

CALS 21 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS—INPUT FROM APPOINTED PROFESSIONALS 5/15/12

To: Dean Shane Burgess and the CALS Executive Council

From: The CALS Appointed Professionals Council

In response to your request for input from the CALS Appointed Professionals Council for the CALS21 process—specifically on how CALS can be more efficient, more effective and more innovative—the council prepared and conducted an online survey, discussed and analyzed the results, identified themes, and now offers the following report. The narrative blends survey responses with input from the 6 members of the CALS AP Council and two other appointed professionals who attended our open planning meeting. We see this process as ongoing and look forward to sharing more views and information with you as part of the shared governance system in CALS and the UA.

UNIT AFFILIATION—All 238 CALS appointed professionals were invited to fill out an anonymous 6-question survey, posted on Google Docs from April 27 through May 4. We had 24 respondents, representing the following departments/schools (requested, but not required, in the first question on the survey): Animal Sciences—3; Development & Alumni—2; Maricopa Agricultural Center—1; Norton School—5; Nutritional Sciences—5; Office of Academic Programs—1; Soil, Water & Environmental Science—1; Veterinary Science & Microbiology—1; Water Resources Research Center—1; No affiliation stated—4.

The CALS AP Council currently has representatives from the Agricultural Experiment Station, CALS Administration Business Affairs; Educational Communications and Technologies; Entomology; Plant Sciences; and the Water Resources Research Center.

INVOLVEMENT—Three questions addressed awareness of and participation in the CAL21 process:

Are you aware of or familiar with the CALS21 strategic plan initiative?

Yes—17 No—7

Have appointed professionals been invited to participate in your units'/department's preparation of responses to the CALS 21 strategic plan initiative questions?

Yes—14 No—7 No Answer Given—3

If appointed professionals have been involved in the process, how have they been involved? If they have not been involved, respond, "Not involved."

The responses showed varying levels of involvement (with individual statements in quotes):

Fully involved—“Attended meetings and forums; included in discussions, received all email correspondence—basically included in most activities related to the process. “Members of any committee and asked for input for the Dean’s 12 questions and 8 questions.” “All appointed staff have been given CALS questions and guidance documents. All staff have been invited to participate in WRRC group sessions to discuss concepts for responses. All staff have reviewed draft WRRC response documents.” “It has been completely collaborative, from the brainstorming phase to evaluation phase,

to completion phase. However, our entire office is appointed professionals.” “We have been invited, as have other faculty/staff.” “We have been invited to all events.” “We have all had as much input as any others in the department.” “Submitted feedback on Phase II and Phase III planning; invited to planning meetings.”” Contributed to info and goals outlined in the documents submitted to the college.”

Informed but less involved—“We were provided a copy of the questions via email, and invited to a forum in which the Director outlined the progress thus far in terms of the School’s responses thus far with regard to the development of the strategic plan. AP have not been engaged in the discussion, and in fact, opportunities have been missed to solicit feedback from AP in departmental or other staff meeting forums.” “Asked to give my supervisor some documentation of work I have performed.” “All staff have been given copies of final documents submitted to CALS.” “Typically, information is shared via email, in a top-down fashion.” “We met with our director for a few hours to strategize together.” “Most of the action items seemed oriented around improvements of tenured faculty or faculty research.”

Not involved/don’t know—“Not involved on current committees.” “I have not been involved.” “I don’t know if they were; I know I wasn’t invited to participate.”

AREAS TO RETAIN, PROTECT, ENHANCE, ADD, OR DISCONTINUE—Responses to the following two questions—the heart of the survey—fell into groups that fit the **CALS Grand Vision Pillars**:

Given your role as an appointed professional, what specific changes do you suggest in the areas below to help the college become more efficient, effective and innovative? a. Existing areas to preserve, protect, or enhance; b. Areas where totally new activities or structures are needed; c. Areas to discontinue, de-emphasize, or modify.

In addition to becoming more efficient, effective and innovative, note any other aspects of the college that you consider important in moving forward, especially as they relate to appointed professionals:

Grand Vision Pillar #1: Global Center of Excellence in Integrative R&D/Tech Transfer and Extension

“Extension structures could be modified to become more cohesive, and create stronger scholarship links and positive working relations between main campus and field agents throughout AZ.”

“Protect & preserve the high level of research scholarship that occurs in CALS, particularly areas in which there is high visibility/recognition for the UA; continue expansion of innovative work in environmental areas (water conservation, arid lands and food supply) as well as consumer/family areas (mind-body research in response to health care crisis, and consumer psychology) in an intentional effort to seek new ways to use both areas of research collaboratively across disciplines within CALS.”

“Focus on identifying plants/crops tolerant to environmental, salinity, drought, and heat stresses characteristics of our desert area, arid region through screening and genetic research for maximum productivity. Also, our environment is such that golfers could play around the year on our golf courses in Tucson and across the state, generating substantial revenue for Arizona. Therefore, our turfgrass program and our unique turf research center should be preserved and enhanced to respond to the demands of the players on the golf courses and other sports turfs. Arboretum and Herbarium also are unique entities in CALS that provide information to many citizens of Arizona and therefore should be preserved.”

“Looking at the Vet Sci. department, I would want to protect the shrimp diagnostic lab. This lab performs a valuable national and international service and when the PI retires, I don't believe the department will support the OIE reference lab.”

Grand Vision Pillar #2: Novel, Innovative, Global Paradigms of Learning

“The education component of the college, both undergrad and graduate level should be protected. The second area is the extension area in order to develop and maintain strategic linkages with the relevant industries around the state, thereby strengthening the political capital.”

“Given my current position I am particularly interested in outreach, getting our name out into the community, and finding relative opportunities for our students to utilize their knowledge in the field. I think that our programs for students including student services, internships, and undergraduate research are of particular benefit for CALS and my department. Also having students enrolled in these experiences to get credit pay for themselves through student fees.”

“Continued focus on undergraduate education, additional emphasis on academic advising, student mentoring and career advising; development of alumni.”

“I would also like to see increased dollars for enhanced learning environments/resources now for students. For example how to access dollars for enhancing our student skills for their chosen careers—can we pool resources to cross train amongst our diverse colleges?”

“Reinforce the teaching component as much if not more than the research component.” “The state really needs a professional veterinary medical program. It would be good for CALS to have this component, which would garner support from many audiences, including the large number of animal lovers/owners in Arizona.”

Grand Vision Pillar #3: Efficient & Effective Organizational Structure

Administrative Responsiveness and Flexibility: “While I do not have enough information to suggest what areas of CALS should be de-emphasized or discontinued, I suggest that initiatives or research areas that are outside of the CALS mission and vision be reconsidered in an effort to concentrate efforts to what we are most effective and efficient in. Creating a strong 'identity' is important, while continuing to stay current and anticipate future important research trends.”

“If there are redundancies created in different departments, we should get rid of them.”

“Through the years of budget cuts at the UA and CALS, all the units have been severely affected and have already cut all the non-essential as well as some essential programs. Therefore, there is not really much left to cut in any unit, and all that is left should be preserved. Some units in CALS could be merged: As SWES and ABE were only one department, SWE, in the past, they could be merged as previously, similar to the merging of Plant Pathology into the Plant Sciences Department in CALS and the CHEM and BIOCHEM departments in the College of Science that merged to one department named Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry a few years ago.”

Dynamic Structure & Funding Aligned with Strategic Vision: “Don't forget the students' viewpoint of the future. Get them involved now in the CALS21 vision. Having a voice in planning the future will bring student leaders back to seed employment, or fund future endeavors. It's important to make sure we remain research oriented and resource-self sufficient college, but what kind of alumni are we nurturing?”

Administration Focused on Facilitating Success & Innovation—Grant support: Obtaining grants is vital yet preparing grant proposals takes a tremendous amount of time away from research, teaching and

extension activities. A pre-award, grant preparation support unit would streamline the grant proposal process for the college.

Comments: "I see CALS grant support staff as an obstacle in submitting grants, in particular NSF grants. I have encountered slow budget review times and general lack of support in the process. More helpfulness would be nice."

"Routing grant proposals through CALS slows us down, and, in my experience, seems like a waste of time and effort."

Cross-collaboration and cooperation: "Increase the connectivity across disciplines. Give more support to professional development and across-discipline cooperation." "Apologies for the cliché, but we have to 'break down silos' and be way more collaborative across all units and in all areas." "Given the challenges we all are facing, I think all of us need to continue to work together cooperatively and maintain our level of professionalism." "Collaboration between units needs to be more effective." "A team-based approach that involves all members in making decisions and providing services is very attractive to me. Data driven decision making is crucial for all departments."

Grand Vision Pillar #4: Physical and Human Capital Infrastructure for Excellence

In the interest of shared governance in CALS, where all employee groups have a voice and a place at the table, the AP Council suggests improvements and additions in the following areas:

Recognized as Promoting a Culture of Appointed Professional Excellence:

"I think there is a lot of ambiguity about Appointed Personnel, and we would benefit from clarifying roles, opportunities, responsibilities, and rights." "My focus is based on the sources of funding that I bring in/am assigned to, so I am not sure I have a complete picture of how the "system" functions (Although, this latest round of information sharing has been helpful). Outside of tenure track/continuing appt personnel, effort and successes may be appreciated, but don't seem to add up to a 'body of work' that contributes to a career path."

"Appointed professional is a challenging role—in many ways we are invisible. Not that our contributions are unappreciated—rather, organizationally, there is little that can be done to reward appointed professionals. Internal motivation and ties to the community keep many of us here. It would help if there were formal guidelines, career paths, opportunities, etc. to attract and maintain talent."

"The appointed personnel—although the first and easiest to cut when it comes to reducing expenses - are often those who are the front line with student needs as well as participating as good citizens (such as working on all the information requests!) in the college—producing much greater benefits and with far more energy than many tenure track professionals."

"Sometimes the language used to describe [CALS] initiatives is too broad or vague--not relatable to appointed personnel. I firmly believe there are too many ideas on the table and should be narrowed."

Direct Communication between Appointed Professionals and CALS Administration:

Enhance and/or create a work environment that recognizes contributions of appointed professionals. To this end, the CALS Appointed Professionals Council intends to be more visible and engaged with appointed professionals and with the college at large.

Comments: “Ask for our input separately. We don't have tenure on our mind, and our roles tend to be more oriented towards supporting teamwork. Our role is to support and enhance a student oriented learning environment. We may have some very practical suggestions to ensure the big ideas are implementable and relevant for all. Have an event that is just fun, where we can interact and get to know each other personally especially across schools. For instance: ‘Breakfast with the Dean’ (10 diverse leaders once a month)—we can discuss academic initiatives but let's also talk about how to make a great working environment, stories of student excellence we can share. Work life balance, leadership.”

Expanding on this idea, the CALS AP Council suggests meeting at regular intervals with the dean to offer ideas from an AP perspective. In addition, the “Breakfast with the Dean” concept could be an annual event that includes a poster session/research rounds, speakers, workshops, etc. It would be a chance for CALS AP to meet each other, build esprit-de-corps, and collaborate across disciplines within the college.

Hiring and recognition: “Continue to hire the world-class faculty "all stars" for each area of the college's mission: teaching, research and extension. The quality of faculty cannot be compromised. We need to continue to recognize and reward faculty/staff/appointed professionals and teams through the various awards programs and events (semi-annual lunches; Spring Awards Banquet; etc). This appears to be the best place to work on campus and it needs to stay that way.”

Grand Vision Pillar #5: Financing

Alumni and Development: “We need to continue to develop new and meaningful ways for alumni to interact with students. We need to create a collaborative atmosphere of philanthropy and giving back that permeates through faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members where extension services are utilized.” “One thing we'd like to achieve is creating a strong 'culture of philanthropy' throughout the college.” “[Enhance] funding sources and opportunities.”

CONCLUSION AND MOVING FORWARD

Across the university, appointed professionals represent a wide range of job titles and roles. We thank you for the opportunity to present our views and we look forward to working with the college, both in our respective departments and units and also formally as a group, in providing constructive input as the CALS21 process continues. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have or provide further information.

Respectfully,

The CALS Appointed Professional Council

Susan McGinley, ECAT (Chair); Susanna Eden, WRRRC; Carl Olson, ENT; Mohammad Pessaraki, PL SCI;
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