

November 26, 2013

To: CBS and CFANS faculty, staff, and students; external stakeholders

FROM: Professors Gary Muehlbauer and Michael Sadowsky

RE: Update from CFANS-CBS Provost's Advisory Task Force: listening sessions

We would like to update you on the work of the advisory task force charged with exploring the possible creation of a new college devoted to agriculture, biological sciences, natural resources and environmental sciences.

The 19-member task force has met weekly to review information and to develop strategies for input from internal and external stakeholders. We have met with Dean Bob Elde and Interim Dean Brian Buhr and have begun to engage with University and external stakeholders to seek their perspectives on the critical questions the provost has charged us with addressing: 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.

We also have been reviewing responses to the survey we sent to internal and external stakeholders earlier this month. About 700 surveys were completed. On behalf of the task force, we extend our sincere thanks to all of you who took the time to answer the survey questions. The responses will provide valuable input to help the task force weigh the potential advantages of a new college along with potential concerns. Responses also are helping us to plan listening sessions with attention to the areas of focus and concern that are most important to various stakeholder groups.

We have now begun to schedule listening sessions, and hope that many faculty, staff, and students will participate in these important discussions. We expect to have about 12 sessions, to take place during the first three weeks of December. We are arranging multiple locations and times to make participation accessible and convenient for as many people as possible.

Listening sessions will be facilitated by an experienced external consultant and framed by a few questions that reflect the priority concerns of various groups (as gleaned from survey responses), within six overarching areas of focus: research, extension, undergraduate and graduate education, external constituents/outreach, and college operations/staff.

The schedule of listening sessions will be updated regularly on the provost's office website at academic.umn.edu/provost/cbs-cfans. We will also send brief emails at the start of each week with updates/reminders about listening sessions.

Schedule of listening sessions (please [check web to confirm](#) dates, times, and locations)

Undergraduate students

Dec. 3, 3-4 pm, Minneapolis campus, Room 3-180 Kenneth H. Keller Hall

Dec. 3, 5-6 pm, St. Paul campus, Room 125 Andrew Boss Laboratory

Graduate students

Dec. 5, 4:30-5:30 pm, St. Paul campus, 125 Andrew Boss Laboratory

Dec. 17, 4:30-5:30 pm, Minneapolis campus, 130 Murphy

Faculty

Dec. 9, 12-1:30 pm, St. Paul campus, 105 Cargill

Dec. 10, 12-1:30 pm, Minneapolis campus, 2,520 Moos

Staff

Dec. 9, 3-4 pm, Minneapolis campus, 102 Fraser Hall

Dec. 16, 12-1 pm, St. Paul campus, 33 McNeal Hall

Extension faculty/staff

Dec. 16, 3-4:30 pm, St. Paul campus, 215 Ben Pomeroy Center*

Dec. 17, 9-10:30 am, St. Cloud Regional Extension Office, Midtown Office Complex, 3400 1st St. North, Room 108

External stakeholders (including government and industry stakeholders, alumni, and others)

Dec. 18, 11 am-1:30 pm, St. Paul campus, 105 Cargill

**check website for exact locations*

As Provost Hanson has emphasized, this is an open exploratory process with no foregone conclusions. No decisions have been made. Strong engagement from the CBS and CFANS college communities, as well as discussions with our external partners and stakeholders, will be critical to the conversation about how best to position our programs for the future.

Please plan to attend a listening session and take the time to offer any information you believe may be relevant. You may also leave comments on a form on the webpage—or 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.