“Because of UW-Extension” Social Media Campaign

Gov. Scott Walker’s 2015-2017 proposed Wisconsin budget includes a $150 million base cut to the University of Wisconsin System. This severe and abrupt cut represents an approximate 13 percent reduction to the State of Wisconsin’s General Purpose Revenue (GPR) support for the UW System.

Because UW-Extension is part of the UW System, this cut will negatively impact the quality and variety of UW-Extension programs available around the state. In addition, Cooperative Extension faces targeted cuts that would eliminate 13.45 positions in addition to the nearly $3 million from our budget resulting from the cuts to UW System.

UW-Extension resources benefit Wisconsin communities, businesses, farms, families and people. You can help us communicate the value and importance of UW-Extension - now, during Capitol Connections April 30 and beyond - by sharing exactly how you benefit from our educational programs through a social media campaign entitled “Because of UW-Extension.”

Why Social Media

Emails and telephone calls are very important methods for communicating with lawmakers. And, recent trends suggest comments and conversations over social media are increasingly influential to legislators and their staff. For example, Chris Nehls writes on the Connectivity blog, “In a poll of House and Senate offices by the Congressional Management Foundation, three quarters of senior staff said that between one and 30 comments on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter were enough to grab their attention on an issue. Thirty-five percent said that fewer than 10 comments were enough.” Nehls also indicates that Facebook is still king, and Twitter is the crown prince.

Messages

Think about the following:

- How has your life, business or community changed because of UW-Extension?
- What skills, connections and resources have you received by working with UW-Extension, to help strengthen your life, family, business or community?

Then, share a Facebook post or Tweet starting with…. “Because of Extension...”.
Best Practices Per Platform

Twitter:

Log in at www.twitter.com through your usual account or access Twitter via mobile app on a smartphone or tablet. Add the hashtag #BecauseofUWEX to any tweet you might share related to UW-Extension. Adding the hashtag #BecauseofUWEX will link our tweets and campaign to Chancellor Cathy Sandeen’s social media campaign.

Don’t forget that the character limit on Twitter can be challenging. You have 140 characters -- punctuation and spaces included -- to convey your message. This means you will need to carefully plan your tweets.

Consider mentioning legislators from your districts in your tweets. You can mention others by including their username with “@” in front. A mention looks like this: @UWEXCoopExt. Contact a UW-Extension colleague for help finding your legislators on social media.

Remember to never lead a tweet with a mention unless you’re replying to someone directly.

- If you tweet “@UWEXCoopExt is the best”, followers of yours that follow you AND @UWEXCoopExt will see it, otherwise it will only be seen by @UWEXCoopExt or when people go directly to your profile. If you want everyone to see it, you would add a period before the mention so it would look like “.@UWEXCoopExt is the best”

If you want to include links to news stories, websites or other information, save space by using a link shortener like Bitly, Ow.ly or others.

A well-constructed tweet would begin with “Because of Extension,” and include a brief statement about impacts, a shortened link to more information (where possible), the #BecauseofUWEX hashtag, and your district legislators’ usernames. If space allows, please also mention the UW-Extension Cooperative Extension Twitter account, @UWEXCoopExt.

Facebook:

Log in at www.facebook.com through your usual account or access Facebook via mobile app on a smartphone or tablet. Add the hashtag #BecauseofUWEX to any status updates or photo/video uploads you might share related to UW-Extension. Photo and video posts are the most eye-catching and popular, followed by links to articles and websites.

You can also tag legislators in your Facebook posts, photos and videos. You can start typing their page name with “@” in front, and Facebook will suggest options for who you’re trying to tag. Please tag the UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension Facebook page in your posts, too. Contact a UW-Extension colleague for help finding your legislators on social media.

A well-constructed Facebook post would begin with “Because of Extension,” and include a brief statement about the impact UW-Extension has had on your life, as well as the #BecauseofUWEX
hashtag, and would tag your district legislators and the Cooperative Extension Facebook page. If possible, include a photo, video or link to more information.

Tweet Ideas:

“Because of Extension, my farm can stay competitive: http://ow.ly/JTiQ5 @legislator @UWEXCoopExt #BecauseofUWEX”

“Because of Extension 4-H, I learned skills that took me to a national stage: http://bit.ly/1M58qxc @legislator @UWEXCoopExt #BecauseofUWEX”

“Because of Extension, I have grown in my confidence to lead: http://bit.ly/1NdA4cT @legislator @UWEXCoopExt #BecauseofUWEX”

“Because of Extension, I’m better prepared to parent my teen: http://bit.ly/1ADUCbf @UWEXCoopExt @legislator #BecauseofUWEX”

“Because of Extension, WI waterways remain clean and beautiful: http://bit.ly/1DHmpCU @WDNR @legislator #BecauseofUWEX”

“B/c of Extension, 285 Iron Co families had food in Feb: http://bit.ly/1AWLcFR @legislator @northernlakesfb #BecauseofUWEX”

Facebook Ideas:

“Because of Extension, I have leadership and communication skills that will help me find a good job in the future. @University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension @Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development #BecauseofUWEX”

“Because of Extension, local officials have support in learning their roles in county, town and city government: http://lgc.uwex.edu/ @UW-Extension Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development @University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension #BecauseofUWEX”

“Because of Extension, women in agriculture connect to strengthen their families and farms: https://wiagwomenssummit.wordpress.com/ @University of Wisconsin-Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources @University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension #BecauseofUWEX”
“Because of Extension, Wisconsin families learn how to keep track of their credit with an eye towards future success: http://fyi.uwex.edu/news/2015/01/27/take-time-to-check-your-free-credit-report-2/ @University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs @University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension #BecauseofUWEX”

UW-Extension Social Media Directory

University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension Twitter
University of Wisconsin-Extension ANRE Twitter
University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension Facebook
University of Wisconsin-Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Facebook
University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs Facebook
UW-Extension Community Natural Resource and Economic Development Facebook
Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development Facebook

Questions?

Please contact your county Extension office.