

Administrative Council
for
Extension and Experiment Station Research Meeting

Friday, October 6, 2023
1:30-3:00 p.m.
130 Burruss Hall Conference Room

Participants: Don Taylor, Alan Grant, Randy Heflin, Mary Burrows, Paul Winistorfer, Tim Hodge, Steve Klieber, Guru Ghosh, Margie Lee, Ken Miller, Mike Gutter, Brennan Shepard, Jeff Earley, Elizabeth Hooper, Lauren Augustine

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome and Introductions (Don Taylor)**
- 2. Discussion Items**
 - a.) Approval of Meeting Minutes (Don Taylor)**

The August meeting minutes were distributed electronically with the agenda. The council reviewed and approved the August minutes.
 - b.) GAP Report Update (Alan Grant)**

Alan Grant, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs), shared the 2023 Global Agricultural Productivity (GAP) Report with the council. This report is produced by the college's global programs office (headed by Tom Thompson) annually to provide global agricultural productivity data, analysis, and policy recommendations to accelerate agricultural productivity growth around the world. The 2023 report shows that the world's current agricultural productivity growth is not high enough to meet the future need for food. The report also provides recommendations for new tools and practices that can be deployed to increase outputs with the same or fewer resources. The report was released on October 3, 2023, and was presented at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. in an event hosted in collaboration with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Sustainable Productivity Growth Coalition. This report will also be presented at several international locations over the next couple of months.
 - c.) USDA Inspection Update (Randy Heflin)**

Randy Heflin, senior associate vice president for Research and Innovation, reported that a USDA inspection took place on Virginia Tech's Blacksburg campus between October 3-4, 2023, and the university did not receive any citations. The next inspection will be in January 2024.
- 3. Unit Updates**
 - a.) Agricultural Experiment Station**

Mary Burrows, director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station (AES), provided updates on personnel hiring in AES. She reported that they received a grant from the USDA's Research Facilities Act Program (RFAP) for a greenhouse in Hampton

Roads. We are in conversations with Old Dominion University to house their orchid collection for three years. We also have a new faculty member in Hampton Roads who will focus on horticulture and greenhouse management.

Mary provided an update on recent large grant proposals submitted, grant awards provided to several AES faculty, the status of plans for a new composting facility, and an initiative to increase doctoral enrollment in CALS' departments.

AES will soon be conducting a research needs assessment to understand the needs of stakeholders.

b.) Virginia Cooperative Extension

Mike Gutter, director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), provided an update on his statewide stakeholder and faculty visits. Visits were also made to some of Virginia's community colleges.

The VCE is exploring a collaboration to create an Urban Agriculture Center in Fairfax County.

A required civil rights compliance audit of the VCE was recently completed and resulted in recommendations associated with record keeping and training. The VCE will be implementing those recommendations.

Mike also provided a brief update on searches for vacant positions on campus and across the state.

The results of a recent state-wide needs assessment found that water quality and quantity should be a key priority area for VCE moving forward.

d.) Deans

Paul Winistorfer, dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment, provided an update on a recent Master Naturalist program held in Abington and an update on hiring searches.

Margie Lee, department head of Biomedical Sciences and Pathology, represented the College of Veterinary Medicine. Margie shared that the indoor arena at the Equine Medical Center has been completed. A ribbon-cutting event will be held in December 2023. Margie also provided updates on the search for a new director of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital and the expansion of a partnership with the Virginia Department of Agriculture Animal Health Division that involves the sharing of pathology personnel and labs.

Alan Grant shared information from a conference in Northern Virginia held by Governor Youngkin to promote indoor, controlled environment agriculture.

e.) Budget and Finance

Tim Hodge, associate vice president for budgeting and financial planning, provided an update on Virginia's special session to establish a state budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and the impacts on Agency 229.

f.) OVPRI

Randy Heflin discussed the work underway to establish a new vivarium in Virginia Tech's Corporate Research Center.

g.) Government and Community Relations

Elizabeth Hooper provided an update on actions taken in response to letters sent from U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and U.S Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack to the governors of 16 states, including Virginia, on September 18, 2023, related to funding differences between land-grant Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and their non-HBCU land-grant peers in their states.

Lauren Augustine provided updates on the federal appropriations process and the Farm Bill.