



OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT —
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
1111 Franklin Street, 6th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

October 22, 2009

Colleagues,

I want to express my thanks to all of you working with the Division to implement the painful budget decisions and help prepare us for the future. I fully understand that change, and especially change of this magnitude, affects people in many different ways.

There are a number of misconceptions floating around internally and among our partners that I want to address. Also, I want to give you details that are emerging as our new structure begins to take shape.

Statewide Programs

Closing statewide program structures has reduced administrative costs, and is driving a restructuring of support functions to take full advantage of improved business processes, streamlined workflow, and UC-wide efforts to improve efficiency, leverage technology and to share common solutions. We can neither afford nor justify individual staff for each program area when those functions can be more efficiently handled. This is not a criticism of the hard work and capabilities of our staff, but essential and strategic restructuring for our future.

Advisors, specialists and other academics have retained their positions and are expected to continue their excellent work. This includes small farm advisors, hardwood program specialists and advisors, and water resources specialists and advisors. Coordination of program functions in these various areas will continue through workgroups (although currently not separately funded), continuing conferences, and collaborations among individual advisors, specialists and faculty on research and outreach contracts and grants. We intend to find a new academic home for the important Water Resources Archives and will be meeting with interested parties to develop a list of reasonable options to pursue.

Executive Working Group

All remaining statewide programs will continue to evolve over time as will other elements of our administrative structure. I have put together a small and dynamic Executive Working Group composed of myself, Barbara Allen-Diaz, Kay Harrison Taber, Don Klingborg, Bill Frost and Bob Sams to advise me as we move through these unprecedented times. The composition is designed to include counties, colleges, RECs, and strategic communications, and will serve as a sounding board for all of the Division. Feel free to contact any of these people with questions or suggestions as we move forward.

The capacity to conduct and deliver quality research and extension programs depends on knowledgeable, capable staff who know specific program areas. With that in mind, very measured and thoughtful consideration is being given to the development of centralized business operations and program support units. Kay Harrison Taber and the Administrative Review Council are providing the analyses and recommendations regarding the design of these units. Service and program support are their top criteria.

I also understand that business operations cannot be decoupled from program support, just as county-based programs and faculty cannot be decoupled from campus-based programs and faculty. The work of the ARC is aimed at gaining improved coordination and cooperation across our organization and addressing the limitations of embedded staff in small vertical unit structures.

County Partnerships

The ANR continuum and our ability to deliver science-based information to our constituents are a large part of the unique capacity that ANR brings to UC. Given the current state budget and county situation, Don Klingborg will take the lead in working with a number of you to examine and propose new county-CE organizational models that will continue to deliver high quality programming within a more stable funding model or set of models. As this process proceeds, it will become clear where county directors will report, but equally important, it will become clear how we all must identify new roles, new leadership opportunities, and new ways of working together effectively and efficiently.

Academic and Staff Personnel

In Academic Personnel, we are working to construct a unit that will streamline the merit and promotion process and provide service on all academic personnel issues that formerly were addressed in regional offices. This includes recruitment, hires, retentions, separations and retirements, as well as items like fingerprinting, visas, workers' comp among other things. Kim Rodrigues will be the director of this unit and serve as the chair of SAC, liaison to AAC and the Personnel Committee, and will coordinate CASA, Federal, and DANRIS reporting. She will work closely with the director of Staff Personnel on the design, delivery and evaluation of comprehensive academic and staff training and professional development programs.

Linda Manton will direct the Staff Personnel unit. This unit will handle all activities related to staff including performance management, hires, background checking, workers' comp, service awards, classification and labor relations among others. Linda will lead the academic/staff training program development and provide leadership for the Division in affirmative action.

Program Support

The new centralized academic program support unit will be led by Joni Rippee and report to Bill Frost. The unit will provide all the support to conduct conferences, symposia and workshops of regional, state and national scope, and includes support for the Research and Extension Center system, ANR advocacy efforts, the Rosenberg Forum, statewide programs, initiatives, and county-based efforts of regional or larger scope. Bill will continue as Associate Director of the REC system. In addition to supervising the academic support unit, he will be a member of the Executive Working Group and Biodiversity Council Executive Committee, track and respond to federal earmarks, and represent ANR for APLU (formerly called NASULGC) national and western Extension Directors meetings.

Supporting Strategic Initiatives

Existing competitive grants programs for the various statewide programs will be withdrawn and redirected to support focused work within the strategic initiatives. Specific endowments, starting with the Kearney Foundation of Soil Science and the Slosson Endowment, will continue to support research and extension work within the terms of their endowments, but will be refocused to support the strategic initiatives.

Emphasis on redirecting resources to some of the strategic initiatives has multiple objectives. By focusing our use of funds to support specific, 5-year missions and research/extension projects within the initiative umbrella, we are looking to build broad-based, inclusive teams to identify and tackle large, highly visible, multidisciplinary projects that result in coordinated outcomes, attract increased outside funding, and support science-based decision-making and public policy.

We are not re-inventing Core Issue Grants, which provided seed money for specific, more localized research and outreach projects. Rather we are focusing our efforts on a few specific, large-scale issues where we can make a difference, establish a track-record for successful, integrated, research-based problem-solving, and attract new funds.

We cannot afford to move forward with all of our strategic initiatives at one time, thus we will focus on missions and projects developed and proposed by teams led by the initiative leaders. Three leaders have been named so far: Joe DiTomaso, Jim Bartolome and Sharon Junge. Two more leaders are yet to be announced. All five initiative leaders will serve on the new Program Council.

Initiative leaders will facilitate, coordinate, inspire and organize teams to develop the broader strategic implementation plan for each initiative including development of the initial mission and project priorities. They and their teams will identify big grant opportunities where our dollars can provide a match. They will reach out across disciplines to make you aware of opportunities for integration.

Collaboration and Coordination

As I've said before, our initiatives are integrated by design. All mission proposals will be discussed at Program Council where all the initiative leaders will participate and ensure our full capacity is brought to bear on the initiative missions and projects. We cannot go forward encouraging our folks to compete internally for a few "bread crumbs." Instead I am looking for new ways of doing business that capitalize on our unique capacity and allow us to acquire new funding to engage in solving problems of importance to California through basic and applied research and outreach, and reward our professionals for their research, education and program delivery.

Teams of academics will work on the focused initiative missions; others will continue to conduct and deliver their outstanding research and education programs in modes and statewide program structures that will continue to exist. Both are valued and essential for the organization.

This change we've initiated is evolutionary and requires our best thinking and a commitment by all of us to make it work. We set a high bar in our Strategic Vision; it has gained traction from the highest levels in UC, USDA, and with a growing list of other states. We have also begun developing an organizational structure that will allow us to maximize our research and education programs to benefit Californians. While ANR members will continue to engage at many levels, we must all take responsibility for the development and implementation of improved organizational structures and new modes of research and extension delivery.

Our Strategic Vision is a guiding document with ambitious initiatives and goals that recognize our strengths, honor our past, and illuminate a demanding, challenging and promising future. Bringing it to life requires new contributions from all of us.

Daniel M. Dooley
Vice President – Agriculture and Natural Resources
Senior Vice President – External Relations

Links to previous budget and restructuring announcements:

Aug. 26 announcement: <http://ucanr.org/pdfs/8-26-09.pdf>

Sept. 21 announcement: <http://ucanr.org/pdfs/9-21-09.pdf>

Sept. 25 announcement: <http://ucanr.org/pdfs/9-25-09.pdf>

Oct. 2 announcement: <http://ucanr.org/pdfs/10-2-09.pdf>