Overall plan for strategic alignment and budget reduction

Please see the accompanying document, Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction, College of Agricultural Sciences.

Organization charts show realignments

Please see the accompanying organizational chart for indication of where current and future undergraduate and graduate programs reside.

How this plan aligns with academic and administrative guidelines

Academic guidelines

5 sub-units per college

Because of the College’s scale, programmatic complexity, and statewide presence, the number of subunits within the College of Agricultural Sciences is proposed to be reduced from 12 to nine (including Botany and Plant Pathology which is moving entirely into the College of Agricultural Sciences), rather than to five units.

Minimum 20 FTE faculty per sub-unit

With nearly 250 faculty members, the College exceeds the minimum of 20 faculty FTE per unit prior to the proposed realignment. The three smallest departments are proposed to be consolidated with other units and post-transition we will have an average of approximately 30 faculty FTE per unit.

Program size

Undergraduate programs: average 20 students (3 yr. average)

All of the College’s undergraduate programs have been reviewed relative to this student number guideline and appropriate adjustments are being made. Major initiatives include: revamping the plant sciences majors, merging Animal Sciences and Rangeland Ecology and Management, repositioning the Applied Economics programs, and revising the OSU programs offered at Eastern Oregon University.

Graduate programs: average 5 masters, 2 Ph.D. (3 yr. average)

All of the College’s graduate programs have been reviewed relative to this guideline and appropriate adjustments are being made. Major initiatives include: restructuring the plant science degrees and merging the Genetics degree into Molecular and Cellular Biology.


Class size

**Lower division: 25**
All of the College’s lower division courses have been reviewed relative to this guideline and in the context of degree review and modification and appropriate actions are being taken including: course elimination, combination, and alternate-year scheduling.

**Upper division: 15**
All of the College’s upper division courses have been reviewed relative to this guideline and in the context of degree review and modification and appropriate actions are being taken including: course elimination, combination, and alternate-year scheduling.

**Graduate: 6**
All of the College’s graduate courses have been reviewed relative to this guideline and in the context of degree review and modification and appropriate actions are being taken including: course elimination, combination, and alternate-year scheduling.

**Administrative guidelines**

**Maximum of 4 levels of management**
The revised structure reflects a maximum of four levels of management: 1) Unit level (head, superintendent, or center director); 2) College associate dean; 3) College dean and director; and 4) University (provost or president). The role of the associate deans is as staff to the dean for the day-to-day operations of the College.

**Targeted minimum of 6 direct reports**
In the revised structure, all of the unit leaders, associate deans, and dean are anticipated to have a minimum of 6 direct reports.

**Disconnect? Rationale and plan**
The College’s proposal describes an ongoing process of review and evolution over the next 15 months. These guidelines will continue to inform that evolution.

**Budgetary implications**

**Budget overview as reported to SABRRC, November 2009**

- We are currently dealing with a combined (Education and General, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, and Extension Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources) recurring budget reduction of $5,333,735 per year and a total cumulative reduction of $9,985,455.

- We have been told to plan for the possibility of additional cuts of 5 percent ($2,300,000 per year) to 10 percent ($4,600,000 per year) this fiscal year.

- We have slammed the brakes on spending and frozen all hiring except for emergencies. Attrition: mostly voluntary to date, but some layoffs have already resulted in a loss of 60 positions: 24 tenure or tenure-track positions; 20 fixed-term positions; and 16 classified positions.

- Budget reductions of 15 percent this biennium could trigger additional layoffs of approximately 15 fixed-term positions and will result in minimal ending fund balances.
• Budget reductions of 20 percent this biennium could trigger additional layoffs of as many as 40 fixed-term positions and as many as 12 tenure and tenure-track positions. Reductions of this magnitude would also likely trigger the closing of two to four of our branch experiment stations.

Current situation and assessment, March 2010

• We dodged a bullet when the tax-related ballot measures passed and there were no further budget cuts this fiscal year. We anticipate that as much as 5 percent (~$2,300,000) of FY 2010-2011 ending fund balances could be targeted yet this biennium.

• Faculty and staff attrition remains the key tool to address current and potential budget reductions.

• The College continues to brace for future budget cuts. Still looming is the announced additional 15.5 percent cut in Education and General funding for FY 2010-2011, potential additional Statewide Public Services cuts this biennium if the state’s financial condition deteriorates further, and a 25 percent expected Oregon University System shortfall in the next biennium. The Statewide Public Services programs, with an inability to raise tuition, are particularly at risk entering the next biennium.

• The announced additional 15.5 percent cut in Education and General for FY 2010-2011 will trigger forced layoffs of teaching faculty and staff beginning next academic year and will create serious problems for students.

• In the Agricultural Experiment Station, we anticipate being able to accommodate our current 10 percent budget reduction and up to an additional 5 percent reduction in FY 2010-2011 without forced layoffs or elimination of tenure-track faculty.

• In our Extension Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, we anticipate being able to accommodate our current reduction without forced layoffs or elimination of tenure track faculty. However, any additional reductions would need to be accommodated using reserve funds being held by Extension Administration.

Budget implications of strategic realignment, looking forward

Savings associated with realignment

The realignment proposal is intended to provide a framework for strategically managing attrition as we adjust to an anticipated future with a significantly smaller state-funded footprint. First, it will ensure a critical mass within units. Second, it will provide opportunities for the remaining faculty and staff to realign themselves into broader units to address critical ongoing needs. Finally, it will provide a context for filling essential, critical positions while still reducing the College’s overall recurring commitments in anticipation of additional budget reductions.

• An additional 10 percent reduction translates to a funding loss of approximately $4.5 million per year resulting in the need to eliminate positions and force layoffs for an additional elimination of 45 jobs. It would also reduce our capacity to generate external funding resulting in an additional annual loss of over $5M in external funds and the associated additional 40 jobs these external funds support.

• At this time, the College does not foresee significant administrative savings associated with strategic realignment. Departmental administrative support personnel already are overtaxed and, in the short run, will be required to address work activities associated with the business center transition.
The College is seeking to reduce expenses employing initiatives such as:

- More centralized management of its farm and animal science facilities.
- Investments in information infrastructure and electronic programming to reduce travel costs, expand programmatic reach, and enhance program integration.
- Pursuing an integrated research-Extension regional “hub-and-spoke” model.
- The pursuit of additional funding to address extensive deferred maintenance issues at its stations and facilities in the Corvallis area that are not maintained by Facilities Services in order to increase efficiencies and reduce operating expenses.
- Restructuring of the College’s Eastern Oregon University-based, Agricultural and Natural Resources undergraduate program.
- Restructuring information technology support within the College.

The College is also systematically exploring alternative sources of funds to replace state funds including: seeking matching local funding for branch experiment stations and Extension programs; increased fees for services; foundation funds; and additional grants and contract funding.

Costs associated with realignment

There are significant opportunity and psychological costs. Vast amounts of time have been diverted from core teaching, research, grant writing, and outreach activities at the expense of the College’s students and stakeholders. Faculty and staff are experiencing great stress in response to the increased and competing demands on their time, and the uncertainty surrounding their future employment and departmental affiliation. There are also significant facility and moving costs associated with relocating faculty and staff to accommodate the new business center and unit realignments. These estimated costs will vary depending upon implementation details that are yet to be determined.

The process for listening and preparing this plan

- Faculty, staff, student, and other stakeholder involvement?
- Evidence of faculty support?

First and foremost it is important to note that this is still a proposal and an on-going process. We anticipate that a final plan will materialize by July 1, 2010. To this point, three groups have provided formal proposals and input: department heads, branch experiment station superintendents, and a faculty strategic discussions panel. Additional input and feedback was systematically solicited via visits by the dean to each of the College’s twelve departments and 11 branch experiment stations; and via a series of Town Hall listening sessions and meetings with faculty and staff, students, and external stakeholders. Faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders also were invited to respond to three questions:

1) Which programs are most vital to you that we should sustain and nurture?
2) What are the key forces or “drivers” in society, the economy, the environment, in research or education that the College of Agricultural Sciences should be prepared to address? and
3) Given declining support for state-supported budgets and changing funding for science, what suggestions might you propose for the College to have a sustainable business model?

The College’s web site includes a “Planning for change” page that summarizes the planning process to date and the major sources of input. (http://agsci.oregonstate.edu/about/planning-for-change)

Enclosures:
Proposal: Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction
Organizational chart