

on the move

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North Carolina A&T State University
School of Agriculture and
Environmental Sciences
Newsletter

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Planning Our Preferred Future

The SAES Strategic Plan is ready — ready for unveiling, ready to be read and ready to be passed along to anyone interested in what the future holds for the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. Most importantly, the plan is ready to go to work.

“It’s a document with a shared vision, filled with promise and opportunity,” said Dr. Alton Thompson, SAES dean.

The vision is ambitious and comprehensive; extending from SAES academic programs, research, and Extension to its facilities and human resources.

It’s also a working document that is a starting point for faculty and staff in planning their work.

“We’ve got to be proactive on issues that are affecting us,” Dean Thompson says. “If we don’t step

picture are theirs to paint. The Strategic Plan is straightforward and easy to understand; not a complex academic document. The SAES team that worked for more than a year to put the plan together also realized early on that a user-friendly resource is one that doesn’t get bogged down in details and specifics.

The Strategic Plan is fully integrated into the University’s FUTURES initiatives, the Division of Research’s eight “core research clusters,” and the SAES’s own six program initiatives. The program initiative teams played an important role in shaping the document.

The Strategic Plan is flexible and set up to be responsive to the individual concerns of SAES faculty and staff. The

SAES task force responsible for bringing the new Strategic Plan to life looked closely at long-range plans that had proven successful at schools of agriculture at other land-grant institutions, and flexibility was one of the keys to success.

The SAES Strategic Plan has already been reviewed by The Cooperative Extension Program’s Strategic Planning Council and other stakeholders, and by some of our agribusiness partners. It was refined in places to reflect

their reactions and concerns.

“It’s going to be a new communications channel between the SAES and our partners and stakeholders,” said Thompson. “Partners and stakeholders will be able to see quickly what the SAES is, and where it’s going. They will be able to determine where our land-grant mission fits in with their needs and goals. It’s also going to be a communications channel that gives the SAES a way to hear of emerging issues we can address.”

The new Strategic Plan has a dual-faceted leadership function. Its job is to lead the SAES through what is shaping up to be a period of growth and expanded engagement. To accomplish this, the plan must push the envelope in some areas. Technology is one area where the push is on.

“Our faculty, staff and students have to work inter-disciplinarily,” said Thompson. “The increased use of innovative technologies brings with it a need to increase our own skills.”

The Strategic Plan is also going to have a leadership role for the entire University in food, agricultural, family and environmental systems. “It expands our participation in learning, discovery and engagement,” said Thompson.

The Strategic Plan will be forever ready for adjustments and improvements. It is going to be subject to an intensive annual evaluation, and progress towards realizing goals will be assessed, along with the continued viability of the goals themselves.

Dr. T’s Moment

This is a special issue that looks in-depth at the SAES Strategic Plan. We worked all of last year to create a document that moves the SAES toward our preferred future. I want to say now as I’ve said all along that this isn’t a bookend or a dust catcher or even an ego booster. This is a blueprint. This is what we will use in SAES to determine where we go and how we get there, and a guide that will be used by the University as it looks for direction for the food, agricultural, family and environmental sciences.

I’m making a copy of the plan available to all faculty and staff and other interested parties. Faculty and staff in particular should use this guidebook as they look for how they can help make SAES successful. For example, if you are looking at where to do research, then the direction is in the plan. If you are in Cooperative Extension and designing programs, just what you should be accomplishing is in the plan. If you are teaching, then the direction for new programs and where to guide existing programs is in the plan.

If you are a friend or supporter, what you can do to help us is in the plan.

In other words, it’s all there. We can fill in the specific route of the journey as we take this trip. But the destination is clear for all of us. It’s called the SAES Strategic Plan. It’s our map for the future.

Now, let’s get *on the move*.

— Dr. Alton Thompson
Dean, SAES



Dr. Willie Willis works with students who may someday be part of North Carolina’s \$60 billion agribusiness economy.

up and chart our own course, it will be mapped out for us.”

As a working document, the Strategic Plan will be online and available 24/7 when faculty and staff are wondering how their work fits in with SAES objectives, or what pieces of the big

Eleven themes form the matrix for the SAES Strategic Plan:

Theme 1: Maintaining a Responsive Learning Environment

Learning is what the University is all about. Consistent and effective learning takes place only in a nurturing, supportive and responsive environment. The SAES must continue to take those necessary steps to build a foundation for learning so that teaching, research, Extension, creative activity and service will flourish. The SAES must provide interdisciplinary learning experiences to our students by offering high quality programs to make them competitive in the global job market, and to instill good citizenship that embodies work ethic and perseverance.

Goal 1: Produce graduates who are competent, prepared to perform in the workplace and prepared to become outstanding leaders in an increasingly diverse society

Goal 2: Enhance an academic culture that is challenging, supportive and fosters achievement and intellectual interaction.

diverse backgrounds and equip them with the knowledge and skills appropriate for multiple career paths and demands to meet the challenges of the future.

Goal 1: Develop and implement innovative strategies to recruit outstanding students

Goal 2: Increase graduation and retention rates

Theme 3: Improving Minority and Environmental Health

Goal 1: Enhance the health and well-being of people - particularly minorities- and the environment in which they live

Goal 2: Establish and enhance partnerships to promote minority health

Goal 3: Provide educational opportunities in minority health and environmental health

Theme 4: Ensuring a Nutritious, Safe and Secure Food Supply

Nutrition-related health problems (obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and nutritional deficiencies) are major public health concerns at the local, state and national levels. Obesity has reached epidemic proportions and remains the leading cause of preventable diseases including diet-related diabetes, heart disease, osteoarthritis, cancer and hypertension. In addition, foodborne illnesses affect thousands of consumers annually and represent a significant public health problem. SAES must help the state's residents produce and consume safe and nutritious foods,

adopt healthy eating habits, and safeguard the food supply.

Goal 1: Enhance educational opportunities in nutrition-related health issues

Goal 2: Expand research and strengthen Extension programs in nutrition-related health issues

Goal 3: Expand innovative research, education and outreach efforts in food safety and security

Theme 5: Empowering Individuals, Families and Communities

Empowering individuals, families and communities involves increasing the knowledge and the skill base, and developing behaviors to address these daily quality of life issues. These issues relate to financial management, parenting and child development, aging, health, adequate nutrition, leadership development, personal safety, and changing employment prospects. It also involves the strengthening of the community infrastructure including housing and effective leadership.

Goal 1: Strengthen the economic, social and physical well-being of individuals and families through educational programs

Goal 2: Improve the capacity of communities to address critical issues through programs in leadership development and civic engagement

Goal 3: Stimulate entrepreneurship and economic development in rural communities

Theme 6: Advancing Biotechnology and Biodiversity

North Carolina's roadmap for biotechnology and biodiversity - New Jobs Across North Carolina: A Strategic Plan for Growing the Economy Statewide Through Biotechnology - shows that the state's biotechnology industry is among the nation's five largest with more than 180 companies employing 21,000 people and generating \$4 billion in annual revenues. The SAES has unique resources and expertise to provide education, to address basic scientific research issues and can help position the state to gain the economic and social benefits from biotechnology and biodiversity.

Goal 1: Strengthen research competitiveness in biotechnology and biodiversity

Goal 2: Provide new educational experiences in biotechnology and biodiversity

Goal 3: Enhance outreach activity in biotechnology and biodiversity

Goal 4: Develop a plan for campus program centers of excellence for biotechnology and biodiversity

Theme 7: Ensuring the Viability of Small Scale Agriculture

More than 90 percent of the farms in North Carolina are small (grossing less than \$250,000 annually). Surviving as a small farmer comes with many perils. These risks include marketing, risk management, profitability, and technical knowledge, changes in public policy, technology advances, and accessing resources. Also adversely affecting small farm viability is the length and segmentation of the production processes and the forces of nature that affect short-term supply in the face of relatively constant demand. In-depth knowledge of, and research on, this population and issues they face are central to SAES.

Goal 1: Enhance the sustainability and profitability of small-scale agriculture

Goal 2: Develop alternative marketing channels for small-scale producers

Goal 3: Assist farmers and small scale landowners in managing assets, farm income, land, people and other resources

Theme 8: Protecting the Environment and Natural Resources

Beyond growing crops and producing food, agriculture also means conserving scarce natural resources and preserving the environment. Farmers and citizens of North Carolina are faced with issues like ground- and surface-water contamination, soil erosion, declining soil quality, and environmental degradation. The SAES must respond to the need of developing profitable agricultural systems that protect the environment, conserve the state's natural resources, develop new ways to harness the state's renewable resources, and enhance our rural communities.

Goal 1: Expand soil and water quality research and outreach.

Goal 2: Enhance SAES instructional, research and Extension programs to embrace the new partnership with USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Goal 3: Develop a renewable energy and bioproducts center

Theme 9: Promoting International Trade and Economic Development

International trade is increasingly important for the agricultural and food sectors. In recent years, agricultural exports and imports have each represented about 12 percent of our national income or gross national product. The inherent opportunities provided by the recent wave of globalization present major important opportunities to harness the collective skills of SAES faculty in mitigating international development challenges in agriculture and related disciplines such as forestry, engineering, veterinary medicine, health and applied education.

Goal 1: Prepare faculty and students for life in a global society

Goal 2: Conduct research and develop solutions to international issues and problems

Goal 3: Assist small businesses and farmers in developing international markets

Theme 10: Using Innovative Technologies

The Internet, informational, instructional, spatial, environmental, and biomedical technologies are essential to the advancement of science in the food, agricultural, family and environmental disciplines. These technologies also expand learning choices and methodologies in support of just-in-time learning and lifelong learning. SAES must continue to fully embrace these innovative technologies, and assure that the use of these new technologies is relevant, appropriate and accessible.

Goal 1. Position SAES to embrace relevant and appropriate technology

Goal 2: Integrate technology in the transfer of knowledge in teaching, research, outreach and Extension



Theme 11: Expand Resource Base and Maximize Relationships

As the priorities of traditional funding sources shift, it's critical that SAES seek new sources of funding to accommodate growth in critical programs and to recruit and retain top-quality employees and students. Tapping into these new funding streams requires targeted and effective marketing of SAES programs and accomplishments. Thus expanding the resource base, creating an aggressive marketing campaign, and strengthening stakeholder relationships are necessary for SAES's survival.

Goal 1: Strengthen and enhance SAES funding sources

Goal 2: Promote SAES with key policy makers

Goal 3: Increase SAES's exposure and value by marketing to the general public

Goal 4: Develop partnerships and collaborations that promote the mission, vision, goals and objectives of SAES



Theme 2: Attract, Retain and Graduate Outstanding Students

Educating students was the earliest mission of the SAES and remains the most important way that we enhance the future of this state. Instruction is fully integrated with our other missions - research and Extension. The SAES expects its graduates to become leaders in their professions and their communities. To this end, the SAES must attract and graduate outstanding students with

on the *move*

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Early Bird registration — by Friday, Aug. 26 —
is \$175. After that cutoff the registration
fee is \$225.

The conference will have six different
workshop tracks:

- Alternative Enterprises
- Marketing
- Risk Management
- Bridging Gaps in Programs and Services
- Organic Agriculture
- Professional Program Development

Conference participants will also have
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