



15 June 2017

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for taking a moment out of your busy day to engage in an ongoing series of communications from CALS' Administrative Leadership. This is another great opportunity and mechanism to discuss our strategic goals for the college and provide transparency regarding the management and organizational direction of CALS. Associate Dean Ratje kicked off this series in May and each member of the Executive Council is doing their part to continue the dialogue. Today, I am addressing Goal 1:

Be a leading economic development engine for Arizona

As Associate Dean and Director of Extension and Economic Development, I am excited to provide some updates and a few examples of what we have been able to accomplish recently through our Cooperative Extension System and the impacts we are making across the state to drive economic development.

Focus on developing...extension projects for resilient societies in arid and semi-arid regions.

- Our Integrated Pest Management Programs continue to garner regional and national recognition and awards as they work to optimize the efficiency of agricultural and horticultural production systems and improve the safety of urban environments while lessening the use of pesticides.
- The Water Resources Research Center's annual conference entitled Irrigated Agriculture in Arizona brought together state, regional and national experts to address the complex issues related to agricultural water use in Arizona
- Development of the Droughtview web site that assists ranchers, land managers, the environmental community and the public to better assess drought and wildfire danger;
- Continued expansion of Arizona Project Wet that provides water-related educational programs and curriculum directed at K-12 students
- Completion of an updated Study Guide for the highly effective Smartscape training program for landscape professionals.

Focus on diversified and non-commoditized industry as well as large scale commodities.

- Through extension education activities and partnerships on Arizona's Native Nations, Native producers have been adopting beef and sheep quality assurance practices, improved record keeping and marketing skills. Their improved skills lead to higher

quality animals, increased pounds of meat produced, increased returns to producer, better natural resources management. The Native Beef program through Labatt Food Service has increase producers return by \$2 to \$4 per pound over the local markets.

- Cooperative Extension continues to work at the forefront of challenges associated with use of limited water supplies for agricultural irrigation. Recent cooperative work with the Yuma County Agriculture Water Coalition led to the publication of *A Case Study in Efficiency-Agriculture and Water Use in the Yuma, Arizona Area* that documented local improvements in agricultural efficiencies that reduced overall water use by 18% over the past 40 years. Extension faculty are also leading a new water-related program entitled CONSERVE that is developing solutions for use of non-traditional water sources for agricultural irrigation (e.g., reclaimed).
- Production of tree nuts has increased dramatically in recent years and Extension faculty are actively working to document the water, nutrient and pest management needs of this growing industry. Use of Zinc EDTA as an alternative means of zinc fertilization is revolutionizing the way Zinc is applied to pecans, improving pecan productivity while at the same time reducing grower costs.
- Extension continues to work on ways to improve the efficiency of Arizona's cattle production systems through cooperative range monitoring programs that improve the productivity of federal, state and private rangelands and educational programs that include regional range cow nutrition workshops and the Cattlemen's College Program.

Develop short professional development, executive education, and continuing e-education courses.

- Last August, Cooperative Extension provided a comprehensive in-service training program on water for faculty and staff that included presentations by local and regional experts on key aspects of water management and supply.
- Thanks to Cooperative Extension's Climate Survey (conducted in Summer 2016), we discovered there were many requests for support using the UA Vitae system – used in annual reviews at the University. In cooperation with our own administrative team, the UA Vitae Team held six training sessions in various counties across the state to go over the software and answer questions.
- Our Climate Survey also allowed us to find a bigger need for more education and communication. We initiated the Live Q & A Webinars that are delivered quarterly. These sessions allow me to engage directly with Extension and Arizona Experiment Station (and CALS) personnel to address questions and inquiries that are trending within the system.
- Family, Consumer and Health Sciences Agents across the state have been teaching Childcare Providers about the importance of early brain development over the past several years. To date, approximately 1,800 childcare providers have participated in this 16-hour training. Evaluation data shows that the impacts are profound in multiple ways, as childcare providers learn how to improve their environments and their interactions with young children 0-3 years, in order to help young children reach their individual potential, and prepare for school and ultimately, the workforce. Research shows that the return on investment for every dollar in programs for young children, its value increases sevenfold after the first 21 years and sixteen fold after 40 years.

Focus CALS resources on degrees that allow students the best economic mobility.

- We have added to our diverse workforce a 4-H STEM Specialist. This has enabled growth in youth-centered programs on- and off-campus and engaging youth from remote counties and Tribal Reservations to “see themselves” at the University of Arizona pursuing higher education.
- The Externships in Sustainability program, hosted for many years in Arizona counties by Cooperative Extension, is now an officially designated “Engaged Learning Experience.” This summer, six faculty representing five Arizona counties will host nine student externs.

None of this great work would be possible without the great people within Extension and CALS. We have many excellent teams focused on delivering on our mission: *To improve lives, communities, and economies in Arizona and beyond and bring science to bear on practical problems.* Please reach out to me with any further questions about the mission of Cooperative Extension. For more in-depth and frequent updates on our message and priorities, please join us for our quarterly webinars.

Sincerely,



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