

Dear Colleagues,

I write to update you on the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources actions in response to the financial challenges facing the University. I also write to invite you to participate in one of a number of sessions over the next few weeks to learn more about the budget and CANR's future.

Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University has a proud and illustrious history. We are fortunate to stand on the shoulders of accomplished and visionary educators who built a college, Extension service and agriculture experiment station network that is world renown. We need look no further than the places we work to be reminded of the leadership that has successfully responded to challenges in our past – Manly Miles, Trout, Anthony, Hannah.

Today is another critical moment in our college's history. More importantly, it is a critical moment in our college's future. The economic, political, and global pressures we face are daunting and yet present us with a great opportunity. It is during times like this that our priorities and needs are scrutinized at new levels. Things become clearer. It is easier to see and choose what we must do, not just what we may want to do. In challenging financial times, vision is the most valuable commodity.

We can choose to react to this situation or we can choose to act with purposeful intent. We can have others define us or we can determine our own future. Our mission and values are sound. We have exciting and viable program priorities that focus on the critical issues of food and health, ecosystem health and services, expanding and developing bioeconomy, sustainability and leadership. And we have the experience, creativity, and capacity to design an integrated ANR system of a college of agriculture and natural resources, Extension service and experiment station network for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Department chairs and directors have engaged in strategic visioning sessions over the last month that have discussed our shared principles and the criteria to consider in refining our structure and financing strategies. The process has been informative and enlightening. Our work aligns with the Provost's preferred process outlined in his March 17 email to faculty [see attached]: a process that involves our best strategic thinking and planning and self-determination at the college level.

We are at a crossroads. Following discussion with university leadership, I am directing CANR leadership to plan for a 15 (+/- 2) percent reduction in GF, MAES and MSUE by June 30, 2013. This is independent of the current funding challenges for MAES and MSUE (a proposed merger and 50% reduction in state funding).

We can choose to slowly continue to decline with fewer resources or we can fundamentally redefine ourselves. As Provost Wilcox writes, "If we are to move forward with less, it will be important to recognize where we need to invest and disinvest." The opportunity to embrace entrepreneurial activities, new revenue generating ideas and redesign organizational structures and practices is here today. We need to remember that our organizational "form" should be driven by our "functions" -- and needs to be as ever-changing, nimble, and flexible as needed to advance our collective intent.

Because of the complexity of the ANR budget and the integrated nature of the CANR, MAES and MSUE funding situation, we have been granted a six week extension in submitting our fiscal strategy to reach the 2013 goal. It is my intent to make this process as inclusive as possible. I value your participation and the opportunity to listen to your ideas, concerns and counsel. I am encouraged and excited about the quality and depth of discussions with department chairs and directors to date and am optimistic that we have the will, the focus and the mutual respect to successfully and openly deal with this situation.

**A meeting with faculty is scheduled for March 25 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. as part of the CANR Faculty meeting. It will be held in Rm. 101 of the Plant and Soils Science Building.** This is intended to be an opportunity to learn more about our current budget challenges and for faculty to share ideas about how to deal with replacing lost GF and increasing revenue generation. More importantly, it is an opportunity for me to listen to faculty concerns and ideas. I truly believe that this is a critical step to co-creating our future.

Additional listening sessions for faculty and staff are also scheduled between March 25 and April 3 prior to our budget submission deadline.

We will be better prepared to collectively deal with the challenge before us because of this dialogue and debate. In a world of uncertainty, it is important that we remember those things that are certain --our research, teaching and outreach missions; our commitment to world class excellence; our value for the pursuit of knowledge. They will guide us through this process and be helpful touchstones as we co-create our future.

### **Faculty Focused Sessions**

Wednesday, March 25	CANR Faculty MTG 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	101 Plant & Soil Sciences Building
Tuesday, March 31	11:30am – 1:30 pm (Brown Bag)	Location TBA

Thursday, April 2      3:00 – 5:00 pm

Erickson Kiva

**Staff Focused Sessions**

Wednesday, April 1      4:00-5:00 pm

Erickson Kiva