

David Francis: New Youth Development Director

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Utah State

University Extension has named David Francis as the program's new youth development director. Francis is currently Extension faculty with responsibilities for STEM. He has worked with Extension youth programs since 2001, where he began his career at Thanksgiving Point as an Extension educator.

In his new role as director, Francis will provide leadership, guidance and oversight to all Extension youth programs and the state 4-H office in support of the USU land-grant mission.

"We are very pleased to have a person of Dave's caliber in this tremendously important role of directing our youth programs throughout the state," said Ken White, vice president for USU Extension. "Dave has a wealth of knowledge and experience that will not only benefit our youth leaders, but, most importantly, our youth. Our 4-H mission is to empower youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. Given Dave's innovation and energy, he will truly help foster that mission."

In his current role, Francis' primary responsibility has been working with Extension faculty, staff and volunteers to develop and support 4-H STEM programs. He has served on the National 4-H Science Leadership Team and served as lead advisor with the National 4-H Council to develop a Computer Science Pathways Program for 11 states, funded by Google. He has also been program director of the National Maker Summit.

Francis said he is excited to take on this new role, and he looks forward to raising awareness about the wealth of resources and programs Extension provides for youth and educators.

"As our world is changing at an unprecedented rate, providing our youth with the tools and programs they need to become successful adults is imperative," he said. "I hope to help deepen the experience that 4-H youth have in their clubs and with their projects. I'm a true believer in experiential learning, and I look forward to demonstrating how the hands-on experiences in camps and clubs can lead to college and career pathways for youth. I am also anxious to help connect 4-H alumni back to the program."

Francis earned his bachelor's degree in environmental studies and his master's degree in agricultural systems technology, both from USU. He replaces Kevin Kesler, who was director of 4-H and youth programs for the past 21 years.

Francis' appointment is effective Monday, November 19, pending approval by the USU Board of Trustees.