

College of ACES

Statement of Strategic Intent

September 2005



College of Agricultural,
Consumer and
Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Strategic intent links an organization’s desired leadership position with established criteria that it will use to chart progress. It builds on the organization’s sense of what it wants to do, and for us, this means:

- Innovating in bioscience: processes, products, environment, and energy
- Creating progressive food and agricultural systems with sustainable landscapes
- Accelerating complementary advances in food, nutrition, and health
- Ensuring that families and communities are resilient

Strategic intent acknowledges goals like these, but it does not dwell upon them. Instead, it serves to:

- Articulate the necessity and intent to excel
- Align actions with intent
- Focus on organizational growth and development
- Merge organizational and individual goals
- Energize leadership and management

Our Guiding Principles

Strategic intent requires purposeful and collective action that by its very nature will be viewed as audacious and unsettling. This becomes particularly apparent when the organization realizes that strategic intent is not just an exercise in dreaming.

In embracing strategic intent, the College of ACES commits to thinking but also to doing. We aim to “get somewhere,” but we must also take steps—audacious and unsettling ones—to get there.

Some of these steps mandate that we develop defined and relevant standards to monitor progress along the path. Others require us to create novel strategic architectures—new ways of doing business.

This document defines ACES Strategic Intent in a precise way, and it articulates how progress will be measured. It also suggests how our strategic architecture—both management structures and processes—could be updated to get the job done, with the understanding that we must remain flexible on this point.

The details will be filled in during the implementation phase, as the organization “learns” from the process. This is the most crucial next step: What do we do to achieve our intent? Our Strategic Intent in a phrase – “Global Preeminence and Local Relevance”

Two overarching goals—global preeminence in our scholarship and exceptional value to society, especially on issues relevant to Illinois—frame the strategic intent of the College of ACES.

ACES will be recognized as the global leader in learning, discovery, and engagement in the most promising areas of scholarship broadly relevant to agricultural, consumer, and environmental sciences. The College of ACES will be acknowledged in Illinois, across America, and around the world.....

- For preparing globally competitive undergraduate, graduate, and mid-career students
- For first-class discovery research that is purposefully translated into practice
- As the preferred source of knowledge that informs sound individual and collective decisions, transforms lives, and deepens cooperative relationships

Strategically, we in ACES intend

...to be recognized for preeminence in the global context.

...to be noted for educating students, alumni, and clients more than proportionately represented among the leaders and entrepreneurs who make a significant difference in their respective fields and occupations.

...to be known for our ability to draw on both internal and external resources to achieve an unusual degree of innovative collaboration.

...to be acknowledged as a first class science college that creates and applies knowledge to assist policymakers, managers, and others in making sound decisions.

In measuring success, we will seek evidence with respect to:

Globalization

- ACES scholarship sets the intellectual agenda of influential organizations and at forums that address crucial global issues for agriculture, consumers, and the environment.
- Global knowledge is an integral component of the programs of study for all of our students.
- Our faculty, students, and staff weave global experiences and perspectives into their programs as a natural course of action.
- ACES students, graduates, and clients are extraordinarily well prepared to thrive in an increasingly global arena.

Leadership

- Our faculty, students, and clients are able to read the forces that shape their time, apply entrepreneurial skills to create ideas and opportunities and turn ideas into reality.
- Amplification of leadership and entrepreneurial skills is woven into the fabric of our programs of study, to differentiate our students markedly from those in peer institutions.
- Demand for our graduates increases, and employers' hiring decisions are positively influenced by the leadership skills our students have gained.
- Employers and donors are willing to support our leadership and entrepreneurship programs.
- Our graduates are able to advance rapidly, and our cadre of alumni and clients with leadership credentials grows significantly.

Collaboration

- Complex programs cutting across disciplines and missions—many of which involve other internal, campus, and external players—are created and managed successfully in ACES.
- Our discretionary resources create translational teams that channel our investment in basic research to identify solutions to real world problems.
- The assets of our external partners are strengthened and our mutual capabilities are leveraged and enhanced.
- The private sector, other campus units, and leading public research institutions seek out ACES as a preferred collaborator.

Knowledge and Decisions

- Our faculty and staff seek to facilitate decision making and inform policy as part of their normal job responsibilities.
- Our graduates are prepared to apply knowledge in making sound policy decisions.
- Our discretionary resource investments are deliberately and consistently competitive in generating external resources and focused on creating exceptional value to decision makers.

- Our college is rising to the top of the commonly acknowledged systems to rank quality in our fields of endeavor.
- Our faculty and staff organize and help lead high profile activities at the nexus of science and policy. Their knowledge and opinions are sought out by decision makers, influential media, and thought leaders.

Potential revisions of our strategic architecture:

Globalization

- ACES creates an externally informed roadmap for its globalization efforts.
- ACES realigns its investments of discretionary funds to leverage external resources for activities that deliberately generate global perspectives.
- ACES devises management and incentive systems to increase the level of global perspective in the college, raise the status of global scholarship and program activity, and market the college as a global leader.

Leadership

- ACES provides incentives for and systematically raises expectations of students, faculty, staff, and clients to maximize their potential for leadership and entrepreneurial success.
- ACES reviews its curricula and programs and introduces innovations to enhance leadership and entrepreneurial skills in all of its students and program partners.
- ACES invests discretionary resources in a college-wide, student-oriented leadership program.
- ACES focuses development efforts on leadership and entrepreneurship.

Collaboration

- ACES creates superior management systems to establish and sustain complex, cross-cutting programs.
- ACES devises incentive systems to reward leadership of and participation in collaborative efforts.
- ACES implements creative mechanisms to transcend academic and organizational boundaries.

Knowledge and Decisions

- ACES recognizes and rewards influential scholarship in its teaching and engagement missions.
- ACES reorients its investments of internal discretionary funds to leverage external resources.
- ACES reserves a portion of its internal discretionary funds as incentive to develop the faculty and staff leadership needed to create major program collaborations.
- ACES creates pre- and post-hiring mechanisms to ensure that its faculty and staff exceed the norms of their fields in being competitive for external funding.
- ACES includes the potential for research leadership and communication skills to non-experts as part of the normal hiring expectations.
- ACES ensures that all students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful research.