NCAC1 Annual Report
Department of Plant Sciences; North Dakota State University
January 6-8, 2020
Rich Horsley, Head

Faculty/Administration:
Changes in upper administration at NDSU included the hiring of Dr. Greg Lardy as Vice-President of Agricultural Affairs; Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources; Director of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station (NDAES); and Director of NDSU Extension. The position that includes the Vice-President, dean, and two directorships is new. Previously, the position did not include the Director of NDSU Extension. Earlier in the year, Dr. Frank Casey was hired as associate director of the NDAES. As this position is a partial appointment, Dr. Casey will continue as Director of the School of Natural Resource Sciences. On December 31, 2019, Dr. Ken Grafton stepped down as Interim Provost. President Bresciani selected Dr. Margaret Fitzgerald to serve as Interim Provost while a national search commences to hire a permanent Provost. Dr. Fitzerald was dean of NDSU's College of Human Sciences and Education.

In the Department of Plant Sciences, Dr. Cliff Hall resigned his position as a professor of cereal and food sciences to take a new position at South Dakota State University. We received permission to refill this position and a search for a replacement is currently underway. In the area of weed science, the department received permission to hire a new faculty position in weed control of invasive species on cropland. Finally, Dr. Ted Helms announced that he will retire on June 30, 2020 as soybean breeder. The department has received permission to refill this position.

Budget:
For the second year straight, student enrollment dropped by over 500 students and the university again faces a shortfall of over $5 million. The Provost asked the deans to provide him with a 90% budget for each department. As of now, it is not known how the shortfall will be covered for this academic year. However, another round of a Voluntary Separation Incentive Package (VSIP) for faculty and staff was offered. Faculty and staff meeting the criteria for the VSIP must retire on May 15, 2020. Like last year's VSIP, we may be able to refill some of the vacated faculty positions but all vacated staff positions will be eliminated.

Departmental Activities/Highlights:
Undergraduate programs: Enrollment in the Crop and Weed Sciences (CWS) program is 140, which is a decrease of 58 students since last year. The Horticulture major has 38 students and the Food Science program has 18 students. The Horticulture program enrollment increased by three students while the Food Science program decreased by eight students.

Graduate programs: There are 63 students (46 MS and 17 PhD) in the department's Plant Sciences program, five MS students in the Horticulture program, and 21 students (4 MS and 17 PhD) in the Cereal Science program. The large number of MS students in the Plant Sciences program is in response by industry for an increased number of agronomists with MS degrees. The number of overall students in the Plant Sciences and Cereal Sciences programs decreased by eight and six, respectively, since last year. The decrease in a large part is due to the fact that projects with state-funded research technicians have had to pay 25% of the salary and fringe since 2016. This amount of salary and fringe is very close to the cost of a graduate stipend.