

February 13, 2003

TO: College of Agriculture Personnel

FROM: Scott Smith

RE: Ag Futures #4

This edition of our “Ag Futures” correspondence deals primarily with a proposed alignment of the College of Agriculture with the reorganized College of Human Environmental Sciences. I also include brief updates on the current budget situation and on strategic planning for the College.

### **Proposed Alignment with Human Environmental Sciences**

I have posted on my office web page (<http://dobson.ca.uky.edu/admin/>), and forwarded to the Ag Faculty Council, two proposals for reorganization of the College of Human Environmental Sciences. These have been developed by HES Faculty. Both options have great relevance to the College of Agriculture. I have asked the Ag Faculty Council to collect and solicit comments and input and respond to me by the first of March. I urge you to review and consider these carefully.

Some history and context should be helpful. HES originated as a part of the College of Agriculture, initially as the Department of Home Economics. This Department grew and evolved under various administrative configurations, eventually becoming a separate college in 1970. Reorganization or elimination of HES, as a College, has been considered on more than one occasion. Most recently, restructuring was recommended by President Todd’s Futures Task Force in the spring of 2002.

The UK administration followed up by appointing a Futures Implementation Committee, on which I served during the summer of 2002. The recommendation of that group was that HES be reorganized as a School of Family and Consumer Sciences within the College of Agriculture. For multiple reasons, including objections from some HES faculty and a recommendation for further deliberation from the Senate, this was not implemented and I was appointed Acting Dean of HES in August. Although the merger with Ag was not executed, it became clear to virtually everyone that continuing HES as a college was not a viable option. Since August, I have worked with the HES Faculty, staff and alumni to develop plans for reorganization.

Proposal 1 (HES Ag and Education) would create a School of Human Environmental Sciences in Agriculture. This School would include the current personnel and programs in the Departments of Nutrition and Food Science and Merchandising, Apparel and Textiles. The Department of Family Studies would remain a department, but in the College of Education. This proposal was developed by a multi-departmental, representative committee of HES faculty; I chaired that committee. This proposal

included full consultation with the university administration and the College of Education; their support is anticipated. **I recommend your endorsement of this proposal.**

Proposal 2 (All HES with Ag) was submitted independently by a group of HES faculty. This would create a School of Family and Consumer Sciences within Agriculture. This School would include the three current departments in HES. This proposal has considerable merit with regard to preserving the strengths and traditions of family and consumer science, it is likely to be supported by most or all HES alumni, and I believe it is the preference of most of our FCS agents and specialists. However, this concept has received preliminary opposition earlier (almost but not quite unanimous opposition) from the Faculty of Family Studies. During the next two weeks a final poll of HES faculty, staff, students and alumni will be conducted to document which of these proposals now enjoys support from which groups. My position has been clearly stated for some time- I would resist the merger of Agriculture with any substantial group of faculty who oppose that merger. My support for this proposal will be contingent upon the outcome of the HES poll. **So, my recommendation to you is to endorse this proposal, but only on the condition that it is supported by a consensus in HES.**

You may ask why either of these proposals is in the best interest of the College of Agriculture. You will find further discussion of the mutual benefits in either proposal, but let me highlight the following points here.

- This is an opportunity to reunify FCS extension programs with research and teaching. These have been independently administered, and in my view not always fully cooperative, since 1970.
- Our vision for the future College of Agriculture includes a broader mission in food systems. I define this to include food production, processing, distribution, marketing/merchandising, preparation and delivery systems. This merger will offer us a clear field of operation in that area.
- Human nutrition is a common and appropriate element of many agricultural colleges, yet the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station has been only peripherally involved in this for many years. Under this plan I anticipate that our college would be responsible for undergrad programs in nutrition and would assume an expanded partnership role (with the Med Center) in the research and education functions of the Graduate Center for Nutritional Sciences.
- The consumer economics-related programs in HES provide obvious potential for contributions to our efforts in community and economic development.
- While the potential ties with the human science elements of HES may be less immediate and clear, and in some ways are more compatible with the College of Education, there would definitely be potential for synergy with our programs in youth development, leadership, and community development.
- Either proposal provides an opportunity to develop functional unity between the Ag Education and the FCS Education programs.
- Our enrollment and degree productivity would be substantially expanded.

- HES, probably more so than any other group on campus, shares our commitment to students and alumni, our dedication to Land Grant values, and our perspective about the balance and integration of discovery, learning and outreach.

No direct costs would be assumed by current units in the College of Agriculture under either proposal. Our largest challenge short-term would probably be integration of the undergraduate programs.

Longer-term, everyone must recognize that many substantial issues remain to be decided. The Faculty of HES are aware that our College will be embarking on a comprehensive strategic planning program later in 2003. They know that I have asked for consideration of a broader name for the College to include "...Agriculture, Food and Environment...". I have made it clear to HES faculty that subsequent to any merger with Agriculture we must collectively review programs, set new priorities, consider further evolution of administrative structures, and possibly make significant changes in some areas.

Please respond to the Ag Faculty Council when they solicit input on these proposals. Also, I welcome questions or comments sent directly to me.

### **College Strategic Plan**

I have spoken and written previously about our intent to start a strategic planning program for the College in 2003. Recently, President Todd initiated such a process for the university. This is scheduled for completion in July 2003. I intend to wait until this plan is available before embarking on the formal phase of our process.

In the interim, I am anticipating completion of, or substantial progress on, multiple elements of College planning including Re-Envisioning Extension, plus the work of our Task Forces on Diversity, Information Technology, and Food Science and Technology. I also will ask a small administrative group to begin collecting resource materials and a "library" of background planning information in anticipation of the formal kick-off for Strategic Planning. I will appoint the Strategic Planning Committee in late spring or early summer.

### **Budget Status**

I assume that most or all of you recently learned that hiring has been frozen by the UK administration until further notice. Several other measures to reduce expenditures have also been implemented.

Also, UK colleges have been asked to submit plans for a 5% recurring budget cut effective July 1. I want to emphasize that this is only a contingency plan at this time. No recurring cuts have yet been made. No positions have been permanently lost. No plans

for elimination of targeted programs or reduction in force have advanced beyond the stage of very preliminary analysis and what-if scenarios.

However, this is a serious situation. Even under some of the more favorable budget outcomes, this will not be business as usual. Expenses will need to be drastically reduced in many areas, even if cuts are limited to the 2.6% in the current House budget. I have not completed the analysis for the 5% contingency plan I am required to submit, but you should understand that it will probably have to include elimination of many of the currently vacant positions plus some elimination of low priority projects and programs.

Higher education budget reductions as large as 9-10% were being discussed not long ago. At the moment, this seems much less likely. The speculation you may have heard about closing facilities, significant layoffs, elimination of whole departments, and reduction in force for field staff all arise from very speculative analysis about how budget cuts at this level could be handled. Note that we are already observing such measures at other states with budget problems in this range or higher.

I will make every effort to keep the entire College informed of budget projections and impacts through your chairs or directors.