children in math and reading activities as well as games, music, art, and field trips. Participants showed academic gains and strong parental support for camp effectiveness.	March 2006– March 2008
HUD HBCU Grant–Watkins Park	U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development	\$600,000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the public facilities of 2 youth-serving nonprofit organizations in North Nashville by renovating space for Bethlehem Center's Shopping Bag Resale Shop and making plumbing and HVAC improvements and replacing windows at Grace M. Eaton Child Care Center. 2. Increase the access to technology for youth in after-school programs in North Nashville through the purchase and donation of computers to Bethlehem Center, Grace M. Eaton Child Care, Friendship Community Outreach Center, Preston Taylor Ministries, Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, and Watkins Park Community Center. 3. Provide educational support to North Nashville youth by providing volunteer support by TSU students, faculty, and staff to area after-school programs. 	August 2005– August 2008
Watkins Park Technopolis Grant	Annie E. Casey Foundation through Vanderbilt University	\$10,000	Improve access to educational technology to support after-school programs in North Nashville. Funds support the purchase of educational materials and software to support Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, Bethlehem Center, and Preston Taylor Ministries.	January 2007– August 2008

Table 1 (cont.)

Grant Name	Funder	Amount	Grant Activities	Grant Period
SCALES National Literacy Network	UPS Foundations through UNC-Chapel Hill	\$7,500	Improve the reading skills and attitudes of struggling preadolescent and adolescent readers. TSU students and staff serve as reading tutors to students at McKissack School, Preston Taylor Ministries, and Bethlehem Center. Faculty members Dr. John Mark Hunter and Tammy Lipsey and Service-Learning staff member Ginger Hausser Pepper were trained in the tutoring model and collaborated with 11 other universities under the direction of UNC-Chapel Hill to implement this program.	March 2007– May 2008
McKissack Service Learning	Tennessee Board of Regents Access & Diversity Grant	\$50,000	Establish a reading clinic at McKissack Professional Development School with TSU faculty and students assisting struggling readers. The grant also provides support to TSU faculty members to revise educational curriculum to integrate service-learning and for the Center for Service-Learning to provide ongoing support to the college for service-learning activities.	September 2007– December 2008
North Nashville Education and Housing Collaboration	U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development	\$584,119	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the rehabilitation of three homes in North Nashville through collaboration with Affordable Housing Resources. 2. Provide renovations, including window and door replacements, improving the safety and energy efficiency of Grace M. Eaton Child Care and purchase signage for Bethlehem Center. 3. Provide support for McKissack Professional Development School through a reading clinic, computer lab, and tutoring; financial and tutoring support in after-school programs in North Nashville (Preston Taylor Ministries and Bethlehem Center). 	September 2007– September 2010
AmeriCorps Support and Training Grant	Corporation for National and Community Service	\$19,250	Provides for travel and training for the VISTA members in the TN Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA Project.	October 2007– April 2008
Institutionalize Service-Learning to Increase Student Success and Retention	U.S. Department of Education Title III	\$189,679	Provides funds to support the operation & activities of the Center for Service-Learning & Civic Engagement, including salaries, expansion of service-learning courses, faculty and community partner development, an annual community service day, and development of Campus Compact.	October 2007– September 2008
TOTAL		\$1,810,548		

will have access to training and resources to develop their civic engagement initiatives according to their mission and goals. TSU's location in the middle of the state is ideal for serving as host site. TSU's designation as a historically black university is another leverage factor for future funding prospects for academic service-learning initiatives. The tradition of engaged scholarship and community partnerships at TSU will amplify the TNCC's depth and quality.

To date, the TNCC has received modest seed grants from the National Campus Compact (\$10,000), Volunteer Tennessee (\$10,000), and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce (\$2,000). To support the development of TNCC, the TSU Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement has also developed an AmeriCorps VISTA

“Through TNCC all colleges and universities across the state will have access to training and resources to develop their civic engagement initiatives according to their mission and goals.”

project, another federal resource available through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The CNCS Tennessee Office has provided TSU/TNCC the opportunity to recruit twenty-five VISTA members at no cost to Tennessee postsecondary institutions during its first year at a value of \$20,000 per VISTA. Any Tennessee college or university that joins TNCC can apply for and receive a VISTA member to support the development of their service-learning and community service

infrastructure. The TNCC/VISTA project has also received an additional support grant of \$20,500 during its first year to provide training and travel for the VISTA members.

In conjunction with Volunteer Tennessee as the lead, the TSU Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Pencil Foundation, the TNCC has submitted a volunteer management grant proposal requesting \$200,000 from the CNCS to build and sustain the culture of volunteerism in Tennessee. The TSU Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement has also received a \$50,000 Tennessee Board of Regents grant to build service-learning initiatives in the College of Education. The purpose of the grant is to develop a successful model for engaging teacher-education students in tutoring middle and high school students in reading. As part of TNCC, the model could be replicated statewide.

The grant efforts, progress, and impact just described indicate that the TNCC leadership continues to leverage other federal and state funding resources to help with its establishment and operations. The TNCC will provide the infrastructure for collaborative work in and with communities, enabling Tennessee institutions to provide leadership in all facets of integrating service with teaching and research that meaningfully contribute to the well-being of society.

TNCC is a statewide coalition of Tennessee colleges and universities, both public and private, dedicated to promoting the civic purposes of higher education. Currently, nine Tennessee institutions are active, dues-paying members of the national Campus Compact and manage modest service-learning initiatives: Belmont University, East Tennessee State University, Lambuth University, Lipscomb University, Middle Tennessee State University, the University of the South (Sewanee), Tennessee State University, Tusculum College, and Vanderbilt University. Others such as Carson-Newman College, Chattanooga State Technical Community College, King College, Maryville College, Milligan College, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and Walters State Community College have been members of Campus Compact in the past. TNCC members are committed to integrating service-learning into the curriculum as a component of effective teaching and learning, meeting institutional civic responsibilities to help address the needs of the state, and fostering development of collaborative partnerships between and among campuses. With state government support, the TNCC will be responsive to the needs of member campuses, providing such services as needs assessments, faculty training, technical assistance, regional workshops, service awards, and other shared resources.

According to the Tennessee Board of Regents' *Public Service Vision Committee Report (2005)*, Tennessee needs (1) a formal statewide system to document service activities both quantitatively and qualitatively; (2) increased collaborations with P-12 schools to improve educational attainment and motivation; and (3) opportunities for students to become engaged in their communities, especially in low-income areas. State government leadership and business leaders in Tennessee have recognized the need for civic and community engagement in the future of the state, and the TNCC will help communities and educational institutions achieve this while promoting the goals of the Tennessee Board of Regents' twenty-year Vision of Excellence in Public Service Plan, the five-year Tennessee Commission of National and Community Service

Plan, the five-year TSU Strategic Plan, and the five-year Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Plan.

The next few decades will require higher education to better prepare students to be effective citizens in a global knowledge economy while attracting and retaining economically, racially, and ethnically diverse student populations. Higher education is challenged to build civic engagement initiatives into curricula, thereby better preparing college students for productive careers, to live lives of purpose, to generate new knowledge, and to apply that knowledge to create a more just and humane society. According to national research findings, service-learning, community-based research, and other forms of civic engagement, when done well, improve student learning outcomes while addressing issues of access, diversity, retention, and workforce development. As a result, elements of engagement are being incorporated into Carnegie classifications, regional accreditation standards, and major research funding criteria.

Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension and the Office of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement are two distinct entities, with independent missions and goals; however, they complement and enhance each other well. Cooperative Extension is a nationwide, noncredit educational network. Each U.S. state and territory has a state office at a land-grant university and a network of local or regional offices.

Tennessee State University's Cooperative Extension Program mission is to help educate and provide information to limited-resource urban and rural individuals, families, small farmers, and other groups. Our vision is to be a leader in outreach educational programs. Using a variety of program delivery strategies, we offer practical and useful research-based programs, resources, and publications in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community resources and economic development. Specialists on the main campus and county Extension agents conduct educational sessions, conferences, and workshops to address community needs. (See table 2 on pgs. 80-81.)

Criteria of Excellence in Cooperative Extension

In the summer of 2005, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) appointed a task force representing all five regions to focus on measuring excellence in extension. The group was charged with

- Identifying the criteria that define excellence in Extension
- Determining the measures of those criteria
- Delineating the necessary collection methods
- Determining how to gain acceptance of the criteria and measures by the Extension System

The task-force-appointed work group brainstormed what constitutes excellence in Extension and developed a 4 x 5 matrix of the criteria of excellence. In its 2007 report, *Extension Excellence: Measuring Excellence in Cooperative Extension*, ECOP approved systemwide recommendations for “criteria of excellence in cooperative extension.” Along with teaching/learning, discovery scholarship, and management, engagement is one of those criteria with five measurement categories.

Creative Program Delivery Grants

The TSU Cooperative Extension Program was challenged to use limited resources, faculty, and staff in creative and innovative ways to facilitate engagement. Since 2002, Cooperative Extension has supported the Creative Program Delivery Program for county agents. The Creative Program Delivery Request for Proposal (RFP) requires a short “who, what, where, why, how, and so what” application to inculcate innovation and creativity in county programming. Extension faculty members provide support and guidance in preparation of proposals, and proposals are reviewed and selected for funding by a panel of experts. We support eight to ten projects per year. Agents provide annual written reports and Powerpoint presentations to their colleagues.

Campuswide Engagement Scholarship Enhancement Grants

Recognizing the importance of engagement to fulfill the mission of a land-grant university, Cooperative Extension issued a RFP to support creative and innovative engagement proposals. The purpose of this program is to encourage collaborative partnerships among Extension and teaching and/or research faculty in all TSU colleges and schools, and to support the Criteria of Excellence in Cooperative Extension. The following criteria for evaluation were required: (1) reflect significant collaboration among Extension faculty, teaching and/or research faculty, and students; (2) involve significant off-campus partners; (3) provide evidence of applied research, demonstrations, and/or technical assistance; (4) contribute

Table 2. Cooperative Extension: Former and Existing Projects

While the Cooperative Extension Program receives formula funds from the federal government, it is still necessary to seek external monies to augment the allocation. The Nutrition Education Program, for example, receives resources to help implement the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program. Programs in the area of agriculture and natural resources receive additional funds as well. A synopsis of some current and past projects are below.

Cooperative Extension				
Program Area	Name	Funding	Activities	Outcomes
Agricultural & Natural Resources	Small Farm Expo	\$17,000	On-farm demonstrations, farm tours, educational sessions, exhibits.	Over 500 farmers, vendors, and reps from state and federal agencies attended.
	Environmental Education		Cheatham County Corps of Engineers collaborated with TSU and other organizations on an environmental study tour and awareness event and educational sessions.	250 K-6 students and 300 adults participated.
Family & Consumer Sciences	Community Gardening		Specialists and agents worked with community groups to respond to the call for a food-secure Nashville. Programs for future Habitat for Humanity homeowners were also conducted.	1. Community Garden Program, participants had a total savings of \$8,349. 2. Garden program in Memphis concluded with 1,906 participants and over 27 organizations.
	Tennessee Browsing Academy		Designed at the request of the City of Chattanooga to help with the local kudzu problem.	36 participants attended. After completion, participants are awarded the opportunity to bid for contracts to remove the kudzu from within the city limits with their goats.
	Incarcerated Parents Program		Helps a portion of the 19,000 Tennessee prisoners increase their knowledge on effective parenting and communication skills.	More than 700 inmates have completed educational sessions.
	Relatives as Caregivers		Educational awareness initiative targeting grandparents and other relatives caring for underage children.	419 people have received direct training from Extension.
	Nutrition Education Program	\$300,000	Focuses on helping food-stamp-eligible individuals establish healthy eating habits and physically active lifestyles.	Over 10,000 people were reached using the radio, social marketing, one-on-one instructions, and health fairs.

Table 2 (cont.)

Program Area	Name	Funding	Activities	Outcomes
	Expanded Food and Nutrition Program	\$120,000	Helps families with limited incomes acquire knowledge, skills, and behavior changes necessary to maintain nutritionally sound diets.	Educated more than 600 youth participating in summer feeding program.
Youth	Helping America's Youth		First Lady Laura Bush, youth-serving professionals, and young people from around the region converged on Tennessee State University to participate in the Helping America's Youth Conference in 2007. Helping America's Youth is a White House initiative designed to raise awareness about the challenges youth face. The effort is particularly interested in pairing at-risk boys with caring adults in three areas: family, school, and community.	Over 300 hundred adult and youth participants.
	Traditional 4-H & youth development programs		Educational sessions implemented on such topics as decision making, responsibility, peer pressure, alcohol, and drugs.	Over 10,000 youth reached.
Community Resource & Economic Development	Entrepreneurship & Small Business Dev		Designed to enhance the entrepreneurial spirit of underserved small business owners and individuals looking to start a small business.	216 participants reported an increase in knowledge and understanding of business concepts and planning.
	Land Ownership Program		Developed to assist underrepresented landowners and farmers with estate planning, legal issues, heir property, and government programs.	69 landowners and farmers increased knowledge on estate planning, legal issues, heir property, and government programs.
	Mobile Information Forestry Technology Program		Uses a combination of traditional landowner training workshops and on-site training using a mobile Internet platform.	Implemented at Alcorn State University, Fort Valley State University, Florida A&M University, South Carolina State University, Virginia State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, and Alabama A&M University.
TOTAL		\$437,000		

at least four of the seven highlighted measures in Criteria of Excellence specified in the announcement. We supported eight projects in 2007–8. Cooperative Extension budgeted \$280,000 to support creative and innovative engagement proposals for the 2007–8 program year.

Summaries of funded projects:

- *Synthesizing Community Forestry/Public Health: A Black History/Urban Forestry Walking Trail* used geographic information systems (GIS), global positioning systems (GPS), and remote sensing technology to develop a model of expanded walking green space in North Nashville. The proposal called for estimates of distances between historic markers and trees. The final task of the project was to analyze the survey results to determine the effectiveness of connecting the community to the urban forest and local history to generate interest among Nashville residents in the proposed fitness circuit. The results are expected to be used to improve the final design of the fitness circuit green space design associated with exercise activities. The overall thrust was to persuade the Metro Nashville government to fund the development of a fitness circuit/greenway in cooperation with Tennessee State University. The members of this project consisted of a faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences History Department, a faculty member in the health sciences, and an Extension faculty member whose area of expertise is urban forestry.
- *Cheatham Lake/TSU Walking Interpretive Trail* specified that through a collaboration with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, an agriculture faculty member, an Extension specialist, and an Extension agent, education would be provided to limited-resource urban and rural landowners, school groups, and other organizations by the development of plants and wildlife such as butterflies, hummingbirds, songbirds, native shrubs, and trees indigenous to Tennessee. The Tennessee State University walking trail and thirteen berms along the walking trail have been developed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Two agricultural science students learned more in their field with some hands-on work on the trail and the plots that accompany it during the summer.
- *Engaging Communities in Urban Tree Risk Assessment Workshop Series* offered a community awareness survey to evaluate attitudes and behavior regarding tree planting and care. The goal

of tree assessment is to increase safety by abating structural defects before tree failure and damage occur. Engaging arborists and other green industry professionals in performing risk assessments of trees in their communities through hands-on training allows for better assessment of those trees. Training in this area provided education to a core group of people who will in turn act as instructors in four workshops held in the Tennessee area. The initial component of the training required purchasing an IML resistograph, an instrument used to locate and predict the presence of decay in the trunk and wood of community trees. Educational publications were produced on the usefulness of data generated from technology used and to raise awareness pertaining to perceived risks associated with landscape trees.

- *Integrating the Use of Technology in the Classroom* provided educational training and assistance in the use of technology to increase student motivation and achievement in the classroom. The collaboration was with inner-city middle school male youth and the College of Education, which provided the pedagogical merit for using technology. Off-campus partners were a college-preparatory middle and high school. The middle school students were brought to the campus of Tennessee State University to be exposed to college campus life. After nine weeks of technology exposure, they were posttested for gains they made compared to their prior level.
- *Integrated Agricultural Day Camp* was a collaboration between the Department of Occupational Therapy (College of Health Sciences) and Cooperative Extension. The Department of Occupational Therapy helps children with disabilities, offering craft activities, working to improve fine motor skills, and assisting with their daily living skills. The day camp at the Agricultural Research and Education Center in Cheatham County allowed children with disabilities to interact with 4-H students of their age range on a farm-type setting. The children were taught lessons on farm safety; they also interacted with a farmer who has a disability and has been assisted through Agrability Program. As a result of the Integrated Agricultural Day Camp with Cooperative Extension and the Department of Occupational Therapy, a memorandum of understanding has been developed between the Cooperative Extension Program in the School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences and

Department of Occupational Therapy in the College of Health Sciences on a 20 percent cost-shared position.

- *Feel Better Today; Stay Healthy for Tomorrow: Eat Better and Move More Workshop*, a health education series, was jointly submitted by the Extension nutrition education specialist and the assistant director of the Tennessee State University Human Resources Office. The project, performed in collaboration with the TSU Wellness Center and the Metropolitan Public Health Department, was designed for university faculty and staff to develop and facilitate four to six monthly sessions that demonstrate and promote making smart choices from every food group and engaging in physical activity three to five days per week. In concert with the Wellness Center and the Metro Health Department, promotions were instituted to provide exercises that fit into busy lifestyles. Lessons were developed using the 2005 Dietary Guidelines (*Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee 2005*), which put emphasis on the best way to give the body the balanced nutrition needed by eating a variety of nutrient-rich foods on a daily basis.
- *Engaging Limited Resource Youth in 21st Century Science, Engineering, and Technology Skills* was designed to help county Extension offices offset the cost of existing and emerging science, engineering, and technology programs. Minigrants were offered to 4-H agents to begin or expand hands-on scientific learning and discovery. The counties involved in this project were Rutherford, Davidson, Scott, and Haywood. In Rutherford County the Extension agent engaged 4-H participants, using a focus on communication for youth who wish to be reporters, camera operators, writers, and video editors. In Davidson County the 4-H computer and technology project will work with after-school students in geo-caching, using global positioning system (GPS) technology. In Scott County, GPS units provided youth with experience in using today's science to navigate through areas. This hands-on learning tool promotes math and science skills by using distances and directions. Haywood County has established a science, engineering, and technology (SET) program. The equipment will enhance implementation and documentation of summer programs, in-school 4-H clubs, project groups, after-school clubs, and judging teams.

Conclusion

Universities are dynamic organizations that must change and adapt to the new funding crises, and new presidential, collegiate, and departmental leadership. Recently, TSU developed a twenty-five-year academic master plan and a five-year strategic plan. The true measure of whether the service-learning objectives are achieved is longitudinal evaluation over a period of years, which occurs through answering questions such as:

- Is the TSU student a better and more effective leader who is socially responsible, cultivates respect for diversity, and encourages compassion for all?
- Is TSU a more responsible and engaged member of the community?
- Is academic learning strengthened by engaging in meaningful service and reflection?
- Has the effort been transformative, creating ethical and responsible community participants?
- Are the partners engaged in teaching, learning, and serving, and being served?

For the Cooperative Extension Program, we should return to the questions outlined in *The Extension System: A Vision for the 21st Century (ECOP 2002)*:

- How well does Extension provide informal outreach education with the communities it serves?
- How effective is Extension in developing, sustaining, and using partnerships effectively?
- How effective is Extension in maintaining scientific neutrality in its educational products?
- Does Extension meet the diversity of program needs appropriate to its location?
- Does Extension serve a representative cross-section of people, including disadvantaged, aging, ethnic groups, and different cultures—that is, all clientele groups?
- Does Extension provide information to address issues in a comprehensive, interdisciplinary way?

- Does Extension focus on community concerns and issues when setting its educational priorities?
- How effective is Extension in supporting and collaborating with the community?
- Does Extension support the community and its leadership in a way that helps the community in responding to issues/problems and maximizes fiscal and human resources?

Future leaders of Service-Learning and Cooperative Extension must be diligent about asking these questions, collecting quantitative and qualitative data to document results, and communicating results to our various stakeholders. *The Criteria of Excellence in Cooperative Extension* matrix is an excellent tool to document our teaching/learning, discovery scholarship, engagement, and management effectiveness. Engagement is a long-term process that requires nurturing and care.

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About the Authors

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(2004–5) of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). He is a current member of ECOP 4-H Youth Task Force and National 4-H Council Board of Trustees. Dr. Chesney is a member of Class IV of the Kellogg National Fellowship Program (1983–86). He was selected for the 2005 inaugural class of the Food System Leadership Institute. He is a member of the Society of American Foresters, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), and a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

- Javiette Samuel, PhD, is Extension assistant professor with the Cooperative Extension Program at TSU in the School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences. She joined Cooperative Extension in 2003 and serves as the Extension Family, Youth and Community team leader and the interim Urban Programs coordinator. Her expertise is in the areas of child development and family studies, leadership, planning, implementation, and evaluation. She has taught courses in family and consumer sciences in the following areas: human development, child development, development of infancy and early childhood, creative and expressive arts for young children, and infant clinic. In 2006–7 Dr. Samuel developed a series of peer-reviewed Extension fact sheets on the following topics: children & stress, parenting, infancy: an overview of the first year, toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, and late adolescence. She has presented numerous trainings, workshops, and programs in these areas. In 2008 she earned her certification from the National Council of Family Relations as a Certified Family Life Educator. Some of her recent awards and honors include: recognized for Distinguished Service to Tennessee State University, National Programs of Distinction Peer Reviewer, National Art of Leadership Class, and Manchester's Who's Who Among Professional and Executive Women.

- Deena Sue Fuller, PhD, is a professor of educational psychology and director of the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement at Tennessee State University. As a professor in the College of Education, Dr. Fuller taught Educational and Developmental Psychology, Classroom Assessment, Adult Psychology, and Classroom Management. Currently, as director of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, she is working to implement service-learning at the university. Since 2004, she has written and manages six grants that support educational and economic development activities for at-risk youth and their families. Immediately following Hurricane Katrina, she planned and implemented a free educational summer camp in New Orleans for 250 elementary-aged children affected by the hurricane. The project was funded by a HUD Universities Rebuilding America Grant. In addition to coordinating the grant projects, Fuller trains faculty in the integration of service-learning into their courses, as well as establishing service-learning opportunities

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