

12-2016

Comparing the Administration of University Cooperative Extensions in the United States: A Case Analysis

Fatma Nasoz

The Lincy Institute, fatma.nasoz@unlv.edu

Robert E. Lang

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

William E. Brown Jr.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lincy_publications



Part of the [University Extension Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Nasoz, F., Lang, R. E., Brown Jr., W. E. (2016). Comparing the Administration of University Cooperative Extensions in the United States: A Case Analysis. *The Lincy Institute Research Brief*(4), 1-10.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lincy_publications/34

This Report is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Report in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Report has been accepted for inclusion in Lincy Institute Reports and Briefs by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

December 2016

Comparing the Administration of University Cooperative Extensions in the United States: A Case Analysis

BY FATMA NASOZ, PhD
ROBERT E. LANG, PhD
WILLIAM E. BROWN JR., MA

Abstract

For more than a century, cooperative extensions and the land-grant universities have translated and extended research-based knowledge and provided non-formal higher education to their communities. Today, more than 80% of the nation's population are living in urban areas (The World Bank, 2015). Challenges facing diverse populations require cooperative extensions to collaborate and form partnerships to leverage resources and expertise. This brief explores the nation's Cooperative Extension System, in particular the university cooperative extensions run by 1862 Land-Grant Universities. Researchers developed an intrinsic case study design to examine cooperative extensions in 15 states and interviewed leaders of the cooperative extensions to identify 1) how cooperative extensions collaborate with other institutions in and out of state; 2) whether cooperative extensions use local extension offices for student recruitment or fundraising; 3) funding sources of the cooperative extensions; and 4) whether cooperative extensions meet their goals. Common themes emerging from the study demonstrate a high-level of collaboration with other universities and faculty, and minimal use of local county offices for student recruitment and fundraising activities.

Introduction

The Cooperative Extension System (CES), a nationwide educational and outreach network formalized by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, is the partnership between the nation's Land-Grant University (LGU) System and federal, state, and local governments. The CES translates research and expertise from universities into practical knowledge, and disseminates and applies this knowledge in local communities.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the federal partner of the CES. The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) oversees the system, supports the universities and local extension offices in identifying research and extension priorities, and provides congressionally appropriated formula grants to LGUs. State and local governments also provide funding to LGUs to support the extension services that address public needs.

In each state, cooperative extension services operate through the state's LGU(s), which are designated as such by the state legislature or Congress. The Morrill Act of 1862, which established a federally assisted higher education system and created the LGUs, identifies the leading mission of such institutions as, "without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life" (NIFA, 2009). In order to address the educational inequality among African Americans and Native Americans, the Morrill Act of 1890 established the 1890 and 1994 LGUs.

Every state has a designated 1862 LGU and some states also have 1890 and/or 1994 LGUs. In 50 states and District of Columbia

(D.C.), the number of 1862, 1890, and 1994 LGUs is 51, 19, and 34 respectively. **Figure 1** presents the types of LGUs in each state: 20 states and D.C. have only an 1862 LGU; 17 states have both 1862 and 1890 LGUs; 12 have both 1862 and 1994 LGUs; and Oklahoma is the only state with all three types of LGUs (NIFA, 2014).

This research study explores the administration of university cooperative extensions run by 1862 LGUs. The research team interviewed high-level executives of university cooperative extensions in several states to explore the following questions:

- **How** do cooperative extensions collaborate with other universities and faculty?
- **What** student recruitment and fundraising activities do cooperative extensions perform at local extension offices?
- **How** are cooperative extensions funded?
- **How** effective is the current structure?

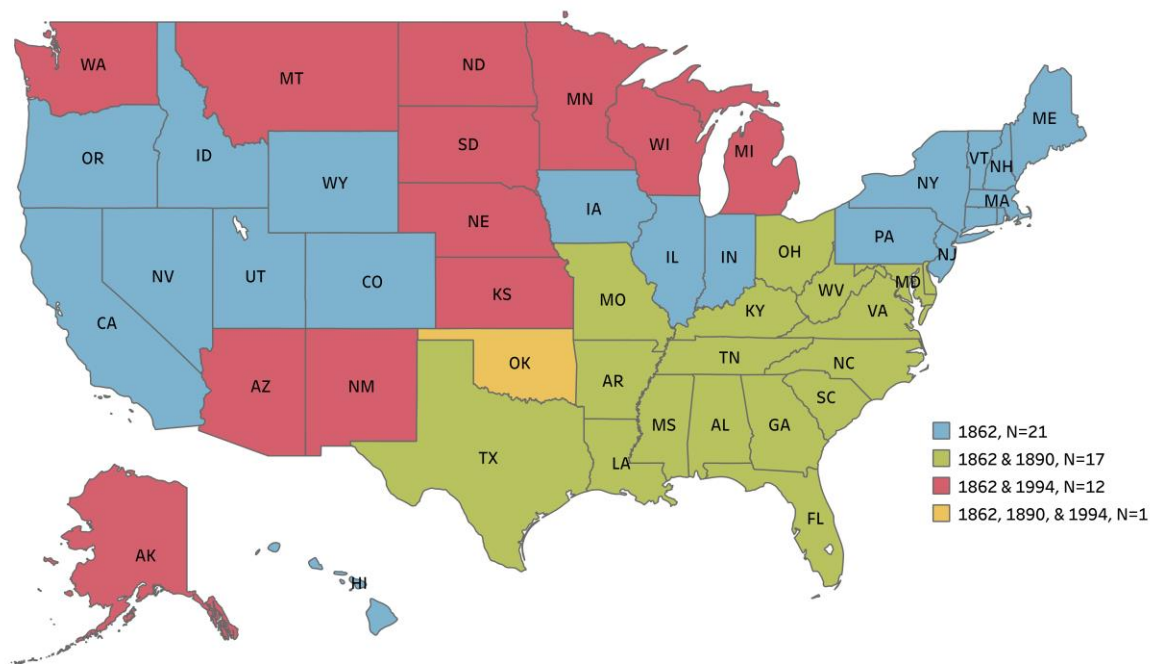


Figure 1 Types of Land-Grant Institutions in 50 States and D.C.

Methods

Research Tools: The primary research tool used in this study is a set of questions asked during phone and email interviews of high-level executives of 15 university cooperative extensions in the United States. The interview questions explored themes on 1) universities that officially administer the extension program; 2) involvement of state's other universities in providing extension services; 3) locations of the extension's county offices; 4) student recruitment and fundraising activities; 5) funding sources of the extension program; and 6) the effectiveness of the current structure. Researchers obtained additional information about the cooperative extensions by examining the documents at the USDA and individual university and extension websites.

Sample: Researchers made a sampling choice to include certain states in this investigation based on similarity to Nevada (NV). Included were states in which the main office of the 1862 LGU that operates the cooperative extension is located far from the population center of the state. Top-five ranked states by geographical distance from the cooperative extension's main office city to the state's

center of population are listed in **Table 1**. The distances are computed using data from the U.S. Census (2010).

Table 1 Geographical Distance between Cooperative Extension Main Office to State's Center of Population

State	Main Office	Distance (mi)
Nevada	Reno	261.69
Alaska	Fairbanks	240.98
California	Oakland	231.72
Washington	Pullman	214.36
Idaho	Moscow	194.68

In total, 21 states were identified. Since NV only has an 1862 LGU, in order to provide a comparative analysis of NV and the sampled states, only the 1862 LGU from each state was included in the sample. Investigators contacted the executives of the cooperative extensions run by 1862 LGUs in those 21 states with interview requests. Fifteen executives responded and their replies were included in the study, corresponding to a response rate of 71.4%. **Figure 2** presents the states included in the study and the type of interview conducted with the university cooperative extension executive in each state. Furthermore, **Table 2** lists the 1862 LGUs and the cooperative extensions in the study.

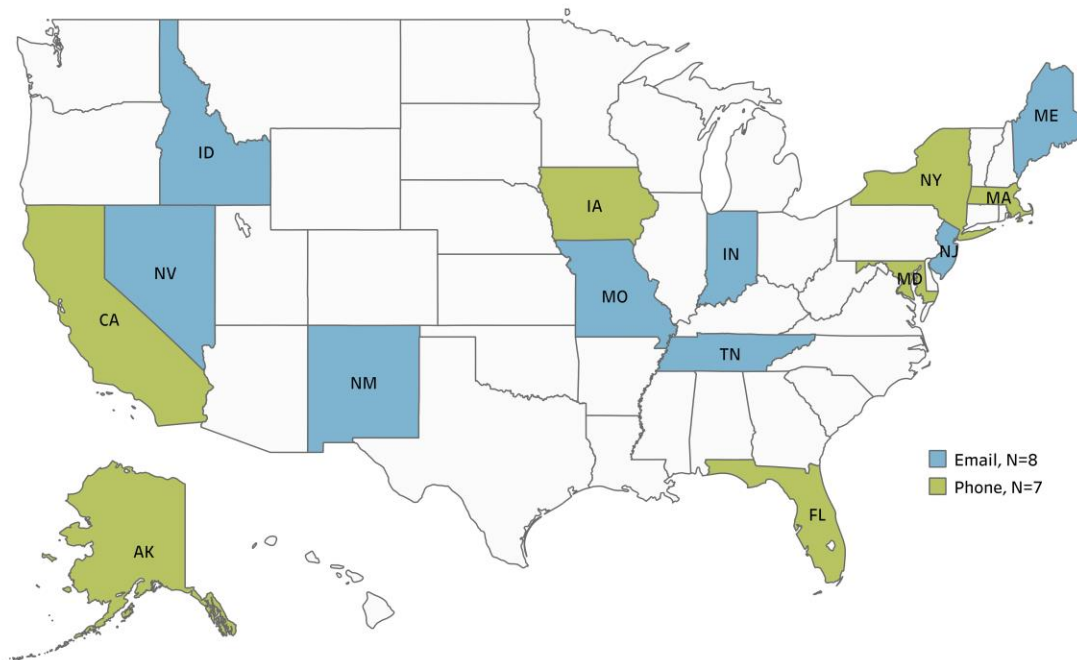


Figure 2 States Included in the Study

Table 2 1862 LGUs and Cooperative Extensions Included in the Study

State	University	Cooperative Extension
Alaska	University of Alaska, Fairbanks	University of Alaska Cooperative Extension
California	University of California System	University of California Cooperative Extension
Florida	University of Florida	University of Florida/IFAS Extension
Idaho	University of Idaho	University of Idaho Extension
Indiana	Purdue University	Purdue University Extension
Iowa	Iowa State University	Iowa State University Extension
Maine	University of Maine	University of Maine Extension
Maryland	University of Maryland at College Park	Maryland Cooperative Extension
Massachusetts	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	University of Massachusetts Extension
Missouri	University of Missouri	University of Missouri Extension
Nevada	University of Nevada, Reno	University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
New Jersey	Rutgers University	Rutgers Cooperative Extension
New Mexico	New Mexico State University	New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service
New York	Cornell University	Cornell Cooperative Extension
Tennessee	University of Tennessee	University of Tennessee Extension

Intrinsic Case Study: In order to gain insight into the administration of 15 university cooperative extensions, scholars developed an intrinsic case study design (Stake, 1995). Researchers chose this approach as its constructivist and exploratory nature provided an in-depth understanding of the nation’s Extension system. The goal of this type of inquiry is not to generalize, but rather to paint an accurate picture of each case (Stake, 2005). Nevertheless, this investigation raises questions about cooperative extension and possible policy implications of the findings for Southern Nevada.

Human Subject Research Considerations: The authors developed and submitted the interview protocol and the research plan to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Institutional Review Board (IRB). An administrative review by the IRB recognized the study to be not "human subject research," due to the nature of the questions asked of participants, and thereby excluded it from board review.

State and University Profiles

Out of 15 states included in the case analysis, 9 states (CA, IA, ID, IN, MA, ME, NJ, NV, and NY) have only an 1862 LGU; 4 states (FL, MD, MO, and TN) have both 1862 and 1890 LGUs; and 2 states (AK and NM) have both 1862 and 1994 LGUs (see **Figure 3**).

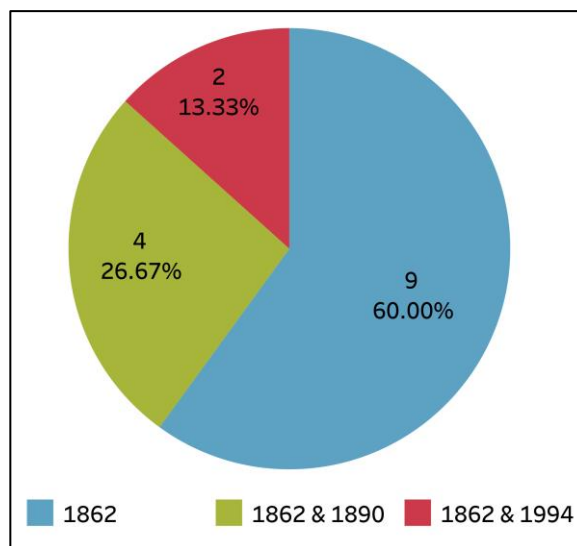


Figure 3 Land-Grant Types

As shown in **Figure 4**, out of 15 1862 LGUs in the study, 12 (LGUs in AK, FL, IA, ID, IN, MA, MD, ME, MO, NJ, NM, and TN) are public universities, 2 (LGUs in CA and NV) are public university systems, and 1 (LGU in NY) is a private university.

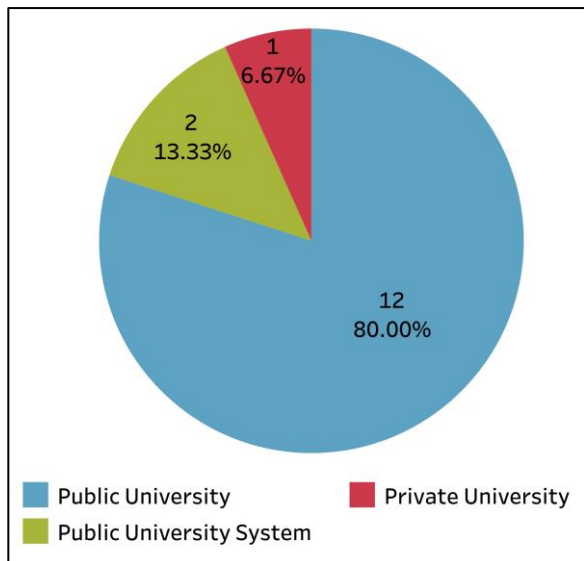


Figure 4 Control Type of 1862 LGUs

Of the 15 1862 LGUs included in the study 10 (LGUs in CA, FL, IA, IN, MA, MD, MO, NJ, NY, and TN) are Carnegie R1: Highest Research Activity institutions and 5 (LGUs in AK, ID, ME, NM, and NV) are Carnegie R2: Higher Research Activity institutions (see **Figure 5**).

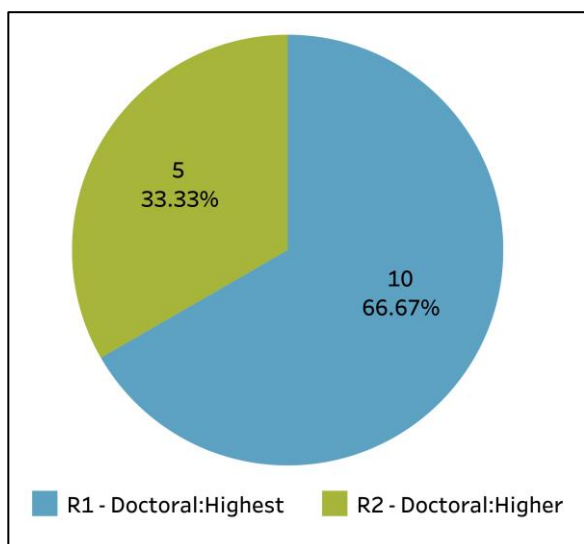


Figure 5 Carnegie Basic Classification

Findings

The findings reveal the diversity of university cooperative extension structures across the nation. The diversity presents itself in several key themes:

1) Partnerships with Other Faculty and Universities

Today, more than 80% of the nation's population are living in urban areas (World Bank, 2015). Challenges facing urban communities require cooperative extensions to collaborate and form partnerships to leverage resources and expertise. The study asked the cooperative extension executives if they collaborate with faculty from other universities on projects and programs. Additionally, executives were asked if any of the local extension offices are located on other university campuses. The executives provided multiple examples, showcasing the collaborative efforts between the cooperative extension and the other universities. Below are some examples of self-reported collaborations.

University of Missouri Cooperative Extension

- Targeted funded collaboration with sister institutions in the UM at St. Louis, Kansas City, and Rolla
- Business/economic development program that is co-funded with other four-year institutions in the state as well as selected two-year community colleges

University of Maryland Cooperative Extension

- Agriculture law with UMD at Baltimore & Eastern Shore
- Health Forum with Pennsylvania
- Health Programs with Virginia Tech, West Virginia, Penn State, and Delaware
- Women in Agriculture with Delaware

New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension

- Partnership with University of New Mexico Health Science Center on Extension health programs

University of California Cooperative Extension

- *Organic Farming with UC Santa Cruz*
- *Water Policies with UC Irvine*
- *Human Nutrition with Fresno State University*
- *Agriculture and nutrition with Chico State University*

University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension

- *Drone technology use in citrus research with University of Central Florida*
- *Sustainable agriculture with Florida International University*
- *Faculty on University of Miami campus working on water issues*

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

- *The Healthiest State Initiative, which aims to improve the physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of Iowans, is a collaborative of universities, department of human services, and local foundations.*
- *Collaboration in research projects and federal funding opportunities*

University of Maine Extension

- *A shared faculty appointment (first of its kind) between two sister campuses*
- *Partners with faculty from 15 institutions of higher education on food security issues and sponsors the annual Hunger Dialogue that examines food security in Maine, specifically within student populations.*
- *Collaboration with other faculty on issues related to food and agriculture*
- *One of the county extension offices is on the campus of a sister UMaine System University.*

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

- *There are Extension faculty and staff housed in facilities of Rutgers University Camden and Rutgers University Newark.*
- *“Many collaborations across universities, across state lines, and across international borders, as well. Our Extension faculty are highly respected nationally and beyond.”*

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

- *“Extension works closely with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas for activities focused on Clark County.”*
- *“Extension also works closely with Western Nevada Community College on programs related to small farms.”*

2) Putting Cooperation and Extension Above Recruitment and Fundraising

Researchers also asked the cooperative extension executives if the county extension offices are used to recruit students or fundraise for the university. Responses revealed that such central university functions are kept to a necessary minimum at the local county offices. Specific responses from various cooperative extensions are shown below.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

- *Student recruitment is not common; however, Cornell Cooperative Extension has a strong 4-H program and students who participate in the program might learn about Cornell University and decide to apply.*
- *Fundraising is done not for Cornell University, but for the county level organization.*

University of California Cooperative Extension

- *No specific student recruitment, but it always has been a discussion because for some counties cooperative extension is the only direct contact.*
- *Local extension offices do not engage in fundraising for universities, but rather for their own extension programs and funds are used to benefit the local community.*

University of Massachusetts Extension

- *No student recruitment*
- *No fundraising*
- *No central university function*

University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension

- *No specific recruitment, but if a family or a prospective student comes to the office then the extension faculty will engage them in conversation and answer their questions.*
- *Extension faculty work on identifying partners to collaborate for funding sources from grants and contracts, but they are not out there proactively looking for donors.*

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

- *"I do not have information about student recruiting activities because this is not part of our formal mission."*

3) Funding Sources

Cooperative extension executives were asked to identify the funding sources for the cooperative extensions across the sampled states. From their responses, researchers determined funding comes from a variety of sources:

- Federal appropriations
- State appropriations
- Federal and state grants and contracts
- Local funds
- Gifts, endowments, donations, and fundraising
- Fees for service
- Other

All cooperative extensions receive federal and state appropriations, grants, and contracts. Cornell Cooperative Extension (NY), University of Missouri Extension (MO), and University of Maine Extension (ME) receive funding from all sources identified above. University of Alaska Cooperative Extension (AK) and University of Massachusetts Extension (MA) do not receive local funds.

4) Emerging Opportunities and Challenges

Overall, the cooperative extension executives reported that extension goals are being met. However, they also acknowledged there are

challenges to address. The most prominent of those challenges are decreasing funding and changing population. Below are some responses from the cooperative extension leaders on opportunities and challenges.

Maryland Cooperative Extension

Maryland is like America in miniature. There are 22 counties and Baltimore. The state from west to east, from Allegany to Piedmont to Chesapeake Bay, shifts from rural to urban to rural, therefore it has different agricultural needs.

University of Maine Extension

"The structure of UMaine for Cooperative Extension is working to meet its goals. Perpetual reductions in state support for higher education is the largest threat to Extension faculty being able to meet the goals of our Plan of Work."

University of Massachusetts Extension

There is an agreement within the university that there is a great deal of unmet need for extension services. It meets the goals, but it doesn't reach a level of achievement. The extension does well what it's doing, but it needs to do more of it. This can be achieved with a shift in structure and a more robust system of community. Currently, there is no strong community government and no local partners to support the work.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

"Our structure supports our programs and our community-directed goals. Our extension faculty are productive and their programs have positive impact on the health and well-being of NJ residents and their businesses. The major constraints we face stem from the decade or more of public disinvestment in higher education, and the agricultural experiment station and cooperative extension. Our overall funding from public sources is down nearly 35% in the past decade, while our salaries and other costs have continued to climb. This is not a sustainable path."

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

“Absolutely, especially with respect to devoting substantial resources to meeting the needs of Clark County. Extension’s programs in Clark County account for a substantial portion of the state and federal funds received by Extension as part of the University of Nevada, Reno. We have strong collaborative working relationships with University of Nevada, Las Vegas and employ a large staff of professionals and paraprofessionals in Clark County. Also, our professional and paraprofessional staff actively respond to funding opportunities from a variety of sources, including public and private grants programs. When successful, these applications support county-based programs. Faculty from Clark County have been very successful in obtaining grants from many sources to support work in Clark County.”

Conclusions

Overall, findings from the responses of University Cooperative Extension leaders across the nation demonstrate the complexity and diversity of cooperative extension administration structures. In other states, analysis revealed that cooperative extensions 1) have faculty from urban university branches as full and equal partners on extension programs and projects; 2) rarely utilize the local extension offices for student recruitment, or do so to serve the students and families who have no other contact with a university; 3) are funded through a variety of sources; and 4) are facing new challenges due to declining funds and changing populations.

Findings for Nevada, however, are different. Upon follow-up with University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE), researchers were provided no specific examples of research or programmatic collaborations

between UNCE and University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), the university in the state’s urban center. In addition, the UNCE building houses the University of Nevada, Reno’s (UNR) “Southern Office of Prospective Students,” which actively recruits students from Clark County for UNR, the LGU running UNCE. Given the extent of collaboration between other states’ cooperative extensions and their community universities, and the extensions’ efforts to focus on serving their communities as opposed to recruiting students or raising funds for the LGU, this research raises questions about the ability of cooperative extension in Southern Nevada to meet the needs of Clark County.

References

- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), (June 2014) Land-Grant Colleges and Universities (1862, 1890, and 1994). Retrieved from https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/lgu_map_6_25_2014_0.pdf
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), (December 22, 2009). First and Second Morrill Act. Retrieved from <https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/asset/document/First%20and%20Second%20Morrill%20Act.pdf>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), The Sage handbook of qualitative research (3rd ed.) (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010. Centers of Population by State. Retrieved from http://www2.census.gov/geo/docs/reference/cenpop2010/CenPop2010_Mean_ST.txt
- The World Bank (2015). *Urban Population Data*. Retrieved from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>

About the Authors

Fatma Nasoz, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Department of Computer Science and the Senior Resident Scholar of information technology at The Lincy Institute. Her academic research is focused on Human-Computer Interaction and Artificial Intelligence. At Lincy, she is charged with leading the Institute's technology initiatives. Nasoz earned her Ph.D. in Computer Science from University of Central Florida in 2004 and she is the author of multiple peer-reviewed journal and conference articles and book chapters.

Robert E. Lang, PhD, is a professor of Urban Affairs and the Executive Director of The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West. Dr. Lang publishes on a wide variety of urban planning and public policy topics and is an expert on governance issues and political patterns in American suburbs. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. Lang holds a Ph.D. in urban sociology from Rutgers University.

William E. Brown, MA, received his undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1978 and his graduate degree from the University of Michigan in 1981. Bill has held appointments as an academic research librarian, faculty member, and administrator at Yale University, the University of Miami, and the University of California, Berkeley, before joining UNLV in 2005. As UNLV Director of Brookings Mountain West, Bill coordinates the programs, lectures, and activities of Brookings Mountain West in Southern Nevada, including the Brookings Public Policy Minor at UNLV. He has published a diverse array of scholarly works in American history, literature, politics, and related fields.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank The Lincy Institute scholar and directors Ramona Denby-Brinson, Magdalena Martinez, and Marya Shegog for their input and feedback during the research plan process; to Shannon Monnat for the initial research identifying the structure of the southern Nevada nonprofit health, education, and social service network; and to Caitlin Saladino for her valuable feedback and proofreading.

About UNLV

UNLV, founded in 1957, is an institution of more than 28,000 students and 3,000 faculty and staff located on the southern tip of Nevada, minutes from the Las Vegas Strip. Classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a research university with high research activity, UNLV offers more than 350 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degree programs including innovative academic degrees in such fields as gaming management, entrepreneurship, entertainment engineering and much more. The entertainment capital of the world, Las Vegas offers students a "living laboratory" for research, internships, and a wide variety of job opportunities. UNLV is dedicated to developing and supporting the human capital, regional infrastructure, and economic diversification that Nevada needs for a sustainable future. For more information, visit: <http://www.unlv.edu/>

About The Lincy Institute

Established in 2009, The Lincy Institute conducts and supports research that focuses on improving Nevada's health, education, and social services. This research will be used to build capacity for service providers and enhance efforts to draw state and federal money to the greater Las Vegas. The Lincy Institute will also highlight key issues that affect public policy and quality-of-life decisions on behalf of children, seniors, and families in. Robert E. Lang, Ph.D. serves as the Institute's Executive Director. To learn more visit: <http://www.unlv.edu/lincyinstitute>



4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 453067
Las Vegas, NV 89154 (702) 895-0088

This information may be used and copies made for non-commercial purposes.
Proper attribution is required.

For citation purposes, please use:

Nasoz, Fatma, Robert E. Lang, and William E. Brown. 2016. Comparing the Administration of University Cooperative Extensions in the United States: A Case Analysis. Special Report, No. 4. The Lincy Institute.