

# The College of Agricultural Sciences and Southern at 150-A Vision Statement

## College Background

The College of Agricultural Sciences is one of the oldest units at SIUC with its roots established in 1879. The COAS was established as a department in 1908 and the current Agricultural Research and Education Laboratories (AREL) were initiated as university farms in 1910. The main building of the COAS was constructed in 1955 when the unit was established as a school. Today the COAS serves over 1,000 students and has consistently ranked in the top three of SIUC's sponsored research units. The college has had a long history of leadership in rural and community development outreach programs. The SIUC COAS is one of only seven non-land-grant colleges of agriculture within NASULGC (National Association of State Universities and Land-grant Colleges). The COAS currently ranks first in research among AASCU institutions and fifth in student enrollment. As a NASULGC type college, the COAS administers a variety of programs and engages in cooperative efforts with the University of Illinois, and federal and state governments and agencies.

## Vision

To be a leader in providing and stimulating a richer quality of life for people in Southern Illinois, the State of Illinois, the Delta Region, the nation, and the world. The goal of the college within the focus of **Southern at 150** is to achieve excellence in its selected programs and activities. Excellence will be accomplished through continual assessments and by teamwork and integration of functions and disciplines within each of the four main areas of the college: Academic Programs, Research, formal Outreach, and International programs. Each of these functions will focus on development of a strategic plan with several specific goals.

## Mission and Values

To improve the quality of Southern Illinois and Delta Region life through teaching, exploration, and discovery to enhance agriculture, the environment, our natural resource base, family and youth well being, and the development of local communities. We accomplish this mission by development, integration, dissemination, and application of knowledge in the agricultural sciences. The COAS addresses Southern Illinois and Delta Region needs in the following areas:

- Forestry and Natural Resources
- Rural development, agricultural education, and community development
- Human nutrition, health and food safety
- Hospitality, tourism and agritourism
- Marketing, trade, economics, and international study
- Animal Systems
- Plant Systems
- Biotechnology, biomedicine, and systems technologies

The COAS values, scholarship, creativity, integrity, cooperation, diversity, mutual respect and a healthy work environment.

### Context

The planning context considers the following broad societal, environmental, economic, and technological changes and their implication in Southern Illinois:

- Illinois producers will need to provide more finished and value-added products rather than commodities as the world food system restructures.
- As the number of large farms and numbers of small farms increase, there will be greater needs in the region for education and research in alternative crops, products, and alternative animal products.
- Global economic changes will drive the marketing of Illinois products.
- Environmental, land use, and water issues are key to Southern Illinois. SIUC's strategic location in the Delta Regional Authority is paramount and will greatly impact the need for research and outreach delivery. Quality of "airsheds", urbanization and land development will continue to encroach on agricultural lands.
- Developing regions of the world will continue to view SIUC COAS as a major resource of information and advisement.
- Concerns regarding food safety and bioterrorism will continue.
- A growing desire for more recreation, tourism, and travel venues in the Delta Region
- Modifications will be required in curricula, degrees and programs to respond to changes in employer sources and societal needs.
- Future farm bills will impact education, research, and world trade.
- Biotechnology is controversial, yet most likely, will greatly impact modern agriculture
- The new distance delivery technologies will dramatically change information distribution. There will be more competitive on and off campus programs.
- Budgetary constraints will continue to challenge educational delivery and research programs.
- The obligation to provide life-long learning will increase.
- Rural communities will struggle to provide adequate support for families to maintain the small family farm culture and the demand from urban cultures will continue to increase.
- There will continue to be a growing demand for "new traditional" programs such as nutrition, human health, bioterrorism control, food safety, agribusiness, e-commerce, agritourism, aquaculture, etc.

### Challenges

The agricultural sciences are highly technological. The greatest challenge is to keep pace in attaining the scientific equipment and high technology laboratories needed for quality teaching and research. This equipment has a turnover rate of 1.4 years and is very expensive. Closely coupled to this point is the need for updating and renovating the older facilities housed by the COAS unit. There currently is a severe shortage of quality square footage. Great strides need to be made in planning, funding, and research support in order to remain on pace with our NASULGC peers.

The clientele of Southern Illinois have come to expect a high level of leadership and off-campus program delivery from the COAS. Maintaining these outreach programs with rising costs of delivery is a big challenge. The COAS has limited faculty manpower

to cover the increasing demand for off-campus programs and still deliver high quality on-campus teaching and research.

Recruitment and retention of quality faculty and staff that can balance and excel in the triad of teaching, research and outreach will remain a challenge. In the past decade the COAS has managed to make great strides by hiring over 90% of its faculty with terminal degrees from AAU top 20 institutions. The limited market place continues to drive both the starting hiring salaries and faculty research start-up costs above the reach of SIUC. The closely associated issue is undergraduate and graduate recruitment. While the college has the faculty capacity to deliver top educational programs, it does lack the resources for the most effective student recruitment plan.

Another key challenge is to refocus sponsored and non-sponsored research priorities to: fit the new SIUC mission, fit the state needs, and gain national competitiveness. Key decisions in the next five years will greatly determined the longer term future bench mark of 2019.

Finally, the underlying greatest challenge is for SIUC and the COAS to establish a reliable, effective capital campaign structure to support the financial needs of the college.

### Priorities

The college has cited and ranked many priorities in its 1996 and 1999 strategic plans. The following are some of the top priorities allowing accomplishment of the Southern at 150 missions and goals:

#### Programmatic-

1. Continue expansion of Forestry and Natural Resource programs to attain top 10 ranking
2. Continue expansion of plant and animal biotechnology programs and facilities
3. Expand sponsored research programs to \$ 10 M
4. Continue expansion and achieve accreditation for the Agricultural Systems Technology program
5. Continue and expand the Delta Regional Authority programs to \$ 1M per year
6. Modify curricula to reach more “new traditional” programs- Landscape contracting, expansion of MS degree offerings, and add more capstone programs with community colleges
7. Add a new Ph. D. program in Agricultural Sciences
8. Expand outreach programs to community colleges in Chicago, Metro East, and Effingham

#### Capital-

1. Renovation of Agriculture Building
2. Addition of new research building
3. Renovations of AREL facilities
4. Addition of new Agricultural Technology facility
5. New facilities for Nutrition and Dietetics programs
6. Addition and renovation of greenhouse facilities

### Summary

The COAS is expected to be a major cooperator in bringing the *Southern at 150* visions to fruition.