

College of Agricultural Sciences Strategic Initiative Teams

January-March 2008

Two sets of strategic initiative teams are being formed this month to provide implementation recommendations for potential inclusion in the college's strategic plan for the period 2008/2009 through 2012/2013. Five teams will concentrate on emerging program priorities and two will study operational priorities.

1. Implementation of Program Priorities

Five emerging program priorities were identified by the college leadership team in fall 2006 and updated in fall 2007 to reflect changing opportunities and stakeholder priorities. They represent opportunities that cross multiple functions, departments, and colleges. All five priorities are interrelated and center on the sustainability of the food and fiber system, ecosystem, and socioeconomic system. USDA defines sustainability as “satisfying, over the long-term, human needs for not only food and fiber but also feed and fuel while maintaining or enhancing environmental quality, rural economic vitality, and quality of life” (USDA REE Energy Science, Education and Extension Strategic Plan, September 2007.)

Short term implementation teams will be charged in January 2008 and will work through March 2008 to identify a short list of longer term implementation priorities on which to focus research, teaching and extension within their topic area. It will be crucial that the resultant priorities include outcomes that cross all three functions of research, teaching and extension. This will be a refinement of the recommendations from the 2004 study groups to include emerging issues, stakeholder priorities, and trends that present new opportunities for college excellence crossing teaching, research and extension. Teams will be asked to consider multiple sources of input. Recommendations will be due to Dean Steele by March 31, 2008 and will be used to refine the next five year college strategic plan that is due to the Provost July 1, 2008.

1.1 Biobased products and renewable energy: Tom Richard and Greg Roth, co-chairs

1. Jeff Catchmark
2. Claire Hinrichs
3. Chuck Ray
4. Gary Sheppard (CED/Ag/Dairy, Westmoreland)
5. Tom Wilson (Ag Engineer, Crawford)
6. Greg Ziegler
7. John Nikoloff—external stakeholder
8. John Karakash—external stakeholder
9. Chris More—College Relations

Be sure to include:

- Gaps and opportunities in research, degree programs/courses, extension education.
- Support the Biomass Energy Center, charged with addressing the complete value chain of biomass energy systems within a bio-based economy.
- Agriculture-based energy production and alternate energy sources.
- Bio-based materials.
- Sustainable bio-economies.
- Technology transfer to public and private sectors, including youth education and public education, to facilitate job creation, energy independence, and agricultural profitability.

1.2 Economic Sustainability: Jill Findeis and Judd Michael, co-chairs

1. Jeffrey Hyde
2. Dan Eichenlaub--external stakeholder
3. Kathy Kelley
4. Tim Kelsey
5. Jon Laughner (Interim CED/Ag Entrepreneur, Beaver)
6. Dave Mortensen
7. Troy Ott
8. Bryan Snyder--external stakeholder
9. Mary Wirth--College Relations

Be sure to include:

- Gaps and opportunities in research, degree programs/courses, extension education.
- Profitability and sustainability of agricultural and natural resources production and processing.
- Entrepreneurship, value-added processing, and income diversification.
- Adjustments in the structure of agriculture.
- Transitions in land use at the rural/urban interface.
- Agricultural workforce and its development.
- Public education for agricultural literacy.
- Community assistance programs such as e-government and youth leadership development.

1.3 Food Safety and Quality: John Coupland and Bhushan Jayarao, co-chairs

1. Marilyn Corbin
2. Cathy Cutter
3. Chobi DebRoy
4. Ali Demirci
5. Duff George--external stakeholder
6. Gretchen Kuldau
7. Amechi Okereke, Hershey Foods--external stakeholder
8. Nancy Wiker (FCS/Health/Nutr/Food Safety, Lancaster)
9. Gary Abdullah--College Relations

Be sure to include:

- Gaps and opportunities in research, degree programs/courses, extension education.
- Consumer health and wellness: Agrosolutions to today's health problems.
- Food safety research, training, and certification for consumers, retailers, processors, and producers.
- Research and education on food quality, consumer preferences, biosecurity, production, manufacturing, and processing.
- Impact of food safety certification standards on agribusiness.
- Integration of food systems to address economics, safety, and food independence across local and global food systems.
- Consultation with Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA).

1.4 Protection of Plant, Animal, and Human Health: Ernest Hovingh and Seogchan Kang, co-chairs

1. Avery August
2. Ottar Bjornstad
3. Dave Filson
4. Joel Hersh, PASART—external stakeholder
5. Mike Hulet
6. Scott Isard
7. Dave Johnson
8. Mary Kennett
9. Nan Hanshaw, PDA—external stakeholder
10. Chuck Gill—College Relations

Be sure to include:

- Gaps and opportunities in research, degree programs/courses, extension education.
- Environmental impacts on human health.
- Prediction and response to pests and pathogens.
- Infectious disease.
- Proactive and cost effective approaches to anticipate, isolate, and eradicate outbreaks, including potential bioterrorist threats affecting crop, livestock, and forest production.
- Diverse production, handling, processing and distribution practices.
- Prevent and control the growth of invasive species and unwanted plants and limit the economic damage they do.

Do not address:

- Nutritional aspects.

1.5 Sustainable Environments: Jim Shortle and Mary Barbercheck, co-chairs

1. Craig Altemose
2. Doug Beegle
3. Elizabeth Boyer
4. Matt Ehrhart-external stakeholder
5. Virginia Ishler
6. Dana Rizzo
7. Kristen Saake Blunk
8. Rob Shannon
9. Jeff Mulhollem—College Relations

Be sure to include:

- Gaps and opportunities in research, degree programs/courses, extension education.
- Environmental solutions for air, land, water, and biological systems.
- Nutrient Initiative for research, education, and outreach to address water quality problems related to agricultural nutrients in Pennsylvania and beyond.
- Harmonize agricultural production with environmental goals through sustainable crop, livestock and forest production practices.
- Improve decisions that affect natural resources and the environment including research, teaching, and extension/outreach in natural resource and environmental economics, sociology, and law/policies and planning.
- NRCS.

2. Implementation of Operational Priorities

Ten operational priorities were identified by the college leadership team in fall 2006: 1.) Marketing, communications, enrollment & retention; 2.) IT support and education; 3.) Development; 4.) Grad student support to enhance diversity & quality; 5.) Facilities & infrastructure; 6.) Start ups, retentions & spousal hires; 7.) Launching the metro station; 8.) Curricular improvement; 9.) E-learning; and 10.) Leading & managing the college as a system. Efforts are underway to implement all of these priorities and two initiatives are being singled out for further implementation planning during winter/spring 2008. Recommendations will be due to Dean Steele by March 31, 2008 and will be used to refine the next five year college strategic plan that is due to the Provost July 1, 2008.

2.1 E-Learning Strategies: Diane Mc Laughlin and David Sylvia, co-chairs

1. Melanie Barkley (Ag/Livestock, Bedford)
2. Suzanne Bienert
3. Carrie Bomgardner--external stakeholder
4. Barb Christ
5. Claudia Mincemoyer

Be sure to include:

- Priority list of markets on which to focus.
- Process for program selection for new program development.
- Policy for maintenance and revision of existing courses.
- Funds distribution policy.
- On load vs. off load faculty compensation.
- Form, function and cost recovery for the college e-learning group.
- Other policies to reinforce values of meeting high demand and multipurpose use.

2.2 Sustaining and Advancing College Excellence: David Blandford and Gary Perdew, co-chairs

1. Ted Alter
2. Mary Jo Depp-Nestlerode
3. Karl Girton—external stakeholder
4. Roger Martell
5. Walt Peetchatka— external stakeholder
6. Ed Rajotte

Be sure to include:

- Recommend policies to organize research, teaching and extension around the integration of the food and fiber system, ecosystem, and socioeconomic system. Start with social sciences and the plant sciences.
- The 2001 College Sustainability report recommended a focus on college level program priorities. As a next step, recommend implementation strategies to control costs and increase funds available to support college level program priorities. Consider faculty workload, low enrollment programs, temporary commitments, duplication of effort, and other costs within the control of unit leaders.
- Recommend means by which the college can strengthen the functioning and effectiveness of program teams that align research and resident and extension education.
- Consider opportunities for centralization of services to control costs and eliminate duplication of effort.
- Include ideas from the fall 2007 extension priority setting group regarding programmatic alignment.