

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE
SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2020

Mission Statement

The School of Agriculture at Texas A&M University-Commerce is committed to experiential and pragmatic learning with rigorous educational programs, courses, and experiences enriched by quality instruction. We offer diverse, high quality farm and ranch enterprises that create opportunities for teaching and scholarly activities. We foster positive relationships among our faculty, staff, and students and maintain a strong public presence on campus, in the community, and throughout the state and agricultural industry. Students are prepared to become competent professionals through the sharing and discovery of knowledge across the varied fields of agriculture.

Vision Statement

The School of Agriculture will be recognized as the choice for students who seek to positively impact the agricultural industry. The School of Agriculture will offer various programs and opportunities for our diverse body of students. Recognition of innovative teaching, scholarship, state of the art resources, and collaboration with industry and institutional partners will result in school enrollment exceeding 500 students and lead to the formation of a College of Agriculture by 2020.

**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:

- Increase undergraduate enrollment to 500 students by 2020.
- Increase graduate enrollment to 50 students by 2020.
- Increase the ethnic diversity (other than Hispanics) of our undergraduate and graduate students to 30%.
- Become the first School or College to meet the 25% Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) standards.
- Increase the ethnic diversity of our faculty.
- Increase undergraduate retention rates to exceed 85%.
- Core curriculum offerings will be increased to improve access to non-Agricultural Science majors.
- Outreach to high schools and community colleges will be improved.
- Align faculty/staff and students' interests

Objective 1.1: Increase access through outreach in order to diversify our student body.

Strategies:

- Increase outreach and recruiting efforts to high schools and community colleges.
- Develop a comprehensive outreach and recruiting plan by Fall 2015.
- Increase recruitment efforts targeting 4-H and FFA youth.
- Increase diversity of faculty to provide role models.

Assessments:

- Number of high schools and community colleges reached.
- Completion of comprehensive outreach and recruiting plan by Fall 2015.
- Diversity of students compared to Fall 2014.

Objective 1.2: Compete for and increase the number of high-achieving undergraduate and graduate students.

Strategies:

- Increase amounts and number of scholarships and stipends.
- Graduate assistants' salaries will be equivalent to that of other public universities in the state of Texas.

Assessments:

- Amount of scholarships and stipends.
- Number of high-achieving students.
- Class rank, achievement scores (ACT, SAT, GRE) and GPA of incoming students and compare to current students.

Objective 1.3: Improve retention and graduation rates.

Strategies:

- Increase access to academic advising by caring faculty and staff.
- Continue through course evaluations at end of each semester.

Assessments:

- Retention and graduation rates.

Goal 2. Academic Excellence and Recognition. Attain national recognition and prestige as a School of Agriculture.

Critical Success Factors:

- Create an internship program with a dedicated FTE.
- Increase the number of students participating in an internship by 10% per year.
- Increase the number of faculty elected or presenting in national associations and/or societies and receiving awards to at least 50% of FTF participating per year.
- Increase opportunities for faculty to engage in research and scholarly activities and become nationally recognized.
- Increase the number of students elected, participating, or presenting in national associations, conferences, and/or societies by 10% per year.
- Increase placement of master's students (thesis option) interested in attending doctoral programs at nationally recognized academic departments to 50% success rate.
- Increase the percentage of students involved in study abroad or international programs by 5% annually.
- Increase percentage of B.S. graduates gaining admittance to professional and graduate schools by 5% annually.

Objective 2.1: Strengthen our undergraduate and graduate programs.

Strategies:

- Program Assessments will be conducted every cycle to ensure program quality.
- Review Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for each program every cycle.
- Full-time Faculty FTE:FTSE ratio will be 20:1 or lower.
- School facilities will be maintained or remodeled to allow recruitment and retention of students, creation of positive learning environments, and maintenance of program excellence.
- Review curriculum for all programs every cycle and recommend changes as necessary (including new courses and honor courses).
- Consider an advisory committee for program assessments to obtain faculty, student, and industry input.
- Conduct surveys to recent graduates or graduating students.
- Increase laboratory experiential learning (i.e., hands-on) experiences.

Assessments:

- Institutional Effectiveness Program Results and Plans
- Exit interviews.
- Surveys from recent graduates or graduating students.
- List of laboratory experiential learning activities held per academic year.

Objective 2.2: Implement new graduate and undergraduate programs.

Strategies:

- Design and implement new majors, including online programs and B.S. or B.A. in Agricultural Communications, Agricultural Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, or Agricultural Economics
- Design and implement new Master's programs, including a Master's in AgriBusiness (MAB), Master's in Animal Science, Master's in Plant and Soil Sciences, a post-baccalaureate teacher certification program, etc.
- Design and implement a new Doctoral program.

Assessments:

- Number of students.

Objective 2.3: Build research programs that contribute to the scientific knowledge, industry, environment, and community.

Strategies:

- Continue and expand multidisciplinary research projects that contribute to the scientific knowledge, industry, environment, and community.
- Each Tenure or Tenure Track Faculty member will submit or coordinate at least one grant proposal per year.
- Each Tenure or Tenure Track Faculty member will submit at least one publication per year.
- Each Tenure or Tenure Track Faculty member will submit at least one abstract for presentation consideration at an annual peer-reviewed conference per year.
- Facilities, equipment, and technology for faculty and graduate students will be improved to provide the necessary research infrastructure.
- Find means for faculty to increase research and scholarly activity productivity that leads to a national recognition.

Assessments:

- Number of projects.
- Amount of funds from externally funded grants.
- Number of publications.
- Number of presentations.
- Amount of funds allocated to facility, equipment, and technology improvements.

Objective 2.4: Increase global awareness and diversity, international education, and study-abroad opportunities for students and faculty.

Strategies:

- Increase global competences for our students and faculty.
- Promote multicultural opportunities for students to eliminate barriers.
- Host a global food or cultural event at least once per long semester.
- National and International opportunities will be identified for interested faculty and students.

Assessments:

- List of global engagement activities.
- Number of university-wide multicultural opportunities promoted by SoA faculty and staff.
- Number of students and faculty participating in the global food or cultural event.
- Number of events hosted.

Objective 2.5: Increase the number of honor societies and student organizations represented.

Strategies:

- Nominate and encourage more student participation in honor societies, and student organizations.

Assessments:

- Number of students inducted in honor societies, and participating in student organizations.

Objective 2.6: Expand and develop external funding for centers and institutes.

Strategies:

- Propose centers and/or institutes.
- Support the creation of new centers and institutes as needed.

Assessments:

- Amount of external funds generated by or received to create centers and institutes.
- Number of new centers and institutes.

Objective 2.7: 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 our students.

Critical Success Factors:

- Increase participation in student organizations by 25%.
- Increase retention of freshman ag related majors.

Objective 3.1: Support student-centered learning communities.

Strategies:

- Create a freshman student learning community within the School of Agriculture.
- Continue to support student organizations that promotes agriculture.

Assessments:

- Freshman retention rate.
- Number of students involved in student organizations.

Objective 3.2: Enhance community relations.

Strategies:

- Update the school web site regularly.
- Initiate ongoing relationships with media outlets.
- Expand the use of social media within our School.

Assessments:

- Hits on web pages.
- Amount of media coverage about the School of Agriculture.

Goal 4. Technology. Maximize the use of technology in the delivery of services.**Critical Success Factors:**

- Initiate archives of recorded and/or streamed video technology of lectures and presentations for course enrichment in our School.

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

- Provide adequate internet access to all labs and teaching facilities.
- Continue updating computers in faculty and staff offices.
- Upgrade hardware and software in the school computer teaching laboratory.
- Maintain adequate access to computers for undergraduates and graduates.
- Maintain adequate access to the internet for students.

Assessments:

- Rate of computer updates for faculty and staff offices.
- Rate of hardware and software updates for labs.
- Adequate access in all labs and teaching facilities.

Goal 5: Partnerships. Build strategic partnerships and alliances.**Critical Success Factors:**

- Increase membership in the school alumni association by 25%.

Objective 5.1: Establish and strengthen partnerships**Strategies:**

- Partnerships with the community.
- Advisory Councils will be established in all program areas.
- Community engagement will be increased through workshops, seminars and special events.

- A full-time faculty or staff will participate and represent the School of Ag in at least one professional or community event per month.
- Higher education partnerships with regional community colleges.
- Develop and expand articulation agreements with key community colleges.
- Enhance faculty presence on community college campuses.
- Partnerships with state and federal agencies.
- Strengthen our partnership with the Texas A&M AgriLife Research.
- Strengthen our partnership with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
- Strengthen our partnership with USDA.
- Develop partnerships with Texas Department of Agriculture.
- Partnerships with different Colleges at Texas A&M University-Commerce.
- Strengthen partnerships with colleges and departments.
- Extend opportunities to selected faculty in other colleges.
- Partnership with commodity groups.
- Establish partnerships with commodity and industry groups in agriculture.
- Partnerships with other universities.
- Participate in the Texas A&M University system course exchange program.
- Strengthen relationships with departmental/ school alumni.
- Develop an online newsletter for our alumni and friends.
- Have greater participation in the Homecoming activity.
- Increase participation in the AGED alumni and friend reception.

Assessments:

- Number of events.
- Number of transfer students.
- Number of partnerships.
- Amount of productivity.
- Number of participants.
- Number of research presentations.
- Number of online courses taught.
- Number of students involved.
- Number of formalized relationships.
- Number of members.

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).
- Increase the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty positions.
- Evaluate existing and future staff needs.
- Establish formal mentorships for tenure-track faculty.
- Increase professional development opportunities for lecturers and tenure-track faculty.
- Achieve parity with other comparable institutions in salaries for faculty, staff, graduate

assistants and administration.

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

Strategies:

- Recruit nationally and internationally for faculty.
- Improve diversity of faculty and staff.
- Salaries will be equivalent to that of similar non-land grant universities/colleges of agriculture.

Assessments:

- Number of diverse faculty and staff.
- Salaries comparable to other non-land grant universities/colleges of agriculture.

Objective 6.2: Retain faculty, staff, and graduate assistants and increase employee satisfaction.

Strategies:

- Follow university procedures and policies when employing new faculty/staff.
- Utilize formative and summative conferences in the annual evaluation process for faculty, staff, and graduate assistants.
- Promote one or two informal social events.

Assessments:

- Percentage of faculty, staff, and graduate assistants retained annually.
- Percentage of faculty, staff, and graduate assistants (if applicable) attending informal social events.

Objective 6.3: Strengthen professional skills and abilities of staff.

Strategies:

- Encourage staff to participate in relevant professional development programs.
- Encourage faculty/staff to utilize employee scholarship programs to expand their expertise.
- Each faculty, staff and graduate student will attend at least one Professional Development training session once a year.

Assessments:

- Percentage of faculty/staff participating in professional development activities.
- Percentage of faculty/staff participating in employee scholarship programs.

Goal 7: Tradition and Pride. Establish a national image for School of Agriculture.

Critical Success Factors:

- Expand endowments by 25%.
- Expand research grant awards by 25%.
- Recognize and promote distinguished alumni.
- Increase the number of students who assume leadership positions in the school 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.

Objective 7.1: Strengthen the pride and prestige associated with being in our School.

Strategies:

- A faculty without sufficient publications will author or co-author at least one proposal for external funding on an annual basis.
- Encourage students to assume leadership positions in school- 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.
- Continue the annual awards banquet that recognizes activities of the school and honors students.
- Create annual awards that allow our students to recognize faculty and/or staff.
- Create annual Alumni of the Year (or influential Alumni) award, to be awarded at School of Agriculture awards banquet.

Assessments:

- Number of contracts and grants with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
- Number of endowments and gifts through Office of Development.
- Number of achievements/awards by faculty
- Number of faculty recognized in the school.
- Number of students recognized by the school for scholarly achievements.
- Number of students recognized by the school for leadership/involvement.

Objective 7.2: Increase participation in media that highlight achievements and outstanding faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends.

Strategies:

- Improve communication with media outlets pertaining to news releases both local and regional.
- Improve Social Media presence for entire School of Agriculture, including student organizations and competitive teams.

Assessments:

- Number of news releases to local and regional media.
- Number of social media posts on multiple outlets.