

July 21, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted and honored to begin my service to students, staff, faculty, alumni and other Arizonans, as the new dean of the University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. My wife Jennifer and I, and son Aidan and daughter Ailey, are thrilled to become part of the Wildcat family. Aidan and Ailey have already started wearing their blue and red in Mississippi.

As the search process progressed, I became increasingly aware of, and impressed with, all of our college's outstanding people and programs. UA's senior administrators, institute and center directors, as well as other colleges' administrators and faculty, undoubtedly value their CALS colleagues highly. CALS alumni have great passion and care deeply for their college. We have great support from Arizona's diverse commodity groups and stakeholders. You can and should be very proud of the direct positive economic, environmental and social value CALS provides to our state and nation. It is not surprising that ours is one of the premier colleges of its type.

This is the first of monthly "Dear Colleagues" letters. In this first letter I want to let you know my four goals, which are of equal priority, for these transition months.

1. Provide you with as smooth a transition as possible. I am working with President Sander, Provost Hay, the CALS administrative leadership team and the Dean's office staff to minimize problems and maintain continuity.
2. Learn as much as I can about our college. To help me do so I will be visiting with you on campus and across Arizona. This will take me some weeks, but I plan to do so well before October 15.
3. Ensure that I meet with, and am available to, our alumni and other stakeholders.
4. Initiate the search for our three associate dean positions. It is my hope that we can have all three positions filled by the end of the semester.

I do want to spend some of this letter discussing our challenges. Like the rest of the nation and world, we have to contend with financial uncertainty and seemingly increasing limitations. Self-reliance, innovation, resilience and our networks will be essential. We are also in a highly competitive environment and I think that focusing on our unique strengths (of which we have many) will help us to be successful.

Along with ongoing financial challenges, our world is facing significant, sometimes seemingly intractable, problems on multiple fronts. We have water, food, energy, education, employment, family and community challenges (to name a few). As staff and faculty of a preeminent college of agriculture and life sciences, it is both our privilege and our responsibility to be leaders in solving problems in all of these areas. There are no easy solutions, but I believe we in CALS are among the most qualified and well-placed to find solutions. As we take up these challenges, we will also have many opportunities to listen and respond to diverse points of view. I believe in being pragmatic, effective, realistic and value-oriented. We are delivering solutions for the real world, for real people with real issues.

It is already crystal clear to me that you are resourceful and hardworking. A lot has been asked of you since Arizona's financial downturn began, and more will be asked of us. However, it is equally clear to me that our department heads and other unit leaders are focused on the best interests of not only their own departments, but also on those of the college and UA as a whole. From the few meetings I have had with these leaders so far, I also know that they take their responsibilities and commitments to you seriously. Let me assure you that I do too.

Finally, I appreciate and welcome your ideas, concerns, or any thoughts at all about our future that you may want to share with me. Please contact me by email at [sburgess@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:sburgess@cals.arizona.edu). I will answer all correspondence, although it may take me a few days.

Go Cats!



Shane