

Vision Statement for Leading the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
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April 10, 2009

I strongly believe that land grant colleges such as Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences have a very different mission than discipline-based colleges. On the research side, the mission is to address problems related to the food, agricultural, rural, and environmental systems of the states in which we work. Doing this well requires outstanding scholarship that is motivated by, or at least relevant to, the problems of the state. It also requires a rich mix of basic, single-discipline research programs, and applied, often multi-disciplinary, research programs. Particularly for the latter, it is important to have a strong relationship with Extension programming and personnel, as well as with stakeholder groups, both to identify research priorities and to disseminate research findings. We must also dedicate ourselves to providing outstanding educational experiences for our undergraduate and graduate students. Our students and alumni are our most visible ambassadors within and beyond state borders. They are our progeny. We must ensure that providing the highest quality education to our students is recognized as just as important or more important than any other mission of the College.

My vision is that the College will address and solve problems related to the food, agricultural, rural, and environmental systems of Virginia and be recognized for doing so by the citizens of Virginia. It will also address those same issues on a national and global basis and be recognized by stakeholders and peers for the excellence and impact of its learning, discovery, and engagement faculty and programs.

Leadership from the Dean, along with sound human and fiscal management, is required to bring this vision to life. My approach to leadership is to encourage and empower others to strive for excellence, innovation, and improvement in their professional activities, and to reduce barriers to working with others in pursuit of programmatic and organizational objectives. The Dean must represent the vision and programs of the College to stakeholders within and outside the University. The Dean must care about and advocate for recognition, funding, and reward of faculty and professional staff. Particularly in the case of colleges of agriculture, the Dean must advocate for appreciation of the scholarship, academic merit, and impact of applied programs, particularly Extension programs. Finally, the Dean must be willing and able to provide direction to the College, both by implementing and leading participatory planning processes, as well as by articulating his or her ideas and vision within and outside the College.