

Faculty and Administrative Commitment to the Grand Challenges

The research environment has changed over the past decade. Availability of dollars from federal agencies has not kept pace with the increase in needs. It is essential that, as a department, we identify and capitalize on our areas of strength to provide a competitive advantage for limited resources. In order to remain relevant and competitive, Agronomy must engage in large scale, interdisciplinary research. It is incumbent that this research be facilitated by the college administration and strategic linkages encouraged across colleges and institutions. In concert with faculty efforts, a priority of administration must be to secure additional sources of funding to support research endeavors and to upgrade facilities and equipment. Administration, from the dean to department head, must be highly visible locally, nationally, and internationally, communicating a clear and simple vision for the college and department, educating decision makers about Purdue's capability to deliver on promises and to contribute to the development of the national and international research and education agenda.

Departmental and college resources will be provided to facilitate collaborative efforts around each of these grand challenges. Faculty teams will develop proposals requesting internal dollars to support novel and collaborative approaches around issues that promise high impact. A departmental structure will be developed to review proposals and award support dollars.

To encourage ideas and opportunities for cross discipline collaboration, a number of approaches will be taken in the department to facilitate communication around programs. Departmental research and education efforts to address each of the grand challenges will be presented at an annual forum of oral and poster presentations. Bi-weekly faculty meetings will highlight the research or educational program of a faculty member as part of the agenda. Departmental newsletters will continue to showcase faculty programs but will include a section on programs that address the grand challenges.

Faculty and staff in our department represent a tremendous investment in intellectual capacity and, collectively, represent one of Indiana's richest resources. Agronomy at Purdue is committed to improving the lives of others through our research and education programs. Our departmental focus is quite broad, addressing state-wide as well as national and international issues. We have been given a responsibility to utilize the collective talents of our faculty and staff to discover and apply knowledge and to develop educated, creative, and productive citizens. Hoosiers continue to look to Purdue Agronomy to energize their state's economy and to position Indiana to be competitive globally. Our citizens expect much from us and it is incumbent upon us to deliver.

In the following sections of the self study document, the faculty have crafted concept papers for each of the six grand challenges describing their shared vision for using their collective talents in the crop, soil, and earth system sciences to address each.