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# Rethinking Cooperative Extension in Southern Nevada

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## Abstract

*Cooperative Extension is a partnership funded by federal, state, and county governments that extends University of Nevada services to Nevadans. As the original branch of Nevada's land-grant institution, the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) has administered Cooperative Extension Service (CES) since the program's inception over a century ago. However, as currently organized, CES has limited presence in Southern Nevada and it has not developed programming commensurate with Clark County's tax contribution to the CES budget. We propose that CES in Southern Nevada be managed by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). As we show, UNLV is already the most connected and active non-profit organization in the region. The campus currently delivers a host of services and programs that are consistent with CES's mission, despite receiving no direct funding to support these activities.*

## Introduction

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Land-Grant Agricultural and Mechanical College Act. Better known as the Morrill Act,<sup>1</sup> the legislation granted states with federal land to establish colleges specializing in "agriculture and the mechanic arts."<sup>2</sup> To ensure that Nevada accessed this resource upon being granted statehood, the authors of the Nevada Constitution included a provision (Article 11, Section 4) establishing "a State University which shall embrace departments for Agriculture, Mechanic Arts, and Mining to be controlled by a Board of

Regents whose duties shall be prescribed by Law." Originally located in Elko, the University of Nevada (now UNR) moved to Reno in 1885. In 1957, the University of Nevada was expanded to include a "Southern Regional Division" in Las Vegas that would later become the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).<sup>3</sup> In 1959, the Nevada Legislature again expanded the University of Nevada when it established Desert Research Institute (DRI) as a separate research division. Among the benefits that land-grant status confers to universities are improved

prospects for accessing federal research grants and greater faculty engagement in local community studies and outreach projects. Land-grant universities are also charged with administering state Cooperative Extension Services (CES) programs. UNR currently oversees CES in Nevada.<sup>4</sup>

As we show below, UNR's management of CES incompletely serves the needs and interests of Southern Nevada. Thus, we propose a reorganization of CES that integrates best practices from cooperative extension programs in other comparable states, and better reflects the north-south regionalism driving Nevada's economy and demographics (The Brookings Institution et al. 2011).

We begin by reviewing legal interpretations defining the state's land-grant institution. Next, we summarize research examining the connectivity of CES to community partners in Southern Nevada, and show present data detailing the underutilization of available resources by CES in the region. We examine specifically how CES operates in Nevada, compared to other states. Finally, we offer a proposed blueprint for how CES in Southern Nevada, managed by UNLV, would leverage existing resources to improve programming and develop partnerships in the areas of education, health care, economic development, social services, workforce development, specialty agriculture, and cultural outreach.<sup>5</sup>

## **Nevada's Land-Grant Institution**

The Morrill Act provided the initial resources for states to establish land-grant universities. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) offers additional language clarifying the mission of these institutions:

A land-grant college or university is an institution that has been

designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The original mission of these institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so that members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education.<sup>6</sup>

The underlying premise for the two Morrill Acts and subsequent federal legislation establishing agricultural experiment stations (Hatch Act of 1887) and cooperative extensions (Smith-Lever Act of 1914) is that a healthy and economically competitive society is dependent upon an educated population. How states use these federal resources to fulfill this mission varies.

In many instances, states have designated land-grant status to institutions that were not directly supported by the original Morrill Acts. For instance, the entire University of California system is the land-grant institution of California, because the state confers land-grant status to all its branches, even those recently established (such as the University of California, Merced). Note that California does not extend land-grant status to the branches of the California State University system (e.g., Long Beach State or Cal State Northridge).

In 1885, Arizona created separate paths for the University of Arizona (as the state land-grant) and Arizona State University (as the state teachers' college), such that only the former has land-grant status even though both institutions have obtained the highest Carnegie Classification (Doctoral Universities R1, Highest Research Activity, or Tier 1).

In Nevada's case, the state legislature never specified in statute, nor has the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada codified

the specific bounds of Nevada’s land-grant institution.<sup>7</sup> Rather, the defining feature of the state’s current higher education governance and administration rests on an attorney general’s opinion written nearly 50 years ago identifying UNR, UNLV, and DRI as the three components of the state’s single land-grant institution, called the “University of Nevada.”

In 1969, after the Board of Regents made UNLV and UNR co-equal branches of the state university, Nevada Attorney General, Harvey Dickerson, issued Opinion No, 69-556 stating:

The University of Nevada System consisting of the University of Nevada, Reno, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the Desert Research Institute, is the only land-grant institution within the State of Nevada. The components of the system may *not* hold individual land-grant status separate and apart from the system (italics added).

The presumption is that the “University of Nevada” consists of three parts, with branches in Reno and Las Vegas and a research institute—now with units in Reno and Las Vegas adjacent to, but not within the campuses. The opinion also finds that the collective entity called the University of Nevada is the state-designated, land-grant institution. The 1969 opinion by Nevada’s attorney general and the vote by the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada provide the legal foundation upon which all subsequent higher education policy in the state rests.

Nevertheless, some uncertainty remains about UNLV’s designation as a land-grant institution. In testimony before the Assembly Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining Committee on March 9, 2017, UNR President Marc Johnson was asked by a committee

member if land-grant status applies to UNLV, given that UNLV has historically obtained federal funding based upon being a land-grant institution.<sup>8</sup> Johnson replied, “I don’t think it does,” and further suggested that it was the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), not the states, that makes these determinations.

Johnson made this assertion based upon a letter to UNR from the USDA, stating that the “University of Nevada, Reno is Nevada’s 1862 land-grant institution of record [...]” (Ramaswamy, 2015). Yet, as noted in the quote on page two from the USDE, it is either “Congress,” or “state legislatures” that designate a school to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts. The USDA is the agency that administers the federal component of the CES program. Because the USDA is within the federal government’s executive branch, and not a legislative body, it does not have the legal authority to decide whether or not a university is the sole land-grant institution within any state.

Moreover, the letter from USDA, and UNR’s effort to declare itself as Nevada’s solitary land-grant institution, conflicts with the Nevada System of Higher Education’s (NSHE) own legal interpretation. Specifically, in response to a request from UNLV asking for further affirmation of the campus’s land-grant status, a 2004 interpretation by the University and Community College System of Nevada’s (now NSHE) legal counsel contends that, “...the land-grant status of the ‘University of Nevada’ applies to all units within the system.” The NSHE legal counsel’s interpretation reinforces and expands Attorney General Dickerson’s opinion. By including all publicly supported two- and four-year colleges in the state—College of Southern Nevada (CSN), Great Basin College (GBC), Nevada State College (NSC), Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), and

Western Nevada College (WNC)—the system legal counsel effectively grants land-grant status to each institution, as they are considered components of the state university. Under this interpretation, all Nevada’s colleges and universities are entitled to equal claim to resources associated with the land-grant.

The consequences of these legal interpretations are myriad. For one, this arrangement creates a disconnect between how the office of “regent” is presented on the ballot, and regents’ actual duties. Nevadans cast their votes for “Regent, State University”—not “NSHE Regent” or “Nevada Regent”—to serve on the “Board of Regents of the University of Nevada.” Yet, these officials are tasked with governing the three branches of Nevada’s state university, *and* five publicly supported two- and four-year colleges.<sup>9</sup>

The extension of land-grant status to all NSHE campuses provides the rationale for the implementation of policies and procedures based upon the notion of a single state university. For instance, the Board of Regents has authorized spending tens of millions of dollars on systems consolidating services across campuses (Ley 2015a). Although this effort has been fraught with multiple cost overruns and delays, it demonstrates the lengths to which the regents and system administrators will go to bind the campuses together, despite their different institutional missions, constituencies, and service areas.

During a March 2016 Board of Regents meeting, some regents even voiced support for creating a single student application and registration platform across all institutions. In another example, an investigation of sexual harassment by an NSHE staff member prompted a policy change allowing confidential employee information to be shared among institutions. Chair of the Board

of Regents Rick Trachok justified the new policy by contending that, “In the past, we’ve treated each of our eight institutions as separate legal entities... [but,] we’re a single entity” (Ley 2015b). Ultimately, that legal entity is derived from the land-grant institution established in Nevada’s Constitution.

However, within this unified governance and administrative structure, there are clearly different institutional tiers. This is most evident in how colleges and universities are funded. While most state support for higher education is appropriated through a single funding formula, the formula also includes “carve-outs” to support UNR and UNLV’s research missions. UNR and UNLV also receive line-item appropriations for their professional schools, intercollegiate athletic programs, and statewide programs. UNR receives additional state funding for CES, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the State Health Laboratory.

UNLV is clearly part of Nevada’s land-grant university, and it is also a component within a system that collectively forms a single land-grant institution. Yet, UNLV at times must demonstrate to the federal government that it has land-grant status. For instance, in 2011, Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto’s office issued a memo detailing how UNLV is part of the state designated land-grant system. UNLV needed the letter to establish eligibility for federal resources requiring land-grant status. Over the years, the university has secured multiple federal grants based on being a land-grant institution.

The supposed uncertainty of its land-grant status also creates a false barrier for UNLV to administer CES in Southern Nevada. Rather than being managed by the local branch of the state’s land-grant institution, CES in Clark County is run by a branch of the same state

university located 450 miles away. This arrangement is suboptimal. A CES program managed by UNLV would develop more robust partnerships and programmatic activity due to proximity and relationships with community networks that UNR simply has not established. Indeed, the entire value of having branches of any organization—government, business, or academic—is that a local office can best administer services to its market area.

Why the current arrangement persists—where UNR runs CES in Nevada’s largest urban county located at the other end of the state—results from three interrelated factors.

First, Nevada has minimal institutional capacity to address structural issues and enact reforms. For instance, the state has a term-limited, part-time, citizen legislature that meets biennially. Similarly, the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada consists of elected members who are tasked not only with governing all eight public institutions of higher education, but also with managing a sprawling system-level bureaucracy employing over 200 people and commanding nearly \$30 million in annual state appropriations.

Second, UNLV is a younger institution than UNR. At the time of UNLV’s designation as a co-equal branch of the state university, UNR already had a long history of administering CES. The history creates institutional inertia favoring UNR’s continued stewardship regardless of its performance. To that end, in the 2017 session of the Nevada Legislature, a bill introduced on behalf of the Nevada Association of Counties (A.B. 16) seeks to give UNR exclusivity over the management of CES. If implemented in its original form, the legislation would not only create a statutory barrier to UNLV’s ability to run any part of CES, but it would effectively elevate UNR

above all other NSHE institutions. Making UNR the sole manager of an asset derived from a collectively designated land-grant status would limit the scope of the constitutional authority underpinning the Board of Regents’ governance of the entire system of higher education in Nevada. That is, either “the land-grant status of the ‘University of Nevada’ applies to all units within the System,” as NSHE’s legal counsel asserts, or the land-grant and by extension the Board of Regents’ constitutional governance authority, only applies to UNR. Consequently, the Nevada Legislature could establish separate governance not only for the state’s two- and four-year colleges, but also for UNLV and DRI.<sup>10</sup>

Third, the internal procedures of the Board of Regents create a risk for campus presidents to be disciplined if they lobby directly for their school. For instance, college and university presidents have been prohibited from publicly advocating for their schools before the legislature (Coolican 2013; Barnes 2016). As such, even if a president wanted their school to manage part of CES, expressing such an interest could be considered problematic under the Board of Regents current governance structure.

The Nevada Legislature is now considering a bill (A.B. 407, (2017)) that designates the management of CES northern and southern branches to UNR and UNLV, respectively.<sup>11</sup> The Clark County Commission, the elected body for the locality that contributes the largest share of CES’s funding (see Figure 1), could also request that UNLV administer CES in Southern Nevada. More to the point, CES is a partnership that is funded by federal, state, and county governments, designed to extend the entire collective entity known as the University of Nevada in service of the state’s population. If current arrangements fail to address the county’s needs, it would be

incumbent upon commissioners to ensure that Clark County property owners are receiving the services commensurate with their tax contributions by negotiating new management of CES.

## **CES in Southern Nevada**

According to its website, CES “values” are as follows: (1) responsive to needs of a diverse society; (2) quality community education, honest and open communication; (3) innovative thinking, flexibility, integrity and dedication; (4) teamwork and collaboration; and (5) accountability and ethics. While the abstractness of these values makes their assessment difficult, available evidence suggests that Southern Nevada CES’s ability to either *cooperate* or *extend* remains somewhat limited.

For instance, an analysis of Southern Nevada’s health, education, and social service organizations found that CES minimally connects to the region’s non-profit networks despite operating in Clark County for over a century, having a sizable staff, and receiving millions in annual county property tax revenue (Monnat and Smedley 2013). The data show CES does not often collaborate with other non-profits, or function as an intermediary among different community organizations.

Monnat and Smedley’s (2013) analysis also reveals that UNLV is the region’s most connected organization, and the most frequent collaborator with other non-profit entities. By these metrics, UNLV serves as the *de facto* CES in Southern Nevada, despite receiving no direct state, federal, or county resources to perform that mission.

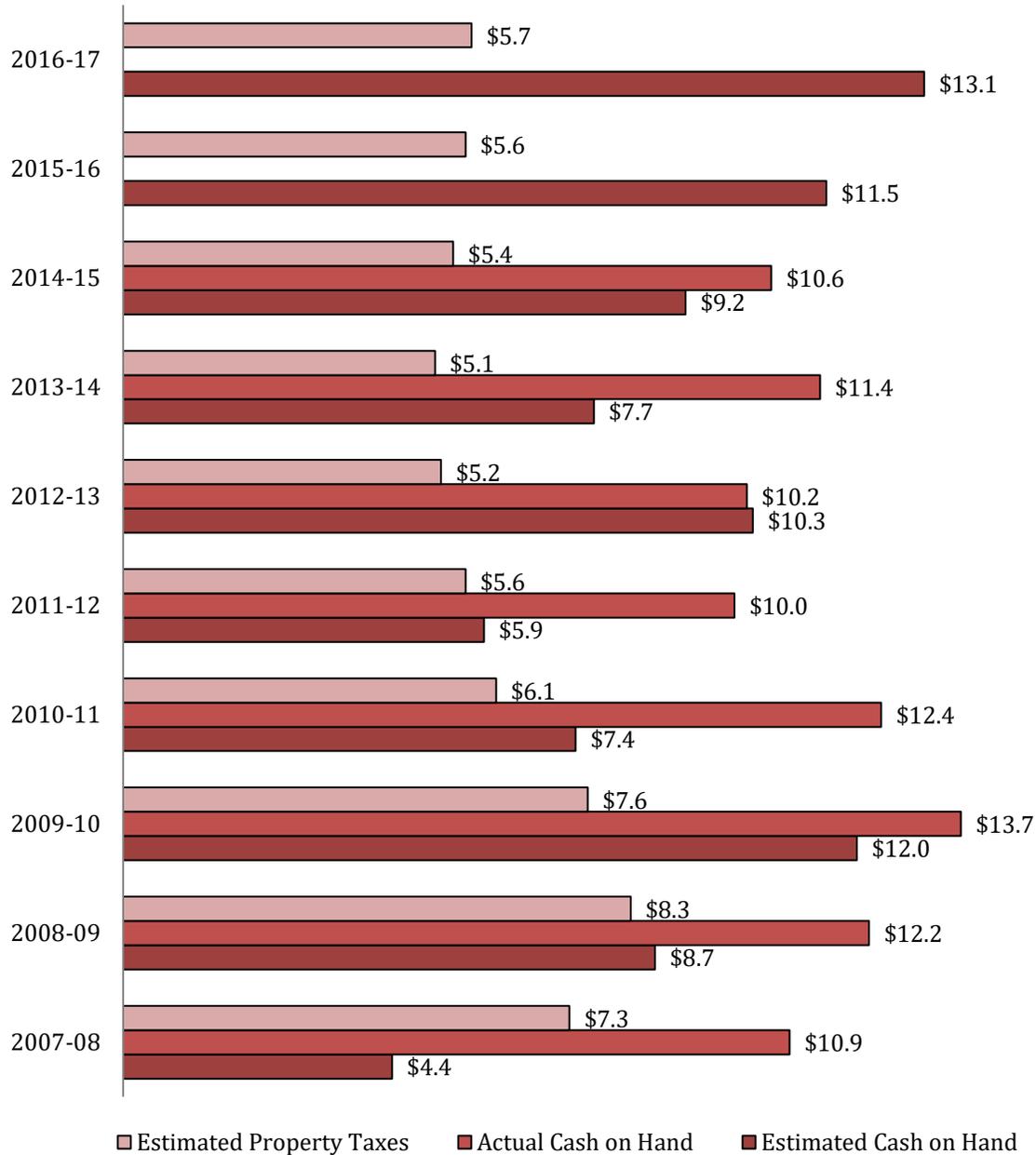
Why does CES have limited impact in Southern Nevada? One answer may be that CES failed to develop programming

proportionate with financial resources provided by Clark County residents. Figure 1 summarizes the county’s contribution to CES’s budget between fiscal years 2008 and 2017. Clark County property taxpayers contribute between \$5 and \$6 million annually to support CES. However, CES’s limited programmatic capacity means that not all the funds are used. As a consequence, CES’s budget account in Clark County has accumulated a rolling surplus balance between \$11 and \$13 million. Given the limited resources directed to areas such as health, education, and social services, and the high need demands in these areas, CES’s decision not to spend the millions of dollars it has available suggests that the current system is not working.

Another possible factor contributing to CES’s relative underperformance in Southern Nevada is that instead of using the full resources provided by the county to increase and improve its menu of programs, it chooses to lease space to UNR’s “Southern Office of Prospective Students.” This unit is comprised of seven employees funded through UNR’s Statewide Programs budget.<sup>12</sup> Put differently, CES rents out space in a Clark County-owned facility so that UNR can recruit Southern Nevada high school students rather than fully maximizing facilities and services for Southern Nevadans.

While we cite systematic data detailing CES’s limited performance in Southern Nevada, anecdotal evidence offered during a March 9, 2017 hearing of A.B. 16 suggests some disenchantment with CES in rural counties as well. Commissioners from several rural counties and representatives of the Nevada Farm Bureau testified that CES was at least partly failing to serve non-urban areas. Sarah Adler, the former State Director for the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development for Nevada, testified that

**Figure 1: Clark County Contributions to CES, Fiscal Years 2008—2017**



Note: Values are in millions of dollars, unadjusted for inflation. Data from “Clark County Final Budget FY 2007-08,” “Clark County Final Budget FY 2008-09,” “Clark County Final Budget FY 2009-10,” “Clark County Final Budget FY 2010-11,” “Clark County Final Budget FY 2011-12,” “Clark County Final Budget FY 2012-13,” “Clark County Final Budget FY 2013-14,” “Clark County Final Budget FY 2015-16,” and “Clark County Final Budget FY 2016-17.” “Actual Cash On Hand” totals for 2015-16 and 2016-17 are yet to be determined

CES resources are increasingly concentrated on the UNR campus, rather than being expended in rural counties. In her testimony, Adler recalled a conversation she had with a faculty member whose position is jointly funded by UNR and CES. Adler stated, “[the] individual [told] me directly that the work he

did benefited his research, his lab on campus, and had nothing to do with what went on at the county level.” Adler also recalled an exchange with another UNR faculty member, suggesting that CES was an agency in service of UNR, rather than the other way. Although Adler was one of several voices expressing

concerns about CES's misplaced priorities, we cite her testimony here to reflect a broader frustration that was palpable in the hearing room.

Much of the testimony offered in support of an amendment to A.B. 16 (2017) focused on cuts that had been made to the state component of the CES budget since the Great Recession. The amendment requires that county contributions to CES be matched by state appropriations. It additionally specifies that CES funding spent on the UNR campus be reported annually, and delineated from resources expended elsewhere in the state.

However, as Damore (2014) demonstrates, CES's funds were not actually cut. Rather, outside of the purview of the Interim Finance Committee, NSHE transferred funds between a number of UNR budget accounts to pay down the debt from the failed UNR Fire Service Academy, shore up reserves for the University of Nevada School of Medicine (now the UNR School of Medicine), and increase UNR's Statewide Programs budget by \$3.5 million, to a total of \$7.8 million. As a consequence of NSHE budget reallocations, CES's state support was reduced from \$7.6 million in fiscal year 2012, to \$3.4 million in fiscal year 2014. Subsequent budgets have continued to fund CES and UNR Statewide Programs at similar levels.

A study conducted by Nasoz et al. (2016) finds that the manner in which Nevada's CES operates is somewhat atypical. The research included a qualitative comparative case study based on interviews with cooperative extension executives from Nevada and 14 comparable states. The study assessed several key metrics: (1) how these organizations collaborate with university faculty; (2) the extent of student recruitment activities they conduct; (3) how they are funded; and (4) how effective their current

structures are for meeting constituent needs. The interviews yielded examples from nearly all states detailing the level of outreach and collaborative programming with faculty members located at multiple campuses, including those from urban state university branches. Within the context of the study, no concrete examples were provided about collaboration with UNLV faculty members beyond a general claim suggesting that there are many such partnerships. The UNR CES director stated, "Extension works closely with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas for activities focused on Clark County" (Nasoz et al. 2016).<sup>13</sup>

Although none of the extension executives in other states reported that undergraduate recruitment was part of their organization's function, many noted that they would not turn away an inquiry from a potential student seeking such information. Interestingly, the Nevada CES executive stated, "I do not have information about student recruiting activities because this is not part of our formal mission," (Nasoz et al. 2016) even though UNR operates a sizable recruiting office in Clark County's CES building.

The Nevada CES executive also responded that Clark County was the recipient of a "substantial portion of the state and federal funds received by Extension" (Nasoz et al. 2016). CES's annual "Program Highlights" publication does not include data on the county-by-county allocation of federal resources in the current budget cycle. Nevertheless, inspection of CES resource allocation in the NSHE 2016-2017 Operating Budget reveals that 33% of state funding for CES is allocated to the "Southern Area;" Clark County is home to nearly three out of four Nevadans.

## **A UNLV-managed CES in Southern Nevada**

The previous sections establish two key points: (1) UNLV—as well as potentially *all* publicly supported colleges in the state—has land-grant status and therefore, is eligible to manage CES; and (2) CES managed by UNR has relatively limited connectivity to Southern Nevada’s non-profit network and has not developed programming proportionate to the funding Clark County residents contribute to its budget. Moreover, compared to similar states, CES’s engagement with UNLV and other local non-profits does not reflect best practice models found throughout the country (Nasoz, et al. 2016).

In sum, our analysis shows that UNR-managed CES is producing suboptimal outcomes. Based on CES’s underperformance, state and local elected officials should consider alternative administrative options. One possibility is to designate the management of CES in Southern Nevada to UNLV.

### *Proposed Management Structure and Partnerships*

A.B. 407 (2017), which seeks to establish regional management of CES in Nevada, lays the ground work for a UNLV-managed CES. Specifically, the bill designates the presidents of UNLV and UNR as the agents with authority to determine how CES is managed in the “Southern and Northern Regions of this State,” respectively (A.B. 407, (2017)). In particular, the bill defines the Southern Region of a UNLV-led CES to include Clark, Lincoln, and Nye Counties.<sup>14</sup>

Partnerships established by UNLV-CES would collaborate with all of Southern Nevada’s public colleges, and DRI-Las Vegas, to provide extension services to the region.<sup>15</sup> Relevant

faculty members from these institutions would be full and equal partners in extension projects and programs in which they participate. To ensure local representation, we also propose that each Nevada county form a CES governing board, consisting of key stakeholders from academic institutions, locally-elected county and city officials, and major non- and for-profit organizations.

As previously noted, even without dedicated funding for the types of programming that CES could provide, UNLV is the top-ranked, non-profit organization in Southern Nevada in terms of “cooperativeness,” “activeness,” “participation,” and “extension” (Monnat and Smedley, 2013). Based upon these same metrics, NSC is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> and CSN is ranked 39<sup>th</sup>. Each of these institutions is more engaged in the community as compared to the 262<sup>nd</sup> ranked UNR’s CES.<sup>16</sup> With additional resources, UNLV, NSC, CSN, and DRI-Las Vegas can expand and enhance existing programs and services and develop new partnerships to address Southern Nevada’s diverse demographic, economic, workforce, educational, agricultural, and cultural needs.

Table 1 summarizes select projects, programs, and community partnership and outreach activities currently conducted by Southern Nevada public higher education institutions. Although not exhaustive, the summary suggests how these institutions are extending their expertise to serve the region. The list also indicates the range of activities that could be easily expanded through a CES led by UNLV.

### *Proposed Budget Allocations and Program Investments*

In addition to organizational structure, we also propose a new budget allocation model for CES in Southern Nevada. As shown in

**Table 1: Summary of Selected Community Outreach Programming by Southern Nevada Higher Education Institutions**

<p><b>UNLV</b></p> <p>ArtsBridge (College of Fine Arts); California-Nevada Public Health Training Center (School of Community Health Sciences); Center for Individual, Couple and Family Counseling (Greenspun College of Urban Affairs); Community Partnerships in Education, Health, and Social Services (The Lincy Institute); Continuing Education (Division of Educational Outreach); Educational and Clinical Services to CCSD students (College of Education); Free Dental Clinics (School of Dental Medicine); Free Legal Education (William S. Boyd School of Law); Historic Urban Neighborhood Design Redevelopment (Downtown Design Center); Girls Who Code Club (Honors College and Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering); Las Vegas Regional FIRST Robotics Competition (Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering); Las Vegas Wash Volunteer Planting Party (UNLV students); Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) Services (School of Community Health Sciences); Professional Development Programs (College of Education); Program Evaluation and Intervention (College of Education); Brookings Scholar Lecture Series (Brookings Mountain West); Science Café Las Vegas (College of Sciences); Southern Nevada Regional Science and Engineering Fair (College of Sciences); The PRACTICE: A UNLV Community Mental Health Clinic (College of Liberal Arts); UNLV Nonprofit, Community, and Leadership Initiative (Greenspun College of Urban Affairs)</p>
<p><b>NSC</b></p> <p>Crossroads Program (Multicultural Affairs); Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) (Community Engagement and Diversity Initiatives); Nepantla Program; Student Leadership Symposium; The Student Teacher Enlistment Project-Undergraduate (STEP UP) Program (School of Education); TRIO Upward Bound Program (School of Education)</p>
<p><b>CSN</b></p> <p>Adult Literacy and Language Classes (Division of Workforce and Economic Development); Apprenticeship Studies; Community and Personal Enrichment Programs (Division of Workforce and Economic Development); CSN Serves (Student Life and Leadership Development); Healthcare Program (Division of Workforce and Economic Development); Mentoring Matters Summit; Russell's Restaurant (Department of Hospitality Management); The Planetarium at CSN, NASA Regional Educator Resource Center; Satellite Campuses/Community Learning Centers: Green Valley Center, Las Vegas City Hall Center, Mesquite Center, Moapa Valley Center, Nellis AFB Center, Sahara West Center, Summerlin Center, and Western Center; Southern Nevada Sustainability Center Project</p>
<p><b>DRI-Las Vegas</b></p> <p>GreenPower Schools and Green Boxes for Education; EnergySmart Education; Next Generation Science Standards Teacher Trainings; STEAM Teacher Training;</p>

Figure 1, property tax collections to fund Clark County's share of CES's budget are roughly \$5.8 million annually. Given the uptick in real estate values and new construction in the county, the contributions are likely to soon exceed \$6 million. Clark County CES currently receives \$1.3 million in state support. However, UNR's inability to develop robust programming to serve Southern Nevada means that a significant share of Clark's contribution remains unspent

each year. The non-expended funds result in a rolling surplus now exceeding \$13 million.

UNLV-CES could distribute the untapped surplus funds over a five-year period. The surplus spend down would increase the total annual expenditures of county-generated resources to roughly \$8.6 million per year (\$6 million in ongoing funding, and a \$2.6 million annual distribution from the rolling surplus).<sup>17</sup> Approximately \$4.5 million of the

new \$8.6 million per year allocation is not currently being used, and could therefore be slotted to new programs. CES funds would continue to support existing staff and projects, pending a review of their effectiveness. New extension programming for \$4.5 million per year could be utilized in the following areas:

- education, health, and social services programs to be administered in partnership with CSN, NSC, and UNLV School of Medicine (\$1.5 million annually);
- urban agricultural programs focusing on specialty crops and natural resources, such as hydroponics for locally sourced foods, to be administered in partnership with DRI-Las Vegas and the Springs Preserve (\$1.5 million annually);
- economic development and cultural programs to be administered in partnership with CSN and NSC (\$1.5 million annually).

Funds would be allocated via annual requests for proposals that are open to all faculty members at partnering institutions in Southern Nevada. Priority would be given to proposals that are able to sustain and leverage funds by establishing partnerships with for-profit and non-profit organizations operating in the region.

Finally, although our analysis focuses on lifting the performance of the current operation of CES in Southern Nevada, we would be remiss to ignore the concerns raised in Nevada's rural counties about CES's management. As made clear in testimony during Nevada's 2017 legislative session, and in prior sessions (e.g., S.B. 255 (2013)), there is a strong sense that CES spends insufficient resources beyond the UNR campus. Unlike Clark County, which has ample local tax revenues to support robust CES programs,

limited tax bases in rural areas constrain the range of local programming. In this regard, our research suggests that policy reforms found in A.B. 16, seeking greater accountability and transparency in how CES allocates and uses resources, are a key first step. Indeed, without legislative action, it is difficult to conclude that CES will fulfill its mission to extend the University of Nevada in service to all Nevadans.

## Conclusion

Elected leaders and residents in counties across Nevada are concerned with the management and operations of CES in the Silver State. Best practices suggest that counties should take a proactive role in working with local land-grant institutions to determine the appropriate programs for their area. The advent of urban cooperative extension services in the twentieth century, and their continued maturation in large metropolitan areas across the nation, demonstrate that land-grant universities have much to contribute to large-scale regions such as Southern Nevada.

In general, reorganizing the management of CES as proposed here reflects a larger trend in Nevada to devolve government services from Carson City to the regions. In fact, such a shift in CES towards regionalization comports with several other statewide localization efforts. For example, the 2011 state economic development plan (The Brookings Institution et al. 2011) explicitly identifies regional governing bodies to administer local economic development. Similarly, state-supported medical education now divides by region, with the UNR School of Medicine representing the north, and the new UNLV School of Medicine covering needs in the south. Ultimately, the ability to reorganize CES at the regional level and assign its management to branches of the state land-

grant institution further supports the notion that *regions* are more effective at addressing local needs than centralized, one-size-fits-all approaches.

Southern Nevadans deserve a CES program that connects to the region and serves the needs of the entire community. As the second most diverse public university in the United

States, in one of the nation's most diverse regions, UNLV is a microcosm of its community. The university is well-positioned to enhance and expand its extensive network of connections within Southern Nevada's non-profit sector. A UNLV-led CES will more effectively leverage local, state, and federal funding to deliver transformational services.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The legislation's primary author was Justin Smith Morrill, a U.S. House of Representatives member from Vermont.

<sup>2</sup> In 1890, a second version of the legislation was signed into law extending land-grants to the former Confederate states.

<sup>3</sup> What is now the University of Nevada, Las Vegas was originally established as the "Southern Regional Division" of the University of Nevada in 1957. In 1965, the Nevada Legislature made the institution an autonomous campus and its name was changed to Nevada Southern University. In 1968, the school was granted co-equal status with the University of Nevada, Reno (with Reno being added to the name of the northern branch of the state university) by the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada. A year later, the campus's name was changed to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

<sup>4</sup> Current NRS (549.010) delegates administration of the CES to the Director of the Agricultural Extension Department of the Public Service Division of the Nevada System of Higher Education. However, no such entity exists. As a consequence, CES is actually administered through the Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station; a unit of the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources at UNR.

<sup>5</sup> Some material in this brief originates from presentations made at a colloquium sponsored by The Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West titled, "Making Cooperative Extension Work for Southern Nevada: Fulfilling UNLV's Urban Land Grant Mission," held on September 23, 2016 at Greenspun Hall. Materials from the colloquium can be found online at, [unlv.edu/lincyinstitute/events/making-cooperative-extension-work-southern-nevada](http://unlv.edu/lincyinstitute/events/making-cooperative-extension-work-southern-nevada).

<sup>6</sup> See the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Glossary by National Center for Education Statistics.

<sup>7</sup> The only reference to a land-grant in the "Board of Regents Handbook" and "Procedures & Guidelines Manual" is in UNR's institutional mission statement. NRS 396.010 states that, "The seat of the State University, as described in Section 4 of Article 11 of the Constitution of the State of Nevada, is hereby located at the Office of the Chancellor of the System." NRS 396.020 defines the legal and corporate name of the State University as "the University of Nevada. The System of: 1. Universities; 2. State colleges; 3. Community colleges; 4. Administrative services; 5. Research facilities including, without limitation: (a) The Desert Research Institute; (b) The Ethics Institute; and (c) The Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics, established within the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; and 6. Departments within the Public Service Division, administered under the direction of the Board of Regents is hereby collectively known as the Nevada System of Higher Education. The System is comprised of such branches and facilities as the Board of Regents deem appropriate."

<sup>8</sup> Video recording of UNR President Marc Johnson's remarks can be viewed at hour 1, minute 09 at the following web address: [http://nvleg.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?clip\\_id=7045](http://nvleg.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?clip_id=7045)

<sup>9</sup> A.B. 331, introduced on March 20, 2017 and sponsored by Ira Hansen (R, Assembly District 32), proposes to separate CSN, GBC, TMCC, and WNC from NSHE and establish the Nevada System of Community Colleges.

<sup>10</sup> On numerous occasions, the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Legal Division has weighed in on the limitations to the Board of Regents' constitutional authority. One such example took place during the 2013-2014 interim session as part of the Interim Committee to Conduct a Study Concerning

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Community Colleges' Subcommittee on Governance and Funding (S.B. 391 (2013)). More recently, the same information was put forth before the Assembly Legislative Operations and Election Committee during a hearing on A.J.R. 5 (2017), which seeks to remove the Regents from the Nevada Constitution. Specifically, the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Legal Division has argued that Section 11, Article 4 of the Nevada Constitution prohibits the Nevada Legislature from creating a separate governance structure for the branches of the state university (UNR, UNLV, and DRI). Given these previous discussions, the legislature has the authority to create separate governance for the state's two- and four-year colleges. This interpretation not only suggests that there are at least two tiers of colleges and universities in Nevada, but that the Nevada Legislature has the authority to create separate governance for *all* public institutions of higher education besides UNR, UNLV, and DRI. However, if UNR were to be designated the sole steward of the land-grant, it alone would be under the purview of the Board of Regents' constitutional authority to govern the state university. Therefore, all other non-UNR higher education institutions in Nevada could be separated into a new governance structure.

<sup>11</sup> A.B. 407, introduced on March 20, 2017, is sponsored by Olivia Diaz (D, Assembly District 11).

<sup>12</sup> UNLV does not receive state funding to support a similar operation in Washoe County. Prior to the 2015 fiscal year this office was funded through UNR's main campus budget using resources appropriated via the funding formula. For an overview of higher education formula and nonformula budgets in Nevada, see Damore (2014).

<sup>13</sup> Although the Nevada CES executive provided no specific examples of collaborations between CES and UNLV in response to survey conducted by Fatma Nasoz, CES does work with some UNLV graduate students and a few faculty members. Based on correspondence to UNLV after the publication of Nasoz et al. (2016), UNR shows some engagement with UNLV in the form of co-authored articles, guest lectures, joint conference papers, and event participation. Rarely do UNLV faculty members work on joint, sponsored research projects with CES where the faculty members are co-principle investigators. Also, given the hundreds of UNLV faculty that could potentially partner on projects with CES, the relatively limited engagement between CES and UNLV does not match institutional connectivity found in other states (Nasoz et al., 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Note that the region identified here is mostly consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau's large-scale metropolitan unit known as a "Combined Statistical Area," or CSA (Frey, Wilson, Berube, and Singer 2006). The CSA provides a better geography to organize CES in Southern Nevada than the current geography because it represents an integrated, regional economy that shares commuter sheds and resource areas.

<sup>15</sup> NRS 549.020 provides the defining language: "...for each county participating, an annual financial budget covering the county, state and federal funds cooperating in the cost of educational, research, outreach and service programs pertaining to agriculture, community development, health and nutrition, horticulture, personal and family development, and natural resources in the rural and urban communities in the State of Nevada."

<sup>16</sup> The data for degree centrality measure and ranking of non-profit organizations included in this study were provided by the lead researcher of the initial report, Shannon Monnat, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology, Demography, and Sociology at Pennsylvania State University.

<sup>17</sup> The budget number does not include the state and federal funds that would be available to UNLV-CES.

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## About the Authors

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**William E. Brown, Jr.** 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.

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## 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/>

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## 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>



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