



Report

Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
March 23, 2004 **SPECIAL EDITION**

ANR Listening Sessions: What was heard and next steps

ANR's Executive Council hosted a series of 10 Listening Sessions as part of ongoing strategic planning for the Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station system in the University of California. The Listening Sessions provided an opportunity for ANR leaders to hear directly from key stakeholders, who provided advice on ANR's future directions and programs. A total of 240 external and 273 internal stakeholders attended sessions at five locations in the state (San Luis Obispo, Riverside, Redding, Parlier and Davis).

ANR Vice President W.R. (Reg) Gomes, members of the [Executive Council](#) (Dean Paul Ludden, UCB-CNR; Dean Neal Van Alfen, UCD-CAES; Dean Bennie Osburn, UCD-SVM; Dean Steven Angle, UCR-CNAS; and Interim Associate Vice President Lanny Lund) and members of the [Program Council](#) listened to stakeholders as they discussed:

- Challenges and opportunities they are facing;
- Expectations they have of ANR in the future;
- Ways ANR can assist them in meeting these challenges and opportunities in the future;
- How ANR should position itself to be most effective in the future.

Executive Council and Program Council members met immediately following the final Listening Session in Davis to identify the initial themes that they heard across all the Listening Sessions. From external stakeholders, they heard very strong support for ANR programs, especially those located locally. They voiced considerable concern over the potential loss of these programs. Internal stakeholders expressed widespread concern about ANR's ability to maintain the excellence of its programs and respond to changing and growing critical needs throughout the state without additional resources.

Here are other major themes they heard from stakeholders and their perspectives about what ANR needs to do in the future:

- Confirm ANR's core mission as a land-grant institution, identify priorities and focus programs on relevant needs of clientele through continued dialogue and a "bottom-up" planning process that includes external stakeholders.
- Improve statewide, campus and county linkages to strengthen the research-outreach continuum through a variety of means, including recognizing

and rewarding ANR academics for work relevant to the land-grant mission and contributing to an effective research-outreach continuum, as well as expanding forums for interaction between statewide, county and campus-based ANR academics.

- Maintain a visible and responsive local presence for CE focused on local issues and problem solving. Establish methods by which to encourage campus-based academics to contribute to the resolution to these problems.
- Improve marketing and promotion of ANR – including raising public awareness of the value of ANR and ongoing public relations with state, county, other partners and ANR members to maintain and increase support for AES and CE programming.
- ANR's role as provider of critically needed unbiased science relevant to issues facing California today was highly valued by all clientele representatives from agriculture, natural resources and human services. All sectors advocated for continued, if not expanded, services of this kind.
- Make ANR and campus administrative services more respon-

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sive to programs and as efficient and non-duplicative as possible – instill a customer service orientation and culture in all service units.

- ANR leadership must commit to a team effort to provide vision and direction for ANR as well as restore confidence and boost morale of stakeholders. There is a sense of urgency to begin now, recognizing that this is a unique opportunity to transform the organization and recommit to the land-grant mission.
- Create mechanisms for effective statewide coordination of ANR programs and resources – through empowerment of Program Leaders and further strengthening of ANR workgroup system.
- Develop strategies to increase resources through cost recovery, extramural funding and other sources. Engage clientele in the process of identifying and secur-

ing new resources. Build and leverage existing and new partnerships with other agencies and external groups.

ANR leaders appreciated the candor and perspectives shared by stakeholders at the Listening Sessions which provided a deeper understanding of stakeholder viewpoints. ANR leaders are now better informed to make organizational and programmatic decisions about ANR's future directions.

At their Listening Session debrief meeting on Feb. 26, Executive and Program Council members agreed that “we remain open to all possibilities for ANR in the future – there is no predetermined outcome – we understand it is important and urgent for us to take action and provide leadership – we are developing an action plan now.” The Executive Council and Program Council are

convening a two-day strategic planning retreat on March 31 and April 1 to develop recommendations for future action – including ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders – in response to what was learned from the Listening Sessions.

All comments gathered in each Listening Session were transcribed and distributed to Executive Council and Program Council members, providing one source of guidance for AES and CE planning in the campuses and regions throughout ANR. Attendance for each site and all the comments can be viewed by clicking on the links to each Listening Session on the ANR Future Directions Web site: <http://groups.ucanr.org/directions>. ANR leadership is still interested in stakeholder comments and perspectives as they move forward with planning for the future – comments can be submitted through the Web site.

We invite you to visit ANR's Web site: www.ucanr.org.
To access back issues of *ANR Report*, log on to <http://danr.ucop.edu/anr-report/>
