

November 4, 2013

To: CBS and CFANS faculty, staff, and students

FROM: Professors Gary Muehlbauer and Michael Sadowsky

RE: Provost's Advisory Task Force—potential creation of a new college devoted to agriculture, natural resources, environmental and life sciences.

As you all know, Provost Hanson has convened an advisory task force to explore the possible creation of a new college involving CBS and CFANS. As cochairs of the 19-member task force, we'd like to update our college communities on progress to date.

The task force members first met October 7 to receive their charge from Provost Hanson. The provost outlined her expectations that the task force ensure a full, frank, and thorough discussion of whether consolidating existing strengths will advance the excellence of our research and teaching; benefit students; enhance our partnerships with agriculture and other key stakeholders; and strengthen opportunities to help address critical challenges in agriculture, biology, environmental and natural resource sciences, and medicine.

The task force has since met twice to discuss the charge and plan relevant information-gathering processes that will be as collaborative, transparent, and as fruitful as possible. Consistent with the provost's expectations for a highly expeditious effort, we are now moving forward to gather input from internal and external stakeholders, with the aim of weighing issues from all relevant perspectives. Over the next week, all faculty, staff, and students in CFANS and CBS will receive a survey and questionnaire inviting comments that will help the task force weigh the potential advantages of a new college as well as potential concerns. External constituents (including government and industry stakeholders, alumni, and others) will also receive a survey.

The task force will use the survey results to frame questions for multiple listening sessions, which we tentatively have planned for the first two weeks of December. Task force working groups have been assigned to focus on six key areas of stakeholder input and discussion: research, graduate education, undergraduate education, extension, constituent/external stakeholder relations, and college staff.

As Provost Hanson has emphasized in previous emails, strong engagement from the CBS and CFANS college communities will be critical to the conversation about how best to position our programs for the future. Please watch for the survey and take the time to offer any information you believe may be relevant. We also urge you to attend listening sessions—please watch for the schedule on the provost's office website at academic.umn.edu/provost/cbs-cfans. The task force charge and FAQs can also be found there. Within the next week, this web page will also include a comment form, providing another opportunity for people within and outside the university to offer input to the task force. We will also use this page to post ongoing updates on the task force's work.

You can also feel free to contact us and any member of the task force (list is on the web) if you wish to offer comments that may be better conveyed by conversation or email.

On behalf of the entire task force, thank you for your support as we move forward with this vitally important discussion.