

CAES Strategic Plan

TEAM 7: Communication. Team Members: John Beasley (co-chair), Ward Black (co-chair), Judy Ashley, Kris Braman, Menia Chester, Jeff Christie, Sharon Dowdy, Nancy Hinkle, Jason Peake, Angela Rowell, Clint Waltz, Faith Peppers

Goal 7: CAES will ensure understanding and appreciation of the value of our programs both within our organization and by the public

(Action Items are coded as LR – long-range; IA – immediate action; B - both.)

A: CAES Faculty and staff will have knowledge of initiatives in various program areas and will collaborate with personnel across CAES disciplines.

The faculty and staff of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences use a variety of methods to communicate both internally and externally.

Strategy 1: Review structure and function of current organizational communication process.

Overview of current structure and process:

The Communication Staff Structure

The units of communications, conferencing, and information technology were combined in 2010. The new, combined unit has renamed itself as the Office of Communications and Technology Services. Recently, conferencing services was moved to External Affairs. The remainder of OCTS handles all marketing, consultation, photo/video services, design, writing/editing, publications management, communications/technology training, accessibility assistance, distance learning assistance, desktop support, server hosting, web design/development, web conferencing and mobile application development for the college. There are currently 38 employees within the OCTS, 13 dedicated to communications, 22 to information technology/Web and 3 to administrative and business services. The director of OCTS reports to the Dean. Conferencing has moved to the Office of Advancement.

The director of public affairs is not housed as part of OCTS and reports directly to the Dean.

Communication Job Requests

The communication staff currently uses an online request system to manage all potential communication projects throughout the college. When requests are made, an email is sent to OCTS employees who enter the jobs into a project management system and assign them to the appropriate personnel. Currently this system is only used for the communications side of OCTS. The IT side uses a verbal system to take in jobs and assign them to the appropriate personnel.

Current Communication Practices within College:

Communication within the college takes places in a variety of methods. The most utilized methods are face-to-face meetings, e-mail newsletters and e-mail listservs.

The meetings that take place on annual basis are:

Internal: Administration & Departments

- Dean, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, and Department Heads (Weekly)
- Administrative Council: Dean, AD's, Unit Heads, Extension Administration (Monthly)

- Dean and Dept. Heads Breakfast (Quarterly)
- New Faculty Breakfasts with the Dean (Monthly)
- Associate Deans with Department Heads Only (Every Other Month)
- Ag and Applied Economics Department (Monthly)
- Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communication Department (Monthly)
- Animal and Dairy Science Department (Monthly)
- Crop and Soil Sciences Department – Newsletter: Every 6 months
- Entomology Department (Monthly)
- Food Science Department (Monthly)
- Horticulture Department – All Faculty (Quarterly), Griffin Only (Monthly), Tifton Only (Quarterly)
- Plant Pathology Department (Bi-annually)
- Poultry Science Department (Every Other Month)
- Dean's WIMBA Budget Updates (as needed)

Internal: Cooperative Extension

- District Extension Directors and Extension Administration (Monthly)
- Extension Program Development Coordinators (Quarterly)

External:

- CAES Advisory Council (Quarterly)
- CAES Alumni Board (Annually)
- 4-H Advisory Committee (Quarterly)
- 4-H Board of Trustees (Bi-Annually)

E-mail newsletters currently being distributed:

1. Angle's Update
2. Research
3. Extension

Listserves most utilized to reach broad audience:

- CAESFAC (CAES Faculty)
- CAESSTF (CAES Staff)
- EXTALL (All Extension County/District Faculty/Staff)

Other methods/vehicles of internal communication:

- CAES Intranet
- Newsletter updates
- Publication updates
- Messages from administrators
- Upcoming events
- CAES Website Home Page
 - Events section
 - Discover section

Action Items:

#1 (LR) - We propose external peer review of our communication processes, efficiency, function, and college brand awareness. A committee would be selected of individuals outside of the college, including communication staff at other colleges, universities and in industry across the country. CROSS-REFERENCE GOAL C1 BELOW. Benchmark 1: Select committee by November 2013. Benchmark 2: Committee to complete evaluation by November 2014. Benchmark 3: Act on committee recommendations by July 2015.

Suggestions for committee members:

- Kansas State College of Agriculture
- Cal Poly College of Agriculture
- UGA or other Law schools
- UF IFAS communication staff

Strategy 2: Identify barriers to and solutions for improvement of communication process

Barriers:

- Lack of departmental information sharing
- Unclear hierarchy in structure of communications personnel
- No clear message from administration; communication comes in pieces from different high-ups but not as a consistent, single message
- Lack of adequate distance communication infrastructure and support

Action Items:

#1 (IA) To diminish current barriers and to avoid future obstacles, we propose that department heads share individual departmental recruitment, research and extension efforts/programs/etc. with Associate Deans in bi-monthly meetings in an effort to increase consistency in departmental messaging (i.e. departments will share what works/doesn't work so other departments can do/avoid similar efforts). Benchmarks: July 2013 and continuing.

If external review is not implemented:

#2 (LR) OCTS will be restructured and would recommend a new hire, a project manager, who will traffic ALL incoming communication requests. Project manager would be a part of the business services personnel who provide support to both the IT and communications groups. This would allow for one "go-to" for CAES clients when requesting OCTS services. This project manager would frequently consult with Associate Directors of IT and Communications to manage, assign and budget projects. Benchmark: July 1, 2013 hire.

#3 (LR) Restructure OCTS to divide IT and communications personnel under an Associate Director of IT and Associate Director of Communications, both answering to the Director of OCTS.

Associate directors would then be primarily responsible for managing their staff vs. managing staff AND project managing for clientele. Benchmark: July 1, 2013.

#4 (IA) A consistent, periodical, internal e-newsletter should be implemented from the Dean with additional information from Extension, research, academics and support units, vs. the individual efforts currently in place. This would give ONE solid message that would give personnel insight into all aspects of CAES. This e-newsletter could give links to more honed-down newsletters from individual groups if desired, but would serve as ONE message from the administration. Benchmark: July, 2013.

#5 (LR) - We propose dedication of one employee to distance communication infrastructure and support. Benchmark: Jan 2014.

#6 (LR) Increase capacity to deliver programs- cross-reference undergrad instruction. Benchmark: July 2014.

#7 (LR) Improve county office facilities to allow participation in online meeting/conferencing options. Benchmark: July 2014.

Strategy 3: Increase interaction and information sharing among campus, departments, and across all units

We think that both increased sharing at AD meetings and a monthly newsletter will encourage interaction, but we also propose:

Action Items:

#1 (LR) Start the communication process with new CAES hires. This would include:

- #1a An "introduction to CAES" conference every 6 months. This 2-3 day orientation could include all new CAES hires within the 6 month period and would be coordinated between UGA HR, CAES HR, Dean's office, and Ag Leadership to accomplish goals. Benchmark: Winter School 2014- and/or Foundations Trainings- March/August

#1b A 1-year employee mentorship program with new hires and employees with 5 years or more of service. Benchmark: July 2013.

B: UGA faculty, staff, and students will understand and value CAES programs.

Strategy 1: Increase the conspicuousness of CAES in university functions and programs

Action Items:

The college currently has a presence at several campus-wide events, including 4-H Day at the UGA Football game, Insectival, and others. To further evaluate potential visibility of CAES across campus, we propose:

#1 (IA) Investigate list of UGA events currently without CAES promotion and add to marketing efforts. Benchmark: July 2013.

#2 (IA) Develop a promotion plan for CAES events within UGA community. Examples: D.W. Brooks Lecture, Woodruff Lecture. Benchmark: July 2013.

#3 (B) There is an association of all communication personnel across campus. The CAES communication office will increase participation in this group and with other communication offices across campus. Benchmark: July 2013.

Strategy 2: Increase the visibility of CAES in university press and media publications

Printed publications:

- There are several UGA publications that feature CAES personnel and programs on a regular basis:
- UGA Columns (Weekly): produced by the University of Georgia Office of Public Affairs, this shares information between units & college across campuses.
- Georgia Magazine (Quarterly): The Georgia Magazine is an external publication featuring highlights of UGA faculty, staff, and alumni to UGA stakeholders.
- Research Magazine (Quarterly): Vice President for Research publication to UGA stakeholders
- The editors of these publications share the printed space among all UGA units. We have information about CAES printed on a regular basis. Our proposed action item is to:

Action Items:

#1 (B) Maintain current information sharing across campus for printed media.

Digital Signage:

- Currently, CAES programs and announcements are promoted in Conner, Four Towers, and other CAES buildings in Tifton and Griffin campus. We propose:

Action Items:

#2 (IA) Increase CAES promotion in digital signage across campus (Tate Center, Miller Center, etc.) Benchmark: July 2013.

#3 (LR) increase number of digital signs at outlying campuses. Benchmark: July 2014

Strategy 3: Increase collaborative projects between CAES and other colleges and units at UGA

CAES faculty and staff collaborate with non-CAES faculty and staff with many projects. Current projects include:

- AGL with Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
- Study abroad: Non-CAES students enroll in our programs
- Vet School: FAVIP program, teaching programs
- Pre-professional undergraduate programs: Law, Medical, Vet
- All CAES Extension and Research personnel are continually encouraged to collaborate with non-CAES UGA faculty

Action Items:

#1 (IA) Develop a list of current collaborative research projects conducted by CAES & non-CAES faculty. Benchmark: July 2013

#2 (IA) Develop a list of development programs to CAES faculty and staff which will encourage collaboration (ex: teaching seminars). This list will be shared with CAES faculty and staff on a regular basis. Benchmark: July 2013

#3 (B) Provide new faculty with a list of potential research collaborators across campus. Benchmark: July 2013

#4 (B) Facilitate conferences/working groups. Benchmark: July 2013

C. Decision makers and the general public recognize and understand the value and impact of CAES programs to the people, state, nation and the world.

Strategy 1: Explore retaining an outside firm to develop and implement a public relations and marketing campaign for CAES.

Action Items:

#1 (LR) - We propose external peer review of our communication processes, efficiency, function, and college brand awareness. A committee would be selected of individuals outside of the college, including communication staff at other colleges, universities and in industry across the country. CROSS-REFERENCE GOAL C1 BELOW. Benchmark 1: Select committee by November 2013. Benchmark 2: Committee to complete evaluation by November 2014. Benchmark 3: Act on committee recommendations by July 2015.

Suggestions for committee members:

- Kansas State College of Agriculture
- Cal Poly College of Agriculture
- UGA or other Law schools
- UF IFAS communication staff

Strategy 2: Inform and reach out to groups unfamiliar with the depth and breadth of CAES (urban populations, underserved groups, etc.)

Current known tools to reach non-traditional audiences:

- Georgia FACES news service, the college's daily online news service has public and media subscribers. Traditional media stories help build awareness among media consumers who may not be traditional users of CAES programs.
- CAES websites help reach consumers looking for specific information on college degree programs, Extension educational publications and other valuable targeted information such as urban ag, certification programs, Georgia weather, eXtension, etc.
- Social media efforts are multipronged and multichannel – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr. We have social media sites geared toward college alumni, students, Extension publication users, Extension, Master Gardeners and viewers of the CAES TV production Your Southern Garden.

- Campus media do a good job covering CAES. We have annual faculty and staff profiles as well as numerous stories in Columns; Grady News Source, the campus TV station, has two reporters assigned to cover the college and they do stories weekly, sometimes more; the Red & Black frequently covers our college and often employs AG comm. students; UGA News Service does an excellent job helping promote our college stories to national media.
- Your Southern Garden is a regional TV gardening show hosted by Walter Reeves, produced by CAES in cooperation with Clemson Extension, IFAS Extension and Alabama Cooperative Extension. The show airs in markets from Kentucky to Florida, SC to Louisiana. This regional effort helps promote our colleges in our home states, but also the notion that colleges of AG, experiment stations and extension are part of a national system of land-grant universities. The show also has a website and social media channels that direct viewers to county extension offices, publications and our colleges. Walter also uses local Atlanta agents to fill in on his WSB radio garden show on Saturday mornings when he is out and has a Master Gardener who works on the show to help screen questions. It's excellent promotion for Master Gardeners.
- Events and exhibits are often held in nontraditional locations to build awareness. Examples are found in county plan of work and CAES impact statements. Urban Ag has a program of point-of-purchase Q Code tags to give information to consumers buying plants at garden centers.
- Extended Campus/R&E Centers/4-H Centers promotions and community events help build awareness in local communities of our resources in their community and what CAES brings to their community.
- K-12 Schools – CAES works closely with K-12 education in many ways including the liaison position to the schools, agent support for in-classroom science education and a wide variety of free curriculum support for environmental education.
- Farmers Markets are becoming a major touch point for nontraditional audiences. Having extension/college booths and faculty on hand to promote other programs, distribute information, etc., helps us reach this growing audience of consumers.

Action Items:

#1 (B) Develop an evaluation tool to identify audiences outside our current College "family." Determine how we use known venues that reach non-traditional audiences in the inventory to connect CAES to that audience. Identify other potential venues to reach the audience.
 Benchmark 1: Investigate and select a way to conduct the evaluation. November 2013.
 Benchmark 2: Complete evaluation and report the data to administration. July 2014.

#2 (B) Focus on non-traditional events/audiences (i.e. the Pizza Farm; exhibits at events that fit our mission but we don't traditionally participate in.) Adequately fund, market, implement and evaluate these efforts to ensure success. Prioritize list of targeted audiences and opportunities to share CAES story (Ex: Teaching program promotion at front door of Tifton Mall). Benchmark: Using data gathered in Item #1, select appropriate venues/events to receive funding and marketing support. December 2014.

- #2a (IA) - Create a departmental listing of efforts to reach non-traditional audiences and create an inventory. Include in the inventory international activities and support to developing countries. Benchmark: Complete inventory. July 2013.
- #2b (IA) - Create and post 10 message points for faculty to use when talking to public groups. Supplement with other visual tools. Focus on the value of CAES to Georgia. Benchmark: Post on appropriate sites. June 2013.

#3 (LR) - Focus on a campaign to create local advocates and to educate urban and newly elected legislators. Work with county advisory boards, Dean's advisory council and others to prepare local advocate programs. Work with Carl Vinson Institute to reach newly elected state officials. Benchmark: July 2013.

- #3a (IA) Share a list of Advisory Council presentations to local civic organizations so faculty can find opportunities that don't overlap to make presentations to civic groups. Benchmark: Currently available to post along with a list of council members willing to speak to local groups, COMPLETE.
- #3b (B) Find opportunities for identified 4-Hers to speak to local groups and legislators. For example, State 4-H Project Winners could present at state meetings of AG-related trade organizations within Georgia (Ex: Entomology project winner at Georgia Pest Control Association annual meeting). Expectation communicated to 4-Hers via state and district level staff. Benchmark: Create list based on State 4-H Project winners. Sept 2013.
- #3c (IA) Increase distribution of strong stories about 4-Hers as leaders to a broader audience and in more public venues to get attention of non-traditional audiences. Benchmark: Sept 2013.
- #3d (B) Encourage faculty members to always identify themselves in media, public address, etc., as being with the University of Georgia. (Often faculty will just say 'Georgia' and people assume the state not the university.) Benchmark: Include in an Angle's Update or Extension/Research e-newsletter. June 2013.

#4 (IA) Improve signage at R&E/branch stations. Make the signs bigger so people can see them from the road to better highlight the UGA connection with proper colors to match UGA identity. Extension will be going through a rebranding this year in preparation for the anniversary next year. Benchmark: Dec 2013.

#5 (LR) Explore and encourage innovative tools and techniques to reach new audiences and age brackets (e.g, "smart-tagging, QR Codes, YouTube, targeted newsletters (internal and external). Benchmark: Determine funds available based on FY14 budget released. July 2013.

- #5a (B) Encourage department heads to support innovation and communication. Reward the faculty for innovation in communication efforts. Benchmark: Develop an inventory of tools currently in use July 2013. Benchmark: Based on other evaluation data gathered, identify other venues for tools and techniques. Oct 2013.
- #5b (LR) Create a catalog of good local tools that can be used or provide ideas to other faculty for tools they can create to communicate with non-traditional audiences. Benchmark: Develop criteria for choosing winners and recognize college communication innovators at respective employee recognition programs. Dec 2013 and ongoing.

#6 (LR) Develop broader ways to identify and quantify impact beyond the direct recipient of a research, teaching or outreach program. Training currently offered through online college training. National training is set to be offered early in 2014. Benchmark: Provide training face-to-face. Sept 2013.

Strategy 3: Deliver a consistent message

Action Items:

#1 (LR) Focus on follow through by teaching faculty how to use available tools and ideas to push that information out. Benchmark: July 2013.

#2 (B) Provide more training and more accountability that training lessons learned are implemented.

- #2a (B) Give faculty more time for training and exploration. More communication training needed for all faculty, not just county agents and Extension specialists. Benchmark: July 2013.
- #2b (B) Reward the faculty for training and implementation activities. Benchmark: July 2013.

#3 (B) Inventory current people and skills available in the Communication staff. Examine what is needed and fair compensation for those positions to allow us to maintain critical people in those positions. Make full use of the skills to broaden the abilities of all faculty and improve our total communication capacity. Implement a department-wide audit of positions and salaries via UGA HR. Benchmark 1: Initiate review. Nov 2013. Benchmark 2: Complete review in preparation for external review. July 2014.

#4 (B) Strategically target effective communication efforts that will have a positive impact on the college's future. As a result of this process, build on effective strategies. What have we done that has been successful??? Identify the successful strategies and focus on those tools and techniques. Benchmarks: Survey and identify ways that clientele connect with the College. March 2014.

Action Items – Cost:

A1#1: External peer review of our communication process, efficiency, function and college brand awareness.

A2#2,3: OCTS restructured and hire of a project manager.

A3#1a: Intro to CAES new hire conference – every 6 months.

B1#2: Development of a promotion plan for CAES events within UGA community.

B2#3: Increase of CAES digital signage across campuses.

C1#1: External peer review of our communication process, efficiency, function and college brand awareness.

C2#1: Develop an evaluation tool to identify audiences outside our current College “family.

C3#1: Focus on follow through, teaching faculty to use available tools and ideas to push information out to audiences.

C3#3: Inventory people and skills available in communication staff to determine critical people and positions. Implement departmental audit.

Action Items – No Cost:

A2#1: Department heads will share recruitment, research, teaching and extension efforts with Associate Deans in bi-monthly meetings.

A2#4: Consistent and periodical internal e-newsletters from the Dean.

A2#5: Dedicate one employee to distance communication.

A2#6: Increase capacity to deliver distance learning.

A2#7: Improve county office facilities for online meeting.

A3#1b: Employee mentorship program.

B1#1: Investigate list of UGA events currently without CAES promotion and add them to marketing efforts.

B1#3: CAES communication office should increase participation with other communication offices across campuses.

B2#2: Increase CAES promotion via digital signage across campus.

B3#1: Develop a list of current collaborative research projects conducted by CAES and non-CAES faculty.

B3#2: Develop a list of development programs to CAES faculty and staff, which will encourage collaboration.

B3#3: Provide new faculty with a list of potential research collaborators across campus.

B3#4: Facilitate conferences/working groups.

C2#2: Focus on non-traditional venues/audiences.

C2#3: Focus on campaign to education legislators.

C2#3a: Share a list of Advisory Council presentations to local civic organizations so faculty can find opportunities to present to civic groups.

C2#3b: Find opportunities for 4-Hers to speak in local groups.

C2#3c: Increase distribution of strong stories about 4-H to broader audiences to reach non-traditional audiences.

C2#3d: Encourage faculty members to identify themselves in media, public addresses, etc as being with the University of Georgia, as opposed to simply "Georgia".

C2#5: Explore and encourage innovative tools and techniques to reach new audiences and age brackets.

C2#5a: Encourage department heads to support innovation and communication. Reward them for innovation in communication efforts.

C2#5b: Create a catalog of good local tools that can be used or provide ideas for tools that can be created to communicate with non-traditional audiences.

C2#6: Provide training for identifying and quantifying impact.

C3#2: Provide more training and accountability for implementing lessons learned.

C3#2a: Give faculty more time for training and exploration.

C3#2b: Reward faculty for training and implementation activities.

C3#4: Strategically target effective communication efforts that will have a positive impact on the college's future.

Action Items – Completed:

C3#3a: Share a list of Advisory Council presentations to local civic organizations so faculty can find opportunities that don't overlap to make presentations to civic groups.