Department of Agricultural Education & Studies

Strategic Plan

2010-2015

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
Iowa State University
**Mission**

The Department of Agricultural Education & Studies’ mission is to provide opportunities to learn, discover and apply the knowledge and skills associated with educational processes in agriculture and the life sciences.

**Culture**

We work in a collaborative manner to facilitate learning, develop the self-directed learner, empower change agents, and enhance the career development of our students.

**Core Values**

We value experiential learning; diversity of people, cultures and ideas; excellence in teaching, advising, scholarship and engagement; institutional leadership; and personal development.

**Vision**

The Department of Agricultural Education and Studies will be a premier leader in the teaching and learning processes of program development, delivery and evaluation systems in agriculture and the life sciences.

**Philosophy**

We believe that arranging and facilitating learning experiences for change agents is essential to the success of agriculture and life sciences. Our fundamental obligation is to prepare the learner to become self-directed, and accountable for his/her actions.

The model that follows provides a framework for achieving the departmental vision and mission. The educational processes form the core of the model that seeks to encompass the appropriate discovery and innovation, and the learning and engagement functions of the Iowa State University, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies. Agriculture and the life sciences represent the context for focusing the educational processes and this context is interwoven throughout the model across the learning, discovery/innovation, and engagement activities.

**Framework**
Priority: Learning - Undergraduate Education

Goal Provide adequate numbers of graduates to our stakeholder groups.

- Review and revise marketing, recruitment, and retention strategies and implementation plan to ensure adequate numbers of graduates for the teaching profession and the agriculture and related life science industries.

Goal Provide experiential learning opportunities, on campus, off campus, and internationally, to help students develop professional, interpersonal, communication, and social skills. Potential venues include:

- Departmental, college and university clubs
- Internships and job shadowing opportunities
- Travel courses and student exchange opportunities
- Class assignments

Goal Provide quality, up-to-date curricula.

- Implement an effective outcomes assessment program to continually and systematically evaluate and improve the department’s curricula.

Goal Provide quality academic advising to all students.

- Implement best practices for academic advising throughout the department and provide adviser and program assessment and training opportunities to ensure student academic advising needs are met.

Goal Strengthen and enhance the undergraduate program in agricultural and life sciences education (options: teacher certification and communications).

- Review and modify the agriculture and life sciences curriculum and student educational experiences as needed to address identified outcomes and ensure quality.
- Seek and use information from stakeholders to improve the curriculum, expand student educational experiences, and improve the image of the department with stakeholders.
- Review the process and procedures for developing the student teaching center list to make sure the best teachers and schools are used in the early field-based programs and student teaching.
Goal

Strengthen and enhance the undergraduate program in agricultural studies.

- Review and modify the agricultural studies curriculum and student educational experiences paying particular attention to articulated student learning outcomes, program quality, and academic rigor.
- Use the Ag450 farm to provide educational experiences to students and expand collaborative relationships with business and industry.
- Insure the AGEDS 450 course continues to be a valuable capstone course for the agricultural studies curriculum.
- Promote the AGEDS 450 course to students outside the agricultural studies curriculum.

Priority: Learning - Graduate Education

Goal

Strengthen and enhance graduate programs.

- Develop a recruitment plan to attract students whose goals most appropriately fit the department’s mission and objectives.
- Expand experiential and active learning opportunities for all graduate students (learning, scholarship, and engagement processes).
- Review graduate level courses and programs for ideas to enhance program flexibility.
- Expand the off-campus Master of Science in Agricultural Education Program and the off-campus Master of Agriculture Program in Professional Agriculture to meet graduate and society needs.
- Develop a follow-up system of graduates to gauge career development, foster collaborative activities, and gain feedback to enhance departmental programs to better meet career pathway needs.
- Participate in interdisciplinary sustainable agriculture programs as a way to experiment with integrated teaching and learning.
- Integrate graduate student research into the focused research of faculty in the department.
- Expand international agricultural and extension education program efforts in the department that foster collaboration on teaching, learning and scholarship.

Priority: Discovery & Innovation/Scholarship

Goal

Promote scholarship on the educational processes (program development, learning, delivery and evaluation) associated with teaching and learning in agriculture and life sciences.

- Identify areas of scholarship (discovery & innovation) to emphasize in the department.
- Nurture and support faculty members to become experts in focused scholarship areas.
- Engage appropriate stakeholders in planning and conducting scholarship initiatives.
• Encourage faculty members to seek funding for focused scholarship areas.
• Conduct an annual seminar for new graduate students on scholarship in the discipline of agricultural education.
• Recruit and select graduate students based on a match between their interests and the scholarship areas emphasized in the department.
• Enhance communication of scholarship within the department through seminars on on-going and completed scholarship and ideas for improving scholarship.
• Use a portion of M.Ag., M.S. and Ph.D. final oral examinations as an open seminar where candidates present their scholarship.
• Enhance dissemination of research findings and other scholarly efforts to peers and external stakeholders by presenting papers and posters at professional meetings and publishing in high quality refereed journals.

**Priority: Engagement**

**Goal**  
**Strengthen two way partnerships through engagement with key stakeholder groups.**

- Develop a process to identify needs of the major “engagement” groups.
- Develop a systematic assessment process to fit needs with mission of department.
- Develop a systematic needs analysis process to identify what can be realistically delivered to “engagement” groups.
- Enrich departmental programs by integrating appropriate input from partners.
- Facilitate and promote the agriculture law program, tax schools and related areas for all interested stakeholders.

**Priority: Faculty Leadership**

**Goal**  
**Facilitate the quest for excellence in learning, discovery and engagement.**

- Develop a systematic plan to expand the department’s development fund.
- Enhance the use of the departmental stakeholder advisory committee.
- Establish a plan to enhance technology used in the department.
- Establish a plan for professional development of all personnel.
- Seek appropriate grants and contracts to enhance educational and research programs.
- Match faculty scholarship focus areas with teaching and engagement assignments.
**Priority: Department Life**

**Goal**  
Ensure that the department is a pleasant and challenging place to learn and work

- Recruit and retain faculty, staff and students who are dedicated to individual and departmental excellence and achievement.
- Expand the diversity of people, ideas, and cultures and nurture an environment in which diversity can thrive.
- Achieve a sustainable balance between responsibilities and resources that will allow the department to efficiently and effectively realize its vision.
- Foster an environment in which all members of the department can contribute to their fullest potential.
- Provide a rich array of opportunities to learn, lead and enjoy life.
- Advance the excellence of the department through enhanced connections between the faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends.

**Status & Policy**

Iowa State University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research Extensive University, is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The university is a member of the Association of American Universities and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

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