

**Cornell Cooperative Extension  
of  
Erie County**



**Capital Campaign Plan**

**Ted Pietrzak + Associates**

Fontanese Folts Aubrecht Ernst, Architects

February 17, 2017

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## 1.0 Introduction

Cornell Cooperative extension of Erie County contracted Fontanese Folts Aubrecht Ernst, Architects who subcontracted with Ted Pietrzak and Associates to identify prospective locations for their future home and prepare a capital campaign plan with specifics to achieving their goals of a new facility.

At the time of the engagement the board and executive director did not have in mind a specific program for the new facility nor cost estimates. In preliminary discussions, a goal of approximately \$10 million was mentioned.

This report is intended to assess the organization and prepare it for a capital campaign. The success of the campaign relies on several factors. These include the following:

- Having an existing donor base,
- having a recognized and compelling mission,
- having recognized campaign leadership,
- having resources to support a multiyear campaign effort, and
- having an initial substantial lead gift.

The recommendations outlined in this report in no way guarantees a successful campaign. The report is intended to provide observations and make recommendations to best prepare Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County to launch a successful campaign. There are several factors that could undermine success. These include the following:

- Lack of donors,
- little organizational infrastructure for fundraising,
- insufficient resources to mount a sustained campaign,
- competition for funds in the community,
- the campaign prematurely going public.

### 1.1 Background to a successful campaign

Several concepts should be understood in advance of launching a campaign. These include the following:

- As a general rule, 20% of donors give approximately 80% of the campaign goals.

- Preparing for campaign is critical and can consume significant time. Usually a feasibility study is conducted testing the compelling nature of the case statement with potential donors.
- Identifying campaign leadership,
- Ensuring staff resources are available,
- Ensuring systems are in place that support the campaign process.
- And possibly most important is having a plan.

## **1.2 The Four Phases of a Capital Campaign**

There are usually four distinct phases to a capital campaign for small and medium sized not-for-profit organizations, 1) addressing the organization's readiness to launch a successful campaign, 2) preparing for the campaign, 3) conducting the "quiet phase" of the campaign, and 4) completing the "public phase" of the campaign. Many organizations go to the "public phase" right away or prematurely and the campaign may realize some encouraging initial successes but it will start to sputter and then fail.

Many executive directors, board members and campaign leaders want to cut to the chase and want to let everyone know "We are running a capital campaign! Will you consider giving?" You'll get a \$100 rather than \$1,000. You'll get \$1,000 rather than \$10,000. Many do not have patience for what is usually a multi-year effort. TP+A tells people to be patient. Sometimes they listen. Sometimes they don't.

### **1.2.1 Addressing the organization's readiness to launch a successful campaign**

An organization needs to be prepared to launch a successful campaign. The factors that define an organization's readiness and the best conditions to conduct a successful campaign include the following:

- Belief by influential people in the organization's importance to the region,
- A clear sense of the organization's contributions,
- A history of private financial support,
- An existing fundraising program that consist of dedicated staff, support systems and programs that contribute to annual needs, and
- A committed volunteer leadership.

All these areas need to be reviewed and issues need to be addressed to strengthen the organization where necessary.

### **1.2.2 Preparing for the Campaign**

This phase involves the following:

- Clarifying the purpose and the outcomes that would be achieved,
- Articulating a compelling proposition statement,

- Conducting a capital campaign feasibility study,
- Finalizing the case statement,
- If the feasibility study proves that the community would sufficiently support such a campaign, forming a leadership committee and naming a chairperson,
- Retaining the needed counsel and/or staff.

### **1.2.3 The “Quiet” phase**

The “Quiet” phase is a critical part of the campaign aimed at raising 70% to 80% of the campaign goal. This phase includes the following:

- Obtaining a lead gift,
- Developing naming opportunities,
- Assuring that 100% of the board gives to the campaign,
- Developing a prospect list and identifying the strongest relationships with prospects and detailing the prospect’s priorities and ability to give,
- Developing and implementing a cultivation program aimed at increasing the prospect’s knowledge about the organization and its importance and
- Ensuring private donations are the first priority followed by foundation grants and then government grants

### **1.2.4 The Public phase**

The public phase of the campaign is announced to the public when 70% to 80% of the campaign goal has been met. The remaining 20% to 30% is sometimes the most challenging to obtain. A general call to the public to support the project results in smaller donations many times. The following activities would take place during the public phase:

- The public announcements of significant gifts,
- Continuing cultivation with individual prospects,
- Continuing efforts to obtain foundation support,
- Generally promoting the campaign in mailings to members, past supporter, and
- Continuing efforts to obtain government grants

## **2.0 Findings**

A report as to the findings was produced and delivered to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County. Many who responded through surveys, questionnaires and at public forums value the organization. When asked the question “What would happen if Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie were no longer to exist?” People indicated that such a

circumstance would deeply affect the future of rural children growing up and having the leadership skills and abilities to work in teams. People commented that without CCE there would be increased difficulty for young farmers or those starting out to be successful. Many expressed concern about the future quantity and quality of food in the County.

Most people that have expressed their hopes for the organization as well as their concerns, have somehow been affected by CCE of Erie County's services. Though a larger community survey was not undertaken, (a small one directed at the organization's contact list was) informal discussions revealed the general lack of knowledge about the role and services of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County. Many did not even know the connection between 4-H education and CCE. And though income levels were not measured, it was generally felt that those with the largest amount of disposable income living in, or around Buffalo or its further such as Orchard Park and East Aurora did not have sufficient knowledge to motivate them to make a financial contribution.

## **2.1 Strengths of CCE of Erie County:**

- CCE of Erie County addresses a very real need. This is its strength,
- Its reputation as a trusted agency,
- The valued services it provides farmers and those involved in agriculture,
- The connection with Cornell University that brings current experts and agricultural science to the region,
- The unbiased information it provides because it is not directly associated with a business or corporation that has its own financial interest as a priority,
- Knowledgeable and dedicated staff,
- A strong and committed volunteer base, and
- A community of people that feels that the organization has deeply impacted their lives and the lives of their families.

## **2.2 Weaknesses of the Organization**

- The reliance on government grants,
- The lack of diverse income streams, particularly through donations and fundraising,
- The lack of brand identity,
- The perception of the lack of understanding of what CCE offers the residents of Erie County, and

- The search for resources through available grants has expanded the scope of CCE of Erie’s programming but has stressed CCE resources.

Though there were concerns expressed through the process about resources and sustainability, there was an overwhelming response to the positive opportunities that a new facility would yield.

### **2.3 The Beginnings of a Compelling Case for Action**

Even if many do not know what CCE of Erie contributes there are compelling reasons to support it. One can not deny as to the following:

- There is a clear need to find a new location,
- There is an opportunity to address facility shortcomings that hamper program delivery and operations,
- There is the likelihood of galvanizing past and present people who have understood the importance of CCE of Erie County, and
- There is an opportunity to develop new programs that respond to current and future needs.

## **3.0 Preparing for a Campaign for CCE of Erie County**

Lack of visibility and brand identity is the chief concern in mounting a successful capital campaign of the size and scope desired by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County.

There has been no evidence of support by the area's major foundations. CCE of Erie has not developed those relationships which are essential in obtaining major contributions.

The organization lacks a donor base and has very little experience in fundraising except for government grants.

Currently there is no sizable leadership gift to mobilize others and motivate leaders and other donors.

### **3.1 Addressing Critical Needs**

#### **3.1.1 Adjusting Some of the Priorities of the Executive Director Role**

The ED’s job description (See Appendix A) identifies a number of management and operational responsibilities. Though it mentions resource development, the organization relies largely on government support. CCE of Erie may be entrepreneurial in program design and delivery but in order to achieve the goals of 1) a sustainable organization and

2) successfully completing a capital campaign, the board and management must adopt an entrepreneurial spirit in building a non-government donor-base. The ED must take the lead. Though the job description obliquely alludes to fundraising, management and board is not currently prepared.

- Financial Planning and Resource Development – In partnership with board members and appropriate staff, establish and implement financial development strategies and ensure effective management and monitoring of association resources in compliance with CCE standards and policies. (from the ED’s job description)

CCE of Erie is set up to understand the local needs, create knowledge “bridges” with Cornell University, develop programs to meet needs, and direct resources to accomplish goals. Most executive directors of not-for-profit entities have direct fundraising responsibilities or managing development staff. They work with their boards and volunteers to raise funds to diversify the organization revenue streams and undertake strategic initiatives such as a having a new home-base. Cornell University did not see fundraising as critical area to emphasize in the job description thereby continuing the organization’s reliance on grant and government allocations.

To achieve growth and organizational sustainability, the ED’s responsibilities should include the following:

- Ensuring the board’s effectiveness in a wide number of areas including fundraising,
- Coordinating the strategic planning process with the board and staff, and
- Achieving fundraising effectiveness by engaging in broad array of methods to broaden the base of donors.

An organization needs to be ready to embark on a capital campaign. Low recognition of the value that CCE provides, the lack of a donor base, confusion about mission and programs all will hamper success. The following are ways to strengthen CCE of Erie even before preparing for a campaign. TP+A strongly recommends addressing these issues otherwise preparing for a campaign may be a waste of time.

**3.1.2 A much higher profile is required.** Funders and donors are not prepared to both learn about the organization and its importance and immediately fund a capital project.

**Recommendation:** CCE of Erie should retain a part-time professional experienced in public relations, with knowledge of writers and reporters at Western New York media outlets.

**Recommendation:** CCE of Erie County should obtain the services of a facilitator who will work with the public relations professionals to conduct a workshop with the



organization's board and other leaders in developing a brand identity and key talking points.

**Recommendation:** The PR expert should work with staff to prepare a plan and prepare and follow-up on media releases to increase the frequency of stories in a wide variety of regional media outlets over a calendar year.

**3.1.3 Cultivating relationships with foundations and potential donors** is critical to success of the capital campaign. Very few relationships currently exist for CCE of Erie. The following is recommended:

**Recommendation:** CCE of Erie should engage the professional expertise of a fundraiser to develop a cultivation plan which would include the following:

- Creating a list of cultivation opportunities,
- Engage board members and other volunteers to serve on a cultivation committee with an outline of responsibilities and duties,
- Coordinate the cultivation process in concert with the PR efforts,
- Create multiple ways of engaging potential funders and prospective donors over an 18-month period. Using opportunities such as the Erie County Fair, special presentations, competitions, memorable 4-H activities aimed at cultivating potential donors and elected officials, and
- Research the priorities of key foundations, set up meetings and prepare the Executive Director and board Chairperson for meetings with select talking points to introduce CCE of Erie. This not a request for support but a "get to know you" meeting.

**3.1.4 Diversifying Revenue Streams** is key to a successful campaign and a sustainable organization. CCE's dependency on government funding leaves it vulnerable and though it will be an important component in a capital campaign, success will also depend on individual, corporate and foundation support.

**Recommendation:** Have a person with expertise conduct a workshop/training for management and trustees as to fundraising concepts, supportive systems and successful practices. Fundraising is not simply asking for donations. Many board members are uncomfortable with this but there are other ways to build a donor base.

**Recommendation:** Create an annual fundraising plan including annual appeals, corporate support and sponsorship, special events, support of foundations, a membership program with benefits.

**Recommendation:** Maintain current efforts to grow the connection with past 4H participants. Ensure parents are also on future mailings or social media.

**Recommendation:** Retain a professional grants writer (contracted or employed) with the priority to find support for existing programs freeing-up operational dollars for the Executive Director to have additional executive assistance, support marketing efforts, organize cultivation opportunities, etc.

**Recommendation:** Adjust the Executive Director's job description to include coordinating cultivation activities and leading the trustees in fundraising (or have this role given to the capital campaign coordinator).

**3.1.5 Forging Collaborative Partnerships** and stronger coalitions amongst similar organizations is a priority for many area foundations. A number of area foundations see the importance of collaborations and will financially support initiatives that create cost savings and synergistic programs and services.

**Recommendation:** The Executive Director and board chairperson should identify synergistic agencies where co-habiting in a single facility would be programmatically and economically advantageous. Arrange meetings with community leaders, explore strategic partnerships, (i.e. USDA, Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District, Erie 1 BOCES, etc.)

**3.2 Understanding the Scope of the Campaign** is essential as the campaign goal is required for the "Proposed Concept" document to be tested in the feasibility study. Currently the information provided TP+A and FFAE is that Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County has generally estimated the campaign goal of \$10 million but the building program has not been completed and the architects have not provided preliminary cost estimates.

**Recommendation:** The building program needs to be finalized even if the board considers phasing in construction. Consider developing a Master Plan and addressing absolute priorities first but identify logical phases for construction each having its own campaign.

**Recommendation:** Carefully estimate the construction and land cost of the total Master Plan.

**Recommendation:** Break-down the capital campaign into phases. An example is the approach taken by the Buffalo Zoo. Its Master Plan called for \$70 to \$80 million of investment in new exhibits, back-of-house support and visitor amenities. The Zoo did not go to the community attempting to raise all the funds needed to implement the whole Plan. It broke the plan into phases. It is currently in its fourth phase and to date received over \$50 million with many foundations, government agencies, corporations

and individuals giving multiple times. This would also have the benefit of lengthen the time to elevate the organization's profile, give donors confidence in the CCE, and build a more sustainable organization through diversifying the its revenue streams.

If sufficient results are achieved in the "Addressing Needs Phase" then the board should continue to the "Preparation for the Silent Phase."

### 3.3 Conducting a Capital Campaign Feasibility Study

The capital campaign feasibility study assesses the potential success of running a campaign at a point in time. The study is also important for several other reasons.

- 1) Prospective funders/donors are identified,
- 2) Prospect campaign leaders are identified,
- 3) The confidential interview process introduces the potential funders to the project in a non-threatening way,
- 4) The information obtained through the interviews assists the consultant in fine-tuning the Concept Proposal into the Case Statement to be used in promoting the project, and
- 5) The process identifies potential issues and support, allowing the Executive Director and the board to make informed decisions about the fundraising potential.

**Recommendation:** TP+A is recommending **NOT** to conduct a capital campaign feasibility study be at this time. A successful campaign for \$10 million will depend on multiple large contributions especially from area foundations and individuals who know of the importance of CCE of Erie County. CCE does not have the higher profile it needs at this time.

**Recommendation:** Once CCE of Erie is ready, the board should engage an expert to conduct a capital campaign feasibility study, which would involve interviewing 40 to 50 community leaders, foundation representatives, elected officials and government representatives, and individuals of high wealth potential who have been "touched" in some way by CCE of Erie County.

Much has been done in the current engagement involving TP+A that would normally be a part of conducting a capital campaign feasibility study. This means there will be less time required to finalize the feasibility study and thus less costs. The activities already conducted included the following:

- Interviews with board and staff members to better understand the needs and priorities,

- Shaping the elements of the “Concept Proposal,” which is not completed at this point,
- Understanding the organization’s strengths and weaknesses, and
- Articulating a compelling “Value Proposition” which has begun but not been finalized.

**Recommendation:** If the feasibility study finds that there is sufficient support for the organization and a clear need for a campaign, then the board should authorize conducting the capital campaign beginning with the “Quiet” phase.

**Remember:** You do not start a campaign if you are ill prepared and your chances of success are poor.

## 4.0 The “Quiet” Phase of the Capital Campaign

**4.1 The “Lead” gift** is not essential at the beginning but it is advantageous in mobilizing the leadership team and initiating the campaign process. The “Lead” donor is a person from the private sector, a person that is willing to be a spokesperson for the campaign, already has high profile in the community, or remains committed but prefers to anonymous,. The ideal “Lead” donor for a \$10 million campaign should give \$1 million but not less than \$500,000. A pledge can be paid over a period of years.

A “Lead” donor may just appear from hearing about the needs of CCE of Erie or may have to be strategically solicited. In the latter case, a small group reviews possible candidates and prepares a strategic approach including understanding the potential “Lead” donor’s priorities, the current situation affecting his/her life, and the ideal person to approach him/her. Talking points are prepared and rehearsed in advance.

The characteristics of the “Lead” donor are that he/she is wealthy and has been “touched” by the organization, personally or through family.

**Remember:** If CCE must solicit a “Lead” donor the process takes time and thoughtfulness. It is, as is the case in soliciting other major gifts, “a campaign of one.”

The goal of the “Quiet” phase is to obtain 70% to 80% of the overall campaign goal. A well thought out and personal approach are the common factors in this phase. CCE of Erie has very little fundraising experience. TP+A advises that obtaining a financial gift is not simply asking someone that is wealthy for a gift. People give to people. People give to causes that they believe are aligned with their values. People give because they have a relationship with the organization. People give because they can afford to give.

**Remember:** People give because they are approached by a person, representing the organization, who they trust, who they believe is honest, and who they believe will fulfill obligations after a promise of a gift is made.

The “Quiet” phase is the most personal phase of a campaign, and the phase that yields the greatest revenue. This phase involves engaging the prospect on a person to person bases, knowing the circumstances and priorities of the prospect and having selected the appropriate person representing the organization making the introduction to the project. Managing these strategic engagements requires experience. CCE can find it through advertising for a new employee with capital campaign experience or contracting with a consultant. The ideal candidate is a person that has experienced success, understands the culture of the organization, knows Erie County and WNY, and is aligned with the organization’s mission and vision.

**4.2 Knowledge and Experience** with capital campaigns is essential. There are numerous reasons campaigns fail, such as having an over ambitious goal, having the wrong volunteer chairperson, taking the campaign public prematurely, expecting that a consultant will achieve the campaign goal solely because of his/her connections, etc. You don’t want to fail. Failing will forever affect the organization’s credibility with donors. It will waste the organization’s investment of funds and human resources in the campaign. Failing will see the loss of volunteer leaders who would be hard pressed to return later.

**Recommendation:** Retain a person experienced in coordinating capital campaigns. His/her role will include the following:

- Orienting the board members to the capital campaign process,
- Finalizing the case statement,
- Assembling a prospect review committee and identifying prospective donors and/or funders,
- Coordinating all meetings, attend to set-up, pre-meeting documents, meeting agendas and minutes and assist the chairpersons of the committees,
- Identifying, with organization’s leadership, the ideal candidate to chair the capital campaign and determine the best ways to approach him or her,
- Developing strategies to approach an individual for a lead gift, and coach board leaders in the cultivation and ask,
- Preparing proposal,
- Maintaining records,
- Coordinating the board giving campaign,

- Preparing campaign documents and spreadsheets, and
- Overseeing the development of communications in conjunction with the quiet phase.

**4.3 Determine the campaign structure** includes acquiring and arranging staffing, volunteer leadership, and contractor outside expertise if desired. The structure is the mechanism to support the implementation of the campaign strategies.

#### **4.3.1 Identifying volunteer campaign leadership**

Volunteer leadership is essential. Volunteers involved in the campaign signal to potential donor/contributors the grass-roots commitment by those that do not have a personal financial interest. The campaign chairperson should have the following characteristics and abilities:

- Positive and high-profile recognition in the community,
- An articulate spokesperson for the organization,
- Ability to mobilize other volunteers,
- Able to commit time,
- Ability to give personally, and
- Organized with the ability to chair meetings.

Selecting a possible candidate for the position and approaching him/her needs to be carefully done. If the approach fails, the second person to be approached would not look favorably about being the second person to be approached.

**Recommendation:** This is a very confidential process to be undertaken behind closed doors with people who are knowledgeable about individuals, who will maintain confidentiality, and would know significant detail about the potential candidates.

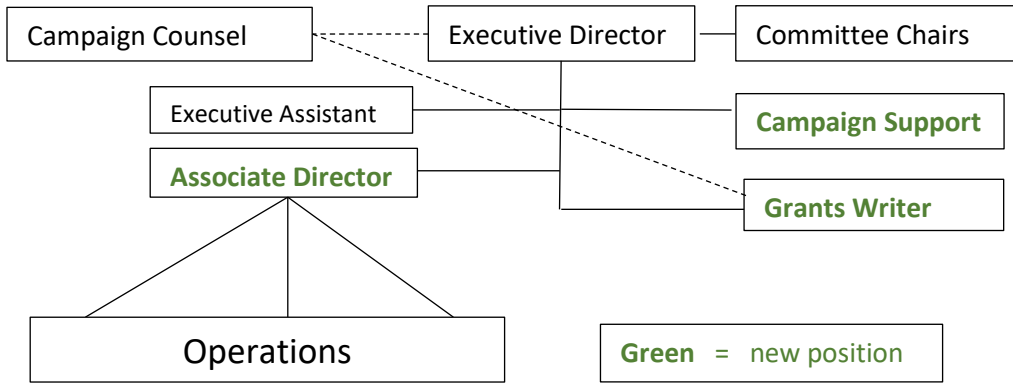
#### **4.3.2 Determining the Structure to Manage and Implement the Campaign**

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County currently has no surplus staff. In fact, existing staff have expressed the need for additional staff in key areas. The organization has limited experience in the area of fundraising and thus needs to develop a fundraising program from scratch. Expertise is required and should be obtained.

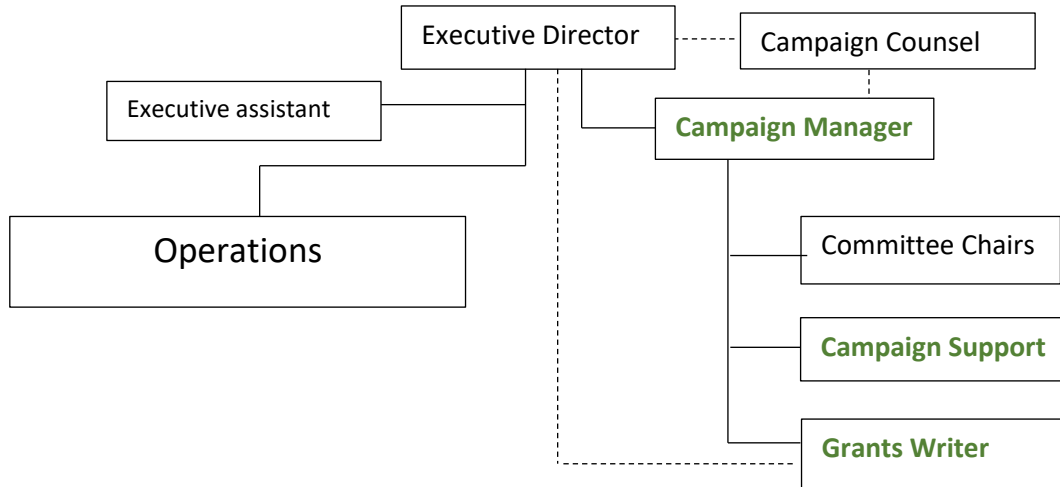
**Recommendation:** Determine campaign management, support needs and allocate financial resources.

The Executive Director will be critical factor in the success of the campaign. Her active involvement means that she will need support in various areas. Two models are being presented for consideration.

**Model A**



**Model B**



There are several operational models with variations. Financial resources and personal preferences dictate the most favorable model for CCE. For instance, in Model A the Executive Director, with advice from capital campaign counsel, takes charge of implementing the capital campaign. This has worked if the executive director understands the mechanics of capital campaigns and has an associate director that can alleviate the burden of day-to-day operations. The executive director in this case becomes the front person for the campaign managing all aspects under guidance from an external counsel. The campaign counsel need not be involved over the whole campaign. Once the executive director is comfortable, the engagement with capital campaign counsel can end.

The second option, Model B, which outlines a staffing structure that includes a capital campaign manager. This person is responsible to the executive director but is advised by out-side counsel.

Available financial resources, knowledge levels, as well as personal preferences in terms of managing such an initiative would be considered in determining the best model for the organization. If there is not an experienced pool of candidates, more time will be required of the campaign counsel.

## **5.0 Breakdown of Campaign Goal**

A break-down of contributions follows. This is a professional opinion about targets and potential results.

The proposed break-down would be too ambitious to implement successfully at this time considering the fundraising history of the organization. CCE of Erie County should implement the other recommendations before a feasibility study is implemented. A more accurate campaign goal and break-down can be recommended after conducting the study.

The following is a suggested break-down based on the organization having a clear and widely appreciated contribution in the County.



<b>Break Down of Donations to meet Goal and Contribution Recognition Suggestions</b>				
	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Targeted</b>	
		<b>gifts/grants</b>	<b>Amount</b>	
<b>Seed funding from property sale</b>			\$900,000	
<b>Foundations</b>				
Foundation (1) Confidential Code Reference	\$1,000,000	1	\$1,000,000	
Foundation (2) and (3)	\$250,000	2	500,000	
Foundation (4,5,6)	\$100,000	3	300,000	
Foundations (7,8,9,10)	\$75,000	4	300,000	
<b>Government</b>				
New York State (DASNY)	\$400,000	1	400,000	
New York State (REDC)/Consolidated Funding Application	\$500,000	1	500,000	
Erie County	\$750,000	1	750,000	
				<b>\$4,650,000</b>

	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Targeted</b>	
		<b>gifts/grants</b>	<b>Amount</b>	
<b>Corporations and individuals</b>				
Lead Benefactor	\$1,000,000	1	1,000,000	The Campus
Founder	\$500,000	2	1,000,000	Education building, barn (1)
Major Patron	\$250,000	3	750,000	Horse arena indoors, main classroom, barn (2)
Patron	\$150,000	4	600,000	Horse arena outdoors, green house, main classroom,
Leadership Donors	\$100,000	4	400,000	Green house, kitchen

Major Donor	\$75,000	4	300,000	Conference room, education technology, website, lab room
Sustaining Donor	\$50,000	6	300,000	Garden (1) and (2), foyer, landscape, Director's office
Sustainer	\$25,000	10	250,000	Offices, animal stalls
Major supporter	\$10,000	20	200,000	
Supporter	\$5,000	30	150,000	
Friend of CCE of Erie	\$2,500	40	100,000	
	\$1,000	100	100,000	
	\$500	250	125,000	
	other		250,000	
				<b>\$5,525,000</b>
				<b>\$9,275,000</b>

## 6.0 Campaign Timing

Several factors affect the timing of a successful campaign. They include organizational readiness both seen internally and externally. Factors include capacity of the community to give, competition from other campaigns and economic conditions. Other factors include the reputation and credibility of the organization and the people involved with it.

The following is recommended with respect to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County. These are estimates based on general condition.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Time to fulfill</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Addressing current issues</b>	
	Elevating CCE of Erie's profile	
	Developing a fundraising and cultivation plan and implementation	
	Adjusting the ED's job descriptions and attend to any required training	18 months

<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Preparing for the “Quiet” phase</b>	
	Acquiring a consultant/firm	
	Conducting the campaign feasibility study	4 months
<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Completing the “Quiet” phase (for 70% to 80% of goal)</b>	
	Lead donor and setting up structure	4-6 months
	Obtaining fundraising counsel	3 months (incl.)
	Solicitation of gifts and grants (if feasibility study shows viability)	est. 36 -48 months
<b>Phase 4</b>	<b>Public phase (for 20% to 30% of goal)</b>	
	Solicitation contribution from the public	
	Engaging 4-H students and alums	
	Active at two County Fairs	24 months

**Appendix A**

**CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
STAFF POSITION DESCRIPTION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Date: 10/2014

The job title classification will be determined in accordance with the Position Classification Process.  
*Please refer to Preparing the Staff Position Description prior to completing this document.*

Current Incumbent, if any: \_\_\_\_\_ Position# \_\_\_\_\_

Classification Job Title: Association Executive Director (1.0 FTE)

Working Title (if different): Association Executive Director Exempt:  Non-Exempt:

Immediate Supervisor's Name and University Job Title: Board President with general oversight by State Extension Specialist  
County Association Erie Association

**POSITION SUMMARY:** Explain the purpose for the position and summarize the responsibilities.

Executive Director for the Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Erie County represents and is accountable to the association Board of Directors and the Director of the Cornell Cooperative Extension system. The Executive Director is expected to be an effective leader, helping to develop and project a compelling and contemporary vision for extension programming to stakeholders, both internal and external. The Executive Director must be engaged with decision makers both locally and at Cornell in order to be effective.

The Executive Director is a 60% fulltime position and is expected to provide high level leadership and management of the association within Cornell and local policy direction. The Executive Director develops and maintains effective working relationships among the staff, other extension associations, the Western Shared Business Network, extension administration, Cornell faculty, and stakeholders. This position will build positive relationships with legislators, local government leaders, community leaders, funding agencies, and civic groups. The Executive Director exercises professional judgment and executive skills in administering overall association operations. This position provides leadership in overall educational program development, implementation, establishing program priorities, and program integration across disciplines and within the broader extension system.

**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Specify required minimum equivalency for education, experience, skills, information systems knowledge, etc.

- A Master's Degree appropriate to the responsibilities of the position.
- A minimum of six years of progressively responsible experience, including at least three years in Cooperative Extension or a closely related field of employment. PhD may substitute for 2 years of experience.
- At least four years of substantive leadership and management responsibilities including human resources, finance, and organizational management.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the operation, philosophy, and objectives of a non-formal education system such as Cooperative Extension.
- Demonstrated ability in strategic planning, ability to establish and communicate goals and objectives, and to set meaningful and achievable plans-of-work.
- Demonstrated knowledge of effective management practices and procedures, including a working knowledge of fiscal planning, budget management, proposal writing, and personnel management.
- Demonstrated ability to staff, develop, motivate, and work with personnel (paid staff, board, committees, and implementation volunteers).
- Demonstrated ability to build strategic partnerships/collaborations with external agencies, community leaders and government officials, and to assess local community issues.
- Demonstrated effective use of varied oral and written communication methods (e.g., radio, TV, print, computer, and meetings).
- Reliable transportation and the ability to meet the travel requirements of the job.
- Ability to accommodate flexible working hours including nights and weekends as needed.
- Demonstrated ability to respond decisively, accurately, confidently and courteously to challenges and opportunities.
- Working knowledge of state-of-the-art technology and the ability to apply it to administrative and educational functions.
- Proven success in fund development (including grants, contracts, fundraising) for mission-based educational programming

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:** Specify preferred specialized education, field and/or certifications.

- Substantial coursework and/or experience in education preferred.
- Substantial training or experience with applied research, nonformal education and/or public outreach
- Demonstrated effective and innovative program development and implementation experience in at least one of CCE's five priority program areas (agriculture and food systems; 4-H youth development; nutrition and child obesity; community and economic vitality; natural resources, energy and environment).

**RESPONSIBILITIES/ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:** List the position's assigned responsibilities and estimate percentage of annual time spent on each responsibility. Include only the essential functions that are fundamental and necessary to the position.

Red high light added by Ted Pietrzak as area relates to a capital campaign

**Association Leadership and Management**

**I. Organization Leadership**

- Vision, Mission and Strategies – Working with the Board of Directors, the Executive Director encourages local application and engagement with the CCE System Mission, Vision and Values and develops local goals and strategies and adaptations as appropriate but ensures that local priorities and actions are reflective of the system direction.
- Executive Director/Board Partnership – The Executive Director implements and manages policies established by the Board of Directors. They have a joint responsibility for developing and maintaining a strong working relationship and an effective communication system. Together, they enable an effective working partnership with county government and Cornell University.
- Marketing and Public Image – In conjunction with the board and staff, establish and maintain positive relationships with the many individuals and groups that support the work of the organization.
- Financial Planning and Resource Development – In partnership with board members and appropriate staff, establish and implement financial development strategies and ensure effective management and monitoring of association resources in compliance with CCE standards and policies.
- Shared Business Network- Participate as an active member in the Western Shared Business Network Administrative Management (AMG) meetings and other duties as specified in the MOU with CCE Administration and the approved Plan of Work.
- Extension System Liaison – Participate in quarterly extension executive leadership conferences and in regional meetings; provide liaison and linkages between the Cornell Cooperative Extension system and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County.

**II. Management and Operations**

- Accomplishment of Management Objectives – Lead the staff in implementation of the strategic plan and program plans of work.
- Fiscal Management – Assure that solid planning and budgeting systems are in place, and that the organization's goals and strategic planning serve as the basis for financial planning.
- Operations and Facilities Management – Responsible for day-to-day management, including compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Works with staff and delegates implementation as appropriate. Provide oversight of building maintenance staff and facility plan.
- Human Resources – Select, orient, lead and manage a staff of educators, office support personnel, and other staff as appropriate including compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Evaluate and implement progressive human resource programs and procedures, as well as to ensure equal employment opportunity.

**III. Administrative Program Leadership and Management**

- **Program Leadership** – Provide leadership for the program development process, including the establishment of priorities, a staffing plan, resource acquisition and allocation and evaluation process to assure program quality and consider the diversity of the community, and to meet Equal Program Opportunity guidelines.
- **Program Management** – Delegate program management responsibility to extension educators as appropriate.
- **Regional Operations** – Participate in regional agriculture (Cornell Vegetable Program), 4-H and other program area Administrative Management Groups (AMGs) according to their respective Operating Guidelines to ensure high quality program and appropriate fiscal and management oversight. Actively pursue opportunities to expand program capacity, improve administrative efficiency, and reduce operation expenses with other CCE associations.

**Professional Development**

- Jointly develop a learning plan with the supervisor(s) and pursue its accomplishment to increase competency in the position.

**TOTAL**