

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND APPLIED ECONOMICS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics is committed to provide the highest standards of excellence in learning, research, and engagement on all aspects of the economics of regional, state, and global production, distribution, and consumption of food and fiber goods and services, and public and private use of natural resources.

VISION STATEMENT

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics will be recognized as the center of excellence for leadership in learning, discovery, and delivery of knowledge on economic aspects of all current and emerging aspects of regional, state, and global food, fiber, and natural resources.

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics will:

be recognized as one of the most highly respected departments of agricultural and applied economics in the United States, attracting the best students, faculty, and staff.

prepare society-ready graduates with the ability to think analytically and independently and to learn to apply economic concepts effectively in their decisions.

be involved in basic and applied disciplinary and multidisciplinary discovery of knowledge with active participation of graduate and undergraduate students.

be engaged in local, regional, and state social and economic development and growth.

GOALS, CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS, AND OBJECTIVES (Including Strategies and Assessment)

Goal 1: Access and Diversity. Recruit, retain, and graduate a larger and diverse student body.

Critical Success Factors

- Enrollment of 275 undergraduates.
- Enrollment of 35 graduate students
- Retention rate of 88%, based on students making 2.0 GPA or higher.
- Increase diversity in the department.

Objective 1.1: *Diversify faculty, staff, and student body.*

Strategies:

- Recruit from non-traditional (non-agricultural) students as well as traditional.
- Actively recruit minorities and females in faculty and staff recruitment.

Assessment:

- Data on the gender and racial/ethnic distribution of faculty, staff, and students, benchmarking on each Fall semester.

Objective 1.2: *Recruit and retain the best and brightest students, undergraduate and graduate.*

Strategies:

- Undergraduate student recruiting will focus more heavily on math, science, and computer high school students, as well as agriculture students, in cooperation with the CASNR efforts led by the Dean's Office.
- Graduate student recruiting will be done through professional meetings, advertisements, and developing closer ties with universities that have not traditionally served as sources of graduate students.
- Retention will continue to rely on a system of student advisement by faculty

Assessment:

- Data on student enrollments, undergraduate and graduate, and retention rates.

Goal 2: Academic Excellence. Attain national recognition as a top Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

Critical Success Factors

- Increase percentage of student involvement in study abroad programs and exchange programs with international institutions.
- Increased student involvement in internships.
- Departmental scholarships of \$35,000 and increased scholarship stipends.
- 40% of students on scholarship.
- Increased offerings of Honors courses.
- Publish the equivalent of 28 top-ranked journal articles per year, encompassing disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and inter-institutional research activities.
- Increased involvement of undergraduates in research.
- Establish an Agribusiness Research Center.
- Increase number of students minoring in AAEC.

Objective 2.1: *Enhance students knowledge of and preparation for dealing with global issues and environmental and other natural resource issues through increased involvement in internships and study abroad and exchange programs.*

Strategy:

- Make students aware of internships and foreign study prospects and more fully explain the educational advantages of these programs.

Assessment:

- Data in student participation in these programs will be compiled and evaluated on an annual basis.

Objective 2.2: *Increase offerings of Honors courses to give to undergraduates with identifiably superior academic abilities a more challenging and broader based education than they might otherwise receive.*

Strategy:

- Evaluate all AAEC course offerings for potential inclusion as Honors courses and make students aware of the Honors Program and the educational advantages of participation.

Assessment:

- Data on departmental students participating in the Honors Program and on the number of AAEC honors courses.

Objective 2.3: *Revisit and redesign, if necessary, our minor requirements for undergraduates.*

Strategies:

- Review the specified requirements for a minor in AAEC with the purpose of making elective of a minor more feasible within students' academic programs.
- Revisions will be advertised through other departments on campus.

Assessment:

- Data on numbers of minors in AAEC.

Objective 2.4: *Establish more scholarships and fellowships and raise stipends.*

Strategy:

- Work with the CASNR Development group to increase scholarship donations.

Assessment:

- Number of students receiving scholarships and stipends and on scholarship donations and endowments.
- Amount of scholarship donations and endowments

Objective 2.5: *Increase involvement of undergraduates in research.*

Strategies:

- Expand the opportunities for undergraduates on research projects and recruit more students into the "senior thesis" capstone program (AGSC 4300/AAEC 4301).
- Student research opportunities will be enhanced by establishing the Agribusiness Research Center.

Assessment:

- Number of students involved in research projects and of student enrollment in AGSC 4300 and AAEC 4301.

Objective 2.6: *Identify and build research programs on current and emerging issues.*

Strategies:

- Maintain our Cotton Economics Research program, for which we have achieved a national reputation as the center of excellence and enhance our programs and recognition in two other research areas – Livestock Economics and Water Resource Economics – and to develop relatively more internationally focused research across these subject-matter areas and establish an Agribusiness Research Center.

Assessment:

- Research growth in the identified areas.

Objective 2.7: *Expand research further into the marketing channels to include producers, processors, and users of food, fiber, and environmental amenities.*

Strategy:

- Initiate more research further into the market channel toward final consumers (e.g., more final consumer demand and industrial organization research) and more research in environmental economics. This objective coincides with the development of an Agribusiness Research Center.

Assessment:

- Research growth in the identified areas.

Objective 2.8: *Promote and support multidisciplinary and inter-institutional research.*

Strategies:

- Maintain a healthy component of disciplinary emphasis as “capital stock.”
- Expand the amount of this research only to the extent that our resource expansion may allow.

Assessment:

- AAEC Department Annual Research Report.

Objective 2.9: *Expand dissemination of research results.*

Strategy:

- Expand research dissemination through both traditional outlets (journal articles, professional presentations, chapters, etc.) and non-traditional outlets (web sites, electronic publication, etc.).

Assessment:

- AAEC Department Annual Research Report.

Goal 3: Engagement. Build community connections that enhance the quality of life for students and the community.

Critical Success Factors

- Increased number of workshops and symposia for professionals and more technical assistance for agribusiness growth and development.
- Establish an Agribusiness Research Center.
- Hire three additional faculty FTE

Objective 3.1: *Identify and build research activities contributing to sustainable economic growth and development.*

Strategies:

- Establish an Agribusiness Research Center that would facilitate research of faculty and students within the CASNR and other centers and institutes on campus directly contributing to agribusiness and local regional economic growth in providing technical and analytical assistance.
- Evaluate opportunities to contribute to economic growth and development.
- Monitor and report activities that contribute to regional economic development and monitor progress toward development of the Agribusiness Research Center which depends on available resources.
- Meeting objective 3.1 would achieve much of this objective as well.

Assessment:

- Number of research activities
- Monitor and report activities that contribute to regional economic development and monitor progress toward development of the Agribusiness Research Center, which depends on available resources.

Goal 4. Technology. Maximize the use of technology in the delivery of services.

Critical Success Factors

- Offer 4 courses through distance learning.
- Consider participation in the distance-based Master of Agriculture degree program and/or a distance-based Master of Agribusiness degree program for professionals.
- Hire two additional faculty FTE

Objective 4.1: *Enhance educational access to campus and off-campus students using appropriate educational delivery technology.*

Strategies:

- Upgrade classrooms for a multimedia environment.
- Initiate development of selected subject-matter materials for distance delivery that lend themselves to that format (4 courses); not all of the material of applied economics can be handled in a distance delivery format.
- Monitor and report development and application of distance delivery materials and other use of teaching technology.
- Number of multimedia classrooms.
- Number of courses.

Assessments:

- Number of multimedia classrooms
- Number of courses

Objective 4.2: *Provide specialized educational access for individuals interested in refining their skills through professional development and continuing education.*

Strategies:

- Provide short courses, conferences, and intersession courses as the needs arise.
- Initiate development of courses for a distance-based Master of Agriculture program and a possible distance-based Masters of Agribusiness program for professionals (possibly in collaboration with COBA and TAMU).
- Continue to explore the possibility of offering a 4-year degree program in professional golf management.

Assessment:

- Annual report.

Goal 5. Partnerships. Build strategic partnerships and alliances.

Critical Success Factors

- Establish 2 joint appointments with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.
- Establish partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

Objective 5.1: *Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with federal, state, and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry, and trade associations to identify and meet community needs.*

Strategy:

- Expand the types of groups we collaborate with into natural resource organizations, economic development groups, and international entities.

Assessment:

- Annual research reports.

Objective 5.2: *Establish educational partnerships and coordinate curricula with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.*

Strategies:

- Expand transfer students from several community colleges.
- Attempt to better formalize working relationships.
- Develop more formal ties with 4-year colleges as a means to better recruit graduate students.

Assessments:

- Number of formal agreements.

- Number of students.

Objective 5.3: *Establish increased research partnerships with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.*

Strategy:

- Strengthen the partnership with an additional joint faculty appointment with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in the field of natural resource economics.

Assessment:

- Annual assessment report.

Goal 6. Human Resources. Maintain a quality work force and work environment.

Critical Success Factors

- Increase the number of tenure track faculty by six and staff by four.
- Establish an accountability mechanism for faculty and staff productivity in outreach and university, public, and professional service.
- Achieve parity in salaries for faculty and staff as benchmarked against appropriate studies.

Objective 6.1: *Hire, promote, and retain excellent faculty and staff.*

Strategies:

- Increase the number of faculty and staff
- Achieve compensation for existing faculty and staff that is consistent with their high productivity and with those of our competing institutions.

Assessments:

- Number of faculty and staff.
- Salaries and salary changes relative to appropriate norms.

Objective 6.2: *Provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.*

Strategies:

- Additional faculty and staff positions will lessen the workloads across the department so that faculty development leaves, foreign work opportunities and staff development opportunities will become feasible.
- Faculty and staff will be encouraged to apply for available opportunities.

Assessments:

- Number of professional development activities.

Objective 6.3: *Develop procedures for extending workload credit and teaching/research productivity equivalency for outreach activities.*

Strategies:

- Develop and propose a model for indicators of productivity for service activities.
- Review and approve model for use in internal evaluation system.

Assessment:

- Have productivity model

Goal 7. Tradition and Pride. Establish a national image for the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

Critical Success Factors

- Departmental endowments of \$1.5 million.
- 2 endowed professorships.
- More awards nominations for faculty, staff, and students and more public information on accomplishments of departmental faculty, students, and programs.

Objective 7.1: *Increase endowments.*

Strategy:

- Work more intensively with the CASNR Development office to identify potential donors for scholarships, Professorships, and Chairs.

Assessment:

- Level of scholarship funding and endowments
- Additional professorships.

Objective 7.2: *Strengthen pride and prestige of the Department.*

Strategies:

- Embark on a program to promote our accomplishments within the campus community, the profession, and the citizenry at large.
- Seeking more awards for faculty and staff.
- Submit more information releases to the general public.
- Better communicate achievements within the academic community.

Assessments:

- Number of nominations and awards.
- Number of information releases.

Goal 8: Institutional Advancement and Accountability. Strengthen fiscal stability and public accountability.

Critical Success Factors

- \$670,000 annual research funding.

Objective 8.1: *Expand external research funding.*

Strategy:

- Generate general additional funding.

Assessment:

- Amount of research funding.

Objective 8.2: *Provide citizen understanding of food, fiber, natural resources and environmental topics to enhance public perception of the Department and the College.*

Strategy:

Assessment:

Note: This strategic plan represents achievable ambitions of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics that will be possible through focusing our efforts and availability of additional resources and facilities. To successfully implement this vision, the college and university must increase organizational and resource management flexibility and provide increased support to: 1) increase the number of tenure track faculty by 6 (from 11 to 17) and staff by 4 (from 3 to 7); 2) achieve parity in salaries for faculty and staff as benchmarked against appropriate studies; 3) construct, renovate, and modernize space to improve teaching and research environment; and 4) increase departmental operating budget (staff, travel, equipment, etc.).