

Justen Smith Named Interim Vice President for USU Extension

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Justen Smith, director of the Utah State University Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Department, was recently named interim vice president for USU Extension. He has worked as an Extension professional for 27 years and has served as department director for the past nine years.

Smith has secured more than \$11 million in grants and external funding to support Extension initiatives and agricultural development. He also led the effort to secure \$1.2 million for the construction of the USU Extension building in Davis County, creating a dedicated space for agricultural education and outreach.

Smith values the land-grant university mission, which extends USU research and resources to all communities in Utah. USU Extension provides research-based education in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, 4-H and youth, gardening, food and nutrition, business and community, finance, and home and family.

USU Provost and Executive Vice President Larry Smith said he is thrilled that Smith accepted this important role.

“Justen’s leadership will be key to USU’s focus on community relations and improving lives throughout Utah,” he said. “He has my absolute confidence in leading Extension.”

Additional accomplishments of Smith include leading the creation of the [drought.usu.edu website](https://drought.usu.edu), which provides resources on agricultural water optimization and water conservation for Utah, the second driest state in the nation. He also partnered with Davis County commissioners to develop and construct the Davis Agricultural Heritage Center in Kaysville. The center honors Davis County and Utah’s agricultural heritage and includes an indoor and outdoor arena and 74 stalls. It

hosts events ranging from mounted western shooting and barrel racing to 4-H youth livestock and horse shows.

Smith’s contributions extend beyond Utah and the U.S. He has worked in 24 countries across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and beyond, providing technical assistance to farmers and agricultural organizations. His work with USDA, USAID, and multiple international organizations has helped improve livestock production, enhance food security, and develop sustainable agricultural practices in diverse regions.

“I am excited to take on this new interim role,” said Smith. “Extension has been my life for nearly three decades, and I have had the privilege of working in every aspect of the Extension system, bringing research and needs-based technical information to help Utahns in all stages of life. I consider USU Extension a national model, and our statewide Extension faculty and staff are extremely valuable assets to our state.”

Smith replaces Ken White, who is returning to his faculty role in the Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department.

USU Extension has offices that serve every county in Utah. For more information about individual county offices and Extension programs, [visit extension.usu.edu](https://extension.usu.edu). Smith can be reached at Justen.Smith@usu.edu.

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