

December 18, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

As I work outside the university walls it's very helpful to me to hear how others see us and understand what we do, their opinions of how well we are doing it, and their opinions of what we should be doing. On Saturday I participated in the university and our college Commencement ceremonies within our walls. These are, of course, our formal celebrations of academic achievement and the most visible representation of what a university produces. What I think the people who attended our Commencement ceremonies saw is that the faculty and staff of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences create new minds able to make a difference in the world while they also achieve personal success. I know, too, that you create new knowledge and you are a fundamental component in our society's economic, environmental and social well-being. In this final letter of 2012, I want to thank everyone in the college for the work you have put into our college this year. It made a big difference to many thousands of people, whether they know it or not, and you made this difference under a new financial reality.

I want to remind everyone where we are and who is doing what as far as planning for, and moving towards, our vision for what CALS needs to be by 2021. This last year has been about strategic thinking (the "phase I and II" questions) before we even considered strategic planning ("phase III"). Starting at the point of delivery – and not from CALS central administration – we identified what our shared goals are for CALS, and then what our strategic priorities must be for CALS, so that we can achieve our shared goals. We then identified specific actions to get there. All of the strategic plan "drafts" are now done for the college units, the college mission areas and CALS as a whole. I call these drafts as they are living documents and I encourage you to continue discussing our strategies and revising and refining these documents as required.

At the university level, each college has been asked to produce a college strategic plan in a standard format. The associate deans and I have been compiling this plan during the semester and you've been asked to comment as it proceeded. Our *College and Three Mission Area Plans* in the format required are at <http://cals.arizona.edu/dean/cals21/newstrategicplans/index.html> and I will be submitting the "final" version over the break. All of the college plans are to be consistent with the university strategic plan (and ours is so far as I can tell at this stage). In the 2013 spring semester my understanding is that each unit on campus will be asked to draft their unit strategic plan, which is to be consistent with their college's plan. The good news for us all is that because of the work everyone did last spring, we are extremely well positioned and have everything done well ahead of the university's schedule.

One thing I have been doing since my first "all hands" meeting in January of 2012 is to show everyone in the college our budget projection or "budget model" (this the kind of budget transparency that President Hart has talked about for the university). This has, I hope, made everyone aware of the budgetary impact the 2008 recession has had on our college. Despite increasing demands, we must now organize the size and scope of CALS to operate within our budget. We are now in a different world than any of us working in CALS today have experienced in the U.S. and it's a world that I expect we will be in for the foreseeable future.

In response to our new reality, the Faculty Consultative Group (FCG) took the initiative to build a "straw man" to stimulate discussion on the optimal organizational structure for CALS to best meet our

programmatic priorities. I am extremely appreciative of their work in a very short time. This model includes our established practice of continuing to move away from academic silos as well as breaking down discipline boundaries when appropriate while, at the same time, maintaining our own individual professional academic identities. Next year on January 7, I will hold another “all hands meeting” where you will see where we are with our budget and what is going on in the college. Immediately afterwards, there will be a FCG “town hall” meeting run by the FCG co-chairs Joel Cuello and Wanda Howell when you can have another opportunity to exercise your right to have your voice heard and debate issues about college structures or anything else you like.

The unit heads will review their units with the Executive Council (EC) in February and March. During these reviews, we will discuss where the unit has been, where the unit is going and how it’s going to get there—all in the context of the mission areas and college as a whole. We will have the unit strategic plans with us, as well as the mission area and college plans. Unit heads and their staff, with help from central administration, will prepare budget models so we can understand the unit’s financial planning.

I want to remind everyone of some of the key groups in CALS and who is doing what across the college as well as what is happening at the university level.

The EC manages the college budget and the three mission areas. The Administrative Cabinet (AC) is made up of the EC and supporting-infrastructure heads, plus one representative county extension director and one representative academic department head, and the AC meetings are focused on communication across the college so that our “left hand knows what the right hand is doing.”

The FCG is the college’s shared governance voice and its role is to provide consultation to the EC. The FCG is run by CALS faculty for CALS faculty and their processes are defined by the FCG. Staff and appointed professionals have analogous groups. You should participate in shared governance via these groups as appropriate and I want to remind you that as university faculty we are actually legally obligated to do so in Arizona (Arizona Revised Statute 15-1601. State universities; location; faculty powers: The faculty members of each university, through their elected faculty representatives, shall participate in the governance of their respective universities and shall actively participate in the development of university policy.) Remember also that everything we do in the college must also be consistent with the university’s policies and processes, including any changes in our unit structures (see http://provost.arizona.edu/files/finalGuide_0.pdf).

The Dean’s Research Advisory Committee (DRAC) advises the dean and associate dean of research (Ron Allen) what we could and should do to optimize CALS research by optimizing the work environment for our research-focused faculty. Again this is a faculty-led and faculty-driven group that has had and will continue to have, a very central role on developing and implementing our research strategy. A good example is the research mission area strategic plan that you can read on our website which was drafted primarily by the DRAC. With Assoc. Dean Ron Allen the DRAC is now working on implementation plans.

With this I will close by wishing you a happy and safe holiday break and best wishes for the New Year. I hope that you can spend some well-earned time with family and friends.



Shane