

**Department of Horticulture
2014-2015 Implementation Plan Report**

Note - Only those recommendations necessitating action are listed here, also completed recommendations are not listed.

Recommendation #1 – Communication seems to be difficult from a number of standpoints. People feel out of the loop, and non-faculty (staff, students, etc.) want to be part of the conversation, or at least informed. Listservs, regular faculty meetings, social events, and graduate student staff liaisons at faculty meetings could all be helpful. There is a level of camaraderie that exists on the Horticulture Research Farm (HRF) that appears lacking elsewhere in the department. In addition to internal communications, some focus on external marketing and a stronger web presence for the department and sustainable agriculture program and farm is important.

Assessment method: A more concerted effort will be initiated to facilitate communication across all departmental lines and the results recorded.

Results: The Chair initiated weekly “brown bag” meetings specifically targeted to faculty in extension, research, and teaching followed by additional meetings targeted to farm and CSA staff, secretarial and technical staff, and graduate students and post-docs.

Analysis of results and reflection: The brown bag meetings were highly successful with broad participation and were followed by a departmental retreat on May 5 at 9 a.m. in the Good Barn.

Ongoing improvement actions: The results from the retreat were recorded and the recommendations from all faculty, staff, and students are being implemented.

Recommendation #2 – The department needs to develop a long-term vision and strategic plan that is more specific to its needs and goals. This should be done with meaningful input from staff and students. The focus on sustainability seems broadly accepted, though it was also clear that more definition needs to be put around that concept so the department has some consensus on positions, prioritizing resource needs, and coordinating research and extension effort.

Assessment method: The department is currently in the process of utilizing the information from the departmental retreat to develop a new strategic plan. The goal

is to have the new plan complete by the end of 2015. Analysis of the departmental focus on sustainability reveals broad support across the entire department.

Results: The strategic plan document is under construction.

Analysis of results and reflection: The strategic plan document will be analyzed at the end of 2015.

Ongoing improvement actions: The new strategic plan will satisfy all of this recommendation and will be implemented over the next five years.

Recommendation #7 – The department needs to develop a cohesive graduate education experience. Students expressed a need for informational seminars and the desire to know more about what other faculty are doing and how the work of their labs relate to the work of the department as a whole. Specific recommendations include the following:

- ***Develop formal teaching or extension experiences, depending on students' interests, as an integral part of the education of graduate students in the Horticulture Department.***
- ***Develop a competitive pool of funding for graduate students to attend scientific meetings. This funding would benefit students and allow the department to have a greater presence at conferences.***
- ***Work to create more professional and social interaction through organized departmental activities for faculty and students as well as encouraging students to organize as a group.***
- ***Develop a seminar or short classes that focus on grant writing activities, cross-training on equipment and techniques, and other subjects that would assist graduate students in their career preparation.***

Assessment method: The number of seminars devoted to graduate level education is monitored and recorded, and specific funds for graduate student development have been identified.

Results: Graduate students have responded positively to extra professional development opportunities to learn about professional responsibilities and funding opportunities.

Analysis of results and reflection: This has been a positive move forward for the department in terms of graduate education and will be continued.

Ongoing improvement actions: We will continue to identify and develop new opportunities for our graduate students.

Recommendation #9 – Leverage existing tobacco settlement funds towards identifying and securing sustainable long-term funding for essential extension related programs.

Assessment method: The number of programs and amount of funding dependent on tobacco settlement funds will be monitored.

Results: The dependency on tobacco settlement funds has not been reduced this fiscal year.

Analysis of results and reflection: We will continue to emphasize the necessity to minimize our dependency on tobacco settlement funds.

Ongoing improvement actions: We will continue to exploit all possible means to move the programs dependent on tobacco settlement funds into sustainable funding sources.

Recommendation #10 – Identify under-utilized office and laboratory space in the Plant Science building and lobby administration to move a significant portion (if not all) of the Horticulture Department to the Plant Science Building.

Assessment method: The number of Horticulture faculty and staff located in the Plant Science building will be monitored.

Results: There has not been any change in the number of Horticulture faculty, staff, or students housed in the Plant Science Building.

Analysis of results and reflection: We will continue our efforts to move Horticulture personnel to the Plant Science Building.

Ongoing improvement actions: A faculty member in the department was part of a committee that examined and identified underutilized and misappropriated space in the Plant Science building.

Recommendation #13 & 14 – Find ways to provide stable recurring funding for extension associates and identify a funding source for the Crop Diversification & Biofuel Research & Education Center.

Assessment method: We created stable funding for the Crop Diversification & Biofuel Research & Education Center (now the Center for Crop Diversification) and continue to find ways to reduce department extension associate dependency on tobacco settlement funds.

Results: Together with departmental salary savings and higher CAFE administration funding, one extension associate is on funds other than those from the Kentucky Horticulture Council.

Analysis of results and reflection: We will continue to explore methods to move our extension associates off of the tobacco settlement funds provided through the Kentucky Horticulture Council.

Ongoing improvement actions: We will consider staff restructuring as a possible means to provide alternative sources of funds for the extension associates in the department.

Recommendation #16 – Identify mechanisms to fill existing vacant faculty positions and, moreover, ways to increase the number of faculty lines in the department.

Assessment method: The number of new faculty positions will be monitored.

Results: Due to budget constraints, we have not been able to fill any faculty positions, but we have an agreement with the CAFE Dean to fill an existing position or create a new one.

Analysis of results and reflection: In the very near future, the department will use strategic planning efforts to define faculty positions within the department.

Ongoing improvement actions: We will continue to lobby CAFE administration for more faculty positions.

Recommendation #17 – Identify and implement a solution to the declining enrollment in the Horticulture and Plant Science undergraduate program.

Assessment method: The number of undergraduates enrolled in the Horticulture undergraduate program will be monitored.

Results: The number of undergraduates has increased from 2014-2015.

Analysis of results and reflection: The development and implementation of new courses in the department has contributed to our increased enrollment.

Ongoing improvement actions: We are planning to continue expanding our course offerings and also plan to remove the PLS prefix from our courses and replace it with HOR or HRT to gain more identity for our undergraduate program.

Recommendation #18 - Identify mechanisms to reward outstanding faculty and staff.

Assessment method: The number of awards to faculty and staff will be monitored.

Results: Our faculty received two awards in 2015, the provost's award for outstanding teaching and the Thomas Poe Cooper award for distinguished achievement in research.

Analysis of results and reflection: We will continue to monitor the number of awards received by our faculty and staff and will emphasize the importance of this as a measure of our department's recognition within the college.

Ongoing improvement actions: We will continue our existing improvement actions.