



National Charrette Institute
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS INSTITUTE (AABI) STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE



JANUARY-AUGUST 2021 PRODUCTS REPORT

Introduction

Between January and August 2021, the National Charrette Institute's Holly Madill and Marie Ruemenapp facilitated a variety of online engagements for a steering committee of AABI staff to discuss the future of AABI. The 22 steering committee members are listed below.

Angel Abuelo Sebio	Paul Gross	Dennis Pennington
Eric Anderson	Jim Kells	Nikki Rothwell
Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa	Rebecca Krans	Dale Rozeboom
Jennifer Berkey	Heidi Lindberg	Matt Shane
Roger Betz	Erin Lizotte	William Shane
Erin Burns	David Lowenstein	Dave Thompson
Beth Ferry	Melissa McKendree	
Sarah Fronczak	Stan Moore	

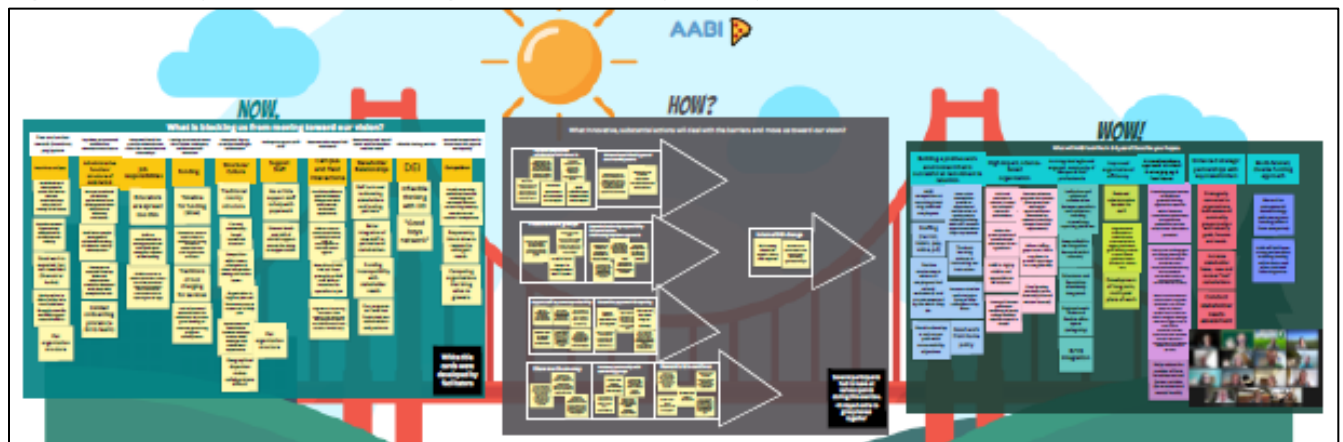
Shifts in the agriculture industry, emerging issues, funding streams, and operations due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, prompted AABI leadership to think strategically about moving forward. Therefore, the purpose of this work was to help define a vision for AABI and identify strategies to achieve it. The process is outlined below.

1. **Pre-Meet** – On January 11, the Steering Committee met briefly over a lunch hour to receive the Strategic Planning charge, introduce each other, learn about the Strategic Planning process, and establish ground rules for how the group would work together through the Strategic Planning process.
2. **Environmental Assessment** – The Environmental Assessment held on January 25, allowed the Steering Committee to quickly build a shared understanding of basic data, recent accomplishments and challenges, and trends in the environment that are impacting AABI and advantages it has to address its future.
3. **Now How Wow** Listening Sessions – To augment the strategic engagements of the Steering Committee, NCI hosted 3 broader Listening Sessions for AABI staff, MSU faculty and external stakeholders to think about AABI's current condition (Now), what it could be in the future (Wow) and identify how to get there (How). The first two sessions on February 16 and 18 were only open to staff and faculty while the third on March 30 was offered to external stakeholders.
4. **Staff Input Sessions** – While the Listening Sessions provided much data for consideration, two Staff Input Sessions held on April 23 and 30 offered staff and faculty another opportunity to think more deeply about how to operationalize the vision.
5. **Practical Vision** – On July 27, the Steering Committee picked up its work after the Listening and Input Sessions by expressing their existing hopes and aspirations for the future of AABI in a visioning session. This process allowed latent hopes to emerge and portrayed a clear and practical way for AABI to be in the near future. The Practical Visioning question was *“What will AABI look like in 3-5 years? Describe your hopes.”*
6. **Underlying Conditions** – Identifying Underlying Conditions is an important step in realizing a vision. During this process on July 29, the Steering Committee identified negative patterns or issues that prevent successful strategic initiatives from moving forward. Identifying them is the first step toward eliminating them and realizing the vision. The Underlying Conditions question was *“What is blocking us from moving toward our vision?”*

- 7. Strategic Directions** – The Strategic Directions workshop held on August 6, helped focus on change, how to overcome the underlying conditions that prevent realizing the vision, and unearthed new courses of action. The Strategic Directions question was *“What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the underlying contradictions and move us toward our vision?”*

The outputs of the work of the Steering Committee are documented in this report. The full set of outputs can be seen in Figure 1 but are presented in detail in this report. Outputs from the Listening and Input Sessions are included as appendices. When lists are presented with numbers, the numbers are only for reference and do not denote any value, significance or prioritization.

Figure 1 – Complete set of Steering Committee outputs captured in a Miro board.



Ground Rules

During the first meeting, the Steering Committee defined how it wanted to work together through the Strategic Planning process by adding to an existing set of predefined ground rules.

- Try On
- It's OK to disagree
- It's not OK to blame, shame or attack
- Practice Self-focus
- Share time and space
- Practice “both/and” thinking
- Don't freeze each other in time
- Be aware of intent and impact
- Expect/accept discomfort and unfinished business
- Maintain confidentiality
- There are no personal agendas
- There are no stupid questions or bad ideas

Environmental Assessment

The Steering Committee began its strategic discussions by first discussing and identifying key shifts and trends that are driving AABI's current reality. It identified events, people, innovations, milestones, etc. over the last 30 years that have impacted agriculture and AABI. Figure 2 is a visual representation of the information collected during the Environmental Assessment. The information collected is then compiled in Table 1.

Figure 2 – Steering Committee’s Environmental Assessment captured in a Miro board.

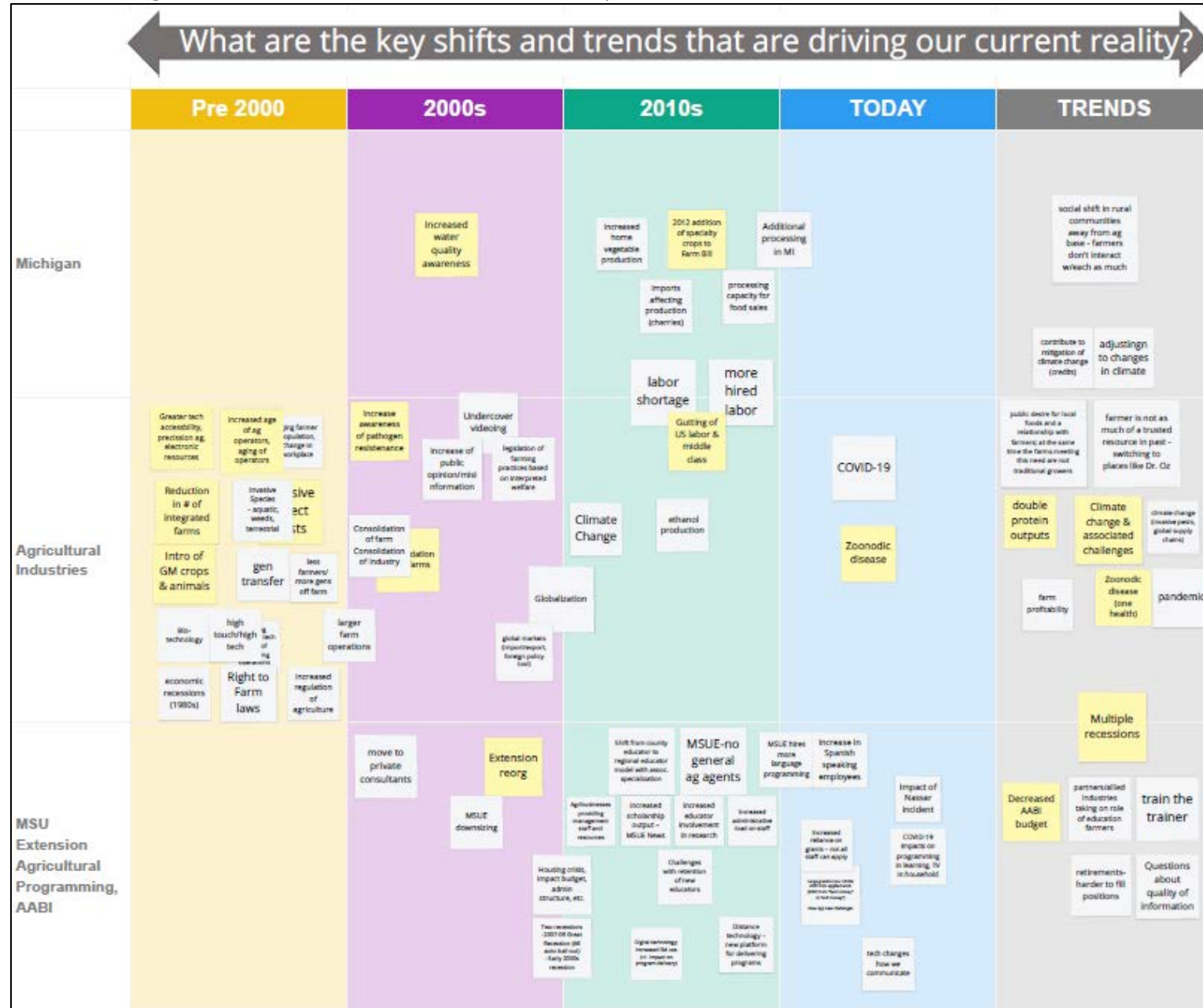


Table 1 – Information collected during Environmental Assessment captured in a Miro board.

	Pre 2000	2000s	2010s	TODAY	TRENDS
Michigan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased water quality awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2012 addition of specialty crops to Farm Bill increased home vegetable production imports affecting production (cherries) labor shortage more hired labor processing capacity for food sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional processing in MI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social shift in rural communities away from ag base - farmers don't interact w/each as much contribute to mitigation of climate change (credits) adjusting to changes in climate
Agricultural Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater tech accessibility, precision ag, electronic resources Increased age of ag operators, aging of operators Reduction in # of integrated farms Invasive insect pests Invasive Species - aquatic, weeds, terrestrial Intro of GM crops & animals gen transfer less farmers/ more gens off farm Bio-technology high touch/high tech larger farm operations Right to Farm laws increased regulation of agriculture economic recessions (1980s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undercover videoing Increase awareness of pathogen resistance legislation of farming practices based on interpreted welfare increase of public opinion/misinformation Consolidation of farm Consolidation of industry Consolidation of US farms global markets (import/export, foreign policy tool) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gutting of US labor & middle class ethanol production Climate Change Globalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Zoonotic disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public desire for local foods and a relationship with farmers; at the same time the farms meeting this need are not traditional growers farmer is not as much of a trusted resource in past - switching to places like Dr. Oz double protein outputs Climate change & associated challenges climate change (invasive pests, global supply chains) pandemic Zoonotic disease (one health) farm profitability Multiple recessions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging farmer population, change in workplace • meeting advanced tech needs of expanding operations 				
MSU Extension Agricultural Programming, AABI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • move to private consultants • Extension reorg • MSUE downsizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from county educator to regional educator model with assoc. specialization • MSUE-no general ag agents • Increased scholarship output – MSUE News • increased educator involvement in research • Increased administrative load on staff • Agribusinesses providing management staff and resources • Challenges with retention of new educators • Housing crisis, impact budget, admin structure, etc. • Distance technology – new platform for delivering programs • Two recessions -2007-09 Great Recession (MI auto bail out) - Early 2000s recession • Digital technology; Increased SM use (+/- impact on program delivery) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSUE hires more language programming • increase in Spanish speaking employees • Impact of Nassar incident • Increased reliance on grants – not all staff can apply • COVID-19 impacts on programming in learning, TV in household • Large grantors (ex. USDA) shift from applied work [Shift from hard money to soft money] New opp new challenges tech changes how we communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners/allied industries taking on role of education farmers • train the trainer • Decreased AABI budget • retirements-harder to fill positions <p>Questions about quality of information</p>

Practical Vision

While vision elements were obtained from the Listening and Input Sessions, after reviewing the information collected in the Listening and Input Sessions the Steering Committee also participated in an independent visioning exercise responding to this question “What will AABI look like in 3-5 years? Describe your hopes.” Figure 3 is a picture of the vision elements developed by the Steering Committee and are presented in detail in this report.

Figure 3 – Practical Vision developed by Steering Committee.



Building a positive work environment that is successful at recruitment & retention

1. AABI competitive at recruiting/retaining talented employees.
2. Have a plan developed to provide an adjustment of "market value" of quality people, including providing dollars for retention opportunities when they are presented.
3. Staffing (recruit, retain, pay, value, pd)
4. The best learning science is instructing our instruction.
5. Positive environment where all employees feel valued, welcomed, and are empowered by the work they do.
6. Increase retention and strategize hiring of new colleagues in key areas.
7. Good work from home policy
8. Need to develop a real career path with accountability objectives

High impact, science-based organization

1. AABI and extension is relevant, trusted and unbiased source for stakeholders
2. Continue volunteer programs that provide participants with meaningful opportunities not diminished by administrative tasks (Unique from Staff requirements)
3. AABI is the primary source of science-based information for MI agriculture.
4. When staffing gaps occur, there are plans to provide coverage in a tangible way
5. AABI is highly visible and accessible to MI citizens.
6. Stop focusing internally (serve clientele) (external mission focused)
7. Training of the next generation- mentoring of youth, college students, educators speak in classes

An integrated, agile, and engaged community of campus & field professionals

1. Unification and enhanced collaboration between specialists and educators, including streamlining reporting platforms.
2. Campus/field/team integration, Research (MSUE relevant)
3. Educators and Specialists seamlessly integrated.
4. Regional work hubs and flexible office space (collegiality)
5. R/T/E integration

Improved organizational efficiency

1. Reduced administrative burden for staff
2. Organizational expectations – administrative overhead (events tagging, paperwork, grant writing, creative support (video graphics) review process for articles etc.)
3. Development of long term, multi-year plans of work

A transdisciplinary approach to critical & emerging ag & food issues

1. Providing opportunities to complete groundbreaking, applicable research with a focus on translation (specialists) to application (educators) so that value to our clientele is provided.
2. Faculty and staff engaged and playing leading roles in centers on wicked problems (cross institutes/interdisciplinary work) (example environmental issues partnership with environmental studies)
3. More in environmental preservation programs (antibiotic use, carbon footprint, water) a) Clear instructions on how to mitigate damage- what we suggest has to have useful actions/outcomes B) At institution level we should reduce our carbon footprint (maybe 50/50 virtual and in person)
4. Help reduce the number of farm foreclosures and farmer suicides (farm stress and mental health)

Enhanced strategic partnerships with key stakeholders

1. Strategically connected to organizations, businesses and commodity groups to align with industry goals, focuses and needs.
2. Increase stakeholder base; new and recover “lost” stakeholders
3. Conduct stakeholder needs assessment

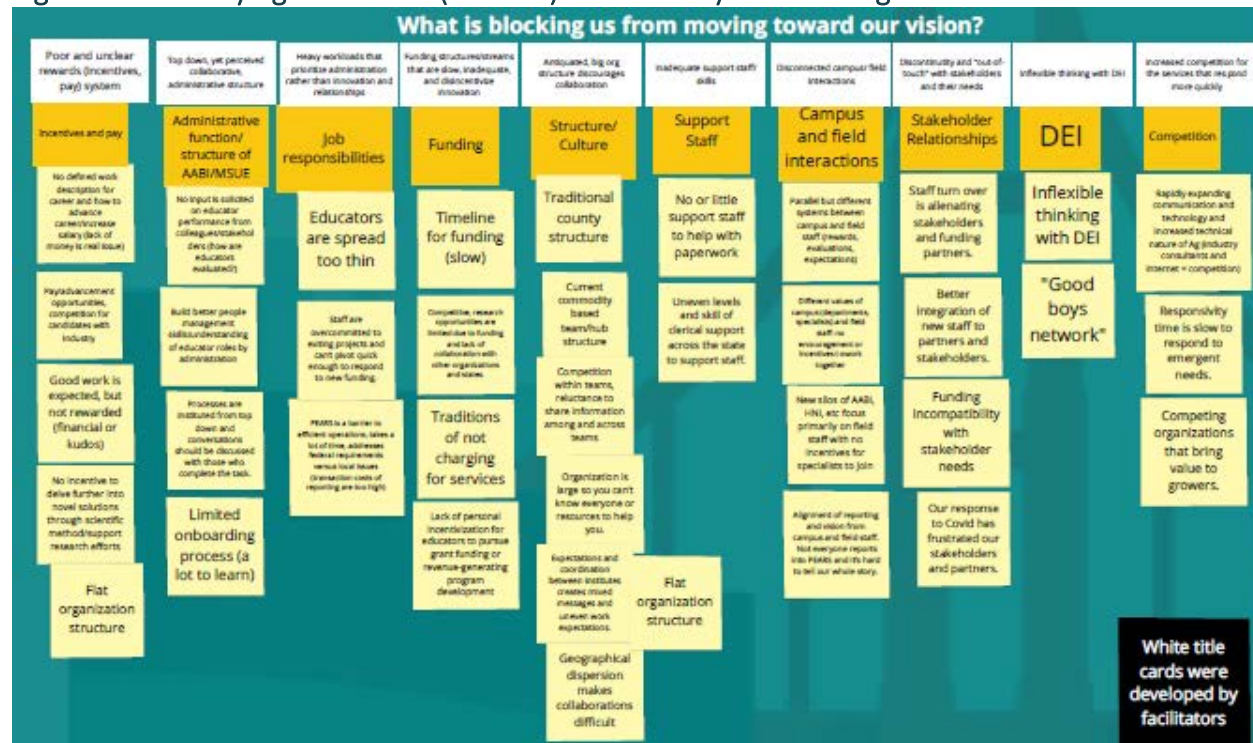
Multi-faceted, diverse funding approach

1. More of an entrepreneurial based strategy with more grant funding (more \$ from companies)
2. AABI will build new, strong partnerships, including funding, with industry and other state and federal agencies.

Underlying Conditions (Barriers)

The Steering Committee then considered underlying conditions that might be preventing realization of the vision and developed this list by responding to this question “What is blocking us from moving toward our vision?” It is important to note that the white title cards were developed by the facilitators based on contributing content below them. Figure 4 is a picture of the Underlying Conditions or Barriers that were identified by the Steering Committee and are presented in detail in this report.

Figure 4 – Underlying Conditions (Barriers) identified by the Steering Committee



Poor and unclear rewards (incentives, pay) system [Incentives and pay]

1. No defined work description for career and how to advance career/increase salary (lack of money is real issue)
2. Pay/advancement opportunities, competition for candidates with industry
3. Good work is expected, but not rewarded (financial or kudos)
4. No incentive to delve further into novel solutions through scientific method/support research efforts
5. Flat organization structure

Top down, yet perceived collaborative, administrative structure [Administrative function/ structure of AABI/MSUE]

1. No input is solicited on educator performance from colleagues/stakeholders (how are educators evaluated?)
2. Build better people management skills/understanding of educator roles by administration
3. Processes are instituted from top down and conversations should be discussed with those who complete the task.
4. Limited onboarding process (a lot to learn)

Heavy workloads that prioritize administration rather than innovation and relationships [Job responsibilities]

1. Educators are spread too thin
2. Staff are overcommitted to existing projects and can't pivot quick enough to respond to new funding.
3. PEARS is a barrier to efficient operations, takes a lot of time, addresses federal requirements versus local issues (transaction costs of reporting are too high)

Funding structures/streams that are slow, inadequate, and disincentivize innovation [Funding]

1. Timeline for funding (slow)
2. Competitive, research opportunities are limited due to funding and lack of collaboration with other organizations and states.
3. Traditions of not charging for services
4. Lack of personal incentivization for educators to pursue grant funding or revenue-generating program development

Antiquated, big org structure discourages collaboration [Structure/ Culture]

1. Traditional county structure
2. Current commodity-based team/hub structure
3. Competition within teams, reluctance to share information among and across teams
4. Organization is large so you can't know everyone or resources to help you.
5. Expectations and coordination between institutes creates mixed messages and uneven work expectations.
6. Flat organization structure
7. Geographical dispersion makes collaborations difficult

Inadequate support staff/ skills [Support Staff]

1. No or little support staff to help with paperwork
2. Uneven levels and skill of clerical support across the state to support staff.

Disconnected campus/ field interactions [Campus and field interactions]

1. Parallel but different systems between campus and field staff (rewards, evaluations, expectations)
2. Different values of campus (departments, specialists) and field staff: no encouragement or incentives to work together
3. New silos of AABI, HNI, etc focus primarily on field staff with no incentives for specialists to join
4. Alignment of reporting and vision from campus and field staff. Not everyone reports into PEARS and it's hard to tell our whole story.

Discontinuity and "out-of-touch" with stakeholders and their needs [Stakeholder Relationships]

1. Staff turn over is alienating stakeholders and funding partners.
2. Better integration of new staff to partners and stakeholders.
3. Funding incompatibility with stakeholder needs
4. Our response to Covid has frustrated our stakeholders and partners.

Inflexible thinking with DEI [DEI]

1. Inflexible thinking with DEI
2. "Good boys network"

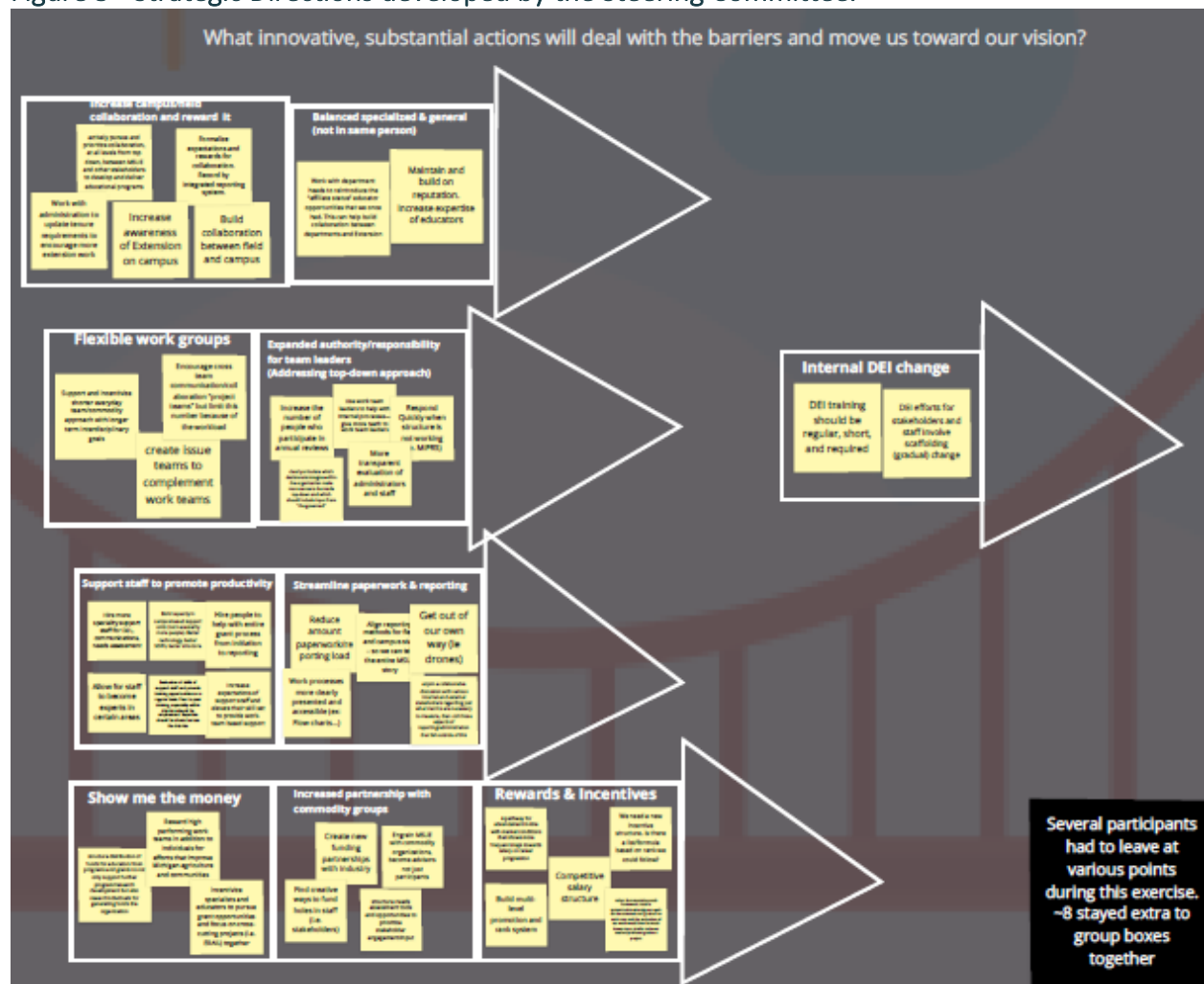
Increased competition for the services that respond more quickly [Competition]

1. Rapidly expanding communication and technology and increased technical nature of Ag (industry consultants and internet = competition)
2. Responsivity time is slow to respond to emergent needs.
3. Competing organizations that bring value to growers.

Strategic Directions

The last exercise that the Steering Committee engaged in was identifying specific actions that AABI could take to overcome the underlying conditions or barriers and achieve the desired vision. Members responded to this question, “What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the barriers and move us toward our vision?” to identify them. Several participants had to leave at various points during this exercise leaving 6-8 participants who were able to stay past the designated time to group boxes together. Figure 5 is a picture of the Strategic Directions developed by the Steering Committee and are presented in detail in this report.

Figure 5 - Strategic Directions developed by the Steering Committee.



The Steering Committee organized the Strategic Directors into connected or related theme areas:

Theme Area #1

A. Increase campus/field collaboration and reward it

1. actively pursue and prioritize collaboration, at all levels from top down, between MSUE and other stakeholders to develop and deliver educational programs
2. Formalize expectations and rewards for collaboration. Record by integrated reporting system.
3. Work with administration to update tenure requirements to encourage more extension work
4. Increase awareness of Extension on campus
5. Build collaboration between field and campus

B. Balanced specialized & general (not in same person)

1. Maintain and build on reputation. Increase expertise of educators
2. Work with department heads to reintroduce the “affiliate status” educator opportunities that we once had. This can help build collaboration between departments and Extension

Theme Area #2

C. Flexible work groups

1. Encourage cross team communication/collaboration “project teams” but limit this number because of the workload
2. Support and incentivize shorter everyday team/commodity approach with longer term interdisciplinary goals
3. create issue teams to complement work teams

D. Expanded authority/responsibility for team leaders (Addressing top-down approach)

1. Use work team leaders to help with internal processes—give more teeth to work team leaders
2. Increase the number of people who participate in annual reviews
3. Respond Quickly when structure is not working (i.e. MiPRS)
4. More transparent evaluation of administrators and staff
5. clearly articulate which decisions/strategies within the organization make more sense to be made top-down and which should include input from “the governed”

Theme Area #3

E. Internal DEI change

1. DEI training should be regular, short, and required
2. DEI efforts for stakeholders and staff involve scaffolding (gradual) change

Theme Area #4

F. Support staff to promote productivity

1. Hire more specialty support staff for D2L, communications, needs assessment
2. Build capacity in campus-based support units (not necessarily more people). Better technology, better SOP's, better structure
3. Hire people to help with entire grant process from initiation to reporting
4. Increase expectations of support staff and elevate their skill set to provide work-team based support
5. Allow for staff to become experts in certain areas
6. Evaluation of skills of support staff and provide training opportunities on a regular basis. Peer to peer training, especially within districts should be emphasized. Expertise should be shared across the districts

G. Streamline paperwork & reporting

1. Reduce amount paperwork/reporting load
2. Get out of our own way (ie drones)
3. Align reporting methods for field and campus staff – so we can tell the entire MSUE story
4. Work processes more clearly presented and accessible (ex: Flow charts...)
5. enjoin a collaborative discussion with various internal and external stakeholders regarding just what metrics are necessary to measure, then cull those aspects of reporting/administration that fall outside of this

Theme Area #5

H. Rewards & Incentives

1. A pathway for advancement in-line with market conditions that shows more frequent steps towards salary or career progression
2. We need a new incentive structure. Is there a list/formula based on rank we could follow?
3. Competitive salary structure
4. Build multi-level promotion and rank system
5. rather than meets/exceeds framework, install a system/rubric whereby our work can be assessed and “graded” on each area, and the evaluation of our work would then be made known to us, similar to how a teacher/professor grades a project

I. Increased partnership with commodity groups

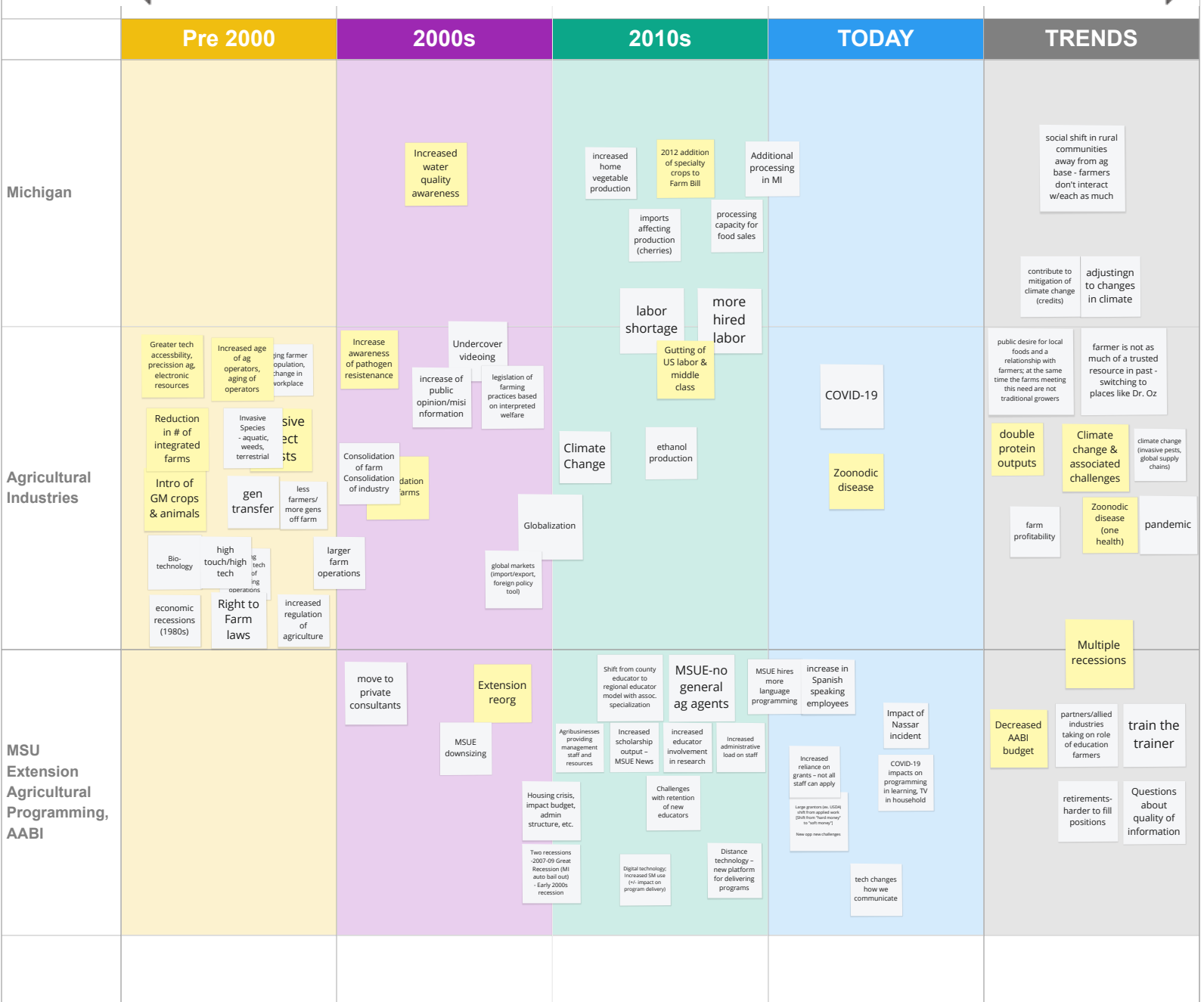
1. Create new funding partnerships with industry
2. Engrain MSUE with commodity organizations, become advisors not just participants
3. Find creative ways to fund holes in staff (i.e. stakeholders)
4. structure needs assessment tools and opportunities to prioritize stakeholder engagement/input

J. Show me the money

1. Reward high performing work teams in addition to individuals for efforts that improve Michigan agriculture and communities
2. structure distribution of funds for educators from programs and grants to not only support further program/research development but also reward individuals for generating funds the organization
3. incentivize specialists and educators to pursue grant opportunities and focus on cross-cutting projects (i.e. ERAIL) together

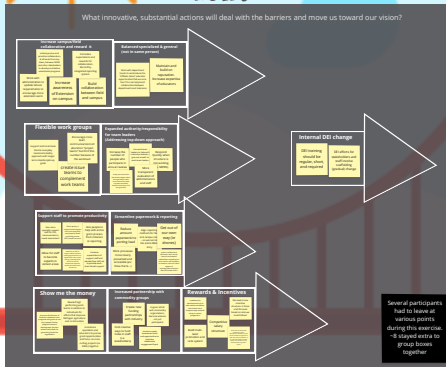
APPENDIX A: MIRO OUTPUTS

What are the key shifts and trends that are driving our current reality?



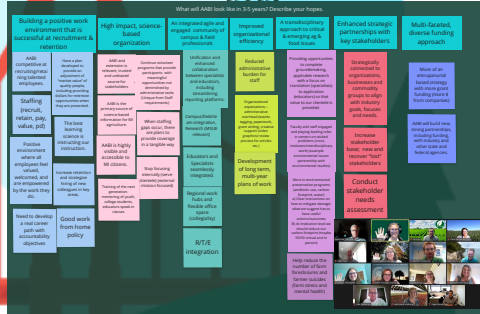


HOW?



Several participants had to leave at various points during this exercise. ~8 stayed extra to group boxes together

WOW!



Help reduce the number of farm foreclosures and farmer suicides (farm credit and mental health)

WOW!

What will AABI look like in 3-5 years? Describe your hopes.

Building a positive work environment that is successful at recruitment & retention

AABI competitive at recruiting/retaining talented employees.

Staffing (recruit, retain, pay, value, pd)

Positive environment where all employees feel valued, welcomed, and are empowered by the work they do.

Need to develop a real career path with accountability objectives

Good work from home policy

Have a plan developed to provide an adjustment of "market value" of quality people, including providing dollars for retention opportunities when they are presented.

The best learning science is instructing our instruction.

Increase retention and strategize hiring of new colleagues in key areas.

High impact, science-based organization

AABI and extension is relevant, trusted and unbiased source for stakeholders

AABI is the primary source of science-based information for MI agriculture.

AABI is highly visible and accessible to MI citizens.

Training of the next generation-mentoring of youth, college students, educators speak in classes

Continue volunteer programs that provide participants with meaningful opportunities not diminished by administrative tasks (Unique from Staff requirements)

When staffing gaps occur, there are plans to provide coverage in a tangible way

Stop focusing internally (serve clientele) (external mission focused)

An integrated agile and engaged community of campus & field professionals

Unification and enhanced collaboration between specialists and educators, including streamlining reporting platforms.

Campus/field/team integration, Research (MSUE relevant)

Educators and Specialists seamlessly integrated.

Regional work hubs and flexible office space (collegiality)

R/T/E integration

Improved organizational efficiency

Reduced administrative burden for staff

Organizational expectations – administrative overhead (events tagging, paperwork, grant writing, creative support (video graphics) review process for articles etc.)

Development of long term, multi-year plans of work

A transdisciplinary approach to critical & emerging ag & food issues

Providing opportunities to complete groundbreaking, applicable research with a focus on translation (specialists) to application (educators) so that value to our clientele is provided.

Faculty and staff engaged and playing leading roles in centers on wicked problems (cross institutes/interdisciplinary work) (example environmental issues partnership with environmental studies)

More in environmental preservation programs (antibiotic use, carbon footprint, water)
A) Clear instructions on how to mitigate damage-what we suggest has to have useful actions/outcomes
B) At institution level we should reduce our carbon footprint (maybe 50/50 virtual and in person)

Help reduce the number of farm foreclosures and farmer suicides (farm stress and mental health)

Enhanced strategic partnerships with key stakeholders

Strategically connected to organizations, businesses and commodity groups to align with industry goals, focuses and needs.

Increase stakeholder base; new and recover "lost" stakeholders

Conduct stakeholder needs assessment

Multi-faceted, diverse funding approach

More of an entrepreneurial based strategy with more grant funding (more \$ from companies)

AABI will build new, strong partnerships, including funding, with industry and other state and federal agencies.



What is blocking us from moving toward our vision?

Poor and unclear rewards (incentives, pay) system

Top down, yet perceived collaborative, administrative structure

Heavy workloads that prioritize administration rather than innovation and relationships

Funding structures/streams that are slow, inadequate, and disincentivize innovation

Antiquated, big org structure discourages collaboration

Inadequate support staff/ skills

Disconnected campus/ field interactions

Discontinuity and "out-of-touch" with stakeholders and their needs

Inflexible thinking with DEI

Increased competition for the services that respond more quickly

Incentives and pay

Administrative function/ structure of AABI/MSUE

Job responsibilities

Funding

Structure/ Culture

Support Staff

Campus and field interactions

Stakeholder Relationships

DEI

Competition

No defined work description for career and how to advance career/increase salary (lack of money is real issue)

No input is solicited on educator performance from colleagues/stakeholders (how are educators evaluated?)

Educators are spread too thin

Timeline for funding (slow)

Traditional county structure

No or little support staff to help with paperwork

Parallel but different systems between campus and field staff (rewards, evaluations, expectations)

Staff turn over is alienating stakeholders and funding partners.

Inflexible thinking with DEI

Rapidly expanding communication and technology and increased technical nature of Ag (industry consultants and internet = competition)

Pay/advancement opportunities, competition for candidates with industry

Build better people management skills/understanding of educator roles by administration

Staff are overcommitted to exiting projects and can't pivot quick enough to respond to new funding.

Competitive, research opportunities are limited due to funding and lack of collaboration with other organizations and states.

Current commodity based team/hub structure

Uneven levels and skill of clerical support across the state to support staff.

Different values of campus (departments, specialists) and field staff: no encouragement or incentives to work together

Better integration of new staff to partners and stakeholders.

"Good boys network"

Responsivity time is slow to respond to emergent needs.

Good work is expected, but not rewarded (financial or kudos)

Processes are instituted from top down and conversations should be discussed with those who complete the task.

PEARS is a barrier to efficient operations, takes a lot of time, addresses federal requirements versus local issues (transaction costs of reporting are too high)

Traditions of not charging for services

Competition within teams, reluctance to share information among and across teams

Organization is large so you can't know everyone or resources to help you.

New silos of AABI, HNI, etc focus primarily on field staff with no incentives for specialists to join

Funding incompatibility with stakeholder needs

Competing organizations that bring value to growers.

No incentive to delve further into novel solutions through scientific method/support research efforts

Limited onboarding process (a lot to learn)

Lack of personal incentivization for educators to pursue grant funding or revenue-generating program development

Expectations and coordination between institutes creates mixed messages and uneven work expectations.

Flat organization structure

Alignment of reporting and vision from campus and field staff. Not everyone reports into PEARs and it's hard to tell our whole story.

Our response to Covid has frustrated our stakeholders and partners.

Flat organization structure

Geographical dispersion makes collaborations difficult

White title cards were developed by facilitators

HOW?

What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the barriers and move us toward our vision?

Increase campus/field collaboration and reward it

actively pursue and prioritize collaboration, at all levels from top down, between MSUE and other stakeholders to develop and deliver educational programs

Formalize expectations and rewards for collaboration. Record by integrated reporting system.

Work with administration to update tenure requirements to encourage more extension work

Increase awareness of Extension on campus

Build collaboration between field and campus

Balanced specialized & general (not in same person)

Work with department heads to reintroduce the "affiliate status" educator opportunities that we once had. This can help build collaboration between departments and Extension

Maintain and build on reputation. Increase expertise of educators

Flexible work groups

Support and incentivize shorter everyday team/commodity approach with longer term interdisciplinary goals

Encourage cross team communication/collaboration "project teams" but limit this number because of the workload

create issue teams to complement work teams

Expanded authority/responsibility for team leaders (Addressing top-down approach)

Increase the number of people who participate in annual reviews

Use work team leaders to help with internal processes—give more teeth to work team leaders

Respond Quickly when structure is not working (i.e. MIPRS)

More transparent evaluation of administrators and staff

Clearly articulate which decisions/changes within the organization make more sense to be made top-down and which should include input from "the grassroots"

Internal DEI change

DEI training should be regular, short, and required

DEI efforts for stakeholders and staff involve scaffolding (gradual) change

Support staff to promote productivity

Hire more specialty support staff for OOL, communications, needs assessment

Build capacity in campus-based support units (that necessarily means people, better technology, better SOPs, better structure)

Hire people to help with entire grant process from initiation to reporting

Allow for staff to become experts in certain areas

Expansion of staff of support staff and provide training, especially within districts should be emphasized. Support should be shared across the districts

Increase expectations of support staff and elevate their skill set to provide work team based support

Streamline paperwork & reporting

Reduce amount paperwork/reporting load

Align reporting methods for field and campus staff—so we can tell the entire MSU story

Get out of our own way (i.e. drones)

Work processes more clearly presented and accessible (ex: Flow charts...)

enjoin a collaborative discussion with various internal and external stakeholders regarding just what metrics are necessary to measure, then call those aspects of reporting/documentation that fall outside of this

Show me the money

Reward high performing work teams in addition to individuals for efforts that improve programs and communities

structure distribution of funds for educators from programs and grants to not only support further program/research development but also reward individuals for generating funds for the organization

Incentivize specialists and educators to pursue grant opportunities and focus on cross-cutting projects (i.e. ERAIL) together

Increased partnership with commodity groups

Create new funding partnerships with industry

Engrain MSUE with commodity organizations, become advisors not just participants

Find creative ways to fund holes in staff (i.e. stakeholders)

structure needs assessment tools and opportunities to prioritize stakeholder engagement/input

Rewards & Incentives

A pathway for advancement in line with market conditions that shows more frequent steps towards salary or career progression

We need a new incentive structure. Is there a list/formula based on rank we could follow?

Competitive salary structure

Build multi-level promotion and rank system

"After the implementation framework, could a commodity advisory board be established and 'graded' up and down, thereby representing the year-round extension educators in a position?

Several participants had to leave at various points during this exercise. ~8 stayed extra to group boxes together

APPENDIX B: AABI Internal & External Stakeholder Listening & Input Sessions Data

July 2021

This document contains a summary of the input gathered from the following meetings:

- First Round of two AABI staff listening sessions held on February 16, 2021 and February 18, 2021 and one AABI external stakeholders listening session held on March 30, 2021
- Second Round of two AABI staff brainstorming sessions held on April 23, 2021 and April 30, 2021

Participants in the First Round listening sessions participated in a WOW, NOW, HOW facilitated activity. First, participants were asked to envision or imagine where they would like to see AABI in 3-5 years and develop a set of “WOW” statements that described that preferred future. Then participants were asked to share where they saw AABI “NOW”. Lastly, participants shared ideas of “HOW” AABI could move from where it currently is to the preferred future that they had imagined. HOW ideas gathered during the First Round listening sessions were organized by the National Charrette Institute (NCI) facilitation team into thematic areas.

- Organizational vision, internal operations, internal communications & DEI
- Funding for staff, operations & programming
- Staffing patterns, positions, teams, expertise, expectations, rewards, hiring & retention
- Program planning/needs assessments, topics, delivery, audiences & impacts
- Partnerships, interactions with stakeholder & marketing

These thematic areas are presented below, along with the specific HOW ideas gathered. This information is labeled as Round 1 - List of HOWs.

AABI staff were then invited back to a Second Round of brainstorming sessions, where they focused on developing an additional set of “HOW” ideas for a small number of the First Round HOW ideas selected by AABI leadership. The HOW ideas from the First Round that were explored in more depth in the Second Round are **HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW**. The second set of HOW ideas are also listed below and are labeled as Round 2 - List of HOWs. The NCI team has highlighted similar thoughts in the Second Round list of HOWs in different colors.

Lastly, after reviewing the WOW statements collected in the First Round listening sessions and the HOW ideas generated in the First and Second Rounds, the NCI facilitation team, with input from the AABI leadership team, have proposed a set of WOW or VISION statements for consideration of the AABI Strategic Planning Team as a discussion starting point for the team’s August 27, 2021, meeting.

Given the length of this document, a Table of Contents has been provided to assist you in navigating through the thematic areas, lists of HOW ideas and possible WOW statements.

Please feel free to contact Holly Madill (madill@msu.edu) or Marie Ruemenapp (ruemenap@msu.edu) if you have any questions.

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(Theme #1) Organizational vision, internal operations, internal communications & DEI

ROUND 1: List of HOWs

1. Strong leadership w/vision for the future; Extension needs to lead Ag into the future, not follow behind.
2. **Get the big things right; Challenge traditional thinking**
3. Don't be afraid to monitor what other states are doing-don't reinvent wheel adapt for MI
4. Think regionally (multi-state); Increase use of collaborative agreements (other states, industry groups etc.)
5. MSU leadership needs to understand the role of a Land Grant University and being truly supportive of this. Have an open and honest conversation with constituents (and listen to) about the land grant mission
6. Integrating research, extension, teaching; ex. Rapid response teams work well
7. Seamless integration across AABI and CFEI serving Ag
8. Meaningful internal DEI work
9. **Consolidate and streamline administrative, paperwork, and reporting requirements to decrease overall administrative responsibilities for educators**
10. **Improve communication; Keep all staff engaged with change as implemented; All staff meeting sharing; Transparency-disengagement is costly**
11. Implement complaint management and improvement system
12. Hire lobbying firm to work on politics
13. Support real efforts toward serving diverse audiences; Listen to diverse peers and stakeholder
14. Continued review of hiring process on diversity; Evaluate needs and provide appropriate support for staff that would identify as marginalized/minority groups
15. Bring in cohorts of people for better retention of diverse staff (young, female, etc.)

ROUND 2: List of HOWs

1. **How can we challenge traditional thinking? What sorts of things does AABI need to do to have internal operations that support innovation and creativity that will make AABI the MODEL for agricultural Extension work of the future?**
 1. Incentivize new staff to adopt leader roles
 2. Incentivize senior staff to adopt more passive roles
 3. Influence staff to work across institutes on high level topics
 4. Incentivize leadership positions
 5. Empower people
 6. Look for ways to flatten the administrative structure and empower the staff to lead
 7. Allow teams to hire their own support staff
 8. Have transition plans for personnel - too many interim, acting, etc
 9. **Share time and space (Using Ground Rules)**
 10. **Limit speaking time**
 11. More support and promotion for programming based on need or issue for an industry or by expertise of the educators and not on location.
 12. Cut back on operating funds. Less in-person, more expensive meetings. Spend more on helping employees either decreasing their workload or increasing incentives
 13. Save money by parting with district directors Or other higher-rank employees And spend more in operations
 14. **Modernize information delivery. i.e.) Extension Foundation is using AI and Machine learning to respond stakeholders**

15. the events calendar, events, and PEARS all somehow be combined and integrated together
16. Expand AABI's knowledge and understanding of educational methods and technologies
17. Google forms, Doodle Bookable Calendar,
18. Allow individual educators to use their own tools (for example, to replace EMS)

19. Use multiple outreach channels for work
20. Use support staff to reach local audiences/media outreach
21. Redefine audiences
22. Determine what should and what should Extension not be doing?
23. It is not possible to challenge traditional thinking

2. How should AABI consolidate and streamline administrative, paperwork, and reporting requirements to decrease overall administrative responsibilities for educators?

1. Need to understand the why is specific tasks/reporting, etc.
2. Creating a big picture understanding for educators on how reports are used and who MSUE is responsible for reporting too.
3. streamline reporting process and doing it well
4. Make measuring time spent on these tasks part of their reporting.
5. improve the paperwork: service provided ratio
6. Reduce volume of forms
 - a. Create check boxes
7. Evaluate new article writing process for effectiveness
 - a. Reduce forms required for review
8. stop using email attachment forms
9. Place value on current levels of paperwork
10. Make administrative tasks part of the plan of work and reporting process (if we will be using part of our time for that)
11. Review policy change for effectiveness
12. Admin should be able to mine data for county/state/national reports
13. Incentivize staff to adopt new tech skills
 - a. Provide trainings for this
 - b. Account for time spent on training and performing these tasks
14. Hire more ANR Creative Staff
15. Hire support staff with skills or give them skills to create resources. They need to do more than sit at a desk!
16. Use PPTs for articles
17. Don't assume that everyone is starting at ground zero with DEI

3. How can AABI improve internal communications to keep all staff engaged as change is implemented?

1. host in one main location
2. A page in teams with consistently updated form links
3. Need a FAQ webpage
4. Form a list of current policies
5. Have written procedures for internal and external-facing processes
6. develop a way to share info that is presented to team leaders with the rest of AABI staff
7. List of where to get those tools
8. List of tools you can use to do
9. List of things you are supposed to do
10. what you are supposed to do
11. Review admin communication tools by first-time visitors or newbies.
12. Create a better "step" process for educators to work through
13. Use spoken/video meetings for team building
14. Use spoken/video meetings for work that does not have to be saved for others to review
15. Shorter emails and communications (Less Wordy)
16. Rely less on meetings and more on written communications. Save the spoken/video/in-person meetings for team building
17. More/longer meeting time at FEC
18. AABI should do a deep dive on what we learned as a result COVID - programming, interfacing with customers Find better ways to motivate our people

19. Define rolls more clearly

20. Move away from top down to a bottom up communication structure

Possible WOW Statements

- AABI will have a forward-focused vision articulated broadly internally and externally that integrates ideas from leadership and the field, and that prepares AABI to anticipate and address the opportunities and challenges of Michigan agriculture currently and into the future.
- AABI will communicate effectively within AABI, with other MSU Extension institutes, across MSU, with other Land-Grant Universities and Extension systems nationally, and with Michigan's agricultural community and stakeholders.
- AABI's operations will balance system requirements and administrative with innovative and creative program delivery allowing AABI the agility to rapidly respond to the largest challenges and crisis facing Michigan agriculture.
- AABI is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive culture, we will work to understand and reduce barriers that exist within the Institute, and we will provide support and guidance to AABI staff to improve programing and resources to be inclusive of diverse and underserved audiences. AABI will provide support and guidance to staff and improve recruiting people of color, women, and LGBTQIA+ individuals into AABI.
- The reputation of AABI will be as THE source for trusted, unbiased, research driven, relevant educational information, making AABI a national leader and model for agricultural Extension.

(Theme #2) Funding for staff, operations & programming

ROUND 1: List of HOWs

1. Create solid & reliable funding source for employees/employment & capital equipment; balance hiring to operating
2. More money at state, national and local level - for salaries, for programs, for research, for other MSUE activities
3. Entrepreneurial funding sources; Increase funding and diversify funding streams; Plan for turnover with rainy day fund; Creative budget ideas to stretch money across fiscal years
4. Embrace grant funding
5. Increase fee for service offerings
6. increased industry financial partnerships; Industry contribute cost to positions that fit better in Extension than University; Cultivate the base of support among all audiences (new, traditional established farmers, urban audiences, etc.)
7. More state and federal funding
8. Expand institutional support to integrate Extension into large grant applications; Partner with other MSU units to fill core positions of need
9. Clear outcomes and products to justify funding
10. Hire firm to figure out funding options
11. Integrated grant teams with solid support pre- and post-award
12. Credit given for dollars brought into organization; Incentivize grants activities and dollars secured from industry/external; Share cost savings from grants, industry gifts with staff
13. Salaries competitive with other opportunities in industry to get best people
14. Compensation relative to employee performance (clear expectations and transparent process); Better merit-based performance system evaluation; compensate meets/exceeds with raises
15. Positions that are continuing funded vs. fixed term (helps with recruitment/ retention)

ROUND 2: List of HOWs

1. How can AABI increase & diversify funding through entrepreneurial sources and use creative budget ideas to plan for turnover and sustainability?
 1. Pay someone to think about this every day
 2. recognize that different positions may have different opportunities
 3. inclusive leadership
 4. finish and deliver on-time, as you committed to doing
 5. Provide incentives for being entrepreneurial.
 6. define entrepreneurial
 7. increase salaries
 8. bonus for exceeding "sales"
 9. consulting days as incentive?
 10. Allow consulting for fees in a way that doesn't compromise our commitment to objectivity
 11. Develop an accounting system that would make it easier to do fee for service work.
 12. soils testing lab is fee-for-service entity can serve as model (continuous or one-time)
 13. create room for advancement
 14. invest in reducing turnover
 15. increase job satisfaction (creating value, listened to)
 16. invest in the process of finding more funding to GET more funding
 17. resources to identify the funding sources (Tyler Tulloch?)
 18. make process of getting grants/jobs/fee for service part of accountability along career path
 19. expectation that if MSUE staff carry load on a grant that their salary is applied (create salary savings)
 20. identify what 'good' performance means- target of fundraising (peer review)
 21. identify what 'good' performance means- target of fundraising (peer review?)

22. as newer educator, it would be great to have a course or list of potential grants that exist within my project area
23. Identify potential partners having common goals
24. change the way we org-project team (inter-institute) as opposed to commodity group to tackle the BIG problems
25. Demonstrate benefits of partnership
26. Form teams of investigators (Ext., other Univs)
27. project teams have life cycles (identify, find funding, etc.
28. Engage the entire supply change
29. Make MSUE the first thing that pops into people's minds when they have a problem or issue.

2. How can AABI increase fee for service offerings?

1. consultancy is not part of land grant mission
2. review protocol for determining how much time to buy out on a grant
3. We need help with pricing of educational services
4. gap analysis between private service and unmet needs
5. find true value of Extension services
6. benchmark against other Univs, open market
7. Evaluate current pricing for appropriateness (ex. soil test)
8. Avoid competition with the private sector
9. Fee for some high value educational services (e.g., ERAIL training available on-line or in-person)
10. Allow group/cloud-based expert provider services
11. manure management systems plans fall under environmental compliance
12. laboratory analysis, expert testimony, environmental compliance plans, biosecurity plan
13. Quality assurance certification
14. Develop more certification training
15. Certification in manure management
16. Training
17. partner with private sector through certification programs, trainings, etc. This might influence sponsorship by partnering
18. Farm data analysis/interpretation
19. Yield monitor calibration
20. Consult with farmers with 'on-farm' research (design, conduct and analysis)
21. Currently out-of-state for educators consulting days as incentives
22. Product life-cycle teams
23. project teams have life cycles (identify, find funding, etc.

3. How can AABI expand institutional support to integrate Extension into large grant applications and partner with other MSU units to fill core positions of need?

1. find true value of Extension services
2. HUGE expansion of promotional strategy
3. Promote to other MI Univs
4. Open FEC or portion to non-E folks (topic focused)
5. Sell/market Extension's expertise to other units
6. Hire or contract a marketing expert
7. Train a select group of educators to be the sales force
8. Has to be someone to coordinate (dedicated, paid)
9. Go through CGA
10. review protocol for determining how much time to buy out on a grant
11. have a course or list of potential grants that exist within my project area
12. experienced grant writers to assist field staff
13. Put some of the onus for partner-formation
14. Flip the table on the campus-based PIs (collaborative proposals) win-win partnerships
15. clarity on how joint partners each benefit
16. Identify partners then ask what units are missing

17. consider new relationships with existing partners
18. develop relationships with new partners
19. ID a mega-powerful and complementary academic and industrial ally
20. identify BIG issue, partner (MIT), MSUE to translate
21. Identify program sponsors, needs, co-create program/service
22. long-term collaboration with sponsors/ audiences? (e.g. positions funded)
23. Initiate conversations with long-standing research programs at MSU about what THEIR needs are for outreach and extension.
24. Survey the field of opportunities (Tyler Tulloch)
25. allow educators to explore BIG issues and solutions
26. resources are tight, and they want research that matters
27. increasingly grant-funded projects are being asked to justify or explain their broader impacts.
28. taxpayers want to see how their money is being used and how research is helping to improve their lives
29. look to international groups for how to do this? (Gates Fdn)
30. expand capacity for Governmental relations across more positions
31. Extension needs to be introduced to all departments on campus.
32. Department chairs need to communicate staffing and program needs
33. Perhaps follow the Experiment Station Model and make MSUE university wide. Broaden "our" projects to include other disciplines
34. develop multi discipline teams with larger overarching goals in common
 - a. Example: climate outreach team
 - b. Example: dealing with farm stress, environment (fish/wildlife)
35. facilitate across the U, overarching themes, how to create these teams
36. Departments/ units allow time for presentations in staff meetings
37. common meetings/ committees/ conferences with other orgs, units (networking)
38. better strategic planning
39. define 'core'
40. Increase length of retirement notification (3 yrs)

Possible WOW Statements

- AABI will entrepreneurially employ a creative, diversified, sustainable mosaic of funding streams to adequately provide financial support for staff, programming, operations, technology, equipment and other necessary expenses.

(Theme #3) Staffing patterns, positions, teams, expertise, expectations, rewards, hiring & retention

ROUND 1: List of HOWs

1. Determine ways to increase and maintain staffing in the field; Work to fill vacancies as soon as possible; More specialists
2. Recognize the importance of hiring the right people; Top notch people; Involve stakeholders in the hiring process; Examine impact of having fixed term positions vs. continued funding positions on hiring and retention
3. Continue review of hiring and employee retention challenges on the diversity of the AABI staff team
4. Attract high quality candidates for open positions; In postings include links to resources available to positions, contacts to allow potential candidates to investigate our openings more thoroughly; Create pipeline for developing new talent, connect to students and other universities
5. Figure out how to retain good people; Maybe bring in co-horts of new staff, particularly diverse, female, young staff; Identify additional level of support need by diverse, minority, marginalized staff
6. Examine administrative, paperwork, reporting and similar types of process that are required of educator positions to determine necessity and if some of them could be shifted to support type positions allowing educators more time for programming and stakeholder interaction. Some specific ideas for positions or ways to do this are:
 - a. Marketing, web development, events management
 - b. Training for county support staff on graphic design, marketing, IT, grant management
7. Provide significant rewards for high performance; incentive quality over quantity; develop alternative (non-monetary) options for employee rewards/appreciation
8. Improved, transparent, clear rubric for performance evaluation and incentives; include clientele input; real tenure process
9. Accountability for educators & campus faculty with Extension appointments
10. Long-term impact focused, self-directed work teams, led by educators
11. Improve communication channels between and among team and campus; Remove barriers for collaboration between teams; Encourage team collaboration
12. Give educators more authority; empower, don't micromanage; Allow flexibility in how educators do their jobs; Encourage and reward risk taking
13. Redefine field staff roles; Faculty appointments for educators; Think of county-based staff more as district staff or specialists; Consider program instructors vs. educators
14. Creative staffing plan; Need defined set of criteria to determine which positions get filled, ability to determine need and justify positions; Geographic and demographic rationale for coverage responsibility; Take team input on where position is needed
15. Robust professional development opportunities, aligned with industry so educators' expertise keeps up with industry trends, laws, technology, etc.; Technical seminars to enhance holistic understanding and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration
16. Connect new staff with formal and informal mentors; cross-team mentoring; better transfer of knowledge between experienced and new staff; recognize/use expertise of campus specialists; pair new staff with producer mentor; more feedback and coaching without more layers of management

ROUND 2: List of HOWs

1. What does AABI need to do to increase and maintain staffing in the field? What sort of things could AABI do to fill vacancies as soon as possible?

1. Be competitive with industry around positions
2. Competitive Starting wages to compete with industry and have adequate raises to maintain
3. Increasing Staffing - respond to industry needs and find non-traditional funding resources.
4. Get posting out to non-traditional, minority-serving institutions; HBU, Hispanic serving, 1994, etc.
5. Q. how do we determine people who might be interested in the job, but are coming from a different area/ expertise to get people with diverse backgrounds; avoid pigeonholing
6. Posting jobs in places people with the skills would find them, colleges, profession boards, etc., think outside box
7. Think broadly about diverse skills that could be relevant to the job, be open to diverse work that could be done in positions
8. Q. How do we let students with skills set/expertise MSUE wants know about Extension; they may not know about Extension
9. Work with advising offices
10. Fill faster, have a sense of urgency to get staff in place
11. Shorten up posting, interviewing, hiring time frames; we lose good candidates because it takes too long; i.e. person had 4 interviews and it took several months, took almost a year to get a job posted, even hiring temp staff takes too long
12. More transparency from admin on what the staffing process is|
13. build strong connections with FFA & 4-H
14. Take advantage of industry partners when they offer funds to support positionsIf you want high performers, need to reward them to keep them
15. need to compensate staff for taking on more responsibility.. we have not done that very well.
16. Be able to compensate all high performers in a given year, don't limit
17. Let people live and work where they want to live and work; be flexible; give people choices; be open, we've learned we can be flexible on work location and still get jobs done
18. People are attracted to people who do things they want to do and work the way they want to; so emulate what we want
19. Maintaining Staff by not burdening current staff with more requirements. We now do all of our office administrative work ourselves and reporting/evaluation, program planning, etc. have become more complicated and demanding of time.
20. Leverage specialist at other LGUs too
21. Develop a staff succession plan and foster closer relationships with ag programs (colleges) to know who is coming out of programs that could fill roles
22. Clear career goals with a better path(less flat) to advancement and provide competitive pay.
23. Allowing an overlap of retirees and new staff
24. Develop mentoring teams comprised of EE's, specialists and maybe clientele or industry partners. Make these teams ongoing until Step III is obtained. This would align more closely with CANR department mentoring system.
25. Can we develop a better system for "ladder climbing" on where/how to move upwards in the system.
26. Standardize new educator base pay raises during the early part of their career
27. We don't need more specialists, we need the current specialists to fill their extension appointment. Provide a clear connection with campus researchers.
28. Make sure we have, or build them, programs that train people to work for Extension

29. Increase professional development opportunities with funding for specialized training
30. Listen to new staff about what they want to work in/on

31. work with new educators to develop meaningful goals, provide meaningful feedback through peer review
32. Make specialist a part of the extension promotion program. Perhaps two tracks to either go to senior educator or specialist

2. How can AABI improve communication channels between and among team and campus? How can AABI remove barriers for collaboration between teams to encourage team collaboration?

1. Regular meetings/ monthly to communication/ collaborate in a regional
2. invite EE with related roles to team meetings, i.e. like inviting horse/livestock EEs to forage team mtgs
3. AABI team leader meetings are a good place to share and start collaboration
4. MAEA is also a good place to build relationships and collaborations, mentorship opportunity/ unofficially
5. FDA Style having an educator do a detail with another team (ie. a beef team member details six months with the consumer hort team)
6. Attend lots of other team's meetings
7. Improve content/agenda of AABI staff meetings to encourage more campus staff participation
8. More shared culture/norms between teams
9. want to be seen as an AABI team within that regional area
10. more social opportunities to interact and create connections
11. Increased exposure and relationship building among all institutes.
12. Clearer outline of roles and responsibilities for all people/moving parts
13. Clear communication about who, where, how decisions are made
14. clearly communicated hierarchy of decision making, not just internal, but with stakeholders, external partners, etc.
15. Campus Specialist don't report in PEARS so they don't always understand what we need
16. Hold campus staff accountable for extension appointments and provide them with adequate funding to fulfill their appointment
17. Specialist get overrun with other responsibilities (teaching/Research) and extension takes a back seat as reviews are done by departments
18. Open directory of what people specialize in. Not their title their interests. Let educators edit at will.
19. Appreciate access through Ron & Marilyn's office hours

3. To achieve a creative AABI staffing plan and build the model for agricultural Extension work of the future, what sorts of adjustments would need to be made in field staff roles? Educator roles vs. program instructor roles? Faculty roles?

1. recognition of the need and time that is needed to build and maintain local relationship
2. Time to build and maintain relationship with campus specialists/faculty
3. Technicians, not PC's, too much responsibility drift
4. Hire BS with expectation w/MS, build skills, especially those w/local ties and ag experience
5. Support staff could have particular skill sets to focus on (graphics, website, editing) that anyone in the district could tap.
6. Help educators realize that possibilities of where their jobs can go also come with responsibilities.

7. Get educators to dream about what they could/can do
8. Give permission/ encourage evolution of job/role
9. Remove institutional barriers to lateral and upward movement(ie. job classifications that potentially hamper lateral movement)
10. Departmental affiliation that means something
11. Some people need flexibility in determining job, others need clear direction, AABI needs to be able to do both based on staff need
12. Standardize roles within work teams, Educators/instructors may perform similar roles at vastly different compensation
13. Make sure staff understand difference and similarities between position types for benefits, leaves and similar types of things
14. Define what the percentage or expectation is for different aspects of the job (ex. internal service/committees vs. program vs. research vs. partnerships vs. fundraising, etc.
15. faculty with extension appointments should be required to work with the field educator team and be evaluated for the % of Extension work they accomplish. This creates the best teams
16. Faculty need to be part of AABI.
17. accountability for Extension assignments
18. Let field staff be field staff. Stop overloading with internal work/committees.
 - a. campus want field staff affiliated w/dept

4. How does AABI create/implement a creative staffing plan? What criteria should be used to determine which positions get filled? How should AABI teams input be included in the decision-making process? What rationale should be used to determine the geographic and/or demographic rationale for coverage responsibilities?

1. Leadership that actively supports the role of the educators
2. Poll Industry for input.
3. Talk to producers regularly get a sense of how many of them have similar idea of need
4. Don't need a person with expertise in every area, but need close enough to get out on farm
5. Need someone local who knows who to contact to get info farmer needs, knows enough to ask the right questions and convey the information back accurately
6. Traditional vs. opportunity
7. Traditional is base ag industry
8. Need local backing for staff to do jobs effectively
9. Push/pull of local vs. broader, stakeholders want local, but funding to do that difficult
10. more interaction with teams, more involvement by team
11. Need team member coverage for areas of the state, but some of that can be affiliation.
12. agree with Bruce, team member coverage across the state
13. Teams should be included in discussion
14. Teams request or suggest positions, but don't know if they will ever be created
15. Accountability to team on positions.
16. admin asked teams to develop staffing plans in 2015 and answer most of the questions in #4. We did that.. went 4 years with no action.
17. Don't solely fill position just because industry has money, mission driven fill positions
18. consider how we prioritize campus vs field staffing. it seems like Extension is backwards with funding for campus vs field
19. More open dialogue and transparency on the total picture
20. Look at opportunities to expand and fund new
21. Volunteer management should be more even distributed, especially when staff serve less populated areas
22. Staff need to know more abt what is happening

23. Staffing plan should be based on stakeholder needs not just industry needs
24. staffing requires funding... all ag industries cannot help fund equally
25. How DOES the staffing plan get determined now? Who are the players?

26. Who needs to be involved - admin, EE's, WGL & teams, campus faculty, industry stakeholders, clientele. We need to have everyone communicate - maybe new lines of funding will be identified.

5. How can AABI align staff professional development opportunities with ag industry's needs, so that educators' expertise keeps up with industry trends, laws, technology, etc.? What sort of staff professional development is needed to increase AABI staff understanding and skills to effectively engage in interdisciplinary collaboration?

1. Hire people with a passion to learn.
2. Clear path to achieve advanced degrees
3. Have staff involved in State industry meetings, on boards, etc.
4. Getting practical on the farm experience
5. MSUE/ AABI's work is about relationships w/farmers, so need the skills & opportunities to do that
6. Encourage trips to encourage unique happenings in the industry
7. Encourage staff to take sabbaticals of couple months to intern with the industry
8. Provide chance for "sabbatical" similar to faculty to obtain experience with industry or other academic experience to gain new skill/perspective
9. Adequate budget to attend industry specific PD. Covid has help as many are now virtual
10. Have staff share with all of AABI or Team (peer-to-peer sharing) what they have learned from their interactions and involvement w/ industry so others can know & learn from it
 - a. Especially at staff onboarding of new staff
11. Coordinate an industry/extension advisory group to discuss what PD is needed to meet the goals of the industry and extension educators
12. When developing PD ideas include producers/ stakeholders in identifying what is needed
13. More guidance is needed, more support for building PD plans
14. Encourage and guide the formation of a good PD plan.
15. Be clearer about expectations and what educators should be doing
16. Give educators a clear goal for PD hours each year. An expectation/limit --should be mentored. The way we report this with time off makes me feel negatively about PD.
17. Some negative reaction to reporting PD right next to sick time
18. Automation will undoubtedly be huge in the coming decade.
19. more of a futuring discussion on a whole series of issues that will be cutting edge in the future.

Possible WOW Statements

- AABI will attract, retain and reward a diverse, high performing workforce located and accessible throughout the state with the skills and expertise required to meet the needs of the breadth of Michigan's diverse agricultural producers and industry.
- AABI educators, faculty and staff will be life-long learners, focused on providing trusted, unbiased, research driven, relevant educational information through learner-centered, state-of-the-art, inclusive and accessible program delivery modes.

(Theme #4) Program planning/needs assessments, topics, delivery, audiences & impacts

ROUND 1: List of HOWs

1. Increase the diversity of the clients/ audience served; support real efforts toward serving diverse audiences; broaden definition of 'valid' agriculture
2. Conduct one centralized, annual needs assessment and evaluation survey of ag stakeholders to clearly define needs and prioritize areas; continued open & honest conversation with constituents
3. Focus programming on complex, soft technology issues to remain relevant, i.e. knowledge, behavior, decision-making, community &/or cultural issues/skills; potential programming that fits this model are environmental quality, IPM, climate change, succession planning, diversity (bio and human) etc.
4. Integrate farm business expertise into other topically focused programming
5. Develop statewide commodity educational content, in person & online
6. Centralized, long-term program plan/ calendar that has content that is responsive to organizational and clientele priorities that determines "best" way to deliver program content, i.e. in person, online, using Zoom or online, on demand class using D2L or something like it
7. Challenge traditional thinking on program delivery; build on strengths and what was learned in 2020 but take balanced approach between online and in person program delivery by:
 - a. Maintaining local and on farm presence
 - b. Using Zoom and other online delivery options regularly
 - c. Allowing programs to be accessible to rural, suburban and urban ag clientele with & without technology
 - d. Recognizing that rapid response teams work well
 - e. Renewing dedication to MSUE News and alternative forms of education delivery
8. Continue coordination between campus specialists and field educators around program delivery
9. Make an investment in online technology to improve quality of educational experience
10. Utilize industry technology to help in research projects; better integrate research and grower contacts, improving communications
11. Make sure program outcomes focus on value to stakeholders' ability to improve lives and livelihoods; triple bottom line of economics/environment/social value
12. Conduct fewer, but better program evaluations

ROUND 2: List of HOWs

1. **How should AABI modify its programming to focus more efforts on building clientele knowledge, increasing their behavioral change, improving their decision-making and cultural competency skills, and increasing their ability to be community influencers or leaders? So, focus on building soft skills, not just hard knowledge?**
 1. Staff that is trained and can provide support in these priorities
 2. Offer cross institute programming more often (Farm stress example, beginning farmer)
 3. practices being promoted may not be the best for growers (industry and government control of program)

4. Audiences-Those that have access to the internet. Those that don't use technology beyond flip phones, etc.
5. Audiences - Early Adopters of Technology, Size of operation, part timers vs full timers,
6. more/deeper relationships with clients
7. Involve clientele more deeply in the programming
8. come up with uniform survey style questions that are asked in person across AABI to help guide programming and programming delivery
9. Scalar input - Make sure you ask input from each technology, age, complexity of operation.
10. staff and resources trained in soft skills to support educators and program directors
11. show clientele how soft skills can support their overall goals
12. Demonstrating value of these soft skills, (case studies)
13. Financial data showing confirmation of grower inquiry
14. Research that determines merit of newer products (environmental)
15. Are we doing this for getting money or for research based (saying no to money for money 's sake)
16. Credibility not becoming impacted

2. How can AABI build on the strengths of what was learned in 2020 around program delivery? How can AABI be innovative and creative, while challenging traditional thinking, about the way(s) it delivers programming in the future?

1. Virtual programming does work.
2. virtual programming made content more accessible to some and reached locations far away, reaching more people in some cases
3. Hybrid programs can be beneficial
4. Using materials Extension created for campus based classes
5. Grazing School example (classroom education can be done online) participants come in-person to "field events"
6. A flipped classroom concept
7. Being creative in how we meet new growers
8. Live virtual clips with simultaneous in-person
9. Instructor is virtual while participants are in a live setting
10. Adding value by allowing families, employees, children, etc. access to simultaneous learning opportunities
11. Generating applicable (camtasia) videos to keep up with client inquiries
12. Online programming in the form of webinars. videos and D2Ls
13. Continue to allow us to purchase equipment needed for online learning
14. Utilizing Technology (smart-phones) for assessing and assisting with on farm issues
15. Video clips showing specific (pest or nutrient) clips demonstrating
16. Interviews and videos with farmers highlighting practices "success stories" "failures" peer to peer teaching
17. D2L Courses as an example of static learning examples
18. Podcasting (lunch and learn for example) That can be used for radio shows that are broadcast later
19. Social Media- great way to get immediate pest issue or crop update out
20. Article readership increased by adding article through social media to be retweeted
21. Newsletters and separate digests for relevant information
22. We can learn how to shoot videos, edit them and include them in programming
23. Our clientele can learn how to use technology for distance learning
24. Possibly look at more cross-institutional (not to mean Cross-MSUE institute) programming. Do less better while tapping non-MSU entities to fill non-MSUE covered needs

3. What sorts of investments should AABI make in online technology to improve quality of its educational experience and program delivery?

1. Camtasia Producers like (Dave & Craig) who do the work (Educators just record)
2. Video editing and closed captioning assistance
3. Web professionals providing dot CMS
4. Events Management does not "talk" to dotCMS
5. Processes and procedures to achieving success for things like podcasts
6. Social Media platform assistance
7. License to use online technology for "tour of gardens" for example
8. Creation of an interactive app that connects growers to monitor what's happening in grower areas (could connect to enviroweather)
9. Individual hired to assist with technology who is immersed (3 Gwynns)
10. More Luke Reese's
11. Can EM talk to PEARS
12. Matrix to determine what practice to implement on farmers property (financial cost/environmental benefit) grassways vs buffer strips for example

Possible WOW Statements

- AABI will offer relevant, innovative and holistic programming that are inclusive of the diverse agricultural enterprises, producers and industry in Michigan.
- Historic and cutting-edge program delivery methods will be utilized by AABI to ensure accessibility to programming and resources.
- AABI educators, faculty and staff will be life-long learners, focused on providing trusted, unbiased, research driven, relevant educational information through learner-centered, state-of-the-art, inclusive and accessible program delivery modes.

(Theme #5) Partnerships, interactions with stakeholder & marketing

ROUND 1: List of HOWs

1. Seek new partner, partners we don't have yet or may not even know about yet
2. Create/continue effective avenues for communication with stakeholders and partners
3. Deepen connections with university and industry partners, established and yet to be determined; explore opportunities with these partners for staffing and program funding but recognize that there are more than financial benefits to these partnerships
4. Personalize staff profiles and used dynamically; curated digital footprint
5. Cultivate the base of support among all audiences i.e. new farmers, traditional/ established farmers, urban audiences, etc.
6. Expand interactions, collaborations, partnerships with counterparts at other universities; monitor what other states are doing, don't reinvent wheel adapt for Michigan
7. MSUE institutes need to become reacquainted with each other; need seamless integration across AABI and CFEI serving ag
8. Increased emphasis on visibility and outreach; clearly communicate what extension can offer, impacts of work and value of AABI
9. Communicate frequently with outside parties; have better system for passing public feedback onto leadership; complaint management and improvement system
10. Need to develop/have more capacity for marketing/branding, i.e. more staff dedicated to marketing the good work AABI does, with web development, social media, Events Management; one possibility is to train county support staff to do more graphic design, IT, program promotion, AABI marketing, and assist with grants management

ROUND 2: List of HOWs

1. How can AABI deepen connections with university and industry partners, established and yet to be determined? How should AABI go about exploring opportunities with these partners for staffing and program funding?
 1. Identify priority groups at University/stakeholders
 - a. Looking for existing relationships - how can you add anything/build further collaborations
 - i. Informal small meetings with current and new relationships to learn about their needs and brain storm how we can partner with them
 - ii. Reward collaborations
 - b. emphasize to staff that developing these connections is high priority
 2. Empower our people to make these connections- trainings, removing roadblocks
 - a. staff training - how to develop efficient communications
 - b. Establish priorities
 3. Road blocks - time, money, location (zoom vs F2F)
 4. Seed grants: Build an endowment to fund seed grants that will support initial steps in cross-disciplinary team projects. \$5 to \$10K can drive a lot of innovation in some cases
 5. Adapt evaluation process to encourage long-term efforts. Can't spend a lot of time on developing new connections and products without getting off the treadmill of week-to-week programming some of the time

6. Mini-sabbaticals: let staff embed in other groups for brief periods (within MSU, other land grants, private sector) to develop teams and new skills

2. How can AABI increase emphasis on visibility and outreach? How can AABI clearly communicate what Extension can offer, the impacts of our work and value of AABI?

1. Including MSUE logo on partner projects/initiatives (GAAMPS)
2. Pipe dream: marketing so good that people advertise for you (think Yeti)
3. Branding
4. Be more responsive in advertising and program promotion (Covid forced some of this)
5. Cost-effective marketing where we haven't gone before. Ex: recent billboard ads
6. Develop industry specific newsletters (statewide)
7. Have an agr. person capable of reaching these needs
8. Go viral
9. When doing a field visit, make a case study video/document (sharing with a larger audience)
10. identify visibility and outreach. how do we increase when we are likely to be more virtual in the future
11. Field visits, Field education meetings, Attend stakeholder meetings - need the people power to do this
12. Connect back with traditional audiences
13. Specific to programs
14. Submit reports to stakeholders
15. Attend stakeholder meetings
16. Improve communication with stakeholders
17. Be intentional when doing outreach
18. Balance supporting local partnerships/relationships while also being technical experts
19. Balance supporting local partnerships/relationships while also being technical experts
20. Communicate programs and partnerships occurring within the districts, with the districts
21. Districts is one example (small piece of pie when you look at the complete list)
22. facilitate issue identification meetings then follow up with action plan meetings

3. How can AABI develop or have more capacity for marketing/branding, web development, social media, Events Management, and other communication and marketing tasks? How might county support staff be engaged in these tasks?

1. Purchase software use for all extension (Canva, Camtasia, etc)
2. Mail Chimp or similar newsletter
3. Advertise on bill boards, radio and TV - short impact stats using real people that are impacted
4. Community News papers
5. Telling a story quickly that highlight impact on producer/consumer - with a very LOCAL connection
6. Ensure the "realness" in our messaging
7. Opportunities for MSUE/MSU relationship building/networking (cross sharing programs OUTSIDE of AABI)
8. Regional F2F locations and then group up virtually (hybrid programming)
9. Extension staff available for campus guest lectures for classroom - bring field to campus
10. Promote connections between campus research specialists/extension
11. Professional development for admin staff to support AABI marketing
12. Promote and reward more cross discipline team work (not necessarily for grants)
13. Provide some flexibility in hiring, especially on funded projects. How difficult is it to do temp hiring or part-time hires for this effort?

Possible WOW Statements

- ABBI will have a robust set of partnerships and collaborations across AABI teams, other MSU Extension institutes, MSU, with other Land-Grant Universities and Extension systems nationally, and with Michigan's agricultural community and stakeholders.
- Michigan agricultural producers and stakeholders will constructively be engaged by AABI in educational programming needs assessments, planning and delivery.
- AABI will effectively communicate, internally within MSU Extension and MSU as well as externally to stakeholders and the public at large, the impacts and outcomes of its work.