

SAC-1 Committee - 2022 Annual Meeting Agenda
Zoom Meeting hosted by North Carolina State University
May 10, 2022

9:00 Introductions – Lesley Oliver, Jeff Mullahey, Julie Carrier, Rebecca McCulley, David Crouse, John Beasley, Tim Grey, Michael Evans, Darrin Dodds, Matthew Whiles, David Baltensperger, Adrian Percy, Mc Macoon, Darrin Dodds, Jeff Edwards, Gopal Kakani in attendance

9:15 Welcome and overview of College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) vision and priorities- Dr. John Dole, Interim Dean, CALs

- John Dole provided an overview of CALs. Ag #1 sector in NC; 668K jobs or 15.5% of workforce. Very diverse-about 30% crops- lots of specialty crops but also corn, peanuts, tobacco etc. Nationally #1 in philanthropic support, #1 largest 2-yr program, #3 industry \$\$ & research \$\$, #2 largest extension network. Focusing on graduate support. Big Ideas: Plant science Initiative, Food Manufacturing Initiative, Food systems & Human Health, Food Animal Initiative. Animal Initiative- Integrated food animal systems, Digital Animal Ag , Food animal communications, protein innovations.
- David asked about the plant science building fundraising- able to raise everything by dedication, but half of funding provided by state- Golden Leaf Foundation. Accompanying campaign for programmatic support- endowed positions, etc. \$160M building and major equipment. Staffing is now a challenge budgetarily.

9:35 CALs Academic Programs: challenges and opportunities.

- Ag Science online degree= first in the university; several certificate programs. Online academy- reduces community college transfer issues, CES agent training; working on professional development opportunities like internships, study abroad, service learning, etc. and determining which provide the best prep.
- Michael asked about the expected importance of the 2-year degree going forward- Important for not contributing to rural brain drain.

9:55 CALs strategic research initiatives and priorities- Dr. Stephen Lommel, Director and Associate Dean, NC Agricultural Experiment Stations

Big emphasis on interdisciplinary programs not just in the college but across the U. Cluster hire program. Building leadership programs to lead up large grant funded programs; allow to build leaders but who want to stay in research. Newer programs include Plant Science Initiative (PSI), Integrative Sciences (focused on molecular and inquiry-based education), Coastal Resilience & Sustainability, Data Science, and genetics/genomic “academies”. In addition to main campus, there is the Centennial campus (site of plant sciences, engineering, other research and education, etc. close to main campus), Farm & Research Station that is one of the few open land spaces left in Raleigh, NC Research Campus (\$22M recurring budget to support researchers- 13 faculty from NC State). Lots of research stations- next big goal is to digitize the stations (\$25 M for fiber

optics and sensors). Underwent investments in new faculty over the last few years; helped with making a culture change and got back up to 320-ish faculty

10:15 Driving innovation and discovery through interdisciplinary collaborations and industry partnerships- Dr. Adrian Percy, Director of PSI

- The Institute is really focused on interdisciplinarity; no permanent space assignment, some new faculty going directly in (all sign an MOU). Little concern about tenure. Director came from industry. Vision to improve the world through plant science through interdisciplinarity (biology, engineering, data science, human sciences) and collaboration with others (industry, including taking space in the building).
- Faculty-based leadership group around 5 platforms- one based on education and one on outreach; plant improvement, data driven plant sci and resilient ag systems
- Lommel indicates that they have avoided having expensive equipment within single labs but have rather focused on core lab facilities

10:35 Delivering Extension through a pandemic: trends and opportunities- Dr. Richard Bonanno, Director and Associate Dean, NC Cooperative Extension Service

- 2nd highest Smith-Lever allocation; also get lots of state support and counties also pitch in- 54% of county-based salaries. Also bring in \$44M in extramural funding and income. Most people at stations have extension appointment except for maybe the breeders. Good collabs with the 1890 (NC A&T) with co-located county agents. 101 offices- one in each county plus Cherokee.
- Starting salary for agents- BA- \$40K, MS \$45K, Docs \$50K. Underwent recent evaluation of salaries across the system.

11:00 NIFA update- Vance Owens and Bisoondat “Mac” Macoon

Total NIFA budget- \$1.8B to cover capacity and competitive programs. Staffing is up and program responsibilities are more broadly distributed among them. Climate change, equitable and resilient and prosperous ag system, equitable marketplaces, opportunities for econ development and improving quality of life in rural and tribal communities; attract, inspire, retain workforce. About 310 staff in Kansas City, about 20 in DC. About 400 total FTEs; lots of new hires able to have remote duty stations, rest of staff given option to return to office. Most decided to work remotely except for 2 days per pay period. May be able to host meetings at the KC office.

11:30 General discussion of topics (see list below)

12:00 Lunch

1:00 General discussion of the follow topics:

1. Grant support staff/models- any institutions have models that work well and if so, what makes them work so well?

Always talk about how to better help faculty compete for grant funding. NC state college grant writer plus central campus grant writing assistance for multimillion dollar grants; also central business office in the college, but that is not helpful in post award management. Jeff M. looking to hire own grant support services for post-award. David B. has a centralized grant system working effectively now, though it was a painful transition. Took 10 years to fix; he gets billed for every grant they handle that comes out of the overhead. John B. college has invested in additional help and that seems to have helped with award establishment and the increase in federal grants submissions with an increase in faculty. Central sponsored programs has lots of turnover. Increase in compliance issues being felt at the faculty level in terms of grant management. John Beasley hired someone part time along with an MBA student to help with some of the grant applications. Darrin seems to have a lot more admin help within the department so the thought of a centralized system does not appeal. But as Jeff E points out that can leave a department vulnerable if a person leaves because they don't have backups. TAMU-50% F&A to Agrilife, dept gets some and PI gets some. When amount capped below allowable, the college gets it's 50% of the allowable first.

Julie mentioned UT's provost is starting to pay the student fees for grad students, but wonders if this will fall on departments after 22-23. David's department requires all costs must be paid, including fees (\$44,000 to budget on a grant for everything, including tuition). Jeff M. essentially adds the fees to the stipend when it can't be covered otherwise so that the student can afford to pay it.

2. What kind of salary data you all had across the region for our departments? As we hit inflation, I think that some investment in developing a good data set would be of value if one does not exist

Salary data- Starting salaries averaging \$85K for 9 month; NC state has min \$90K and recently addressed salary compressions; Rebecca running into the issue of existing faculty salaries not being higher than what recruits want. John provides an idea of what the 12 month conversion would be when making offers.

Jeff M. is seeing retention issues with early career faculty; also concerned about compression at the full professor levels as the lower starting salaries keep increasing. At UK this year there was some latitude and additional funding to make adjustments, but that was an unusual situation- once in last several years. At NC State they also were able to do the odd adjustment this year- adjustments can be made based on market analysis – Jeff may have one for Soils/crops. There is an Oklahoma State Survey that is available there. <https://www.okhighered.org/studies-reports/faculty-salary/2019-20.pdf>

AAUP salary survey: https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/AAUP_ARES_2020-21.pdf

NC State has had some good luck getting graduates to go into extension, though who knows how long they will stay in those positions.

3. Institutional Collaborations Mechanisms for addressing Big Ideas in SE

Discussed briefly how departments might proactively put teams together to be ready for proposals like Climate-Smart Commodities, NSF regional centers for innovation. Jeff M thinks

it's an opportunity for admins to do a better job of being strategic about this for emerging areas of research.

Possible ideas for new regional projects:

Cotton leaf dwarf virus (v. regional in nature); talked about incentive for joining multistates

John asked about undergrad enrollment in agronomy/environmental sciences- Had been seeing increases for several years and then recently it's dropped. Va Tech- fairly steady in those, but turf has cratered while horticulture increases along with ag tech. Increases in graduate student enrollments being seen at Mississippi State and Auburn. Some see internal competition with other general ag programs with lesser science requirements. At NC State they have made a more concerted effort in recruiting, sending regular emails leading up to the start of school after acceptance. Not clear if a central recruiter is terribly helpful to the departments. At UK Ag Medical Biotech and Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences are both growing but also have a new Ag Ecosystem Sciences major which has about 40 students.

TAMU centralized advising, accounting and IT. They lost a recruiter who engaged with the community college system which served as a feeder to his department.

Jeff M. asked about strategic planning- Several departments undergoing departmental program reviews currently.

New Facilities- Auburn getting a new building for three departments, but replacing one of the worst buildings on campus. Will hold 3 ag departments and 2 others; expect to start ground work this year and completed in about 3 yrs 250,000 ft². Mississippi State has a building renovation planned; state allocated \$18M, but expected cost now is about \$30M, though will mostly update mechanical systems. Remodel of David's building fell one vote short.

Michael was promised a new building as a result of the merger of three depts. 5 years later they are looking at a \$50M building, but that won't house the 75 faculty they have in the school. The university is investing in N. Va innovation campus.

Jeff not allowed to gain space by having people move into the new PSI, so there has to be a backfill plan.

3:30 Decide location for meeting next year

Had a discussion about whether to do in person vs virtually. Seems to have better attendance with virtual, but often hit 8-10 in person

Suggested that we host the next one in VTech- Roanoke maybe, could come to campus, could go up the mountain a bit. Any time in the summer would work, but later in May preferred. Mountain Lake Lodge might be a place. Timing later in May or early June probably best timeline.

Thanks to Dr. Mullahey for hosting and supporting and NIFA for joining today.

4:00 Adjourn