

Promotion Guidance for AgriLife Research Faculty Task Force

Progress Report - July 2021

Task Force members met on July 7 and 16 and further discussed and refined the Promotion Guidance document that was crafted last month. A “standard operating procedure” as an addendum (supplementary document) to the promotion guidance document has also been developed. Both documents are at the final stage of committee review. We plan to submit the final report next week.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Strategic Plan

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Strategic Plan Task Force has had two meetings since the last report (June 8) to debrief from our virtual town halls (these were explained in last report) and develop a writing plan; then (July 21) to review writing done so far and further advance the reports writing. The report contains seven sections led by different task force members who also led them in the virtual town halls; the first six sections align to the TAMU strategic plan. Two primary sets of resources were used to develop the writing on this strategic plan, the SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) activity that the Task Force conducted early on, and the COALS community listening sessions conducted more recently. While content is now written for all sections, more time is needed for developing common presentation writing format across sections (we are being mindful that polishing and aesthetic formatting will take place by professionals after we hand it off) as well as some time for reflection. We are targeting three to four pages of condensed writing in aspirational language. The committee continues to discuss how to get feedback from stakeholders in a timely manner to ensure all voices are valued. At our next meeting (August 2nd) Dr. Juan Landivar will present the AgriLife Research Strategic plan to our task force and discuss ways the COALS strategic plan can align with the AgriLife Research Strategic plan.

College Policies for Graduate Education

The College Policies for Graduate Education Task Force has had two additional meetings since our last report (June 3, July 27) following our two town halls for the COALS community. In the first meeting we reflected on the town halls and finalized our questionnaire to departments. The questionnaire had eight sections following questions in our charge, each sections had multiple to many specific questions. The questionnaire was sent to 15 Graduate Coordinators and their Department Heads and we received answers from all of them, along with many additional supporting documents. We thank the departments for being very responsive to our extensive inquiries! In our July 27th meeting we furthered our strategy to compile all of this information and write our options report, as well as to provide summary feedback to the departments. The limiting factor at this point is compiling the information to make it usable to report writers and departments, after which writing will commence. As with the five town hall sections and the eight sections on the departmental questionnaire, the Task Force plans to divide writing into similar sections with different groups of Task Force members leading each. We expect to begin writing as soon as information can be compiled, likely in the next week. The options report will combine information gained from the town halls and the departmental questionnaires.

COALS Individualized Major in the College

Since the last report (which discussed having met with the Department Heads and Associate Heads) the Task Force met June 7 with the Academic Advisors to gain their input. The task force presented a similar rough-draft case, asked some clarifying questions, and had an open discussion with many of the Academic Advisors. The Task Force's perspectives on opportunities, charge, background, case studies, basics of degree, and potential administration were presented, updated with feedback from the previous meetings with the Department Heads. There was good participation and interest with many outstanding comments and questions raised. The conversation with the academic advisors highlighted many of the same concerns and tempered enthusiasm for this plan that the Department Heads did previously. Both sets of stakeholders did not recognize a major need or hole that the proposed individualized major would fill justifying the large investment in resources required to make the major work. The task force met again (July 26) to debrief and further our writing plan with discussion helping to shape the outline of the report. The report will contain the roadmap as planned but will also caution that expressed concerns of stakeholders outweigh enthusiasm for use of resources needed to obtain success in creating an individualized major at this time. Seth has drafted the report and it will be shared and edited by other members before meeting again next week for a final or near-final discussion, with the report finalized for distribution shortly thereafter.

International Research and Development in AgriLife (Task Force #9) Progress Report - July 2021

The International Research and Development in AgriLife Task Force conducted its subcommittee tasks through email communications, and the full committee met via TEAMS on 7 July 2021. Survey questionnaire has been developed in Qualtrics. We plan to send out the questionnaire for survey next week for a two-week survey. The outline of the final report has been prepared, discussed, and finalized. Once the survey results are available, data will be analyzed, and final report will be prepared. We anticipate having the final report completed in late August.

Youth Development in AgriLife Task Force

July 2021 Report

The task force has completed the Inventory of youth programs within AgriLife. The remaining aspect of our Charge has not been finalized but below are the respective solutions* our team has developed for the Options Report regarding the future organization and administration of youth development academic and extension programs in AgriLife:

Option 1:

Create and Implement a “Renowned Visiting Scholars in Youth Development” Program

The Renowned Visiting Scholars in Youth Development program would attract world-leaders in youth development research and extension to our campus. Scholars would be in-residence at Texas A&M for one year. During that time, the Scholars would mentor and collaborate with existing faculty, extension professionals, post-doctoral trainees, and top graduate students. Two Renowned Visiting Scholars in Youth Development, one focused on research and one focused on extension, would be in-residence concurrently.

Option 2:

Create a Coordinator of Youth Development position in the office of the Vice Chancellor

The Coordinator of Youth Development would be charged with creating synergies and enhancing communication among faculty, specialists, and advanced graduate students conducting research and outreach in youth development. The Coordinator would lead AgriLife in identifying renowned scholars, actively seek funding opportunities for conducting youth development research and outreach, and establish and use networks and inventories of AgriLife faculty and specialists to assemble teams to conceptualize projects and strategically pursue external funding. The coordinator would also organize a Youth Development Council comprised of representative personnel from within AgriLife agencies and COALS. The Council would meet quarterly to review and discuss youth development programs and research, thereby facilitating increased communication and coordination among colleagues.

Option 3:

Create an AgriLife Institute for Youth Development

The AgriLife Institute for Youth Development would be a community of scholars, practitioners, and students engaged in youth development research, education, and service activities who all have a desire to advance the field of youth development. The institute would be representative of all AgriLife entities including the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M Forest Service, and the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory. Main areas of focus within the Institute would need to be identified such that existing resources and networks are leveraged to foster innovative, cutting-edge solutions to youth development issues. A rich array of programming (e.g., conferences, lecture series, symposia, summits) would be included in the Institute to create a space for inquiry and dialogue among individuals working in youth development across AgriLife. A Director in the Institute would manage processes within the Institute, but not direct the work of individuals and/or teams.

Option 4:

Do Nothing – Leave Youth Development as it is

Youth Development efforts across AgriLife are exemplary as they are.

*Note. These number aligned with the respective options are not indicative of a priority or ranking order.

These options and the final Options Report will be voted on by the task force before submission.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Strong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "S".

Robert Strong