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**Subject:** Next Steps in Improving CALS Innovation and Efficiency  
**To:** CALS Faculty, Staff and Students  
**From:** Dean Richard Linton *Richard A. Linton*  
**Date:** Dec. 9, 2015

Three years ago, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) embarked on a strategic planning process we called “Envisioning the Future.” This process brought internal and external stakeholders to the table to define our value system and our purpose and to clarify our strategic themes. Today marks an important milestone in the implementation of our strategic plan, the day we introduce our new purpose-driven, systems-oriented framework and announce a historic investment by our college and Provost to co-fund 40 new CALS faculty positions over the next four years.

This significant investment, in conjunction with our new framework, will better position faculty, staff and administration to think, work and perform more strategically across all disciplines. This combination will help CALS achieve our mission of interdisciplinary discovery, learning and engagement to create agricultural and life sciences opportunities that benefit our state, the nation and the world. It recognizes that while our opportunities are boundless, our resources are not.

If we are to provide the academic programs, research and extension services needed by our faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders we must improve interdisciplinary teamwork so we can form decisions and make investments more strategically. As the Dean of this great college, I believe a new and innovative infrastructure is necessary to fully realize our vision and provide all CALS departments, centers and programs an opportunity to thrive.

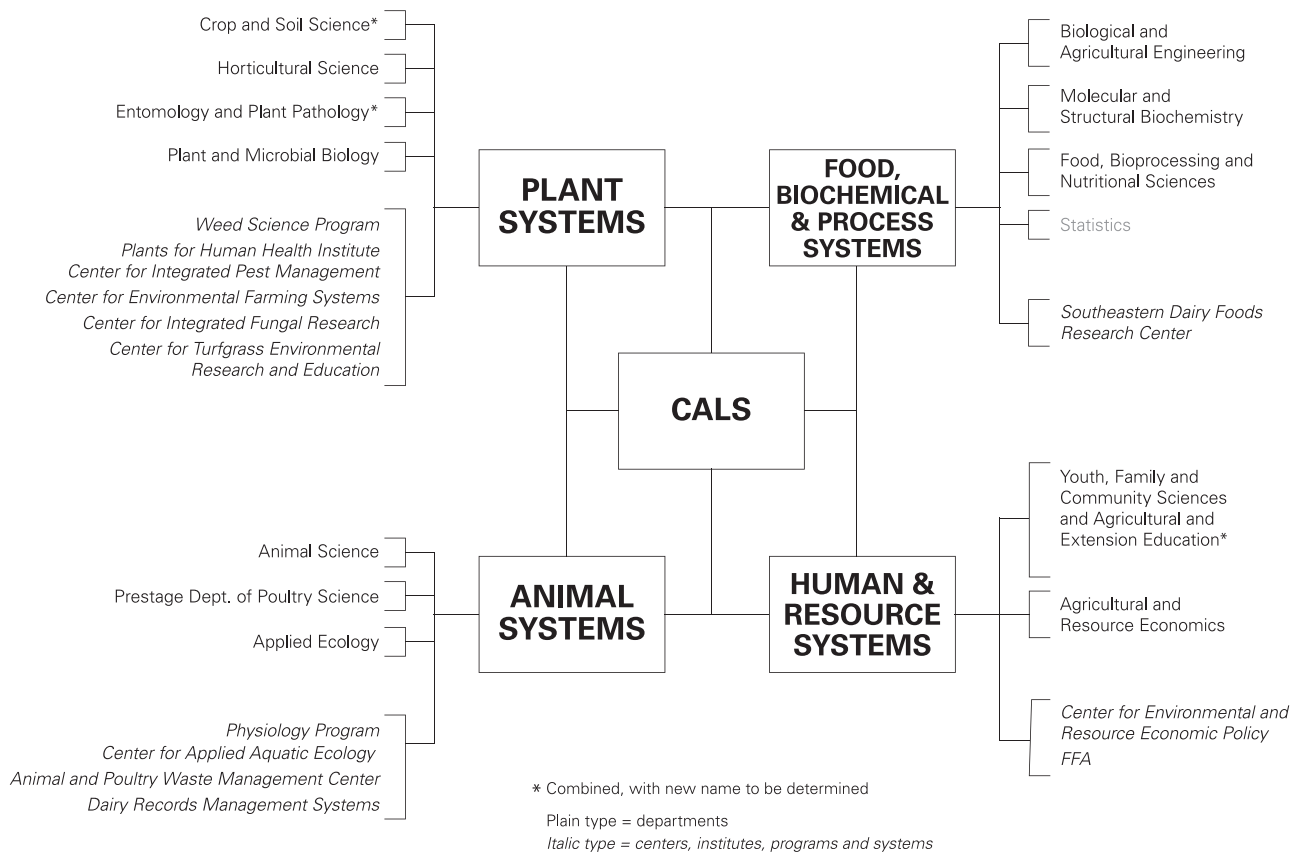
As with any change, I anticipate you will have many questions. This memorandum is designed to begin addressing those questions by outlining what is included in these changes, why we are making changes, when the changes will occur and how you can learn more.

**What will be different?** Our new infrastructure, what we are calling the CALS Collaborative Systems, aligns departments, centers and programs of similar disciplines into four collaborative focus areas: Plant Systems; Animal Systems; Human and Resource Systems; and Food, Biochemical and Process Systems.

These systems will provide the needed flexibility for department heads, center directors and program leaders to work more closely together across disciplines. It will enable collective goal development, allow for system-wide budgetary recommendations and strategic hiring requests to CALS administration. One CALS associate dean and one rotating center or department head will co-lead each system.

The CALS Collaborative Systems calls for an update in department structure. Some of our current departments will be merged to optimize our opportunities and maximize our impact. Announcements for department heads for all merged departments, as well as for system co-leaders are forthcoming.

Let's break it down into the newly created systems:



**Plant Systems** (co-chaired by Associate Dean Steve Lommel) will encompass the departments of Plant and Microbial Biology and Horticultural Science, as well as two new departments resulting from mergers: Entomology and Plant Pathology (the combination of Entomology and Plant Pathology), as well as Crop and Soil Science (the combination of Crop Science and Soil Science). The system will also include a more formally organized Weed Science Program, as well as the Plants for Human Health Institute and the centers for Integrated Pest Management, Environmental Farming Systems, Integrated Fungal Research and Turfgrass Environmental Research and Education.

**Animal Systems** (co-chaired by Associate Dean Sam Pardue) will encompass the departments of Animal Science and Applied Ecology as well as the Prestage Department of Poultry Science. In addition, the system will include the Physiology Program, Center for Applied Aquatic Ecology, Dairy Records Management Systems and the Animal and Poultry Waste Management Center.

**Human and Resource Systems** (co-chaired by Interim Associate Dean Travis Burke) will consist of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics as well as a new, yet-to-be-named department that includes the current departments of Youth, Family and Community Sciences and Agricultural and Extension Education. The Center for Environmental and Resource Economic Policy as well as the SNAP-ED and FFA programs will also be part of this system.

**Food, Biochemical and Process Systems** (co-chaired by Associate Dean Sylvia Blankenship) will include the departments of Biological and Agricultural Engineering and Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences, as well as the Department of Molecular and Structural Biochemistry. The Southeastern Dairy Foods Research Center will also be part of this system.

Additionally, the new CALS Collaborative Systems includes a phased divestiture in the Department of Statistics, which will take place over several years. The Dean of College of Sciences (COS) and the department head of Statistics will be working with CALS administration to manage this transition. We recognize the important need for statistical information and collaboration, but in the future we will access this information through new ventures and partnerships with COS, strategic hiring and other potential sources. Resource savings from this action will be used to make strategic investments in our college.

To help CALS live into our vision, the Provost is co-investing with the college for the creation of 40 new faculty positions over the next 4 years – with an immediate release of up to 20 new faculty positions beginning in January 2016. This is an unprecedented investment and is a real game changer for the work we do, with a lasting impact for decades to come.

**Why are we making changes?** There are many reasons for this change – some internal, some external. Internally, there is an opportunity to improve strategic hiring practices, decision making and investments through increased collaboration. We have faced external budget cuts and unfunded mandates that have been exacerbated by operational inefficiency and the lack of interdepartmental goals, and strategic hiring practices. Innovative collaboration, a key element in our CALS Collaborative Systems, can help us manage budget cuts that have made it impossible to maintain appropriate faculty and staffing levels on and off campus.

For the past 12 months, the CALS administrative team has been conducting an innovation and efficiency exercise that has included engaging peer land-grant colleges to learn how they have moved forward in times of challenge, as well as the formation of an Innovation and Efficiency Committee. This committee included 40 faculty from a cross-section of departments and disciplines. The group was charged to share ideas and changes to help CALS be more efficient and innovative – now and in the future – with a specific request to develop options for restructuring the college. Though the committee's final report did not include organizational change, many of their ideas have already led to improvements in our business operations, budgeting processes and internal communications. After carefully studying all ideas and suggestions from the committee, and soliciting input from all department heads, CALS administration developed an Innovation and Efficiency Plan, the CALS Collaborative Systems. We presented this plan to the Chancellor and Provost and have their full support.

**How and when will the changes take place?** We expect to have the new framework in place

by July 1, 2016. In January 2016, the four systems will begin convening to work on strategic hiring plans and system recommendations. In the meantime, we want to hear your questions, comments and ideas in shaping a framework that allows for greater interdisciplinary collaboration.

**Where can you get more information?** We have developed a website at [go.ncsu.edu/livingourvision](http://go.ncsu.edu/livingourvision) where you can read more about the changes, express interest in participating in the process and submit your questions.

While these changes will alter our team-based identities within the college, they will also allow us to align who we are and what we do in a way that enables us to live up to the strategic vision that you – our faculty, staff and stakeholders – played an important role in shaping.