



VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

APRIL 10, 2025 | APRIL 15, 2025



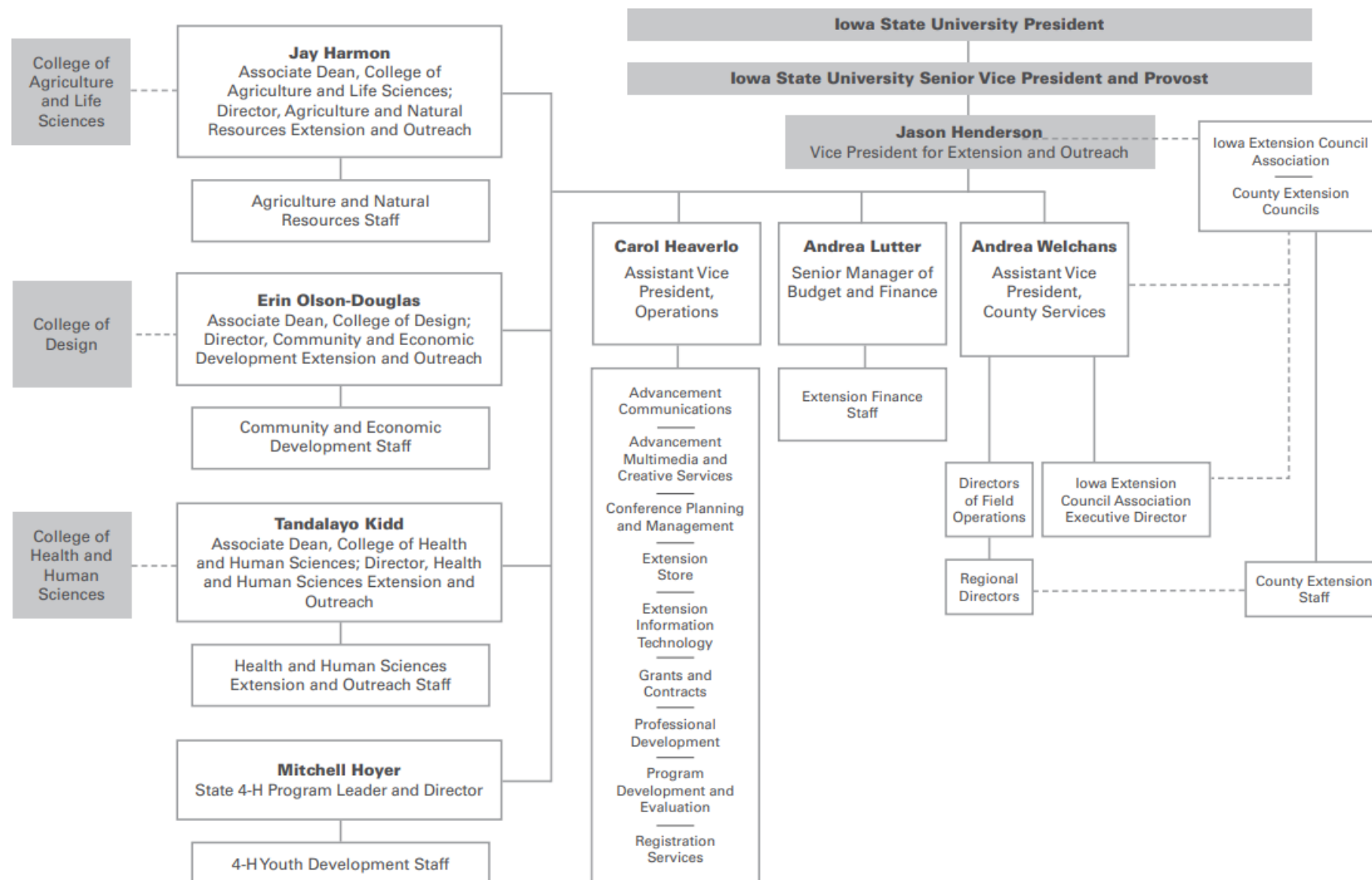
Understanding Roles within ISU Extension and Outreach

RaeAnn Gordon, Director of Field Operations-North
Janet Smith, Director of Field Operations-South

Analogy—It's A Dance!



LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND OUTREACH



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When Roles are CLEAR

- Job satisfaction
- Increased job satisfaction and retention
- Reduced conflict
- Increased task and workplace productivity



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MOU Outlines ISU Extension and Outreach and County roles

II. Purpose

ISU and the Extension District enter into this Memorandum of Understanding in order to cooperate in a partnership:

- 1) To deliver on the land-grant mission of
 - a. providing access to research- or evidence- based education;
 - b. applying research to the needs of Iowa, the nation, and the world; and
 - c. extending knowledge to strengthen Iowa's economy and residents' quality of life.
- 2) To extend the land-grant university beyond the campus borders and provide a locally relevant mix of educational programs consistent with the provisions of the

Roles and Responsibilities

IECA Exec
Director-Jen Vit

Council

County Director

Regional
Director

VP of Extension
Dr. Jason
Henderson

AVP-Andrea
Welchans

Director of Field
Operations
RaeAnn/Janet



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Extension Council Role Reflection

1. Strategic Direction
2. Legal and Fiduciary
3. Governance vs. Management
4. Community Engagement
5. Council Development

Your governing body is formally called the **"county agricultural extension council"** or a shorter version, **"county extension council."** Informally, we use the terminology **"extension council"** or **"county council"** or **"council."**

"County agricultural extension district" means the governmental subdivision of the state or as a shorter version, **"extension district."** Informally we can refer to it as **"district"** or **"county."**



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1. Strategic Direction



Are we effectively setting strategic direction based on local needs?



- Ensure programs meet local priorities.



- Are we engaging the public for input?



- Do we revisit our priorities or strategic plan regularly?

2. Legal and Fiduciary Responsibilities



Are we fulfilling our legal and fiduciary responsibilities?



- Stay compliant and accountable. Follow Fiscal/Personnel policies.



- Are we following Iowa Code 176A?



- Are we transparent with budget and tax levy decisions?

3. Governance vs. Management

Are we providing effective oversight without managing daily operations?

- Maintain a governance - not management - role.

- Are we trusting staff with day-to-day decisions?

- Are we staying focused on policy and oversight?

Governance or Management?

Role	Governance or Management?	Primary Focus
Director of Field Operations	Management	Oversight of regional staff, program implementation
Regional Director	Management	County/regional staff supervision, local liaison
Iowa Extension Council Association Executive Director	Governance Support	Support to local governance and strategic leadership
County Agricultural Extension Districts	Governance	Policy, budget, direction-setting



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Management VS. Governance

Management VS. Governance

Management

Governance

	Purchase additional software for a county employee's computer	
	Approve credit card limit for employees	
	Pay registration for county employee to attend Crucial Conversations training	
	Print and review TCP time sheets for personnel files	
	Buy toner and paper for copy machines	
	Write and submit a grant to the Washington County Riverboat Foundation	
	Direct the external bookkeeper to give a 2% raise to county staff	
	Contact companies to obtain bids for carpet and cleaning services	
	Buy a new printer to replace the old one for the OA; cost \$700	
	Purchase a new laminator	
	Reserve the local rec center for the family fun night	
	Invest and purchase a 6 month CD	

4. Community Engagement

Are we building partnerships and advocating for Extension in our community?

- Strengthen local visibility and support.

- Are we promoting Extension?

- Are we collaborating with local groups to build a strong educational program?

5. Council Development



Are we investing in our development as a high-functioning board?



- Improve council performance over time.



- Do we evaluate ourselves?



- Are we seeking training or using resources from ISU Extension or IECA?

Leadership



Andrea Welchans
Assistant Vice
President
for County Services



RaeAnn Gordon
Director of Field
Operations
North Regions
1-12, 17 and 28



Janet Smith
Director of Field
Operations
South Regions
13-16, 18-27, 29



Jennifer Vit
Executive Director
Iowa Extension
Council Association

DFO Value

Director of Field Operations Roles and Responsibilities: The DFO shall:

- a. supervise regional directors;
- b. assist, educate, and advise regional directors and Extension District councils and staff with compliance and budget and finance questions;
- c. fill in for the regional director when the regional director is absent;
- d. address questions or concerns about individual regional directors when they arise;
- e. engage the Assistant Vice President for County Services and/or Vice President for Extension and Outreach if the DFO believes it is warranted;
- f. encourage Extension District councils and staff to talk to their DFO if they have an ongoing dispute involving a regional director.



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Regional Director Role

ISU Extension and Outreach is divided into regions. Each region has a director who provides administrative leadership to county extension offices that meet legal and fiduciary obligations of the extension districts and oversee delivery of educational programs that align with the needs of the area. Regional directors supervise county staff as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding. They initiate strategies and provide oversight for extension council implementation of fiscal management, human resources, and program needs assessments.

Regional directors collectively work together through committee structures, which provide leadership to an operational or functional area of county extension council work.



Takeaways

- When in doubt reach out
- Things do not get better by ignoring
- Shared accountability.
- We are not perfect. We are together.
- WE>ME
- Discern our actions, interactions and reactions-- so toes are not stepped on.



Resources

- www.carvergovernance.com/model.htm
- www.carvergovernance.com/model.htm
- [Board Self-Assessment | Cornell Cooperative Extension | Staff Site](#)
- www.extension.iastate.edu/countyservices/extension-council-reference-manual
- <https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/getting-great-defining-roles-governing-body-and-local-government-manager>



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Thank you

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www.iaextensioncouncils.org/