

## The Ever-Evolving Brand of the Land-Grant Institution: A Historical Overview

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## The Ever-Evolving Brand of the Land-Grant Institution: A Historical Overview

### Abstract

A brand is a multifaceted system of management choices and consumer responses that distinguishes products, goods, services, or ideas and creates awareness and meaning. In a highly competitive environment, the importance of the branding of universities is continually increasing. Land-Grant Institutions (LGIs) have a long and storied history of serving the public, who may have little awareness of the institutions' overall missions or importance. This inquiry sought to describe the brand and branding of LGIs over time. The Morrill Act of 1862 established LGIs and their brand as schools of higher learning for the common people. The LGI and its brand was expanded through the Hatch Act of 1887 and Smith-Lever Act of 1914. LGIs have undergone many changes, some of which are name changes. The total number of name changes for all 1862 LGIs is 93. Even though the overall brand of LGIs as a system has changed, adapted, evolved, and rebranded numerous times, the original brand mission and vision have remained intact. Results suggest most LGIs have renamed or rebranded to be more appealing to broader audiences and to populations not directly tied to the agricultural sector and rural America.

### Keywords

Branding, land-grant institutions, land-grant mission, rebrand

## **The Ever-Evolving Brand of the Land-Grant Institution: A Historical Overview**

A brand is defined as a “complex, interrelated system of management decisions and consumer reactions that identifies a product (goods, services, or ideas), builds awareness of it, and creates meaning for it” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 6). Or, from the consumer-driven approach, a brand is “the promise of bundles of attributes that someone buys and provide satisfaction . . . the attributes that make up a brand may be real or illusory, rational or emotional, tangible or invisible” (Ambler, 1992, p. 27). Brands cannot be understood independent of the world or context in which they exist. Brands are more similar to networks than singular paths. Brand systems are made up of many different components (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The present study focuses on the branding vision, purpose, values, mission, and core concept of land-grant institutions (LGIs) over time. A brand’s purpose, vision, and values contribute to the mission of the brand and by definition the entity it illustrates (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

The vision of a brand is future-focused. A brand vision encompasses the branding entity’s core purpose and values. A brand’s purpose is focused around the concept of what society gleans from the brand itself; what is literally the brand’s purpose for existing (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Related to a brand’s purpose are its values. Brand values are operationalized as the lasting contribution the brand will have to the quality of society in which it exists (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009; Osborne, 1991; Wilson, 1992). While the vision of a brand concentrates on the future, brand mission focuses on the present. The mission addresses in what the brand engages or does, i.e., its everyday tasks and why. The mission of a brand should contribute to the vision of a brand (Campbell & Yeung, 1991; Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). The brand’s core concept is considered the most important component of a brand strategy. The core concept communicates to the consumer what the brand represents (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). A core concept is the essence of the brand. This communicates to consumers the brand’s meaning (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

The first recognition of intentional branding is credited to Procter and Gamble in 1931. After World War II ended, car brands such as Ford and General Motors started using advertisements to increase brand awareness (Whisman, 2009). Multiple definitions of a brand exist. In a non-profit context, a brand can be “a purposeful strategy for identifying what an organization does, communicating who it does that for, and establishing understanding of why those two things are important” (Arozian, 2003, p. 4). Regarding universities, Drori (2013) defined a brand as “artifacts that uniquely identify the organization . . . [and] convey the personality of the particular university” (p. 3). Brands are said to be of utmost importance for the success of universities in the changing consumer climate (Drori, 2013). The branding of universities has recently become a higher priority for these higher education institutions (Bunzel, 2007; Dholakia & Acciardo, 2014; Drori, 2013; Drori et al., 2013; Jevons, 2006; Sujchaphong et al., 2015).

### **Renaming Brands**

Rebranding, or renaming brands, often happens over time (Hankinson et al., 2007). Renaming an organization is not necessarily a rebrand. A true re-branding of an organization is symbol of systematic change (Lomax & Maddor, 2006). Therefore, simply changing a logo or name of an organization should not be considered a rebrand. The name of brands is of utmost importance. A name differentiates the brand and establishes its identity in the marketplace (Schultz et al., 2000). Names are “powerful symbols that define for others who we are and what

we can become” (Fombrun, 1996, p. 35). As such, establishing a name for a brand or changing it plays a role in strategic communication and marketing (Muzellec, 2006).

### **Branding Universities**

Universities have come under scrutiny and criticism by scholars regarding a lack of strong branding (Jevons, 2006). The rising competition and cost associated with higher education cause higher scrutiny among university customers, i.e., students and their parents among other stakeholders. Therefore, traditional brand management strategies may not suffice when marketing universities (Argenti, 2000). Moreover, universities have a unique opportunity to brand through the architecture of buildings, design of campus or landscape, and general ambience (Drori et al., 2013). These elements, in addition to webpages, advertisements, mascots, apparel, and other merchandise, help create and sustain a university’s unique or distinctive brand.

### **Issues in Branding Land-Grant Universities**

According to the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), “[a] land-grant college or university is an institution that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts” (APLU, 2019, para. 1). These institutions were tasked historically with “teaching agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education” (APLU, 2019, para. 2). At least one LGI was established in each U.S. state and territory. However, states had the freedom to implement the land-grant mission in various ways (Gavazzi & Gee, 2018). The different expression and application of land-grant legislation by each state or institution has created some identity issues for the system of LGIs nationwide.

A recent SWOT analysis among senior administrators at LGIs across the nation found “the public at large has little understanding of how universities contribute directly to the well-being of communities, let alone understanding the more specific definition of what it means to be a land-grant institution” (Gavazzi & Gee, 2018, p. 29). Sternberg (2014) noted that “[LGIs] are one of the most precious if not always most highly visible resources this nation has” (p. vii). This general lack of awareness, visibility, and understanding has increased the importance of branding by these institutions.

LGIs award degrees to nearly 1.2 million undergraduate students each year. Moreover, these universities educate 70% of graduate students enrolled in U.S. research institutions (Sternberg, 2014). One-hundred and ten institutions currently have land-grant status. Although land-grant institutions throughout the nation were established by a series of the same legislative acts, the application of such legislation or federal statutes differs greatly from state to state (Campbell, 1995; Gavazzi & Gee, 2018; Sternberg, 2014).

Though this variance created challenges as far as branding, it is necessary and adds value to each respective LGI. “The minute we try to homogenize our universities, we become more like a federalized education system, and we lose our luster in the process” (Gordon & Gee, 2018, p. 31). Therefore, individual institutions have differentiated themselves over time. However, understanding the differentiation of the brands of LGIs may be essential in preserving the viability and identity of the system to which they belong while also appreciating and accentuating the need for such individualized institutional identities.

Different LGIs have been working to improve their brands for a long time. Some researchers have concerned themselves with external branding (Abrams et al., 2010; Baker et al., 2011; Smith & Oliver, 1991). These investigators found that public awareness of the land-grant mission and its impact on U.S. society or more broadly varied. Although, when people were aware of the land-grant mission or the LGI being studied, their perceptions were positive (Abrams et al., 2010; Baker et al., 2011). Other researchers focused their inquiries on internal branding (King, 2021; Ray et al., 2015; Settle et al., 2016; Zagonel et al., 2019). Internal audiences were aware of but had varying levels of understanding of the land-grant mission (King, 2021; Zagonel et al., 2019).

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to describe the brand of 1862 LGIs over time. This study did not examine the brands of 1890 or 1994 LGIs. Two research questions guided this study:

1. How did the primary federal legislative acts that funded and expanded 1862 LGIs build and direct their brands over time?
2. How did the 1862 LGIs rebrand themselves over time?

### **Methods**

Historical research methods were used to answer the study's research questions. McDowell's (2002) guidelines served as the study's overarching methodology. Such "encompass[ed] a number of activities from selecting, evaluating, and interpreting historical evidence, through communicating these findings" (McDowell, 2002, p. 11). Historical research begins by identifying a study area, creating questions to guide research, and the collecting, verifying, classifying, and examining data to answer the guiding questions (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Our research questions were answered by applying branding concepts (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009) to describe the federal legislation and enacted laws as well as other relevant events and actors that impacted the establishment and development of LGIs in the United States.

Primary and secondary sources were gathered through the Oklahoma State University library search tools. Key search terms included combinations of agricultural experiment station, branding, college of agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, Hatch Act, history, image, land-grant, Morrill Act, Smith-Lever Act, and university. Primary sources included legislative acts and records, university webpages, and government reports. The study's secondary sources were historical books related to LGIs and peer-refereed journal articles. These sources were read in their entirety and examined through the lens of branding. The primary researcher took extensive notes while reading and analyzing the documents. The sources were deemed authentic and accurate through the lenses of internal and external criticism (McDowell, 2002), or what Johnson and Christensen (2012) called respectively positive criticism and negative criticism. Corroboration, i.e., "comparing documents to each other to determine whether they provid[ed] the same information or reach[ed] the same conclusions" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 421), was also applied to selected findings to further ensure the study's credibility. The potential for presentism (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) was mitigated by sourcing and reporting the LGIs' names and name changes over time, including the years in which their current names were established. Additional pertinent documents may exist in libraries or archives at other 1862 land-grant institutions that are not digitized and readily accessible via online searches. These may

have been sourced if face-to-face searching had occurred, however, funding was not available for such, which is a limitation to the study.

## Findings

### **Research Question 1: How did the primary federal legislative acts that funded and expanded 1862 LGIs build and direct their brands over time?**

#### **Early Mentions of the Land-Grant Concept**

The Land-Grant College Act was first proposed in 1857 by a U.S. congressional representative from Vermont, Justin Smith Morrill. However, the initial idea for the land-grant model can be traced back to Jonathan Baldwin Turner (Herren & Hillison, 1996). In 1851, Turner proposed a lofty idea of offering education that was both technical and theoretical and open to all types of students, regardless of their socioeconomic class or status (Herren & Hillison, 1996). At that time, the vision of the brand of what would become land-grant universities was seen by some as innovative and idealistic, but by others as impractical or even impossible to achieve (Herren & Edwards, 2002).

The formal proposal of the land-grant mission and funding to support such occurred in 1857 by Morrill. The legislation was blocked primarily by representatives of southern states (Simon, 1963). In addition, most farmers were not inclined to favor expansion of the federal government and proponents of states' rights (Simon, 1963). On its original proposal, the Morrill bill was poorly received by Democrats, westerners, and southerners. The initial stated brand purpose of the LGI was "the adaption of existing educational resources to a changing society in a nation which generally believed that education policy was a public concern" (Simon, 1963, p. 103). The bill's second attempt at passage resulted in majority votes in the House and Senate, but it was vetoed by then President James Buchanan (35th Cong., 2nd Sess. 1414, 1859). The Land-Grant College Act (or Morrill Act of 1862) would not become law until it was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on July 2, 1862 during the American Civil War (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862).

#### **Legislative Acts That Shaped the Brand of the LGI**

Five acts shaped the land-grant system as it is known today. The Morrill Act of 1862 was the first of those acts. The first Morrill Act established the teaching mission of the LGI (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862). The Hatch Act of 1887 expanded the mission and therefore the brand of LGIs. This legislation established agricultural experiment stations throughout the nation (Hatch Act, 1887). Next, the second Morrill Act was passed and signed into law in 1890. This Act was created to combat racial segregation and offer similar educational opportunities for African Americans, particularly in states that had comprised the Confederate States of America and its bordering states (Morrill Act of 1890, 1890), due to their large populations of former slaves and rigid adherence to the *separate but equal doctrine* (Campbell, 1995).

In 1914, passage and enactment of the Smith-Lever Act created the Cooperative Extension Service (CES). This extended the knowledge of land-grant universities and experiment stations into nearly every county of the nation (Smith-Lever Act, 1914). And last, the 1994 Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act provided land-grant status to the nation's tribal colleges. This act expanded opportunities for students, primarily Native Americans, who were

underserved (Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act, 1994). These legislative acts and their respective influence on the LGI brand as a *system* are described below.

### ***Morrill Act of 1862***

After the Southern states seceded from the Union in 1860 and 1861, the Morrill Act was represented during the legislative session of 1861 and 1862. After some debate, the act passed by a vote of 32 to 7 in the Senate, and 90 to 25 in the House of Representatives (Simon, 1963). On July 2, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the first Morrill Act into law. This act established the teaching arm of the land-grant university system (Herren & Edwards, 2002). Thirty-thousand acres, or an equivalent amount of land scrip, was granted to every state in the Union for each state's senator and representative in the U.S. Congress (Campbell, 1995). The passage and enactment of this legislation marked the beginning of accessible higher education for the common man. In fact, the LGI has been touted as "higher education for the public good" (Gavazzi & Gee, 2018, p. 1).

**Initial Manifestation of the LGI Brand.** Following enactment of the first Morrill Act in 1862, the brand of the LGI was formally established. The *vision* of such was formally laid out by the Morrill Act of 1862. The *mission*, or the original focus of the brand, was "to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe" (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862, para. 4). The vision of the brand, or overarching future-oriented ideal, was "to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life" (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862, para. 4).

The *value*, or lasting contribution to society of the brand, was an educated industrial class of Americans and the offering of education to those who seldom had the opportunity to be educated previously at the tertiary level. Campbell (1995) asserted that the value of the LGI brand was and remained the "application of learning in the service of the best interests of the people [and] . . . service to the public" (p. 27).

The initial LGI legislation was associated exclusively with higher education. Therefore, a core concept or essence of the original LGI brand was education of the masses through teaching or instruction, i.e., service to the common man was established as a core concept of the brand. Moreover, "[t]he concept for the land-grant model . . . developed out of the need for a maturing nation to educate its citizens to cope and excel in a world that was changing faster than it had ever changed before" (Herren & Edwards, 2002, p. 95).

The consumers or audience of the brand, primarily the white industrial class of America, were intended to understand the brand as dedicated to educating their sons and daughters in their respective states. Note the inclusion of daughters. LGIs were among the first coeducational colleges in the nation (Beale, 1973). This new idea of education was paradigm-shifting. For the first time education was available to *common people* (Herren & Edwards, 2002). From the beginning, LGIs were intentionally established with an emphasis on public-service to all, despite social standing or class (Campbell, 1995).

### ***Hatch Act of 1887***

When the Hatch Act was signed by President Grover Cleveland on March 2, 1887, the research pillar of the LGI was established. Therefore, the purpose of the LGI brand shifted from being singularly focused on post-secondary education to also including the “scientific investigation and experiment respecting the principles and applications of agricultural science” (Hatch Act of 1887, 1887, para. 2). The Hatch Act established agricultural experiment stations in each U.S. state or territory depending on the grantee’s status. These experiment stations were founded to conduct agricultural research specific to the regions’ respective needs and interests (Kerr, 1987). However, of note, the first agricultural experiment station in the United States was created in 1875 in Connecticut (Kerr, 1987), and preceded passage of the Hatch Act by more than a decade.

The first agricultural experiment station legislation at the federal level was introduced in 1882. Seaman A. Knapp, known as the Father of Extension, wrote the original proposal (Kerr, 1987). The original legislation was known as the Cullen Bill. However, controversy ensued about where control of the experiment stations would lie. The federal and state governments were expected to supply funds and the land-grant colleges would select personnel and disseminate quarterly the research emanating from the college-maintained farms (Kerr, 1987). The bill that eventually passed, the Hatch Act of 1887, specified experiment stations should conduct original research related to agriculture and were to be created and supervised by the land-grant colleges; however, states could choose to have experiment stations not connected with their agricultural colleges. Similar to the Morrill Act of 1862, states were intended to implement provisions of the Hatch Act in concert with their unique needs and priorities. In other words, each state was to determine the research foci for their respective stations (Kerr, 1987).

**Resulting Shift in LGI Brand.** The addition of agricultural research as conducted by the experiment stations shifted the brand of LGIs. The vision of the LGI brand changed to also include improving agricultural practices throughout the nation by applying research-tested methods. The brand purpose and mission were to conduct agricultural research to be readily applied and used by the nation’s farmers. This was sometimes referred to as *book farming* (Boone et al., 2000). The core concept or essence of the LGI brand evolved to include both teaching and research that would benefit the agricultural sectors of the states, regions, and nation overall.

The reception of the new brand of LGIs was varied. Most farmers simply ignored the newly established research stations. However, some producers embraced the concept; this group suggested stations test different varieties of seeds and then distribute that information to farmers. Legislators also tasked these stations with inspecting seeds, feeds, foods, and fertilizers for quality assurance and value (Kerr, 1987).

### ***Smith-Lever Act of 1914***

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service (CES). David F. Houston, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture in 1914, lauded the Smith-Lever act as one of the most innovative pieces of educational legislation to ever be implemented by a government (Campbell, 1995). The act was part of a “comprehensive attempt to make rural life attractive, comfortable, and profitable . . . [to] solve the chronic problems of agriculture and rural life” (Campbell, 1995, p. 23). The act provided for “cooperative agricultural extension work between the agricultural colleges in the several states receiving benefits of an Act of Congress approved

July 2, 1862, and of acts supplementary thereto, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)” (Smith-Lever Act, 1914, para. 1).

The CES was created essentially to “diffuse among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, uses of solar energy with respect to agriculture, home economics, and rural energy and to encourage the application of the same” (Smith-Lever Act, 1914, para. 2). These efforts were to be done in cooperation with the USDA. The Smith-Lever Act created the third and final pillar of the LGI, i.e., Extension.

The dissemination of information by the CES was intended to be practical applications of the research conducted at the LGIs’ agricultural experiment stations. Extension personnel were tasked with providing demonstrations for farmers and, in many instances, their wives (Smith-Lever Act, 1914). Each state was initially given \$600,000 to establish their CES (Campbell, 1995). The term *cooperative* referred to the cooperation that local Extension was to have with the USDA, and to its funding model, which was intended to be shared funding as provided by federal, state, and local governments (Campbell, 1995). Furthermore, 4-H was eventually added to the portfolio of the CES, thereby including program’s for rural youth (Beale, 1973).

**Resulting Shift in the LGI Brand.** The establishment of the CES was an effort to bring the benefits of the LGI to the broader population, not just college students, but potentially to all members of society (Campbell, 1995). This piece of legislation is what made the land-grant mission whole or complete. The overall purpose of the LGI brand was to “promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life” (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862). Regardless of the legislation following the first Morrill Act, the purpose of the LGI brand remained essentially the same: to improve the lives of the industrial class, especially regarding the workers and other citizens populating the rural communities in which most of the nation’s agricultural production occurred.

The Smith-Lever Act simply extended the mission to even more members of agricultural and predominately rural communities. The core concepts of the LGI brand were thereafter teaching, research, and extension of practical knowledge for improving the lives of and in service to the people of the United States and world. The LGI brand value was the improvement of rural communities as mainly populated by an agricultural class of citizens and by association the larger society.

## **Research Question 2: How did the 1862 LGIs rebrand themselves over time?**

### **Renaming of Universities and Colleges of Agriculture comprising the 1862 LGI System**

In the nearly 160 years following their establishment, LGIs have undergone many changes, some of which were the renaming of the institutions themselves and their respective colleges of agriculture. When the Morrill Act was passed, some states applied land-grant status to already established institutions, e.g., New Jersey and Rutgers University, with the understanding that the institution would offer instruction in agricultural and mechanic arts (Campbell, 1995). Other states opted to create new institutions, e.g., Kansas and Kansas State University. Over time, many LGIs have changed their names, some more than four times and the total number of previous names is 93. Table 1 displays the different iterations of the 1862 LGIs’ names.

Few people were trained in the sciences related to agriculture or in agriculture itself when the Morrill Act of 1862 was enacted (Committee on the Future of Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (CFLGCA), 1995). Many of the early faculty at LGIs were recruited because of their superior skills in farming or animal production. This created the trend of specializations within the broad field of agriculture, which has resulted in departments and degree programs such as animal science, crop science, and horticulture, and numerous other subject or discipline-oriented titles (CFLGCA, 1995).

In 1995, less than one-half of the “1862 colleges retain[ed] the name ‘College of Agriculture’ or ‘College of Agricultural Sciences’” (CFLGCA, 1995, p. 83). To date, only five LGIs have kept the simple College or School of Agriculture title (Auburn University, Kansas State University, Louisiana State University, Purdue University, and University of the Virgin Islands). The remainder of LGIs added some aspect of science or natural resources to the titles of their agricultural colleges or, in some cases, the words biotechnology, food, forestry, health, human, and life were also included. Others incorporated the surname of individuals, e.g., the University of Arkansas’ Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences. And five colleges no longer have the words agriculture or agricultural in their titles. Table 2 shows the name of the agricultural college or the college or school housing the agricultural programs of study at each 1862 LGI.

**Table 1***Instances of Name Changes by 1862 LGIs*

Institutions as Currently Named	Year Founded	Former Names	Year of Last Name Change
Rutgers University	1766	Queen's College; Rutgers College	1924
University of Georgia	1785	N/A	N/A
University of Vermont	1791	N/A	N/A
University of Tennessee	1794	Blount College; East Tennessee College; East Tennessee University	1879
University of Delaware	1834	NewArk College; Delaware College	1921
University of Wisconsin	1838	University of the Territory of Wisconsin	1866
University of Missouri	1839	N/A	N/A
University of Minnesota	1851	N/A	N/A
University of the District of Columbia	1851	N/A	N/A
University of Florida	1853	East Florida Seminary; Florida Agricultural College; University of the State of Florida	1905
Pennsylvania State University	1855	Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania; Agricultural College of Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania State College	1953

Michigan State University	1855	Agricultural College of the State of Michigan; State Agricultural College; Michigan Agricultural College; Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science; Michigan State University of Agriculture and Applied Science	1964
University of Maryland	1856	Maryland Agricultural College; Maryland State College	1920
Auburn University	1856	East Alabama Male College; Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama; Alabama Polytechnic Institute	1960
Iowa State University	1858	Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm; Iowa State College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts; Iowa State University of Science and Technology	1959
Louisiana State University	1860	Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy; Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	1965
Kansas State University	1863	Kansas State Agricultural College; Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science; Kansas State University of Agriculture and Applied Science	1959
University of Massachusetts	1863	Massachusetts Agricultural College; Massachusetts State College	1947
Cornell University	1865	N/A	N/A
University of Maine	1865	Maine State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts	1897
University of Kentucky	1865	Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky	1916
University of California System	1866	Agricultural, Mining, and Mechanical Arts College	1868
University of New Hampshire	1866	New Hampshire College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts	1923
West Virginia University	1867	Agricultural College of West Virginia	1868
University of Illinois at	1867	Illinois Industrial University; University of Illinois	1965

Urbana-Champaign Oregon State University	1868	Corvallis College; Oregon State Agricultural College; Oregon State College	1961
University of Nebraska	1869	N/A	N/A
Purdue University	1869	N/A	N/A
Ohio State University	1870	Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College	1878
Colorado State University	1870	Colorado Agricultural College; Colorado State College; Colorado State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts; Colorado A&M; Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College	1957
University of Arkansas	1871	Arkansas Industrial University	1899
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	1872	Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College; Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute; Virginia Polytechnic Institute	1970
University of Nevada, Reno	1874	State University of Nevada; Nevada State University; University of Nevada	1969
Texas A&M University	1876	Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas	1963
Mississippi State University	1878	Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Mississippi; Mississippi State College	1958
University of Connecticut	1881	Storrs Agricultural School; Storrs Agricultural College; Connecticut Agricultural College; Connecticut State College	1939
South Dakota State University	1881	Dakota Agricultural College; South Dakota Agricultural College; South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts	1964

University of Arizona	1885	N/A	N/A
University of Wyoming	1886	N/A	N/A
North Carolina State University	1887	North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts; North Carolina State College	1962
Utah State University	1888	Agricultural College of Utah; Utah State Agricultural College	1957
New Mexico State University	1888	Las Cruces College; New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts	1960
University of Rhode Island	1888	State Agricultural School; Rhode Island College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts; Rhode Island State College	1951
Clemson University	1889	Clemson Agricultural College	1964
University of Idaho	1889	N/A	N/A
Washington State University	1890	Washington Agricultural College and School of Science; State College of Washington	1959
North Dakota State University	1890	North Dakota Agricultural College	1960
Oklahoma State University	1890	Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College	1957
Montana State University	1893	Agricultural College of the State of Montana; Montana College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts; Montana State College	1965
University of Puerto Rico	1900	Normal School	1923

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	1907	College of Hawai'i; University of Hawai'i	1972
University of Alaska	1917	Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines	1935
University of Guam	1952	Territorial College of Guam; College of Guam	1968
University of the Virgin Islands	1962	College of the Virgin Islands	1986
College of Micronesia-FSM <sup>a</sup>	1963	Micronesian Teacher Education Center; Community College of Micronesia; College of Micronesia	1992
Northern Marianas College	1981	N/A	N/A

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*Note.* Information for this table was adapted from each institution's respective website. The comprehensive list of institutions was retrieved from APLU. <sup>a</sup>Federated States of Micronesia

**Table 2***Names of the Agricultural Colleges in 1862 LGIs as of 2021*

Institution Name	Name of Agricultural College
Auburn University	College of Agriculture
Clemson University	College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences
College of Micronesia-FSM <sup>a</sup>	Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources <sup>b</sup>
Colorado State University	College of Agricultural Sciences
Cornell University	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Iowa State University	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Kansas State University	College of Agriculture
Louisiana State University	College of Agriculture
Michigan State University	College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Mississippi State University	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Montana State University	College of Agriculture
New Mexico State University	College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
North Carolina State University	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
North Dakota State University	College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources
Northern Marianas College	Department of Natural Resource Management <sup>b</sup>
Ohio State University	College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
Oklahoma State University	Ferguson College of Agriculture
Oregon State University	College of Agricultural Sciences
Pennsylvania State University	College of Agricultural Sciences
Purdue University	College of Agriculture
Rutgers University	School of Environmental and Biological Sciences
South Dakota State University	College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences
Texas A&M University	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
University of Alaska	College of Natural Science and Mathematics
University of Arizona	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
University of Arkansas	Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, and Life Sciences
University of California System	College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences
University of Connecticut	College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources
University of Delaware	College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

University of Florida	College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
University of Georgia	College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
University of Guam	College of Natural and Applied Sciences
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Idaho	College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
University of Illinois	College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
University of Kentucky	College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
University of Maine	College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture
University of Maryland	College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Massachusetts	Stockbridge School of Agriculture
University of Minnesota	College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences
University of Missouri	College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
University of Nebraska	College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
University of Nevada, Reno	College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources
University of New Hampshire	College of Life Sciences and Agriculture
University of Puerto Rico	College of Agricultural Sciences
University of Rhode Island	College of the Environment and Life Sciences
University of Tennessee	Herbert College of Agriculture
University of the District of Columbia	College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences
University of the Virgin Islands	School of Agriculture
University of Vermont	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
University of Wisconsin	College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
University of Wyoming	College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Utah State University	College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Washington State University	College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences
West Virginia University	Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design

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*Note.* Information for this table was taken from each institution's respective website. The comprehensive list of institutions was retrieved from APLU. <sup>a</sup>Federated States of Micronesia, <sup>b</sup>College of Micronesia and Northern Marianas College are two-year institutions and do not have colleges or schools devoted to agriculture but rather departments inclusive of its various disciplines.

## Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

The idea and concept of LGIs have been changing, adapting, evolving, and rebranding since at least 1857. Before the legislation that officially established the LGI and therefore its brand, the postulation and proposal of the LGI idea from 1857 to 1862 laid the foundation for the LGI brand. From 1862 to 1994, legislation has dictated the changes and adaptation of the LGI brand. The names of LGIs changed from 1866 to 1992 (see Table 1). These name changes may be attributed to several factors. Many of the schools had the term *agriculture* in their titles. As institutional offerings expanded to include more than agriculture, institutions may have changed their names to be more inclusive. However, these changes were in accordance with the original LGI brand due to the Morrill Act of 1862 stating that the humanities were not to be excluded (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862) from the curriculum of these institutions. Moreover, some of the institutions changed their names from *colleges* to *universities* as they grew and diversified and that also may have signified the offering of graduate level degrees over time.

Over the years, most colleges related to agriculture within LGIs changed their names (see Table 2), perhaps to increase inclusivity and status. In concert, a shift occurred from primarily only emphasizing the production-oriented aspects of agriculture. For instance, Beale (1973) asserted that “[a]griculturists recognize that the modern farmer, to succeed, must be a combination naturalist, scientist, economist, and businessman” (p. 17). And agriculture has changed “from production and marketing [of food] to a food system approach” (Fields et al., 2003). Moreover, increased focus has been placed on creating community leaders, informed citizens, and stewards of natural resources as well as premiere agriculturists (Beale, 1973). These objectives likely contributed to the changing of names by many agricultural colleges at LGIs over time.

Despite these changes, the original brand mission and vision remained intact. The changes that occurred after the Morrill Act of 1862—creation of agricultural experiment stations, addition of cooperative extension, and name changes of institutions—did not deviate from the original land-grant aim. Rather, the changes supported the institutions’ brands and expanded their potential audiences and related impacts.

This expansion was in accordance with the essence of the LGI brand. From the beginning, the LGI sought to arm the common man and woman with an education (Morrill Act of 1862, 1862). This education was intended to not only benefit society as a whole, but also create opportunities for people to advance themselves and improve their lives (Herren & Edwards, 2002). By adding agricultural experiment stations and the Cooperative Extension Service, LGIs established a stronger brand and increased brand presence throughout the nation, thereby educating more sons and daughters of the industrial class. Results of this study suggest that most LGIs renamed or rebranded themselves presumably to be more appealing to broader audiences and to populations not directly tied to production agriculture and rural America. Although this expansion was in keeping with the essence of the LGI brand, the public still has relatively low understanding and awareness of the land-grant mission (Baker et al., 2011; Sternberg, 2014).

It is recommended these concepts be addressed in graduate education courses. Having a historical understanding of the land-grant mission and its components may be beneficial for agricultural communications and Extension education students. Future research should examine whether the renaming of LGI components were true instances of rebranding, i.e., actual organizational change (Lomax & Maddor, 2006). The effectiveness of the rebrands also could be

examined to determine if LGIs were more inclusive and appealing to diverse audiences after being renamed. Moreover, the brand of 1890 and 1994 LGIs should be examined, as well as the entire LGI system i.e., 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions combined. Future research should focus on the manifestation of the LGI brand at individual institutions and the expression of that brand through external marketing and communication materials (Evans, 2006). Moreover, investigating the internal awareness, knowledge, and perception of the LGI brand by the students, staff, and faculty who populate the institutions may benefit the system, including regarding its current and emerging challenges as well as potential opportunities (King, 2021).

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