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STRATEGIC PLAN

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
& NATURAL RESOURCES



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
**AGRICULTURE &
NATURAL RESOURCES**

2025-2030



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These committee members generously contributed their time and insight, lending unique perspectives that enriched the process and ensured the resulting plan reflects the values, priorities, and aspirations of the college community they represent. Their thoughtful guidance and collaborative spirit have helped produce a document that captures the collective vision of CANR and positions us to achieve lasting impact in the years ahead.

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To all who participated in this process, thank you for your leadership, voices, and unwavering commitment to the success of CANR and its mission. Your contributions will leave a lasting impact, helping to shape the future of the college and the communities we serve.

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

To our college community members,

I'm excited to share this strategic plan—a bold and thoughtful roadmap shaped by the voices of our college community. Your dedication and willingness to collaborate allowed us to imagine a future for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources that builds on the excellence we have long embodied and will continue to uphold in the years to come. Through listening sessions, surveys, and discussions, our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners came together to identify what matters most and define where we focus our energy moving forward.

As we look to the future, we recognize there are uncertain times ahead, but after a year on the job, I am truly optimistic and inspired by the curiosity of our researchers and students; the passion for our state and its people demonstrated by Cooperative Extension (Extension); and our educators' continued dedication to our students. Over the past year alone, our students and faculty have led research efforts that have addressed some of the most urgent and complex challenges facing our state and communities—from avian disease and coastal resiliency to food safety, crop production, and carbon capture. Our shared commitment to addressing the most pressing challenges is truly inspiring, and I'm honored to present a plan of this magnitude at such a pivotal moment.

While we are not the only ones rising to the challenge, what truly differentiates CANR is our holistic approach—as we advance research, our students are engaged with emerging discoveries in real time, and our dedicated Extension professionals work tirelessly to translate that scholarship into action through programming across the state. The collaborative backbone of our college is one of our greatest strengths, allowing us to move forward with purpose, driven by curiosity and a commitment to asking the right questions and delivering transformative solutions.

This intentional integration of research, education, and outreach is a defining characteristic of CANR. We do not stop at generating knowledge, we apply it. We enable our students to be active participants in this process, gaining real-world, applied experiences that are both distinctive and transformative. This blend of scholarship, community engagement, and experiential learning defines who we are and strengthens our impact across Delaware and beyond.

As an alumnus of CANR, I know firsthand what a special and distinctive place this is. Now, as Dean, I am proud to carry that legacy forward, honoring the values that make this college feel like home while pushing us to grow, adapt, and realize our full potential. This plan provides the foundation to do just that. It captures who we are and who we aspire to be—a community of problem-solvers, leaders, and innovators grounded in science and driven by purpose.

We have a strong foundation, clear direction, and shared vision, and with this plan as our guide, I'm confident the next chapter in CANR's story will be one of continued impact, collaboration, and progress. With a clear sense of purpose, we remain at the forefront of agriculture, natural resources, and environmental stewardship, laying the groundwork for the next 150 years and beyond.

Sincerely,



Brian E. Farkas, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Agriculture
and Natural Resources

University of Delaware



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2024 – 2025 academic year, CANR undertook a college-wide planning effort to chart a path forward, aligning the many strengths and voices of our community around a shared vision and strategic priorities. The result is a unifying roadmap that honors our 150-year land-grant legacy and builds momentum for lasting impact.

This plan was shaped through an intentional, inclusive, and stakeholder-driven process led by a strategic planning steering committee composed of representatives from across the college. Together, we engaged nearly 1,000 voices through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and listening sessions, ensuring the final plan reflects the unique priorities and aspirations of our college community. A summary of this engagement is included in Appendix A.

Our strategic framework centers on five key priority areas essential to fulfilling CANR's mission and realizing our vision for long-term impact:

DRIVE INNOVATIVE AND IMPACTFUL RESEARCH

We will advance research that tackles today's most pressing challenges and delivers actionable solutions for communities, industries, and natural ecosystems. By cultivating interdisciplinary collaboration and aligning our research with community and industry needs, we will transform knowledge into tangible benefits for ecosystems, economies, and everyday lives.

FOSTER TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE

We will reimagine teaching and learning to deliver applied, high-impact educational experiences that empower students to lead and innovate in their fields. Through continual investment in instructional excellence, relevant curricula, and hands-on learning, we will enable every student to leave CANR prepared to shape a better future.

PROMOTE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND RECRUITMENT

We will create a student experience rooted in belonging, connection, and purpose. By expanding access, strengthening mentorship, and deepening career preparation, we will enable our growing student body to thrive in their careers and serve as changemakers in their communities.

STRENGTHEN EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

We will amplify the reach and relevance of CANR by deepening our partnerships with alumni, industry, government, and community stakeholders. Through Extension and other translational efforts, we will ensure our research, education, and service efforts have a lasting and visible impact across Delaware and beyond.

IMPROVE FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT EXCELLENCE

We will transform our physical spaces into dynamic platforms for innovation, learning, and collaboration. By modernizing our facilities and ensuring equitable access to these resources, we will support the next generation of revolutionary research, applied education, and community engagement.

Using this plan as our roadmap, we will rely on clearly defined metrics to hold ourselves accountable to our college community and stakeholders, working collectively to bring our shared vision to life through intentional action and continuous progress.

Together, we will build on our strengths and seize new opportunities as we continue to feed the world and protect the planet.



INTRODUCTION

Feed the World. Protect the Planet.

But what does that really mean?

At the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, feeding the world and protecting the planet means fulfilling the mission of land-grant institutions by preparing the next generation of leaders and problem-solvers, conducting groundbreaking research that addresses critical global challenges, and translating that knowledge into action by serving our communities. This work is not just important, it is foundational to life as we know it.

Our story began over 150 years ago when, on January 12, 1869, the University of Delaware signed an agreement to become the state's land-grant university. Since then, our college has been known by many names—Department of Agriculture, School of Agriculture, College of Agricultural Sciences, and now, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Each name reflects an era of growth and evolution, but our unwavering commitment to serving our state and beyond through education, research, and outreach remains constant.

Over the years, our alumni have become successful growers, agribusiness leaders, scientists, and

policymakers. Our faculty has led groundbreaking research that has shaped the future of food, natural resources, and environmental sustainability, and through Extension, we have brought that knowledge to the public, putting research into practice to promote economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being.

Today, CANR boasts the highest student enrollment ever, with vibrant programs, state-of-the-art facilities, and a dedicated community of scholars, educators, and professionals across the state. Our physical footprint includes: our Newark campus housing core facilities for research, teaching and extension, including a 350 acre farm; our Extension complex in Dover; and the Carvel Center in Georgetown dedicated primarily to research and extension activities and our second large farm. These facilities include an impressive array of specialized facilities—farms, forests, laboratories, and production units—that provide unmatched opportunities for active learning, translational research, and community collaboration.

But our work is far from done.



The challenges we face today are as vast and complex as the natural world we study. From understanding the genetics of crops and conserving biodiversity to exploring the intersections of behavioral economics, environmental sustainability, and addressing food insecurity, our work is at the core of our existence. It is essential and urgent, and CANR is uniquely positioned to meet these challenges head-on. Agriculture is more than what we eat, it is one of the most significant drivers of our regional and national economies. As such, our responsibility to contribute to this field of study is amplified.

As we look to the future, we know that building on our proud 150-year legacy and preparing for the complexities of the 21st century requires listening to the voices of our community. To guide this effort, we established a Strategic Planning Steering Committee composed of students, faculty, staff, and leadership from across CANR. Their role was critical, not only in reviewing research and informing stakeholder engagement, but also in ensuring the process reflected the unique perspectives and priorities of our college community.

Our commitment to inclusivity and collaboration guided every step of the process. We did not just want to gather input; we wanted to ensure the strategic plan reflected who we are and what we value. We understood that working together as a community was essential to charting a path forward that honors our

identity as a land-grant institution while embracing the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Throughout the planning process, we engaged nearly 1,000 voices from across the CANR community—students, faculty, staff, alumni, and external partners—through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and

listening sessions. This extensive feedback provided valuable insights into our strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth. Through these conversations, clear themes emerged that reinforced the importance of teaching and learning excellence, enhancing the student experience, supporting groundbreaking research, strengthening external partnerships, and optimizing our infrastructure and resources.

Our process was intentional and inclusive because we believe our best path forward is one that reflects the values, aspirations, and strengths of our entire college community. The result is a strategic plan that honors our

history while laying a bold foundation for the future—one that ensures CANR continues to feed the world, protect the planet, and prepare the next generation of leaders and innovators.

We are excited for you to join us as we build on our strengths, seize new opportunities, and continue to feed the world and protect the planet. The work ahead is essential, and we are ready.

“**As we look to the future, we know that building on our proud 150-year legacy and preparing for the complexities of the 21st century requires listening to the voices of our community.**”



MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

MISSION

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is a unified community of leaders addressing the grand challenges that define our relationship with the natural world and the future of global agriculture through rigorous and engaged research, innovative and discovery-based teaching, and impact-driven outreach and engagement

VISION

We will be a preeminent college recognized for preparing world-class leaders and innovators in agriculture, natural resources, and emerging fields while conducting groundbreaking, collaborative research that transforms communities, ecosystems, and industries

VALUES

Community

We are stronger together. We are a welcoming, supportive, and caring community where students, faculty, and staff are connected, valued, and engaged. By fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging mutual understanding, we enable each member of our college to grow, thrive, and contribute to our collective vision.

Collaboration

We intentionally work across the diverse disciplines within our college and with community partners across the state. We live out the ethos that complex challenges are best addressed through collective expertise and shared purpose. This spirit of collaboration is built on a strong foundation of respect and a commitment to serving the public good.

Innovation

We are future focused. We embrace innovation as a driver of growth, relevance, and progress. Our college encourages the pursuit of bold ideas and use of forward-thinking approaches, allowing us to respond to emerging needs and lead in our respective fields.

Impact

We strive to make a difference. We empower our faculty, staff, and students to transform communities through research, teaching, and outreach extending far beyond our physical campuses. This impact endures long after our students leave – our alumni serve as leaders and change-makers in their communities, reflecting our commitment to preparing individuals for meaningful and lasting success.



STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

This strategic plan is built around five priority areas: facilitating groundbreaking research, fostering excellence in teaching and learning, promoting the student experience and recruitment, strengthening external partnerships and engagement, and enhancing infrastructure. Each of these is essential to achieving our mission and vision and serves as a foundation for the college's continued success.

Within each priority area, our overarching goal articulates what we ultimately aim to achieve and provides a clear direction for our efforts. To guide our focus, each priority area is composed of actionable strategies, organized into subcategories to provide clear organization. Each strategy was carefully designed and developed to guide the college's activities over the coming years and help us in the pursuit of our goal.

To track progress and ensure accountability, each section includes a list of measurable success metrics that will allow us to evaluate our impact and progress and make data-informed adjustments as needed. Designed as broad, outcome-based measures, these metrics will track our overall progress and guide the successful achievement of our strategies, streamlined to prevent undue administrative burden. These metrics will also provide transparency and guide continuous improvement as we implement this plan.



Priorities, Goals, and Strategies



01

Drive Innovative and Impactful Research

GOAL:

Advance innovative, high-impact research that tackles major challenges and delivers actionable solutions for communities, industries, and natural ecosystems.

For over 150 years, our research has driven discoveries that have transformed industries, improved communities, and addressed critical societal needs. From advancing sustainable agriculture to protecting natural ecosystems, our commitment to using science and innovation to solve real-world problems has been at the heart of our mission. We continue to uphold our responsibility to feed the world and to protect the planet, carrying this legacy forward to harness and develop cutting-edge technology, interdisciplinary collaboration, and scientific advancements to envision and create a better world. To remain at the forefront of discovery, we will use ever-evolving technology to accelerate solutions.

Research is at the core of what we do. As part of a land-grant institution with a strong commitment to our communities, CANR leads the way in developing solutions that address real-world challenges. Whether tackling issues in sustainable agriculture, food security, and environmental conservation or fields like data science and behavioral economics, our work is driven by the goal of making a measurable difference. To truly make a difference, we recognize that our research and results must first be trusted by those seeking information. Now more than ever, we are committed to being a reliable source of knowledge and a prominent leader in impactful, evidence-based research.

We recognize the importance of strengthening discipline-specific expertise while also embracing the power of collaborative thinking and interdisciplinary approaches. Just as ecosystems thrive through diversity and interconnectedness, so too does our research. Some of the most pressing challenges facing society today—climate resilience, food insecurity, and sustainable natural resource management—require perspectives that span disciplines and solutions informed by multiple lenses. By fostering collaboration across departments, colleges, and external partners, we enhance our capacity to address these challenges with innovative and actionable solutions.

Our commitment to innovative, responsive collaboration shapes the direction of our work as we facilitate groundbreaking research, align our work with community and industry needs, and invest in the resources and support structures necessary to ensure long-term success. Through these efforts, we will continue to lead in high-impact research that delivers solutions across Delaware and beyond.

COLLABORATE ON BIG IDEAS THAT ADDRESS SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

- Identify and build support for areas of research focus and multidisciplinary collaboration across the college and university to facilitate knowledge exchange, idea generation, and collaborative proposal development
- Leverage faculty recruitment and hiring processes to strengthen cross-disciplinary collaboration within the college
- Develop a process to gather input from stakeholders, such as industry leaders, community members, and other partners to identify pressing needs that can be addressed through our expertise and research
- Establish ongoing communication channels to promote internal knowledge-sharing and highlight research successes, funding opportunities, and collaborative efforts



INVEST IN ROBUST RESEARCH SUPPORT

- Elevate the Associate Dean of Research role to a primary appointment overseeing the college's research portfolio
- Provide consistent pre- and post-award support and lifecycle management to streamline processes, reduce administrative burden, and ensure continuity in grant management
- Assist faculty and professional research staff in the identification and pursuit of diversified funding sources, including federal, industry, and philanthropic sources, to sustain research growth and expand student funding
- Support the identification of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary funding opportunities and the development of competitive grant applications
- Expand availability of college-level research support and increase awareness and access to university funding opportunities
- Continue to attract and retain high-quality faculty and research professionals to support the college's research portfolio



METRICS

- | | |
|--|--|
| » Variety of funding sources | » Number of citations |
| » Number and quality of publications | » Number of patents and invention disclosures |
| • <i>Peer-reviewed</i> | » Amount of licensing revenue |
| • <i>Industry focused</i> | » Number of collaborative grant applications |
| » Research expenditures | » Proposal submission and success rates |
| » Facilities and administrative revenue | |
| » Number of named/endowed faculty positions | |
| » External awards and honors | |

02



Foster Teaching and Learning Excellence

GOAL:

Deliver high-quality instruction and transformative applied learning experiences inside and outside the classroom to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity needed to excel in their careers.

At CANR, we cultivate an academically rich environment where students are not just learners but active partners in shaping their educational journeys. Our commitment to student success extends far beyond the classroom with personalized support, dynamic learning experiences, and meaningful connections that empower students to thrive academically and professionally. From their first day on campus through graduation and beyond, CANR students are supported by a unified community invested in their growth and achievement.

Our approach to teaching and learning reflects a deep and unwavering commitment to excellence and access. We recognize that to prepare students for meaningful careers and lifelong impact, we must provide high-quality, up-to-date instruction, hands-on learning opportunities, and real-world experiences that ignite passion and develop critical thinking. This includes integrating best practices in instruction, incorporating emerging innovations in pedagogy, and ensuring applied, experiential learning remains central to our programs. This dedication to improving teaching and strengthening the recognition and support systems for excellent instruction not only empowers our faculty but also enhances student experiences and outcomes.

A key driver of this commitment is investing in our faculty, who lead CANR's teaching and instruction, with the resources, professional development, and support needed to deliver exceptional learning experiences for all students. We are dedicated to empowering our faculty to incorporate best-in-class teaching practices and create inclusive and engaging learning environments that foster student success. Maintaining excellence in education also means ensuring that our programs and courses are current and reflect emerging knowledge, industry practices, and cutting-edge instructional approaches. We are equally committed to continual review and revision of our curricula to ensure we prepare students for the careers of tomorrow.

We are uniquely positioned to offer distinctive experiences by leveraging the physical assets available within CANR and the opportunities afforded through our partnership with statewide Extension. These experiences not only deepen knowledge but also allow students to engage directly with communities, solve complex challenges, and translate classroom learning into real-world solutions. By fostering a culture that values teaching excellence and student-centered learning, we ensure all CANR graduates leave prepared to excel in their careers, lead in their fields, and make a lasting impact.



ELEVATE TEACHING EXCELLENCE

- Appoint an Associate Dean of Academic Programs to serve as a strategic leader and champion for academic programs, support innovation and foster integration, responsiveness, modernization, and continuous improvement across all programs
- Elevate the importance of high-quality instruction across the college by formalizing a system to highlight teaching excellence through awards, recognition, and visibility within evaluation processes
- Develop and formalize structures for student input in teaching award nominations to ensure student perspectives are incorporated
- Pursue named professorships and endowed positions for continuing-track faculty roles and provide discretionary funding for exemplary teaching efforts
- Expand continuing-track and primary teaching appointment faculty hires, positioning these educators to innovate, continually monitoring and evolving programming and teaching strategies to align with the ever-changing demands of students

SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

- Support adoption and broad use of the new university Teaching Quality Framework across promotion and tenure and assessments to ensure alignment with evolving best practices
- Implement structured cross-department peer observations and evaluations to facilitate continuous improvement, promote knowledge-sharing, and foster a culture of teaching excellence
- Support ongoing teaching development by designating faculty teaching mentors collegewide to provide guidance and encourage pedagogical innovation

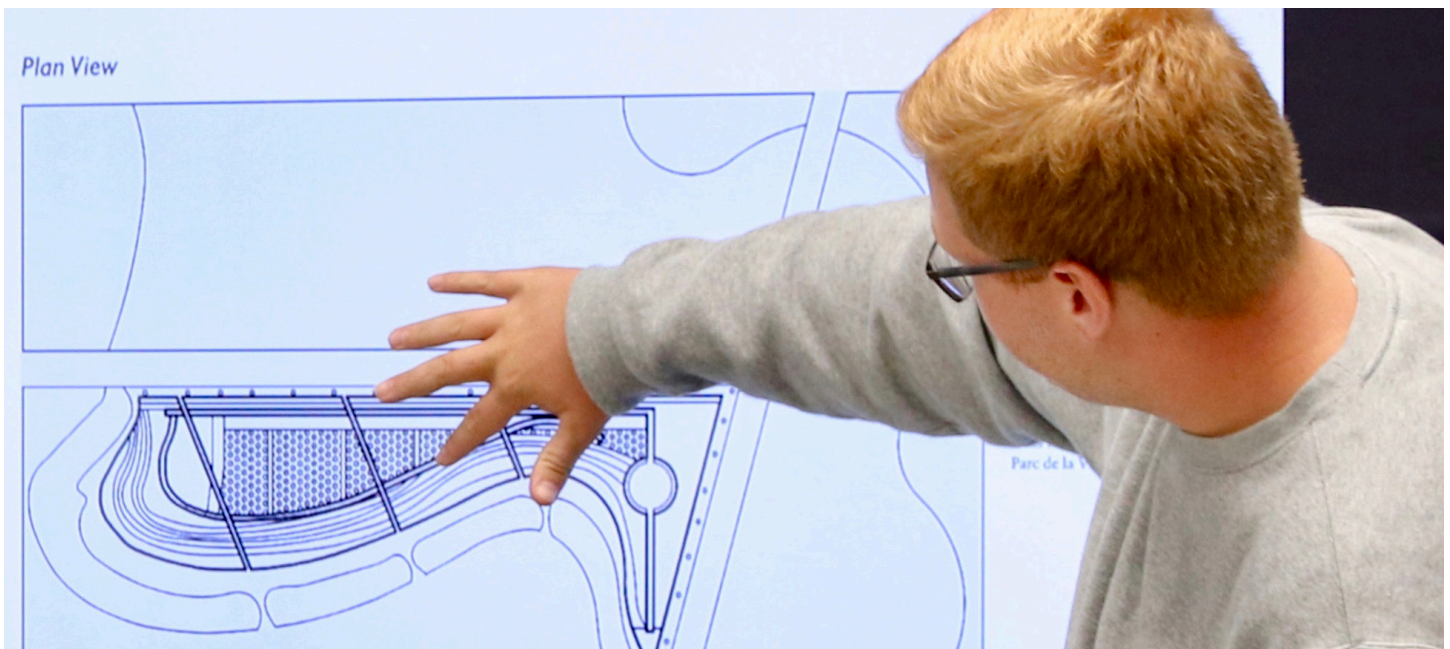
EXPAND ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, RELEVANT, AND APPLIED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Maintain responsive and forward-looking curricula, reinforcing CANR's role as a leader in innovative, applied teaching and learning in agriculture, natural resources, and other data-driven, applied science disciplines that address pressing societal challenges
- Conduct a holistic review of academic programs to identify synergies and opportunities for cross-department integration and embed this framework into new program development
- Provide support, resources, and recognition for faculty-led curricular reviews and significant contributions to academic program assessments
- Offer dedicated financial support for faculty to expand hands-on and applied learning opportunities that offer unique learning experiences for students
- Work to ensure equitable access to existing applied learning opportunities, ensuring all students have access to the benefits of experiential learning
- Work collaboratively with Extension faculty, staff, and partners to identify and provide applied and community-based learning opportunities for CANR students through current Extension programming and initiatives
- Develop and leverage outdoor learning spaces to deliver signature immersive educational experiences for students



METRICS

- » **Number of named professorships or scholarly endowments for teaching faculty**
- » **Number of program reviews and revisions**
- » **Percentage of faculty who receive peer observations**
- » **Use of outdoor learning spaces**
- » **Funding for new or improved learning spaces**
- » **Number of applied learning experiences through Extension**



03



Promote Student Experience and Recruitment

GOAL:

Grow the CANR student body by creating a high-quality learning environment that supports academic, personal, and professional success, preparing graduates to excel in their careers and contribute meaningfully to their communities

CANR offers the best of two worlds, providing a small-college atmosphere where students build meaningful relationships and engage closely with faculty and access to the vast resources of a major research university that opens doors to transformative opportunities. This unique environment provides opportunity to foster a strong sense of belonging, where students are not just part of a college, but part of a tight-knit community deeply invested in their success.

Part of what sets CANR apart from comparable programs is its unwavering commitment to applied learning and hands-on experiences that are seamlessly integrated both inside and outside the classroom, for both undergraduate and graduate students. These experiences equip students with practical, real-world skills that prepare them to excel as leaders and professionals in agriculture, natural resources, and applied sciences. Through research opportunities, fieldwork, internships, and engagement with Extension, students gain exposure to the challenges and complexities of their disciplines while developing the expertise and confidence needed to make a meaningful impact.

CANR's enrollment is at its highest, and the strength of our academic programs, student advisement, and the curated, high-quality experiences we provide our students are the driving force behind our continued growth. Our goal is to expand these opportunities to serve more students while maintaining the personal attention and excellence that define the CANR experience. A key part of this effort is providing even more opportunities for students to connect with our incredible faculty, recognizing relationship-building and mentorship foster deeper learning, inspire curiosity, and empower students to develop the confidence and critical thinking needed for transformational growth and success in the classroom, throughout their careers, and within their communities.

We are committed to continually strengthening and enhancing our programs, thinking creatively about how to build deeper connections, providing exceptional learning experiences, and offering distinctive opportunities that students cannot find anywhere else. Moving forward, we will continue to focus on cultivating student success and career preparedness, expanding recruitment pipelines, and enhancing student engagement and community-building efforts. These goals will ensure CANR remains the premier destination for students seeking a transformative, hands-on educational experience.

ENHANCE RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AND STRENGTHEN PIPELINES

- Better showcase and market the diverse skill sets (both hard and soft) students develop at CANR, highlighting the rich hands-on learning and applied research opportunities offered and the career paths available after graduation
- Develop targeted recruitment strategies focused on building on our strong base of enrollment across the state of Delaware while increasing our geographic reach, positioning CANR as the premier educational destination for future professionals in agriculture, natural resources, and other data-driven, applied science disciplines
- Strengthen current graduate student recruitment with a dedicated initiative highlighting CANR's strengths, including hands-on research opportunities, collaborative potential, and competitive funding packages, where applicable
- Improve and expand transfer and degree pathways through partnered programs and streamlined requirements to improve student access to CANR

CULTIVATE STUDENT SUCCESS AND CAREER PREPAREDNESS

- Identify and dedicate a collaborative space in Townsend Hall that serves as a landing and community-building hub for graduate students
- Advocate for greater transportation options on the Newark campus and connectivity between physical campuses across the state
- Increase utilization of Townsend Hall for classroom instruction and pursue the addition of large, flexible instructional spaces on South Campus and Webb Farm to meet growing educational needs
- Implement and communicate structured processes that allow students to provide feedback, elevate concerns, and navigate conflict effectively, ensuring responses are timely and can affect change
- Expand college-funded and departmental professional development initiatives, promoting equitable access to opportunities for students to enhance career readiness and build practical skills
- Provide staff support for career development and placement services to foster professional growth and facilitate internships and experiential learning opportunities
- Develop and maintain a centralized, user-friendly online information hub with consolidated career resources, internship and research opportunities, advising information, and student engagement offerings
- Institutionalize support structures for student organizations to ensure they have the resources, guidance, and expectations needed to continue providing meaningful engagement opportunities
- Support the establishment of a college-wide graduate student organization
- Set clear standards for quality and access in academic advising to promote consistent and meaningful experiences for all students



METRICS

- » **Student Enrollment**
- » **Graduation, retention, and completion rates**
- » **Student placement post-graduation**
- » **Participation in professional development opportunities**
- » **Number of non-majors enrolled in CANR courses**
- » **Percent of students who met with their advisor/faculty mentor in a semester**
- » **Number of classes held in Townsend Hall**



04

Strengthen External Partnerships and Engagement

GOAL:

Grow trustworthy, mutually beneficial partnerships that position CANR as a respected and go-to source of information for external stakeholders

At CANR, we know doing excellent work through research and teaching is only part of the equation. True impact comes from translating excellent work into solutions that address real-world challenges, build stronger relationships with our stakeholders, and amplify the visibility of our successes. As a land-grant institution, we have a responsibility to ensure the work we do transcends the walls of our college, reaching the communities, industries, and partners who can benefit most.

Our commitment to translational research and applied solutions is at the core of our mission. While we are exceptionally proud of the fundamental and applied research we produce, we recognize it is not enough for this work to remain in a bubble. We must ensure our knowledge is shared, applied, and used to improve lives and ecosystems. This requires first understanding the evolving needs of our communities and industries and aligning our efforts to address those needs. At the center of this priority is the work and dedication of our Extension faculty and staff who serve as critical conduits to the communities we serve, ensuring our work is both informed by and responsive to real-world concerns.

We recognize the invaluable role our alumni play in this process—they are industry leaders, partners, and advocates who can help us expand our reach, foster new collaborations, and ensure our research and teaching efforts remain aligned with industry and societal needs. Our alumni can also become our biggest supporters, contributing their time, expertise, and resources to help move our college forward. By intentionally engaging our alumni network, we can create new pathways for collaboration, mentorship, and advocacy that strengthen CANR's external presence and build a stronger base of support.

Moving forward, our focus will be on enhancing visibility, fostering mutually beneficial partnerships, and deepening our engagement with stakeholders to ensure CANR remains at the forefront of using research and education to solve real-world problems, improve ecosystems, and prepare our students to excel in their future careers. We will strengthen existing relationships and build new connections with industries, policymakers, and communities, effectively positioning CANR as a trusted, go-to resource for applied research, workforce development, and community engagement.

STREAMLINE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Conduct an internal inventory of existing partners and stakeholders to build a comprehensive, accessible database that supports relationship management and targeted engagement
- Develop and implement targeted, multimedia communication strategies to raise awareness of CANR's expertise and showcase successful partnerships
- Develop a media engagement strategy positioning CANR faculty and Extension Specialists as subject-matter experts to increase their visibility in regional and national news coverage
- Streamline communication platforms and website presence and consolidate databases to create a unified system that ensures consistent, coordinated, and strategic external communications
- Incorporate clear action items and engagement opportunities into partner and alumni communications

DEEPEN INDUSTRY AND PARTNER ALIGNMENT

- Position CANR as the preferred partner for regional and national industries, government agencies, and other organizations that support internship placements and further research areas
- Facilitate ongoing conversations with stakeholders to identify key challenges facing communities, inform research agendas, and further align teaching and engagement efforts with industry needs
- Establish and expand advisory groups across all academic programs to strengthen alignment between CANR's curriculum and the evolving needs of partners
- Develop targeted pathways for collaboration with Extension to translate research and community-based solutions into industry and agency partnerships, fostering innovation and impact
- Pursue formalized agreements and partnerships that position CANR as a leader in providing expertise, applied research, and innovative solutions to industry and community partners
- Better leverage college assets, such as Newark and Carvel Farms, the Creamery, University of Delaware Botanic Gardens, and Extension programs, to host community workshops, outreach events, and industry training sessions





GROW ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

- Develop a comprehensive alumni engagement strategy offering multiple pathways for alumni to stay connected and contribute to the success of the college, including guest lecturing opportunities, panel discussions, and career talks
- Embed virtual engagement strategies into alumni outreach efforts to expand the network of engaged alumni
- Celebrate and amplify alumni achievements through enhanced communication highlighting their impact on industries and communities
- Create opportunities for alumni to serve as ambassadors and advocates for CANR, sharing positive stories of their experiences and outcomes to attract prospective students and promote the college

STRENGTHEN EXTENSION PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Expand the use of Extension as a bridge between CANR and community stakeholders, identifying opportunities for reciprocal knowledge sharing, service, and engagement
- Leverage Extension programs and events as platforms for showcasing CANR's expertise and reinforcing its reputation as a trusted resource for communities throughout Delaware and beyond
- Further integrate Extension within CANR departments and units to create seamless pathways for collaboration, allowing faculty and Extension professionals to co-develop applied research and outreach initiatives



METRICS

- » **Number of partners engaged with the college**
- » **Web and media interactions**
- » **Number of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and partnership agreements**
- » **Philanthropic giving**
- » **Percent of alumni who make financial contributions to CANR**
- » **Rate of student involvement in college enterprises**
- » **Collaborations across research, teaching, and extension**



05

Improve Facilities and Infrastructure to Support Excellence

GOAL:

Strategically upgrade and maintain CANR's facilities and infrastructure to support excellence in research, teaching, and outreach

Our college enjoys the distinct advantage of having unique spaces on campus and expansive resources across the state. From our major teaching, research, and Extension footprints across the state to specialized facilities like the Allen Laboratory, UDairy Creamery, Fischer Greenhouse, Paradee Center, and Carvel Research and Education Center, our assets create unparalleled opportunities for hands-on learning, translational research, and community engagement.

However, maintaining and maximizing the potential of such diverse and specialized infrastructure, including our robust natural resources whose importance in a human-dominated landscape is crucial, requires a two-fold approach. First, we are committed to being proactive and strategic in maintaining and managing these resources, knowing these are facilities and environments that provide unique capabilities. Our goal is to ensure each asset is well-maintained, optimized for its highest and best use, and accessible equitably across all departments and programs. To achieve this, we will invest in foundational internal processes that promote consistency, efficiency, and transparency in the management and use of these resources.

Second, leveraging these assets effectively is critical. These physical spaces are not just facilities, they are essential components that elevate excellence in teaching, research, and the student experience. Our hands-on learning environments provide transformative experiences that allow students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world challenges, while our state-of-the-art research facilities empower faculty to conduct innovative, translational research that addresses complex societal problems. Moreover, these spaces serve as convening hubs where external partners, industry leaders, and community stakeholders come together to collaborate on shared goals and drive meaningful impact.

By investing in maintenance and infrastructure upgrades while strategically aligning these spaces with the teaching, research, and outreach priorities of the college, we ensure that CANR continues to be a leader in providing exceptional, active learning environments, conducting cutting-edge research, and building lasting relationships that strengthen our impact locally and beyond.

ASSESS, PRIORITIZE, AND MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Conduct a comprehensive, college-wide facilities and instrumentation audit to assess current assets, identify maintenance schedules, and determine future needs
- Develop and implement college-level maintenance schedules and long-term management plans that align with audit findings and provide a roadmap for ongoing care and improvement
- Establish a repair fund as part of all funding requests for facilities and instrumentation
- Work with departments and units to identify and prioritize critical infrastructure needs for research, teaching, and Extension, incorporating insights into long-term planning and capital campaigns
- Incorporate usage analytics and feedback from faculty and students to assess how facilities are used and where additional investments or modifications may be necessary



ELEVATE CANR'S NATURAL RESOURCES

- Develop a strategic master plan to grow the farms as state-of-the-art models for integrated, modern production practices - including farm management software, data collection, analytics, and finance - across multiple crop and animal systems, strengthening the farms' role as models for sustainable practices and production
- Explore opportunities to expand existing crop and field areas, including the potential acquisition of new space to support production, innovative research, hands-on student learning, and community engagement
- Actively manage and enhance CANR natural areas as demonstrations of the ecological and educational value of nature in human-dominated landscapes

STANDARDIZE PROCESSES AND ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY

- Implement a standard process for proactive repair, renovation, and facility requests that include iterative updates and proactive planning
- Create a centralized information hub with up-to-date data on facility resources, upcoming maintenance, and usage protocols
- Provide transparent, easily accessible information about available facilities, equipment, and instrumentation, enabling faculty, staff, and students to maximize the use of existing resources



METRICS

- » **Completion of facilities and instrumentation audits**
- » **Annual investment in facilities**
- » **Adequacy of repair funds**
- » **Active use of CANR spaces, farms, and instrumentation**
- » **Facilities projects completed annually**



IMPLEMENTATION

We look to the future with excitement and confidence – this strategic plan reflects the collective efforts and shared vision of our college community and lays a strong foundation for the innovative, collaborative efforts to further our commitment to excellence and drive positive impact in the communities we proudly serve.

As we move forward, we recognize the landscape in which we operate will continue to grow and evolve, presenting both challenges and new opportunities. We remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing our strategic goals while maintaining the flexibility and agility needed to adapt and respond effectively to emerging challenges.

Our next step is to develop a clear and actionable implementation plan outlining the specific steps required to achieve these goals, including specific timelines, measurable success metrics, and an accountability framework to help ensure our efforts are impactful and aligned with our long-term vision. To support transparency and continuous improvement, we will also report annually on progress toward our goals, using data and metrics to guide ongoing decision-making and adjustments.

To learn more, visit our strategic planning website at:
udel.edu/canr/about/strategic-plan/



APPENDIX A:

Stakeholder Engagement

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Thank you to our faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students, donors, alumni, university leaders, Extension staff, and external partners who participated in the strategic planning process throughout the 2024-2025 academic year. In total, we received 991 points of feedback. This input formed the foundation of our strategic plan, directly informed our discussions, shaped our vision, and guided our selection of priority areas.

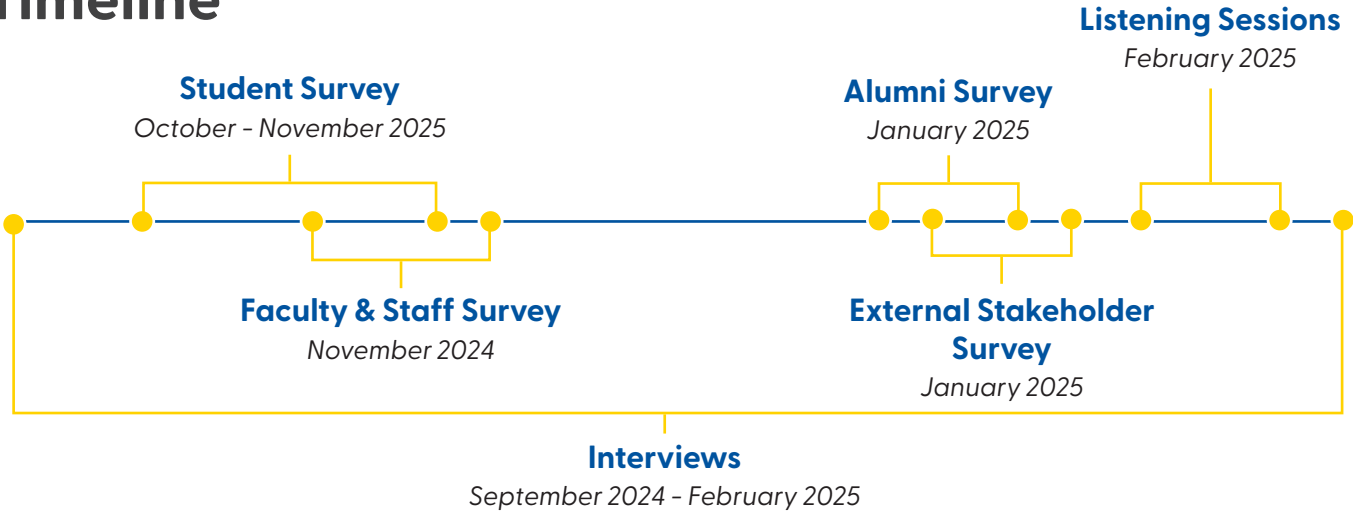
991

points of feedback

Participation



Timeline





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