

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences  
*Alumni and Friends*



UNIVERSITY OF  
**FLORIDA**

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**IFAS**

Strategic Planning Session  
February 24 & 25, 2005

## INTRODUCTION

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) has become increasingly diverse in the types of majors offered, student population and alumni base. Alumni from the CALs, including the School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC), School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) and the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering number more than 18,500. In addition, the college maintains an important role as the teaching branch of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) with more than 4,000 students studying in over 20 different majors. . The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Alumni and Friends (CALSAF) organization provides support to CALs and IFAS in a variety of ways including support of student recruitment initiatives, providing a scholarship, and managing the relationship between the college and its alumni. In an effort to strengthen the CALSAF organization and its connection to, and support of, CALs/ IFAS and its alumni, former students and friends, a strategic planning session was held. The following pages will outline the session details, procedures and outcomes.

### ***CALS Alumni and Friends Mission***

*CALS Alumni and Friends is dedicated to building a network to enhance awareness and promote the quality programs of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences through fraternity among graduates, former students and friends.*

## PARTICIPANTS

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Alumni and Friends organization (CALSAF) consists of graduates from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs), School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC), and School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE).

The invited participants were from the following stakeholder groups:

- Alumni of CALs and SFRC
- Current Students
- CALs Alumni and Friends Board Members
- Agriculture and Natural Resource Industry Leaders
- Faculty and Staff

The CALSAF Strategic Planning Session was an interactive meeting. Stakeholder groups were brought together to create desired future scenarios after reviewing the organization's past and evaluating present trends. This session was held to look at the changing role of the CALSAF organization and its relevance to the college's diverse stakeholders. The sessions goal was to find a common ground where action could be taken. Then short-term and longer-term action plans were established.

# Stakeholder Participants

Terry Baker  
Alumnus SFRC  
USDA Forest Service

Hannah Carter  
Alumnus/Faculty  
Wedgworth Leadership Institute

Scott Christmas  
Alumnus/Industry Representative  
Florida Farm Bureau

Jodi DeGraw  
Alumnus/Graduate Student  
Agricultural Operations Management

John Faryna  
Undergraduate Student  
Microbiology and Cell Science

Liz Felter  
Alumnus/Staff  
IFAS Marketing and Communications

Lisa Guion  
Faculty  
Family, Youth and Community Sciences

Chip Hinton  
Alumnus/Industry Representative  
Florida Strawberry Growers' Association

Brent Howard  
Alumnus, CALSAF Board

Kevin Huesman  
Alumnus/CALSAF Board  
Land O'Lakes-Purina

Mike Marshall  
Alumnus  
Marshall Tree Farm

Diane Mealo  
Staff/Graduate Student  
Mid-Florida Research and Education Center

George Pickhardt  
Alumnus/CALSAF Board  
Arrow Environmental Services

Bud Riviere  
Alumnus/CALSAF Board  
Chipola College

Jerry Southwell  
Alumnus /CALSAF Board

Emily Sperling  
Alumnus /Faculty  
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Janna Underhill  
Alumnus/Staff  
Food Science and Human Nutrition

Trey Whitehurst  
Alumnus, CALSAF Board

## Mixed Groups

1

Jodie DeGraw  
Lisa Guion  
Bud Riviere  
Emily Sperling

2

Chip Hinton  
Mike Marshall  
George Pickhardt  
Janna Underhill

3

Hannah Carter  
John Faryna  
Liz Felter  
Kevin Huesman  
Trey Whitehurst

4

Terry Baker  
Scott Christmas  
Brent Howard  
Diane Mealo  
Jerry Southwell

## REVIEWING THE PAST AND CURRENT STATUS



Participants were asked to review a current status statement prepared by the facilitator. The statement, which was constructed using information from interviews with stakeholders held prior to the meeting, included information about CALSAF's mission statement, general purpose, structure, resources, activities, communication and current issues. Participants were then asked to review and discuss in groups the current status of the organization, particularly in regards to the mission statement and purpose.

### Outcomes of Reviewing the Current Status:

**Mission** CALS Alumni and Friends is dedicated to building a network to enhance awareness and promote the quality programs of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences through fraternity among graduates, former students and friends.

- The majority of the group felt that the current mission, as stated above, adequately represented the CALSAF organization. It was suggested that the organization's mission should include services to not only graduates, former students and friends, but also current students

**Purpose** The stated purpose of the organization is to support IFAS through fundraising, legislative advocacy and student recruitment.

- It was suggested that the most beneficial support CALSAF could provide to IFAS is in building a comprehensive alumni network
- CALSAF should improve participation in current events versus creating more events
- It was suggested that fundraising should be an outcome, not a purpose
- The true connection that students make is at the department level. Therefore a concentrated effort to improve department-based alumni relations should be made
- It was suggested that though one of the organization's primary issues is to attract students, alumni could play a larger role in student recruitment

**Resources** The organization currently has part-time staffing through an employee of CALS academic programs.

- A full-time executive director is needed to advance the organization
- Additional resources need to be garnered to support increased activities by the CALSAF organization

## REVIEWING THE PAST AND CURRENT STATUS (cont.)

### Current Issues

It was determined that CALSAF is not adequately...

- Including non-traditional agriculture majors, particularly those in the life sciences
- Learning from other top-notch colleges of agriculture including Cornell and Purdue
- Cultivating relationships with current students early on in hopes to strengthen their participation in CALSAF. It was suggested that this could be done by making the organization more visible to current students at the career expo, student barbecues, etc. and including current students in alumni events
- Coordinating and encouraging department-based alumni relations. It was suggested that the true connection that students make with the college is at the department level
- Providing continuing education and career development opportunities for alumni
- Providing business-to-business networking opportunities for alumni
- Effectively recruiting volunteers and alumni board members and providing a committee structure
- Representing alumni regionally
- Reaching out to alumni from off-campus programs
- Tracking alumni through surveys

<b>Number of Living CALS Alumni by Decade</b>					
Includes CALS, School of Forest Resources (1,831), School of Natural Resources and					
<b>Decade</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>% Male</b>
Unknown	7				
1930's	36	1	2.78%	35	97.22%
1940's	243	2	0.82%	241	99.18%
1950's	880	11	1.25%	869	98.75%
1960's	911	34	3.73%	877	96.27%
1970's	2957	644	21.78%	2,313	78.22%
1980's	3627	1,270	35.02%	2,357	64.98%
1990's	5551	2,491	44.87%	3,060	55.13%
2000's (up to	4337	2,448	56.44%	1,889	43.56%
1994-2004	8,429	4,366	51.80%	4,063	48.20%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>18,549</b>	<b>6,901</b>	<b>37.20%</b>	<b>11,648</b>	<b>62.80%</b>



Stakeholder	Proud	Sorry
<p><b>Alumni &amp; Industry Representatives</b>  <i>Trends Discussed: urbanization, diversity of students and alumni, and demands on resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing the need to expand the focus of the organization to include all CALS alumni, not just traditional agriculture majors</li> <li>• Participating in a session that addresses the issues</li> <li>• Ability to use ambassadors to recruit CALS students (future alumni)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of communication with non-traditional CALS alumni</li> <li>• Failure to take full advantage of the alumni market</li> </ul>
<p><b>Faculty &amp; Staff</b>  <i>Trends Discussed: diversity of students and alumni, demands on time/what's in it for me, and competition for resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging, studying and planning for a changing student population</li> <li>• Good feedback from students about the relationships they have with CALS faculty and staff</li> <li>• Providing networking opportunities and social activities for alumni</li> <li>• Progress being made towards serving diverse alumni population through diverse career development and alumni activities</li> <li>• Accomplishing many milestones with few human and financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not investing in enough activities and opportunities with students that turn into a connection with them as alumni once they graduate</li> <li>• Lack of cultivation of relationships with non-traditional CALS students</li> <li>• Lack of professional and personal development, including continued education, for alumni</li> <li>• Neglecting to further cultivate relationships with non-Florida and international alumni</li> <li>• Not addressing these issues sooner</li> <li>• Broadening alumni base to address support and need for resources</li> <li>• Need for increased level of organization</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current CALS Students</b>  <i>Trends Discussed: diversity of students and alumni, what's in it for me, and urbanization</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased emphasis on attending college</li> <li>• The increase in the student base and its diversity</li> <li>• Having the opportunity to utilize CALS Ambassadors to recruit students and in alumni relations</li> <li>• Opportunities for CALS students to interact with faculty and alumni</li> <li>• The College's variety of student enrichment activities and opportunities for scholarships</li> <li>• Promoting agriculture awareness programs (Food for Thought)</li> <li>• Increasing the number of CALS alumni with an understanding of agriculture and natural resources</li> <li>• Building relationships with industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to increase recruiting in underrepresented areas (rural areas and urban areas with a lack of knowledge about agriculture)</li> <li>• Lack of outreach to alumni and current students from different backgrounds, particularly in the life sciences</li> <li>• Lack of emphasis on including student activities at alumni events</li> <li>• Not verbalizing the needs and wants of students to the college's administration</li> <li>• Lack of understanding and appreciation of agriculture and natural resources by general students and population</li> <li>• General public's ignorance about Food production</li> </ul>

## FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Participants returned to their mixed groups to create a future for the CALSAF organization in the year 2020. Using that future as their present, each group visualized a CALSAF organization that was feasible, desirable and personally motivating. Each group provided details that represented the best possible environment for the CALSAF organization to operate in 2020. Participants were instructed to disregard cost and degree of difficulty in this task. The groups then presented the major accomplishments that CALSAF made by the year 2020.

### In the year 2020 CALSAF...

- Knows where alumni are and what they are doing (employment, sphere of influence, etc.)
- Has well-attended alumni events
- Increases the number of scholarships and fellowships offered to CALS students
- Is a model for all college-level alumni associations at land-grant institutions
- Has international groups/network
- Helped IFAS achieve full legislative support at the local, state and national levels
- Has involvement in CALS curriculum development and needs assessment
- Has an alumni building
- Offers comprehensive job networking and placement
- Has a strong connection with all CALS alumni -- traditional agriculture, natural resources, social science and life science alumni alike
- Provides resources that educate high school and community college advisors that help recruit students to CALS
- Has full-time staff and student intern positions
- Offers mentoring programs that provide career guidance, mentoring for new alumni in medical professions, and guidance for current students
- Has a sponsored lecture series
- Has alumni in each of Florida's counties that recruit students
- Prints a relevant annual alumni publication
- Has an overabundance of volunteers desiring to serve in CALSAF Board positions and committees
- Has active volunteer committees (fundraising, alumni ambassadors, student affairs, government affairs, alumni services, etc.)
- Hosts a graduation breakfast
- Provides relevant alumni services (education, networking opportunities and career development)



*Janna Underhill, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation alumnus and student services coordinator for the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department, presents the 2020 Scenario for group 1 as Chip Hinton, CALS alumnus and executive director for the Florida Strawberry Growers' Association looks on.*

- Organizes international alumni trips and is reaching out to alumni living in other countries
- Contacts every new alumnus by phone
- Has a hall of fame
- Sponsors alumni events at all key industry meetings
- Has a member on each search committee for key CALS positions
- Offers joint alumni events with the University of Florida's professional schools
- Completes annual training for volunteers
- Employs every available technology to communicate with alumni
- Has a grassroots government affairs network that supports the initiatives of CALS/IFAS
- Has alumni activities offered by all departments
- Has an annual alumni service project



*Jodi DeGraw, graduate student in Agricultural Operations Management, presents her group's 2020 scenario.*

## A glimpse into the future alumni of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

### Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment (Fall 2004)

Students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, School of Forest Resources and Conservation, and the Department of

Major	Undergraduate	Graduate	Female	Male	Minority	International
Agricultural Education and Communication	50	41	67	24	4	3
Animal Science	524	52	443	133	107	22
Agricultural Operations Management	39		12	27	17	2
Agronomy		29	10	19	0	12
Botany	10	2	7	5	3	0
Doctor of Plant Medicine		32	16	16	5	4
Entomology	23	94	48	69	16	18
Fisheries and Aquatic Science		47	20	27	4	2
Forest Resources and Conservation	35	69	45	59	17	23
Food and Resource Economics	370	77	140	307	114	50
Food Science and Human Nutrition	793	54	575	272	336	18
Family, Youth and Community Sciences	193	20	172	41	79	3
Geomatics	52		4	48	11	0
Horticultural Sciences	25	41	21	45	11	16
Turfgrass Science	30		2	28	1	0
Env. Management in Agriculture	11		6	5	0	0
Environmental Horticulture	54	28	47	35	10	5
Microbiology and Cell Science	454	22	228	248	175	6
Packaging Science	27		9	18	10	0
Plant Science	23		15	8	6	2
Plant Pathology		31	14	17	1	9
Plant and Molecular Cellular Biology		33	16	17	3	13
Natural Resource Conservation	41		20	21	7	0
Soil and Water Science	5	79	37	47	10	24
Statistics	6		4	2	1	0
Undecided	130		59	71	32	5
Wildlife Ecology and Conservation	142	62	127	77	30	13
Agricultural and Biological Engineering	158	57	77	124	58	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>3195</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>2241</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>273</b>

\*some students did not report sex or race

## COMMON GROUND

At the start of the second day, participants returned to their mixed groups to compile the future vision. During this portion of the session, participants created lists of what they want to see the organization achieve and large project ideas. Participants then cut the lists into strips and placed them on the wall. The wall reflected the cumulative results from all four mixed groups and led into a group discussion of the “what we wants.”

Meeting as a whole group, participants discussed the common ground issues and organized these into common themes. The major common ground themes were as follows:

### **Infrastructure**

- Full-Time Executive Director
- Alumni Center/Physical Space
- Formal Committee Structure
- Diversity of Board and Committees
- Leadership Development

### **Funding Mechanism**

- Increased Scholarships
- Increased Funding

### **Public Relations**

- Formalized Identification as CALSAF Members
- Outreach to Non-Florida and International Alumni
- Collaboration with Professional Schools
- Coordinated Alumni Relations Efforts with CALS Departments
- Outreach to All CALS Graduates
- Enhanced Website

### **Marketing**

- Needs Assessment
- Effective Alumni Events
- Family Friendly Activities
- Increased Current Student Involvement
- Benefits Package
- Attendance at More Industry Functions
- Government Affairs Network
- Sphere of Influence Database

### **Item on the “Not Agreed” List**

- Formal CALSAF Membership Application



*Microbiology and Cell Science student John Faryna (left) helps Dr. Michael Schwartz (right), session facilitator, group lists into common themes upon the direction of the group.*

## **ACTION PLANNING**

Armed with both a vision for the CALSAF organization and an understanding of the common ground, participants entered the final stages of the strategic planning session. Interest groups were created using the themes that were created from the common ground activity. Participants were instructed to go to the group that most interested them, with the understanding that they could move between groups freely. The newly formed action planning groups then discussed and recorded both short-term (obtainable within three months) and longer term (obtainable within three years) objectives.

The following objectives were recommended for implementation:

### **Infrastructure**

#### **3 Months**

##### *Staffing*

- Obtain approval for a full-time executive director that is responsible to the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Create job descriptions and advertise executive director and support staff positions
- Communicate the need for dedicated physical space for a CALSAF office to the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources

##### *Board of Directors and Volunteer Structure*

- Identify potential board members that represent the diversity of alumni (regional location and academic discipline)
- Update board member job descriptions to include clearly defined responsibilities and terms of service
- Determine needed standing committees (could include finance, public relations, leadership, alumni activities)
- Identify components needed for leadership development program for alumni volunteers

#### **3 Years**

##### *Staffing*

- With an executive director in place, a program review has been established.
- Secure adequate physical space for director and staff and alumni center

##### *Board of Directors and Volunteer Structure*

- Maintain cultivation of board of directors and standing committee members that reflect the diversity of the college.
- Maintain functioning district and organizational level committees
- Require that board members and critical committee positions attend leadership program established by CALSAF

## Funding Mechanism

### **3 Months**

- Meet with the Executive Director of the University of Florida Alumni Association to discuss funding opportunities,
- Establish CALSAF representation on UF Alumni Association Board
- Meet with the Assistant Vice President for SHARE (development office)
- Meet with Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources to discuss budget
- Develop strategy for sale of CALS items
- Discuss current and new events for fundraising
- Discuss ongoing dues issues
- Dedicate time at the next board meeting to discuss funding issues

### **3 Years**

- Explore corporate sponsorships
- Membership benefits are in place (i.e. credit card)
- Endowment growth mechanism is in place
- Examine matching funds opportunities
- Create line item for CALSAF in IFAS budget
- Create more fundraising events
- Offer corporate sponsorships (associate members etc.)
- Sell CALS paraphernalia
- Establish CALSAF as a 501(c)3
- Member benefits operate as profit center
- Discuss use of student activity fees to fund alumni initiatives

## Marketing

### **3 Months**

#### *Marketing*

- Establish and utilize dedicated space in all CALS publications (including CALS Connection) to feature alumni news and activities
- Create a slogan and branding to attract new graduates and alumni
- Send regular email updates to alumni

#### *Coordination with Departments and Schools*

- Coordinate/collaborate with CALS departments, off-campus programs, and professional schools
- Send a formal letter to department-level alumni coordinators outlining expectations for involvement, joint partnership opportunities, etc.
- Have alumni representation at department and professional school functions

*Outreach to Non-Florida and International Alumni*

**3 Years**

*Marketing*

- Create CALSAF brochure and materials

*Coordination with Departments and Schools*

- Send letters of congratulations from CALSAF to alumni students graduating from professional programs (Colleges of Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy and Law)

*Outreach to Non-Florida and International Alumni*

- Identify and establish international job and internship opportunities
- Utilize alumni relationships to increase the number of international graduate students attending CALS
- Establish alumni international travel/study tours

**Public Relations**

**3 Months**

- Enhance alumni website (include link to CALS job bank and to UF Alumni Association online member directory)
- Create website message board and alumni classifieds
- Post infrastructure (committee structure, etc) on website
- Continue formal outreach to new graduates (letter of congratulations and commencement CD)
- Send formal letter to alumni of the School of Natural Resources and Geomatics describing the relationship with CALS and the benefits of participating in CALSAF
- Increase CALSAF representative attendance at student events including convocation, graduation, student barbecues, etc.

**3 Years**

- Enhance career services for alumni
- Enlist alumni volunteers to make personal phone calls to recent graduates describing the benefits of participating in CALSAF activities

## **CALS ALUMNI AND FRIENDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Roger Scarborough, President**  
Gainesville, FL

**Bruce Christmas**  
Cottondale, FL

**Kathy Demaree**  
Bushnell, FL

**Scott Emerson**  
Bell, FL

**Brent Howard**  
Windermere, FL

**Kevin Huesman**  
Lake City, FL

**George Pickhardt**  
Venice, FL

**Marion C. "Bud" Riviere**  
Bonifay, FL

**Jerry Southwell**  
Wauchula, FL

**Trey Whitehurst, III**  
Okeechobee, FL

### **Staff**

**Emily S. Sperling**  
Executive Director

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## NOTES

