



VICE PRESIDENT FOR THE DIVISION OF  
AGRICULTURE, LIFE AND VETERINARY  
SCIENCES, AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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Dear Colleagues,

On Tuesday, Jeff Silvertooth notified me that, effective June 12, 2021, he will leave his position as Director for the University of Arizona (UA) Cooperative Extension System (CES) and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Associate Dean for Economic Development and return full time as professor of environmental science in the Department of Environmental Science, or as Jeff often says, return to *"earning an honest living as an agronomist"*.

Jeff assumed responsibility and accountability for the CES at a most difficult time—the height of the Great Recession. Under his leadership, everyone in the CES has since made strong progress and he told me that he feels the key goals articulated in the CES strategic plan he led are now completed. Jeff will leave the organization on very sound footing. As he will tell you, the CES faculty and staff are providing an outstanding connection to the communities and Tribal nations across the entire state of Arizona - *"bringing the university to the people and science to bear on practical problems."*

I will miss not only Jeff's leadership of one of UA's three core missions as Arizona's land-grant university, but also his sage insights into the entirety of the division and his high integrity. He made me smile routinely, though most of the time he wouldn't know this. He often chose to play the contrarian to help people find better ways to solve challenging issues, and he engaged with humor and charm. He has the utmost respect of our stakeholders. This was hard earned (*"honestly earned"* I can hear him say), not because of his renown longevity, but because of his life's work's large and measurable impact on their business bottom lines and their ability to grow jobs and keep Arizonans employed, happy, and healthy.

I believe that the CES director job is one of the most exposed and wearing in the university: perpetually "squaring circles" with a lot of face time and even more time behind the wheel on Arizona's highways and byways. It is not a job for the fainthearted, and it is not "40 hours-a-week". Jeff redefined the role in Arizona. Additionally, so we could save peoples' jobs, he also took on key Experiment Station unit responsibilities during the most challenging part of the Great Recession. I know he will continue leading as he always does, because that is who he is. Thank you, Jeff, for saying "yes" to me almost ten challenging years ago; you will leave a historic legacy.

I must fill Jeff's big shoes with an interim CES director immediately. **I request that you please email me directly with your nominees for the interim CES directorship (including self-nominations) by 5 p.m., Wednesday, May 12.** All emails are personnel emails and so are confidential. Please ensure, before you nominate someone, that they consent to be nominated by you.

If I receive permission to proceed, I will begin the process of searching for the permanent CES director and request nominees for the search committee. I will provide you with more specific information as I have it.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve', written over the 'Best wishes,' text.