

**College of Agricultural Sciences
Office for Undergraduate Education**

Living Our Mission to Achieve Our Vision: Strategic Plan 2009-2014

Introduction

As part of the college-wide strategic planning activity, the College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education has created this document to provide direction and guidance as it moves forward with meeting important challenges ahead. All staff provided input on the plan, contributing to the development of the Vision and Mission statements, as well as the goals and objectives for each content area. The staff in Undergraduate Education recognizes that strategic plans are fluid documents, meant to be adjusted and changed as goals are achieved and new goals emerge. The staff is committed to periodically reviewing and assessing this strategic plan accordingly.

Method

In March, 2008, the Office for Undergraduate Education participated in the “FISH Philosophy” workshop presented by the Human Resources Development Center. The goal of this workshop was to begin the process of identifying core values, leading to the creation of new Mission and Vision statements. A follow up workshop was held in May, 2008 to clearly establish Mission and Vision statements and to define the next step in creation of a formal strategic plan.

Following the second workshop, a smaller working group defined the seven general content areas of programs and services offered by the Office for Undergraduate Education for students, faculty, and staff. The groups are: Recruitment; Retention; Multicultural Enhancement; Faculty Development; Course Development; Facilities, Learning Environment, and Resources; and Professional Development. Each group was charged with setting goals and objectives for the assigned general content area. Those recommended goals and objectives are synthesized in this Strategic Plan.

Office for Undergraduate Education: Vision Statement

The Office for Undergraduate Education will lead the efforts of the College of Agricultural Sciences at The Pennsylvania State University in providing outstanding support and services for students by facilitating academic and professional preparedness, encouraging the use of state-of-the-art technology for student development and instructional purposes, creating welcoming and engaging facilities, and developing tools and resources to ensure faculty preparation and development.

Office for Undergraduate Education: Mission Statement

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education at The Pennsylvania State University values each individual student as demonstrated by a team of caring and responsive staff offering dynamic and visionary services that prepare students to achieve academic, professional, and personal success.

Strategic Initiatives: Living Our Mission to Achieve Our Vision

Recruitment

Goal

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will increase enrollment of high quality and diverse undergraduate students by enhancing collaborative initiatives with internal and external stakeholders; increasing involvement of college alumni in recruitment events; continuing development of both print and web-based marketing materials; and developing tools and resources for students at Commonwealth campuses.

Objectives

Collaborative Initiatives and Shared Programming

- Expand collaborative efforts of Student Recruitment and Enrollment Committee (SREC)
- Expand outreach visits to high schools offering Agri-science curriculum in PA and NJ
- Expand outreach visits to PA 4-H leadership activities
- Expand outreach efforts to include non-traditional audiences i.e. Career Fairs, PA Home-School Association and PASA Youth Track
- Expand efforts to reach Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) students
- Expand career exploration programs for high school students
- Utilize Creamery facility as a site for information distribution for the general public during major campus events
- Sponsor pre-college activities at diverse locations

Alumni Volunteer Development

- Provide training on current college curriculum and career paths
- Engage alumni in local recruiting and retention events

Recruitment via Technology

- Utilize C-Vent as tool for large-scale target email communications
- Utilize C-Vent for open house event management
- Expand use of Office for Undergraduate Education Facebook site
- Conduct student profile interviews to add to web
- Add “Ask Us “feature to the web site
- Expand use of online chats involving academic programs and Ag Advocates

Marketing Materials and Resources

- Increase photo library by establishing monthly shoots to capture a variety of photos to meet discipline, cultural and seasonal needs
- Create new brochure that merges and replaces College Fact Sheet and discipline flyers
- Update Careers book to include all current major programs, incorporate internship and career profiles from students and alumni

Commonwealth Campuses

- Develop new Commonwealth campus piece (print and web) that includes student profile promoting the 2 + 2 message

Retention

Goal

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will improve student retention rates by enhancing the academic and social experience for all students, including those attending Commonwealth campuses; strengthening internal processes and customer service; and developing programming that will contribute to students' personal and professional development.

Objectives

Commonwealth Campus Initiative

- Develop programs and services to enhance Commonwealth campus student experiences
- Develop programs and services that engage students in the life of the college
- Expand e-Learning opportunities for Commonwealth campus students
- Expand co-curricular learning opportunities for Commonwealth campus students

Internal and External Stakeholder Relations

- Develop programs and services for training and development of stakeholders such as alumni volunteers, Extension offices, Academic Program Coordinators, and unit leaders.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with business, industry, government, community, and education partners

Academic Advising

- Create and deliver on-going adviser training and communication
- Communicate more effectively with students regarding adviser assignments
- Improve Office for Undergraduate Education customer service related to monitoring adviser assignments and providing information to students as needed

Academic Offerings via Technology

- Expand e-Learning opportunities for Commonwealth campus students
- Expand course offerings at Commonwealth campuses using alternative media such as Adobe Connect
- Expand online course offerings for all students

Career Development

- Create a position within the Office for Undergraduate Education to coordinate career exploration, internship development, and partnerships with potential employers
- Coordinate efforts with the Development Office, Alumni Relations Office, and Entrepreneurship Initiative
- Upgrade and expand the Internship/Career database and website; improve student, faculty, and staff use of web resources
- Develop programs that educate and prepare students for professional settings and opportunities.
- Provide more opportunities to connect students and potential employers with personal interaction on and off campus.
- Expand College Mentor program in collaboration with Alumni Relations
- Develop tracking system to monitor student internship experiences and alumni career paths

- Develop informative publication pieces for potential employers, external stakeholders, and students.

Customer Service

- Provide ongoing training and professional development for Office for Undergraduate Education and department support staff
- Improve internal communication flow
- Create Office for Undergraduate Education internal referral document
- Improve communication/information sharing between academic departments and Office for Undergraduate Education
- Strengthen Office for Undergraduate Education’s relationship with Academic Program Coordinators

Financial Support

- Work with Development to grow and publicize scholarship opportunities
- Improve communication efforts with Commonwealth campus students to publicize scholarship opportunities and application processes
- Strengthen internal budget process

Multicultural Enhancement

Goal

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will strengthen multiculturalism within the college by focusing on recruitment, retention, faculty development, and collaborative partnerships within the college.

Objectives

Recruitment

- Expand lines of communication with multicultural high school students
- Include scholarship information for underrepresented students with general college materials
- Expand multicultural programs Web site
- Identify demographics of the student population to find out which schools are the most ethnically diverse
- Involve MANRRS students in recruitment efforts
- Provide funding for students with limited resources to attend college recruitment events such as High School Senior Day
- Develop publications that highlight alumni
- Involve alumni in outreach, including special weekends
- Profile alumni from diverse backgrounds college publications

Retention

- Create a Multicultural Student Welcome program
- Establish a Student Advisory Board that connects students across the college and makes recommendation on services provided to underrepresented students (Commission on Cross College Cultural Connections).
- Provide academic monitoring of students

Faculty Development

- Use resources to broaden and enhance multicultural understanding
- Create a Brown Bag series for faculty and staff
- Integrate multicultural education into adviser training

Collaborative Partnerships within the College

- Develop collaborative partnerships with internal and external groups including: Cooperative Extension, International Programs, and Environmental Institute Justice and Ethics

Faculty Development

Goal

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will contribute to faculty professional development by creating and implementing academic advising training, workshops related to teaching, and financially supporting relevant professional development activities such as conferences and journal subscriptions.

Objectives

Advising Training

- Establish brown bag advising lunches
- Conduct needs assessment
- Develop advising workshops for faculty and staff
- Support professional development for advisers via like conferences and workshops
- Develop Web-based training for both University Park and Commonwealth campus advisers
- Develop an advising certificate program

Sponsored Professional Development Opportunities

- Design and implement teaching workshops
- Design and implement Advising workshops

Sponsored Conference Attendance

- Support attendance at advising conferences
- Support attendance at the NACTA conference
- Support attendance at other relevant teaching or advising conferences

NACTA Journal Distribution

- Fund a one-year subscription for new faculty who have at least a 25-30% teaching appointment
- Fund subscriptions for Academic Program Coordinators

Course Development

Goal

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will expand academic opportunities for students by developing courses utilizing electronic media and making Agricultural Sciences courses more accessible to Commonwealth campus students.

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will strive to meet the needs of industry partners by academically preparing students to be successful within those industries.

Objectives

Expand course offerings via the eLearning Cooperative. Course possibilities include:

- PPATH 300
- HORT 101
- ANSCI 215
- SPAN for AG
- ANSCI 100
- AG BM 200
- SOILS 101
- AG 113

Deliver AG 150S to Commonwealth campuses.

- This course is currently delivered at Penn State Berks, Altoona and New Kensington. Expand to Mont Alto, Erie, Harrisburg, Hazelton, York and Brandywine.

Increase access to electronic course opportunities.

Meet industry needs through proactive collaboration and course development.

- Establish partnerships with Penn State Ag Council
- Involve guest speakers from industry in AG 150S and Spanish for the Agricultural Industries
- Develop more student internship opportunities

Facilities, Learning Environment, and Resources

Goal

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will collaborate with the Agricultural Administration Building Facility Coordinator to enhance the first floor hallways and lobby area, and will work to create a more student-centered, welcoming, and engaging office space inside room 101 and the 101 conference room.

Objectives

Create an inviting space that flows nicely with the renovations already planned for the building.

- Plans for the lobby area include installation of a flat screen TV monitor to showcase video streams, marketing photos, and announcements for students.

Plans for enhancement of the 101 Agricultural Administration Building office include:

- Install digital picture frames to showcase current student recruitment photos
- Use the antique showcase unit in the current waiting room for student club/team awards
- Install digital picture frames on conference room walls
- Create framed prints of current student recruitment photos

Professional Development

Goal

The College of Agricultural Sciences Office for Undergraduate Education will encourage and support its staff's professional development, as individuals and as a team, by annually identifying the staff's needs and goals, in relation to the objectives and purpose of The Office for Undergraduate Education, in the form of a written policy which will be in compliance with the policy established by the College of Agricultural Sciences.

Objectives

Office for Undergraduate Education Objectives

- Establish policy guidelines for participating in professional development and support regarding the number of workshops feasible for the team or individual based on issues of time and department budget
- After attending workshops teach and share with other OUE staff whatever can be useful to the team or other individuals on the staff
- At the end of each academic year assess success in terms of what has been accomplished by the team and individual staff members

Individual Objectives

- Establish as an individual needs and areas of desired growth
- Identify strategies that will encourage and motivate staff members to participate in workshops that enable professional development
- Identify how to make all OUE staff aware of how the annual budget allots for profession development

Team Objectives

- Establish policy for training new staff
- Establish a policy of protocol to ensure that all staff members feel equal and appreciated in their job duties
- Establish as a team our needs and goals relative to professional growth
- Provide professional development as a team to other areas of CAS
- Develop handbook/orientation handout for all new employees
- Encourage the establishment of a monthly calendar for noon lunches to interact, strictly on a volunteer basis, both socially and professionally

College Level Objectives

- Encourage brown bag lunches for OUE and the whole College on relevant topics and issues

Measuring Success

Measuring the success of this strategic plan will take many forms depending on the area being evaluated. For example, increased enrollment and lower attrition rates provide a quantitative measure of recruitment and retention goals. Qualitative analysis might be used to determine the success of advising initiatives and meeting industry needs. Likewise, project completion such as lobby and office enhancements, are indicators of having met goals for facilities.

The staff has committed to annually evaluating this strategic plan to determine whether goals and objectives have been met, and to adjust the plan as needed. Work teams will reconvene by content area to conduct these analyses. The staff will also need to be cognizant of continuing financial challenges and strategize realistic goals based on the evaluation as well as available resources.

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