Dr. T takes moment to review 2005-06 academic year

I’m using an expanded space in this issue to talk about some of the progress the SAES made this year. Last year we unveiled a new five-year strategic plan, “Planning Our Preferred Future.” The plan, organized around 11 primary themes, represents a balance between the expectations that stakeholders have for the SAES, and the emerging issues that the SAES must address if it is going to continue to lead the University’s land-grant commitment to instruction, research and Extension. For each of the 11 themes, two-to-four goals were identified as major milestones or measurable objectives.

The plan has made it easier to see where we are going, and we all have a clear road map for how to get there. It’s also a reference tool for members of the SAES faculty and staff as they chart their individual plans of work and professional goals. Whenever a new project or responsibility is under consideration—and when new directions for long-standing responsibilities and projects are on the table—“Planning Our Preferred Future” is the first place to turn for guidance.

Although “Planning Our Preferred Future,” is a five-year plan that is beginning its second year, many accomplishments from the 2005-06 academic year deserve high grades for how well they mesh with strategic plan goals: especially those goals that represent measurable objectives.

But we don’t just have a plan to say we have a plan, we have a plan that we will use to measure and report our successes. I don’t just need to know our progress. I want all of us, internal and external stakeholders, to know where we are and what progress we are making. This is the first of our annual strategic plan report cards. In some places we’ve made tremendous progress, in others we have laid the groundwork and in still others, much work remains to be done. But this is as expected. We created a plan that forces us to stretch and grow, and that is exactly what’s happening.

Here’s a look at where we are after one complete year.

The first two themes in the SAES strategic plan put the student learning environment at the forefront. The SAES gets high marks for an 8 percent enrollment increase, a 14.4 percent increase in credit hours generated and a 17 percent increase in student internships. The groundwork for several new programs of study was also completed. These new programs promise to increase the recruiting base.

The strategic plan’s third, fourth and fifth themes address minority health, food safety, and family and community development. The Cooperative Extension Program was a major contributor to these themes. Although major impacts haven’t been recognized, the groundwork for change has been cultivated and the yield could be an overhaul of organizational marketing, programming and evaluation that will give the SAES potent new connections for helping families and communities.

The Agricultural Research Program (ARP) scores the most points for technology and resource base expansion themes. The research faculty and staff generated 72 proposals, 46 received funding, and this led to an increase in overall research funding from $3.3 million in 2004-05 to $4.4 million in 2005-06. Research expertise helped line up three important new facilities for the University Farm. Through added employment opportunities for grad students, expansion of its summer program for high school students and growth in research opportunities for undergraduates, the ARP also helped the SAES chalk up passing marks for progress toward goals for student recruitment.

Extension and the ARP both had additions to their programming and project repertoires that were spot-on for goals in addressing emerging issues in small-scale agriculture and environmental stewardship. Extension specialists opened up new communications channels for connecting campus resources and their own expertise to farmers and landowners, while research into new enterprises for small farms also found its way directly to farmers in record time.

Agricultural Communications and Technology (ACT) and the University Farm were here, there and everywhere on the first report card.

Benchmark improvements in the SAES’s IT infrastructure were the underpinning for the high marks academic units receive for smart classrooms, computer labs and specialized software. Extension’s annual report, Solutions for North Carolina®, and the ARP’s annual magazine, Research, continue to showcase and highlight SAES efforts, people and programs. These publications are calling cards that assist with recruitment, fundraising and marketing.

Inside this report card you can see additional details on the progress made to date. It’s a good start, but it’s not the end. I expect to see us continuing to move forward and in some areas to exceed the goals we’ve outlined. Let’s celebrate where we’ve been. But much work remains to be done. Let’s remain on the move.
Although the SAES strategic plan, “Planning Our Preferred Future,” is a five-year plan that is beginning its second year, many accomplishments from the 2005-06 academic year deserve high grades for how well they mesh with strategic plan goals.

Theme 1: Maintain a Responsive Learning Environment
- A new relationship with the N.C. State University School of Veterinary Medicine
- New curricula for certificate programs in small-scale agriculture, agricultural business management, and commodity merchandising

Theme 2: Attract and Graduate Outstanding Students
- New curricula for certificate programs in small-scale agriculture, agricultural business management, and commodity merchandising
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 3: Improve Minority and Environmental Health
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 4: Ensure a Nutritious, Safe and Secure Food Supply
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 5: Empower Individuals, Families and Communities
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 6: Advance Biotechnology and Biodiversity
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 7: Ensure the Viability of Small-Scale Agriculture
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 8: Protect the Environment and Natural Resources
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 9: Promote International Trade and Economic Development
- More than 100 farmers across the state.

Theme 10: Use Innovative Technologies
- More than 100 farmers across the state.
on the move

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on the move/flip side

Mark Your Calendar

• University-wide opening day program for A&T faculty and staff: Aug. 16
• SAES academic year kickoff: Aug. 16
• First day of classes, fall semester: Aug. 21
• A&T Homecoming: Oct. 21

Corey Burgess of the SAES staff is part of the team attending to the new dairy unit at the A&T University Farm. The unit has facilities for teaching, research and demonstrations of all aspects of pasture-based, dairy production systems.

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