5-Year Strategic Plan

Approved in 2014

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Food Science and Technology is to disseminate knowledge of food through student education; to seek, verify and apply information related to food, and to communicate same through professional, scientific and public outreach programs.

More specifically the mission is:

- To provide baccalaureate and graduate education in food science that promotes excellence in student achievement and prepares students to contribute effectively and excel in a changing world.
- To enquire into the nature of food production, processing, and delivery through the discovery, interpretation, and creative application of knowledge.
- To serve the public through timely education of producers, processors, distributors, and consumers using relevant, accurate, and unbiased research-based information and to improve the quality of life through life-long education.
- To disseminate knowledge through publications, presentations, and state-of-the-art technologies.

The Department of Food Science and Technology strives to enhance the economic viability and global competitiveness of Georgia’s food production and processing sectors.

INTRODUCTION

This plan follows the format of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences 2020 Strategic Plan with seven goals. This format is for the sake of convenience and does not imply that these sections deal with truly independent missions of the department. To implement portions of this plan, we propose to develop new initiatives that will improve our ability to focus departmental, college, and state resources on the mission of the department.

Goal 1 – Academics

A. Provide quality Food Science education

1. Provide quality teaching through course offerings and student mentoring. Use evaluation of these efforts for annual evaluation and promotion.

B. Evaluate the curriculum of the major

1. Continually and critically review the curriculum and when needed revise it. Assess the learning outcomes of all courses and use student feedback to improve course offerings.

2. Facilitate offering a 3-credit course to fulfill WLCHA core requirement.
3. Evaluate teaching needs as FST faculty retire, and ensure that position descriptions include these needs.

C. Maintain awareness of job market demand for Food Science majors

1. Publicize information about job market demand and summary of IFT salary survey
2. Promote industry experiences with credit hours
   a. Create an orientation session at the department for new Food Science students.
   b. Create media for advertising internships and Co-ops.
   c. Include internships or co-ops in the experimental learning experience.
3. Increase student involvement in our professional society (e.g., IFT).

D. Involvement if interdepartmental curricula

1. Ensure that cross-listed courses are properly publicized and coordination between the other departments is maintained by the undergraduate coordinator.
2. Have undergraduate and graduate committees review existing courses and consider needs for cross-listing.

E. Increase undergrad involvement in meaningful research experiences

1. Apply for existing undergraduate research funding from CAES and university sources.
2. Include undergraduate research efforts in the experiential learning experience.

F. Evaluate curriculum to increase globalization

1. Continue to promote Food Science study abroad programs.
2. Survey instructors and students (through our exit survey) annually to quantify the extent of global issues discussed in existing courses.
3. Continue the involvement of international guests/scholars in the seminar program.

G. Continue development of the distance education effort

1. Increase number of students in the online MFT program to at least 15 new students.
2. Continue to develop and modify the asynchronous course offerings and course materials.
3. Continue offering the appropriate graduate level courses to Griffin students via distance education.
H. Enhancement of graduate program

1. Continue to monitor student numbers, ratio of MS to PhD students and quality.

2. Seek additional funding to support graduate education (e.g., assistantships, equipment and facilities).

3. Identify and solicit industry support to enhance graduate education via participation in FoodPIC projects.

I. Increase diversity in student body

1. Increase participation in programs supporting underrepresented students (e.g., summer study programs, feeder programs, etc.)

2. Promote our Graduate program to minority institutions, so we can recruit the best students from targeted programs.

3. Continue to seek financial support (Graduate Assistantship, Fellowship or other funding) for minority students.

Goal 2: Extension Education and Outreach

A. Establish direct internal communications about Extension and outreach activities

1. Extension Food Science (EFS) will establish direct communication with the CAES Deans, county program development coordinators (PDCs), area specialists, county agents about EFS activities.

2. Updates on food safety research will be distributed on a regular basis (including, but not limited to, the Center of Food Safety website and quarterly newsletter).

3. Provide information to Georgia and Southeastern food processors about its programs and services.

B. Continue existing workshops and develop new programs to meet emerging needs

1. Maintain and update workshop materials, and references in participant notebooks.

2. Add new workshops and programs as needed.

3. Food safety and quality auditing programs such as SQF, GFSI and BRC will be incorporated into workshops as appropriate to provide a well-rounded training.

C. Provide extension and outreach services to the food industry

1. Train small to medium sized Georgia food product entrepreneurs in proper processing procedures.
2. Provide assistance to small to medium sized Georgia food product entrepreneurs who need assistance meeting FDA, USDA, and Georgia Department of Agriculture requirements (Services may include sanitation and microbial audits, collecting lethality data, and providing information on product development, commercialization and marketing)

3. Provide the food industry with science-based research information to optimize processing, reduce foodborne illness, and improve food safety. The release of new FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act) regulations in 2015 will necessitate that all FDA-regulated food plants (fresh produce, nut, snack foods, etc.) must develop and implement food safety plans for their operations. New “HARPC” food safety plans will become mandatory for small to medium-sized processors in Georgia and they will need technical assistance from Extension specialists.

4. Develop needs-based educational and training bulletins, fact sheets, newsletters for timely updates on regulatory policy changes, new regulations, and meeting those requirements (e.g., changes in food labeling guidelines, allergen labeling, FSMA, etc.)

D. Address the sustainability of food processing and food safety

1. Provide training in proper processing methods, food safety guidelines to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks.

2. Provide information about food processing waste and waste water treatment, minimization of food waste and water conservation methods to stakeholders.

3. FoodPIC should include sustainability practices in the areas of food processing, preservation and packaging to the information conveyed to the clients.

E. Improving health and wellness through food safety education and training

1. Our hands-on approach of delivering food safety training increases the understanding of the participants of the critical impact of maintaining safe and sanitary production practices in their food processing plants. Food-borne illness outbreaks have been greatly reduced since 1998 when HACCP was introduced.

2. Food Safety (HACCP) education on meat and poultry, and nuts should also include information on health and wellness of these commodities.

Goal 3: Focus Area - Food safety, health and wellness, and sustainable food system

A. Develop overall program in the focus area through interdisciplinary teaching, research, and Extension programs

1. FST will actively address the CAES focus areas of (1) Food, health and wellness and (2) Sustainable food production systems through interdisciplinary teaching, research
and Extension programs that are timely and relevant to the citizens of Georgia, the nation and the world.

2. Include food safety, health and wellness and sustainability in food science curriculum.

3. Conduct collaborative research projects in the area of food safety and functional foods within and outside of the FST program.

4. Work with food industry partners to develop technology for safe and nutritious food supply.

5. Enhanced Extension workshops addressing implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

6. Actively participate in the CAES led Sustainable Food Systems Initiative (SFSI) and in the UGA-wide sustainability and sustainable food system programs and initiatives.

7. Actively participate in the UGA-wide Obesity Initiative.

Goal 4: Research. FST will have a strong, well-supported, and balanced basic and applied research programs

A. The department will have a core of nationally-prominent research faculty contributing to relevant focus areas

1. Aggressively seek extramural funding to support research efforts in their respective areas and use the data for annual evaluation and promotion.

2. Develop department level strategies that increase the number of special and named professorships.
   a. Pursue the establishment of an Endowed Chair Professor position in a focused area.
   b. Work with FST Industry Advisory Board and FST alumni to seek funding for the position.

3. Encourage collaboration between FST, CFS and FoodPIC in conducting industry-sponsored research projects

4. Encourage faculty to apply for distinguished faculty awards in CAES and the UGA.

B. Foster collaborative relationships between basic and applied scientists

1. Update and maintain the FST website that highlights the strengths of FST, CFS, and FoodPIC with links between them.
2. Emphasize the need to hire new faculty that are willing to collaborate with scientists 
in other disciplines, departments, and across basic and applied areas of research.

3. FST should make this goal a priority in the training, mentoring, and evaluation of 
faculty.

Goal 5: Faculty and Staff Productivity

A. FST will have the most productive, innovative and respected faculty and staff 
workforce in the land-grant system

   1. Provide mentoring for the development and enrichment early in the career of faculty 
and staff.

   2. Continue to promote a healthy work/life balance.

   3. Increase rigor of faculty performance evaluations and promotion and tenure 
procedures to ensure excellence, and establish evaluation and promotion processes 
that recognize the diversity of faculty responsibilities and activities.

   4. Increase rigor of staff performance evaluations and reclassification procedures to 
ensure excellence, and establish evaluation and promotion processes that recognize 
the diversity of staff responsibilities and activities.

Goal 6: FST will maintain current funding, expand existing sources, and search for a 
diversity of new funding resources

A. Seek funding to support teaching, research, and Extension programs

   1. Faculty will actively submit grant proposals to secure funding.

   2. Seek funding from new public and private sources.

B. Establish a mentoring program for new faculty with emphasis on grantsmanship

   1. Establish informal mentoring program for new faculty with emphasis on 
grantsmanship and scholarly activities.

   2. Encourage junior faculty to attend grantsmanship workshops.

   3. Encourage senior faculty successful grant writers to share their experiences and 
provide tips on writing grant proposals.

C. Ensure management and support for interdisciplinary grantsmanship and research 
efforts

   1. Encourage faculty members interested in pursuing additional research opportunities 
with partner institutions should take advantage of databases such as COS-Pivot.
2. Encourage interdisciplinary/multi-institutional collaborative grant writing and provide example agreements for use by faculty during proposal development process.

D. Emphasize alternative funding

1. Approach commodity groups (federal and state) and other organizations (private foundations such as Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, etc.) for support of FST programs.

2. Encourage receipt of gifts from industry and private individuals.

Goal 7: Communication

A. Enhance internal communication within the department

1. FST faculty and staff will demonstrate knowledge of initiatives in various program areas within FST, CFS, and FoodPIC and will collaborate when appropriate.

B. Enhance communication about FST to UGA community, decision makers and the general public

1. FST faculty should submit relevant and unique teaching, research and extension accomplishments/stories to CAES Public Relations Coordinator for web distribution via GeorgiaFaces site, to Columns, and other outlets as appropriate. This includes student and staff accomplishments.

2. The FST faculty should send students/alumni accomplishments to South Campus magazine and the Director of CAES Alumni Relations.

3. Develop communication tools so that Decision makers, alumni, and the general public will recognize and understand the value and impact of FST programs to the people, state, nation, and the world.