

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences
Strategic Plan 2012 – 2017**

Our Vision

The Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences at Virginia Tech strives for pre-eminence in teaching, research, extension, and outreach to provide sustainable ecosystem management and improved environmental quality. We integrate sciences to deliver comprehensive solutions to the agricultural and environmental challenges of today and tomorrow.

Our Mission

We will meet the land-grant mission of Virginia Tech by improving crop plants, enhancing sustainable practices in crop production and land use, and increasing knowledge about human impacts on the environment through education, research, and outreach.

Our Values

We value and reward excellence, integrity, respect, collegiality, effective communication, and resource stewardship. These values are essential to meet the land grant university's commitment to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the global community.

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND BENCHMARKS

I. Academic Programs

We are committed to high quality, relevant, and cutting-edge academic programs

A. Undergraduate (Primary responsibility: Undergraduate Programs committee, Dept. Head)

Goal 1 Strengthen undergraduate programs, making us one of the preeminent departments of our kind

Benchmarks

- Rename the CSES degree and re-organize/introduce new options in both degrees by December 2012
- Complete internal review of course offerings and new course development by December 2012
- Complete first survey of employers and graduates by August 2013
- Implement formal assessments for both undergraduate majors by Fall 2012
- 90% of our undergraduates taking professional certification exams will pass
- Initiate peer reviews of teaching in Fall 2012

Goal 2 Increase the size of our undergraduate programs

Benchmarks

- Teach 550 undergraduate SCH/teaching faculty FTE by 2017 (465/FTE in 2011)
- Increase enrollment in the ENSC major to 225 by Fall 2017 (150 in Spring 2012)
- Increase enrollment in the CSES major to 75 by Fall 2017 (65 in Spring 2012)
- Award 60 B.S. degrees/year by 2017 (2007-2011, average of 41 B.S. degrees/year)
- Increase enrollments in ENSC 1015/1115 and 1016/1116 to 100 by fall 2012 and 150 in fall 2013 (65 enrolled in 1016 during Spring 2012)

Goal 3 Increase support for undergraduates

Benchmarks

- 20% of CSES/ENSC students with summer internships by 2017
- 10% of CSES/ENSC students participating in research activities by Fall 2013
- One study abroad opportunity per year beginning with summer 2014
- 2017 scholarship goal: \$50,000 in undergraduate scholarships. 2011: \$25,000/yr
- Initiate a “scholars” program for high-achieving students by fall 2013

B. Graduate (Primary responsibility: Graduate Programs committee, Dept. Head)

Goal 1 Increase graduate student enrollment

Benchmarks

- Teach 200 graduate SCH/teaching faculty FTE by 2017 (129/FTE in 2011)
- Enrollment goal, Fall 2017: ≥ 25 Ph.D., ≥ 35 M.S., and ≥ 15 MALS. (Fall 2011 enrollment is 12 Ph.D., 25 M.S., and 8 MALS)
- Increase GTA’s from 5.75 to 7.50 (Currently based on CALS FTE x hours metrics)
- Graduate student enrollment in M.S. and Ph.D. programs should be at least 2.6/faculty FTE by 2017 (1.9/FTE in 2012)

Goal 2 Ensure the quality and rigor of CSES graduate programs

Benchmarks

- Complete a critical evaluation of CSES and MALS (ENSC) graduate course offerings by fall 2012
- A distinguished speaker series will begin no later than Fall 2012
- A graduate student ‘tracking system’ will be in place by Fall 2012
- 2017 goals: 1.0 presentations and 0.5 refereed journal articles/year by M.S./Ph.D. graduate students

Goal 3 Increase support of graduate students

Benchmarks

- 2017 goal: Award \$10,000 in scholarships annually to graduate students (2011: \$3,500)
- Provide \$15,000 annually by 2017 to support graduate student travel
- Improve all graduate student facilities in Smyth Hall by the end of 2017

II. Research (Primary responsibility: Dept. Head, Facilities Committee, Faculty)

We are committed to conducting relevant and cutting-edge research supported by extramural funds

Goal 1 Increase sponsored research and royalties from cultivar release

Benchmarks

- FY 2008 – 2011 Sponsored Awards \$3.48 million/yr. FY 2017 goal: \$5.0 million. The CSES goal is to always be among the top three departments in CALS in research awards and expenditures.
- FY 2012-2017 goal of \$200,000/yr in royalties (FY 2011: \$207,000)

Goal 2 Increase number of refereed publications and presentations by CSES faculty

Benchmark

- 2017 goal of 2.5 refereed publications/faculty FTE/year (2011: 1.9/FTE)

Goal 3 Improve facilities in Smyth Hall and maximize efficiency of space usage

Benchmarks

- Complete renovations of Smyth 350 and 351A by the end of 2012. Set next priorities for lab renovations by the end of 2012.
- Complete renovation of Smyth 337 by the end of 2012
- Re-label laboratories in Smyth by the end of 2012
- Facilities Committee will review lab space allocation during 2012 and every two years thereafter

Goal 4 Ensure that the Agronomy Farm and NPAREC contribute successfully to CSES research programs

Benchmarks

- Complete targeted improvements at the Agronomy Farm by the end of 2013: Paint doors to improve appearance, improve air flow and circulation through buildings, Improve equipment storage through clearing space or adding more
- Implement new name and land use changes at NPAREC by August 2012

III. Extension (Primary responsibility: Extension Programs committee, Dept. Head)

We will generate and deliver current information concerning crop, soil, and environmental sciences to promote sustainable land and water resource management

Goal 1 ANR agents will receive the education necessary to enable them to deliver high quality, impactful programs

Benchmarks

- By 2017, 75% of ANR County Agents and 90% of recent hires with crops and soils, environment and natural resources, and lawn and garden topical areas will participate in 1 classroom and 1 field service training program each year
- 16 extension publications in need of revision will be updated by spring 2013, and needed publications will be identified by the end of 2012 for future development

Goal 2 Our clientele will be educated in a manner and have access to the latest information that will stimulate them to implement scientifically cutting-edge practices

Benchmarks

- CSES Specialists will give 76 workshop/conference and 71 field day presentations/year
- The number and amount of extension grants will increase by 5% annually. 2017 target: 73 grants with \$700,000 for extension activities
- Website hits will increase by at least 5% each year. 2017 target: 14,500
- The number of social media followers will increase each year. 2017 target: 534

Goal 3 CSES extension programs will be renowned statewide/nationally/internationally

Benchmarks

- At least one extension news article will be written and included in each departmental newsletter

Goal 4 Service to industry, state and regional organizations will maintain and enhance essential linkages with external stakeholders

Benchmarks

- There will be an increase in the service by extension specialists to regulatory technical advisory committees and industry leadership boards. 2011 – 40; 2017 target - 42
- Soil test methods and recommendations will be revised as new scientific knowledge is generated

IV. Communications, Marketing, and Outreach

(Primary responsibility: Communications, Marketing, and Recruiting committee, Dept. Head)

Goal 1 Increase the visibility of CSES

Benchmarks

- Participate in all university and/or college-sponsored recruiting/information exchange events
- Develop a student recruiting strategy
- Create scholarship incentives for CSES/ENSC students who serve as CALS Ambassadors
- At least one student from CSES and ENSC will serve as Ag Ambassadors each year

Goal 2 Develop and deliver current recruiting information in print and electronically

Benchmarks

- Complete graduate program flyers by July 2012
- Complete video clips of students and faculty for CSES webpage by Dec. 2012. Upload to website
- Complete a short PowerPoint presentation with photos of students and student activities that visually 'describe' our majors, options, and/or graduate programs by Dec. 2012.
- Design and develop banners containing pertinent pictures and text describing MS and PhD programs by August 2012

Goal 3 Ensure effective communication within and outside the department

Benchmarks

- Publish the first CSES quarterly newsletter in June 2012

Goal 4 Engage our alumni, emeriti, and supporters in the present and future of our department

Benchmarks

- Host an annual breakfast for emeritus faculty, beginning fall 2012
- Create a CSES Advisory Committee with 6-8 members, no later than January 2013