

College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Monthly College Newsletter | December/January

Message from the Dean



The College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for our students, staff, faculty and visitors. Land-grant universities were created more than 150 years ago to provide knowledge in a broader and more inclusive way. Today, diversity and inclusivity are the foundation upon which we build a successful college and they must be a priority as we pursue our research, teaching and extension programs.

The college recently conducted an internal review of its Office of Diversity. This office was created by Dean Scott Smith in the early 2000s during the early part of his tenure. The information developed during the review reinforced how critical the office is to the success of the college's students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. The office provides leadership for the college as it strives to set and advance strategic policies related to equity, diversity and inclusion. It is heavily involved in recruiting and retaining diverse and talented students, staff and faculty. It is responsible for developing the cultural competency that underscores everything the college does. Today, we are grateful for Dean Smith's vision and that of Dr. Lionel Williamson and Dr. Quentin Tyler's past leadership of this office.

Many strengths were identified in the review. The college's student body has become more diverse, with one in five of our freshman class being an underrepresented minority. Under the leadership of Dr. Mia Farrell, recently named assistant dean and director of the Office of Diversity, the UK chapter of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences continues to set the bar nationally for developing campus and community leaders. Mia recently assumed the position of president of the national MANRRS organization, just as the UK chapter was celebrating its seventh consecutive Chapter of the Year Award. Under Mia's leadership, the Office of Diversity will continue to focus on student success and fostering a sense of community and belonging within the college.

The review also noted that we need to increase faculty and staff awareness of the resources available in the Office of Diversity and elsewhere to support the college's commitment to an inclusive and culturally aware environment. Dr. Vanessa Jackson, chair of the Department of Retailing and Tourism Management, has been named College Director of Faculty Diversity and Inclusiveness and will be an additional resource for the office as it works to address diversity and inclusivity issues specifically related to the faculty experience. This will be a part time appointment for Vanessa, who has recently renewed her appointment as chair of RTM. In a way this will formalize Vanessa's role as a university-wide leader and advisor to many.

Vanessa will work with chairs and faculty to help academic programs achieve inclusive curricula and student programs; support programs focused on creating and assessing social justice, anti-racism, anti-discrimination and diverse classrooms. She will also work to promote diversity and inclusion among faculty and leadership and explore partnerships with other colleges to advance the communication and outcomes related to enhancing diversity and inclusion and other faculty-driven issues.

As their direct supervisor, I am responsible for making sure that Mia and Vanessa are positioned for success in their complementary roles. Through their efforts, I'm confident that our college will continue to be a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. The land-grant university has built on its roots and has evolved to serve the multicultural modern world. This kind of progress honors our slogan, "It Starts with Us."

New Extension Structure

On November 13, a new Extension administrative structure was announced statewide for the UK Cooperative Extension Service. The structure is designed to increase agent time available for programming; increase mentoring opportunities between agents and supervisors; streamline our fiscal accountability and compliance; and reduce our staff to supervisor ratios.

The new structure will include 28 areas divided in three regions eliminating the current seven district structure. The new area groupings, each including three to five counties, were developed within the current district borders. These new areas are for administrative purposes. Programming is not impacted. To learn more about the new structure, visit the Extension transition [website](#).

New online room reservation system

A new online room reservation process for E.S. Good Barn, Seay Auditorium and Seay Lobby in Ag Science North and 249 Barnhart will be implemented in January. Anyone wishing to reserve these spaces must use the online system to submit a request. Visit the reservation system at <https://administration.ca.uky.edu/room-reservations> beginning Jan. 2.

Hall of Distinguished Alumni



The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and CAFE Alumni Association invites you to attend the 2020 Hall of Distinguished Alumni Induction Ceremony beginning at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10, 2020 at Hilton Lexington Downtown Grand Kentucky Ballroom.

Please join us as we honor inductees Zhiqiang An, Patrick M. Henderson, Sarah Tabb Henry and Dorothea Smith Oatts (posthumously). Cost is \$50 per person. To register, contact Brooke Stone at 859-257-3814.

UK@Work Survey Results

The college had a 48% response rate, 137 faculty and 741 staff, on the UK @ Work survey. Results show that 12 out of 13 categories have improved or maintained scores since 2017, with perceptions of leadership showing a statistically significant improvement. A few strengths: 91% of respondents report they are proud to be associated with UK, 91% also report that their department chair or supervisor treats them with respect and 89% indicated that their work gives them a sense of personal accomplishment. The survey also identified a few opportunities. Fifty-four percent of the faculty and staff disagree, or are not sure, whether or not action will be taken based on the problems identified in the survey. There is a general lack of clarity across many groups about what procedures or process to follow if they have a concern or complaint. More faculty and staff report experiencing stress at work and their level of stress is reducing their effectiveness. Over the coming months, the college will update its UK@Work [website](#) with the 2019 survey results, while departments and nonacademic units with at least 10 survey respondents will receive a unit-level report. We will develop action plans in response to identified opportunity areas, and we will share our plans so you can stay informed about initiatives underway collegewide and in your unit.

Awards/Honors

The CAFE Master Teacher Award - Bryan Hains, associate professor the Department of Community and Leadership Development.

George E. Mitchell Award, for outstanding faculty service to graduate students - Alison Gustafson, associate professor in the Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition.

Kentucky Association of State Extension Professionals' **Mack Whiteker Excellence in Extension Award -Donna Amaral-Phillips**, professor in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences.

Kentucky 4-H took top honors in the National 4-H Livestock Judging Competition during the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville. Kentucky 4-H All-Star Gold

Livestock Judging Team are Chevy Vaske of Boone County, Kasey Johnson of Mason County, Lydia Gosney of Pendleton County and Will Banks of Harrison County. They are coached by Steve Austin, extension associate for 4-H Youth Livestock Programs. They are the first Kentucky team to win the national contest.

Alumni Association Winter Event

Join the CAFE Alumni Association Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020, in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Lexington Downtown for brunch and a pep rally before the CATS take on the Crimson Tide of Alabama.

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. EST with the meal lines opening at 10 a.m. Tip-off is at noon. Click [here](#) for more information and to register to attend.



In the news

Grant will help UK extension expand opioid prevention and recovery efforts

The Cooperative Extension Service recently received more than \$1 million to help further the organization's statewide educational efforts in opioid prevention and recovery. The [two-year grant](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration will allow extension to bring new and innovative programs to the state and build upon its already successful efforts. As part of the grant, extension will offer an Addiction 101 course geared toward health care workers, extension agents and community leaders. It will also include Botvin LifeSkills Training, which is a national, evidence-based substance abuse prevention program, to area middle school students.



UK working to lower obesity rates in Kentucky county

Faculty and staff are collaborating with community leaders in Martin County to improve the county's built-environment infrastructure, increase food accessibility and encourage healthier eating and shopping. The [project](#) is the result of a five-year, \$2.5 million grant UK Family and Consumer Sciences Extension received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC awards grants to land-grant universities in states that have counties with more than 40% of the adult population considered obese. Five years ago, Kentucky had six counties with obesity rates high enough to qualify for funding. Martin is the only county that remains.

UK, KSU partner to help Kentucky's at-risk youth

A partnership between Kentucky's two land-grant universities will result in life skills training and workforce preparation for some of the state's most vulnerable young people. Through a project called [Uplift: Empowering Today's Youth for Tomorrow's Future](#), Cooperative Extension specialists at the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University will deliver educational programming to unstably housed teenagers in Lexington and Elizabethtown. It is funded by a five-year, nearly \$650,000 grant from the Children, Youth and Families at Risk

Spotlight

Sam McNeill

Extension Professor, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering
Research and Education Center, Princeton

We asked Sam to share a little about his passions, his career path and what led him to us.

Tell us about your background and what led you to your current role at UK?

I was raised on a small farm in Fleming County and received three degrees in agricultural engineering: B.S. (UK '74), M.S. (UK '79) and Ph.D. (UT '96). Early in my career, I worked as an extension agricultural engineer, then joined the extension faculty ranks in 1997 and was promoted to full professor in 2018. My primary focus is post-harvest engineering systems for grain crops. I have written extension publications on handling, drying and storing canola, corn (both conventional and organic), grain sorghum, soybeans and wheat. I have provided technical assistance for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on more than 100 Kentucky farms.



In the past 10 years, I have had the opportunity to work in Ghana and Nigeria and have provided training aimed at reducing post-harvest losses/providing food security to more than 1,000 farmers, extension educators, grain merchants, processors and university students and faculty.

What is your favorite thing about working in CAFE?

The chance to work with other engineers and across disciplines in agriculture/grain science, which has led to career opportunities beyond my dreams.

What is one thing about yourself that might surprise people.

In my prime (at 35), I ran a sub 3-hour marathon in Louisville and qualified to run the Boston marathon which I've since run twice, along with 10 others in four states.

Calendar of Events

December 7

[Tour of Evergreens and Kissing Ball crafting event-The Arboretum](#)

December 13

Last Day of Classes

Helpful Links

[Giving](#)

[College Weekly for Faculty & Staff](#)

[College Weekly for Students](#)

[The Ag Magazine](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Contact Us](#)

December 16-20
Monday through Friday
Final Examinations

December 20
December Commencement

December 21-January 1
Winter Break

January 6-7
[2020 Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable
Conference](#)

January 15
First Day of Classes



Click the image above to read the latest issue of The Ambassador!

