# South Coast & Research and Extension Center STRATEGIC PLAN





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# INTRODUCTION

The South Coast Research and Extension Center (SCREC) is one of the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources' nine Research and Extension Centers (REC). The REC system is a strong, vibrant organization of research and education academics supported by extraordinary research management capacity to conduct agriculture, natural resource and human resource programs of the highest quality science to foster healthy people and thriving communities. The Centers, located throughout California's various climatic zones and representing nearly every type of agricultural and natural resource system in California, offer researchers places to conduct field experiments and outreach programs.

SCREC was established by the University of California in 1956 as a representative site for agricultural and horticultural research in California's south coastal plain-temperate climatic zone. Located on 200 acres of deep, gently sloped, alluvial fan soil, the Center and its mild winter climate are conducive to growing a wide range of subtropical crops as well as ornamentals for the urban landscape. SCREC's role in providing UC scientists with a controlled location to conduct research and extension continues to evolve as agricultural production shifts from adapting to a more urbanized landscape to the increasing need to ensure the protection of natural resources, food safety, and the labor force responsible for growing, harvesting, and distributing crops.

SCREC's location, now in one of the most populous regions of the state, is currently the only urban Center in the REC system and therefore ideally positioned to improve the public's understanding of complex agriculture and natural resource issues through direct interactions with UC scientists and their collaborators. In order for SCREC to continue to meet the needs of the surrounding region, efforts will need to be made to expand the Center's involvement with and impact to new, broadening partners, such as non-profit land conservation and environmental groups, and federal, state, and local agencies addressing similar issues impacting agriculture and natural resources. New partnerships, innovative research, and expanded extension activities will also require investment in infrastructure and skilled professionals in order to position the Center as a leader in delivering science-based research to a new generation of California farmers, natural resource professionals, and members of the public working and living in highly urbanized environments.



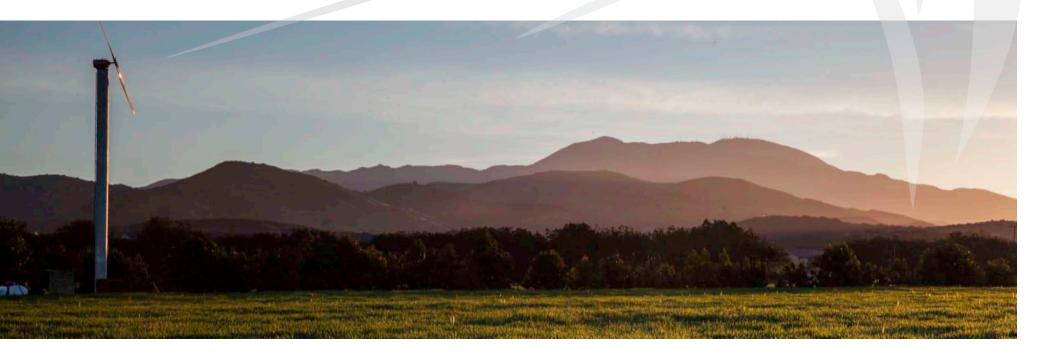
# STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

#### **UC ANR Vision Statement**

ANR envisions a thriving California in 2025 where healthy people and communities, healthy food systems, and healthy environments are strengthened by close partnerships between the University of California and its research and extension programs and the people of the state. The University remains connected and committed to the people of California, who enjoy a high quality of life, a healthy environment, and economic success in the global economy.

#### South Coast REC Mission Statement

South Coast Research and Extension Center strives to be the leading source of research and extension on urban, agriculture, and wildland issues impacting the Southern California coastal region.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

#### **REC** system overarching goals

In 2012 UC ANR launched a coordinated, future-oriented strategic planning effort for all nine RECs. The strategic planning charge is to develop a long-term and big picture strategic plan centered on stakeholder input. The strategic plan is designed to serve as a "living document," a flexible framework to set direction and focus effort over the next 20 years. The strategic planning effort is intended to be inclusive, future-oriented and with a focus on implementation and assessment of plan deliverables through time. SCREC is the second center to engage in this process.

The REC system's overall strategic planning effort is structured to include the following guiding goals:

- Develop an effective and organized approach for research and outreach at the centers and among the centers.
- Increase collaboration across the ANR network including collaborations with surrounding Cooperative Extension programs.
- Engage the local community in planning and implementation (local community is not necessarily place-based but also subject area-based).
- Engage partners not previously affiliated (e.g., non-ANR UC campuses, CSUs and other colleges, agencies, organizations).
- Align REC strategic plan with the ANR Strategic Vision 2025.
- Develop an effective communication and outreach program to increase visibility and

- programmatic impact of the REC.
- Ensure REC resources are effectively and efficiently utilized, and explore new and diverse opportunities.
- Reconstruct the REC system identity by enhancing programming and facility resources.

#### Planning process

In June 2013 a twelve-member strategic planning committee was formed (see table next page) with members broadly representing major SCREC stakeholder groups. These core committee members served as assessment and feedback links with the diverse stakeholder group vested in the long-term future of SCREC. In September 2013 the SCREC Strategic Planning Committee kicked off its strategic planning process that included assessment, strategy formulation and implementation accountability. The committee had five, one-day, in-person meetings. The first meeting provided an overview of the Division's vision, the UC REC system's longterm goals, and SCREC's mission, history, and operations. The committee conducted a situational analysis that included obtaining input from other key stakeholders to identify current strengths and weakness of SCREC, as well as outline potential future opportunities and threats that could influence how SCREC operates in the future. The second meeting focused on understanding and exploring the stakeholder input and synthesizing this input into three broad strategic directions. The third meeting focused on refining the scope of the strategic directions through developing goals and key actions

associated with each strategic direction. Committee members then went back to key stakeholder groups to get feedback on the committee's proposed strategy, which was discussed during the fourth meeting and helped refine the content of the draft strategic plan. During their last in-person meeting, the committee finalized the draft strategic plan including the implementation accountability elements, intended outcomes, implementation responsibility and deliverables. This final draft plan was circulated one last time for stakeholder comment during spring 2014.

# Implementation and assessing strategic plan outcomes

Early on in the REC system's strategic planning process, it was recognized that the strategic planning process must be intimately linked to a streamlined and executable implementation and assessment plan. Toward this end, committee members were asked to help identify deliverables associated with each key action as well as the persons/organizations with implementation authority. This broad matrix that links strategic directions, goals, and actions with implementation responsibility and deliverables will be used as the framework for identifying implementation priorities and assessing implementation progress through time. The SCREC Director in conjunction with REC system administrators will develop annual priorities for plan implementation. Deliverables associated with goals and key actions will be used by REC administrators and the SCREC Director to jointly set outcome targets and annually review progress toward agreed upon priorities.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

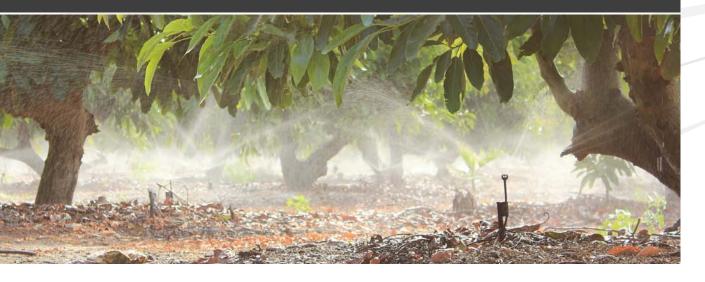
Committe Member	Committee Stakeholder Affiliation	Stakeholder Grou	ups That Provided Input
Darren Haver, Chair	Director, UC ANR South Coast REC	<ul><li>Cal Poly Pomona</li><li>Board of Supervisors</li><li>Orange Coast College</li></ul>	<ul><li>Regional Water Quality Board (Santa Ana)</li><li>Local/Regional Water Providers</li><li>City of Irvine</li></ul>
Jutta Burger	Co-Director, Science & Stewardship, Irvine Ranch Conservancy	<ul><li>UCI</li><li>Chapman University</li></ul>	<ul><li>Nature Conservancy of Orange County</li><li>Irvine Ranch Conservancy</li></ul>
Peter Changala	Vice President of Ag Operations, Irvine Company, Inc.; Irvine Valencia Growers	California Avocado Commission	• Irvine Co.
Bill Hammerle	Special Programs, Five Point Communities	<ul> <li>Five Points, Lennar</li> </ul>	
Paul Kawamura	Orange County Produce	<ul><li>California Strawberry Commission</li><li>Great Park Association</li></ul>	Orange County Produce
Peggy Mauk	CE Specialist, Subtropical Horticulture, and Director, Agricultural Operations, UC Riverside	UC AES faculty	CE advisors and specialists
Kathy Nakase	Executive Director, Orange County Farm Bureau	<ul><li>Farm Bureau</li><li>Local High School Ag Teachers Association</li></ul>	<ul><li>Nursery Growers Association</li><li>Southern California Association of Pest Control Advisors</li></ul>
Keith Nathaniel	CE Advisor, 4-H Youth Development, and County Director, UCCE Los Angeles	<ul> <li>CE 4-H Youth Development Advisor, UCCE San Diego</li> </ul>	
Loren Oki	CE Specialist Dept. of Plant Sciences, UC Davis	<ul> <li>UC AES faculty</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>UCCE advisors and specialists</li> </ul>
Patrick Strader	Executive VP, Five Point Communities	<ul> <li>Five Points, Lennar</li> </ul>	
Rachel Surls	CE Advisor, Sustainable Food Systems, UCCE Los Angeles	UC AES faculty	CE advisors and specialists
Laosheng Wu	CE Specialist, Environmental Sciences, UC Riverside	<ul> <li>UC AES faculty</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>CE advisors and specialists</li> </ul>
Lisa Fischer, Ex-Officio	Associate Director, UC ANR Research and Extension C	enter System	
Katherine Webb- Martinez, Facilitator	Analyst, UC ANR Program Planning and Evaluation		
Sherry Cooper, Staff	Analyst, UC ANR Program Support Unit		



Address Critical Issues in Urban Settings, Agriculture, and Natural Environments



#### Address Critical Issues in Urban Settings, Agriculture, and Natural Environments



SCREC will continue to address the needs of agriculture and expand research into issues that are important to the surrounding coastal urban and natural environments. SCREC's urban location provides unique opportunities to further develop UC ANR's research efforts in urban agriculture and the interfaces between urban settings, agriculture, and natural environments, with particular focus on invasive pests and water resource issues related to climate change. SCREC will capitalize on the UC ANR network to build upon its strengths in the areas of subtropical and tropical fruit research, landscape management, pest management, and ecosystem services. Success in this area will also require identifying and collaborating with new and broadening partners, such as non-profit organizations and natural resource based organizations, to solve complex multi-disciplinary issues. These goals and key actions will ensure SCREC maintains both a focus on short- and long-term research relevant to the South Coast region.

#### Goals

- Identify critical natural resource and food system issues in urban settings, agriculture, and natural environments and their interfaces.
- 2. Facilitate the development of innovative and regionally relevant research and science-based management practices.
- Expand focus on urban agriculture and environmental horticulture.
- Develop sustainable management methods that focus on urban areas, agricultural lands, open space and their interfaces.
- Ensure sustained support and relevance to commercial agriculture evolves with changing needs.

#### **Intended Outcomes**

- Innovative, science-based practices are developed and shared broadly among stakeholders in order to address locally relevant, critical and emerging issues in urban agriculture, natural environments, and their interfaces.
- Regional commercial agriculture's research needs are met.
- SCREC's scope of work includes urban agriculture and environmental horticulture and involves new and broadening partners in these fields.

#### Goal 1: Identify critical natural resource and food systems issues in urban settings, agriculture, and natural environments, and their interfaces.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
1A. Establish diverse South Coast Research and Extension Center Planning Advisory Committee.	SCREC Director	Advisory committee with multidisciplinary representation established
1B. Use regional needs assessments to determine issue priorities (leverage existing work by CE advisors, partner organizations and agencies, as well conduct as needed).	SCREC Director in collaboration with Planning Advisory Committee	<ul> <li>Priority issues determined based on needs assessments</li> </ul>

#### Goal 2: Facilitate the development of innovative and regionally relevant research and science-based management practices.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
2A. Create new and broadening cross-disciplinary partnerships as they emerge (e.g. non-profit organizations working in natural resources, food systems, and youth development; foster collaboration with new researchers from both public and private institutions)	SCREC Director in collaboration with Research Advisory Committee and Planning Advisory Committee	<ul> <li>New partnerships created with measurable outcomes and positive impacts, such number of projects, researcher collaborations, and additional resources brought to SCREC.</li> </ul>
2B. Incorporate additional criteria into the Research Advisory Committee's process to include the development of science-based Management Practices and their extension to end users.	Associate Director of REC System and SCREC Director	<ul> <li>Funded research projects develop and extend new management practices</li> </ul>
2C. Develop long-term, multi-disciplinary research.	SCREC Director in consultation with Planning Advisory Committee and the Research Advisory Committee	Number of long-term research projects

#### Goal 3: Expand focus on urban agriculture and environmental horticulture.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
3A. Actively engage with environmental horticulture and urban agriculture stakeholders through the Planning Advisory Committee (see 1A above) to help identify critical issues.	SCREC Director in collaboration with Research Advisory Committee and Planning Advisory Committee	<ul> <li>Involvement of new stakeholders in the fields of urban agriculture and environmental horticulture</li> </ul>
3B. Adapt agriculture/horticulture advances for small-scale and backyard growers in the urban environment.	SCREC Director and UC ANR CE Specialists and Advisors	<ul> <li>Number of new knowledge and methods developed specific to small-scale and backyard growers in the urban environment</li> </ul>

#### Goal 4: Develop sustainable management methods that focus on urban areas, agricultural lands, open space and their interfaces.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
4A. Facilitate the development of agriculture and natural resource management practices in an urban environment.	SCREC Director and UC and non-UC academics	<ul> <li>New agriculture and natural resource practices that consider interface issues are developed and extended</li> </ul>
4B. Utilize research projects as demonstration areas to provide training and education.	SCREC Director and UC ANR CE Specialists and Advisors	New demonstration areas are established.

#### Goal 5: Ensure sustained support and relevance to commercial agriculture evolves to meet changing needs.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
5A. Actively engage with growers and commissions through the Planning Advisory Committee (see 1A above) to identify critical issues.	SCREC Director	<ul> <li>Identified priority needs and new opportunities for commercial agriculture</li> </ul>



Expand Outreach, Education, and Extension





#### Expand Outreach, Education, and Extension

The urban population surrounding SCREC allows for UC ANR outreach and education to be delivered to a large and highly diverse audience. Opportunities for SCREC include improving the extension of research results to targeted clientele and initiating science literacy programs for the public (young and old), and policymakers on critical issues in urban settings, agriculture, and natural environments. The goals and key actions in Strategic Direction #2 will ensure SCREC identifies and collaborates with community partners in the delivery of science-based information, provides education on topics of importance to community leaders and the general public, and expands interactive science experiences for elementary through high school and college students, and the general public.

#### Goals

- Engage and educate community partners, focusing the changing demographics in the region.
- 2. Provide opportunities to expand extension of research results of all REC projects.

- Create and promote interactive science experiences for school age children through informal and formal education programs.
- 4. Develop internship opportunities for students and certification programs for professionals.
- Enhance and promote effective training and demonstration activities to engage the general public.

#### **Intended Outcomes**

- An increased number of diverse community partners are engaged in SCREC activities.
- More extension (UCCE) work is supported through the RAC process.
- School-aged children gain knowledge and skills through an expanded interactive science program.
- Students and professionals gain knowledge and skills through the center's new internship and certification programs.
- Training and demonstration activities increase community engagement.

#### Goal 1: Engage and educate community partners, reflecting the changing demographics in the region.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
1A. Gather community input on UCCE priorities from stakeholders, users, and staff to ensure delivery of relevant information to the end user (e.g. host focus groups with the public and researchers)	SCREC Director in collaboration with Planning Advisory Committee, Research Advisory Committee, and UCCE Specialists and Advisors	<ul> <li>Prioritized list of UCCE needs compiled with input from users and staff</li> <li>List of new, broadening clientele groups with suggested strategies to engage</li> </ul>
1B. Develop a database of community partners, users, and stakeholder groups.	SCREC Director and key staff	Database developed and used
1C. Host various extension activities to showcase REC to the public and others.	SCREC Director, key staff and UCCE Specialists and Advisors	<ul> <li>Open house event held, number of and diversity of participants</li> <li>Number of targeted activities developed based on community input and delivered, and participation</li> </ul>
1D. Expand facility use to new, broadening disciplines (e.g. psychology, human ecology, etc.)	SCREC Director and key staff in collaboration with Planning Advisory Committee, Research Advisory Committee, and UCCE Specialists and Advisors	Stakeholders from new, broadening disciplines use facility
1E. Provide science-based information to end users (e.g. on management practices).	SCREC Director in collaboration with UCCE Specialists and Advisors and non-UC academics	<ul> <li>Number of unique educational products developed and distribution</li> </ul>

#### Goal 2: Provide opportunities to expand extension of research results of all REC projects.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility		Deliverables
2A. Ensure that all research projects have a clearly articulated extension component.	Researchers and RAC	•	Research projects articulate extension plan/ methodology
2B. Enhance the coordination of extension activities for proposed research projects during the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) process.	SCREC Director in collaboration with RAC	•	Research projects articulate extension plan/ methodology
2C. Develop a process to evaluate exclusively extension project proposals, as exists for research projects.	Associate Director of REC System, SCREC Director in collaboration with RAC	•	Process and criteria to evaluate extension only projects established and implemented



Goal 3: Create and promote interactive science experiences for school age children through informal and formal education programs.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
3A. Expand collaborations with existing youth programs (e.g. California Naturalists, 4-H, Ag in the Classroom, Project Learning Tree, etc.).	SCREC Director, Statewide 4-H SET program, and 4-H UCCE advisors, other UCCE Specialists and Advisors, supporting program staff, and partner organizations	New youth programs engaged in SCREC programs
3B. Develop a dedicated youth program with a specific place and name to foster recognition.	SCREC Director in collaboration with Planning Advisory Committee and partner organizations	<ul> <li>Developed and implemented specific program plan for youth science literacy program (includes name, goals, site, etc.)</li> </ul>
3C. Expand existing volunteer program to include docents, to help deliver programs and maintain demonstration areas (Master Gardeners, 4-H youth, seniors, etc.).	SCREC Director, UCCE Specialists and Advisors and associated program staff	<ul> <li>Increased number and age diversity of participants in a more formalized volunteer program</li> </ul>
3A. Deliver experiential learning activities.	Volunteers and UCCE Specialists and Advisors, and program staff	<ul><li>Number of activities delivered and participation</li><li>Program participant outcomes measured</li></ul>
3E. Ensure participation reflects the demographic composition of the community.	SCREC Director, and UCCE Specialists and Advisors and SCREC program staff	<ul> <li>Track program participant demographics; monitor for parity with community demographics</li> </ul>
3F. Establish professional development opportunities for teachers with specific, measurable outcomes.	UCCE Specialists and Advisors	<ul> <li>New professional development opportunities for teachers offered and participation tracked.</li> <li>Outcome indicators measured</li> </ul>

#### Goal 4: Develop internship opportunities for students and certification programs for professionals.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
4A. Connect to existing college intern programs to offer credit towards degrees or certifications.	SCREC Director	Student participation in research internships
4B. Secure funding for internships and certification programs.	SCREC Director	<ul> <li>Funding for this goal</li> </ul>
4C. Provide opportunities to receive educational credits for professional licensing and certifications.	SCREC Director and Planning Advisory Committee	Number of professional certifications awarded

#### Goal 5: Enhance and promote effective training and demonstration activities to engage the general public.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
5A. Assess how to best use the Center's existing demonstration areas (backyard orchards, demonstration landscape, drought tolerant evaluation garden).	SCREC Director and Planning Advisory Committee, Research Advisory Committee, UC ANR academics and program staff	<ul> <li>Environmental scan of other environmental education programs using demonstration areas conducted</li> <li>SCREC's unique opportunities identified</li> </ul>
5B. Promote opportunities to expand demonstration.	SCREC Director	<ul><li>Distribution of promotional materials</li><li>Number of activities offered to general public</li></ul>
5C. Determine how to allocate resources to maintain demonstration areas (rate and recharge, sponsorship, etc.).	SCREC Director in consultation with Associate Director of REC System	<ul> <li>Management plan and budget for demonstration areas</li> </ul>
5D. Expand existing volunteer program to include docents, to help deliver programs and maintain demonstration areas (Master Gardeners, 4-H youth, seniors, etc.).	SCREC Director, and UCCE Specialists and Advisors, and SCREC program staff	Increased number and diversity of volunteers
5E. Provide educational materials and relevant resources to assist the public in implementing science based recommended practices taught through trainings and demonstrations.	SCREC Director in collaboration with UC and non-UC academics and program staff	<ul> <li>Number of unique products developed and their distribution</li> </ul>



Enhance Visibility and Resources to Support Research and Extension Programming





## Enhance Visibility and Resources to Support Research and Extension Programming

SCREC is centered in one of the most populous locations in California. To maintain its relevancy in this region, SCREC needs to develop stronger linkages to the surrounding urban community. To accomplish this, the center will develop more effective methods to communicate its present and historical accomplishments. The goals and key actions in Strategic Direction #3 will enable SCREC to increase visibility in the immediate surrounding community and the larger Southern California region.

#### Goals

- Increase visibility of SCREC to stakeholder groups.
- 2. Improve communication to highlight the value of SCREC.
- 3. Increase revenue, monetary and in-kind.
- Identify SCREC fiscal, staff, and land resources needed to support expanded outreach and education programming.
- Identify capital improvements needed to support UC ANR research and extension programs.

#### **Intended Outcomes**

- Clientele, legislators, new stakeholder groups, and the public have increased awareness of SCREC.
- The value of SCREC is more widely understood.
- Increased revenue enables SCREC to expand research, outreach, and education.

Goal 1: Increase visibility of SCREC to stakeholder groups (e.g. clientele, legislators, new and broadening groups, and the public).

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
1A. Develop marketing and communications strategy.	SCREC Director and outside contractor	<ul> <li>Marketing/communications plan documented, implemented, and updated on an annual basis with consultation from marketing experts.</li> </ul>
1B. Explore opportunities for better, consistent name recognition.	SCREC Director and outside contractor, SCREC Planning Advisory Committee consultation	<ul> <li>Identify a more recognizable name for programs delivered at SCREC.</li> </ul>
1C. Explore interactive educational opportunities, in public and commercial places (e.g. weekend workshops at garden retail stores, activities in housing developments, etc.).	SCREC Director collaborating with UC academics and program staff from UCCE	<ul> <li>Number of educational opportunities offered and number of participants</li> </ul>
1D. Identify staffing needs to successfully implement the actions associated with this goal.	SCREC Director	<ul> <li>Marketing and communications staffing plan documented and implemented</li> </ul>
1E. Provide policy-relevant information to policymakers.	SCREC Director in collaboration with UC and non-UC academics and program staff, UC ANR Director of Advocacy and Strategic Communication Group	<ul> <li>Number of policy-relevant materials developed and extended</li> <li>Policy outcomes measured and communicated</li> </ul>
1F. Work with researchers to engage non-profit organizations, commodity groups, and other entities to sponsor field days.	Researchers and SCREC Director	<ul> <li>Commodity groups sponsor field days</li> <li>Non-profit organizations sponsor field days</li> <li>Other groups identified in Strategic Directions #1 and #2</li> </ul>

#### Goal 2: Improve communication to highlight the value of SCREC.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility		Deliverables
2A. Identify staffing needs to successfully implement the actions associated with this goal.	SCREC Director	•	Staffing plan developed and implemented
2B. Enhance mechanisms for capturing SCREC outcomes and impacts.	Associate Director of REC System and SCREC Director	•	Gather and communicate SCREC outcomes and impacts from the research, extension and education projects and activities
2C. Focus communication on how SCREC benefits agriculture, urban areas and open space.	SCREC Director in collaboration with UC and non-UC academics and program staff	•	Impact stories and public value statements developed and disseminated
2D. Utilize the most appropriate communication technologies to deliver SCREC messages.	SCREC Director in collaboration with Advisory Committee	•	Communications plan includes appropriate strategies (e.g. social media, such as, blogs, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)

## Goal 3: Increase revenue (monetary and in-kind).

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
3A. Identify staffing needs to successfully implement the actions associated with this goal.	SCREC Director	<ul> <li>Development plan includes staffing needs (see below)</li> </ul>
3B. Develop a fund development plan including capital and programmatic needs.	SCREC Director, and UC ANR Development Office	Development plan documented and implemented

#### Goal 4: Identify SCREC fiscal, staff, and land resources needed to support expanded outreach and education programming.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
4A. Re-align SCREC fiscal, staff, and land resources to support long-term outreach and education projects and to support SCREC more broadly, including succession planning.	Associate Director of REC System and SCREC Director	Staffing plan with budget developed and approved

#### Goal 5: Identify capital improvements needed to support research (e.g. current need for potable water as a research control) and Extension.

Key Actions	Implementation Responsibility	Deliverables
5A. Develop mechanism for evaluating and prioritizing capital improvements supporting research and extension programs.	Associate Director of REC System and SCREC Director in consultation with Advisory Committee	Capital improvement plan
5B. Identify facilities improvements and programmatic support to better deliver all extension activities, e.g. need for a more functional conference room.	SCREC in consultation with SCREC Planning Advisory Committee and Research Advisory Committee where appropriate.	Specific facility and programmatic needs identified in capital improvement plan