

**PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT
Department of Forestry and Natural Resources 2019 - 2020**

1. With input from College, develop a plan to replace facilities to provide faculty, staff, and students with suitable office, laboratory, and classroom space.

Assessment Method: We will continue to engage college and university administration to advance planning for a new Natural Resources and Forestry Learning Center. We view significant progress to be when the University capital planning and budgeting includes funding for the facility.

Results: The CAFE recently engaged Sasaki Associates, Inc. to develop a facility plan for the south side of campus. This plan was completed and presented to CAFE Department Chairs on October 12, 2016. Construction of a new Natural Resources and Forestry Learning Center is included in Phase II of that plan.

Analysis of results and reflection: We have begun conversations with the Director of Philanthropy and with our alumni about initiating fundraising for a new facility. A new natural resources building has been added to UK's master plan. Interim space plans include the incorporation of office and lab space provided to the Department in the Dimock Building.

Improvement actions: While continuing to work on a long-term philanthropic fundraising plan the following actions are underway to temporarily improve working and instructional conditions in the Department including:

- 1) Continued improvement and occupancy of Dimock have been underway with faculty and graduate students currently housed there.
- 2) In collaboration with the VP of Facilities, responding to the findings of the recent undergraduate program accreditation review and analysis and response from the Provost, windows in T.P. Cooper are scheduled to be upgraded and replaced, and appropriate upgrades in cooling and heating of instructional rooms (101,109, 113, 212, 217, 220) have been proposed by the VP of Facilities.

2. Simplify the administrative structure for Robinson Forest and Robinson Center for Appalachian Resource Sustainability (RCARS) with an eye towards sustaining the forest and Wood Utilization Center.

Assessment Method: The department chair and RCARS director will collaborate and evaluate with appropriate staff the functioning of the facilities to provide an efficient and effective process for activities and programs conducted at the facilities.

Results: Three initiatives were completed, or are in-progress, to improve the administration and provide for fiscally sustaining Robinson Forest and the Wood Utilization Center. The FNR chair and RCARS director have developed a budgetary assessment to address immediate and on-going

infra-structure needs at Robinson Forest. To improve the administrative structure and work efficiency at Robinson Forest, the chair and director have re-aligned the forest manager position to a shared administrative position between the department and RCARS. The chair has initiated planning to enroll Robinson Forest in a voluntary carbon program to provide continued funding for Robinson Forest and RCARS.

Analysis of results and reflection: FNR has worked in collaboration with and approval of the CAFE AR to establish an administrative structure at RCARS that involves a Director appointed by the CAFE AR, and three Assistant Director Positions, including Farm Operations, the Wood Utilization Center (WUC), and Robinson Forest (RF). The latter two are Department staff with a 20% responsibility for the AD position. The AD for the WUC has been appointed. This structure improves the efficiency and efficacy of management of both the WUC and RF. UK has signed initial paperwork to facilitate the scoping process to enroll Robinson Forest in a voluntary carbon program.

Improvement actions: FNR will finalize enrollment in a carbon program. FNR is also finalizing hiring of the AD for Robinson Forest.

3. Develop a succession plan to effectively deal with a significant number of faculty openings that will be the result of faculty members retiring in the next 5-10 years. This plan should include additional staffing at both the faculty and staff level to meet current and future needs in research, teaching, and extension.

Assessment Method: Annually, we will revisit our staffing situation and evaluate progress toward filling anticipated vacancies and responsibilities.

Results: The Undergraduate Program Committee chair has developed and implemented a new undergraduate advising plan that incorporates all FNR faculty replacing advising that had been largely done by the DUS, currently held by late career faculty. Instructional DOE has been added to two Extension faculty lines, recently hired, to help build instructional capacity needed to address required courses needs for our accredited forestry undergraduate program. Career advancement opportunities have been planned for early career faculty. Succession planning is a key focus area of the department's two day faculty/staff retreat scheduled for the fall of 2019.

Analysis of results and reflection: Identification and prioritization of issues was established from the retreat and used to develop a phased implementation plan. Also a planning matrix of positions and instructional need has been developed to use in succession planning for upcoming retirees. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has diverted resources and slowed implementation of plan elements. Summer undergraduate advising has been distributed to a larger number of faculty including early career. New Extension hires will be instructors of record for FOR courses, helping to distribute the teaching load and assisting in succession planning. The Extension Coordinator position has been established as a rotation among the Extension faculty to provide for long-term facilitation of extension programming. Early career faculty are instructionally shadowing senior faculty to aid in the transitioning of instruction for several courses. Due to budget reductions

associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to eliminate funding for one teaching/research faculty position and potentially a second Extension faculty position.

Improvement actions: The department chair will annually assess succession planning and convene faculty representatives from all department mission areas to strategically discuss succession planning efforts as needed.

4. Develop a Ph.D. program for the department. Careful consideration will need to be given to what additional graduate level Forestry courses will need to be added and who will teach these courses.

Assessment Method: Completed.

Results: In the summer of 2018 the Ph.D. (Forest and Natural Resources Sciences) program was approved by UK BOT and by Kentucky Council on Post-secondary Education (CPE). .

Analysis of results and reflection: The department is currently accepting applications for a Ph.D. in Forest and Natural Resource Sciences and has made decisions regarding department stipend allocations among MS and PhD candidates.

Improvement actions: The department and DGS will monitor the implementation of the Ph.D. program and will develop guidelines and procedures to ensure effective implementation of the program including monitoring stipend development.

5. Aggressively work towards improving the diversity of the department's faculty and undergraduate student population.

Assessment Method: The department chair and academic coordinator will annually evaluate student demographic metrics and the chair will ensure all faculty and staff searches adequately access individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Results: Enrollment has increased to 60 students, 30% female and increase from 18% last year. Other metrics including non-resident, underrepresented minorities, and first-generation college student percentages have remained stable. Recent faculty hires include one female minority.

Analysis of results and reflection: We continue to seek diversity in our student population as well as our faculty and staff. Many of our peer institutions also report challenges in diversifying their undergraduate student body and we are challenged in this regard as well. We have developed a draft Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (DEI) plan that has been reviewed by the CAFE Assistant to the Dean for Diversity. We are piloting selected elements of the plan prior to finalizing and submitting to faculty for approval and implementation.

Improvement actions: We will continue to assess the Departments DEI proposed plan and piloted elements and finalize the plan for approval and implementation. We will also continue to seek diversity in our student body as well as our faculty and staff, reaching out to diverse pools of applicants when hiring faculty and staff and recognize the importance of overall diversity and gender diversity, specifically in our decision making processes.

6. With the involvement of all departments and students that comprise the multidisciplinary Natural Resources and Environmental Science (NRES) program, explore and address both the perceived and real underlying tensions between the Forestry and NRES programs.

Assessment Method: We continue to monitor relations following provisions in the MOU between FNR and NRES.

Results: In the summer of 2017, a MOU between FNR and NRES was approved by the FNR faculty and NRES Steering Committee. Provisions within the MOU were acted upon and the MOU was shared with other CAFE departments, upon request.

Analysis of results and reflection: The development and implementation of the MOU have been helpful in dealing with issues. Communications between FNR and NRES leadership have been regular and effective. The Department Chair has met with the new incoming NRES Steering Committee chair and continuing monitoring of the relationship between the programs is appropriate.

Improvement actions: The Chair will continue to consult with the NRES Steering Committee chair and work towards collaboration where appropriate and beneficial to each program.

7. Continue development of the Forest Health Center (FHC) to meet the needs of the department, college, and forestry industry. Consideration should be given to providing the needed staffing, facilities, and equipment, including the possibility of co-locating the FHC and FNR in any new facility that is built.

Assessment Method: We are currently evaluating our success by tracking extramural funding, staffing, and program participation.

Results:

The FHC has acquired well over \$2.5 million (competitive grants and gifts) to date and has hired 5 post-doctoral scholars to assist with research and programming. A forest genetics position has been added as a Research Specialist in the Department working collaboratively with FHC.

Analysis of results and reflection: We continue to seek permanent, recurring funding for the FHC. Our partnership with the USFS has yielded three permanently stationed USFS scientists on UK's campus for the first time.

Improvement actions: We will continue to look for opportunities to include the FHC in initiatives like the emerging Beam Spirits Institute and the White Oak Initiative to help build the presence of the FHC in Kentucky and a UK.

8. Continue developing relationships with stakeholders and support industries. In addition to departmental interaction with these groups, it is important for college administration (particularly the Dean) to have periodic, direct contact with these groups as well.

Assessment Method: We will use the department advisory board to evaluate our success in establishing relationships and partnerships with various forestry groups and industries.

Results: Our relationship with other forestry organizations and agencies in Kentucky and throughout the region is at a high level and continues to expand. FNR is exploring ways to leverage interaction with the emerging Beam Spirits Institute that will provide direct assistance to the distilling industry and forest industries that supply barrels critical to the survival and competitiveness of the whisky in industry in the U.S. The Department has worked with the American Forest Foundation and the Dendrifund to establish the White Oak Initiative, a region wide effort to assist white oak dependent industries and sustain white oak resources. The department provided the proposal that was used to establish \$2.3 million in USDA funding for white oak sustainability efforts in 17 states where white oak is a critical ecosystem component and economic driver.

Analysis of results and reflection: We will continue to broaden these relationships with other groups and focus on communicating with these partners. We have made particular strides in recent months to engage non-traditional forestry clientele, such as the distilling industry, which depends on white oak for making bourbon. We have established a periodic Department E-News release specifically to engage alumni and department partners and friends with the Department. We have established a Forestry Alumni Chapter with CAFE. However, implementation of improvements in the use of the advisory board, as developed from our 2019 department retreat, has recently been slowed by the pandemic because of the attention required to maintain our instruction and research enterprises in 2020.

Improvement actions: We will continue reaching out to alumni and clientele using our multiple Constant Contact newsletters including the new Department E-News and continue to build the Forestry Alumni Chapter. The efforts are designed to strategically provide information on department needs, fund raising efforts, and increase overall Department awareness.