INTRODUCTION

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) at the University of Maryland, College Park is one of the nation’s premier institutions for the study of agriculture, natural resources, environmental issues, nutrition and food sciences. As a part of a land grant university, our College continues to enhance the lives of Marylanders through outreach, education and research programs. The College is the home of the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) and the University of Maryland Extension (UME). Our teaching, research and extension programs are designed not only to address statewide problems, but also national and global issues.

In the last five years, the College has made significant contributions to the advancement of agriculture, has spearheaded innovative national projects, and has significantly increased its contribution to the economic development of the state. The College is committed to build on its achievements and to move to the next level of pre-eminent colleges of agriculture and natural resources in the United States. We believe that as our College’s reputation for excellence grows so will the reputation of the University. We plan to reach the next level of excellence by stimulating the scholarly environment of the College, increasing the rigor of our teaching programs, performing cutting edge research and Extension programs, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our operation.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to be the pre-eminent college of agriculture and natural resources in the nation through distinguished teaching, research and Extension programs, such as:

- Providing the highest quality of education for our students.
- Performing cutting edge research to address the agricultural and environmental issues of Maryland, the nation and the world.
- Providing the highest quality of public education and service to the state of Maryland and the region through Extension and outreach activities.
- Enhancing the reputation of the College and University by extending its knowledge and capability to other parts of the world.

Our location provides us with the strategic advantage of being able to utilize the existing and build additional external resources as leverage to achieve our goals. Our success will benefit the University, the natural environment, and the citizens of Maryland, nation and the global community.

OUR MISSION

The Mission of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is to develop knowledge and human capacity among the citizens of Maryland, the nation and the world. We are committed to benefitting society by:
offering exemplary teaching programs that advance lifelong learning of students, both on and off campus;
conducting internationally-renowned research in agriculture; food and nutrition; biotechnology; natural resources and the environment; and in programs that directly benefit families, youth and communities; and
providing accessible, unbiased, expert knowledge that people can use to improve their economic stability, their quality of life as well as the community and the environment in which they live.

Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities
An assessment of our strengths, challenges and opportunities provides insights into the environment in which we operate and the alternatives before us.

Strengths
The College is continuing in the new millennium as a confident, capable and creative institution providing excellence in teaching, research and extension/outreach to our students and to the citizens of Maryland and the world.

- We continue to recruit and retain outstanding faculty who have earned national and international reputations for excellence in their fields and dedication to their professions.
- The impressive academic profile of our graduate and undergraduate students is a source of optimism, and the College’s programs now attract some of the most gifted and talented students from Maryland and around the world.
- Our diverse and talented staff is enthusiastic and committed to excellence, making the College a welcoming, productive environment in which to work and learn.
- The College’s location provides students and faculty with unique access to public policy-makers, national research laboratories, libraries, agencies and networks, as well as offering exciting opportunities for exploring issues related to the urban-rural interface.
- We continue to develop programs that rank among the best in the country and the world, reflecting the strength of our faculty, staff and students.
- Because of its long-term involvement in environmental issues related to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, the College is considered to be a national and international leader in the field of environmental science and policy.
- The College Alumni Association is among the strongest in the University System of Maryland, providing a network of alumni and friends upon whom we can call for support and counsel in our efforts to achieve excellence.

Challenges
Although the College is experiencing a period of growth and recognition, there are threats to our progress that could prevent us from achieving our vision. For example, some challenges, such as the
state of the local, national and world economy, are external to the College but could exert a negative impact on our programs and goals. By identifying our vulnerabilities, we can anticipate problem areas and not only overcome them but use them as opportunities for the College to grow and develop.

- As Maryland becomes increasingly urbanized, we must increase efforts to find solutions to agricultural and natural resource problems – solutions that support and sustain the state’s agricultural and natural resource industries – while, at the same time, protecting and enhancing our environment.

- Reflecting the urbanization of the state, we need to find ways to recruit top-quality students from all areas of the state, not just those traditionally familiar with agriculture and natural resources.

- As state support for higher education has diminished over time, we need new partnerships and new sources of financial support to enable us to continue to sustain and improve high quality academic programs, expand research efforts and strengthen our extension/outreach efforts.

- Because of the area’s high cost of living, adequate financial compensation for faculty and staff is essential for us to be competitive with our peer institutions if we are to recruit and retain the most highly-qualified employees.

- We must acquire additional space and increase efforts to renovate our buildings and to equip and support a larger number of classrooms to accommodate the technology required to meet the needs of our research and educational programs.

**Opportunities**

A growing recognition of the College as a premier agricultural learning institution and society’s increased interest in the environment, sustainable agriculture and bioenergy, the safety and security of food production and consumption, and an increased emphasis on the biosecurity of animals, plants and humans all offer the College exciting opportunities to demonstrate leadership during the next ten years.

- Because of our geographic proximity to federal laboratories and institutions, and to other prominent research centers throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, our College has a strategic advantage in increasing the number of mutually-rewarding partnerships in emerging areas related to food safety and security, sustainability, urban agriculture, biofuels, and animal and plant biosecurity.

- By capitalizing on our strengths, including our unique location, knowledge base, teaching and extension/outreach capacity, the College can contribute to the scientific justification for sustainable agricultural production in environmentally-sensitive regions in Maryland, across the country, and throughout the world.

- The diverse make-up of our nearby communities, which range from urban to rural, provides a unique laboratory for the comprehensive study of agricultural, ecological, economic and
political issues, while the diversity of the populations in the region offers a large pool of extremely talented and diverse students and employees from which we can recruit.

- The growing number of international activities and outstanding international students, faculty and staff in our College provides a strong foundation from which to increase engagement and build a global reputation for excellence in all areas of agriculture and natural resources.

- Through new and existing partnerships and innovative programs, the College has the opportunity to better integrate the research and educational centers, the academic departments, the Maryland 4-H Youth Development Center, and 24 UME extension/outreach offices across the state within the total spectrum of University of Maryland programs.

- Investment in information technology and faculty/staff training will allow the College to expand and strengthen its ability to deliver quality educational programs to students, both on campus and off, and in the national and international communities.

INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE 1:

_Elevate the quality of education for all learners by creating a challenging and enriching learning experience._

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has always placed a high value on life-long learning, a fundamental concept of the land-grant mission. Our student-centered approach to learning, promotion of high quality instruction, and emphasis on positive student-teacher interaction and mentoring reflect our respect for the learner. In addition to a broad range of degree programs, the College through UME offers professional and non-formal educational programs throughout the state, which enrich the learning environment and provide learners the opportunity to engage in educational experiences that can improve the world in which they live and work. The AES and College’s Research and Education Centers on and off campus sites provide a unique opportunity for the faculty and students to conduct research and outreach programs statewide.

The College has developed nationally-recognized programs that attract students of the highest caliber. Constant innovation and relevance in a real world context is an integral part of our vision for academic programs. Research, internships and service-learning opportunities are now an integral part of the curriculum. These opportunities add increased breadth and depth to the overall educational experience and help prepare students for the 21st century. We will continue to elevate the quality of our graduate and undergraduate education and extend it to all learners in the tradition of the land-grant mission. Our commitment to academic excellence has led to new and innovative programs in international agriculture, study abroad opportunities, and in the integration of distance education technologies. The following actions will continue to facilitate our vision.
Specific Steps:

1. **Provide enriched educational opportunities and personally fulfilling and challenging academic curricula that prepare our graduates to meet the challenges of the 21st century.**
   - Where necessary, redesign existing courses to increase their rigor and challenge.
   - Design courses that will strengthen our students’ critical thinking, problem-solving and creative abilities, and communication skills.
   - Revamp the current undergraduate curricula to increase innovation and coordination of course offerings.
   - Adjust as necessary the time distribution of our course offerings and the number of sections offered to assure that students are able to register for the courses required for graduation in a timely manner.
   - Enhance the quality of our teaching and the impact of mentoring by supporting teaching/learning strategies that are active, learner-centered and collaborative.
   - Expand undergraduate student participation in internships including research and extension activities guided by faculty members.
   - Ensure that all undergraduates have the opportunity to broaden their perspectives by participating in an international educational experience through long- or short-term study abroad courses.
   - Significantly enhance academic advising for all students by making greater use of peer mentoring, improving the availability and knowledge of faculty advisors, and increasing the use of technology in advising.
   - Make more AGNR courses, such as I-series courses, available to students campus wide.

**Measures of Success**

   - Redesign 20% of courses each year in all academic units as necessary to increase their rigor and challenge.
   - Increase by 5% per year the number of students participating in undergraduate research and extension projects.
   - Increase by 3% the number of graduates who have had an international experience prior to graduation.
   - Increase student graduation rate.
   - Have 10% of undergraduates accepted into professional and graduate schools.
   - Increase satisfaction levels of graduates as expressed in exit interviews.
   - Create academic, extension and research task force to further enhance student participation in these activities.

2. **Remain the school of choice for the most talented students in Maryland and for outstanding out-of-state students by strengthening recruitment efforts.**
   - Continue to aggressively recruit academically-gifted undergraduate students who meet or exceed quality standards established by the University of Maryland.
   - Increase the visibility of the College through visits to high schools across the state and in neighboring states.
   - Increase the number of entering freshmen while maintaining the high quality of our students.
• Increase the availability of financial assistance, both need-based and merit, for freshmen and transfer students.
• Ensure a reasonable time to degree completion for first time freshman and transfer students.

Measures of Success

• A steady increase in GPA and SAT scores of incoming freshmen and transfer students.
• An increase of 3% per year in the number of freshman admissions and enrollment, with a goal of 1,250 students by 2014.
• An increase of 1% per year in the second-year student retention rate.
• A 5% per year increase in scholarship funding awarded by the College.

3. **Systematically integrate the use of information technology into our instructional programs, so that all faculty and students can fully exploit new technology as an essential tool in teaching and learning.**

- Expand training and support services to help faculty with curricular redesign, educationally-sound pedagogical practices, and the development of information technology-based coursework.
- Set expectations that every academic course will have an online syllabus and an established protocol for remote communication between student and instructor.
- Establish information technology fluency and information literacy requirements for all undergraduates and bring all students to a level of information technology proficiency appropriate to their disciplinary needs.
- Strongly encourage all students to have access to a networked personal computer, and require computer ownership for students in selected disciplines.
- Bring every classroom up to the University’s established minimum standard for information technology capability and create special purpose information technology-enhanced classrooms and laboratories as required.

Measures of Success

• A 10% per year increase in the number of faculty in our instructional program equipped to use new technology.
• An increase of 10% per year in our academic courses that provide online syllabi and remote connections between students and instructors.
• A steady increase in information technology fluency by our students.
• Each year, renovate one College-owned classroom, through Campus funding, to include the latest technologies and equipment.

**INITIATIVE 2:**

*Build a strong culture of excellence in graduate education, research and scholarship.*

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has demonstrated research excellence in several areas, and many individual faculty members are nationally and internationally recognized as leaders within their disciplines. The College is a leader in patent development and technology transfer
within the university and is also widely recognized for its high quality graduate programs. Yet, the College needs to develop more nationally- and internationally-recognized programs and to recruit even more high quality faculty and graduate students. These actions will further the College’s goal of creating a culture of research excellence across its academic programs and departments.

Our location, which we are using to our advantage, enhances the ability of the College to shape and participate in decision-making processes associated with national policy in agriculture and natural resources. Our close proximity to federal laboratories, such as USDA, FDA and NIH, provide unique opportunities for enhancement of our research programs, collaborative and cross-disciplinary research, and graduate education. Being centrally located within the Chesapeake Bay region also offers the College opportunities to further enhance its strong national and international research reputation in the fields of agricultural and environmental interaction. The College is uniquely poised to develop its research and scholarship programs through the following steps:

Specific Steps:

1. **Increase the number and proportion of our faculty who are regarded by their national and international peers as being among the best in their disciplines.**
   - Continue to elevate the standards for appointment of new faculty and the expectations for promotion and tenure of existing faculty.
   - Increase the competitiveness of our faculty compensation packages to allow us to recruit and retain the very best faculty and raise the average salaries of our existing faculty both on and off campus.
   - Create endowed faculty chairs and professorships by establishing this as a major fund-raising objective of the College.
   - Recruit faculty members who hold membership in national and international academies, or at that level, and promote our existing faculty for membership in those organizations.
   - Increase the assistance provided to departments to recruit and to retain greater numbers of talented faculty from under-represented groups.
   - Seek additional ways to celebrate and reward faculty for their scholarly achievements, recognizing them for the entire range of their contributions and accomplishments.

Measures of Success

- Increased quality of new faculty as judged by their training, publication and grantsmanship records.
- An increase in expectations for faculty for promotion and tenure compared to previous years.
- A 5% increase per year in the average salary of new and existing faculty.
- Establishment of a goal of adding one endowed professorship per year.
- Hiring at least two new under-represented faculty per year.
- Establishment of a clear, college-wide procedure for rewarding faculty for their scholarly achievements.
2. **Continue to improve the excellence of our best research and graduate programs while also increasing the number of programs of recognized excellence.**

- Reallocate resources to facilitate creation of programs of excellence in research areas of expected growth and national needs.
- Review all programs and centers of the College and eliminate those that are unproductive or obsolete.
- Develop in each department at least one program that is nationally and internationally recognized for research excellence.
- Increase the College’s capacity to conduct applied and developmental research by enhancing collaborative efforts between field faculty and faculty within academic programs.
- Increase the integration of education, scholarship and extension/outreach in the College.
- Add at least three new faculty during the next three years in areas of national research needs (e.g., biotechnology, functional genomics, infectious diseases, bioinformatics, environmental protection, food safety and security).
- Require each research-intensive faculty member to write at least one new extramural grant proposal per year.
- Increase the quality and quantity of faculty publications.
- Improve the visibility and stature of the College’s research programs within and outside the university.

**Measures of Success**

- Creation of one new program by eliminating one unproductive or obsolete program per year.
- An increase of 10% per year in the number of collaborative projects between field faculty and campus-based faculty.
- A 10% increase per year in co-authored publications by field faculty and campus-based faculty.
- A 10% per year rise in the number and average impact factor of faculty publications.
- A 20% increase per year in the number of grants submitted to external sources.
- Increase of 5% per year in expenditures from extramural sponsors for research.

3. **Increase the College's success in recruiting, developing, and placing outstanding and diverse graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.**

- Increase the number and amounts of graduate assistantships and postdoctoral fellowships through private fundraising efforts and through the allocation of additional department, College and campus resources.
- Significantly improve the College's marketing of its graduate programs, especially through the Internet, with the aim of increasing the total number and quality of graduate student applications.
- Improve our ability to select truly outstanding students by using diverse measures of quality for graduate admission as appropriate to particular fields and populations.
- Provide a rigorous learning environment, faculty mentoring and other support to our graduate students to afford them the highest possible level of graduate experience and to assist them in obtaining professional placements.
• Encourage greater participation and involvement of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars within the wider College community and emphasize their importance to the intellectual ambiance of the College.
• Encourage collaborative interdisciplinary graduate training grant proposals.
• Increase faculty participation in interdisciplinary graduate programs.
• Attract highly-qualified postdoctoral scholars and provide the learning environment and mentoring necessary to ensure their success as independent scientists.

Measures of Success

• Increase graduate stipend amounts to match other campus graduate programs in similar fields.
• A steady annual increase in the number of applications from, and the GPAs and GRE scores of, new graduate students.
• A 5% per year increase in the number of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.
• A 5% per year increase in the number of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars receiving national awards and honors.
• Positive feedback from graduating students and employers.

4. **Translate discoveries into viable technologies, products and services to strengthen the economics of Maryland and the world.**

• Foster an environment that encourages faculty, staff and students to engage in transfer of technology and entrepreneurial activities.
• Expand the use of existing intellectual property developed in the College through the Campus Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC).
• Encourage development of new businesses using the technology developed by College faculty, staff and students.
• Integrate research and extension programs of the College aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of Maryland producers, businesses and individuals served by the College.

Measures of Success

• A 5% per year increase in the number of invention disclosures filed with OTC by College faculty, staff and students.
• An increase of 5% per year in the number of patents and licenses granted.
• Establishment of three new start-up businesses based on College research by 2014.

**INITIATIVE 3:**

*Ensure a College environment that fosters an inclusive and diverse community among faculty, staff and students.*

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources comprises a wide range of disciplines and a wealth of different skills and abilities, united by shared interests. The College community, including students, staff and faculty, strives to reflect the diversity of the social environment around us in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, cultural heritage, personality, sexual orientation and political persuasion.
Nov. 3, 2009

These differences represent a remarkable asset for the College, bringing new perspectives, fresh ideas and continued enthusiasm to bear on the ever-changing issues facing agriculture and natural resources.

The responding to the global nature of both agriculture and natural resource issues demands teamwork, collaboration and the celebration of diversity. The state of Maryland is a microcosm of diversity with urban and rural populations; mountainous, piedmont and coastal plain ecosystems; and both new and established ethnic populations. Capturing the benefits of this diversity and fostering an inclusive community within the College are keys to our future. To achieve these goals, it is important to take the following steps:

Specific Steps:

1. **Develop coherent and comprehensive strategies to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.**
   - Establish procedures for recruiting, retaining and improved mentoring of under-represented faculty in all positions within the College.
   - Identify and implement new strategies for recruiting faculty and staff that are more reflective of populations we serve.
   - Conduct College-wide equity reviews to ensure parity across gender and ethnic groups.
   - Direct all search committees for key administrative positions to more diligently seek female and ethnic minority candidates through the use of professional search firms and other aggressive strategies.
   - Provide for first-year women and ethnic minority faculty an annual workshop, conducted by key administrators and senior faculty members from these groups, that addresses their unique issues and provides successful strategies for enabling these individuals to succeed in the tenure and promotion process at College Park.

Measures of Success

- Achievement of a population of faculty and staff that better reflects the diversity of the state of Maryland.
- Continuing to hire female and ethnic minority faculty for at least one third of the open positions each year, whenever possible.
- Striving to hire one new female or minority faculty member per year in key administrative positions, whenever possible.
- A 20% increase over five years in the success rate for female and minority faculty in the Promotion & Tenure process.

2. **Develop strategies to increase the enrollment of undergraduate and graduate ethnic minority students and improve their graduation rates.**
   - Provide incentives for more faculty-student mentoring and the development of summer and winter term programs with local school systems, historically black institutions and other institutions with high minority representation.
   - Provide incentives for programs to identify and recruit talented ethnic minority students at the community colleges.
Nov. 3, 2009

- Improve retention of ethnic minority students enrolled in the College by supporting programs that pair students with faculty mentors, increase opportunities for student employment, and address the development of skills associated with higher retention rates.
- Conduct surveys of departing faculty, staff and non-returning students with emphasis on determining reasons for departure and possible retention remedies.
- Provide leadership and mechanisms for identifying and supporting minority graduate students for future faculty positions.

**Measures of Success**

- A 5% increase per year in the number of minority undergraduate and graduate student applications and enrollments.
- A 5% per year improvement in minority student retention and graduation rates.
- An increase in the success rate of minority students as determined by the annual outcomes assessment.

3. **Build a greater sense of community among faculty, staff, students, postdoctoral scholars and alumni.**

- Increase funding for activities that enhance student-faculty-staff interaction, such as College and departmental award ceremonies, the annual Ag/Maryland Day celebration, and College service clubs.
- Continue to build ties to alumni that stress their importance as members of the College family and as an important resource for students and faculty.
- Encourage our faculty, staff and students to participate in a “green” College by submitting suggestions on ways to reduce waste in paperwork, energy, time and effort, and adopt as many of those suggestions as feasibly possible.

**Measures of Success**

- An increased number of College and/or Department functions and projects that encourage and enhance interaction among faculty, staff, students and alumni.
- Achievement of a stronger sense of stewardship and inclusiveness among faculty, staff and students.
- An enhanced relationship with College alumni as indicated by their increased involvement in College programs and activities.

**INITIATIVE 4:**

*Engage the College more fully in outreach and collaborative partnerships with the greater community.*

As a land grant institution, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has always devoted a large portion of its energies to the effective sharing of its expertise with a multitude of external groups. Our rapidly-changing environment is creating a greatly-expanded range of opportunities for increased interaction and engagement between the College and a variety of constituents. Expectations have been raised for the College’s contribution to the quality of life of our citizens
through its expertise in many disciplines, and the role of the College as an active partner with industry, non-profit organizations, governing agencies and state systems has been heightened.

The number of urgent problems requiring attention in our society can be overwhelming and the list of potential areas in which the College will be engaged is endless; however, the linking of research to practice and the application of knowledge to the greater community are unique contributions that can be made by the College.

Specific Steps:

1. **Extend the scholarly reach of our faculty by forming strong partnerships with other research entities and state and federal agencies.**
   - Establish more, and enhance existing, programs in which talented corporate and government agency researchers spend time at College facilities on and off campus participating in teaching activities, mentoring graduate students, pursuing joint research projects, and interacting with faculty and students.
   - Aggressively pursue targeted strategies, such as providing seed funding for our research teams working collaboratively with researchers from the University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB) and Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, to increase extramural research funding from all sources with particular emphasis on federal competitive grants.
   - Strengthen collaborative partnerships among the College's academic and field faculty, with other colleges at UM and UMES, and with other universities in the Maryland System, emphasizing the extension/outreach component.

**Measures of Success**

   - A 5% increase per year in the number of scientists from corporate and federal and state agencies involved in collaborative teaching, research and extension programs of the College.
   - A 5% per year increase in collaborative grants submitted to external sources that include College faculty and faculty from other colleges at UM and UMB.
   - A 10% increase per year in the number of publications co-authored by College faculty and faculty from other colleges at UM and UMB.

2. **Extend our learning community beyond the College boundaries and promote life-long learning as an integral component of our academic programs.**
   - Increase the College's visibility among the state's high schools and community colleges.
   - Create new and expand current certificate programs to meet the educational needs of the state and the nation.
   - Develop effective community educational programs in agriculture, food safety and security, environment, health, nutrition, youth development and families, using research-based information.
   - Increase the number of community seminars and workshops hosted by College faculty each year.
Measures of Success

- An increased community awareness of and interest in College teaching, research and extension programs.
- A 10% increase per year in the number of high school student internships in our academic units.
- An increase of 5% per year in the number of certificate programs offered.
- Development of at least one formal agreement per year for an educational partnership program with the local community.

3. Increase the scope and impact of the College's international programs and activities.

- Direct the College’s Office of International Programs to work with the academic units and centers to identify and integrate the current wide variety of College international initiatives into a coherent vision and a cohesive strategy to increase their visibility and impact.
- Strengthen the College’s on-going programs and projects with China, India, Russia and the Republic of Georgia, and develop new programs and projects with Africa and South America.
- Extend the College’s research, teaching and extension programs to the international community through the use of distance education.
- Expand and improve our College faculty and student exchange and study abroad programs.
- Promote College research and extension activities through international seminars and conferences held in different parts of the world.

Measures of Success

- Development of at least one international program through the use of distance education.
- An increase in the number of active international programs by one per year.
- An increase of 3% per year in the number of students involved in study abroad programs.
- Schedule at least one international seminar or conference per year in nations around the world.

4. Expand the College's family of friends and alumni by increasing our interaction with those groups and more effectively communicating our accomplishments.

- Engage all departments, centers and administrative units in building ties to alumni and friends that stress their importance as members of the College family and as an important resource for students and faculty.
- Direct the College’s Office of External Relations to work with the Dean, department chairs and center directors to coordinate and facilitate improved communication among their units and their alumni and friends.
- Mount a concerted effort to update our alumni database, with a goal of achieving current addresses and contact information for at least 90% of our alumni.
- Make Ag/Maryland Day a spectacular event, with the goal of enhancing College interaction with the public and, thereby, increasing annual attendance.
Measures of Success

- Increased recognition of and participation in College programs by our alumni and friends.
- A 10% increase in the number of meetings held between College administrators and alumni and friends.
- An updated alumni database will include at least 90% of our alumni by 2014.
- An increase of 5% per year in attendance at College functions such as Ag/Maryland Day.

INITIATIVE 5:

Build an infrastructure that fully supports excellence.

To achieve excellence as a premier college of agriculture and natural resources in the nation, it is imperative that the College has a responsive and customer-oriented infrastructure that supports the work of our faculty, staff, and students. This infrastructure includes human resources, administrative systems and processes, facilities and technologies essential for seamless operations of an academic college with extensive field operations. Life-long learning and integration of technology into the classroom represent important initiatives for the College. Because of earlier budgetary limitations, infrastructure investment has lagged behind other investments in various areas at the College, but if we are to continue our rapid advancement, it is essential that investments be made to address a number of critical infrastructure issues.

Specific Steps:

1. Establish a top performing College External Relations operation.

   - Establish a first class public information infrastructure that advances the College’s goals and creates an image appropriate for one of the nation's pre-eminent colleges of agriculture and natural resources.
   - Develop an integrated database for public communications, prospect management, alumni relations and partnership development.
   - Initiate and implement a fully-coordinated development strategy for the College incorporating alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends of the College, with a goal of increasing annual giving to $4,000,000 by 2014.
   - Promote the shared interests and goals of the College, both internally and externally, to the populations we serve.

Measures of Success

- Increased audience responsiveness to the College’s public information infrastructure.
- Updated database is established and maintained on a continuous basis.
- An increase of 10% in the number and amounts of gifts from private donors.

2. Create and maintain an electronic networking infrastructure that provides the level of connectivity and data throughput required for our faculty and staff to excel in their research and scholarship and that facilitates innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
• Ensure that the web presence of the College and College Units is among the best in the country.
• Use outsourcing services to effectively market the College’s programs.
• Develop a plan to provide high speed internet connectivity to all college units including county research/education centers and offices within the next 3 years.
• Expand videoconferencing capabilities for all College departments and centers in order to increase efficiencies in distance learning and meeting communications.

**Measures of Success**

• A 10% increase per year in the number of hits on the College and academic units’ websites.
• High-speed Internet connections established for all College units within 3 years.
• Installation of videoconferencing equipment in at least one College unit per year.

3. **Develop the College’s physical facilities to meet the needs of a leading college of agriculture and natural resources.**

• Develop a 10-year facility plan for the College reflecting current limitations and long-term goals.
• Renovate the classrooms and on- and off-campus laboratories throughout the College to facilitate state-of-the-art teaching, research and extension activities.
• Establish a plan to replace current aging equipment in College departments and centers.
• Purchase modern major equipment required for our faculty to perform “cutting edge” research.
• Establish a top quality core facility for College research faculty, students and staff.
• Upgrade animal and plant facilities on and off campus to a level that facilitates productive research.

**Measures of Success**

• Renovations completed each year on 5% of the square footage of classroom and research space.
• Replacement of at least one aging major piece of equipment in each College unit per year.
• Purchase of at least one major piece of equipment per year for faculty research.

4. **Ensure that the administrative operations of all College units, including the Dean’s offices, academic units and centers provide responsive, customer-oriented service to all of the College's constituencies.**

• Examine the current administrative structure of the College with a view to adjusting/reducing the number of upper level administration positions as necessary.
• Promote a strong "customer-first" orientation among all units to deliver the highest possible quality service to both internal and external clients.
• Review and amend current operating budgets and staffing levels to facilitate long- and short-range goals.
• Develop processes that are transparent and accountable, and promote efficiency and effectiveness in the Dean’s offices, academic departments and centers.
• Encourage department and College administrators to reduce waste in areas of manpower, and under-utilized facilities and services.
• Streamline reporting requirements to remove redundancies.

Measures of Success

• Adjustment of upper level administration positions accomplished within three years.
• A marked increase in Customer satisfaction determined through annual survey responses.
• Annual revisions made to the College Budget and Program Plan.
• Increased efficiency and effectiveness in all College units as measured by annual survey responses from faculty, staff and students.

INITIATIVE 6:

Build an Extension program that improves the quality of life in Maryland.

University of Maryland Extension (UME), which is based upon a partnership between University of Maryland College Park (UM) and University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), will tackle the big, critically important societal issues—those that are the “most challenging and vexing.” To determine what are the most challenging and vexing issues, UME will engage stakeholders in dialog, scan the environment for changing conditions, use data available from multiple, trusted sources, and rely upon the expertise and leadership of Impact Teams that guide program development and delivery. The organization will marshal all of its intellectual resources through its local-based educators and statewide Extension Specialists, coupled with the research and teaching expertise in the College and University, to achieve measurable impacts that build strong and resilient economies, communities, families, and individuals. The new key outcomes, strategic goals, and impact teams contained in this plan will help the College, the University, and the State of Maryland move forward in a proactive and progressive way.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The plan for UME emphasizes key outcomes, impacts in critical areas, and “marshalling our intellectual resources” into non-formal educational programs that work together to deliver measurable results for the economy, the environment, and the community. This approach aligns with the UM, UMES, and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) to achieve impact on the big societal issues important to Maryland and, ultimately, to the global community.

The UME impact areas (referred to as Goals 1-4) represent major programmatic initiatives that UME will direct resources to accomplish. These impact areas are a broad-based method of dividing the critical needs identified by the planning process into manageable units. Key outcomes are the goals within each impact area. Impact leadership teams are made up of field-based Extension Educators, Extension Specialists, and Faculty Extension Assistants who work together to provide overall statewide leadership for programmatic efforts. Impact teams are linked to each other through common target and primary audiences served, the topics and subjects taught, and outcomes and impacts achieved. Impact leadership teams, across the major programmatic goals, will develop signature programs that are replicable, measurable, and recognized at the state and national levels.
Goal 1: LOCAL FOOD & AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS

Key Outcome: Agriculture and food production will be sustainable and profitable and provide a safe, abundant, affordable, and accessible food supply.

Impact Team: Agriculture and Natural Resource Profitability

Measures of Success:
- An increase in agricultural literacy in urban and rural areas to develop residents’ understanding of the food system.
- An increase in the sustainability and profitability of agriculture, forestry, and green industries through sustainable environmental practices.
- A decrease in the loss of agricultural land while enhancing (promoting) value of agriculture land and open space in rural and urban areas.
- An increase in agricultural profitability and sustainability through the development of alternative enterprises and value-added products.
- An increase in Maryland’s food system to match local production with market demand.
- An increase in the use and affordability of locally grown, fresh food through local market promotion and community gardens.

Goal 2: ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Key Outcome: Individuals and communities will become stewards to manage the environment for the mutual benefit of people, ecosystems, wildlife, natural resources, and economic interests.

Impact Team: Energy Conservation and Sustainability

Measures of Success:
- An increase in knowledge of new, science-based, energy-efficient technologies by assimilation of emerging information on climate change, biofuels, and renewable and alternative energy sources.
- An increase in knowledge and use of Environmentally Preferable Products (EPPs), such as Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED).

Impact Team: Natural Resources Conservation and Sustainability

Measures of Success:
- An increase in use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to improve water, forestry, agriculture, land quality, and urban areas.
- An increase in the adoption of BMPs that reduce inputs of nutrients into the environment.
- An increase in agriculture BMPs to minimize environmental impact from agriculture.

Goal 3: HEALTHY LIVING

Key Outcome: Youth, individuals, and families will make informed decisions about their health, finances, food, housing, and overall well-being.
Impact Team: Money$mart

Measures of Success:
- An increase in basic financial literacy and security for the future of Maryland residents.
- An increase in youth and adults’ ability to make both short- and long-term decisions regarding credit, debt, and spending.

Impact Team: HealthSmart

Measures of Success:
- An increase in basic health literacy for adults and youth in Maryland.
- An increase in consumption of healthful food and increased physical activity to improve healthy eating for life.
- An increase in awareness of healthy homes, workplaces, and schools by improving indoor air quality and reducing harm from lead paint, smoke, chemicals, radon, pests, and other poisons.

Impact Team: FoodSmart

Measures of Success:
- An increase in home and community food production.
- An increase in consumer food safety, handling, and food preservation practices and literacy from farm to consumer to reduce food-borne illnesses.
- An increase in agricultural literacy in urban and rural areas to develop residents’ understanding of the food system.

Goal 4: RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Key Outcome: Improve human capacity to achieve desired community outcomes and be prepared to respond to uncertainties of economics, health, climate, and security.

Impact Team: Community Resource and Economic Development

Measures of Success:
- An increase in capacity of communities for economic resiliency through entrepreneurship opportunities.
- An increase in the knowledge and skills of youth and adults to develop entrepreneurial ventures.
- An increase in the number of youth engaged in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to develop workforce skills and career paths.
- An increase in the number of students entering college for degrees in multiple areas, but with a specific emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Impact Team: Community Leadership and Civic Engagement

Measures of Success:
- An increase in the leadership skills of youth and adults to engage in community decision-making and public policy.
- An increase in the leadership skills of Maryland residents through partnerships which lead to sustainable communities.
An increase in the community’s ability to make decisions on public policy issues through process skills (group facilitation, public issues education, and consensus building).

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE KEY OUTCOMES

Impact teams will develop action plans for each of the impact areas. The following strategies, however, will undergird the work of all teams:

1. **Issue-Based Programming**: Rather than focusing on a particular audience or a narrow subject-matter area, issue-based programming focuses on the most critical issues and requires a concentrated, collaborative effort across the organization and, at times, with partners outside of the organization. Issue-based programming has been proven to produce large-scale impacts when implemented with intention and thoroughness.

2. **Multidisciplinary Impact Teams**: For issue-based programming to be successful, multidisciplinary teams are needed. Today’s public issues are complex and require multidisciplinary approaches that bring to bear diverse expertise on issues. Teams have the opportunity to create significant impact that individuals alone cannot. Impact teams will also ensure that the connection between research and extension is strong and that unbiased, research-based information will be used to formulate responses to issues. Therefore, teams will be co-led by a field-based Extension Educator and a campus- or regional-based Extension Specialist.

3. **Signature Programs of Excellence**: Impact Teams will create Signature Programs of Excellence that solve individual, group, and/or community issues identified by clients. These programs will enhance the public good through environmental, social, and economic impacts that are attainable and measurable. Signature programs are founded on research-based knowledge and include systematic documentation of curriculum development and program evaluation. In addition, the signature programs are integrated across multiple disciplines, universities, and/or regions and are replicable at state or national levels.

4. **Strategic Statewide Staffing**: Strategic staffing will ensure a dynamic organization in the coming decades. Extension Educators’ expertise will be shared across county boundaries and organized statewide and within geographic clusters so that Maryland residents receive the latest information from the most informed educator in that area. A balance of tenure-track faculty, faculty educator assistants, and staff members will be monitored and maintained in order to ensure stable core programs while being responsive to emerging issues. UME will invest in its faculty and staff in both informal and formal professional development.

5. **Strategic Investment of Resources**: Federal, state, and county dollars will be used to the utmost efficiency with the goal of achieving long-term benefits and sustainability. All resources will be leveraged to attract additional funding or other resources. In addition, UME will continue to be a responsible steward of public resources through strategic program evaluation to ensure a return on investment; through accountability and transparency; and, through documenting and communicating impacts to our stakeholders.

6. **Program Flexibility**: Impact Teams will ensure that programs can be adjusted as community needs change. Programs will not continue because the organization has always had them; rather, programs will start and end, along with clientele needs. New programs will be developed as new issues emerge that can be addressed within UME’s mission and resources.
7. **Partnerships & Collaborations**: No one organization today typically has all of the resources needed to solve large societal issues. UME will continue with its history of forming partnerships and engaging in collaborative ventures. Typical issues addressed by UME require not only a multidisciplinary approach internally, but also an approach of external partnerships, including partnering with other agencies, states, and the national eXtension.org network.

8. **Enhanced External Funding**: As with the overall College, UME will aggressively target external sources of funding. Impact Teams will work with other faculty throughout the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to attract additional funding. UME resources will be used to leverage additional resources at the state and county levels, including grants, contracts, fees, memberships, endowments, etc.

9. **Accountability**: Impact Teams will ensure that consistent, systematic evaluations will take place and the results will be reported. Impact Teams will also ensure accountability for resources allocated to the various program efforts, and UME will be accountable to funders and taxpayers. UME, following the University’s model, will reallocate resources to priorities and curtail activities that are not producing the intended impacts.

10. **Marketing**: The UME program development process will be strategically coupled with marketing strategies in order for UME to effectively communicate the impacts and value it brings to Maryland. In addition, the name change from Maryland Cooperative Extension to the University of Maryland Extension more closely aligns with the University and helps to provide a “front-door” in all of Maryland’s local communities for the University. UME will no longer be “the best kept secret.”