

GROWING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: **THE IDEAL OF A CONTEMPORARY LAND-GRANT MISSION**

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana

Education, in the broadest of truest sense, will make an individual seek to help all people, **regardless of race, regardless of color, regardless of condition.**

GEORGE
WASHINGTON
CARVER

SETTING THE STAGE

We are pleased to present the 2021-2026 Purdue University College of Agriculture Strategic Plan. Our previous strategic plan provided an important roadmap for our College's success. Building on that success, we began the process of developing our next plan in fall 2019 by assembling a 28-member task force made up of faculty and staff members representative of our College. We held discussions with College administrative leaders, alumni, advisory board members, undergraduate and graduate students, and other stakeholders to define the College's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. We also worked with these groups to define the visionary grand challenges facing our College now and in the future.

Using the input gleaned from thoughtful discussions with these groups, we restated our Core Values and Culture and defined our Mission (what we must do to attain the ideal of a contemporary land-grant mission) and Vision (where we aspire to go in growing a sustainable future). In the context of our Mission and Vision, we have built our plan around these College-wide goals:

- ▶ **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** New models of best practices, attending to core values and culture, for integrating diversity, equity and inclusive excellence into the living culture of our College.
- ▶ **Teaching and Learning:** Preparing students in Indiana and around the world with breadth and depth of learning programs marked by academic excellence, innovative teaching, comprehensive curricular content and experiential learning.
- ▶ **Research:** Preeminence in discovery and innovation to address global challenges in food, life and natural resource sciences.
- ▶ **Engagement:** A nationally recognized model for serving the ideal of a contemporary land-grant mission contributing to societal progress in Indiana and expanding to global levels.

The draft of the plan was vetted both internally and externally during spring 2020. Observations and input from many individuals helped us produce the final version of the plan. Our thanks go to the task force members and all those whose input helped us shape the plan. With much momentum generated by our last strategic plan, our 2021-2026 strategic plan is a bold roadmap for taking Purdue Agriculture to even higher levels of excellence in all that we do.

WHO WE ARE

In the College of Agriculture at Purdue University, we are committed to core values and culture that guide us in all that we do. Our activities span the globe in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and societal engagement through Extension. They are all anchored to these core values and culture that serve as the overarching principles by which we conduct ourselves. We promise to fulfill these expectations by demonstrable actions.

- ▶ We commit ourselves to ethics, honesty and integrity in everything we do.
- ▶ We celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion with respect for each other in a climate that promotes inclusive excellence.
- ▶ We demonstrate civic values, citizenship, social and cultural competence, and commitment to global responsibilities with responsiveness and leadership throughout the College.
- ▶ We dedicate ourselves to uphold our responsibility and accountability toward education, society and the environment.
- ▶ We pride ourselves in creating new models for cultures and climates that nurture academic and professional career development of all faculty, staff and students.
- ▶ We pledge uncompromised commitment to our values and culture in all interactions with all our constituencies at home and around the world.
- ▶ We render ourselves as an exemplar of demonstrating standards of core values and culture in the practice of higher education.

As overarching principles, our core values and culture are embodied in all aspects of this strategic plan. We commit to assessing our success with accountability to all our constituents.

AT A GLANCE

THE BIG PICTURE

At a glance, the Big Picture view of this strategic plan is anchored to the following premises as the defining aspects of our College of Agriculture going forward.

- ▶ **WE ARE “GLOBAL”**
in our identity.
- ▶ **WE MAKE EDUCATION AVAILABLE TO ALL**
in the contemporary spirit of a land-grant university.
- ▶ **WE NURTURE OUR PEOPLE**
— faculty, staff and students — for success, and we champion diversity, equity and inclusive excellence in all that we do.
- ▶ **WE PREPARE GRADUATES WITH COMPREHENSIVE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION**
with outstanding experiential learning.
- ▶ **WE ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES**
in food, life and natural resources by research and problem-solving with modern and novel science and technology.
- ▶ **WE ENGAGE WITH LOCAL-TO-GLOBAL COMMUNITIES**
in our service to people, and we focus on community-driven Extension programs.

This Big Picture view is manifested through the Mission, Vision, Goals and corresponding Strategic Initiatives described in our plan.

OUR MISSION

THE IDEAL OF A CONTEMPORARY LAND-GRANT MISSION

Embody the ideal of a contemporary land-grant mission to prepare tomorrow's leaders for meeting society's needs.

Key Characteristics

- ▶ **Education and experience at all levels** (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate and professional) for students from all walks of life, attending to their access and success — affordability, academic support, facilities and equipment, timely graduation, career placement and beyond — and signifying educational value.
- ▶ **Basic and applied research** with relevance, purpose and responsiveness to societal needs, advancing education and providing experiences for professional growth.
- ▶ **Extension programs** engaging partnerships with diverse constituencies in Indiana and, globally, toward meeting agricultural needs and challenges.

OUR VISION

GROWING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Achieve worldwide leadership in growing a sustainable future addressing challenges in food, life and natural resource sciences, working across disciplines.

Key Characteristics

- ▶ **People, purpose and productivity** impacting integrative dimensions of food systems and environmental ecology with outstanding leadership in growing a sustainable future.
- ▶ **Premier undergraduate education** with transformational experiences evidenced by innovative teaching and learning, comprehensive curricular content, experiential co-curricular activities, state-of-the-art infrastructure and high-value academic support services.
- ▶ **Coveted place of choice for talents from around the world** to advance their education and experience through globally renowned graduate, postgraduate and professional programs.
- ▶ **Visionary research and applications** toward meeting global challenges through discipline-based and interdisciplinary endeavors.
- ▶ **Community-driven engagement focusing on Extension programs** with mutual partnerships supported by research and scholarship that add value to the greater good and strengthen lives and livelihoods in Indiana, extending to national and global communities.
- ▶ **Exemplary integration of programs** amongst teaching, learning, research, scholarship and engagement as a catalyst for connecting with other disciplines in the College, the University and external constituencies.

GOALS AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Mission and Vision of the College of Agriculture will be achieved through four goal areas with the global dimensions embedded in each area — Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Teaching and Learning, Research, and Engagement. These goal areas and their characteristics (as end-state evidence of achievement) are illustrated as follows.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Advance new models of best practices, attending to core values and culture, for integrating diversity, equity and inclusive excellence into the living culture of the College.

Key Characteristics

- ▶ **Advocacy** of the value of multicultural competence, diversity, equity and inclusive excellence throughout the College.
- ▶ **A culture of welcoming all people** that offers opportunities for everyone to succeed and thrive.
- ▶ **A collaborative community** where the benefits of human and intellectual diversity, and inclusive excellence, are valued as intrinsic assets at the core of educational and professional development.
- ▶ **A sense of belonging** with respect and dignity, transparency and freedom of self-expression, open communication and individual identities embraced for inclusivity and excellence that strengthen a multicultural community.
- ▶ **Equity in representation** among faculty, staff and students demonstrated through recruitment, retention, professional development and participation in collaborative activities.
- ▶ **Peer recognition** of the College's diversity and inclusion programs as new models of best practices that inform other educational environments for emulation.

Key Strategic Initiatives

- ▶ **Equip faculty, staff and students** with tools to recognize what it means and takes to have a diverse and inclusive environment.
- ▶ **Conduct new College employee welcome orientation** (faculty, staff, graduate students) through:
 - Initial diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) conversations.
 - Professional development with continued DEI conversations for expansion of DEI awareness.
- ▶ **Respect the value of staff** with support (e.g., time release, financial assistance) for professional development in DEI and for career advancement.
- ▶ **Establish DEI core curricula and training programs** to be available for all in the College.
- ▶ **Develop affinity groups** for the College.

- ▶ **Create recruitment initiatives to increase the diversity** of staff hiring pools.
- ▶ **Create guidelines, expectations and rubrics** for assessing DEI compliance and competency of staff and faculty to use when assigning merit.



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Prepare students for tomorrow's world with breadth and depth of learning programs, academic excellence, innovative teaching, comprehensive curricular content and experiential learning.

Key Characteristics

- ▶ **Access-to-success for students recruited from all walks of life** through teaching and learning with innovative approaches and comprehensive curricula for premier undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate and professional programs.
- ▶ **Diverse opportunities for experiential learning** complementing curricular programs with field experiences, global awareness and exposure to societal challenges.
- ▶ **Integration of educational and personal growth** — educating the “whole” student with academic, professional, civic and personal growth — developing leadership to make a difference in the world.
- ▶ **A community of engaged faculty and staff** that strives for excellence in teaching and learning, improved student outcomes and innovations with peer-recognized research and scholarship.
- ▶ **Excellence in academic support, services and facilities** — educational affordability, academic and career advising with mentoring, teaching/learning facilities and support for well-being that help fulfill the promises of a transformational education.



Key Strategic Initiatives

- ▶ **Attract, recruit, retain and promote success of a diverse group of students** (including underrepresented, underprivileged, nontraditional, multicultural, urban and rural).
 - ▶ **Provide academic and financial support** to students from diverse backgrounds.
 - ▶ **Promote and support faculty and staff development**, and provide access to training for teaching/learning and academic support services.
 - ▶ **Utilize PK-12 engagement as a pre-recruitment strategy** to build relationships with students and strengthen the educational pipeline to Purdue and higher education.
 - ▶ **Ensure that students are supported** in areas of academic and professional development, as well as overall well-being attending to food security, physical and mental health, and cultural acclimation.
 - ▶ **Develop cutting-edge curricula** with comprehensive content, up-to-date teaching and learning methods, flexibility, openness to new ideas and a wide range of experiential learning opportunities for students (e.g., study abroad, service learning, leadership development, undergraduate research, conference participation, Department and College-level representation, and other extra-/co-curricular activities).
- ▶ **Be a preferred university** for industry employers in terms of jobs and internship placement, academic and leadership programs, and support through Agricultural Advancement.
 - ▶ **Attract, retain and promote world-class faculty and staff** to support teaching, advising and learning initiatives.
 - ▶ **Provide resources** to faculty, staff and teaching assistants to allow for further educational development and learning new areas and teaching techniques.
 - ▶ **Reach out to all students with the opportunity to connect with faculty mentors** outside the classroom and alumni mentors for career/professional development.
 - ▶ **Expand online course offerings and programs**, attending to learning disabilities (e.g., hearing-impaired) to make them widely available to a variety of clientele.
 - ▶ **Ensure a breadth of career services** in partnership with the University's Center for Career Opportunities (CCO) for both general fields in agriculture and specialized careers aligned with the students' majors.

Achieve preeminence in discovery and innovation to address global challenges in food, life and natural resource sciences.

Key Characteristics

- ▶ **Basic research** advancing its impact on the world.
- ▶ **Leadership in interdisciplinary and collaborative research** expanding the research footprint and impact on the frontiers of knowledge and applications.
- ▶ **Innovative applications** meeting challenging societal needs as a leading contributor toward advancing quality of life, livelihood and the environment.
- ▶ **Global recognition for driving discovery toward solutions to challenges** of food, life and natural resource systems.
- ▶ **Accomplishments** that raise the distinction, stature and world rankings of the College.
- ▶ **Success in garnering significant investments** from public and private entities at state, national and international levels, thus advancing the global visibility and competitiveness of the College.

Key Strategic Initiatives

- ▶ **Drive discovery**
 - **Seek solutions that address challenges** of food, life and dimensions of natural resource systems and the environment.
 - **Conduct basic research** that creates fundamental knowledge to broaden discovery pathways.
 - **Enable data science and digital technologies** for the next generation of decision-making for food, life science and agriculture.
- ▶ **Address global challenges through discovery and innovation**
 - **Invest in people:**
 - **Promote leadership in interdisciplinary research** to expand the College's research footprint and impact on the frontiers of knowledge and applications by facilitating connections and creative collaborations.
 - **Champion accomplishments** that raise the distinction, stature and world rankings of the College.
 - **Recruit, retain and promote** world-class faculty, staff and students.
 - **Maximally engage the next generation** of thinkers and problem-solvers to be future-ready through innovative graduate programs.
 - **Empower a working and learning environment** that welcomes, values, supports and promotes diversity, inclusion and equity for all persons.



■ **Modernize facilities and resources**

- **Design and refresh facilities** with people-centric designs that promote socialization within (and between) research groups.
- **Identify and invest in unique facilities** that promote discipline convergence in addressing multifaceted research problems.
- **Plan new research workspaces** for greater flexibility and adaptability.
- **Align resources to pivot** to match new research needs.

■ **Create and leverage strategic alliances**

- **Attract significant investments** from public and private entities at state, national and international levels.
- **Identify and seek unconventional partners and alliances** while remaining connected to current stakeholders.

■ **Conceive and develop disruptive frameworks and technologies for agriculture, food and life sciences**

- **Engage in creative activities** (e.g., Hackathons and Ag-Eng days) that hasten ideation and team formation.
- **Promote and recognize team efforts** that expand the reach of agriculture and life science discovery.

■ **Promote an “ideation-to-outcomes” approach to science**

- **Develop innovative applications** in meeting challenging societal needs as a leading contributor toward advancing quality of life, livelihood and the environment.
- **Foster, recognize and reward entrepreneurship** in research and graduate education.

Demonstrate a nationally recognized model for serving the ideal of a contemporary land-grant mission contributing to societal progress in Indiana and expanding to global levels.

Key Characteristics

- ▶ **Public engagement programs** for positioning global sustainability of agriculture and the environment, as well as the worldwide image of Purdue agriculture for its research accomplishments.
- ▶ **Advancing public trust** in agriculture and pursuit of new opportunities.
- ▶ **Raising interest in STEM education** for agricultural and environmental careers among young generations by engaging with PK-12 populations.
- ▶ **Need-based and constituency-focused Extension programs**, in partnership with diverse populations addressing contemporary societal issues.
- ▶ **Agile, effective and efficient responsiveness** for development, execution and assessment of Extension initiatives.
- ▶ **Recognized value creation** by contributions to public good that benefit Indiana and extend to national and global levels.
- ▶ **Focused international engagement with partnerships** that advance societal development, fulfilling agricultural needs and aspirations around the world.

Key Strategic Initiatives

- ▶ **Create innovative, multidisciplinary educational programming** addressing issues relevant to Indiana and expanding to national and international communities with programs in:
 - Big data/digital agriculture.
 - STEM education throughout life.
 - Responsiveness to current issues (e.g., urban agriculture, mental health, opioid addiction, invasive species and diseases, food safety, modern multidisciplinary farm decision-making, community and economic development, and production efficiency and sustainability).
 - International Extension (per Federal Extension guidelines as pertaining and beneficial to the United States).
- ▶ **Expand the College's reach of Extension** through diversification of audiences, programming and delivery methods recognizing the social and cultural contexts of constituencies through:
 - Online introductory-to-advanced programming (e.g., Urban Agriculture Certificate, pesticide application licensing, Master Cattleman, Tree Stewards).
 - Educating new and current employees to advance their knowledge of the subject matter of their interest and corresponding skills for delivery methods.
 - Introducing Extension as a career option and identifying new audiences and opportunities for people to try Extension as a career (e.g., internships).

- Rebranding of 4-H programs to reach PK-12 underrepresented groups and youth.
- Contemporary communication technology to make existing and emerging resources more accessible (e.g., visual impairment, multilingual literacy and other challenges).
- Selectively focused international Extension using emerging technologies.

Raise awareness of the impact of programs

- ▶ with evaluation, messaging and branding through:
 - Compilation and analyses of impact data from throughout the state.
 - Marketing strategy for sharing data and success stories from Extension and engagement programs.
 - Evaluating and assessing domestic and international Extension programming.

Promote a diverse and inclusive Extension workforce

- ▶ with programs for:
 - Demonstrating diversity in leadership throughout the Extension organization.
 - Ensuring that all Extension personnel complete the Navigating Difference training program and every Extension region/county completes the Coming Together for Racial Understanding program.

- Fostering affinity groups for Extension programs and expanding DEI workshops at Extension’s Professional Development Conference (PDC).

- ▶ **Engage with and cultivate donors** at the state, national and global levels for increasing private funds to support the College’s initiatives.



KEY PRIORITIES

Based on our Mission, Vision, Goals and Strategic Initiatives, the defining aspects of the College of Agriculture **premised at the Big Picture level** are once again reiterated as follows.

- ▶ **We are “global”** in our identity.
- ▶ **We make education available to all** in the contemporary spirit of a land-grant university.
- ▶ **We nurture our people** — faculty, staff and students — for success, and we champion diversity, equity and inclusive excellence in all that we do.
- ▶ **We prepare graduates with comprehensive and transformational education** with outstanding experiential learning.
- ▶ **We address global challenges** in food, life and natural resources by research and problem-solving with modern and novel science and technology.
- ▶ **We engage with local-to-global communities** in our service to people, and we focus on community-driven Extension programs.

Given these premises of this Big Picture, the **Key Priority Actions** that will guide the College in moving forward during the next five years are described as follows.

- ▶ **Think “big” in the global context** for key initiatives advancing the College’s impact on the world.
- ▶ **Invest in and empower people** — faculty, staff and students — with incentives and infrastructure support to make a difference locally, nationally and globally.
- ▶ **Promote diversity, equity and inclusion** with a celebrated culture of inclusive excellence.
- ▶ **Enhance student access, retention and success** toward rewarding careers and fulfillment of life.
- ▶ **Expand transformational learning opportunities** for increased student participation.

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity,
the stability, and beauty of the biotic community.
It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

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- ▶ **Expand online education** for acceleration through degree programs, professional advancement and global access to education for all.
- ▶ **Pursue data science and advance digital agriculture** for meeting global challenges in sustainably advancing agricultural productivity and securing a robust economy.
- ▶ **Advance the Plant Sciences initiative** toward feeding the world.
- ▶ **Develop and implement community needs-based Extension programs.**
- ▶ **Raise public understanding** of agriculture, natural resources and related sciences.
- ▶ **Invest in facilities and infrastructure** supporting world-class education, research and Extension.
- ▶ **Position the College to capture emerging opportunities** with agility and resolve.
- ▶ **Increase funding** for advancing the College (e.g., general fund; gifts, grants and contracts; private funds).

LEARN MORE

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