

**Branding the Land-Grant University: Agricultural Producers' and Community Leaders' Awareness of the Tripartite Mission**

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**Abstract:** Several land grant institutions have adopted a name to encompass the teaching, research, and extension components of the university, creating a brand identity for those public services. But, in the mind of stakeholders, has the connection between the tripartite mission and the brand name been made? Since these stakeholder groups are now largely suburban and urban, are they aware of these activities and what do they think about them? The purpose of this study was to determine agricultural producers and community leaders' level of awareness and perceptions of the tripartite mission of the University of Florida under the brand name Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). A sample of 352 producers and 355 community leaders were surveyed. Survey participants

were asked a range of questions about their awareness and perceptions of IFAS and its teaching, research, and extension functions. Questions were also asked regarding the IFAS brand identity and strength. The results showed that agricultural producers and community leaders were informed and held positive views about the research, education, and public service activities of the University of Florida, but, unaided, did not connect these activities with the IFAS brand name. Applying brand marketing strategies through clear and consistent messages would help create a stronger connection between the brand name and services among new and traditional audiences. Other land grant institutions should consider similar research to create a body of knowledge to help market these institutions.

**Keywords:** branding, university reputation, marketing, land-grant university, agricultural producers, community leaders