

UNIT REPORT

Agriculture & Natural Resources, IFAS - 02.Reviewer's Report – IE

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Agriculture & Natural Resources, IFAS

IFAS Mission Statement

Mission Statement:

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Mission The mission of UF/IFAS is to develop knowledge in agricultural, human, and natural resources, and to make that knowledge accessible to sustain and enhance the quality of human life.

Start: 07/01/2022

End: 06/30/2023

Progress: Ongoing

Unit/College: Agriculture & Natural Resources, IFAS

Responsible Roles:

2022-23 Goal 1 Communicating UF/IFAS' Role and Impact

Goal: Communicating UF/IFAS' Role and Impact

Action Items:

1. Diversify methods and audiences for communicating UF/IFAS's roles and impact.
2. Analyze trends to develop opportunities for future communications to reach a specific audience.

Measures of Action Items:

Media report from UF/IFAS Communications measures and demonstrates increases in methods and audiences; a review of current social media.

Time Period of Action Items:

July 2022-June 2023

Resources of Action Items:

UF/IFAS Communications leads the collection and analysis of data about communicating about UF/IFAS' roles and impact. Its resources are department personnel's time and budget.

Results and Evaluation:

UF/IFAS Communications collects the data about media trends. It includes media exposure, social media, and other analyses regarding UF/IFAS from a communications perspective.

These results are shared regularly with the UF/IFAS leadership team and trends are discussed by those individuals.

1. Spanish-language media: After hiring a Spanish-language specialist in UF/IFAS Communications, there was an increase of media stories transcreated in Spanish, with 16 stories in the final quarter of 2022-2023. As a result of this trend, UF/IFAS leadership expressed support of communicating with Spanish-speaking Floridians and continuation of the program.
2. Social media profiles of flagship accounts for UF/IFAS all experienced growth in 2022-2023. For example, the UF/IFAS Facebook account had 3 very highly viewed posts with more than 110,000 impressions each. While two of those posts were about insects with important information, the third was a fictional April Fool's joke demonstrating a successful level of creativity and humor. As a result, the UF/IFAS leadership team encouraged more humor when appropriate for those flagship social media accounts.

Attached Files

ATTACHMENTS:

UNIT GOALS CONNECTED TO UNIVERSITY GOALS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Goal 4 Growth in research and scholarship that enhances fundamental knowledge and improves the lives of the world's citizens.

Goal:

Growth in research and scholarship that enhances fundamental knowledge and improves the lives of the world's citizens.

Objective:

Four objectives are associated with this goal.

- Objective 1. Documented advances in productivity and recognition of UF research programs.
- Objective 2. Exceptional graduate and postdoctoral scholars who will contribute to influential research and scholarship.
- Objective 3. Increased extramural and intramural funding that enhance both basic and translational research.
- Objective 4. Processes and systems that facilitate excellence in research and scholarship.

2022-23 Goal 2 Deepening Strategic Partnerships

Goal: Deepening Strategic Partnerships

Action Items:

1. Strengthen partnerships to address biological invasives.
2. Increase cross-disciplinary and international collaborations.

Measures of Action Items:

1. Progress on establishing the UF/IFAS Invasion Science Research Institute and its outcomes.
2. Progress on establishing the UF/IFAS Global Food Systems Institute and its outcomes.

Time Period of Action Items:

July 2022-June 2023

Resources of Action Items:

IFAS faculty, staff and resources. Both the Invasion Science Research Institute and the Global Food Systems Institute were developed using existing UF/IFAS state appropriations.

Results and Evaluation:

1. Global Food Systems Institute (GFSI): Funding for the GFSI is for a 3-year commitment from UF/IFAS leadership and the UF Vice President for Research, with 2022-2023 as the middle year. GFSI organized a Future of Food Forum in March 2023, with the York lecture endowment funds paying for its keynote speaker as the 2023 York Lecturer. The specific topic of the 2023 theme of artificial intelligence attracted numerous attendees from across the discipline spectrum.

UF/IFAS leadership met with the GFSI director to discuss progress and budgetary review in spring 2023. GFSI will continue through 2023-2024 with the spring 2024 review to make a decision about future funding from UF/IFAS. UF/IFAS will also use the evaluation of GFSI from the Vice President for Research, which will also determine if it will provide funding for 2024-2025.

2. Invasion Science Research Institute (ISRI): After the director was hired, Dr. Matthew Thomas, he has been building his vision for the program, writing grant proposals, and hiring personnel. ISRI developed its strategic plan in 2022-2023 and is planning some future events for 2023-2024.

Both programs are expected to continue to develop partnerships and external funding support and the UF/IFAS leadership team will evaluate GFSI and ISRI on those criteria once they are fully established.

Attached Files

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2022-23 Goal 3 Sustaining UF/IFAS's Physical/Social Systems

Goal: Sustaining UF/IFAS's Physical/Social Systems

Action Items:

1. Increase staff funding and support to minimize turnover.
2. Acknowledge, address and prioritize off-campus Research and Education Center needs.

Measures of Action Items:

1. Determine how many staff positions were added in 2022-23.
2. Partner with Design, Construction and Planning to consider new dormitory designs to reduce cost and to enhance well-being for students at the Research and Education Centers.

Time Period of Action Items:

July 2022-June 2023

Resources of Action Items:

Both items use current dollars within UF/IFAS.

Results and Evaluation:

No actions were taken by UF/IFAS leadership to increase the number of staff in UF/IFAS due to a lack of available funding.

UF/IFAS leadership hired Melissa Long to be the new director of UF/IFAS Human Resources in March 2023, and she added a staff talent management recruiter on her team to provide more capacity to improve UF/IFAS hiring practices of staff.

Adding dormitory space for off campus UF/IFAS students is a top priority of the UF/IFAS directors of the Research and Education Centers (off campus). However, the current costs are quite prohibitive so there was interest in developing alternative designs for the dormitories. The students and faculty from UF's College of Design, Construction and Planning presented the students' designs and recommendations to the UF/IFAS leadership team. While the designs have not yet been used for actual design or construction of a UF/IFAS dormitory, the concepts remain in consideration when funding might allow for a new building.

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UNIT GOALS CONNECTED TO UNIVERSITY GOALS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Goal 3 Faculty recognized as preeminent by their students and peers.

Goal:

Faculty recognized as preeminent by their students and peers.

Objective:

Five objectives are associated with this goal.

- Objective 1. An increased number of faculty recognized by distinguished awards, fellowships, and memberships.
- Objective 2. An increased number of high-impact scholarly publications and creative works.
- Objective 3. An increased professional and public visibility of UF faculty.
- Objective 4. An increased faculty participation in professional service and leadership.
- Objective 5. A nurturing and invigorating academic and professional environment for all faculty across the research, teaching, and service missions of the university.

IFAS IE Detail

Providing Department: Agriculture & Natural Resources, IFAS

Administrative Support Services:

Administrative support services provided by UF/IFAS include: Information Technology, Facilities Operations and Management, Human Resources, Budgeting and Finance, Communication Services, Governmental Affairs, and Advancement. These activities are conducted in coordination and cooperation with other central UF administrative support organizations but are financed and managed by UF/IFAS. The individuals responsible for these operations report to the Office of the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources (SVP).

In the spring of each year, each unit's Director submits a report of accomplishments for the year and a statement of goals for the future to the VP. Where quantitative data on level of service (such as construction contracts managed, energy savings, personnel or financial transactions processed) are accessible or pertinent, it is provided in the annual report of accomplishments. There are no specific standards utilized to evaluate the overall management of these units. However, the report of accomplishments can be

compared with previous statements of goals. In addition, any input received by the VP's office from IFAS leadership and faculty regarding under-performance or exceptional service is also considered. Negative (or positive) input or information requiring immediate action is communicated when received. The VP's office also does periodic listening sessions with the unit heads on administrative support. Feedback is communicated to the service unit's Director and monitored. The overall quality of performance is communicated to the unit's Director in an annual letter of assessment, provided in March of each year.

A more comprehensive evaluation of the unit leader's performance is done every fifth year during the period from January to June. In preparation for the evaluation, the Director to be evaluated will prepare a summary of job duties, a statement of personal goals for the upcoming five-year period and a statement of accomplishments for the immediate past five-year period. This information, along with a statement of mission, will be provided to those from whom evaluative input is solicited.

For these evaluations, input will be solicited from the Chairs, Center Directors and other IFAS faculty and/or staff as determined by the VP's office. The completed evaluation forms are returned to the VP's office. The supervisor will meet with the individual being evaluated to discuss input received and overall performance and leadership of the individual. Following this meeting, the supervisor will provide a written summary to the individual. The deans and the VP are conducting program evaluations over a period of 3-5 years for each of its departments, to evaluate the progress of the departments and to give feedback to the departments.

Academic and Student Support Services:

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) administers the degree programs of UF/IFAS. A full description of academic and student support services and monitoring of their effectiveness is provided in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Effectiveness Process Documentation Report.

Research:

The research mission of UF/IFAS, conducted by the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, is to discover new scientific knowledge, encourage innovative study, and create applications based on sound science – delivering solutions to the challenges facing agriculture, natural resources and life sciences in Florida, our county and the world.

The Florida Agricultural Experiment Station is focused on the following goals:

- Expand our global leadership in transformational basic and applied research for contemporary agriculture, natural resource and interrelated human systems (Research Programs)
- Objectives:
 - Promote the conduct of impactful research that enhances sustainability, competitiveness and profitability of food, agricultural and natural resource systems.
 - Build and maintain strong research programs that advance knowledge and practice on a global scale.
 - Identify new and emerging research topics and research gaps that are ripe for transformation.
 - Develop seed programs to support strategic transformational research initiatives with strong potential for external funding or with high likelihood of commercialization.
 - Maximize communication, information and data systems access.
 - Modernize and improve scientific equipment and infrastructure.
 - Increase extramural support and funding.
 - Increase the number of scholarly peer-reviewed publications with impact.
 - Promote national and international programs and awareness of research quality and impacts.
 -
- Revolutionize the research culture to facilitate the transformation of agriculture, natural resource and interrelated human systems (Research Culture)
- Objectives:
 - Enhance the diversity of faculty, students and staff to strengthen innovation.
 - Recruit and retain diverse, top performing faculty and staff.
 - Develop and support new approaches to improve and expand graduate and undergraduate research experiences.
 - Facilitate the formation of multidisciplinary, intercollegiate teams that advance interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial thinking to address increasingly complex challenges.
 - Improve synergies between the land grant missions to foster communication, impacts and partnerships.
 - Foster effective research training that incorporates multinational engagement for faculty and students.
 - Increase the ability and capacity of scientists across UF/IFAS to communicate their knowledge and technology to a wider audience.
 - Reward distinction in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research programs.
- Build faculty and staff job satisfaction and quality of life on the job (Research People)
- Objectives:
 - Promote training and continuing education for faculty, staff and students.
 - Foster a mentoring and collegial environment.
 - Recognize faculty and staff at all career stages for leadership and excellence in individual and team achievements.
 - Promote faculty recognition on the state, national and international stage.

The Florida Agricultural Experiment Station (FAES) will achieve these goals by seeking ways to enable the success of individual faculty and empower multidisciplinary teams, and will strive to identify and meet future opportunities to further our research mission.

Discoveries in knowledge and practice are transferred from researchers to state extension specialists and county extension faculty who, in turn, deliver this information to Florida's businesses and workers, families, seniors and youth, government leaders, homeowners, small farmers, etc. through best practices and educational programs. This development and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of the state and its people are directly aligned with the missions of both UF/IFAS and the University of Florida.

To insure that UF/IFAS is conducting research that improves the quality of life, many needs assessment strategies and advisory groups are utilized. For example, the Florida Agricultural Council, Inc. (FAC) is a non-profit foundation consisting of five regional groups that meet at least every two years and provides a forum to discuss societal trends, educational and technological issues, and economic pressures that affect agricultural and natural resource entities in Florida. Department chairs and Research and Education Center (REC) directors have advisory councils representing various agricultural commodities, natural resource organizations, community leaders, etc. These advisory councils regularly provide input on current issues and potential needs for the future.

In conjunction with the university-wide goal setting process in 2015, IFAS Research revised their goals which were originally described in the 2013 Research Roadmap.

The FAES provides a number of support services to individual faculty, faculty research teams and units to enable the research process. These include annual training for faculty and graduate students in grantsmanship and statistics (including the design and analysis of experiments). Feedback from workshop participants is gathered and used to improve subsequent offerings. Regular alerts about research funding opportunities are targeted to individuals or teams of faculty. Funding for IFAS Early Career Grants, Research Equipment and Infrastructure Grants and periodic seed funding opportunities is available from the FAES to faculty on a competitive basis. Proposals from IFAS faculty for the UF Research Opportunity Seed Fund are reviewed and selected for submission to the UF Vice President for Research. Funds are also made available to faculty for sponsoring undergraduate research summer internships. Evaluation of current research programs and input for new programs is obtained through informal faculty discussions, quarterly breakfast workshops with faculty and quarterly meetings of the IFAS Faculty Research Advisory Group. Faculty also serve on program review panels and provide input on improvement of research services.

Research projects conducted by UF/IFAS faculty are reviewed at both the unit and federal level. New research project proposals are submitted to the USDA's Current Research Information System (CRIS) and peer reviewed, with final approval from the unit leader. Research projects align with the mission and specific goals of UF/IFAS and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). CRIS projects are approved for a five-year period. Faculty with CRIS projects submit an annual report to the USDA by September 30 of each year. This annual report includes the project's outcomes and impacts for the year, outputs (e.g., publications and presentations), participants in the project, target audiences and project modifications (if any). At the end of the five-year period, a final comprehensive report is submitted detailing overall outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project. All CRIS project proposals and reports are reviewed by a departmental review committee and the FAES CRIS Coordinator prior to submission to USDA.

Faculty progress in their research program is evaluated annually by the unit leader via the individual faculty's report of accomplishments. Evaluation criteria are determined at the unit level, and typically include the quality and quantity of peer-reviewed publications and grant funding received. Annual evaluations are submitted in the spring of each year with a written evaluation provided by the unit leader.

In addition, as a land-grant institution, the USDA requires us to demonstrate the measurable impact of the research and education conducted each year and to conduct internal and external reviews to ensure we are effectively meeting our most critical statewide needs. See the Community and Public Service (Extension) section below for more details.

Community and Public Service:

The community and public service mission of UF/IFAS, conducted by UF/IFAS Extension as part of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service (along with Florida A&M University), is to develop educational programs targeting critical issues throughout Florida. With nearly 350 Extension faculty (including courtesy faculty paid by their county employer) located in Florida's 67 counties as well as 220 state specialists on the UF campus and at 12 research centers around the state, UF/IFAS is well-positioned to disseminate the agricultural, natural resources and human systems research discoveries that can provide solutions to challenges facing the state. This development and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of the state and its people is directly aligned with the missions of both UF/IFAS and the University of Florida.

To insure that UF/IFAS Extension is conducting educational programs that address critical state issues, needs assessments and advisory groups are heavily utilized. Each county Extension office has a county-wide advisory committee and each county faculty member is expected to have at least one program advisory committee. County Extension Directors (CED) and District Extension

Directors (DED) review the membership of the committees as part of the faculty member's annual review, conducted in the spring of each year.

As a land grant institution, UF/IFAS submits an annual report to the USDA to demonstrate the impact of the research and education conducted each year. This report requires us to conduct both an internal and external assessment each year to make sure we are effectively meeting our most critical statewide needs. Externally, at a minimum, we conduct a needs assessment of the 67 county commissions in Florida. In 2011-2012, we conducted a more comprehensive needs assessment by holding listening sessions in every county, conducting ten regional meetings to discuss the findings of the listening sessions, completing a Delphi study of key stakeholders and opinion leaders and conducting an online survey of nearly 4,300 Floridians. During 2019-2020, UF/IFAS Extension began work on its next Roadmap for the organization's strategic planning for the next decade and this effort continued in 2021-22.

As a result of that effort, UF/IFAS Extension is now organized around seven key initiatives that will guide our work over the next decade (but reviewed each year as described above). These initiatives are:

- Increasing the sustainability, profitability and competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural enterprises
- Enhancing and protecting water quality, quantity and supply
- Enhancing and conserving Florida's natural resources and environmental quality
- Producing and conserving traditional and alternative forms of energy
- Empowering individuals and families to build healthy lives and achieve social and economic success
- Supporting urban and rural community resources and economic development
- Preparing youth to be responsible citizens and productive members of the workforce

Each initiative is further broken down into priority work groups, consisting of teams of county and state faculty working together to develop logic models that include situational statements, rationale, input, methodology, output and outcome/wider impact. Extension faculty use this structure to develop their own plans of work for the upcoming year that are reviewed by their CED and DED as part of their annual review.

Internally, state and county faculty reviewers assess the logic models, resource needs, and expected outcomes and impacts (i.e., measured change in knowledge, behavior, or condition) for these major statewide initiatives. Formal merit reviews are conducted annually by faculty not directly involved in a particular initiative but who are peers and understand both the logic model process and the outcomes. Extension faculty, as well as research faculty, are encouraged to use SMART objectives when determining the effectiveness of their projects. SMART objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-oriented. Reviewers rate the logic model, including SMART objectives, and provide feedback and recommendations for improvement to the initiative teams. Initiative teams then meet to make changes to the logic model. This merit review process is shared with Extension administration, including program leaders, and is part of the annual USDA report.

UF/IFAS Extension conducts county program reviews, five per year, to insure the faculty's educational programming is effective and meets the needs of the county. Teams consisting of state specialists, county faculty (from other counties) and Extension administrators and/or unit heads visit a single county for 2-3 days. Presentations and meetings are held with county Extension staff and faculty as well as county administrators, stakeholders, and clientele. Each review team submits a written report (including SWOT analysis and recommendations for improvements) to Extension administration, program leaders, and the appropriate CED and DED. DEDs select up to three priority items from the report for CEDs to work on over the following year. CEDs are required to complete a one-year follow-up report demonstrating the improvements or changes made to these priority areas. Reports are sent to Extension administration, program leaders, and DEDs and shared with unit leaders as needed.

Each December/January, UF/IFAS faculty report the transfer of research-based information to the community (i.e., non-formal student population) in terms of clientele contacts. Faculty also report the level of knowledge/skill/behavior changes found among program participants and more significant impacts such as a decline in pollution or disease.

The individual level data are reviewed by all CEDs and DEDs, or unit leaders in the case of state specialists and are part of their annual report of accomplishments. The data are organized around the initiatives and priority work groups. The summarized data are provided each Spring semester to UF/IFAS Senior Vice President's office and the Director of Governmental Relations and used for Return on Investment publications available online to the public. Trends in clientele contacts are tracked and discussed among UF/IFAS administrators and UF/IFAS Program Development and Evaluation Center staff.

A Customer Satisfaction Survey is conducted annually in 12-14 counties on a five-year rotation. Questionnaires are mailed to Extension program participants, asking them to rate their experience and the information provided. The county-level data are provided to Extension administration, DEDs and CEDs for those counties, including information on positive or negative trends and findings. CEDs are encouraged to share the data with their faculty and staff. The Florida Department of Education is also provided a copy of the report.

Through in-service trainings, Extension faculty are offered numerous opportunities to learn the latest research and discoveries from state specialists and researchers. They also receive training on SMART objectives, logic models, and evaluation methodologies and tools. These evaluation tools are tied directly to the SMART objectives within a logic model and provide measurable results that can be used for assessment.

Effectiveness Oversight:

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Meena Thiyagarajah, Chief Financial Officer; tmeena@ufl.edu

Institutional Effectiveness Report Complete: true

XResponsible Roles:

IFAS Actions for Improvement

Unit/College Actions for Improvement :

The changing of the UF presidency and UF's budget model have caused UF/IFAS leadership to begin to plan a major evaluation of its current programs and funding levels. In spring 2023, the entire 6-member UF/IFAS leadership team met with each unit leader for one hour to review their existing budget, needs, and outlook to determine a baseline of information (more than 30 meetings).

At the end of the 2022-2023 year, the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources moved to serve as the interim UF provost and new developments in the university's strategic direction are taking place.

XResponsible Roles:

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