Professional Values And The Florida Cooperative Extension Service: Developing A Foundation For Strategic Planning

Mary Speece Williams
University of North Florida

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PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND
THE FLORIDA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE:
DEVELOPING A FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

by

Mary Speece Williams

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Educational Services and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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The dissertation of Mary Speece Williams is approved:

Signature Deleted (date)
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Signature Deleted 3-24-94
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Signature Deleted 3-24-94
Signature Deleted 3-24-94

Committee Chairperson

Accepted for the Department:
Signature Deleted
Chairperson 4/13/94

Accepted for the College/School:
Signature Deleted 4/13/94

Accepted for the University
Signature Deleted 4/13/94

Vice President for Academic Affairs
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was undertaken to determine the organizational values shared by the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Related topics that contributed to the literature review included human and organizational values, organizational culture, strategic planning, and the philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Focus group interviews were conducted in each of the five administrative districts and on the University of Florida Campus. A total of 40 individuals took part in the group interviews. Transcripts of the interviews were read, coded, and sorted by themes to develop a list of twelve categories of values shared by the professionals interviewed. Coded sections of the transcripts were transferred to a descriptive matrix in order to reduce and simplify the analysis.

Three groupings of values emerged from the data and were described as "communities" of values. The three communities were personal, mission-related, and structural values. Personal values were rewards, relationships, and personal history. Mission-related values were organizational history, research-based information, relevance, comprehensiveness,
life-long education, diversity, and service. Structural values were shared ownership and system linkages.

These three communities were depicted in figures that described the relationships of the values to one another. The final discussion described the inter-relatedness of the three communities in the overall organizational structure. Recommendations were made for further study and program development for the Florida Cooperative Extension Service.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Do professionals in effective organizations have a set of shared values that guide daily actions and decision-making processes? If so, what are the common values and beliefs that guide the operations of the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service? How do these shared values shape the organizational culture of this professional organization?

For a variety of reasons, educational and other non-profit organizations are implementing planned change strategies derived from the business sector (Apps, 1990; Bryson, 1989; Day, 1991; Forsman, 1990; Posey et. al., 1987; Safrit, 1990; Simerly 1987). In recent years USDA Cooperative Extension System state and national partners have instituted strategic planning strategies to help adapt and plan for continued existence in an increasingly competitive environment (Apps, 1990, 1991; Boyle, 1989; Jimmerson, 1989; Patton, 1985, 1988). Not all planning models, however, include a recognition of the important role played by employee value systems and beliefs, and their congruence with corporately held or stated values. Final plans may look good on paper, but unless supported by guiding principles shared by the people who must implement them, programs and services outlined in the plan may not
develop as envisioned.

Administering relevant, effective, and efficient Cooperative Extension educational programs will require effective strategic planning skills on the part of Extension leaders. The identification of the organizational values of the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service would provide administrators with one vital aspect of an effective, holistic strategic planning process. Additionally, studies of both public and private sector organizations support the importance of clarity and consensus of values to organizational culture building, and thus to organizational effectiveness (Argyris, 1990; Boxx, 1991; Bradford & Cohen, 1984; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Kouzes & Posner, 1990; Offerman, 1987; Rulnick, 1991; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983).

This qualitative case study was based on the assumption that individual values, organizational values, and corporate culture are functions of personal interactions and perceptions of the individuals within the organization. The organization itself functions as a cultural system. Strategic planning is also a process of interactions, and is impacted by the perceptions of the individuals participating in the planning process. While empirical models of values clarification are available, the purpose of this study was to provide an intensive, holistic description and analysis of the perceived shared value set of a single bounded system, that of the professional faculty of the Florida
Cooperative Extension Service. A review of literature illustrated the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the Cooperative Extension Service as well as the relationship of this study to existing literature on values, corporate culture, and strategic planning. Focus group interviews provided data about the perceptions of the professional employees of the unit.

The Research Problem

Any effort to manage organizational transition can be stressful and destructive for an organization and for the individuals within it unless careful attention is given to the underlying professional philosophies shared by those individuals. Identification and discussion of shared organizational values can be the springboard for an effective strategic planning effort as an organization enters an era of internal assessment and transition.

The values held by the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service play important roles in determining the manner in which these professionals plan, conduct, and evaluate the Extension educational programs they coordinate. As the administration of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service seeks to update its mission, goals, and philosophy, questions concerning the values held by its members must be considered. The personal and professional experiences of this researcher as a
professional employee of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service supported this premise. Literature on planned organizational change and strategic planning also supported this premise. Lippitt (1981) suggested that those who implement organizational change must be sensitive to the concerns, anxieties, fears, hopes, wishes, and expectations of those who will be affected. Blake and Mouton (1982) emphasized that while change imposed upon people may succeed, an alternative approach to planned change involves the use of norms, including shared values, to shape change that accommodates both the organization and the individuals within the organization. Bryson (1989) and Simerly (1987) described models of strategic planning for public and not-for-profit organizations that include components for clarification of members' values.

Before the Florida Cooperative Extension Service administration begins a process to plan strategically for organizational transition and change, the organizational values held by its professional members must be investigated and clarified. A clear understanding of these shared organizational values can also serve as a powerful tool in the recruitment and training of new professionals and in the development of programs that meet the needs of the publics served. This qualitative study helped clarify these values.

The Research Questions

The purposes of this study were stated as qualitative
research questions. They are as follows:

What are perceived to be the shared values that guide the daily decisions and operations of the Florida Cooperative Extension professional?

What differences are there in perceived values among demographic groups within the organization?

What similarities are there in perceived values among demographic groups within the organization?

Significance of the Study

A statement of shared values describes our beliefs. These values often address the organization's relationships to its major constituents — members, the public, and staff. These broad beliefs, taken seriously, can translate into policies that affect every aspect of operation.

Furthermore, studies of public sector organizations support the importance of clarity, consensus, and intensity of values to organizational effectiveness (Alexander, 1987; Boxx, Odom, & Dunn, 1991). People within successful organizations clearly understand and agree with the group values. When values are deeply held, there appears to be a substantial congruence between stated or espoused values and action, or values in use. Thus, shared values become a screen for all organizational decisions regarding mission, vision, strategies and action.

Extension professionals are public sector employees
concerned about organizational effectiveness and culture. Jimmerson (1989) emphasized the need to critically evaluate the values that guide the decision-making involved in Cooperative Extension programs as well as those of the clientele with whom we work. He indicated that all educational institutions need to promote a deeper understanding of values and beliefs in order to meet the challenges of the information age. If we are to work effectively with our client groups, suggested Jimmerson, we must critically evaluate basic values underlying the methods and goals that we promote.

This study provided foundations for the development of new program efforts and organizational policy for the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Recruitment, training, and promotional efforts can be developed to maximize the impact of the shared value system on the organizational culture. Decisions regarding implementation of new program efforts can be screened through the filters provided by a set of shared values. This study also served to generate theories about value congruence and organizational effectiveness which can be tested in future research.

This case study was conducted to provide a holistic understanding of the organizational values of a single bounded system, the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, as perceived by the professional employees of the
organization. No single strand of theoretical literature encompassed the holistic nature of this question. Several bodies of literature have bearing on this problem. The nature of human values was more clearly defined. The parallel construct of organizational values was further explored, especially as the values impact the corporate culture and the effectiveness of the organization. The process of strategic planning is in part dependent upon the identification and articulation of shared organizational values. Finally, it was important to understand the historical philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service in order to understand the current perceptions of the Florida professionals.

Procedure And Limitations

Focus group interviews were conducted to reach targeted representatives of the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Das (1983) described focus group interviews as useful in generating hypotheses and in getting in-depth information on perceptions and beliefs of group members. Morgan and Spanish (1984) agreed, and added that the major advantage of focus groups over other qualitative methods is that they offer the chance to observe participants in interaction that is concentrated on the perceptions that are of interest to the researcher. Admittedly, the strengths of focus groups come from a
compromise among the strengths of other qualitative methods. They are neither as strong as participant observations in the naturalistic observation of interaction, nor as strong as direct interviewing or probing for deeper individual perceptions. The focus group, however, effectively combines those goals in a single methodology. Morgan and Spanish specifically recommended focus groups as a method for studying attitudes, opinions, motivations and beliefs which guide behavior.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four constructs in establishing the validity of qualitative research. The first is **credibility**, demonstrating that the research was conducted in such a manner as to accurately identify and describe the subject. Validity, or credibility, must be assessed in terms of interpretation of the data rather than in terms of reality itself (Merriam, 1991). It is important to note here that this study triangulated the perspectives of different groups in order to generalize conclusions to the whole system, rather than triangulate using several methodological techniques.

The second construct proposed by Lincoln and Guba is **transferability**, responsibility for which they assign to the researcher. This study was a case study of a single bounded system. It involved examining perceptions of employees in a single organization at a given point in time. This qualitative study did not seek to provide a statistically
generalizable conclusion, but the findings can provide a basis for comparison of other similar organizations.

The third construct identified by Lincoln and Guba is 
**dependability.** This researcher makes the qualitative assumption that the social world is always changing, and that the concept of exact replication of this study is problematic. One of the basic assumptions of qualitative research is that reality itself is holistic and ever-changing. Indeed, the conditions from one focus group to the next were different, and it became important to note and address these conditions in the analysis of the data.

The final construct, **confirmability,** parallels the traditional research concern of objectivity. It is natural that any researcher comes to a project of this magnitude with some inherent subjectivity, and that the researcher is in fact the tool for the qualitative analysis. In this case, the researcher’s personal insights as an extension professional were helpful in describing the professional organization being investigated. She was also able to relate the discussions in the group interviews to their context within the structure of the organization. Her prior contacts with key administrators in the Florida Cooperative Extension Service helped her to gain access and support for holding the interviews in county offices, and facilitated the recruitment of the focus group participants. The researcher’s own values as an extension professional imposed
limitations on the confirmability of the study. She compensated for these limitations by keeping a personal progress journal throughout the project with which she was able to separate her own values from those of the group participants. She also used the journal to generate the themes that eventually became the coding system used for data analysis.

**Definitions of Terms**

The organization investigated in this study uses certain terms that may or may not be clearly understood by others. To clarify the meaning of some terms used throughout the study, the following definitions are to be applied whenever the terms are used:

- **Expressed Organizational Values:** an expressed, enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence within a specific organization is preferable to any opposing mode of conduct or end-state of existence (Safrit, 1990).

- **Job Tenure:** the number of years the employee has been employed by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service and any other state Cooperative Extension Service.

- **Florida Cooperative Extension Service:** the organization in the state of Florida that plans, implements, and evaluates non-formal educational programs based on research-generated information from the University of
Florida, Florida A & M University, and the national network of other land-grant institutions of higher education. Primary programs are developed in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, home economics and family studies, 4-H and youth development, and community resource and leadership development.

Position Within the Organization: the position held by the professional within the organization - either state administrator, state specialist, county director, area agent, county agent, or other.

Professional Employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service: those members of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service with earned degrees and who hold either faculty or courtesy faculty status with the University of Florida personnel system.

Program Area Assignment: the subject matter responsibility of the professional - e.g., agriculture agents may be assigned to program responsibilities with livestock, field crops, citrus, or other specific subjects. Home economists may be assigned to program responsibilities for nutrition or consumer economics. Other program responsibilities may include 4-H, community development, or administration.

Strategic Planning: the process of designing, implementing, and monitoring plans for improving organizational decision making by analyzing current
organizational values and resources and projecting future environmental trends and influences.

Single Bounded System: the unit of analysis for the case study. In this case, the single bounded system is the Florida Cooperative Extension Service and its employees.

Plan of the Study

Chapter II, the review of literature, includes references relating to the topics of values, organizational values, organizational culture, strategic planning, and the philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service. Chapter III provides a rationale for the selection of the methodology and a description of the procedures involved in conducting the focus group interviews. Methods of data analysis are also discussed in Chapter III, but continue in Chapter IV as the researcher presents her analysis of the interview transcript data. The concluding chapter presents the researcher's conclusions and possible implications of the study, along with recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It is the premise of this study that the values held by the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service greatly affect the success of those professionals in planning, conducting, and evaluating their educational programs. The researcher believes that an individual's values will influence his or her actions and behaviors, including actions within an organizational context. As administrative leaders begin to plan for organizational change in the objectives, goals, philosophy and processes of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service in response to societal change, the values held by the organizational members must be taken into consideration.

Bodies of literature have been reviewed to support the premises of this study. The question demands that we first have a clear understanding about the nature of values and their relationship to behavior. A related body of literature links the notion of personal guiding values to organizations. Organizations may or may not have clear statements about the guiding values that provide philosophical foundations for the organizational mission and daily actions of their members. The development of the corporate or professional culture of the organization is in part due to the shared understanding of organizational
values. A commitment to shared values can improve the professional culture and enhance the effectiveness of the organization. Still another body of literature deals with the process of strategic planning and the place of values identification and clarification in that process. Finally, it is important to understand the historical and philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service in order to place the question of organizational values within the context of this specific case.

This chapter has been organized to lead the reader through (1) a discussion of the theoretical context of the study within existing literature on human and organizational values; to (2) the significance of organizational values as they relate to organizational culture; to (3) organizational culture as a factor in strategic long-range planning; (4) and to conclude with a review of the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the Cooperative Extension Service as an organization-specific foundation for values clarification.

**Human and Organizational Values**

Various disciplines define and investigate values using different methods. Sociologists see values as patterns of principles that give social order to groups; cultural anthropologists see values as patterns discernible by observation of any member of a group; and psychologists
believe that the values of individuals and groups are related through mediating processes (Carter, 1991).

As individuals, we are guided at every level of society by certain principles called values. Values are shaped by enduring beliefs and attitudes and become a referent point so that any given mode of conduct or state of existence can be deemed preferable to some opposing mode of conduct or state of existence (Rokeach, 1973). A value is a preference as well as a conception of that which is preferable. Values function as standards for action, as screens for decision-making and conflict resolution, and provide motivation for behavior (Kasten & Ashbaugh, 1991; Rokeach, 1968). Schein (1985) described values as a sense of "... what 'ought' to be, as distinct from what is" (p. 120). Values play an important role in determining how we function as individuals and as members of a family, a work group, or a profession (Conklin, Jones, & Safrit, 1992).

Kluckhohn (1951) defined a value as:

... a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action. (p. 425)

According to this conceptualization, both the implicit values we possess as individuals and those explicitly impressed upon us by the social groups within which we function might be considered descriptors affecting our actions and influencing our goals (Safrit, 1990). Bamberger (1986) agreed, and further described values as abstract
ideals, positive or negative, which serve as standards to
guide and determine action, goals, attitudes, ideology, and
the presentation of self to others.

Rokeach (1973) identified two major types of values, terminal (or ends) values and instrumental (or means) values. Terminal values are aspirations, ultimate goals, or worthy states of existence, such as happiness or wisdom. Instrumental values are related to an optimum way of behaving while trying to reach terminal values. Examples of instrumental values are honesty and responsibility. He stated that "... the consequences of human values will be manifested in virtually all phenomena that social scientists might consider worth investigating and understanding" (p. 3). He further suggested that certain kinds of attitudes and behaviors can be significantly predicted by certain values. Consequently, the values one possesses as either an individual or a group member may be used as a predictor of identifiable attitudes and behaviors. Rokeach concluded that further research is needed to identify more clearly the particular values that each social institution focuses upon, the extent of the overlap and competition among institutional values, the effectiveness of different social institutions and organizations as value socializing agents, and the conditions under which institutional value change can be brought about.

Hodgkinson (1991) provided his own schema of value
related terms. He illustrated three types of values: (1) subrational, which are grounded in affect and personal preference; (2) rational, which are judged to be "right" for either social or end-state conditions; and (3) transrational, which are grounded in the metaphysical. Transrational values take the form of ethical codes and are unverifiable by techniques of science or logic, and their adaptation implies an act of faith. This schema led Hodgkinson to define values as synonymous with meaning, or concepts of the desirable with the force of motivation.

In modern democratic society, guiding values have largely reflected the provision of equality and liberty. These are public values that cut across group lines and interests. For a strong public value system to exist, private values must be acknowledged. Private values are commonly rooted in important religious and ethical beliefs (Foster, 1989). It is for this same reason that the naturally diverse public value system may only accommodate private values with great difficulty. Thus, an effective organizational value system depends in part on the adaptation and inculcation of various private values. The leadership of an effective organization, asserts Foster, must be concerned with the evolution and transformation of the organizational value system.

Every profession or work organization is guided by certain values. Organizational values communicate that for
which the organization stands. They are the principles upon
which professional activities are planned and carried out,
and the screens for administrative decision-making (Boxx,
Alexander (1987) described shared values as fundamental
guiding beliefs that drive the way an organization competes,
produces and manages. Popular writers such as Peters and
Austin (1985) and Kanter (1983) claimed that organizational
success is in part determined by a firm set of underlying
values that is shared by the members of the organization.
Whether implicit or explicit, they constitute the essence of
the organizational management philosophy.

Kouzes and Posner (1990) took the same position while
emphasizing the need to align personal and organizational
values. They described values as those things that are most
important to us. They are the deep-seated, pervasive
standards that give direction to the hundreds of decisions
made at all levels of the organization every day. It is
critical that people understand what the organization stands
for and that those organizational values are in congruence
with personal values held by the members. Indeed, the
guiding beliefs or values are antecedent variables of
effectiveness of performance in organizations. In their
research, Kouzes and Posner found that shared values do the
following:
* Foster strong feelings of personal effectiveness.
* Promote high levels of group loyalty.
* Facilitate consensus about key organization goals and stakeholders.
* Encourage ethical behavior.
* Promote strong norms about working hard and caring.
* Reduce levels of job stress and tension.

Whether or not values are articulated and publicly communicated by an organization, it is apparent that values will drive behavior, both individually and collectively. The sharing of values, especially by processes such as socialization, internalization, or clarification, helps to coordinate and stabilize behavior in social systems (Bamberger, 1986; Forsman, 1990). With a sense of shared meaning and purpose, people respond to work with increased motivation and commitment (Sergiovanni, 1987). Bennis and Nanus (1985) argued that by asserting and defending particular values leaders can communicate and share the organizational purpose and vision with followers, creating a bond between leaders and followers. This bond incorporates the non-negotiable core values and beliefs of the organization and is a major part of an organizational culture in which effective leaders are able to mobilize the
energy and commitment of employees toward organizational goals.

Hodgkinson (1991) provided a theoretical model for the total field of leadership behavior as it relates to five dimensions of values (Figure 1). The first dimension represents personal values of individuals. Dimension two represents the values of the immediate work group surrounding the individual. The third dimension stands for the formal values of the organization expressed in goals, policies, and culture. The fourth and fifth dimensions are those of the immediate and larger social context within which the organization finds itself.

The Total Field of Leadership Behavior

![Diagram of five dimensions of values related to the total field of leadership behavior proposed by Hodgkinson (1991).](image)

Figure 1: Five dimensions of values related to the total field of leadership behavior proposed by Hodgkinson (1991).
The five dimensions all interact systematically to impact the behavior of both leaders and followers, but Hodgkinson maintains that the leader's prime concern must be with the third dimension, which connects the organization to its purposes. The leader is always challenged to manage the conflict between the first and third dimensions. He or she must continually monitor the interactions between the individual and the organizational values.

Several basic premises emerged from the concepts, theories, and opinions expressed in the literature that have guided this study. First, values have cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that are based largely on tradition, experience, and needs. This complex nature of values is in part accountable for the difficulty in their identification. Secondly, values may be characteristic of either individuals or groups. The values of individuals and those of the groups to which they belong most often overlap. A lack of congruence between the two, however, often results in individual and/or group dysfunction. Thirdly, values are influenced by social, cultural, and psychological factors that may modify even the most stable of value systems over time. This modification process might be conceptualized as a values evolution, which justifies the periodic need for values examination and clarification for both individuals and the groups to which they belong.
Organizational Culture

Organizational culture may be defined as a pattern of beliefs and expectations which are shared by the organization’s members. These beliefs and expectations produce norms that powerfully shape the behavior of the individuals within the organization and which reflect the organizational values (Bookbinder, 1984). Current prevailing perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of organizational members may be considered to be the climate of the organization, but it is important to go deeper and determine the origins of those perceptions, or the underlying values. Bookbinder proposed an organizational model which shows the interrelationship between strategies and programs, operating systems, and cultural values. The long term success of the organization, suggested Bookbinder, depends on a good fit between strategy, system, and culture. Wilkins and Ouichi (1983) also explored the relationship between culture and organizational performance. They argued that the organization which develops a distinct local culture will have significant performance efficiencies, and that the organizational culture will be more or less attractive to certain types of individuals.

Although we may each come to an organization with a uniquely personal value system, we function best within organizations and professions where we share values with our colleagues (O’Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991; Wilkins &
Ouichi, 1983). For an individual to be satisfied and attached to an organization, the person may need both task competency and a value system that is congruent with the central value system of the organization. The organization needs to select people who fit a given situation, which will likely include some combination of task and cultural elements. Failure to fit on either dimension may reduce the employee’s satisfaction and commitment and increase the likelihood of their leaving (O’Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991). Diamond (1991) suggested that organizational culture is ultimately a product of the ways in which participants interact with each other at work. The shared meaning of those relationships is critical to our understanding of organizations. He also listed other components of organizational culture which include artifacts, formalities and informalities, socialization and indoctrination, rituals and myths, espoused and practical theories of action (values), leadership personalities, subgroups, and organizational history.

Values, along with mission, goals and objectives, help determine the corporate or professional culture, the way an organization does business (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Harmon & Jacobs, 1985; Klemm, Sanderson, & Luffman, 1991). The professional culture of any organization provides norms and standards for behavior and action and becomes an important management tool. A shared sense of mission and values also
allows for much greater flexibility in deriving a plan for change, whether specific and reactive, or general and proactive. Conway (1990) also described the use of "rites" as tools for building organizational culture, which he defines as those formal, elaborate, dramatic and public activities that are expressive of selected organizational beliefs and values. He maintained that the rites and ceremonies of organizational culture are more effective regulators of daily behavior of individuals than are rules and legislation.

A strong organizational culture can be defined as a system of informal rules that spell out how people are expected to behave without bureaucratic regulation and punishment systems. Rules become less important as corporate culture becomes imbued with the shared values that guide the daily behavior of the individuals that make up the organization. The sharing of values is one mechanism for socialization and stabilization of a culture or organization, thus stabilizing organizational behavior (Bamberger, 1986; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Harmon & Jacobs, 1985). Values provide a common direction for all employees and guidelines for day-to-day behavior. Deal and Kennedy described the role of values as the "bedrock" of any corporate culture. Schein (1985) described values as the somewhat visible manifestations of the organizational culture. Boxx, Odom, and Dunn (1991) concluded their study
of value congruency in a public sector organization by recommending that managers focus attention on determining the differences which may exist between the organizational value system and the values held by the individual employees.

Other factors can help shape organizational culture and impact the development of organizational values. Gordon (1991) theorized that organizations are founded on industry-wide assumptions about customers, competitors, and society, and which form the basis of the organizational culture. From these assumptions, certain values develop concerning the way things are done, and strategies, structures and processes are developed which reflect those values. Corporate cultures, consisting of these widely shared assumptions and values, are in part molded by the requirements of the industry in which they operate. He asserted that changes in strategies, structures and processes without sufficient attention to changes in values and culture may undermine morale and contribute to organizational dysfunction.

The initial steps in guiding an organization toward a strong allegiance to a set of shared values will require that leaders determine existing organizational cultural values and examine the value orientation of their employees. Knowledge of one's own and others values is one of the major dimensions of ethical leadership (Boatman & Adams, 1992).
Practicing ethical leadership requires three major activities: knowing, or awareness of values; feeling, being able to sense value and dilemmas; and acting on that knowledge and feeling. Hodgkinson (1991) agreed, adding that educational praxis deals with the complex field of value interactions that permeates every organization, and which is the core of the art of leadership. The educational leader must be active in clarifying his or her own value positions, and be ready at any time to voice values or purposes of the organization. "Organization chemistry is value chemistry and it is a critical factor in educational organizations and their leadership" (Hodgkinson, p. 40).

Several basic premises emerged from the literature regarding organizational culture that had bearing on this study. First, behavior of individuals within an organization is fundamentally guided by their values and the values of the organization. The values that guide behavior thus become the basis for organizational culture as they effectively substitute cultural norms for regulations, rules, and punishment systems. Secondly, organizations will be more effective when the culture is strong and operating strategies and systems are appropriate to the culture and values. Finally, effective leadership behavior involves a close attention to individual and organizational value system congruence.
Strategic Planning

The success of an organization usually does not occur by accident. It is more often the result of giving deliberate attention to managing change in the culture of the organization, developing people and their management skills, developing teams of problem solvers, and establishing effective organizational structures (Beck, 1987; Simerly, 1987).

Strategic planning may be conceptualized both as a process and as an actual written plan. Simerly (1987) defined strategic planning as a process that gives attention to designing, implementing and monitoring plans for improving organizations. Macher (1987) suggested that for an organization to take itself powerfully into the future members must ask themselves not what they can expect to happen in the future, but what they want to happen in the future. Members must articulate a mission and a set of values that capture the enthusiasm and loyalty of people and provide a sense of direction. Edgely (1990) stated that strategic planning defines a vision of where an organization wants to be in the future and uses that vision to guide daily decision making. The process integrates decision making and the actions of the organization with the aid of a strategic plan. The plan functions as a compass pointing towards members' needs and draws human energy and capital together to achieve the organizational mission. Doyle
(1990) stated that the essence of successful organizational visioning is a commitment to rethinking and reviewing the organization. Ultimately, the process empowers members to achieve and the organization to reach its full potential.

Public service agencies are emulating business strategic planning efforts in order to continue to provide relevant, accountable service. Posey, McIntosh, and Parke (1987) stressed that preparing a public service agency for strategic planning must include improving the organizational culture and altering both the staff’s and the agency’s frame of reference. Focusing on process and improving organizational culture through a recognition of shared values will help prepare the organization for more successful strategic planning. Barone (1986) suggested that disparity in personal values between members of an organizational change team can result in unintentional miscommunications. The work of the change team will benefit from an open discussion of shared values and value differences by increasing personal trust. Because long range, strategic planning involves organizational transformation of goals, mission, and activities, any structure of change that doesn’t take the organizational values into account is fundamentally the wrong approach (Wallin, 1985).

The basic premises that emerged from the literature on strategic long-range planning were as follows: First,
strategic planning involves preparing an organization for change in a proactive, evolutionary way. Change can be stressful, however, when imposed upon an organization without regard to the existing organizational values and culture. Secondly, grassroots identification of shared values and corporate culture will allow individuals to identify and impact the direction of the change implied in the strategic planning process so that it is congruent with their own value systems, thus reducing stress and other negative impacts of planned change.

Philosophical Foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service

This case study investigated the values of a single bounded system, that of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, as it approaches an era of organizational transition. In order to understand the place of the study in the national system of Extension education, it is important to understand the historical and philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service.

In the latter half of the 19th century American colleges began to shape and be shaped by one of the ideals of the American revolution, that of free inquiry. Two important events in the history of American higher education occurred during this period. The Morrill Act of 1862 granted vast tracts of land to each state and territory for
the establishment of agricultural and mechanical colleges, most of which later became major research universities. The act was intended to improve American agriculture by preparing future farmers with new scientific knowledge and techniques. At the same time, it proposed to offer access to liberal education to America’s rural population and higher education in home economics and mechanical arts (Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987).

The second Morrill Act of 1890 provided direct annual appropriations to each state and territory to support its land grant college. This act also prohibited racial discrimination in admissions to colleges receiving funds. Seventeen states, primarily southern, established or supported separate institutions for white and black students to escape the provisions of the 1890 act. These schools have come to be known as the 1890 colleges, also holding land grant status (Rasmussen, 1989). As America approached the 20th century, education was no longer reserved for a privileged few; it had begun to serve the interests of the people and the needs of a growing nation (Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987). Florida’s land grant institutions are the University of Florida and Florida A. & M. University.

It soon became apparent that meeting the educational needs of both students and the rural population would be difficult. The Hatch Act of 1887 was one effort to improve
the research base of agricultural and home economics higher education by establishing experiment stations in each state. Still, educators needed to convince rural men and women that what was being done at the research stations would be of benefit to them. If the research were to be of benefit, it would have to be communicated more clearly to the rural population (Rasmussen, 1989).

Other social, economic, and political trends of the late 19th and early 20th centuries helped shape the philosophical foundations that led to the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service. There was a concern that industrial expansion was drawing rural leadership away from the rural communities and into the cities. The quality of rural life and the education of rural youth had become national issues (Rasmussen, 1989; Rutledge, 1989). President Theodore Roosevelt appointed a Country Life Commission in 1908, which called for a national redirection in rural schools for young people and for a system of continuous education for rural adults (Rasmussen).

Early efforts at extending university resources to the rural population included farmer’s institutes, lecture series, and short courses (Cooper, 1978; Rasmussen, 1989, Rutledge, 1989; Wessel & Wessel, 1982). Rutgers University was the first land grant institution to report an organized agricultural extension program to the Association of American Colleges and Experiment Stations in 1894.
Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, often referred to as the 'father' of the Extension Service, was convinced that reading pamphlets or observing demonstrations would not lead farmers to change their practices (Rasmussen, 1989). Rather, he argued, they could be convinced of the value of change through demonstrations carried out by the farmers themselves on their own farms. Knapp went on to establish boys' and girls' clubs as a way to get the parents interested in attending other programs (Rasmussen; Wessel & Wessel, 1982). These clubs later were emulated in all states, including Florida, and came to be known as 4-H clubs. The stated purpose of the Nebraska clubs, for example, included a phrase that had come to symbolize the philosophical foundations of the Extension Service's youth programs: "to educate the youth of the county, town and city to a knowledge of their dependence upon nature's resources, and to the value of the fullest development of hand, head, and heart . . ." (as cited in Wessel & Wessel, p. 7).

The Smith-Lever Act was a benchmark for federal involvement in education generally and in federal commitment to lifelong learning in particular. This act, signed into law on May 8, 1914, initiated the development of the world's largest system of adult education, the Cooperative Extension Service. This agency provided a more effective way for the land grant institutions and the United States Department of
Agriculture to deliver the public service that had been intended in the bills establishing these institutions, but which had not been fully realized before that time (Rutledge, 1989). The Florida legislature extended university programs in Florida in 1909. These programs continued with state appropriations until 1914, when the Florida legislature accepted the provisions of the federal Smith-Lever Act (Cooper, 1976).

The philosophical foundation of the Cooperative Extension Service was to help people help themselves by taking the university to the people. The system has evolved into an institution that is responsive to priority needs and focuses its resources on providing quality information, education, and problem solving programs on real community concerns (Rasmussen, 1989).

Nationwide, land grant institutions and federal partners in the Extension mission have embarked upon strategic long range planning efforts to determine priorities and ensure future organizational effectiveness. As the Florida Cooperative Extension Service approaches such planning efforts, organizational leaders must consider the historical and philosophical foundations of the organization.
Summary of Review of Literature

This case study was conducted to provide a holistic understanding of the organizational values of a single bounded system, the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, as perceived by the professional employees of the organization. No single strand of theoretical literature encompassed the holistic nature of this question. Several bodies of literature were found to have bearing on this problem.

The nature of human values and the parallel construct of organizational values were explored in order to place the study within the context of accepted theory on values. Values may be characteristic of either individuals or groups, and the values of individuals and the groups to which they belong often overlap. When individual and organizational values are not congruent, however, they may contribute to individual or group dysfunction. While value systems are stable, they are influenced over time by social and cultural factors. This indicates a need for periodic examination and clarification of individual and organizational values.

Organizational culture was defined in the literature in part by the shared values of the individuals within the organization. Values can take the place of rules and punishment systems when they serve as expectations of professional behavior and performance. Effective leaders
should pay close attention to individual and organizational value congruence in order to develop a strong culture and increase the likelihood of organizational effectiveness.

The process of strategic planning was explored and found to be dependent upon the identification and articulation of shared organizational values. Individuals within an organization will experience less stress during organizational transition if they have been included in the planning process and careful attention has been given to individual and organizational value congruence.

Finally, it was important to understand the historical and philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service in order to understand the current perceptions of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service professionals as they approach an era of organizational transition.
CHAPTER III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Any given qualitative design is necessarily an interplay of resources, possibilities, creativity, and personal judgments (Patton, 1990). "Research, like diplomacy, is the art of the possible" (p. 13). Several phenomenological premises led the researcher to search for a qualitative methodology that would allow for exploration into the individual and collective perceptions of the organizational values under inquiry. These premises were that (a) human activity and knowledge is constructed, (b) social science knowledge must be based on reflective construction, and (c) organizations are unique and must be examined as cases.

Leadership as a critical practice depends largely on one's view of human activity: whether one conceives of such activity as passed down from generation to generation without much change or as constructed, passed down but recreated and interpreted in that passing. This researcher proceeded on the assumption that human activity and knowledge is constructed. Therefore, humans are not mere objects of scientific inquiry, but agents who can use social and scientific knowledge to change and reorder their own conceptual bases.
Social science knowledge is first dependent upon commonsense constructions of those being observed and then ultimately reflects back upon previous commonsense knowledge in a reflective and critical manner (Foster, 1989). Schön (1983) maintained that discipline-based knowledge in a wide range of professions has proven insufficient to deliver solutions to the complex social and environmental problems of our times. Knowledge based on technical rationality may be out of step with the changing situations of the praxis of organizational leadership.

Each organization is unique in some aspect. Change can only come about when the individuals who belong to a particular organization can see the point in changing. Therefore, argued Rizvi (1989), each situation for change must be examined in the context of its own unique historical and social features. "The rationalist linear model of educational change is totally inappropriate" (p. 227).

These premises and the interplay of resources available to the researcher led to the selection of focus group interviews as the primary strategy for data collection. Das (1983) described focus group interviews as useful in generating hypotheses and in getting in-depth information on perceptions and beliefs of group members. Morgan and Spanish (1984) agreed, and added that the major advantage of focus groups over other qualitative methods is that they offer the chance to observe participants in interaction that
is concentrated on the perceptions that are of interest to the researcher. Admittedly, the strengths of focus groups come from a compromise among the strengths of other qualitative methods. They are neither as strong as participant observations in the naturalistic observation of interaction, nor as strong as direct interviewing on probing for deeper individual perceptions. The focus group, however, effectively combines those goals in a single methodology. Morgan and Spanish specifically recommended focus groups as a method for studying attitudes, opinions, motivations and beliefs which guide behavior.

This study involved seven focus groups, one from each of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service's five geographically defined administrative districts, and two groups from the University of Florida campus that provided responses from the state administration/supervision group and the campus based Extension specialists. Krueger (1988) presented a complete discussion of the advantages and limitations of this qualitative methodology with special concerns for conducting focus group interviews within existing organizations. The administration/supervision group was interviewed separately in order to address one major concern identified by Krueger, that of skewing a group discussion with the weight of the administrative or supervisory participants.
A second major concern identified by Krueger (1988) was that of the researcher’s prior involvement and identification with the group to be interviewed. He cautioned that discussion can again be skewed if the group participants are too familiar with the facilitator. This researcher conducted a trial interview with six of her Extension colleagues selected to represent the various program and administrative areas in her own administrative district. One of the research committee members was recruited to serve as outside observer for this trial interview. The trial allowed for (1) an evaluation of the researcher’s interviewing skills; (2) an examination of the impact of the participants’ familiarity with her as the interviewer; and (3) a refinement of the interview questions before proceeding with the other four districts and the two campus based groups.

Comments from the outside observer led the researcher to prepare a more formalized statement of introduction for the interviews in order to give participants a better understanding of the study. She was also reminded of the need to refrain from providing feedback during the interviews if such feedback could be construed as an evaluation of what was being said. The observer cautioned the researcher to be prepared to probe more deeply during subsequent interviews if the discussions didn’t focus on values or if members of the group were not fully
participating. The researcher also began to keep personal notes in the form of a journal following this trial interview. The journal allowed her to state her immediate personal reactions, briefly summarize group discussions, and add any notes that might prove useful during the remainder of the interviews. This journal served as a secondary source of data and allowed the researcher to separate her personal biases and reactions from those of the group participants.

Methodology: Data Collection

A site was chosen from among the county Extension offices in each of the five districts to accommodate travel arrangements of the agent participants. District Directors and the Dean for the Florida Cooperative Extension Service assisted in selecting and recruiting group participants from each district to represent the mix of the Cooperative Extension professionals of that district. Professionals were defined as degreed employees holding faculty status with the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service. They included administrative faculty as well as courtesy agents hired with county and grant funds. Focus groups generally consist of six to ten participants for maximum participation (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1988). Ten participants were recruited for each group, with the assumption that some would ultimately not be able to attend.
Meetings of the administration/supervision group and the Extension specialists group were held on the University of Florida campus.

Interview groups were purposefully chosen and mixed to include participants from the following areas:

- Home Economists
- Agriculturists
- 4-H Youth Development professionals
- Sea Grant or Community Resource and Leadership Development Professionals

Additional care was taken to guarantee a gender mix as well as a mix of levels of tenure in each group. Administrative faculty were not included in the district interviews but comprised their own group as described earlier. Participants were recruited initially with a personal phone call from the researcher, and the appointments were confirmed with a follow-up letter, which was copied to pertinent supervisors within the Extension system.

A total of 40 individuals took part in the interviews, which represented approximately 10% of the total population of Florida Cooperative Extension Service professionals at the time of the interviews. The demographic mix of the participants according to the above criteria was as follows:
Gender
Men - 22
Women - 18
Assignment and Background
Agriculture - 12
Home Economics - 9
4-H - 9
Administration - 5
Other - 5
Tenure
0-9 years - 17
10-19 years - 12
20 & < years - 11

Instrumentation in a focus group interview involves the facility and recording system, the moderator, and the questioning plan. All county Extension offices provided an appropriate atmosphere and allowed for audio taping of the focus groups. A simple cassette tape recorder was fitted with a non-directional microphone to accurately record the interviews for future transcription. Tables were arranged to allow the participants to face one another for more personal interaction. All groups were informed prior to opening the discussion that the findings would be reported as group data and that confidentiality would be maintained. The researcher served as group moderator. Each interview lasted approximately one and one-half hours. The researcher also provided luncheon trays for the participants in the five field based groups, which proved to be extremely useful in establishing a spirit of cooperation and collegiality among the participants.

The questioning plan involved a combination of high and low levels of moderator involvement. The plan began with
introductions of participants. Each participant was asked to think for a few minutes and write notes to themselves about what brought them to a career in Extension. The group discussion then began with each participant making an individual, uninterrupted statement of an autobiographical nature, using their note cards as a guide. These opening statements were a way of getting all participants on record, with their different experiences and opinions, before a consensus emerged (Morgan, 1988). The opening statements were noted for general themes and perceptions, which were used to "track" the discussion as it proceeded. Tracking leads the moderator to refer to comments and issues that participants raised earlier in order to move the conversation to the next segment of the questioning plan (Wells, 1974).

The second phase of the questioning plan involved setting the stage for discussion with a storyboard involving the future of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. The researcher presented the storyboard as a brief scenario in which Extension professionals were asked to plan for organizational transition. Participants were instructed to design the ideal Extension Service, but to remain mindful of past successes and current mission. She then asked the participants to discuss possible futures and ideals that would guide the transitions for their organization. Once this introduction was completed, the discussion was
relatively self-managed with very low levels of moderator involvement. The moderator noted themes for tracking the discussion in the third phase.

A third phase of discussion proceeded with higher levels of moderator involvement in order to probe more deeply into themes tracked from the first two phases. The researcher presented a definition of organizational values derived from her research proposal, and illustrated the definition with material from the discussion. Participants were asked to expand upon previous discussion and state their perceptions of the organizational values currently espoused and practiced by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service as an organization. The final phase of the focus group allowed each member a chance to make an uninterrupted summarizing statement, potentially uncovering material that might have been held back.

Note cards were available to all participants to capture reactions, questions, or other thoughts that they might not have expressed during the interview. The researcher collected these note cards, and they served as a secondary source of data, along with the brief notes made during the tracking of the discussion.

The researcher listened to each interview tape in its entirety immediately after the interview session and then recorded journal notes to capture her own perceptions and critique of the interview. Because they involved her own
interpretation, the journal notes also became part of the preliminary analysis of the data. Allowing time between groups and thorough debriefing in journal notes assisted the researcher in developing a self-awareness of biases, thereby allowing her to separate her biases from those of the participants. She was thus able to limit conscious attempts to draw premature conclusions from the interview data. The tapes were reviewed again in great detail as the researcher transcribed each one verbatim. This review and transcription also served to generate a preliminary coding list for use in data analysis. Over 250 pages of interview and field note transcripts were prepared for analysis. A sample from the original transcripts is included in Appendix A. Interviews began on July 16, 1993, and concluded September 9, 1993.

Methodology: Data Analysis

As stated before, the act of data analysis in this qualitative study began at the same time the data were collected during the interviews. Interview notes and journal notes helped to generate some primitive category lists for future use in developing codes for data analysis. Potential trends and patterns were noted during this time and the researcher was able to check the validity of preliminary insights with subsequent interview groups. The separation of data collection and data analysis for the
purposes of organizing this written report should in no way be interpreted as a separation of the two phases in the conduct of the study. Qualitative analysis is both recursive and dynamic, building upon insights begun in the collection phases and proceeding throughout the concluding phases (Merriam, 1991).

The initial strategy for organizing the interview data in preparation for further analysis was to prepare five copies of the entire set of transcripts, which were labeled by interview, page, and line number for cross referencing purposes. One set was reserved as a master copy for future reference. Three sets were cut up by units of data and the labeled sections were placed into file folders identified by the three demographic characteristics used to define group participants (gender, assignment, and tenure), and by the four phases of the discussion guide. Each unit of data was labeled with the original page and transcript number in order to locate it in the master copy if necessary.

The fifth set was used to generate the overarching themes and patterns, which were marked in the text with a coding system reflecting the organizational values under investigation. Content of the coding list included insights from notes kept during the interviews, journal notes, and notes generated during transcription. The initial coding list included 12 categories of values, which were assigned 12 different colors:
Rewards
Relationships
Personal History
Organizational History
Research-Based Information
Relevance
Comprehensiveness
Life-Long Education
Diversity
Service
Shared Ownership
County/Campus/System Linkages

Colored pencils were used to mark comments and discussions throughout the text that contained examples of these categories.

Using samples provided by Miles and Huberman (1984) and Patton (1990), the researcher constructed a data matrix based upon the 12 categories. The open ended interview guide provided a descriptive analytical framework for the matrix. A second role-ordered matrix was constructed which reflected the participants' demographic characteristics on one dimension and the values from the coding system along the second dimension. The cells of the two matrices corresponded to the contents of the previously prepared file folders and allowed for simple data reduction and summarization. Selected quotations and key words were also included in the appropriate cells. The two matrices were used for the purposes of data organization and description rather than for conceptual or analytical purposes. Sample sections of the two matrices are presented in Appendix B.

Data triangulation for this study was accomplished by the use of several different data sources. The (a) note
cards kept by the interview participants, (b) the researcher's interview notes, and (c) the journal notes all served as checks for conclusions drawn from the interview transcripts. A second level of triangulation occurred in the subtle cross-case analysis and the grouping of answers from the seven different groups. While discussing central issues and common questions, each group presented a slightly different perspective which enriched the total data set.

The final stages of analysis continued throughout the writing of this report. "Writing does not come after analysis; it is analysis, happening as the writer thinks through the meaning of the data. Writing is thinking, not the report of thought" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 91). With the data matrices as tools for organization, the researcher used the purpose and intent of the study as an organizer for drawing descriptive narratives about the perceptions of the participants. The inductive theoretical, inferential, and speculative analysis of chapters IV and V are appropriate characteristics of qualitative methodologies (Bogden & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman).

Summary of Research Design

Focus group interviews were chosen as the primary strategy for data collection for this qualitative study. Seven groups of professionals from the Florida Cooperative Extension Service met to discuss their perceptions of the
values that guide the programs and processes of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. The researcher served as group moderator, guiding each group through four phases of discussion. Interview transcripts, notes kept during interviews, and the researcher's journal notes all provided data for analysis.

Transcripts were labeled for identification of speaker and context and then coded with colored pencils to identify comments reflecting the 12 major categories of values that emerged from the preliminary analysis of the interviews. Two data matrices were constructed to organize, reduce, and summarize the data. The first matrix was organized according to the four phases of interview discussion, and the second matrix separated comments from the groupings according to gender, assignment, and tenure. Inductive analysis continued throughout the writing of the report, as is appropriate in qualitative research.
CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this research was to provide a holistic understanding of the organizational values of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service as perceived by the professional employees of the organization. The questions that drove the research effort were the following: (1) What are perceived to be the shared values that guide the daily decisions and operations of the Florida Cooperative Extension professional? (2) What differences are there in perceived values among demographic groups within the organization? and (3) What similarities are there in perceived values among demographic groups within the organization?

The analysis presented in this chapter will first describe the three "communities" and twelve overall categories of value orientations that emerged from general review of the data and matrix construction. Each category is described within the contexts of the interview groups themselves, and then in terms of the responses of the various groups identified for comparison. Next is a discussion of the interrelationships between the categories, with a description of a proposed conceptual model that provides for visualization of the relationships. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.
Three Communities of Values

Preliminary field notes and initial review of the interview transcripts led the researcher to begin with a list of twelve categories of values to guide further analysis: rewards, relationships, personal history, organizational history, research, relevance, comprehensiveness, life-long education, diversity, service, shared ownership, and system linkages. A tentative outline of relationships between the categories emerged, and the outline was developed to reflect types of participant responses within each category. Thus, the final coding list reflected the themes that became apparent during subsequent review of the data:

I. Personal Values
   A. Rewards
      1. Extrinsic
      2. Intrinsic
      3. Characteristics of the job
   B. Relationships
      1. Structural - within the organization
      2. Social - within the community
      3. Mission - within the program
   C. Personal History

II. Mission-Related Values
   A. Organizational History
      1. The tradition of Extension work
      2. The Smith Lever mission
      3. The Land-Grant system
   B. Research-Based Information
      1. Practicality
      2. Credibility
      3. Objectivity
      4. Respect for natural and social sciences
      5. Use of technology in research, application, and delivery
C. Relevance
   1. Meeting basic, local needs
   2. Building basic, traditional skills
   3. Solving human and community problems
   4. Improving the quality of life
   5. Uniqueness of the organization

D. Comprehensiveness
   1. Issues Programming
   2. Impact

E. Life-Long Education

F. Diversity

G. Service
   1. Collaboration
   2. Building communities
   3. Building human capital

III. Structural Values

   A. Shared Ownership
      1. Grassroots efforts
      2. Funding and accountability
      3. Marketing and public perceptions

   B. County/Campus/System Linkages
      1. Communications
      2. Trust/Honesty/Integrity
      3. Faculty partnerships
      4. Multi-disciplinary approaches
      5. Program focus

Understanding of the perceived values is not as clear cut as the outline used for coding would seem to indicate. As coding proceeded the relationship between the values began to take the shape of a map, with the three distinct "communities" of personal, mission, and structural values being linked together by very clear areas of overlap and common roadways. The discussion presented in this chapter will focus first on the three separate communities.

Personal Values

As the researcher read through the text of the interviews it became clear that there were several types of
motivators for professional behavior that were very personal in nature and related to the sense of personal fulfillment experienced by the professional. Figure 2 illustrates the community of personal values that emerged during the reading of the text and the construction of the matrix of overall themes.

Rewards.

The instructions given during the introductory phase of the focus group interviews asked participants to discuss what brought them to a career in the Florida Cooperative Extension Service and to tell why they continue to work for the Extension Service. Most of the answers reflected the types of rewards experienced by the professional that kept them interested in and motivated by their work. The most obvious answers were related to extrinsic types of rewards that were measurable to some degree. Just as important, however, were the less obvious intrinsic motivators and the actual characteristics of the nature of Extension work that were identified by these individuals.

Extrinsic motivators most often discussed during the introductions were job security, benefits, and retirement. Some participants came to work for the Extension Service in order to make a career change, but only one person listed salary as a positive motivator. In fact, salary inequities and an ineffective merit evaluation system were listed as
Figure 2. COMMUNITY OF PERSONAL VALUES
demotivators. Another extrinsic motivator was recognition in the form of awards for professional achievement.

During the discussion of ideal futures for the Florida Cooperative Extension Service the discussion took a different approach to external motivators. In describing the ideal, the participants were very concerned about designing an evaluation system that would accurately and fairly represent the nature of their accomplishments. In all but one of the groups, the participants seemed unsure about the standards currently used for their evaluations, feeling they were too subjective and dependent upon the whim of the administrator assigned the task of evaluation. The ideal evaluation system, they agreed, would reflect quality standards and performance objectives agreed upon by the professional, their administrators, and the clients they serve. Evaluations would also be more reflective of input from county level administrators and actual program participants and respect both qualitative and quantitative measures of accomplishment. Excerpts from the discussions have been chosen to illustrate major points for this report. Each excerpt will be labeled in order to identify the speaker's gender, length of tenure, and program responsibility. Professionals with assignments in community development, leadership development and Sea Grant programs have been labeled as "other" to avoid their possible identification. Typical comments included the following:
I think there needs to be a better system of reporting what we do. I think the university gets hung up on numbers a little bit too much. I think the comprehensiveness and the long term effects of a program are much more important than numbers (female, 8 years, home economics.)

If we want to look at an example we ought to look at Nevada, because they’ve got a very clear cut line. If you want a 5, then there’s criteria, it’s listed. Now it’s very difficult to get a five. I think in your notes that should be listed as one of the major causes of discontent within the whole system. Basically I’m saying the whole system stinks (male, 26 years, other.)

Several intrinsic motivators were seen as valuable by many of the participants in the interviews. These were most frequently discussed during the introductions as reasons for staying with the Extension Service, but then were repeated and confirmed during the discussion of organizational values. Participants felt that their work was creative and innovative, and they took great pride and personal satisfaction from their careers. Examples of these comments included the following:

I think I like staying in Extension because it’s one of the few programs where we have an opportunity to be creative and develop programs with people and for people (female, 28 years, 4-H.)

We’re proud of Extension (male, 28 years, agriculture.)

I’m still here because I never seem to get accomplished everything there is to do, and I keep looking at new things to do (female, 18 years, other.)

We ought to value the opportunity to try the off-the-wall, not always do the same thing all the time. If I’ve got something I want to try, that should be valued. Creativity, a better word, probably (male, 5 years, other.)
Other rewards that were frequently mentioned were professional development and training opportunities. Agents and administrators alike valued the commitment to continuous professional development, and all agreed in the ideal Extension Service training would be given even more emphasis to support individual development plans for professionals. Comments that illustrate this included the following:

I was there for several years with a master’s degree and then decided to get my doctorate and Extension supported that (female, 1 year, administration.)

If we’re an educational program that truly believes in educational development of staff, it is our obligation or [our administrator’s] obligation to design a professional plan that is going to help us. And I don’t think right now we get that. We do not have people who work with us on our professional development (female, 28 years, 4-H.)

We’re going to have to look at a really strong commitment between people in Extension, both at the county and the state level, who have a life-long commitment to educating themselves. The human capital structure doesn’t stop when you get your master’s or PhD. The issues are going to continue to change over time and people are going to have to invest in professional activities (male, 11 years, other.)

The professional’s standing in their home community was seen as a reward by several participants. The county level professionals felt an obligation to maintain a certain respect and status in their communities and were proud of their positions as community members.

Another intrinsic motivator discussed by nearly half of the participants was the simple fun and enjoyment they receive from their work. Illustrations of this concept included the following:
I’ve always enjoyed working for Cooperative Extension and have never considered another position very seriously (male, 28 years, 4-H.)

But I also like the job that I’m doing. I enjoy working with the people that I’m working with (male, 5 years, other.)

The reason I stay is because I love it (female, 24 years, home economics.)

Horticulture is fun (female, 16 years, agriculture.)

You know we complain at times, but it’s what you want to do and you have to make it what you want to do. You have to enjoy it (female, 5 years, 4-H.)

**Characteristics of Extension work** were themselves discussed as rewards that kept professionals motivated and satisfied with their work. Of primary interest to participants was the flexibility the work affords both in programming efforts and in constructing work schedules that allow for personal discretion in the use of time and resources. Examples of these comments included the following:

*Somehow I can work most everything I want to do in my life into my job, which is a real blessing* (female, 18 years, other.)

*I stay probably because of the flexibility, not really setting your own schedule, but being able to work around families* (female, 11 years, home economics.)

*Flexibility has just really been one of the keys to my staying somewhat satisfied in Extension* (male, 29 years, agriculture.)

Related to flexibility was the variety of programs and activities that the work entailed. Most participants agreed that the variety and flexibility kept their work stimulating and interesting and added to their enjoyment of their work.
Typical comments included the following:

I’ve been forced, in a way, to have enough variety in my Extension experiences to keep me from getting totally bored and worn out (male, 33 years, administration.)

I like the flexibility and the diversity. And it’s not as rigid [as teaching]. I enjoy doing something a little different each day (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

I don’t think we ever have two days that are the same and I love the variety of the job (female, 28 years, home economics.)

Summary.

The participants assumed a great deal of professional freedom and self-discipline as an aspect of their work that was tied directly to the flexibility and the variety. They appreciated the autonomy of working in their home communities with ties to the university, and that autonomy was considered valuable by most of them. Comments that illustrated this included the following:

You’ve got a lot of control, a lot of freedom (male, 13 years, administration.)

The main reason that I remain in Extension is that I can direct my own programmatic activities, and I enjoy that independence. . . . So I find myself lucky and fortunate to be in this field and in Extension with the flexibility and programmatic independence. It’s just great for me because I tend to be somewhat independent and like to direct my own things anyway (male, 3 years, other.)

The dynamics of organizational change were discussed as a value by many of the participants. Professionals appreciated new challenges and the opportunity to grow and change with the organization. Change was itself seen as a value. Illustrations of this concept included the
following:

I believe that Extension is in a critical period, and for us to survive we’re going to have to change everything; change the way we think, change the way we deliver programs. Change is going to be the name of the game. And I guess I find it very rewarding that I can spend the last years of my career in a changing organization and be a part of that change (male, 26 years, other.)

You know, it’s totally different than the way it was when I started working as a youth professional in Extension 26 years ago. And I hope that’s one of the reasons that I stay with it. I don’t want to stay in an organization that looks like it did 26 years ago (female, 26 years, 4-H.)

Another characteristic that the professionals valued was the match between their own skills and interests and the needs of the organization. They felt as though they had found a professional niche that was suited to them and allowed them to display their expertise and their interests in a constructive way. Typical comments included the following:

I have an unusual variety of experiences, from the traditional agriculture to the professional ability to deal with grants, and to deal in that sort of arena (female, 2 years, home economics.)

I decided a position that was a bit more socially oriented rather than physically oriented would better fit my skills, needs, and wants (male, 13 years, agriculture.)

I found that what I thought were my strong points at the time were very well suited for Extension work. I thought my skills and strengths would be used well (female, 8 years, 4-H.)

Values related to the extrinsic rewards of job security, benefits, and retirement were of much more interest to senior professionals, those with 20 or more
years of experience, than to those with 20 or less. The only group that thought evaluations were fair and reflected professional achievements accurately was the administrative group. County agents and campus-based specialists of all backgrounds and levels of tenure expressed concern over evaluations and urged administrators to consider other options for a more equitable system.

The intrinsic rewards of pride in program and standing in the community were also more keenly felt by county faculty than by state faculty. All groups valued training opportunities, but expressed a need for more personalized help in designing professional development plans and for cross training for new program efforts. All faculty expressed innovation and creativity as a value, but home economists more often felt that they were not rewarded or supported for innovative efforts.

All faculty valued the characteristics of the work that allowed for variety, autonomy, and change. Women cited flexibility in scheduling as a value more often than men and went on to explain how the flexibility helped them also meet their personal and family needs. The only group that consistently cited a need for more flexibility in creating their own professional schedules were the 4-H agents.

**Relationships.**

Participants in these focus groups valued the people
with whom they work. Colleagues, staff, and clients all were important to these professionals and each group cited the personal nature of their work as being one of the things that keeps them motivated. Some of the most important relationships were with colleagues or mentors who brought the individuals to a career in Extension. These relationships within the organization were illustrated by comments such as the following:

When I was a boy growing up the county agent in our county was very influential on my life after my father passed away, and I just held him in high regards (male, 6 years, agriculture.)

I also enjoy working with my Extension colleagues. I like other Extension agents and have fun being around them (male, 9 years, 4-H.)

I was recruited by the home economics agent there in [the] County. I actually worked with the wife of the horticulture agent there in the school system, and came to know the home economics agent. She was the one who actually had me apply for the position in Extension (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

The agents and their families and everybody are kind of together, and I think that sort of sets a good example throughout the community (female, 16 years, agriculture.)

Relationships within the community were also valued by these professionals. They felt a sense of belonging to their home communities and a responsibility to maintain a certain status and position of respect. They have developed personal and social ties to the clients and families with whom they work and take part in other kinds of volunteer service activities in their communities. Many times these
relationships were also used as tools for reaching educational objectives, but the professionals often separated the relationships from the program in their discussion. Comments that illustrate this included the following:

I really enjoy working with the farmers. I don't think there's any better group of people to actually work with. They're really down to earth, they want to spend time with you. When you're not there they ask where you have been (male, 3 years, agriculture.)

My clients are really special to me, and I get calls weekends, nights. You know, we are friends, so that's really important (female, 16 years, agriculture.)

I think we've always been respected in the community . . not only as an agent, but how we are involved in the community, in our churches, or schools, or civic organizations or whatever (female, 5 years, 4-H.)

We are able to--somebody said sit on the fencepost--not in a literal sense, but to go to make the relationship work, and then that relationship becomes a tool for practice change and educational development (female, 16 years, agriculture.)

Relationships and the "people" orientation within the program were discussed as valuable by these professionals. They appreciated the immediate feedback and communications with their audiences and used this feedback as a sort of personalized instant progress report on each project or program. The program itself was described as people oriented:

Extension is people oriented. Period (male, 28 years, agriculture.)

It seems to me that one of the most important things that we can do is be in touch with the people of the state of Florida. Always try to remember that (male, 11 years, agriculture.)
There's a people issue. There's a people thread that goes through that (male, 11 years, other.)

I've always been a people person, so I wanted to do something where I could work with people and I wouldn't have to start a lab (female, 8 years, home economics.)

The direct service aspect of Extension work was repeatedly cited as valuable and key to organizational effectiveness in reaching educational objectives. Most of the comments related to the relationships built within the program referred to this type of teaching relationship as "one on one" and stressed it as part of the uniqueness of the Extension Service educational model. Examples included the following:

It comes down to having a lot of personal contact with the kids and caring a great deal about who they are and what they are going to become (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

You serve a kid one kid at a time and I don't think there's anybody that does that better than Extension. As we change to encompass a larger community we're still going to be dealing with one family or one child. You don't change them by the thousands (female, home economics, 2 years.)

It comes down to that one on one person, and that is our goal. . . . that farmer that comes in, that you have the time to sit down with him and interpret his soil test. That's what grassroots actually means (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

Regardless of how good the information is it's the person that has to adopt the practice (female, 1 year, administration.)

Service and relationships with young people were highly valued by most of these professionals. Many had originally planned to teach, but found Extension work more satisfying because of the variety and flexibility, and also because of
the longer term personal relationships built within the Extension youth program. Comments that illustrate this concept included the following:

I have a tendency to count for the relationships with the kids and the volunteers as a big part of accomplishment (female, 8 years, 4-H.)

I like to see a child grow and develop as well as the families make a change, and hopefully I will have a part in some of their life (female, 5 years, 4-H.)

You get to work with kids. You get to see the kids grow and improve their skills (male, 8 years, agriculture.)

Summary.

Comparisons between the various groupings of answers yielded very few differences in the importance these professionals placed on the personal relationships established in their work. The only group that did not refer to collegial relationships within the organization were the senior agents with 20 or more years of experience. County agents placed more value on their relationships within their communities than campus-based administrators. Professionals from every grouping agreed that the relationships built with youth and with adult clients were critical to organizational success and effectiveness. The "one on one" direct service aspect was as important to men as to women and to new professionals as well as more experienced faculty.
Personal History.

The personal history of these professionals became important to them as they chose their careers and remained with Extension. Many of these people had experiences and successes as 4-H members during their own youth, and they seemed to indicate a desire to help others replicate those successes. Some had grown up on farms and remembered the agriculture or home economics agent visiting their families and helping them in their early years. Others did not have experience with Extension as children, but their family or personal interest in agriculture or home economics led them through a variety of educational and work experiences to a career in Extension. Two stories serve as vivid illustrations and summaries of the value these professionals placed upon their own personal history:

Extension brought me to Extension. I was associated with the land grant university through the 4-H program in my county. That public institution that provided a way for rural people of modest resources to be educated brought me to Extension because it provided the opportunity for me to be educated. I had been on that university campus many times through activities and programs in the 4-H program, so I knew the university already and I knew the programs that were there. It was comfortable and easy for me to come. It was comfortable and easy for my parents to see that as something valuable. The home economics profession brought me to Extension. The home economics profession was a worthy profession for women . . . in those years. It was sort of like teaching. It was appropriate for women to go into those fields. I was educated to be an educator. . . . That’s what brought me to Extension. I would imagine that many home economists or agriculturalists that you would interview of my age would probably say the same kind of thing (female, 18 years, home economics.)
I was in 4-H for about ten years, age 9-18. I had a considerable amount of success in that. I guess the peak of my career was in my senior year in high school, first year in college. I was what they called the boy of the year. . . . I had the grace and respect of the extension agents, the staff that was in my home county. I guess the reason that I really wanted to help farmers is that I was the product of—my dad failed the farm and he lost the home place and I just felt that we need to have some people stay on their own farm, and be able to farm if they wanted to, and raise their children on the farm. That’s why I’m in Extension (male, 23 years, agriculture.)

This same type of story was told by faculty of all ages and all levels of tenure. Over half of those interviewed cited their own experiences as 4-H members or their relationship with the Extension faculty in their home counties as valuable to them in their work today. A few who had not been 4-H members described other youth organization or related work experiences that matched traditional Extension programs in home economics, agriculture, or youth development.

**Summary of personal values.**

In summary, the first "community" of values that emerged from the data related to very personal motivators for professional behavior within the organization. **Rewards** for faculty included extrinsic, intrinsic, and job characteristics. **Relationships** within the organization, within their communities, and within their programs were valued by all faculty. Their own **personal histories** were of value to these professionals as they described how they came
to a career in Extension and why they stay with that career.

Mission-Related Values

The second community of values that emerged from the interview text related to the impact of Extension programs on the mission of the organization. The professionals interviewed all believed deeply in what they did, but as a group they had difficulty defining and clarifying the organizational mission. Examples of comments related to the overall mission of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service included the following:

I have a very firm belief in the mission of Extension. I value and believe in what we're trying to do (female, 26 years, 4-H.)

We are a public university, the University of Florida, trying to put fact with the educational programs to solve problems (male, 11 years, agriculture.)

To help people make a change... I would be just tickled to death, as a professional, that I was working for this glorious mission, because it is a glorious mission. I mean the Extension Service of the United States is a model in the world. I mean, what we've got is perfect (male, 5 years, other.)

There were, however, several categories of values discussed that related to the mission of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Figure 3 illustrates the categories within this community of mission-related values.

History - Tradition.

These professionals valued their own personal history
as it related to their careers, and they also valued the history of the Cooperative Extension Service and the mission that was defined during the inception of the service in 1914. Several indicated that the past successes of the Extension Service educational model were being threatened by the dynamics of organizational change, but others seemed to believe that the ties to the history of the organization could become a burden if not balanced with the needs of today’s communities. Illustrations of this concept included the following:

I think that the Extension Service needs to stick to some of the traditional things that created the Extension Service, the grassroots ideas. I think that’s what got us going and I think that’s what keeps us going, to some extent (male, 8 years, agriculture.)

It’s been a very successful history that we’ve had. I think if we’re going to proceed into the future we’ve got to look again at what our mission is and make sure it’s on target to meet some real needs of people (male, 30 years, agriculture.)

As the public changes, we have to change with it. You’ve got to. The state of Florida is changing, and we’re not. Trying to hang on to programs that don’t positively impact that mission is suicide (male, 5 years, other.)

The land grant university system and the network of resources were discussed as part of the system linkages but also as they related to the overall mission and history of the Cooperative Extension Service. Professionals appreciated their ties to the public universities in Florida and to the total land grant system. The land grant process of information dissemination was related to the overall
Figure 3. COMMUNITY OF MISSION-RELATED VALUES
mission in comments such as the following:

I think we ought to sell the system, because the system is what has worked all these years. The delivery of the information, the system itself (female, 18 years, other.)

I also appreciate having the network, of being able to work with land grant universities throughout the United States (female, 26 years, 4-H.)

All groups in the study were positive about the overall mission of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, even if they had difficulty clarifying it and agreeing upon it. Men tended to be more supportive of the traditions and history of Extension work than did women, but each group stated concerns about tying too closely with the history at the expense of the present and future needs of the organization. New professionals with less than ten years of tenure did not mention the importance of the land grant system itself.

Research.

The research base for Extension programs was valued by these professionals as part of the land grant information dissemination system and as it related to the credibility of programs. Comments about the value of research as it built the knowledge base of Extension programs fell into five general areas of concern: (a) practicality, (b) credibility, (c) objectivity, (d) a respect for both social and natural sciences, (e) and the use of technology in research, application, and delivery of information.
Research was most often mentioned during the third phase of the focus group discussions concerning the values. Professionals expressed a strong desire to see all information shared in Extension programs undergirded by the research generated by the land grant university system. County faculty tempered this desire with the concern that research be practical and applicable to their needs in local programming:

Do we value the research base? We have to (male, 28 years, agriculture.)

I think the ability to perform the research is important, but I don't think they necessarily do the research that we think they need to do (female, 3 years, 4-H.)

If the research base isn't moving with you, or if we can't change what our research base is, that's what I think has been a real problem with Extension (male, 13 years, administration.)

Research ought to be a solution to an academically interesting problem, an academic problem that also has application to solving a problem. Not just something that is interesting but also contributes to solving a problem (male, 28 years, administration.)

Credibility was also important to these individuals as they shared the information in their communities. They felt that research generated on the University of Florida campus contributed to their credibility as professionals, but they then went on to express concern over the shortage of academic resources in some areas of local interest. An example of this type of discussion centered around a program developed to assist people in recovering from a hurricane. Materials were prepared and distributed which contained
conflicting information and cited no research to substantiate any of the information. Professionals felt this and other instances damaged their credibility:

I think part of that is we’re so concerned about getting out information that is timely, you know, on people’s minds at that moment, that we’re not taking the time to do it right (male, 3 years, other.)

[We ought to] be able to answer the questions educationally and professionally with some sense that we know what we’re talking about (female, 5 years, 4-H.)

We need to make sure all those bridges are intact, that we are indeed experts in the fields that we claim that we are (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

Objectivity in the research and program effort also was listed as a value by these professionals. They expressed concern over the distinction between objectivity and advocacy, however, and their ability to present information in such a manner that allowed the client or family to make their own decisions about issues. Examples of these comments included the following:

I think we have the obligation to present, as best we can, the most objective information about things these folks are concerned about. . . . They can make the decisions and we can move on with them (male, 33 years, administration.)

You can be an honest advocate (female, 28 years, home economics.)

I think we can be organizational advocates instead of educators. We advocate a position, after we’ve educated on an issue. People decide what position they’re going to take, and we can give them the information they need to make the decision, rather than us saying, ‘OK, this is the decision you’re supposed to reach’ (male, 28 years, administration.)
Extension programs are heavily grounded in the natural and practical arts and sciences related to home economics and agriculture, but individuals in these focus groups valued both the natural and social sciences. There seemed to be an increasing awareness that meeting the mission of helping people solve social and community problems will demand a research base that encompasses both technical and intuitive knowledge. This interest was also discussed in regards to reporting program impact and evaluations of professionals. Examples of these comments included the following:

A lot of our accomplishments . . . are very hard to measure. They are qualitative, not quantitative (female, 8 years, home economics.)

The research base--we have a lot of technical, technology based problem solving. A lot of problem solving needs to revolve around the social sciences . . . I don't see it represented in the pool of knowledge that we need at the level and scale we need (male, 28 years, administration.)

Technology was valued by these professionals both for its application to problem solving and for its use in delivery of information. Many of these individuals expressed appreciation for the computerized information and communication network available to them and intended to make better use of electronic communications in the delivery of research-based information to their clientele. Agriculture agents particularly valued technology as it related to their program areas. Examples of comments related to technology in research, application, and delivery of information
included the following:

Hopefully with Extension we are on the cutting edge of new technology and research, and I like to be a part of that (female, 5 years, 4-H.)

I see us delivering some high tech information that is going to probably be delivered to a highly educated clientele, who will want to receive it through electronic means (female, 18 years, other.)

On the technical production aspect of it, Extension has got to get up to speed. What is happening with technology today is our only hope within agriculture, of competing in the emerging, global market environment (male, 29 years, agriculture.)

All groups in these interviews valued the research base as it contributed to their professional credibility and uniqueness. Timeliness and practicality were of concern to professionals from each of the groups. Home economists most often cited a need for more research to undergird their program efforts. 4-H professionals made the least comments about research in general. Objectivity was discussed in some measure by every group except 4-H agents. Senior faculty were most likely to support what they called "honest advocacy," while newer agents seemed troubled about where to draw the line between objectivity and advocacy.

Administrators were the first group to talk about a respect for social sciences in solving problems, but county faculty wanted more attention paid to social concerns in terms of reporting their local accomplishments. Men, agriculture, and senior agents with 20 or more years of experience most often referred to technology as a value.
Relevance.

Extension faculty were concerned that their programs and their organization were relevant to today's society. Comments reflecting this concern were generally grouped in five areas: (a) meeting basic, local needs with a localized mission; (b) teaching basic, traditional skills to effect change in practice; (c) teaching problem solving and decision making skills; (d) helping others improve the quality of their lives; (e) and filling a void or being unique in their communities.

The Extension faculty interviewed were concerned that their programs were meeting basic, local needs in their communities and were serving a valid purpose unique to their location. The concept of developing a localized mission was mentioned by several of them, which would in turn be meshed into a district-wide mission, and eventually a state wide mission for Extension. Faculty agreed that the primary strengths of Extension programs lie with this ability to tailor programs to fit basic local needs, reflecting the changing conditions of life in both rural and urban communities. They talked about this in terms of proactive programming, or anticipating future needs and programming for them, as well as reactive programming, or helping clients deal with conditions as they happen. Examples of statements that reflect a concern about meeting basic, local needs included the following:
Basically I would say it's the ability to take academic, research, educational information and find ways to make it available to the community (male, 2 years, agriculture.)

What you should be teaching is what people basically want to know at that particular time. We find that out in part through an advisory committee or system of determining program needs (male, 33 years, administration.)

Along with that, too, is we've got to make the people understand that what they need is changing also... they don't need to crochet, they need to figure out how to feed their family, take care of their children (female, 11 years, home economics.)

We need to provide programs that fit the needs of our changing society (female, 8 years, home economics.)

The traditional knowledge bases of agriculture and home economics were reflected in the discussions of teaching basic, traditional skills to effect change in practice. A few of the professionals interviewed were concerned that these traditional knowledge bases were outdated and no longer relevant in meeting today's program needs, but many more were quick to defend these traditional skills as part of the solutions to today's problems. Some linked the uniqueness of the organization to these traditional skills, and others linked the skills to problem solving and improving quality of life. Examples of these statements included the following:

I think agriculture is important and I think everybody needs to know about agriculture, regardless of whether that's where they end up in a career or not (female, 3 years, 4-H.)

The home economics program really helped a lot of the women learn skills--where they could stay home and use these skills and earn money (female, 3 years, 4-H.)
[I] feel very strongly about maintaining that agriculture base and traditional home economics base. It's a very critical niche in our economy and our community and I think that no matter where else we expand, we cannot let those people down. Those people can go nowhere else for that kind of information (female, 2 years, 4-H.)

I think we're going to see a major influx of families growing their own food, going back to family gardens. People don't have basic skills and the young families just have no basics. I mean, they just can't do an awful lot of things. . . . money management and those kinds of things (male, 26 years, other.)

Most of these professionals felt that programs needed to contribute to solving social, community, and what they called "people" problems. Faculty were interested in teaching decision making and problem solving skills regardless of the subject matter, and felt that these skills would help clients improve the quality of their lives. Comments that reflected a concern for problem solving included the following:

We need to be in the business of helping people solve problems; serious, significant, societal problems. . . . We really are about helping people solve problems (female, 8 years, home economics.)

I feel that we have that opportunity, through 4-H, to help kids get involved in that whole process of making decisions (female, 26 years, 4-H.)

I think that describes extension--people and problem solving oriented. . . . I hopefully can contribute to helping people solve problems and government solve problems, whatever the case might be (male, 11 years, other.)

An aspect of relevance that was closely tied to problem solving and decision making was improving the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities.
Professionals also referred to this as "making a difference in people’s lives," and were proud of the impact they and their programs have had in bringing about these perceived differences. Others discussed "helping people help themselves." Examples of comments that reflect this aspect of relevance included the following:

You get a really deep satisfaction out of helping people, and seeing that you make a difference in their lives (male, 30 years, agriculture.)

As agents you need to keep in mind one thing, and only one thing, and if you do that you’ll be successful, and that’s to help people make a change (male, 5 years, other.)

We exist solely for the purpose of, in some way, improving the lives of our clientele (male, 29 years, agriculture.)

The professionals interviewed for this project valued the unique role that Extension programs play in their communities. The land grant research base and traditional skills were both cited as factors in the uniqueness of the organization, as was the ability to tailor programs and efforts to meet local needs. They were proud of this uniqueness and seemed to challenge one another to describe how these community needs would be better served by other agencies:

Who would administer or execute the current function and responsibilities of the Cooperative Extension Service if, in fact, it was decided to dissolve it? Who would take over? Who could do a better job than Extension’s own people (male, 2 years, agriculture?)

Nobody else serves them the way that we do (female, 5 years, 4-H.)
Nobody else does it. No one else in the community does it. When they don't know who to call they call us. If we let go of that piece of the pie we're in big trouble (female, 2 years, home economics.)

There were very few apparent differences between the various groups of professionals in terms of how they perceived the relevance of their programs and of the organization. Meeting basic, local needs was identified as a value by all groups, as was teaching problem solving and decision making. Administrators were less concerned with teaching basic traditional skills than were county faculty, but campus based specialists discussed applying basic, traditional skills in community problem solving. 4-H agents and agents with 20 or more years of experience did not take an active role in discussing the uniqueness of the organization, but both groups were most apt to discuss making a difference in people's lives. The most interesting difference noted in this comparison was that the individuals most interested in the uniqueness of the organization were the new agents with nine or less years of experience.

**Comprehensiveness.**

Professionals in these focus groups seemed to value the comprehensiveness of the Extension Service programs. Agriculture was discussed as it impacts the natural environment, for example, and then again in terms of how agricultural production impacts local economics.
Comprehensive programs aimed at helping families manage food resources wisely were also mentioned as examples. Faculty from both urban and rural counties were determined to use Extension resources to help solve local problems. These professionals wanted to feel as though the programs they conducted made an impact on families and on communities, and they felt that the more comprehensive programs aimed at solving community issues would do that by applying the technical research base in a problem solving fashion. They examined the same value from a different viewpoint, however, when they mentioned the frustration with trying to meet all needs of all people of the state of Florida. They recognized the need for cross training and multi-disciplinary teams when attempting to work on these comprehensive issues-based programs. Examples of statements that illustrate both their pride and concern about comprehensiveness included the following:

Extension needs to be presented in a manner or promoted in a manner so that we are recognized as merchants of both social and economic change (female, 16 years, agriculture.)

We really have the expertise to solve a lot of problems that are city, community problems beyond agriculture. We've got a lot of the expertise in the agricultural department. All we have to do is kind of stretch a little bit to get there (male, 11 years, agriculture.)

We try to wear too many hats all at the same time and the administration keeps trying to get us away from our really traditional programs and get us into these things that we don’t know anything about. We’re going to have to be retrained (male, 28 years, agriculture.)
Those are some of the challenges we face to really do issues programming and really tackle it in both a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency way (female, 8 years, home economics.)

Both men and women cited rural economics, environment, and consumerism as issues that Extension could address in comprehensive programming. Agriculture and home economics agents were concerned about these same issues, while Sea Grant and other agents mainly voiced interest in the environmental issues. 4-H agents and agents with less than ten years of experience spoke more of issues affecting families and youth than other groups.

Education.

Education was listed as a value in and of itself. Many of these professionals began their careers as teachers in formal classrooms and moved to Extension for the freedoms afforded by the non-formal educational programs. They shared a commitment to life-long continuing education both for themselves and for the audiences they serve. They appreciated education as a process rather than as a product and spoke of the family and community as learning organisms as well as individuals. They also valued education for the power it bestows upon families and individuals to make change in their own lives, and for its social power in impacting public policy. Examples of comments that reflect education as a value include the following:
I think our mission and values are education, education, education. We have to teach others how to help themselves, teach others how to improve their situation, and teach others how to empower themselves to bring about change (male, 28 years, other.)

And underlying all of that is the belief that education is going to do any good. . . . that people do have some control over their own life and their own situation (female, 16 years, home economics.)

You’re talking about the process, not the institution of education (male, 2 years, agriculture.)

But that won’t stop the learning process. I mean the expectation is that you will learn something new all the time (female, 1 year, administration.)

We are still in the education business (female, 11 years, home economics.)

Again, there were few differences between groups in terms of how they valued education. They agreed that education was a life-long process and that they were responsible for their own educational development in order to serve their educational mission. 4-H agents were less likely to link education with power, but home economists, agriculturalists, and agents with other assignments referred to the power of education in impacting public policy.

Diversity.

The professionals interviewed for this project discussed diversity of their clientele as a value, but limited the areas of diversity to those of economic status and non-traditional families. There was very little specific mention of cultural diversity of either Extension faculty or audiences but a great deal of discussion about
changing audiences in terms of changing social needs. These individuals were most proud of the fact that they are able to serve the needs of limited income families and linked this service to the unique resources and abilities of the public land grant institution. Meeting the needs of economically disadvantaged individuals and families was mentioned in generally equal proportions by every group compared for this report. Examples of these comments included the following:

Our programs have to be accessible to low economic - socio-economic status individuals. They need to be accessible to single parent households, and to a whole group of individuals that are becoming a bigger part of our communities (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

I think as disastrous as [hurricane] Andrew was it was a plus for the Extension Service, because our people, certainly our home economists, were already positioned in several multi-cultural areas as the lead agency for education (female, 2 years, home economics.)

Extension is not like it used to be because the people are not like they used to be (female, 28 years, home economics.)

The clientele that we are working with are becoming very diverse, and consequently the needs and the problems that they have are constantly changing (male, 29 years, agriculture.)

Service.

The professionals interviewed for this project felt privileged to be providing a service for their home communities and for the citizens of the state of Florida. This was reflected in their comments about the relevance of their programs, but other comments fell into three broad
areas related to service: (a) collaboration with other agencies, (b) building communities, and (c) building human capital.

Collaboration with other agencies and with other university departments was listed as a value by several individuals and groups. They discussed collaboration primarily as a tool for addressing social issues and problems such as health care and youth and families at risk. Examples of comments about collaborative efforts included the following:

I see us working in partnership with some of these regulatory agencies, doing educational programs not only for them but for the people they are regulating (male, 30 years, agriculture.)

Collaborative efforts--the value is one of collaboration, mutual trust, purposefulness of effort, and helping people to achieve those things they decide they want to achieve, that will enhance their status and their state of affairs (male, 33 years, administration.)

Some of the issues we deal with like infant mortality, teen parents and pregnant teens ... are more complex. We not only need multi-disciplinary within Cooperative Extension, we need multi-agency programs (female, 8 years, home economics.)

We need to be doing a lot more collaborative work with other agencies and groups so that we are not duplicating services but that we are pooling resources to maximize the expertise of all the groups within counties (female, 2 years, home economics.)

Building communities was the second aspect of service that was discussed by these professionals. Traditional rural development programs were cited as examples of building communities, but there was a stronger undercurrent
of discussion that implied a responsibility for "community"
that was not defined by geographical boundaries:

Somehow within our society here in this country we have
got to stabilize communities and strengthen the local
community and strengthen the leadership that exists
there. We have got to strengthen the opportunities
that exist for people in local communities (female, 18
years, home economics.)

Our Extension programs, if they truly are designed to
solve people's problems, whatever those problems are,
have an aspect of 'community' in them that we can't
ignore (female, 16 years, home economics.).

It's a sense of community--not necessarily individual
entities and individual governments, but a sense of
community, of being part of a group concerned about the
welfare of other people (male, 11 years, agriculture.)

Building human capital referred to building the
capacity of individuals and families to positively impact
their own future and that of their communities. Both
leadership and volunteerism were discussed as aspects of
human capital that were developed through Extension
educational programs. Volunteers were valued not only for
the service they were able to provide to county Extension
offices, but for service they also provide to the larger
communities in which they live. Examples of comments
reflecting the value of service in building human capital
included the following:

One of our strengths is that we work with people as
individuals and make them leaders. Not everybody is a
leader at the same level, but I think that's one of our
major functions, to help people become leaders (female,
1 year, administration.)

Leadership development is really something that we need
to look at across all program areas. I think that
should be a major focus regardless of whether we're in
home economics, agriculture, or 4-H. One of our missions is to develop leadership within the community (male, 26 years, other.)

Teach others to empower themselves to bring about change. That's the leadership (female, 16 years, home economics.)

I think one of the clear unique strengths that we have, better than anybody, is training volunteers. That goes back to the leadership training. We are the best in the United states in that area. I really believe that. Look at the sheer numbers of volunteers that we have (male, 13 years, administration.)

Both men and women valued collaborative efforts, but home economists and new faculty with less than ten years of experience mentioned it as a value more often than the other groups compared in this study. The concept of building communities was discussed most by the faculty with 10 to 19 years of experience and was not mentioned as much by more senior faculty. Building human capital of leadership and volunteerism was discussed in generally equal proportions by every group separated out for comparison.

Summary of mission-related values.

In summary, the second "community" of values that emerged from the data related to the mission of the Cooperative Extension Service, both nationwide and locally. Professionals interviewed in these focus groups valued the organizational history of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, citing the tradition of extension work and the land grant university system as factors in that value. They valued the research-based knowledge, but added that the
research was only useful in that it was practical and enhanced credibility and objectivity. They respected both natural and social sciences, and technology in research, application, and delivery of programs. Relevance was important to these professionals. The five aspects of relevance that were discussed were meeting basic, local needs; teaching basic, traditional skills; solving human and community problems; improving the quality of life; and the uniqueness of the Extension Service in meeting some or all of these needs. The comprehensiveness of the program was discussed in terms of programming for complex issues and the long-term impact of those programs. Education as a life long process was of value to them, as was meeting the needs of diverse audiences. The final value that related to the mission was that of service, particularly in terms of collaborating with other agencies, building communities, and building the human capital skills of leadership and volunteerism.

Structural Values

The third community of values that emerged from the reading of the text of the interviews and the construction of the matrix of overall themes is illustrated in Figure 4. These motivators for professional behavior were linked to the structure of the organization and its operation at both the local and the state level.
Grassroots Efforts

Marketing & Public Perceptions

SHARED OWNERSHIP

Funding & Accountability

STRUCTURAL VALUES

Program & Personal Focus

Multi-disciplinary Approaches

System Linkages

Trust

Faculty Partnerships

Communications

Figure 4. COMMUNITY OF STRUCTURAL VALUES
Shared Ownership.

Shared ownership was the term the researcher chose to describe the discussions that evolved around funding and accountability for the public institution of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Reflected in this term is the notion of the federal, state, and county cooperation in the formal funding of the Cooperative Extension Service, and the sense of responsibility and accountability for proper, effective use of both public and private funds for operations. It also encompassed the need for public and political support at the three governmental levels in order for the organization to compete and survive. Three general areas of discussion related to this concept of shared ownership: (a) the "grassroots" program, (b) shared funding and accountability, and (c) marketing and public perceptions.

These professionals used the term "grassroots" to describe the local ownership of Extension programs. Extensive reliance on county funding was viewed as both a benefit and a burden, but most agreed that the proportion of county funding in Florida Extension programs meant that they must be held accountable in meeting the needs of local citizens first, and must utilize the opinions and expertise of local citizens to do so. The system of local advisory committees was cited as the obvious and best means of assuring accountability. Advisory committees were valued
both for their role in legitimizing local programs and for
their assistance in securing local and state funding. The
county Extension office was called the "first line of
defense," referring to local access to community based
programs. Examples of comments that illustrate the values
of grassroots programs included the following:

The program came from the people up. You know that we
have been out there in touch with the people in the
community and we have not had someone in Washington or
Gainesville or someplace saying 'this is what's good
for [the] County' (male, 30 years, agriculture.)

The sense of public ownership is a value that we hold .
... because Extension almost by definition is working
for the public good. And if the public doesn't invest
in their own good, there's something wrong (male, 28
years, administration.)

We believe very strongly in a bottom up programming
advisory committee and letting our potential clientele
determine what we will do educationally, what the
priorities are in that particular county (male, 33
years, administration.)

I think one thing that we need to think about when we
think about Extension as an organization is that the
county offices become the first line of defense. ... When [the people] see the university system out in the
state it is the county Extension offices that are the
first line of association (male, 11 years, other.)

Funding and accountability were valued by these
professionals as a structural component necessary for
organizational survival. While discussions concerning the
grassroots values were primarily positive in nature, these
discussions took on a more negative tone as faculty
discussed the intense competition for public funds, the
pressures of remaining accountable to three or more separate
funding sources, and trying to meet the demands of the mission-related values with less fiscal and staff resources. Many individuals made reference to matching the expectations of key decision makers who could influence local or state funding. There were also mixed feelings about the use of private funds and grants to support specific programs. While grant funds were welcomed when projects met existing goals of the Extension Service, agents feared that corporate and private support could exert undue influence on the direction of local programs. Examples of comments reflecting a concern for funding, accountability, and survival included the following:

I think the buck is the bottom line. Because, see, we get our money from legislators and county governments and so forth, so they have to think that this is needed, and it's important, and it makes a difference, period (female, 28 years, home economics.)

I think one of the biggest things we're battling right now is survival. Sometimes that can be very detrimental... there is a lot of value and a lot of emphasis on just plain survival right now (female, 16 years, other.)

Maintain our cooperative effort and keep our county commissioner folks, and people within the county who will keep funding our program as well served as we can. We know in one particular county that they had to abandon a nutrition program because of the lobbying that took place.... so we value objectivity but we live within the constraints of reality (female, 18 years, home economics.)

Related to the questions of funding and accountability were concerns about marketing and public perceptions of Extension programs in Florida. Some faculty felt a sense of organizational identity crisis and discussed the need to
clearly label buildings, materials, and programs with an organizational logo and identity. They used commercial terms to describe the need to enhance public perceptions of their organization and their programs, as a sort of organizational advertisement in the competition for public funds and organizational survival. While most of these individuals valued the traditional skills and programs in home economics and agriculture production as part of their mission, they resented the stigma these traditional programs placed on their image as a contemporary organization dealing with contemporary issues. Examples of comments about marketing and public perceptions included the following:

A lot of people don’t know what Extension is, what we do, whether it benefits them in some indirect manner, and I guess it’s part of the marketing problem (male, 8 years, agriculture.)

That’s the thing about having your 4-H meeting where it can be identified with Extension, whether it’s at the extension office or extension center . . . it’s packaging and what the people perceive (male, 30 years, agriculture.)

Maybe that’s a marketing problem. Maybe they don’t realize that we’re no longer sewing and cooking and recipes and that kind of stuff (female, 16 years, agriculture.)

Did you know that Extension is the world’s best kept secret? We need to get some recognition out there (male, 28 years, agriculture.)

There was a great deal of consistency between the various groups examined in terms of the value they ascribed to shared ownership of Extension programs. Advisory boards and local input were mentioned by every group, and they each
acknowledged that local sense of ownership could also be a burden if funds were short or local perceptions of the programs were not positive. The 4-H agents as a group had less to say about funding and accountability than any other group but agreed with the others on the need for increased marketing efforts and improving public perception of programs. Men more often talked about the power wielded by key decision makers and the need to match program efforts to their expectations. Organizational survival was discussed in relatively equal proportions by every group separated out in the matrix.

**System linkages.**

The system linkages discussed by these professionals were closely tied to the linkages of the land grant university system. The researcher has separated them out for discussion, however, because they also reflect a deeper concern for personal and departmental linkages within the organization and tend to flow in their meaning from one area to the next. Related to the values discussed concerning relationships, these linkages describe a need for improved communications between state staff and administrators and field faculty. Some field faculty expressed a sense of distrust between administration and themselves, prohibiting true faculty partnerships for both programming and administrative decision making. The need for multi-
disciplinary approaches to issues-based programming was discussed as a mission-related value, but it appeared again as a need to establish system links between departments and individuals with diverse resources applicable to problem solving. Finally, the breadth of the mission and diversity of resources made it difficult for faculty to describe the balance point for focus and specialization.

Field faculty felt that communications between them and their campus-based colleagues were weak and often ineffective. Negative messages were received by field faculty, even when no intended message was sent by state staff. They expressed a need to improve communication linkages throughout the system and wanted to be included in more of the communications involved in making organizational decisions. Several appreciated the focus group itself as an opportunity to meet with colleagues and talk about the organization rather than simply work together on a program. Examples of these types of comments included the following:

We ought to value communications among ourselves. There seems to be a little bit of a lack of that, even among county staffs (male, 1 year, agriculture.)

[Discussions like the focus group would] give us a chance maybe to see what our leadership, our administration is up against. . . . I think it's a good experience and we may not all have that opportunity (male, 8 years, agriculture.)

I think what they are saying to us--it may not be intended this way--though when the administration does [leave vacancies in the county] it tends to diminish the self-worth of that county office, because they feel that their county program and their staffing is not perceived as important by administration. And I think
that they're sending the wrong signal out, and they've sent it over and over (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

Closely related to the desire for improved communications was a desire for trust, honesty, and integrity among faculty members. Field faculty again described their morale as low. They said they did not necessarily trust their administrators to understand their need for more support at the local level. Field faculty felt powerless to impact the direction of state programs even when they felt they had significant resources to contribute to statewide goals and missions. They also felt as though administrators did not trust them as professionals and perceived a lack of loyalty between administration and staff. Examples of these types of comments included the following:

I really think that until the administration truly believes in what we're doing and values us as people important to them, then I don't see a future for us (female, 16 years, agriculture.)

We need to make sure that the bridge is rebuilt between state administration and the county personnel, and be ever mindful that we don't make that same mistake, by having that gap between ourselves and the clientele (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

I would also like to see us bridge the gap between administration and county personnel, so we don't have an 'us and they,' that we need to all work together for our organization, and for our programs, and for our clientele (female, 3 years, 4-H.)

I think there needs to be a value of organizational unity. We are a group of professionals with the Extension Service. We are not a group of agriculture agents or 4-H agents or home economics agents (male, 1 year, agriculture.)
Faculty partnerships were valued, and these discussions again tied very closely to the issues of communications and trust among faculty members. The comment about organizational unity shared above touches on this issue but does not reflect faculty concerns about campus based researchers, specialists, and administrators recognizing field faculty as full partners in the educational mission. Field faculty wanted to be included on program design and delivery teams as well as administrative decision making teams. They implied in several statements that field faculty could be more effectively supervised by a specific program department head than by a district administrator. They also voiced concern about establishing the necessary partnerships on the land grant campus to involve departments and colleges not traditionally linked to Extension in true service to communities and citizens of Florida. Examples of comments that reflected a desire for more effective faculty partnerships included the following:

I think the organizational values need to be determined by a collective body. And the collective body in this case would be the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Use the field faculty as advisors to the university department heads (male, 2 years, agriculture.)

We are [perceived to be] the dummies that couldn’t make it on the campus. And part of that is a result of the district director’s function as our administrator (male, 5 years, other.)

... if we were each tied to departments on campus, went to faculty meetings in our departments on campus, that kind of communication would begin to happen that hasn’t happened in the past, and tie the organization
together (male, 13 years, agriculture.)

We need to value teamwork which crosses subject matter lines, and teamwork that crosses organizational hierarchy lines, so that we work with each other (female, 16 years, other.)

The output of the whole is greater than the sum of any individual part. If we all work together we can do a lot more than if we’re each off in our own little realm or each department is doing their own little thing, or each department is fighting with each other department, or the college of agriculture is fighting with the business school. We’ve got to move beyond those lines (male, 11 years, other.)

Multi-disciplinary approaches to programming and problem solving were valued by these professionals, as evidenced by some of the comments chosen to represent concern with faculty partnerships. Teamwork was again mentioned as valuable in building multi-disciplinary programs. These comments also reflected an appreciation for the vast diversity of resources available throughout the land grant university system and on the university campus but recognized the difficulties inherent in multi-disciplinary approaches:

It’s harder to work in a group, with people who don’t have the same background as you have, who don’t come at issues from the same direction. We’ve been working in those kinds of groups (female, 8 years, home economics.)

We have hundreds of people that we can draw upon to look at problems, although I know that we do have our little turf battles within that (female, 18 years, home economics.)

We’ve got to figure out a way to make the land grant university the land grant university again. In other words we’ve got to figure out a way to make the disciplines that have not been involved in the research and education process of the land grant university
involved again (male, 11 years, agriculture.)

The mission of the land grant originally was that all of those other departments would extend. . . You are really talking about the leadership at the president's level at the university system (male, 11 years, other.)

The final area of discussion that concerned the structural issues of system links was that of program and faculty focus. Field faculty and administrators alike voiced a need to spend more time developing a specialization and program focus. While individuals acknowledged the breadth of the Extension mission in striving to meet the needs of the people of the state of Florida, they were concerned with "trying to be all things to all people." The concept of agent specialization also related to the discussions about teamwork and multi-disciplinary programming, with each faculty member contributing their own expertise in teams designed to address community and statewide issues. A few agents described their role as that of a generalist but admitted their frustrations as they felt torn in too many directions to feel successful in their programming efforts. Examples of statements that indicated a need for more program and professional focus included the following:

We do need to kind of specialize a little bit and be experts in certain areas and not try to tackle everything (female, 4 years, 4-H.)

We try to wear too many hats all at the same time (male, 28 years, agriculture.)

. . . along with some specialization so that each faculty is recognized for their expertise in some area.
I think we can't be everything to everybody, so we're going to have to cut back (female, 1 year, administration.)

We need to reduce the number of state major programs offered by Florida Cooperative Extension and focus only on those that we have a strategic competitive advantage in (male, 3 years, other.)

... you're not everything to everybody, but you better remember what you're the strongest at (female, 28 years, home economics.)

The discussions about system linkages were primarily conducted by the field-based faculty. Administrators and campus-based specialists saw themselves as trusting and supportive of county faculty, while county faculty were very vocal about the need for improved communications and a more supportive atmosphere of mutual trust. Agents with nine or less years of experience were the most frustrated by what they perceived to be poor communications within the system, but agents of every level of tenure agreed with them and suggested ways to improve those communications.

4-H agents, whose role is inherently more that of a generalist than a specialist, were the least vocal about the desire to bring more focus to programs and professional preparation. Men and women of each level of seniority and every other program assignment were equally concerned about their ability to focus and their mastery of expertise in some area of specialization. Administrators generally supported the concept of hiring temporary staff to fill specialized roles, but only one field-based faculty member proposed that as an alternative staffing pattern.
Summary of structural values.

In summary, the third "community" of values that emerged from the data related to the organizational structure of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Two categories of values seemed to capture separate related concepts. The value of shared ownership reflected a pride in the grassroots efforts of Extension field faculty in working with and for the citizens of their home communities. Faculty were concerned with organizational survival and viewed the complexity of funding sources as both a burden and a benefit. Marketing and public perceptions were cited as tools to improve chances for organizational survival. The system linkages between county and campus staff were valued but described as weak and in need of attention if organizational unity was to be expected. These linkages were closely related to concepts already discussed in personal and mission-related values and tended to overlap themselves, as if one concept flowed naturally into the next. These concepts included improved communications, trust and loyalty between faculty members, faculty partnerships for both programming and administrative decision making, multi-disciplinary approaches to problem solving, and program focus or specialization.
Common Roadways Between the Three Communities

The term "community" has been used in part of this report as it was used in the context of the group interviews. The researcher also chose "community" to describe her rationale for the clustering of concepts and values into categories, and to describe the nature of the relationships between these categories. The coding outline and the two coding matrices alone would perhaps lead the reader to assume that these clusters and categories were clear-cut and well-defined, separate from one another. Figures 2, 3, and 4 begin to show the relationships within the various clusters but still do not accurately illustrate the links or common roadways between the communities. The figures might be considered as separate maps, as communities are depicted in an atlas.

As the researcher reviewed the text of the interviews and began the coding, the relationships between the communities became much more complex and interwoven. Sorting comments by values categories proved difficult when, for example, one sentence reflected a concern for relationships, partnerships, and accountability for use of public funds. The three figures representing the personal, mission, and structural values began to take the shape of a small hollow globe when common roadways were drawn between the clusters of concepts. The preceding discussion has already described some of the areas of overlap and shared
concern. Figure 5 represents the researcher’s proposed conceptual model that provides for visualization of the relationships between these three communities of values.

The globe is seen as hollow in order to visualize the interconnections not only among the three major communities but also among the twelve categories of values. The values are each linked to their larger community. Within a community, the values are connected to one another by other roadways. For example, many of these professionals valued their personal history as 4-H members and cited their 4-H agent or leader as a significant person in helping shape their career aspirations. The relationship involved in those situations was also valued, as the agent took on the role of mentor.

The connection between research and relevance provides another example of how values within a community are connected by these roadways. Professionals valued practical research that contributed to local problem solving. They also valued the research base as one of the strengths of the land grant university system which made them unique as educators. Thus, there is a link depicted connecting research to the organizational history.

More roadways connect the values from one community to another. The mentor relationships described above have become a part of the Extension Service’s organizational history, for example, as faculty have recruited and nurtured
Figure 5. Conceptualization of the Common Roadways Between the Three Communities of Values
new professionals for several generations. Another example connects shared ownership to rewards, as securing funding from several different sources contributes to organizational and personal security.

Relationships, system linkages, and relevance emerged as the hub traffic areas in this global map, as they provided the most common roadways between the three communities. Personal relationships were not only important to these professionals as rewards but as tools for accomplishing their organizational mission of education and service to their communities. System linkages were perceived as weak, but faculty expressed a desire to strengthen the relationships involved in establishing those linkages. Relationships also played a part in building the local and state level partnerships necessary for effective shared ownership of the organization.

System linkages also impacted the perception of the rewards of Extension work. Professionals valued their freedom, yet expressed a desire for more administrative support and more equitable evaluation systems. Linkages were closely tied to research and organizational history as professionals discussed the need to work more closely with other departments and other land grant institutions in developing comprehensive, relevant programs.

Relevance was connected to personal rewards as professionals took pride in their work as it impacted local
community problems. They felt good about making a
difference in the quality of life in their communities.
Involving clientele in program design and delivery
established relationships, impacted shared ownership, and
helped to ensure that the programs were meeting basic, local
needs. Examples such as these could be drawn to illustrate
every roadway depicted in Figure 5.

When the relationships between values were visualized
as in Figure 5, it became apparent that the definition of
values presented in concrete linear and separate terms was
incomplete. Rather than viewing each of the twelve
categories as separate and distinct values, the researcher
saw the common roadways and linkages as vital to the
integrity of the global map. The three communities of
personal, mission, and structural values were inextricably
linked by these roadways. To define the twelve values
categories without exploring these relationships would have
been like leaving Figures 2, 3, and 4 as pages in an atlas;
each may seem complete by itself but is generally
meaningless unless the reader knows where the community is
located and can get there in the first place.
Summary of Analysis of Data

The analysis presented in this chapter first reviewed the initial questions that drove the focus group interview process. The coding outline was presented, which included the three "communities" and twelve overall categories of value orientations that emerged from general review of the data and matrix construction. Each category was described within the contexts of the interview groups themselves, with examples drawn directly from the interview transcripts presented as evidence. Responses of the various groups identified for comparison were examined for similarities and contrasts.

A discussion of the interrelationships between the communities and categories was presented, with a description of a proposed conceptual model that provides for visualization of the relationships. The model made use of a hollow globe to illustrate the relationship of each community to the others, as a global map would illustrate the relationship of one page of an atlas to the next.

Chapter V will present a summary of the research study, conclusions, perceived implications, and recommendations.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Organizations, like people, go through life cycles - birth, rapid growth, maturity, decline, and death. Organizations, however, do not have to decline and die. With leadership and visionary action, an organization can be repositioned to continue the growth, maturity, and regeneration cycle. Change is a constant pattern flowing throughout the Cooperative Extension System in the 1990's. This change is a positive sign of a dynamic organization experiencing transition and rebirth. (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, 1991)

This case study was conducted to explore the organizational values as perceived by the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service as a foundation for strategic planning. As organizations experience transition and rebirth, it is important to understand the foundational values that guide the daily behavior of members of the organization, both individually and collectively. An understanding of the shared organizational values will assist members of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service as they approach this era of transition and rebirth.

A question of this qualitative nature demanded a review of several bodies of related literature: (a) values and organizational values, (b) organizational culture, (c) strategic long-range planning, and (d) the historical and
philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Theories on values were explored in order to understand the nature of values and their relationship to behavior. When values are shared by organizational members, they can serve as norms for professional behavior within that organization. The development of an effective organizational culture is in part due to a shared understanding of organizational values. A commitment to these shared values can improve the professional culture and enhance the effectiveness of the organization.

It is important to identify and clarify shared values when strategically planning for long-range organizational change and transition. Organizational members will adapt and process change more effectively if attention is given to the congruence between personal and organizational values. Finally, it was important to understand the historical and philosophical foundations of the Cooperative Extension Service in order to place these questions of organizational values within the context of the specific case.

Seven focus group interviews were conducted to reach targeted representatives of the professional employees of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Participants were purposefully recruited to represent professionals with various program assignments and levels of tenure. The researcher served as moderator for the groups. Tape
recordings of each interview and the researcher’s taped journal notes were transcribed to provide the text for analysis.

Analysis first began in the data collection stages of this qualitative study. A preliminary list of organizational values was developed during the interview stage and was refined during transcription and early reviews of the transcripts. Transcripts were labeled in order to identify the speaker and the context of the comments and color-coded to identify the 12 categories of values used for analysis: (1) rewards; (2) relationships; (3) personal history; (4) organizational history; (5) research-based information; (6) relevance; (7) comprehensiveness; (8) lifelong education; (9) diversity; (10) service; (11) shared ownership; and (12) county, campus, and system linkages.

Two data matrices were constructed for data reduction and summarization. The first matrix summarized the 12 values categories according to the phases of the focus group interview guide. The second matrix summarized the categories according to the demographic characteristics of the participants: gender, assignment, and tenure. While transferring data from the transcripts to the matrices, the researcher developed figures that took the form of maps in order to visualize the relationships among the values.
Conclusions

Three communities of values emerged from the transcript data. Personal values included the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards experienced by the professionals, and the characteristics of Extension work were also valued as rewards. Professionals valued the relationships they established and maintained in their work. Collegial relationships within the organization, social relationships in their home communities, and relationships established with clientele involved in their program provided a different kind of reward for these professionals. They also valued aspects of their own personal history that brought them to a career in Extension work.

There were very few noticeable differences in how these professionals valued their rewards, relationships, and personal histories. Women cited flexibility as a desirable job characteristic more often than men and related that characteristic to their desire to balance work and personal needs. The 4-H agents were more concerned than other agents about flexibility of scheduling and demands of the job. This may be related to the fact that 4-H work demands more evening and weekend hours to effectively reach volunteer and youth audiences.

The second community of values related to the mission of Extension work. These professionals valued the history of the Cooperative Extension Service and its traditional
mission of extending the academic and research knowledge base of the land grant university system in local, problem-solving educational programs. They valued this research base for its practicality, and for the objectivity and credibility it lent to them as professional educators. Participants respected both practical and natural sciences and appreciated technology in the research, application, and delivery of knowledge. They valued the relevance of their programs and aimed to meet local, basic needs by teaching skills involved in solving individual, family, and community problems. These professionals desired to improve the quality of life for their clientele, and they took pride in their unique positions in their communities. They valued the comprehensiveness of the Extension program in impacting real issues of concern to people in Florida. They valued life-long learning and education and wanted to provide learning opportunities to a diverse range of audiences in Florida. Faculty valued the service aspect of their work, which they related to collaboration with other agencies in building communities and building human capital.

There was congruence between the perceptions of the various groups concerning the mission-related values, but there were a few differences worth noting. Senior faculty valued organizational history more highly than new faculty. Agriculture agents took great pride in the research base as their source of educational information. Home economists
and 4-H professionals expressed a need for more relevant research. These comments might reflect the structure of the research staff of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Faculty assigned to research in agriculture far outnumber those assigned to research in other areas. Home economists and 4-H professionals expressed more concern about the diversity of Extension audiences, perhaps reflecting the nature of their existing audiences.

Structural values composed the third community described in this report. Shared ownership reflected a desire to have local clientele feel some responsibility and ownership of the program. It also reflected the valuing of the traditional shared funding structure of the Extension Service, which utilizes funds from federal, state, and local sources. Faculty wished to see more effort in marketing the Extension Service in order to improve the public perception of their program and organization. These professionals seemed to value highly their links within the Extension system but expressed discontent with the strength of those linkages. They felt that organizational communications were weak, and that trust and professional morale could be improved by establishing more effective faculty partnerships that crossed hierarchical barriers. They valued multidisciplinary approaches to programming but also expressed a need to more sharply focus programs for problem solving and to focus their own individual skills for greater impact in
team programming.

Discussions revolving around these structural values yielded the most evidence of discontent among these professionals. Argyris (1982) emphasized the importance of differentiating between "espoused theories" and "theories in use." Espoused values are those that are claimed as desirable, while values in use are those that actually guide behavior. Supervisory personnel, administrators, and official documents often portray espoused theories and values, while front line staff claim other theories are actually practiced. In this case there seemed to be a wide gap between the structural values espoused as desirable and those actually practiced by the organization. County faculty and administrators did not share the same perceptions of these structural values. County professionals gave specific recommendations for strengthening system linkages of communications and faculty partnerships when discussing the ideal Extension Service.

The presentation of the analysis and conclusions of this study outlined and discussed the three communities and 12 categories of values. As the analysis proceeded, however, it became clear that relationships not only linked values within communities, but between the communities. The linkages among categories of values created a common roadway system for the three maps, which merged to form the hollow globe in Figure 5. The globe was proposed as a conceptual
model to allow for visualization of the relationships among the values.

The community of structural values seemed to have the weakest roadways linking it to the other communities. Professionals valued their mission as community educators, for example but expressed doubt that campus-based faculty shared their commitment to local problem solving. County faculty felt that their relationships with their administrators were weak but highly valued the relationships established in their communities as part of their program. The administration/supervision group was the only group that did not express a great deal of discontent with the structural values discussed during the interviews. This itself may support the conclusion that improved communications are needed to strengthen the relationships that tie the structural values to both personal and mission-related values.

Implications

The Florida Cooperative Extension Service is entering an era of organizational transition. Effective organizational leaders would be wise to consider the advice of Hodgkinson (1991) to pay close attention to the congruence of personal and organizational values as they plan for this transition. Strategic planning means not only orchestrating organizational change but involving
organization members in the change process. The shared values of the professional employees of the organization should be considered as the Florida Cooperative Extension Service initiates a strategic planning process. This study will be useful in clarifying those values.

It may be even more important for organizational leaders to pay close attention to areas of lack of congruence or discontent. Success of the strategic planning effort will be enhanced by a strong organizational culture, and the culture will be strengthened by efforts to rebuild the weak links in the shared value system. The hollow globe depicted in Figure 5 might at first appear to be fragile, but the complexity of the system serves to strengthen and solidify the foundations upon which the Florida Cooperative Extension Service is built. While the shared roadways carry the burden of fulfilling personal and organizational goals, they provide a complex network or web of support that will enhance the overall ability to travel among the three communities of values. If, for example, the roadways between the "relationships" and the "system linkages" are weak, the relationships within the mission provide strong personal rewards that may serve as compensation for most of the faculty interviewed.
**Recommendations**

The purpose of applied research is to inform action, enhance decision-making, and apply knowledge to solve human and societal problems. Applied research is judged by its usefulness in making human actions and interventions more effective and by its practical utility to decision-makers, policy makers, and others. (Patton, 1990, p. 12)

The review of related literature, the findings of this study, and the conclusions and implications led the researcher to make recommendations for further research as well as recommendations for practical application by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

It is recommended that further study be conducted to identify important variables for subsequent explanatory or predictive research. An instrument can be developed to investigate quantitatively the value orientation of the entire professional population of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service which would either support or refute the findings of this study.

While this study only identified espoused values, a future effort can compare the values expressed with the actual daily behavior of the members of the organization exhibited in documents, memos, achievement reports, and other written materials. Participant observations can be conducted to examine the behavior of small groups of professionals as it relates to expressed values.
It is recommended that this study be replicated using Cooperative Extension Service professionals in other states as the case population. It is important to compare and contrast shared values of other state Cooperative Extension Services and the Extension Service (United States Department of Agriculture) as administrative leaders enter periods of strategic planning. The results of such replicated studies could help to clarify the value system of Extension professionals as members of a national organization, and to define the values of the total Cooperative Extension System.

**Recommendations for the Florida Cooperative Extension Service**

It is recommended that the administrative leadership of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service incorporate values clarification processes into the strategic planning effort. Professionals from all levels of the organization should be involved in these efforts, in order to increase the likelihood of their sense of ownership and responsibility for the success of the strategic plan. Statements of values that are arrived at by consensus should be included in the official organizational mission statement.

New agent recruitment and orientation should include sessions concerning shared organizational values. Such sessions would help to familiarize new professionals with the organizational value system and help them to discover
congruence or disharmony between their personal values and those of the organization.

The Florida Cooperative Extension Service should offer continuing education to professionals to address the shared organizational values and the role the values play in operationalizing the mission and goals of the organization. Appropriate strategies can be designed to promote increased understanding of organizational values, and to enhance congruence between personal and individual values.

Administrative leadership of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service must give careful attention to the perceived weak links in the value system described in this study. The values related to the structure of the organization are more directly controlled by administrators than by any other professionals, yet produce more discontent and value disharmony than any other category. One final quote from the interview transcripts illustrates the concern for strengthening organizational structure:

All that we have discussed today affects long range - even short range - the integrity and the pride and the leadership of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. And if we want to maintain that or aspire to more of it, I think we're going to have to kind of refocus. There is no ideal structure. Every structure is relative to the time that it is in practice (male, 2 years, agriculture.)

It is recommended that all faculty work to establish stronger partnerships for programming and decision making. Communication networks must be used more effectively to strengthen relationships between campus and county based
faculty. Effective marketing resources are necessary if all partners in the shared funding arrangements are to perceive value in the program. The common roadways among structural values and the other two communities already appear to be weak. If they collapse, it may be impossible for personal and mission-related roadways to support the weight of organizational survival.
APPENDIX A.

Samples of the Interview Transcripts
Note: These transcripts have been edited only to protect the confidentiality of the group participants. Proper names, unusual specific program assignments or other identifying characteristics have been left blank. Speakers have been labeled by number. Speakers 1-7 were in the introduction phase of the group interview.

1: OK, I'm ____. I'm a multi county extension agent, and I've worked with ____ since I was in high school on and off. Always liked working with them. I was introduced to extension as a program as a peace corps volunteer. And during my graduate studies at ____ I worked as a graduate assistant to the extension specialist. So I got real involved in what extension was doing there. So that is how I came to extension. That was in '88 I started so it was about 5 1/2 years now. That's how I got here. You want me to continue with the second half of why I stay here? (please) Stupidity. No. 22 days a year annual leave, and I'm not joking. That's - I've always been one that money hasn't been as important to me as the time I have to enjoy the money I've been making. And that is one thing that extension provides is a very nice set of annual leave. But I also like the job that I'm doing. I enjoy working with the people that I'm working with. And also I see extreme potential for myself professionally beyond the present situation that I'm in.

Mary: Within extension?

1: Within extension and without. I am developing a reputation that - a professional career that is going to go beyond what I'm doing today. So that's why I'm here.

2: OK, well, I grew up in the city and I never heard of extension until college. And then I went to this program where they were talking about different careers and they talked about extension and I thought that sounded real interesting, so I went to ____ and worked there for a little while, and worked in public welfare for awhile. Moved to Florida and came back to extension, because I liked that. I stay in it because I like the variety - all the different kinds of things we do, and you know, nothing is ever the same. You're not cooped in all the time and confined, also. But I can't stand the reports.

3: My name is ____. I'm in home ec basically because of my 8th grade home ec teacher, she kind of impressed me. She had lots of shoes (ha ha). I was in 4-H for 10 years in ____, and so I know a lot about extension although it's very different in ____. I came down here to escape the snow and the cold, and answered an ad in the newspaper, believe it or not, for this job. I've been here 11 years, and I stay probably because of
flexibility. Not really setting your own schedule, but being able to work around families. I have 3 small children. I also like my job, I think as ___ said, variety. But I get a lot of satisfaction from seeing my audiences respond to me.

4: I'm ____ and I've been in - I'm in my 26th year, and so I'm kind of in the down side of my career. I've held just about every position. I started as a - I spent quite a few years as a 4-H youth professional and then I was an agriculture agent in the midwest. I even served a year as a home economist in a county that had no home economist. And then in my current position here in Florida. I got into extension I think - you know, most kids want to be doctors or firemen or something. That was never in my line of thinking. I always wanted to be a county agent. And I guess it goes back to a very positive experience I had as a very young child with my home county extension service, and that just stuck with me all those years through 4-H and high school, and college, and where I'm at today. I believe that extension is in a critical period, and for us to survive we're going to have to change everything. Change the way we think, change the way we deliver programs, change is going to be the name of the game. And I guess I find it very rewarding that I can spend the last years of my career in a changing organization and be a part of that change.

5: I'm ____, I'm in my 29th year in extension. I came from a rural farm background, went to a small high school - grades 1-12, small school where you knew everybody in the whole school. Nobody there went to college and everybody pretty well went to work in the phosphate industry when they got out of high school. That was about the only option and I really didn't like the idea of doing that. So that and my mother's long term interest in seeing me go to college, I think, were the reasons I went to college. I had no idea, though, what direction I might go, and finally, probably more than anything else, due to meeting Dr. ____, who was chairman of the animal science department at Gainesville, I decided to go there and go into animal science. Whenever I was ready to graduate the job options were basically chemical and fertilizer sales sorts of jobs, ranch management jobs, and extension. Or some of the others added an educational component and went to vo ag teaching. As it turned out there were a couple of extension jobs that were available. And back then the district director simply solicited agent potentials, and either yes or no, you've got the job. We didn't go through the procedures that we do now. So I had 2 options, one in ___ County and one in ___ County. Also back then everybody started in 4-H. I was a - you went through a period where you were assigned 4-H and you got out of that as soon as you possibly could, is sort of the way things were then.
1: It’s still the same. Sorry, ___.

5: My exposure to extension had been as a 4-H’er, although my 4-H experience was somewhat limited, and I really made no connection between 4-H and extension. I just knew that there was a 4-H agent, but I had no idea what extension was, or anything about extension as a 4-H’er. In fact, I was president of my 4-H club, and also I was exposed to some fairly substantial degree to 4-H, but really didn’t know what it was. I did remember going to camp, and that’s where I first got to know ___, is when I was a 4-H’er 10 years old and he was the 4-H agent here in ___ County. He was a long time extension agent and county director here in ___ County. So that’s sort of how I wound up in extension, and the reasons that I’ve stayed are probably similar to some of the others. Flexibility has just really been one of the keys to my staying somewhat satisfied in extension. I have had a lot of opportunities, state wide, nationally and internationally to be involved in a lot of things. And that’s a kind of flexibility that is very unusual in any kind of somewhat secure government type job. And that’s the other thing I’ve always — I guess clung a little too tenaciously to the idea of the security of the job. That’s probably kept me from possibly getting out at some point back down the line. I guess the reason I went to ___ County initially was because it paid more, and I’ve been fortunate, I guess, relative to extension agents in general in that that county was a pretty strong pay county throughout, and with promotions and so forth was able to — relatively — achieve a pretty good salary. That’s another thing that helped in the decision to stay put, that the option pay wise, weren’t always a lot greater in industry or other options. I guess that basically sort of summarizes why I’m here — still here. It’s not always been because of a tremendous amount of satisfaction with extension in general. And like ___, there are certainly a lot of the day to day required — not necessarily justifiably required — situations in my mind that are the unpleasant side of it.

6: Ok, I’m ___, I work with the 4-H program. I’ve been working with extension for 26 years. I also started out as a 4-H club member as a member for 11 years. Then I had the opportunity to work in ___ in the summertime as a college work-study person through a county 4-H office. So I did that for 3 years, and in my senior year an opportunity during the school year to work in the 4-H office as a program assistant. And I had not considered extension as a career even though it had been a big part of my life all during that time. I was in education and had not signed my contract for a job, but was to go in and sign a contract for a job when a district director called, and said before I signed a contract would I consider looking at a career in extension. And the benefits at that time were a lot greater than serving as a school teacher. So
I decided to work with extension service and started off my career in a very mountain county - 2 mountain counties. It was a large geographic area. I had 60 miles between offices so I guess that’s one of the reasons I - a 45 minute drive to get to here is not a bad drive to get to work. I had 2 offices and 2 programs to manage that had 60 miles between the 2 offices. I ended my career in ___ in a - if ___ has an urban county or urban area, I was in one of those little urban counties. And went back to finish a masters degree and got married, and decided to relocate in warmer weather. I had fallen and broken my arm in the ice and snow of ____, and that was sort of a deciding factor that I definitely did not want to stay in the cold. In Florida I’ve had the opportunity to work in 3 different counties. I started out in ___ county with the 4-H EFNEP program, and moved into ___ county, and from there to ___ county. So I’ve had an opportunity to work in some very different counties with some very different types of programming. I think the reason why I stay in extension and with the 4-H program is - first of all I have a very firm belief in the mission of extension. I value and believe in what we’re here trying to do. I believe it is important to teach people to learn to help themselves and I feel that through the 4-H program that we can help kids get a real firm foundation and we can help kids make a difference in what’s going to happen to them and in their lives. And I think also I like staying in extension because it’s one of the few programs where we have an opportunity to be creative and developing programs with people and for people. And I think so many of the other youth programs have programs that are handed down to them from a top level - that this is what you have got to do and this is the way you have got to do it. And I appreciate working for an organization that sees the value of meeting needs of people. I feel that we have that opportunity through 4-H to help kids get involved in that whole process of making decisions. I think that’s, you know, the major reason why I’ve continued to stay with it. I also enjoy the flexibility, and the benefits that we have in being involved in this type of an organization. And I also appreciate having the network of being able to work with land grant universities throughout the United States. I think that I feel real strong that we’ve got a research base to back the kinds of things that we do. And that if we don’t have an answer to a problem locally that we can find the answer somewhere within the United States, and I think that’s definitely a thing that keeps me interested in working for an organization that has that kind of backing.

7: My name is ___ and I’ve been in extension for 3 years now. I’m the baby here. I got into extension - basically I was influenced by an aunt. I have an aunt who was an extension agent in ___. And the fact that she traveled really moved me. And as I grew up I saw - I was exposed to other agents because
I would go to programs - even though I was in high school I was always interested in sewing and everything, and I could go to some of their presentations and I was always learning. And I always enjoyed seeing how much the older women in the group were enjoying this, and I felt like that would be something I would enjoy being able to do to touch people’s lives and make a difference. In back then extension was a little bit different. The home ec program really helped a lot of the women learn skills - where they could stay home and use these skills and earn money. So it was not the same as it is here. And when I came to Florida and was looking for a full time job I had considered being a teacher. But things didn’t work out so I applied to work with extension. It just so happened that I had been one of my teachers in, and I called her, and the first thing she said was, you’re not going to want to be a home ec agent, because it’s not like it is back home. You know, she knew where I was coming from, and she said it’s not like it is back home. It’s a totally different focus and if you’re interested in this part of it the way it was back home and helping people learn skills and use it as a trade to earn money and benefit their family and everything and stay home, it’s not like that. And the position I was looking at was the one in that was 4-H and then I asked her questions about that. I had not been exposed to 4-H because when I grew up in 4-H was for the kids who lived out in the country on the farms, and I lived in the city. I lived 2 miles from the extension office, but it was just not available to me. I belonged to the girl scouts. Anyway, I kind of like stumbled into 4-H that way. And I really enjoy it. I don’t know if I’ll stay, because of all the changes. No job is secure right now and there are so many changes. The demands that are put on a 4-H agent are great, and they seem to be more and more and more, and it’s harder to juggle your family and all the commitments that this job requires. And I hope I can stay because it is a challenge to me. I really enjoy it, and I know that the pay isn’t way up there, but I’m thinking of the flexibility. I really do enjoy that flexibility a whole lot because of my family.

Speakers 8-12 were in the third phase of the focus group interview, discussing values.

8: I think ideally - if there was a person from outside the university or extension sitting at the other end of the table listening to us the first thing they would jump on is our - what would be our number one value is the uniqueness we have of being a land grant university. I think that is a value unto itself that would be very important to an organization. You can build so much around that when you realize what it says and the meaning you have, so I’ll start out with that.
9: That's an interesting concept, but unfortunately in Florida we've already lost a lot of that. Because the community college system is structured so that they've taken over a lot of the functions. They have institutes of government so that they have already been identified in this state as the lead organization in helping local units of government. That's somebody in the past that cooperative extension used to work a lot with. And the people associate those community colleges in a lot of ways more with the grassroots than they do the university of Florida. I gave a presentation at the conference a year ago and a guy from - we cooperated on the paper - we were the only people there from the land grant institutions, but there were at least a dozen community college presidents in the United States there telling them what they could do for them. We can help you solve your policy problems for the city. So it used to be one of our real strengths. I think we've lost our comparative advantage in that area a little bit, and it may be something we need to rewrite it.

10: Except that we really have so much to offer them that is technically based, public policy decision making.

9: We do that, and the thing we have to remember - and I'm real sensitive, having worked with the governors office, they don't want a decision - they don't need information that's going to take 6 months to make a decision. They want you to give them general direction in 2 days. So instead of saying if we have this little research program and you give us 8 months to do it, and the legislator's goal is to get from Gainesville to Tallahassee, what they are looking for is someone who is going to point them towards Madison and not towards Mulberry. Get them going in the right direction and they'll fine tune it later. And we've become so tied up in our own research base that it takes months and months and sometimes years and years. That's just the way it works. So on some of our policy issues we've lost that a little bit.

10: yeah, or we've missed our research planning function. We have not anticipated where we needed to be in our research program so that we could have it. But you've got to have the answer right away, and you're going to have to get it.

9: See, we never - it's interesting - we're in the process now, the college is, and I've been doing a little work on that. There is a mission identified for IFAS, and it's a mission identified by administrative law. And there's nothing wrong with it when you look at it, but I doubt if there's been a lot of departments or a lot of county offices who have identified what their missions are, where they get their people, things like that. We're planning in our department on doing some - basically what it boils down to is strategic
planning in extension. ___’s effort here later this month in ___ county is really that approach at the county level. But we haven’t had that, so we’ve missed the issues curve on some things, we weren’t doing the research enough in advance. Some of the things that came to my mind - I guess when you said it was a grassroots organization and the county is the first line of defense which was a statement that I made, I think there’s a couple of other things implied there. One is helping people, and if you are helping people I think you are a service based - or have a service based orientation. I’m going to go down and do one part of ___’s program, but I guess the question is if we adopt the concept of extension as a service based organization and the county is the first line of defense, and I’m Mr. Joe Blue Collar in west Palm Beach, I work form 8-5 every day to get my dollars. I come home, my yard has a big brown spot in the middle of it, and it looks like it’s dying, and I dial the county extension office. And it says our office hours are 8-5. You’ve lost that person as someone who is going to use your service or find it acceptable. He’s going to call the pest control company that has a bug man on the line 24 hours a day. I’m not proposing that we have extension offices and people who are there 24 hours a day, but I am suggesting that we may need to pay a little bit more attention to the service aspect. So helping people and grassroots and county as first line of defense, and service. The other thing is that we really probably haven’t stressed strong enough is that we are really an equal access type educational institution. The land grants aren’t the Harvards, and stuff like that. We should be as willing to go in and work with the socio-economic disadvantaged as the advantaged. And I think we need to stress some stuff like that more. And I’ll keep quiet. The other 2 areas that come to my mind is 1, I really think that the faculty both at the county and state level, because of a variety of reasons, are starting to lose the concept of professionalism. To me, I think we need to identify that you are a professional, and with the professionals there comes commitments. One of them is the human capital thing we talked about, being a life long commitment to learning and educating yourself and helping other people. And between tough budget times at the state and not being able to fund some of the more typical extension activities I think that people - the morale has deteriorated, maybe just the degree of professionalism has gone away. The other thing is another issue I brought up - the thing that I always hunt for when I’m doing my extension program is the aspect of quality. I think we need to identify - we’re a quality organization, I don’t care - like I said before, if it’s home ec, food and resource economics, poultry science, 4-H, entomology, if we’re doing quality work, people are going to want it. And the demand for it is going to grow. So quality is right up there at the top of my list of values.
There is a value that I think extension has in the past claimed. And in some cases has been right in making that claim, but I think that we’ve lost somewhat in a state like Florida, but I see the need for it currently being very important. It’s a value that I would call – I’ll use Etzioni’s term for it. He calls it communitarian. I don’t know if any of you have read any of his publications or not. He’s an economist at Georgetown University and he’s been an economic advisor for several administrations in Washington. He wrote An Agenda, He’s had a couple of books since then. He’s got one out now called the Spirit of the Community. Then he’s got this word communitarian in there. But what he’s meaning by this is that somehow within our society here in this country we have got to stabilize communities and strengthen the local community and strengthen the leadership that exists there, strengthen the opportunities that exist for people in local communities. And I guess that I always pick up on this because this thread runs through all of his writing. He was an extension agent in Israel, probably in the 50’s, and he came here and did his graduate work and he’s been on the faculty at Georgetown University for a long time. he’s done some other things in between. But that extension philosophy comes out if you listen to him. In fact I saw him on a documentary on public television a couple of nights ago talking about this particular concept. And I think that’s a concept that we thrived on in extension in the early years, but we haven’t dealt with it so much. Now those of you who are at the county level understand the difficulty of that kind of concept now in a state like Florida, with its huge urban population, with its diversity of people, the fragmentation of social institutions at the local level. But I think that’s a value that extension has built on over the years and a value that we could well continue to incorporate. And I think that our extension programs, if they truly are programs designed to solve people problems, whatever those problems are, has an aspect of community in them that we can’t ignore. So that’s one value that I’d like to emphasize in there. And the other one is innovation. And I think it’s very easy for us, with our lack of resources – I think that’s probably one of the things you were getting at in terms of quality. It’s very easy to continue doing - or going in the same track that we’ve always been going in. Innovation is difficult. It’s risky, and yet innovation is what has kept extension alive over the years. Maybe we haven’t done enough of it. But that’s another value that I would place in there.

The other aspect that goes along with innovation as being a part of quality is also the evaluation of it. We have to be able to decide when to give up something and there’s a higher return by going on to the next thing. We have to decide that it’s worthwhile to take a project risk that to sit around and do nothing, and we’ve got to build those types of things into
- almost into the reward system so that you end up - if you could sum up all the individual parts in the - the output of the whole is greater than the sum of any individual part. If we all work together we can do a lot more than if we’re each off in our own little realm or each department is doing their own little thing, or each department is fighting with each other department, or the college of agriculture is fighting with the business school, or whatever the case might be. And we’ve got to move beyond those lines.

10: Mary, I think this must be important because when you were giving us our charge I was writing down some of our definition of organizational values, and I wrote one thing down that was sort of new. And then I started kind of recording some of the things that you said you had heard. And the one thing I wrote down in that is unique that kind of goes with what we’ve said and some of the things that I mentioned before - I guess this is a value - it seems to me that one of the most important things that we can do is be in touch with the people of the state of Florida somehow. Always try to remember that. Everybody in this room doesn’t need to hear that because of who we all are. But if you look at the system, the university system, there’s a lot of things going on that tend to pull us away from doing that. Whether it’s writing grants or getting refereed journal articles or worrying about budgets - sometimes we’re not - we have to constantly work at being in touch with the people of Florida. That’s one of the uniquenesses we have, and it’s one of the things - again, it makes land grant universities that are doing their job unique. I think we can’t -we can never - in fact that would be the first thing on my list. We have to be in touch with the people of the state of Florida, as the university of Florida. If we do that we can stay ahead of the research curve, probably, if the agents keep us tuned in on what we need to do in terms of research that will be there when we need it instead of 8 months later. It will help us accomplish a lot of things that we were talking about previously, if we stay in touch. I guess the 2nd most important thing is one we’ve already talked about, is research based and objective orientation. That’s another one of the real uniquenesses of us, as extension. It’s a lot easier to stand in a chicken house or a corn field and say, OK, I can be objective about these treatments that these hens are on or this corn is receiving. It’s a little different to be objective when you’re standing up with a producer or someone else in a county commissioner meeting where they are getting lambasted and remain objective. It’s a lot tougher in those instances, and that’s where we’re headed. I think that’s where we’re headed, ____, is in the middle of that with public policy kinds of things. We’re all kind of in that. It seems like all of extension, county agents, and specialists alike are really headed towards being in areas that are
uncomfortable for us, but we've got to stay objective. That's what I wrote.

9: I put that right up there with my professionalism, in my criteria.

12: I think - since I talked about issues programming as problem solving I guess I would put that as one of the primary values that - I'm not sure I would put it in as an existing organizational value or one we need to move towards, or some combination thereof. Certainly it's one of the values that we need to have, that we need to be in the business of helping people solve problems, serious, significant, and difficult societal problems. And I guess going along with that is the link with the land grant university and the research base, the fact that what we do is research based and what we do is service. It's all those things that are kind of hard to separate. When I talk to people who are in industry or who are in other aspects of university life, as faculty, I think they are kind of amazed at the approach that we take in extension. I think we just seem so idealistic to them that they are just kind of amazed. I remember when I interviewed for this job I was really impressed with the people in extension. I haven't had very much contact with extension. I was just so impressed with - these people are trying to do something here. That doesn't mean that we're all perfect and just coming at this with noble intent, but I think that a lot of that is there and that's a value. Helping people is a good thing to do and it's deserving of our time and attention. That's a very important part of this organization. We really are about helping people to solve problems. I guess I would put that right up there at the top. That and getting money. (ha has) It's not somebody else's value.

8: I want to make a comment on something ___ was discussing - about people being very important and being in contact with our clientele, and so forth. I agree with all that, but there's always a down side to everything. Even in 4-H those same people are the ones who keep us from change, because like in 4-H they love tradition so much. Gosh, you start things and they are successful, they won't let you stop them. I see that as being - those same people we're trying to keep ahead of are the same ones that keep us from change. I've presented some things that to me sounded so obvious, and were not a big change, but they view them as being very big, and do not want to change a lot of times. I just wanted to get that out there, that's also a down side to - if you really listened to our clientele, we'd be like the politicians, you know, we wouldn't change anything. We could use them as an excuse to - my people don't want to do something as drastic as that.
10: Maybe it’s a different population and it gets us back to -they are our traditional clientele, we can’t turn our back on them, but maybe we’re going to have to go develop a new group to meet. It’s the same problem in the natural resource area in water quality. We really have the expertise to solve a lot of problems that are city, community problems beyond agriculture. We’ve got a lot of the expertise in the agricultural department. All we have to do is kind of stretch a little bit to get there. We can do that without turning our back on agriculture. We just have to do it.

9: The problem is that we’re not - by many of the groups outside of the traditional users of our system we’re not viewed as unbiased and objective. In 1983 I’d only been down here 2 years, in 1984 I’d been here 4 years, I’d worked in the governors office in another state. They had a house tax advisory committee meeting in Orlando. They were talking about changing the state’s use value assessment laws and they asked me to come and testify, the chairman of the committee, and I did. All I had to say, basically, was that 49 other states had this. If you do this, this will be the result in terms of property taxes, this is what will happen, I went straight through a simple mathematical, multiplication type analysis. And when I got done, the person got up behind me and said you can’t believe that guy. And the committee chairperson said why not, and he says, well, he works for IFAS. And the chairman said well, so what? And he said that’s the lobbying arm of the ag industry in this state. And he said this right in front of the house legislative committee meeting. And so unfortunately outside of some of the traditional users we really have a big PR thing. And it’s complicated by the fact I think somewhat is that - in not all of our urban counties but in many of our counties our staffs are really built around the technical, commodity related base as individuals. And what happens is they feel more comfortable working with some of those traditional groups and they become almost exclusive in their work with them. That doesn’t help that problem by any means. We have a lot we can offer, but we do have some problems we are going to have to overcome before we’re viewed as acceptable by a lot of groups and organizations.

11: We espouse the value of objectivity and we strive to do that. But the constraints - the reality of the constraints are there. Just like you were mentioning with the ag industry and just like our nutritionists run into - they speak about the dangers of cholesterol, animal fat and cholesterol. And you know what the beef producers did, and you know what the pork producers did. The beef cattlemen being a more influential group in this state. But we know in one particular county that they had to abandon a nutrition program because of the lobbying that took place, and that was in ___
County, I think before you came here. So we value objectivity but we live within the constraints of reality. It's part of what he's talking about here in this lobbying effort.

Mary: What else? Any other values that jumped out on your list that you want to be sure we speak to?

12: I think I want to say that collaboration may be one that perhaps we all could strive for. I think that we're certainly not there, and I don't think that it's really valued at this point in time. It's not an organizational value I don't think at this time. It may be one that we better get to be an organizational value if we want to survive. Flexibility, I think, is. We may not be there the way we need to be. I think it's a value and we need to be able to implement it to a greater extent, more widely across the system.

9: You run into danger on that because you have to be very careful. I think a manager, and that's what we're really talking about when we talk about our deans and stuff, they have to have some control over the organization. I don't think anybody doubts that. The question is how far does the control go? Is it better to go through a system where you just sort of categorize everything or is it better to go to a system where you go back to my concept, that I think of in terms of performance goals. Maybe the performance goal is that we want to train 3% of all the registered dieticians in the state in a year. Maybe that's what Home ec says. Ok they do that. You've got your resources, how you do that I don't care. Just get it accomplished, instead of saying you got to do this but you got to plan it with that and you gotta do that. But at the same time I think we really do have to recognize that that person, who is our superior, whoever it might be, is held accountable by someone else and they do have to have some management authority which is going to get rid of the concept of complete flexibility. But there's definitely room I think, to build some more in.

8: We went through a strategic planning process for 4-H this last year. I recall one of the things that came out of there was volunteerism was a value. I think especially in extension we're depending more on volunteers, and volunteers do so much now with our organization whether it's helping out with a county fair or whatever. But we depend on volunteer hours so much.

Mary: Does volunteerism relate to what you were referring to as communitarianism - community building, and then does that relate to your notion of developing human capital?

9: It does somewhat. I think we're getting into an issue that is going to be really difficult for the university to address,
and we’re going to have to do it. I wholeheartedly support the concept that we’ve got to make communities as strong as possible. The problem that we run into - and I grew up in a small community. They could have benefitted from leadership development things like that. But we’ve grown up in a system where communities, when we define them physically as these small towns outside here - in many states those communities were established and counties were established by how far you could ride your horse in one day, from sunup to sundown. And towns were how far you could make it in 2 hours by horseback. So we’ve got a society that’s changed through all this technology and stuff. Interstate system, the telecommunication linkages, all this type stuff. But we’re still trying to support all these small individual communities. And I think that we’re going to find ourselves in the unenviable position of having to say there’s just not enough resources to go around for every community building effort and unfortunately having to make the difficult decisions of where we put the scarce resources and what ones are viable and what ones aren’t viable. I think that’s going to be difficult for us to do, but I think of the little small community I grew up outside of and literally every 5 miles there’s a town of 600. They kill themselves trying to figure out how they are going to provide services in those communities. If they could just figure out some way to band, to have one form of government, one fire department, to have one welfare system, to have one leadership program, one small city council or - they could go someplace. So I support the concept, but there’s some difficulties out there because they die. It’s changed so much since they’ve brought those things out. Your concept of community is a little bit bigger than that.

11: It’s different than that, and it’s a sense of community - not necessarily individual entities and individual governments, but a sense of community of being part of a group concerned about the welfare of other people. And if that’s 2 city blocks, or if that revolves around a school system, or it revolves around whatever, whatever institution - it’s a little different concept than that.

9: Yeah, but there’s some of it in there, though, because when you start getting into the leadership thing, especially when you move away from the university, you’re talking about human capital in all these small place, what you’re talking about the small community away from here having some sense of purpose, some goals and directions,

11: And some leadership for themselves.

9: Some vision for the future of their community, and you can’t disagree with that, but I think it’s going to present us
with some problems on down the road because of resource constraints and different things like that.

11: I guess I'm not thinking of community development in the sense of the old rural community development that we've always thought about traditionally in extension. I'm not thinking about leadership, per se, because either of those things in isolation make no sense. But in many cases many of the issues that we work on in extension involve a sense of community, whether you're talking about formal leadership or whatever it might be, there's that sense of community. You might have that through a variety of programs that really on the surface have nothing to do with community development when actually that's what you are doing.

10: I heard an interesting definition of community last week in a real urban setting where people have houses and jobs and they lock their doors at night, don't see each other much, don't say very much to each other. But there's a community at the bus stop where all the people come, get along, and those people talk to each other, and check on the kids, and I got to thinking, how do we deliver an extension program through a bus stop? But that's a community, and it's a stronger community than the people who live within the 2 blocks, because they don't - some of them do and some of them don't talk to each other.

9: Yeah, it's a PTA, school, something like that, so we're probably going to have to rethink some of our reaction to stuff like that.

Speakers 13-18 were giving summarizing remarks during the fourth phase of the focus group interview.

13: I'll go ahead and start. I think with us looking at where we stand and where we are going, I think this is real important in extension. And I think that looking at our mission statement as it relates to real needs in the community and realizing that we are in a highly competitive situation now with our organization - we will need to do a real good marketing job of letting more people know what we're doing and how well we can do it and how we are best equipped to do the things that we have been doing for the past 75 years. But we need to make sure that what we're doing - that we're not doing the same old things we've been doing for 75 years but we are doing it using the same basic methods that were used, and that is to go to the people and make sure that there is a need out there that we are meeting. And hopefully those people that we are helping will convey this to the decision makers that will
continue to fund us to continue to do these kind of things here, more of them in the communities. We've got to realize that we, again, cannot petition. We assume that we have a role in the education of people in our counties - we've got to market this ability that we have and show that we can do it, do it better, more efficiently. I think efficiency will be important as far as where we're going down the road. I think we'll probably have to do more with less, possibly, and to smaller programs, be more innovative and creative in our programs, and use a lot of different technologies and so forth. I think this is sort of where we're going with these concerns that we have with our organization.

14: I think that basically the discussions that we're having like this right here today will be very beneficial and advantageous to us all, to take a day away from the office and start looking at the true mission of extension, what brought us here and what our purpose is, ways that we look at change, and maybe some things that we're doing in our counties, maybe some personal things here. Talking about the 4-H department is like stepping on my toes, but I think there's something that needed to be done. One thing I appreciate, makes a lot of sense to me, it gives us a chance maybe to see what our leadership, our administration is up against. When they sit in their round table discussions and they talk about where are we going and how are we going to get there, what are our resources, I think it's a good experience and we may not all have that opportunity. I appreciate being here today to have that chance to get a different perspective of what we're here for. Talking about success stories, obviously IFAS, the Florida Cooperative Extension Service has got numerous success stories. I think the mission is quite clear, in terms of what we're all trying to do, we're community based, and we have got that flexibility that we can be creative and not become stagnant in our profession. We're excellent program developers and educators. We do have that changing audience that we need to be accountable to them and we need to toot our own horn, or chop wood and stack it, chop wood and stack it, and keep working and stack it up to let everybody see what all we've done. Of course, work on our marketing, and teamwork. Back to - we all work together we have the same mission. We're not home economists, we're not 4-H agents, we're not ag agents, we are, the extension agents.

15: Just a last point that ___ talked about. I still think that's a very big weakness. There's still some friction between departments. Maybe not as much as at one time, but we'd better deal with it now more than ever, because we've got a lot of challenges that we'd better be together in the future. So funding, of course, will be one of the biggest challenges, and we'd better be ready for change, because it's coming.
16: I feel that we still have to be involved in the community, probably more so than we already have been, in order to meet the changing needs. I think all of us have said that. I think as an agricultural base, we will still be doing the same thing, but we will look a lot different. There may be people who do not understand that we're doing the same thing, that we're just using different methods to get to the same answers or same solutions of problems. I feel like down the road that there will be some downsizing like has already been mentioned. I have mixed emotions about that, whether it's good or bad. I feel like we need to be in our own counties, and like ___ mentioned, are they going to think, well, she's only here 3 days a week, do we really want to keep her and pay her, or whatever. But I think we're going to have to work harder during that downsizing to do the job we're doing now or we're going to be more efficient as far as our time and our other resources as far as management. I agree that we need to be Extension agents and not our own subject matter. I think that's a problem I've seen in various counties of, I'm a 4-H agent or a home ec agent or hort agent or ag agent, or - Well, I've done my percentage of 4-H for the year so why should I bother doing any more. We have to have that unity and we have to have that camaraderie, and we have to work together. We have to work as a team as we've already mentioned in order for us to survive and for us to be seen as a whole unit and not as a separate entity or office or whatever the case may be. For the legislators, for our constituents to understand that we're there for a purpose to serve the community and to serve individuals one on one or as a group, and solving problems for everybody.

17: I feel very strongly that we need to have more of a team approach. People frequently come in and say "is the county agent in?" and I can say "the agricultural agent is out, but the home ec agent is in, and we need to make sure that people realize that we're all in the same game together. Also I feel that it is very important not to let go of that traditional audience base. Nobody else serves them the way that we do. I guess for somebody who looks at maybe a global picture it's unusual for me to feel very strongly about maintaining that ag base and traditional home ec base. It's a very critical niche in our economy and our community and I think that no matter where else we expand we cannot let those people down, those people can go nowhere else for that kind of information.

18: I agree with you - it may take me awhile, but I think we need to keep that agriculture base. I guess my fear is I see extension falling apart and being downsized all over the country, and the more I think about it the more confused I get. We need to keep our base and keep it strong, but are we going to go right down with it? I don't think we will, but we've got to keep it but we've got to look at other areas too.
I don't see how we can look at other areas unless we have a larger staff. All of our populations have grown, I think County has grown almost 50% in 10 years, and there's no way we can have one on one or a good support base if the population keeps growing. So I don't know the answer. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and I'm sure I'll enjoy the ride home.
APPENDIX B.

Sample Sections of the Data Analysis Matrices
Categories by Interview Phase

Items labeled by: page number - Interview group - line number 00 - 00 - 00

REWARDS - Introductions

### Extrinsic

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Categories by Demographics

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REFERENCES


VITA

Mary Speece Williams was born in , on . She attended public schools in Nebraska and Colorado before graduating from Loveland High School in 1970. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in vocational home economics education from Colorado State University in 1974 and her master’s degree in home economics from the University of Northern Colorado in 1977.

Williams taught in public schools in Colorado and Florida before joining the Florida Cooperative Extension Service in 1980. She has served as 4-H and home economics coordinator for Nassau County, Florida and is currently the director of the Nassau County Cooperative Extension Service.

Williams received the Distinguished Service award from the Florida and the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents in 1991. She has received numerous other awards from these and other professional organizations, including a national communicator award from the National Association of Extension Home Economists. Williams chaired the Florida 4-H Strategic Planning effort in 1991-92 and is a past president of the Florida Association of Extension 4-H Agents.

Williams’ family includes her husband, Bob, and sons Casey and Zachary.