

**PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
Forestry and Natural Resources Department
2022-2023 Progress Report**

Recommendation 1. Continue building on DE&I efforts in the department and take advantage of new initiatives created by the college, as well as new constituencies that have been reached with online programming during the pandemic. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goals #2 & 4)

Assessment method: Plan development 2021-22 academic year and implementation in 2022-23

Results: Develop and implement an Undergraduate DEI plan that provides a structured approach to provide awareness and education on these issues throughout the undergraduate degree program. The plan was completed in 2021 and includes presentation of DEI principals in our introductory FOR 285 course, DEI resources provided to instructional faculty and staff, and exit interviews with graduating seniors to assess DEI issues and responses. The plan was completed and initiated in the fall of 2021.

Analysis of results and reflection: Reception of DEI plan by faculty and staff instructors was good. Initiation of DEI introductions in FOR 285 was established, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion provided introduction of DEI issues to students. The one senior exit interview held to-date including DEI elements was well received.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continued use and assessment of plan will be required to determine effectiveness and assessments of gaps.

Recommendation 2. Work with college leadership to develop and coordinate a structured platform such as an advisory board for stakeholder engagement in philanthropy, student instruction/engagements/curriculum review, and public education regarding the significance and economic impact of the forest sector for the Commonwealth. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #2)

Assessment method: Plan development 2022 and implementation in 2023

Results: Develop a stakeholder/partner structure that provides for assessment, evaluation and input for the development and deployment, in collaboration with CAFE Development Office, of a philanthropic plan to build department capacity. Progress to-date includes publishing and dissemination of the inaugural issue of “inFORm”, a biannual newsletter aimed at communication with alumni and stakeholder/partners and publishing and distributing a bi-monthly Constant Contact Department E-News to alumni and partners.

Analysis of results and reflection: The department has initiated the publishing of the “inFORm” newsletter, distributing hard and virtual copies to alumni, stakeholders and partners. The department also started the distribution of the Constant Contact Department E-News to alumni and partners.

Ongoing improvement actions: Discussions with the restructured CAFE development office is underway to develop a philanthropic plan for the department. Professional development for the department’s staff has resulted in one staff graduating with an M.S. in Marketing from the Gatton College of Business and Economics with a second staff expected to graduate in May of 2024. The latter effort to improve the department’s ability to effectively communicate with stakeholders. Formal

stakeholder engagement in instruction and curriculum review has not yet been established.

Recommendation 3. Consider additional opportunities for staff professional development and recognition, and review MJRs annually and update periodically to ensure the actual activities of staff positions are adequately reflected. If not reflected in MJRs, acknowledge overload activities in the unscored general supervisor comments section of annual performance evaluations. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #3)

Assessment method: An Annual Performance Evaluation checklist including MJRs review and adjustment, staff professional development planning, overload assignment tracking was developed in 2021 and implemented in the 2022 performance evaluation cycle. Annual review of the checklists provides for progress assessment for this recommendation.

Results: Recording and recognition of overload assignments, and interest in and development of (where appropriate) professional development plans was completed in 2021 and 2022. MJR's were restructured for 6 staff to better reflect work efforts, and 5 staff initiated plans for professional development including enrollment in graduate programs at UK. .

Analysis of results and reflection: Use of checklist was successful in accomplishing this recommendation.

Ongoing improvement actions: Annual evaluations will continue to use the evaluation checklist and supervisors will continue to discuss professional development interest and opportunities with staff. Chair will provide analysis of annual evaluations to ensure maintenance, use, and evaluation of this procedure.

Recommendation 4. Ensure that short handedness does not prevent faculty and staff from accessing regular professional development opportunities such as sabbaticals or adjustment of DOEs and JAQs to learn new skills / publish (could lead to retention issues). (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #3)

Assessment method: Planning for building instructional DOE capacity in department and to build expertise in department administrative roles among faculty will be undertaken to allow opportunities for faculty to pursue to professional development opportunities.

Results: Three new faculty hires have instructional DOE's of 20 to 30 percent including responsibilities for core courses in the FOR major and Wildlife Minor. Extension faculty have also been assigned 20 percent instruction DOE and have contributed significantly instructing both required graduate and undergraduate courses. One staff position was restructured providing increased instruction of required 200 level undergraduate courses to free up faculty DOE. Restructuring of FOR curriculum has been submitted for approval. Extension coordinator responsibilities have been established on a rotation among extension faculty with a new coordinator starting in January 2024. New DUS and DGS assignments have been made.

Analysis of results and reflection: Increasing number of faculty and staff engaged in instruction and rotation of some administrative assignments should overtime help build instructional and administrative capacity and allow some faculty to have greater flexibility in pursuing professional development opportunities. However, the structured nature of our accredited undergraduate degree offerings may continue to make it difficult for easily building instructional capacity for some disciplines

and some faculty are still constrained by teaching and administrative assignments. Continued evaluation of the situation is needed and opportunities to develop plans to provide adequate redundancy in instructional capacity should be established.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continue to evaluate instructional DOE and develop a lecturer position to aid in required undergraduate degree instruction.

Recommendation 5. Formalize instructional opportunities for graduate students as Ph.D. program develops to help with career paths. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #1)

Assessment method: Initiate process in 2022

Results: One staff has been accepted in our PhD program and planning is underway to establish a lecturer position upon PhD completion. Currently the staff is instructing undergraduate degree courses in the department. The department has developed a Statement of Evidences for Lecturers and has modified its Rules of Procedure to include lecturers.

Analysis of results and reflection: The process has worked to provide instructional development for our PhD students and we have formalized pathways for instructional opportunities for our PhD students.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continue to discuss and assess instructional responsibilities for students in our newly established PhD program.

Recommendation 6. Develop a formal mentoring process for faculty in the department, drawing on college and university resources as appropriate. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #3)

Assessment method: Policy and guideline development 2022

Results: The department has established new 2 and 4 review processes and a new promotion and tenure assessment process, to increase tenured faculty's engagement with, and advice to, early career faculty. Newly hired early career faculty have been provided a mentoring team.

Analysis of results and reflection: The new 2 year, 4 year, and promotion and tenure review processes were implemented in 2023. This included the use of tenured faculty outside of the department. In all cases the processes were successful in providing valued input for the candidates and resulted in improved understanding amongst tenured faculty of early career faculty enterprises. The faculty has also initiated a brown bag program, meeting to share ideas with the idea of building collaborations. This informal sharing should enhance understanding of programs amongst faculty that will aid in mentoring.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continue to assess the strategically developed review processes and evaluate the mentoring teams for effectiveness.

Recommendation 7. Identify and secure funding for additional graduate assistantships and research technician lines in support of the departmental mission. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #3)

Assessment method: Number of stipends and distribution to support research enterprises across all faculty focus areas.

Results: Sharing stipend need among potential donors including alumni. Donors, including one alumni, is considering development of an endowment to fund a graduate stipend.

Analysis of results and reflection: Donor discussions have been fruitful and need to be continued. However, recent required increases in FRN stipends (from \$17,000 to \$26,180 for our 12 month MS and PhD students) will result in a reduction in stipend availability for both capacity funded and endowment funded departmental available stipends.

Ongoing improvement actions: Need to incorporate and/or coordinate with recommendation with recommendation 8 is needed. The department needs to develop plans for a revised department stipend distribution.

Recommendation 8. Collaborate with college and university administrations, legislators, and stakeholders to address the critical need for new facilities to meet the current and future missions of the department, college, university, and the Commonwealth. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #6)

Assessment method: Evaluation in 2022

Results: Assessment of infra-structure needs from new faculty resulted in improvements in three existing labs to improve the efficiency of both early career and senior faculty. Space allocations and renovation plans for T.P. Cooper and Dimock are underway. Developed agreement to provide US Forest Service collaborative lab space with FNR faculty in Agr. North building was developed.

Analysis of results and reflection: Current expansion plans for the VA and UK hospitals has resulted in discussion over the future of existing M-G CAFE building and infra-structure. This includes the moving of future lab spaces for US Forest Service/FNR from Agr. North building and discussions involving FNR space in Dimock and the entire TP Cooper Building. The footprint for a new forestry and natural resources building has been established on the M-G CAFE campus.

Ongoing improvement actions: Maintain discussions within M-G CAFE administration on need for a cohesive plan to establish a new FNR building and effective and efficient move of FNR spaces from Dimock and TP Cooper buildings including a strategy to include a new FNR building as a funding priority of UK.

Recommendation 9. Consider options to address needs created by the loss of motor pool (e.g., leasing). The loss of faculty and staff time addressing the issue is a real cost issue.

Assessment method: Initiate implementation of elements in 2021

Results: Purchasing of a number of motorpool vehicles was accomplished to increase the department vehicle pool, especially for Extension. Several staff obtained rights to monitor federal property to address vehicle needs, particular for field research and operations at Robinson Forest.

Analysis of results and reflection: Purchase of motorpool vehicles improved UK vehicle access for

Extension. However, need was not fully met, faculty both extension and research have found it more advantageous to be reimbursed for use of personal vehicles. Inability of UK rental contractors to provide vans and trucks for instruction and research remains highly problematic.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continue to monitor vehicle need with department across all mission areas, maintain needs list for federal vehicle acquisition and monitor federal surplus.

Recommendation 10. Formalize and communicate a plan with enough details to address the crisis of faculty lines and succession planning, which threatens SAF accreditation core competencies and the department's education, research, and extension programs. (CAFE 2015 – 2020 Goal #3)

Assessment method: Develop plan 2021 – implementation of approved plan in 2022

Results: Faculty hires for needed areas was accomplished in 2022 and 2023 according to approved plan.

Analysis of results and reflection: Completed

Ongoing improvement actions: