

### **Development of the Strategic Plan for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Revision of the College Staffing Structure, and Completion of a Five-Year Self Study**

**Issue:** The strategic plan for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) was out of date and developments of a new university-wide plan (VolVision for the Top 25), new leadership of the UT Institute of Agriculture, and continued enrollment growth supported the necessity for a new strategic plan for CASNR and an examination of the organizational structure of the office of the dean. This effort coincided with the scheduled comprehensive self-study and five-year program review for the college and the dean.

**What has been done:** Accomplishments achieved within the goals of the FSLI project include:

- A draft of the strategic plan (CASNR 2020 Draft 1.1) was developed including values, vision, characterization of CASNR today, trends, goals and micro-goals. The process was launched with a planning meeting of CASNR leaders and key faculty with Mitch Owen, consultant, on August 23, 2011, and was followed by an all-college meeting held September 21-22 with a focus on the Future of Academics. The planning team met again on October 25 and 26 to analyze the survey results and college-wide input and to construct an initial framework for the strategic plan. The draft was distributed again to the college to collect input on strategies, defining benchmarks, and measures of success. Individualized feedback obtained during individual department visits. We are now nearing completion of the final draft.
- A study was done comparing the size and scope of the CASNR dean's office staffing with two other smaller colleges and it was found that we were understaffed with respect to total FTEs and were the only college unit without a Budget Manager. We were able to successfully upgrade the position description of the Accounting Specialist to a Budget Manager status and she has taken on responsibilities for Human Resources support as part of that upgrade. Another position was also upgraded with the additional responsibilities for diversity initiatives. We were also given a centrally funded Advising Director position to aid in keeping students on track for timely graduation (a Top 25 metric) and that position was filled in August 2012. In addition, faculty with interest and ability in selected areas were given partial administrative supplements to expand the college's scope resulting in a Director for International Programs and Study Abroad, a Director for CASNR Technology, and a Director for Honors Programs and Undergraduate Research. These expanded faculty positions in linkage with the dean's office have been quite successful.
- The CASNR self-study report was completed in June of 2012 and the unit review was conducted in July by five members of the review committee including one from the University of Kentucky. Results from the report of the formal Review Team will be used to finalize the CASNR 2020 Strategic Plan.

**Impacts/New Partnerships:** The Office of the Provost provided funds to hire a Director of Advising and with the hire of an Assistant Dean in 2011 and position description upgrades, a new organizational structure for the dean's office was implemented. A USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant obtained by the Coordinator for Undergraduate Research and Honors Programs and the dean in 2011 enabled a cross college collaborative BRIDGE program focused on undergraduate research exposure and retention of dean's scholars. Matching funds were provided by five other colleges and the Office of the Provost. Another HEC obtained by the Director of Retention for CASNR which focused on service learning as a component of cross-cultural competency was funded in 2012 in support of aspects of the strategic plan.

**Outcomes:** Execution of the FSLI project plan has resulted in a more effective staffing structure for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and an effective strategy for expanding the scope of staffing in the arena of special initiatives, such as honors programs, undergraduate research, and international programs. The CASNR 2020 strategic plan has provided a clear vision for the future and was the result of widespread input from all tiers of the college. A comprehensive self-study and review has provided an objective view of CASNR's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Contribution of the FSLI experience to the project: The training received during the FSLI experience provided a template from which to work in developing the strategic plan and valuable contact with the consultant, Mitch Owen. The change in perspective and the technique of 'standing on the balcony' to assess situation enabled a comprehensive view of the staffing structure and where it could be improved.

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Link to CASNR Review Report

<https://ag.tennessee.edu/casnr/Documents/CASNR%205-Year%20Unit%20Review%20Final.pdf>