

Introduction

This newsletter is designed to inform you about where the college is today, what we expect in the next year or so, and most importantly, how we are preparing for the future. In 1889, the College of Agriculture was the first college established at the University of Arizona as part of the requirement for the university to become a Land Grant institution. "Land Grant" reflects a unique federal status, central to our mission, whereby the federal government provided grants of land to the states to fund the establishment of universities focused on the "practical subjects"—agriculture, mining, engineering and others—as well as traditional academic programs. CALS, perhaps more than most educational institutions, continues to focus on the practical subjects that directly impact the lives of Arizonans every day.

Over the years CALS has been successful in driving and benefiting from continual change, both in its own structure and within the university, with programs and departments established, eliminated, or merged. Our name was changed to College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 2000 to reflect some of these new contributions. There have been good budget years and many that were difficult to manage. Our audiences, students' backgrounds and curricula, and the types of state and national problems or issues we address have changed. However, we continue to organize our formal efforts around three major areas: teaching, research, and extension.

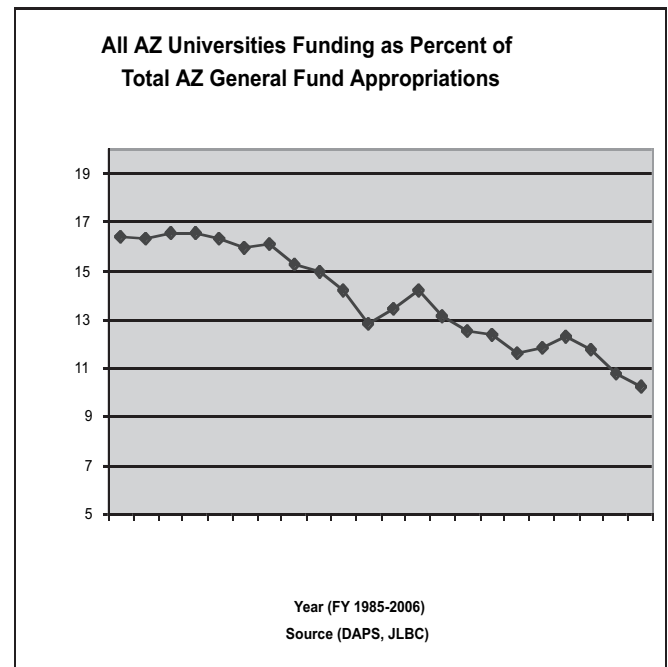
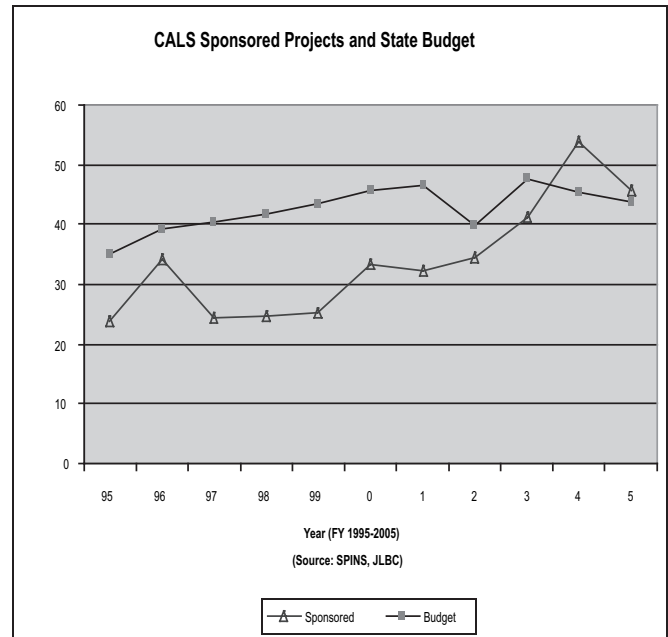
We all need to be aware of the importance of continual change and work together in navigating a particularly challenging future. We are entering what some have characterized as a "VUCA" world: volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. We cannot anticipate the future by simply projecting the past. These conditions demand a flexible, agile, innovative and responsive (or "FAIR") approach to problem-solving. We will define our focus areas based on successful, critical, demand-driven and practical subjects rather than simply using the names of departments or units. In addition, we plan to operate according to specific guidelines, performing continuing assessments while engaging our audiences and communicating widely, thus providing a framework for utilizing to our advantage the changes wrought in a volatile and uncertain world.

The sections that follow provide a snapshot of where we are today, list our focus areas and summarize the recently revised strategic plan that will guide us over the next five years. Further information is available from the website cited at the end.

College Snapshot

CALS is unique within The University of Arizona and also within Arizona's entire higher education system. We have varied disciplines, aggressive research initiatives, comprehensive teaching efforts, and a state-wide presence with Cooperative Extension and our strategically located agricultural centers. We also conduct a number of unique partnerships and cooperative efforts with non-university groups and we remain the only college whose original university Land Grant mission is still central to our own mission. The Land Grant mission is particularly relevant today for several reasons: 1) one of the University of Arizona's new goals is to "extend the concept of a land grant university across all colleges," 2) current discussions on the future role of universities often highlight how their missions have drifted and emphasize that universities need to get "back to basics" and 3) the Kellogg Commission (2000) has updated the Land Grant concept as "renewing the covenant: learning, discovery and engagement in a new age and a different world" where the focus must be entirely on the pressing educational, social, economic, scientific, and medical challenges of our times. This is what we do. We intend to aggressively continue building upon our Land Grant status in a way that is relevant for meeting 21st century needs and applying our knowledge.

During the last two years, CALS-sponsored research project awards have exceeded the state appropriated budget for the college. Our Plant Sciences department, for example, was the university's fourth-largest recipient of grants last year, and obtained a significant portion of the National Science Foundation's plant research budget. At the same time, the funding for Arizona universities by the state has continued to decline as a percent of the total state appropriations budget since the mid-1980s. This situation is not unique to colleges heavily engaged in research (most public universities face similar challenges), and reflects a national trend. State governments are making difficult choices among competing programs, and higher education is only one of these programs. It is therefore incumbent to balance, maintain and grow our sources of funding as we provide programs of value to Arizona citizens. The tables below illustrate these trends.



The college offers 30 degree programs through 12 on-campus academic units. CALS also runs 14 interdisciplinary centers or special facilities, 11 agricultural research centers or demonstration sites, and 22 Cooperative Extension offices in the 15 counties, including six offices on American Indian reservations. In fall 2005, off-campus employees (agricultural centers and county Cooperative Extension) included 21% of our employees (down from 24% in 1995). The portion of all employees who were designated as full-time has remained about the same for the last 10 years at 28-29%, and student employees are increasing (31% in 2005 compared to 26% in 1995). Full-time faculty represent 28% of full-time personnel, and full-time staff represent 54% of full-time personnel (27% of staff are part-time). Employment information in the tables below shows total numbers of employees (full plus part time, all locations, all funding sources). Graduate student employees are funded primarily through assistantships, and undergraduate students through part-time wages.

Employees by Category

	1995	2000	2005
Faculty	272	265	257
Academic Professionals	176	183	189
Classified Staff	645	689	670
Graduate Students	229	202	216
Undergrad Students	162	267	280
Total	1484	1606	1612
Total (without students)	1093	1137	1116

Employees by Location

	1995	2000	2005
Campus	739	768	786
Agricultural Centers	169	144	132
County Extension	185	225	198
Total	1093	1137	1116

Challenges Facing Our College

Our college is healthy and has a reputation across campus for serving our students well, for demonstrating high research productivity, for working with the people of the state to improve their well-being, and for being well-managed and fiscally responsible. Therefore, we are in a position of relative strength as we attempt to come out of several years of budget reductions and their resulting impacts on programs and people. We have critical new challenges to prepare for and we must maintain our position of strength. Some of these challenges are:

- **Resource Constraints** — The worrying but uncertain economic conditions over the next 10-15 years may result from a decreasing percentage of state revenues to higher education, increasing costs of entitlements (e.g., social security, Medicare/Medicaid), a growing federal deficit, possible decreasing federal grants and other supports for higher education, along with increasing competition for those funds.

- **Demographic Changes** — Estimates of the number of Arizona high school graduates indicate strong growth for multiple years, with a substantial increase in the percentage of Hispanic students. A recent Arizona Board of Regents report suggests that Arizona university enrollment may grow from 113,000 to 156,000 in the next ten years. Our extension and research audiences are also evolving, both in rural and urban settings, and our teaching programs must also continue to change. Thus we face changing audience demand, and dramatic potential growth in overall higher education demand that is more diverse at a time when resource constraints are becoming more pronounced.
- **Learning Styles and Places** — There are no longer only a few places for “teaching” to occur, such as classrooms or laboratories. Rather, “learning” takes place in many locations, including classrooms, learning centers, cafés, field exercises, informal gatherings, and the Internet, and in many ways, such as lectures, independent study, collaboration, gaming, simulations, and debates. Our Land Grant obligation extends not just to new learners, but to experienced learners facing rapid changes in their communities and industries. New learners grow up with new technology and have broader experience and demands arising from a variety of learning styles. We are in the transformational process of moving away from learning in one place using limited methods to learning in a variety of locations using diverse approaches. We are moving from a focus on the teacher (teaching) to a focus on the student or researcher (learning).
- **Significant Changes are Underway in Arizona Higher Education** — Examples include new applied research facilities being constructed by CALS at Red Rock, Yuma and the main campus; the Phoenix Biomedical Campus of the Arizona University System, jointly operated by ASU and UA; the ASU Downtown Campus (adjacent to the Biomedical Campus); the new BIO5 approach to interdisciplinary research on the UA campus (headed by one of our Plant Sciences faculty); and the transfer of the Arizona Regents University (now called AZUN, the Arizona Universities Network) to NAU for management and operation. The 2005 redesign study for the Arizona universities designated UA Tucson and ASU Tempe as the primary research universities in the state and addressed the main, expected student enrollment increases through growth at ASU West, ASU East, ASU Downtown, UA South, NAU, and the NAU 2+2 program (working with community colleges for lower division classes and NAU for upper division). The University of Arizona (Tucson)’s current enrollment of 37,000 is close to the main campus capacity of 40,000; the Regents plan is for additional enrollment to be addressed by The University of Arizona (South). In the future, CALS will also play a significant role in meeting these needs on a statewide basis.

How these challenges evolve is uncertain but just recognizing they will be of concern allows us to do a certain amount of preparation for whatever holds for the future.

Planning and Navigating Our Future

CALS made significant revisions to its strategic plan in spring 2005 (cals.arizona.edu/dean/planning) and developed new vision and mission statements.

Vision: To provide valuable learning experiences for our students and stimulate a richer and sustainable quality of life for people in Arizona, the nation, and the world.

Mission : To develop, integrate, extend, and apply knowledge.

The CALS revised strategic plan identifies future focus areas , and addresses our relationship to The University of Arizona’s strategic plan. With the collaboration of our stakeholders we reviewed the major driving forces of change and their implications for CALS, and identified some key assumptions that will guide our thinking about the future.

We will maintain many of our traditional programs but the focus must continue to change and evolve. Internal reallocation of resources will be an important financial tool in addition to funding by state appropriations and sponsored projects. We update a 10-year budget plan annually with the aid of our stakeholders as part of our ongoing effort to continually reevaluate our focus.

CALS focus is on six subject areas (most addressed by more than one administrative unit). These divisions reflect tangible, responsive and market-driven interdisciplinary academic service areas.

1. Environment, Water, Land, and Natural Resources
2. Plant Systems
3. Animal Systems
4. Family, Youth, and Community
5. Human Nutrition, Health and Food Safety
6. Marketing, Trade, and Economics

As noted in the introduction, the world around us is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous; the VUCA concept was initially identified by the military but it applies to our environment as well. Our flexible, agile, innovative, and responsive, or FAIR management approach requires that we use these guiding principles in making choices and apply quantitative methods for assessing progress, rather than simply bogging down in the disconnected or impractical goals or objectives often embraced in planning processes. The FAIR concept requires a capacity to act. Our goal is not simply to survive, but to serve consistent with the Land Grant mission and to compete effectively through leveraging change.

As an example of a flexible, innovative approach, we are asking some of our faculty to help accomplish our mission through applying their knowledge and abilities to changing needs rather than acting according to a preconceived notion of their job model contained in earlier, more limited position titles and descriptions. Most of our senior extension specialists now carry the equivalent professional title so they can guide graduate students and teach courses where they have special expertise. Similarly, many of our agents now serve several counties and multiple constituencies and in certain cases are also housed in our academic departments. Our faculty and staff are our primary operational assets, and are blurring the arbitrary historical lines between teaching, research and extension to deliver a more integrated product. We believe this approach represents the flexibility needed to respond to the needs of our students and our clients, in all parts of Arizona. Also, we recognize that our scientific advances, coupled with changes in our state’s environment, will affect the agenda for colleges like CALS, and we intend to use that fact to our advantage.

Managing our College

For more detailed information on all aspects of CALS governance structure and processes visit the CALS governance website at cals.arizona.edu/dean/governance. The site includes key best practices in governance for the university with annotations on CALS efforts; another section covers relevant policies from the Board of Regents and the university as well as the college policies.

CALS is one of the largest and most complex colleges at the university, and because of our land-grant status we have a more complex budgeting and evaluation process. Special evaluations of units (joint with USDA and the university) are conducted approximately every seven years, and other special evaluations or assessments are done either by USDA, accrediting agencies, or the college as requested by outside agencies. The budgeting process includes certain federal funds provided as a pass-through as part of our legislative budget.

The CALS primary governance structure is a five-member Executive Council (the Dean and Vice Provost; Vice Dean and Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station; Associate Dean for Academic Programs; Associate Dean for Cooperative Extension; and Associate Dean for Administrative Services), which covers the major administrative areas of the college. In addition, formal councils represent the major employee groups in the college (faculty, staff, appointed personnel, students), and there are administrative groups (county extension directors and campus department and unit administrators), and an overall Dean’s Advisory Council. All of these groups have the responsibility for reviewing appropriate information and providing feedback on a timely basis. They are also charged with the responsibility for raising issues with the Executive Council when concerns warrant.

Communication in CALS is accomplished through several channels. The CALS Weekly Bulletin, a collection of announcements and general college news, which can be submitted by any college member, is emailed to all employees. Copies of Executive Council weekly minutes are available by request to the Dean’s Office. The CALS Communications Team meets several times a year to address ways to improve communications. Employee councils meet periodically. Individual departments often share minutes of their faculty or staff meetings with members of the department. Cooperative Extension issues “Tuesday Morning Notes” to keep all those with extension appointments informed about happenings of special interest to them. Occasionally, where particularly important issues develop, opportunities are provided for feedback via an anonymous web form posted in the CALS Weekly Bulletin.

The governance website also provides details on college advisory councils for faculty, appointed personnel, staff, and students, and administrative councils. These include those for campus department heads and the county directors, plus the Executive Council, and the Administrative Council, which includes all the other councils. CALS provides online access to important employee information such as lists of committee purposes and memberships, employee awards and evaluations, professional development opportunities, diversity and equity activities, position searches, and unit annual reports and unit evaluations. Finally, the college has an Alumni council and a Dean’s Advisory Council composed of several college members and representatives of stakeholder groups. The college holds a Faculty/ Staff Luncheon in spring and fall that features program highlights of the year and an awards presentation; a Staff Development Day; a Faculty Annual Meeting, and an annual Administrative Council retreat.

The University of Arizona and Focused Excellence

Three major decisions by the University of Arizona will impact the college in the years ahead:

Focused excellence — Focused excellence is derived from several factors: how we teach, how we invest in our infrastructure, how we engage the public and interact with the private sector, and how well we address inclusiveness. It is an evolving process of concentrating on what we do well and on special situations as a way of investing our limited funds most effectively. Focused excellence is not a discipline or department, rather it is processes and activities. Therefore any new investments made in college units as a result of focused excellence are based on a combination of factors. These relevant factors are not yet completely defined by the university, but we intend to respond accordingly. To us, focused excellence implies delivering integrated teaching, research and extension programs in areas relevant to Arizona consistent with our Land Grant mission. CALS is uniquely equipped to do this.

Budget Reallocation — The University of Arizona announced in spring 2005 a new method for distributing the budget. Effective July 1, 2005, state and locally allocated fund accounts for all deans and vice presidential areas must be assessed 0.5% at the beginning of the fiscal year and moved to central accounts; this will be an annual activity. These centralized funds will be redistributed to units based on the criteria that define focused excellence (however these criteria are currently unspecified). This redistribution will not occur for the first several years so existing investments (and deficits) that require centrally allocated funds can be addressed. Units that do not engage in focused excellence activities will therefore see their funds slowly reduced on a continuing basis.

New Leadership — In July 2006 the university will have a new president. Further, although not a university decision, we will be guided by two new Regents beginning in January 2006. While changes always occur with new leadership, certain basic policies that have significant impacts on the colleges, like the two listed above, may come under reconsideration. Further information about the university plans for focused excellence, along with information on governance, financial bulletins and strategic planning can be found at president.arizona.edu.

Our Plans for the Future

We need to think about three basic questions:

- How does CALS respond to, or take advantage of, Arizona's anticipated population growth and the demand for university degrees,

- How does CALS leverage its unique structure and statewide, long-term relationships to enhance CALS status within The University of Arizona and the state as the provider of choice for relevant programs, and
- How does CALS sustain its important programs given the funding environment and changes taking place in Arizona's higher education activities?

Some preliminary conclusions to these questions were developed at the May 2005 administrative retreat which included all department heads, county directors, and a few others:

- Increase partnerships with others (including both on- and off-campus groups, including community colleges), and look for new ways to apply the great strength of our own faculty and staff.
- Enhance electronic or other new learning opportunities or models through partnering with community colleges, and through using extension and research sites for some of these learning opportunities.
- Increase attention to defining our relevance for our traditional supporters and urban audiences, and target high growth regions with relevant programs.

We need to communicate effectively with our employees and stakeholders about the importance of addressing the future differently than we have in the past. Our basic approach will be to:

- Recognize the need to respond to, create and leverage change in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world,
- Continue to integrate flexibility, agility, innovation and responsiveness into our decision culture,
- Use guiding principles and performance indicators to make decisions and assess results, and
- Communicate in appropriate ways with our employees and stakeholders, so everyone better understands the changes taking place and how we rise to meet them.

For further information

Copies of CALS Strategic Plans (long and short versions) and information on CALS planning, governance, and ways of managing change can be found at cals.arizona.edu/dean

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