

THE VISION WE SHARE



The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences stands on the threshold of an exciting new era. As one of this country's preeminent colleges of agriculture, we have a proud history of providing the educational and scientific support that is essential for the success of our state. Our teaching, research and extension programs continue today to provide the very highest quality student instruction, scientific investigation and delivery of information.

But times are changing. And our College must respond to the new demands and opportunities that face us. The rapid spread of urbanization, changes in the expectations of policy makers, changes in patterns of agricultural and food systems, and increasing concerns about the environment and the natural resources of the state all contribute to the need for us to reassess our goals and plans for the future.

In response to these changes, in 1995 I appointed a task force to develop a strategic plan that would prepare the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences to meet the challenges of the 21st century. I charged this task force with the responsibility of looking at all aspects of our College, including its mission, values, organization, structure and function.

The members of the task force led an intensive strategic planning effort that involved more than 4,500 people, including faculty, staff, farmers, business leaders, educators, consumers, representatives of other College clientele, members of the Board of Regents, the General Assembly and state government. The strategic plan developed through this inclusive process outlines bold and dramatic changes, and it also offers a careful analysis of how these changes can be carried out successfully.

The Strategic Plan has my full and enthusiastic support. Implementation already has begun. I believe this plan will serve us well as we move our College forward to capture the opportunities of the 21st century.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale Buchanan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gale A. Buchanan
Dean and Director

THE VISION WE SHARE

AS Georgia rapidly grows and changes, its agricultural roots are becoming less and less visible – but they are even more important today than in the past. Georgia’s rich agricultural heritage and abundant natural resources nourish and support the economy of every county, community and city in the state.

The work of the University of Georgia’s College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences grows from those strong, deep roots. Our history dates back to 1859, when the College was founded to educate Georgians about growing crops and livestock. Today, the College defines its role much more broadly. Through its work to educate students, to inquire into the nature of agriculture and the environment, and to deliver research-based information to the people of Georgia, the College touches every Georgian every day.

As needs, technology, priorities and demands change, the College has a responsibility to the people of Georgia to lead the way in adapting to new situations and new opportunities. It must chart its course with vision and with clarity.

The University of Georgia underwent a strategic planning process in 1995, setting a high standard for its schools and colleges to follow. When the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences began to develop its own strategic plan, the process was based on the participation of the College’s faculty and staff, its students, its clientele and the state’s leaders. The task force appointed to lead the planning process was asked to go beyond current restraints and realities, and to envision what a college of agriculture should look like in the 21st century. The strategic plan was crafted with many goals, subtexts and agendas. But its fundamental purpose is to embrace a vision for the College that reflects its values, its mission and the strengths of its people.

This document is a summary of a larger report, which is archived and available for reference.

THE VISION

The result is a dynamic plan that rests on a simple premise: To take its place as a leader in agricultural education, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences must become one college. The spirit of unity, cooperation and collaboration runs through every issue and every recommendation proposed. An emphasis on teamwork permeates the plan. The tools to make it happen administratively and structurally are outlined.

Through this plan the College recognizes its responsibility to the people of Georgia and to the agricultural industry to use resources wisely, efficiently, and productively. At the same time, the College also recognizes its responsibility to treat faculty and staff fairly, to support their work, to recognize their contributions and to reward their efforts.

The strategic plan offers a detailed guide for action, but it also is intended to be flexible enough to change with changing times. An important part of the vision is a continuing process of open and honest dialogue among the faculty, staff, administration, students and external stakeholders of the College. It is this process that will keep our mission clear and ensure continuing success for the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences as we enter the 21st century.

THE PROCESS

The 20-member task force appointed to lead the planning process first developed two documents that serve as a foundation for the strategic plan: a Mission Statement and a list of Values that guide the way decisions are made in the College.

The strategic plan itself consists of ten critical issues facing the College, with goals and recommendations outlined to address each issue.

The heart of the strategic planning process was a questionnaire, distributed to every member of the faculty and staff of the College, as well as to 374 undergraduate and graduate students, many alumni and almost 2,000 external people, including members of the agricultural community in the state, educators, policy makers, consumers, representatives of environmental organizations and members of the media. The 12-page questionnaire asked for responses about the values, mission and issues facing the College. Respondents ranked and rated items and wrote their ideas, concerns and philosophies in response to various questions.

A total of 32 percent of the questionnaires were returned, including 60 percent from faculty, 31 percent from staff, 13 percent from students and 22 percent from clientele. The responses were read, transcribed and analyzed. The information provided the basis for decisions made in every phase of the process.

The Task Force supplemented the questionnaires with interviews and focus groups. For example, the list of values is the result of a values audit of more than 200 people in and outside of the college. Task Force members interviewed UGA administrators, students, legislators and others, asking key questions

"To take our place as a leader in agricultural education, we must become one college."

such as: Who does the College serve? What is its most important activity? How is the College important to the people of Georgia? The answers from these interviews and the questionnaire formed the values section, the philosophical center of the strategic plan.

The mission statement came from questionnaire responses and research into mission statements from other organizations and federal legislation.

Once the task force identified the key issues, it invited both internal and external people to form modeling groups for each issue. Each modeling team researched an issue and proposed three or four models of approaches that would address the issue. They gathered data, analyzed resources, developed time lines, listed strengths and obstacles to each model, evaluated its chances of success and developed contingency plans for future circumstances. In some cases, modeling teams have made similar recommendations. The teams learned that one solution can sometimes address more than one issue.

The dean and associate deans reviewed the models and chose one model for each issue. The selected models have become the recommendations for addressing each of the 10 issues.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences is to seek, verify, and apply knowledge related to agriculture and the environment, and to disseminate this knowledge through student education and public outreach programs.

More specifically, our mission is:

To provide baccalaureate and graduate education in agricultural and environmental sciences that promotes excellence in student achievement and prepares students to effectively contribute and excel in a changing world.

To inquire into the nature of agriculture and the environment, through the discovery, interpretation and creative application of knowledge.

To serve the public through timely education of producers, consumers and agribusiness using relevant, accurate and unbiased research-based information, and to improve the quality of life through youth development and life-long education.

Thus, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences promotes economic viability and global competitiveness of Georgia agriculture, fosters environmental stewardship and wise management of natural resources, and ensures the production and distribution of safe food, feed and fiber.

VALUES

The people of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences share these beliefs:

COMMUNICATION

We have a responsibility to communicate useful, research-based information.
We listen to our clientele and value their input.

COOPERATION AND RESPECT

We value the contributions of each individual. We believe diversity in people and ideas is a strength. We value cooperative efforts.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

We strive to strengthen the economic future of Georgia agriculture and to protect and conserve natural resources.

EXCELLENCE

We strive for excellence in our work. We value creativity, originality and innovation in the pursuit of knowledge and service.

INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Our credibility, objectivity and honesty must be beyond reproach. We seek to interpret and deliver unbiased, relevant information effectively and quickly.

QUALITY EDUCATION

We are dedicated to providing the best possible educational opportunities for youth, adults and families in the classroom and the community.

THE VISION TO LEAD

We are committed to shaping the future. We accept our role to provide leadership and to develop leaders in the agricultural and environmental community.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN: TEN CRITICAL ISSUES

The strategic plan consists of ten issues identified as critical for the College, with goals and recommended actions outlined for each issue.

UNITY

The College must move beyond the divisions created by history, tradition and location. Barriers among functions must be eliminated. An emphasis on fair and equal treatment for all faculty and staff, and an emphasis on teamwork and cooperation will help to create a new sense of unity.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND EDUCATION

To attract the best students and meet the needs of Georgia's employers, the College must provide a more diverse and flexible educational program. We must value teaching, reward good teachers, and create a stimulating and dynamic learning environment.

STAFF MORALE

The changes and uncertainty that our College faculty and staff have faced in recent years have threatened College morale. New opportunities for professional development, increased benefits and improved internal communication can contribute to better morale and increased efficiency.

FUNDING

Eroding state and federal budgets, rapid changes in agriculture and fierce competition for private funding require a serious reappraisal of funding prospects and strategies for the College.

COMMUNICATIONS AND IDENTIFYING CLIENTELE

Serving our clientele must involve an open dialogue, both within the College and with our clientele.

DIVERSITY

True appreciation of diversity is an attitude that requires a change in culture. The College should value diversity by encouraging mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people of many different backgrounds and descriptions.

URBANIZATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The steady urbanization of Georgia has created both problems and opportunities for agriculture. The College must study its programs in environmental science and sustainable agriculture and develop new initiatives to respond effectively to the needs of the state in these areas.

OUTREACH

The involvement of the College in issues not within the research base of the College – such as family and consumer science issues – has resulted in criticism from some state leaders. Outreach programs in these areas should be shifted to the college or school with the appropriate research base.

GLOBALIZATION

Georgia must compete in a global marketplace that offers both economic opportunities and tough competition. The College must define its role in this expanding arena.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Changes in organizational structure are needed in order to achieve the vision of unity for the College and meet the goals of the strategic plan.

“Times are changing. Our College must respond to the new demands and opportunities that face us.”

One College, one mission, one voice. That is the vision of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. To achieve it, the College must move beyond the divisions created by history and tradition. Administrative roles and procedures, support systems and separate locations have nurtured a strong sense of separate identities. But the key to success for the future lies in cooperation.

The distinct and separate functions of teaching, research and extension served our clients well in a time of large and dispersed rural populations, slow transportation and no electronic communication. Students came to campus from rural backgrounds, enriched by their contacts with 4-H and other extension experiences. After college, they returned to the farm or to serve in their communities. Research was focused on the needs of farmers and consumers and was closely tied to extension programs. College unity was provided by our common agricultural profession and by our shared vision of service to rural populations. Both fail us now.

Solutions to the question of how to achieve College unity are presented in each of the ten reports that make up the Strategic Plan. Together, they form a vision of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences as a single entity that embraces our shared values and addresses our full mission. The recommendations outlined in this first section seek to provide equal treatment, equal access to support systems and equal voice in the system within equivalent ranks and jobs. We value the strength that comes from diversity and the excellence that comes from individual accomplishments. But only by working together – in teams and in new administrative structures that reflect the needs of today’s rapidly changing world – can we successfully fulfill the mission of our College.

“Equal treatment, equal access to support and equal voice in the system will help us work together.”

GOAL 1

Focus on “College first,” removing barriers — real or perceived — that unnecessarily separate functions, locations or departments.

- Every department in the College should be led by a single administrator who appreciates all three functions of the department.
- Integrate non-county faculty into departments and house all faculty together within academic units or interdisciplinary work groups. Provide joint appointments for academic faculty when appropriate.
- Departments should recognize deserving faculty and staff members with awards and ceremonies that include all functions and locations.
- Assure each faculty and staff member equal and fair performance evaluations and promotions based on clearly defined job expectations. Reward and promotion systems must recognize teaching excellence as well as research and publication.
- Pattern College-wide faculty and staff councils after UGA faculty and staff councils. Provide appropriate participation for all groups in governance and advisory activities.
- Merge budget and personnel offices, and create a single set of administrative procedures and guidelines for the College.
- Merge communications offices to provide service for teaching, research, extension and counties.
- Establish a College-wide electronic communications network to assure that all faculty and staff receive consistent information in a timely manner.
- Assure county professionals of continued access to all faculty and support services for information and programming.
- Form an environmental sciences working group to encourage cooperation across disciplines and functions.

GOAL 2

Develop a unified voice so that the College can provide leadership in the agricultural and environmental communities.

- Establish a College Advisory Committee to represent all clients, functions and disciplines of the College.
- Publish unified newsletters, reports and other publications.
- Align outreach programs with the research base of the appropriate colleges.
- Allow the size and support of programs in each county to vary according to local needs and resources.

GOAL 3

Enhance opportunities for teamwork and cooperative efforts to achieve our common mission.

- Faculty at Griffin and Tifton should share in the teaching responsibilities of the College.
- Encourage the formation of multidisciplinary, multi-function teams.
- Develop clear and consistent guidelines to document the accomplishments of teams and their members.
- Show appreciation for team members through positive reinforcement and additional benefits.

GOAL 4

Eliminate forms of internal competition that tear at the fabric of unity and teamwork.

- Encourage productive competition among faculty in seeking grants, awards and recognition.
- Discourage competition for limited internal funds, pay raises, work space and equipment.
- Base pay raises on superior performance in assigned jobs rather than on an arbitrary set of standards such as journal publications or grants received.
- Give all faculty and staff a clear explanation of the policy on supplemental salary from royalties.

GOAL 5

Foster teamwork with agencies, institutions, businesses and organizations that share our mission.

- Look first to partnerships within the University of Georgia.
- Draw up formal agreements between UGA and USDA that clearly recognize the commitment of each to the other's programs and successes.
- Develop teaching partnerships with educational institutions and industries.
- Continue partnerships with traditional agricultural businesses, and develop new partnerships with emerging companies. The partnerships should emphasize mutual benefits.
- Establish liaisons with environmental and agricultural organizations that share our mission.
- Coordinate programming with other Georgia institutions, particularly Fort Valley State University and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND EDUCATION

To attract the best students, our College must be dynamic and flexible, with an educational program that meets the diverse needs of students from a wide variety of backgrounds and with many different professional goals. In the past, the College has been tied to tradition, with a specialized and discipline-oriented structure that has not readily changed to meet the emerging needs of society. Today and in the future, our educational programs must be more responsive.

The College should strive to build an undergraduate student body that reflects society's diverse cultural, social, geographic and demographic makeup. To attract students from both rural and urban backgrounds, we must dispel the myth that our College teaches students to become farmers. Educational programs should reflect the multidisciplinary nature of today's agriculture and environment, and potential students should be informed about the wide range of career opportunities made possible by a degree in agricultural and environmental sciences.

A well-rounded education that provides the basis for life-long learning skills should be the heart of undergraduate training. In addition, the College must give all undergraduates, including students from other majors in the University, an understanding of the complexity of food and fiber production and environmental science. And it must give specializing students the technical skills they need to compete in today's complex, integrated agricultural and environmental science industries, including jobs in agricultural production and processing, environmental protection, and agricultural and environmental science research.

Finally, the College must value and reward good teachers. Historically, reward systems for faculty have been based on research productivity, and this often has resulted in a reduced emphasis on teaching. The knowledge gained from research can greatly enrich the teaching program, and the importance placed on research need not be diminished. The key is to place an equal value on both research and teaching, and to integrate the two functions for the benefit of both.

GOAL 1

Promote student recruitment by improving communication about educational and career opportunities in agricultural and environmental sciences.

- Hire a career services coordinator and develop a continuous recruitment effort.
- Develop new ways to promote the College and to distribute information about educational and career opportunities to potential students.
- Use advanced technology such as the World Wide Web to recruit students.
- Locate the training of vocational agriculture teachers in a new Department of Agricultural Leadership and Communications. Encourage these teachers to be strong recruiters for the College.
- Encourage graduating students to become active and supportive alumni.
- Work toward the goal of significantly increasing the diversity of the College student body. Seek more diverse geographic, demographic, cultural, gender and racial representation.

"Our College must value and reward good teachers."

GOAL 2

Diversify and broaden the scope of educational programs.

- **Reduce departmental barriers to allow greater flexibility in designing classes.**
- **Enhance relations with other UGA colleges, schools and programs, especially in areas such as agribusiness, environmental law, pre-veterinary medicine and landscape design.**
- **Develop a class in environmental science that will serve students university-wide as an option for the environmental literacy requirement.**
- **Develop plans for a bachelor's degree in environmental science.**
- **Offer more honors courses.**
- **Support distance learning and other information technology for instructional use.**

GOAL 3

Develop partnerships with other institutions and with industries.

- **Develop a Regional Education Concept through reciprocal agreements with other colleges and universities to waive out-of-state tuition for students in certain courses.**
- **Develop partnerships with other colleges and universities both within and outside the University of Georgia system to broaden educational opportunities.**
- **Develop agreements with industries to offer more internships, invitational lectures and adjunct faculty appointments.**
- **Monitor the quality of partnerships and agreements to ensure that they continue to enhance the mission and to reflect the values of the College.**

GOAL 4

Recognize the importance of teaching by recruiting the highest quality teaching faculty and by rewarding good teaching.

- **Develop flexibility in faculty appointments to allow for maximum use of individual faculty strengths in teaching.**
- **Require a teaching-related seminar for applicants for teaching positions.**
- **Place students on faculty selection committees.**
- **Consider the needs of current and projected course offerings when selecting new faculty.**

GOAL 5

Create a caring, supportive academic community.

- **Recruit the highest quality students.**
- **Develop a teaching culture that fosters concern for the students. Include teachers in recruitment efforts.**
- **Develop curricula that respond to changing career needs and interests.**
- **Create a student center, resource areas and meeting spaces for students.**
- **Provide computer laboratories for students that set the standard for other institutions.**

STAFF MORALE AND JOB SATISFACTION

Low staff morale often is an unfortunate result of uncertain times. With steady budget cuts, changing structure and turnover in many administrative positions, employees face an unpredictable future. Survey responses and discussions with staff members of the College also indicate other causes of low morale. Some staff members say they feel unappreciated. Others are discouraged by their perception that pay is not based on performance. Vacant positions cannot be filled quickly, and inadequate communication causes misunderstandings and creates barriers between faculty and staff.

Changes are needed in policies, training, communication, rewards and recognition in order to turn this problem around. Access to additional training would enable staff members to upgrade skills and improve job performance. Opportunities to participate in professional meetings would encourage further professional growth and improve job satisfaction. Management training could improve communication, reduce conflicts and increase efficiency.

GOAL 1

Provide incentives and opportunities for additional training and professional development.

- Encourage staff members to seek additional training.
- Encourage staff members to participate in professional meetings.
- Provide funding to support staff participation in training and professional development activities.
- Require management training for staff members with personnel management and supervisory responsibilities.

“Changes in policies, training, rewards and recognition can improve staff morale.”

GOAL 2

Show appreciation through positive reinforcement and additional benefits.

- **Recognize and give credit for staff contributions. Provide a written record of work well done.**
- **Hold awards and appreciation ceremonies during normal working hours.**
- **Include support staff in the planning stages of projects.**
- **Allow flex-time and flex-location when appropriate.**
- **Encourage recreational office activities such as ball teams.**
- **Encourage the development of a leave-share policy, allowing employees to share sick leave with co-workers for critical illnesses.**
- **Study the feasibility of allowing pay for overtime.**
- **Study the feasibility of adding the following benefits to the employee assistance program: child care, tuition remission, financial planning services, legal counseling services, family counseling services.**

GOAL 3

Create and implement a consistent and timely internal communication system.

- **Give faculty and staff consistent instructions, updates and information in a timely manner.**
- **Give staff the opportunity to contribute in planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and procedures.**

GOAL 4

Encourage the development of a performance-based pay and promotion system.

- **Develop a system with the flexibility to reallocate resources to reach unit goals.**
- **Conduct the performance evaluation process effectively, and connect performance evaluation results with pay and promotion or termination.**

FUNDING

The College – along with most public institutions – has seen dramatic shifts in financial support. Political and social changes are putting pressure on the fiscal resources of the College as never before. State and federal funds are dropping, while the costs of conducting programs continue to rise. At the same time, clientele have never needed the College more. Rapid-fire changes in the technology of agriculture demand a knowledgeable educational and research base for producers, consumers, agribusinesses and government agencies. But providing that knowledge requires dependable and adequate funding, and the question is: Where will the money come from?

The College most certainly will need to call on extramural funding to supplement state and federal support. But care must be taken to ensure that increased reliance on outside funding does not make the College less responsive to the state. We need an effective way to identify opportunities and issues so that programs continue to respond to the needs of Georgians and, at the same time, position the College on the cutting-edge of innovation.

GOAL 1

Create a task force to identify emerging issues and opportunities in Georgia agriculture and the environment.

- Members of the task force should include distinguished clientele, faculty, county agents, administrators and other professionals.

GOAL 2

Encourage the formation of interdisciplinary and inter-functional teams with sufficient funding to address issues and opportunities for teaching, research and extension.

- Assign a portion of appropriated funds to teams working on issues as an incentive to encourage participation.
- Include professionals from industry, other universities, governmental agencies and surrounding states on teams.
- Review and evaluate teams every four years.

GOAL 3

Expand College development efforts and begin a major fund-raising campaign.

- Set a goal for a major capital development campaign to create a sustainable, income-generating endowment for new projects, faculty chairs, scholarships and faculty and student development.
- Create a position in the College development office to identify, research and maintain liaisons with funding sources.

DIVERSITY

The most important commodity in a university is knowledge, and the discovery, transmission and dissemination of knowledge are enriched by a diversity of perspectives. In choosing diversity as a strategic issue, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences reflects the commitment in the University of Georgia’s strategic plan to “ensure diversity in the academic community.” The College already follows UGA hiring policies by seeking the most qualified candidates, expanding the applicant pool from under-represented populations and refusing to tolerate discrimination in selecting employees. These policies have increased diversity throughout the university.

But mandated administrative policies will not ensure a true commitment to diversity. True appreciation of diversity is an attitude that cannot be demanded or forced. Real diversity in the College will come through a combination of guidelines – and genuine support for the concept.

Diversity in an organization results from a healthy blend of differences in age, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, socioeconomic status, spiritual practice, and other human traits and backgrounds. An institution values diversity by encouraging mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people of many differences.

The goals and recommendations for ensuring diversity in the College are based on the premise that cultural change can be instituted at a grassroots level by a committed group within an organization. The ultimate goal is that diversity will become a part of everything we do, so that it no longer requires special emphasis. Success will come only with the adoption of a new culture that recognizes contributions of all employees based on merit, regardless of differences.

GOAL 1

Recognize, encourage and publicize diversity, pluralism and multi-cultural activity already existing in the College.

GOAL 2

Collaborate with other University System units to create links among teaching, research and outreach.

GOAL 3

Develop a mechanism, such as a forum with multiple formats, to encourage open discussion within the College community on issues of diversity and unity that divide us.

COMMUNICATIONS AND IDENTIFYING CLIENTELE

Ask any family or marriage counselor: Communication is the key to success. It's the same for the College. We must be able to communicate our educational message, report on the impact of programs to our clientele and funders, and talk with each other within the College. But communication goes both ways. We also must be able to listen.

The College needs to establish a strong link with its clientele. That means being able to identify emerging audiences as well as connecting with traditional audiences. The College should be ready and able to listen to the needs and to respond with programming within its mission. Such an open dialogue needs a communications structure – not just for communicating with clientele, but also to support a healthy flow of information within the College.

Not surprisingly, the recommendations to improve communication often parallel the results from the unity issue and the funding issue. College unity and successful fund-raising both depend on a strong internal and external communication network.

The communications/clientele modeling team called its preferred approach the Informed Consumer Model. It is designed to identify clientele and to set up effective lines of communication. This approach strengthens the ability of the College to report results to its clientele and its funding sources. The model includes four systems, each of which contributes a portion to build a strong communication cycle that connects the College internally and with its clientele. A critical element of the model is an emphasis on matching the message to a targeted audience at the right time using the best delivery methods.

GOAL 1

Improve and expand dialogue with clientele.

- Assign a College representative as a liaison with outside groups to be an advocate for the College with clientele, and for clientele with the College.
- Develop ways to contact present and emerging clientele.
- Appoint a College Advisory Board that can help the College identify issues.
- Build on partnering relationships to strengthen the land-grant concept.

GOAL 2

Improve and expand dialogue within the College.

- **Make joint appointments and establish response teams where appropriate to generate teamwork and cooperation. Share staff support, facilities and equipment across program and function areas.**
- **Expand the Extension Service needs assessment program College-wide.**
- **Combine the two communications units into one College-wide unit.**
- **Establish a quick, responsive, informative internal communications system.**

GOAL 3

Collect and analyze information.

- **Identify problems by studying economic, political and social directions; trends; demographics and other data.**
- **Build a data-collection system to inventory current programs and projects.**

GOAL 4

Implement a College-wide communications system.

- **Target media to be accountable to Georgians.**
- **Expand the use of communications technology.**
- **Link information from the data-collection system to media and other external audiences.**

"The College should listen to clientele needs and respond with programming within its mission."

URBANIZATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Georgia is changing. As cities expand and rural land shrinks, both agriculture and the environment are faced with new challenges. Urban growth forces the rezoning of farm land, increases land values and taxes to levels that farmers can't afford, erodes agricultural infrastructure and services, and contributes to the declining number of people who depend on agriculture for their living.

While urbanization usually spells the end of production agriculture in an area, it also creates large new markets for non-traditional agriculture. Turf and ornamental plant production, commercial landscaping and pest control, and agricultural tourism develop. Agricultural interests turn to specialty products, organic production techniques, direct marketing, and high cash value or value-added products. These forms of agriculture need support from the College and clearly lie within its mission.

Urbanization also creates a different set of environmental issues. Odor and nuisance problems, water quality and quantity, air quality, real or perceived human health risks from pesticide and fertilizer use, and animal waste disposal are of increasing concern. Too often, the public perceives a conflict between agriculturalists and environmentalists over these issues. But most agriculturalists work hard to safeguard environmental quality, and the two groups could and should be allies. Sustainable agriculture, which emphasizes environmentally friendly farming practices, provides the framework for productive cooperation toward common goals.

Several years ago, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences changed its name to recognize the importance of environmental science. But it did not clearly outline the focus and extent of environmental science programs within the College. Because this is a complex issue with clearly divided points of view, no consensus was reached on this question in the strategic planning process. Further study and discussion of the role of environmental science in the mission of the College is recommended.

GOAL 1

Increase emphasis within the College on urban agriculture issues such as turf and ornamental plant production, landscape management, urban pest management and environmental issues related to urban agriculture.

“Too often, the public perceives a conflict between agriculturalists and environmentalists.”

GOAL 2

Develop an interdisciplinary program on agricultural and natural resource policy assessment to address economic, political and social issues related to the effects of urbanization on agriculture.

GOAL 3

Develop distinct programmatic areas of emphasis at the three main campuses to address issues related to urbanization and sustainable agriculture.

- **Develop a major focus at the Griffin campus on urban agriculture issues such as turf and ornamental plant production, landscape management, urban pest management and environmental issues related to urban agriculture.**
- **Develop a major focus at the Tifton campus on sustainable agriculture and related environmental issues such as pesticide use, soil erosion, animal waste disposal and fertilizer loss.**
- **Develop a major focus at the College Station in Athens on interdisciplinary agricultural and natural resource policy assessment; environmental studies such as toxicology, soil effects and bioremediation; and coordination of teaching programs in sustainable agriculture, environmental horticulture and natural resource policy.**

GOAL 4

Form a new group to continue studying the role of environmental science in the College and to attempt to reach a strategic recommendation on this issue.

OUTREACH

The involvement of the College in issues related to family and consumer sciences has been criticized by some state leaders. They have argued that these programs duplicate the efforts of state and federal agencies, and that the research base for societal issues is not within this College. On the other hand, there is a strong demand for these programs at the county level, and there is federal and county funding.

The research base for family and consumer science issues resides in the University of Georgia's College of Family and Consumer Sciences. The responsibility for these programs should be shifted to this college. The programs would continue to be supported at the county level, satisfying local demand and meeting federal requirements.

The research base for 4-H and youth development resides in both colleges and, to a lesser extent, in the College of Education. Responsibility and funding for 4-H should remain within the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. College faculty and staff who direct projects in areas outside the research base of the College should forge links with academic units in other colleges. These changes are consistent with the mission of our College. They also are consistent with the movement toward "clustering" extension efforts for several counties. Clustering will make it easier to have agents at the county level with specialized outreach responsibilities. The changes will have a positive impact on employee morale and will allow flexibility in meeting local needs of counties.

GOAL 1

Shift funding and responsibility for outreach programs to the colleges and schools with the most appropriate research bases.

- Move extension specialists dealing with family and consumer science issues to the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Eventually, county agents delivering family and consumer sciences programs also may need to be assigned to that college.
- Move forestry extension specialists to the UGA School of Forest Resources.
- Keep agricultural extension and 4-H in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

GOAL 2

Maintain a coordinated effort on the county level.

- County extension offices should continue to offer programs in agriculture, 4-H, forestry and family and consumer sciences. Program development support should come from the appropriate colleges.
- District heads should continue to coordinate all county programming. The district head may have joint appointments in both colleges.

GOAL 3

Set up a task force to oversee implementation of the changes and to recommend modifications as necessary.

GLOBALIZATION

Georgia agriculture competes in a global marketplace. Agricultural producers in the state have been active in international markets for decades, relying on sales to other countries for strong prices and profits. As more countries become self-sufficient in agricultural production, Georgia agriculture feels the economic pinch, especially when government programs are being reduced at the same time.

The mission of the College includes promoting Georgia agriculture in the international arena. As more producers and agribusinesses move onto the international stage, they must be prepared, both with competitive products and with an understanding of the systems. International literacy will be a central component of the future growth, productivity and prosperity of Georgia agriculture. An appreciation for the value of globalization both within the College and in its clientele is essential.

GOAL 1

Develop a consciousness of globalization.

- For students, promote participation in the Certificate of International Agriculture, incorporate international experiences into courses, encourage study abroad and promote exchange programs.
- For faculty, compile and disseminate information about developments in other countries, develop research and outreach programs, develop economic scenarios for innovative enterprises, create an international agriculture seminar series and encourage international contacts.
- For clientele, publicize the benefits of international contacts, promote an awareness of alternative production and marketing techniques, and organize international travel to see the global market and learn about competition.

GOAL 2

Establish an international agricultural center to encourage a consciousness of globalization.

- The Center would serve as a think tank to improve the economic competitiveness of Georgia agriculture, identify high-value crops and livestock products for the world market, identify new technology, be involved with international trade shows featuring Georgia agriculture, provide marketing assistance and identify international expertise.
- The Center would replace the current International Agriculture Office and would provide a link with the UGA Office of International Development.
- The Center would have an advisory committee to provide input and to help with projects and activities initiated by the Center.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Our College is a complex organization with multiple functions and locations, including faculty and staff in each of the 159 counties in Georgia. State leaders have encouraged the College to streamline administration and to develop a more efficient organizational structure. While permanent units, such as departments, provide stability, the pace of modern science and business require the flexibility and responsiveness of interdisciplinary teams to address specific issues. There also is a need to eliminate duplication of services and procedures, to rethink the ways in which administrative decisions are made, and to make more extensive use of electronic technology throughout the College.

The recommendations for changes in organizational structure rest on several critical assumptions. Overall unity of the College must take precedence over loyalty to departments, functions or locations. Strong leadership is needed at all levels. The organizational structure should have clear lines of program and fiscal responsibility, but it should be flexible enough to encourage interdisciplinary teamwork and to respond to emerging opportunities. All administrative positions and service units must be critically evaluated. Faculty and staff at all locations need equal representation, and internal communication must be improved. The development of a statewide technology infrastructure is essential. And students, faculty and clientele should see our College as a source of environmental and natural resources information.

The recommendations are consistent with national trends, and they demonstrate the willingness of our College to be proactive, responsive and forward in its thinking and planning. The plan recommends a two-stage process, beginning with immediate consolidation of functions and moderate restructuring, to be followed within five to seven years by more extensive reorganization. An ongoing, thorough evaluation of the process, with modifications as needed, will be critical to its success.

Stage One: Begin immediately to consolidate functions and moderately restructure the College.

GOAL 1

Consolidate faculty and administration across functions.

- Consolidate teaching, research and extension faculty within each department into single administrative units.
- Give department heads programmatic and budgetary responsibility for all functions and locations.
- Create regional campuses at Athens, Tifton, Griffin and possibly in southeast Georgia.
- Create the position of resident coordinator to manage operations at the Griffin and Tifton campuses.
- Place each branch station under the administration of one of the three major campuses.
- Hire faculty members to fulfill overall mission, rather than teaching, research or extension appointments. Encourage joint appointments.

“Overall unity of the College must take precedence, along with strong, effective, diverse leadership.”

- Provide funding to support interdisciplinary teams.
- Create task forces to review off-campus facilities such as 4-H centers and branch stations, to determine their justification, needs and directions.
- Abolish the College Teaching Faculty and create a College-wide Faculty Council.

GOAL 2

Establish a faculty-driven Environmental Sciences Working Group.

- The working group should cross discipline, function and college lines to provide a framework for cooperative programs.
- It should recruit students and coordinate environmental sciences course offerings.
- It should be the catalyst for forming a center or institute.

GOAL 3

Enhance delivery of services at the county level.

- Cluster county faculty, where feasible, to serve clientele more effectively.
- Adjust the number of extension districts to the most effective level.
- Consider relocating district offices to regional campuses in order to create a closer link between county programs and research and teaching programs.

GOAL 4

Consolidate support services within the College.

- Establish an Office of Information Technology for college-wide support of distance education, computer applications and electronic communication.
- Combine communications units.
- Provide resources to hire or retrain people for specialized support positions, especially technology and information delivery positions.
- Consolidate service units such as business and physical plant, and integrate them across campuses and functions.
- Institute user fees for analytical services. Consider privatization of functions such as soil testing and technical training.

Stage Two: Restructure the organization of the College.

GOAL 1

Encourage interdisciplinary efforts across traditional departmental lines.

- **Create approximately four or five schools composed of related disciplines or natural working groups. Combine or redefine existing departments and units into these schools.**
- **Appoint a Chair for each school on the Athens campus.**
- **Appoint Associate Chairs and rotating faculty program coordinators at each of the other campuses.**
- **Redefine the associate dean positions as executive and program associates.**

GOAL 2

Distinguish between management duties and leadership functions.

- **Create the position of CEO for Management and Operations.**
- **Create the position of Assistant Dean to support the Associate Dean for Programs. Appoint faculty members to serve in this position for rotating terms of two or three years. Create additional Assistant Dean positions as needed.**

GOAL 3

Expand the use of electronic technology College-wide.

- **Continue and expand support for the Office of Information Technology.**

GOAL 4

Merge the functions of teaching, research and extension at all levels.

- **Organize county staff into multi-county units reporting to the appropriate regional campuses. Align county staff with the appropriate UGA schools and colleges.**

GOAL 5

Place decision-making at the lowest possible level.

- **Give the faculty council responsibility for making College policy.**

GOAL 6

Create mechanisms for College-wide planning and decision-making.

- **Create a think tank to continue the strategic planning process.**
- **Form teams, working groups and centers to address problems or issues.**

“Ongoing evaluation of the process will be critical to its success.”

IMPLEMENTATION

A visionary plan contributes nothing sitting on the shelf gathering dust. It must be studied, argued, modified and implemented. The administrative leaders of the College have pledged full support for the plan, and implementation has begun. Many recommendations already have become policy.

- **Teaching, research and extension faculty have been consolidated within each department into single administrative units.**
- **A single administrator now leads each department, with coordinators appointed for program areas.**
- **Regional campuses have been established and research branch stations have been administratively assigned to appropriate regional campuses.**
- **Faculty from regional campuses have been integrated into our residential instruction program via GSAMS as well as scheduled on-site classes.**
- **Collaborative discussions have been conducted with our partnering institution, Fort Valley State University, aimed to strengthen program and faculty relations.**
- **A recognition system for College employees has been established and implemented.**
- **Communications offices for the College have been merged into one unit.**
- **The Task Force on Diversity has prepared a draft report for review.**
- **The Office of Information Technology has been established.**
- **A construction bid has been awarded to develop the Agricultural Alumni and Study Activity Center.**
- **A state-of-the-art student computer learning laboratory has been funded for the Environmental Health Science program.**
- **A College Advisory Board has been established, replacing previous advisory groups for research and extension.**
- **Committees have presented guidelines for College identity and the formation of a College-wide faculty council.**
- **A committee has been appointed to continue study of the role of environmental sciences in the College.**

THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Georgia is changing. As cities expand and rural land shrinks, both agriculture and the environment are faced with new challenges. Society is placing stronger emphasis on the environment, sometimes resulting in the perception that agriculture gets blamed for degrading the environment.

In 1989, the College of Agriculture changed its name to include environmental sciences, providing formal recognition that the environment is a core issue of our college. Both agricultural and environmental systems are composed of biological and physical processes. An emphasis in either system has potential applications and implications for understanding and problem solving. Our college integrates a science-based problem-solving approach and all aspects of the environment within the expertise of the faculty and the availability of funds.

While the college has programs on the environment, they do not emanate from a strategic vision. Environmental science cuts across all units in the college but there is no system in place to coordinate these efforts. Each unit maintains its environmental science teaching, research and outreach activities alongside its traditional agricultural programs.

Today students are extremely aware of environmental issues. The Environmental Health Science program, just one aspect of environmental sciences, had the largest undergraduate student enrollment in the college in spring quarter, 1997, with 187 students representing 15.4 percent of the total college enrollment. The Board of Regents recently approved a masters degree in EHS. The program has a highly active research component along with the teaching program. It has no outreach program.

The continuing concern and support for environmental sciences, the high demand for undergraduate and graduate programs, the unique and interlocking connection between agriculture and the environment, and the strong environmental sciences program developing throughout the college all justify the need for clearly defined goals.

GOAL 1

Establish a college-wide Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences degree similar to the current Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree.

- All academic units of the College may enroll students in the BSES degree.
- Overall guiding principles of the new degree should be developed by the college faculty with leadership from the office of the associate dean for academic programs.

GOAL 2

Establish a Center for Environmental Sciences to facilitate communication and collaboration among environmental programs within the college.

- Encourage communication within and outside the college on environmental programs through newsletters, websites, listservers, seminars and other outreach activities.
- Encourage and coordinate multi disciplinary research projects among faculty.
- Recruit students on environmental programs and degree opportunities and advise departments on the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences degree program.

- **Serve as a resource center for environmental issues for government, industry and citizens.**
- **The Center will allow the college to become a center of excellence in the environmental area for the state and the region, and serve as a model for other land-grant colleges.**
- **The Center will be recognized as a centralized resource on environmental issues, with flourishing outreach activities and continuing education opportunities.**

GOAL 3

Form a Department of Environmental Health Sciences.

- **Complement the new Center for Environmental Sciences, building a collaborative relationship between the EHS department faculty and the faculty in other college units in teaching, research and extension.**
- **Put the program on the same level as the other 25 accredited EHS programs across the country, enabling the department to more effectively recruit and retain top faculty and students and to compete for external contracts and grants.**
- **Fully integrate the outreach program in cooperation with other units and implement the college's public service mission in environmental sciences.**