

# **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN Mission Statement**

The Department of Agricultural Education and Communications' mission at Texas Tech University is to generate, integrate, create, broaden, and diffuse knowledge bases in the human dimension of the agricultural sciences and natural resources. To positively affect behavioral change for the improvement of social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of all individuals touched by our agricultural and natural resource systems, we display an outward focus, and enthusiastically receive input from our key stakeholders including practitioners in agricultural communications, public school agricultural teachers, and extension professionals. This in turn enables us to provide premier academic programs, effective outreach, and encourages relevant scholarship.

## **Vision Statement**

The Department of Agricultural Education and Communications will be recognized as one of the top-ten academic units of its kind in the nation. This recognition will be a result of quality academic programs producing society-ready graduates who will assume national and international leadership positions through their conceptual understanding of foundational theory, practical application, ability to grow and mature intellectually, reason soundly, think critically using imagination and ingenuity, display self-confidence, and concern and care for one's family, community and the marginalized of our society. Our outreach and engagement programs will be acknowledged as being innovative, relevant, timely, and appropriate. Faculty and graduate student research will be considered by our peers and consumers as being excellent in quality, innovative in approach to theory, programmatic in nature, systematic and focused.

## **GOALS, CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS, and OBJECTIVES (including Strategies and Assessments)**

**Goal 1. Access and Diversity. Recruit, retain and graduate a larger, more academically prepared, and diverse student body.**

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Annually increase the diversity of undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty in the department.
- Increase enrollment of undergraduate students by 10% (220 students).
- Increase enrollment of graduate students by 10% (44 graduate students).

- Increase enrollment of post-baccalaureate (teacher certification) students by 10% (10 students).
- Increase the graduate students on support pursuing MS (Thesis) and Ed.D.'s by 10% (10 students).

**Objective 1.1: Diversify the student body through increasing access.**

**Strategies:**

- Increase recruitment efforts targeting 4-H and FFA youth.
- Increase diversity of faculty to provide role models.

**Assessment:**

- Diversity of students compared to baseline.

**Objective 1.2: Compete for the best and brightest undergraduate and graduate students.**

**Strategies:**

- Continue and expand departmental recruitment in concert with CASNR.
- Offer higher scholarship and graduate stipends.

**Assessments:**

- Class rank, achievement scores (ACT, SAT, GRE) and GPA of incoming students and compare to current students.
- Amount of scholarship and graduate stipends.

**Objective 1.3: Improve retention and graduation rates.**

**Strategies:**

- Continue personal advising by caring faculty and staff.
- Continue through course evaluations at end of each semester.

**Assessment:**

- Retention and graduation rates.

**Objective 1.4: Establish more scholarships and fellowships.**

**Strategies:**

- Increase endowments for undergraduates and graduates by 20% (\$285,685).

**Assessment:**

- Number and amount of scholarships and fellowships.

**Goal 2. Academic Excellence. Attain national recognition as a top-ten department in the nation.**

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Increase the number of undergraduate students participating in an internship by 10% (70 students).
- Increase the number of faculty in elected national societies and receiving awards by 10% (4 faculty).
- Increase the number of doctoral students employed in nationally ranked academic departments by 25% (5 students).
- Increase the percentage of students involved in study abroad or international programs by 10% (20 students).
- Increase percentage of B.S. graduates gaining admittance to professional and graduate schools by 5% (20 students).

**Objective 2.1: Strengthen undergraduate programs.**

**Strategies:**

- Review the agricultural communications curriculum.
- Review the interdisciplinary agriculture curriculum.
- Review the agricultural systems management courses.
- Restructure advisory committees to obtain faculty, student, and industry input.
- Design and implement a new course to support students in the honors program.
- Design and implement new courses to enhance the curriculum of non-majors.

**Assessment:**

- Undergraduate surveys and exit interviews.

**Objective 2.2: Develop a new undergraduate program.**

**Strategies:**

- Design and implement a new major in agricultural extension/leadership.

**Assessment:**

- Number of students.

**Objective 2.3: Strengthen graduate and professional programs.**

**Strategies:**

- Review the agricultural systems management courses.
- Review the campus-based masters degree program.
- Review the campus-based doctoral degree program.
- Review the distance-delivered joint doctoral degree program with Texas A&M University.

**Assessment:**

- Graduate surveys and exit interviews.

**Objective 2.4: Develop new graduate and post-baccalaureate teacher certification programs.**

**Strategies:**

- Design and implement a master's degree in agricultural communications.
- Design and implement a distance-delivered master's degree program
- Design and implement a distance-delivered teacher certification in agriculture program for post-baccalaureate students who are place-bound.

**Assessments:**

- Number of students.

**Objective 2.5: Build research programs that contribute to social, economic, and/or environmental conditions, and enhance national prestige as well.**

**Strategy:**

- Continue and expand multidisciplinary research projects targeting social, economic and/or environmental conditions.

**Assessment:**

- Number of projects that contribute to social, economic, and/or environmental conditions as compared to baseline.

**Objective 2.6: Expand international education and study-abroad opportunities for students and faculty.**

**Strategy:**

- Encourage more international education participation from students and faculty.

**Assessment:**

- Number of students and faculty participating.

**Objective 2.7: Increase the number of honor societies represented.**

**Strategy:**

- Nominate and encourage more student participation in Gamma Sigma Delta, Alpha Zeta, and Phi Kappa Phi.

**Assessment:**

- Number of students inducted honor societies and compare to baseline.

**Objective 2.8: Expand and develop external funding for centers and institutes in the department.**

**Strategies:**

- Solicit external funding for the Center for Agriculture Technology Transfer.
- Establish a Center for Public Opinion in Agriculture.
- Support the creation of new centers and institutes as needed.

**Assessments:**

- Level of external funds generated by centers and institutes.
- Number of new centers and institutes.

**Objective 2.9: Recruit, employ, and retain nationally recognized faculty.**

**Strategies:**

- Nationally and internationally recruit for new faculty.
- Ensure competitive salaries and benefit packages.
- Have sufficient start-up funds and facilities.
- Retain productive faculty by all means necessary and available.

**Assessments:**

- Grant dollars awarded.
- Number of publications and scholarly activities.
- Number of international activities.
- Number of outreach activities and awards.

**Goal 3. Engagement. Build community connections that enhance the quality of life for students and the community.**

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Tracking system for student career placement and identify baseline data.
- Increase participation in student organizations by 25% (150 dues paying members).

**Objective 3.1: Support a student-centered learning community that enables students to grow and mature intellectually, reason soundly, think critically using imagination and ingenuity, display of self-confidence, and concern and care for one's family, community and the marginalized of our society.**

**Strategies:**

- Continue personal advisement by caring faculty and staff.
- Continue to challenge students with rigorous coursework.
- Continue to support organizations such as Collegiate FFA, Collegiate 4-H, and the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT).

**Assessments:**

- Student evaluations of courses.
- Exit interview data.
- Number of students involved in student organizations.

**Objective 3.2: Enhance community relations.**

**Strategies:**

- Evaluate advisory committees.
- Revise the departmental web site.
- Continue and expand relationship with TTU News and Publications and local media.

**Assessments:**

- Number of advisory committee members
- Hits on web pages.
- Amount of media coverage on the department.

**Objective 3.3: Enhance exposure to multicultural experiences.**

**Strategies:**

- Review the department's multicultural course for content and appropriateness.
- Establish student teaching sites and extension internships in the El Paso area.
- Encourage internships with a diverse group of employers/supervisors.

**Assessments:**

- Surveys.
- Exit interviews.

**Objective 3.4: Strengthen the effectiveness of current programs.**

**Strategies:**

- Review professional development programs designed for high school agriscience teachers, extension professionals, and agricultural communications practitioners.
- Review the department's involvement in youth development programs for FFA and 4-H members.

**Assessments:**

- Survey to measure satisfaction.
- Number of FFA and 4-H youth participating in on-campus activities.

***Goal 4. Technology. Maximize the use of technology in the delivery of services.***

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Increase the number of interactive web-assisted courses offered in the department by 50%.
- Utilize video-streaming technology to archive video for course enrichment in 10% of departmental courses.

**Objective 4.1: Increase student, faculty, and staff access to information technology.**

**Strategies:**

- Update computers in faculty and staff offices.
- Upgrade hardware and software in the department's computer teaching laboratory.
- Maintain adequate access to computers for undergraduates and graduates.
- Upgrade the distance education classroom by replacing computers, upgrading cameras and installing Internet ports for students.

- Establish a conference room equipped with a Polycomm unit capable of business-quality interactive video delivery.
- Equip the office computers of faculty with mini-Polycomm video systems, providing easy point-to-point access for student advisement and interactions with off-campus academics.
- Purchase a second state-of-the-art video editing system.
- Upgrade the technology at distance learning sites including the Texas A&M University Research and Extension Centers in west and north Texas.
- Incorporate multimedia projection equipment in all major classrooms in the department.
- Install Ethernet connections in all major classrooms in the department.
- Employ a full-time computer technician for the department.

**Assessments:**

- Amount of technologies.

**Objective 4.2: Integrate the use of technology in the teaching and learning process.**

**Strategy:**

- Reward faculty for effective use of instructional technology.

**Assessment:**

- Amount of technology use.

**Objective 4.3: Integrate the use of technology in research, publications and outreach.**

**Strategy:**

- Electronically distribute media releases, research findings, publications and video clips.

**Assessment:**

- Amount of electronic media distributed.

**Objective 4.4: Become a technology resource for formal and non-formal educational agencies and the media located in rural communities.**

**Strategies:**

- Add an outreach page to our web site.
- Provide in-service education on technology to agriscience teachers, extension agents, and practitioners in agricultural communications.

**Assessments:**

- Number of hits on web page.
- Number of participants in in-service programs.
- Survey participant satisfaction.

**Goal 5: Partnerships. Build strategic partnerships and alliances.**

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Increase membership in the departmental alumni association by 25% (600 members).
- Increase the number of multidisciplinary proposals submitted to funding agencies by 25% (ten proposals).
- Increase the number of proposals submitted to funding agencies co-authored by disciplinary faculty at other institutions by 25% (ten proposals).
- Increase the number of proposals submitted to funding agencies with collaboration of international authors and/or agencies by 25% (five proposals).
- Increase the number of faculty on joint appointment with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station by 100% (two faculty).

**Objective 5.1: Establish and strengthen higher education partnerships with regional community colleges.**

**Strategies:**

- Develop and expand articulation agreements with key community colleges.
- Enhance faculty presence on community college campuses.

**Assessment:**

- Number of transfer students.

**Objective 5.2: Strengthen the partnership with state and federal agencies and laboratories.**

**Strategies:**

- Initiate a formal partnership with the USDA Plant Stress Laboratory.
- Initiate a formal partnership with the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District.
- Initiate a formal partnership with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.
- Strengthen our partnership with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

**Assessments:**

- Number of partnerships.
- Amount of productivity.

**Objective 5.3: Strengthen and/or initiate partnerships and cooperation in different Colleges at Texas Tech.**

**Strategies:**

- Strengthen partnerships in the College of Education and in the School of Mass Communications.
- Establish partnerships with the Department of Education, Nutrition, and Restaurant-Hotel Management (College of Human Sciences) and the Department of Communications Studies (College Arts and Sciences).
- Extend Adjunct Faculty status to selected faculty in other colleges.

**Assessments:**

- Number of partnerships.
- Amount of productivity.

**Objective 5.4: Expand Texas Tech's presence in the region and the state.**

**Strategies:**

- Establish partnerships with commodity groups in agriculture by presenting TTU data in education and communications, and by having more faculty and students attend meetings.

**Assessments:**

- Number of participants.
- Number of research presentations.

**Objective 5.5: Strengthen partnerships with other universities.**

**Strategies:**

- Strengthen ties with Texas A& M University, Mississippi State University, and North Carolina State University.
- Evaluate the joint graduate course offerings through interactive video and the web.
- Evaluate and pursue the possibility of joint positions in academic programs with Texas A&M in Distance Education and Agricultural Communications.

**Assessments:**

- Number of courses taught.
- Number of students involved.
- Number of joint positions.

**Objective 5.6: Establish partnerships with other universities.**

**Strategies:**

- Establish ties with West Texas A&M University, Lubbock Christian University, Abilene Christian University, Wayland Baptist University, Angelo State University, Tarleton State University, Sul Ross University, New Mexico State University, Sam Houston State University, Southwest Texas State University, and Oklahoma State University.
- Evaluate the possibility of joint course offerings and joint positions.

**Assessment:**

- Number of formalized relationships.

**Objective 5.7: Strengthen relationships with departmental alumni.**

**Strategies:**

- Send alumni and friends a departmental update twice a year.
- Send alumni *The Agriculturist* magazine twice a year.
- Have greater participation in the Summer Alumni Social and Homecoming activity.

**Assessments:**

- Number of members.
- Amount of gifts.

**Goal 6. Human Resources. Maintain a quality work force and work environment.**

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Reduce annual faculty/staff turnover to below 10% (excluding retirements).
- Acquire revenues to construct renovate and modernize space to accommodate faculty, staff and student populations.
- Increase the number of tenure-track faculty positions by four.
- Increase the number of staff by four.
- Achieve parity with other comparable Big XII institutions in salaries for faculty, staff, graduate assistants and administration.

**Objective 6.1: Recruit, support and retain excellent and diverse faculty, academic professionals and staff.**

**Strategies:**

- Recruit nationally and internationally for faculty.
- Maintain salaries to retain best employees.

**Assessments:**

- Diversity of faculty and staff.
- Salaries comparable to other Big XII universities.

**Objective 6.2: Reduce employee turnover and increase employee satisfaction.**

**Strategies:**

- Utilize personnel records when employing staff.
- Contact references of final candidates.
- Have an open and continual information exchange throughout the year, not just at annual evaluations.

**Assessment:**

- Employee turnover.

**Objective 6.3: Strengthen professional skills and abilities of staff.**

**Strategies:**

- Encourage staff to participate in ServicePlus, ATLC and other professional development programs.
- Encourage staff participation in relevant off-campus professional development experiences.

**Assessment:**

- Participation in professional development activities.

**Objective 6.4: Strengthen professional knowledge, skills, and abilities of faculty.**

**Strategies:**

- Encourage faculty to participate in on-campus and off-campus professional improvement programs.
- Encourage faculty to attend professional meetings and conferences.
- Encourage faculty members to develop a conceptual model of their research programs.
- Encourage faculty to diagnose their own individual teaching effectiveness and prescribe necessary improvements.

- Inform faculty members about the tenure and promotion process, workload guidelines, FTE generation, and student credit hour formulas.
- Encourage faculty members to work in teams.
- Encourage faculty members to integrate their teaching, research, and outreach programs into an integrated, programmatic whole.

**Assessment:**

- Faculty productivity.

**Objective 6.5: Provide competitive salaries at all levels.**

**Strategies:**

- Employ faculty and staff at competitive salaries relative to the Big XII.
- Adjust faculty and staff salaries as appropriate to keep highly productive faculty at competitive levels.

**Assessment:**

- Salary levels compared to Big XII.

**Objective 6.6: Review departmental organization and structure for effectiveness and efficiency.**

**Strategies:**

- Establish a complete, more formal committee structure within the department.
- Develop a coordinated system for departmental policies and procedures that compliment University Operating Procedures (OP).
- Establish a regular schedule for faculty and staff meetings.

**Assessments:**

- Formal committee structure.
- Written policies and procedures.
- Established meeting schedules.

**Goal 7: Tradition and Pride. Establish a national image for Agricultural Education and Communications at Texas Tech University.**

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Widely promote Distinguished Alumni recipients, Endowment Donors, and Alumni Award Recipients.
- Expand endowments by 10%.
- Increase the number of students who assume leadership positions in college and university-wide student organizations.
- Increase the number of undergraduate students participating in national discipline-based competitions.
- Increase the number of undergraduate students who assume leadership positions in discipline-based clubs and student organizations.
- Increase the number of undergraduate and graduate students presenting posters and papers at national research meeting conferences and symposia.
- Increase the number of alumni who assume leadership positions in professional associations.

**Objective 7.1: Strengthen the pride and prestige associated with departmental programs.**

**Strategies:**

- Invite all newly admitted students to participate in Red Raider Camp.
- Encourage students to assume leadership positions in college- and university-wide student organizations.
- Encourage students to participate in discipline-based national competition.
- Reward faculty for student organization advisement and subsequent participation in regional, national and international competition.
- Identify alumni with leadership potential and encourage them to apply for leadership positions in professional associations.
- Coordinate an annual awards banquet that recognizes activities of the department and honors students, staff, faculty, and alumni.

**Assessment:**

- Number of students and alumni who are recognized by the department.

**Objective 7.2: Strengthen media relations that highlight achievements and outstanding faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends.**

**Strategies:**

- Develop improved ties with TTU News and Publications to have news releases prepared and submitted.
- Develop closer ties with local, regional and national print and electronic news organizations.

**Assessments:**

- Number of articles published.

- Number of news spots on television.

**Goal 8: Institutional Advancement and Accountability. Strengthen fiscal stability and public accountability.**

**Critical Success Factors:**

- Expand endowments by 50% (target of \$807,000).
- Expand research grant awards by 66% (target of \$243,000).

**Objective 8.1: Increase external funding from research projects, special programs and endowments.**

**Strategy:**

- Each faculty member who does not have a substantially funded project will author or co-author at least one multidisciplinary research proposal and one USDA (or another appropriate agency) proposal on an annual basis.

**Assessment:**

- Number of contracts and grants with the Office of Research Services and endowments with Institutional Development.

Note: This strategic plan represents achievable ambitions of our unit that will be possible through focusing our efforts and availability of additional resources and facilities. To successfully to obtain this vision, the college and university must increase organizational flexibility and provide increased support to the department to: (1) increase the number of tenure track faculty by four and increase staff by four; (2) achieve parity in salaries for faculty, staff, and graduate students as benchmarked against appropriate studies; (3) construct, renovate, and modernize space to increase and improve office facilities as well as classroom, laboratory, and research environments, (4) invest in distance delivery technology (via TIF and other programs) in order to upgrade equipment, facilities, and delivery systems, and (5) increase the departmental operating budget.