

Draft
Land Grant University Identity

Facing traditional issues as well as new global challenges, adequate resources are needed to support the current Land Grant Universities (LGUs); hence it is critical that no further expansion of the LGU network is legislated. Numerous studies highlight the need for additional investment in the existing LGU system. Collectively, the current LGUs comprise a nationwide network of institutions with shared identities, funding mechanisms, and missions as described under the Morrill Acts and subsequent legislation.

These ‘peoples’ universities conduct mission areas of teaching and learning, research and discovery, and engagement and outreach focused on agricultural and food systems, natural resources and sustainability, engineering, and rural economic and social/youth development. Other Acts of Congress expanded and clarified these missions and LGU institutional identity and uniqueness to include Agricultural Experiment Stations (Hatch Act 1887), Cooperative Extension (1914) and the rural and agricultural social sciences (Purnell Act 1925), including family and consumer sciences (historically associated with Home Economics). Uniform among this system of LGUs are:

- Colleges of Agriculture and related colleges, schools or programs
- Agricultural Experiment Stations
- Cooperative Extension Services
- Statewide Service

LGUs, therefore, must engage the breadth of the states they serve as well as the nation. Combined, Cooperative Extension, including 4-H youth programs, and Agricultural Experiment Stations form the cornerstone of the LGU missions and are necessary to provide statewide engagement and research. The LGUs, coordinated through the Board on Agricultural Assembly, have evolved with the transformation of American society as agriculture, food systems, and rural society have changed. This identity historically continues to separate LGUs from other universities. While LGUs serve metropolitan areas and provide a much wider range of faculty talent to social, economic, and environmental issues, they continue their agricultural, food systems, youth development, and rural agendas.

The transformation of American public higher education during the late 20th and early 21st century has included increasing commitment to research and outreach, often inspired by the success of LGUs to systematically integrate learning, discovery and engagement. However, the statutory identity of LGUs, as legislatively expressed in the Acts of Congress (noted above) and the specified focus on agriculture, engineering, food systems and rural social institutions provide historic and legislatively specific missions for service and Cooperative Extension to the states they serve are unique. LGUs are also unique among educational institutions in the U.S., in that they receive Federal appropriations that are available only if state matching funds are provided.