Fifth Year Review of Dean Linda Kirk Fox
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
The University of Georgia
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On 13 December, 2016 our committee was charged by Provost Pamela Whitten with coordinating a fifth year review of Dean Linda Kirk Fox of the College of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS). The Provost outlined the current policies for a fifth year review and instructed the committee to proceed with Dean Fox’s review. The committee subsequently developed a strategy to solicit input from a wide variety of sources that interact with Dean Fox in a professional setting. These constituent groups included FACS faculty, staff (administration, extension agents, postdocs), graduate students, undergraduate students as well as external groups including FACS alumni, Georgia Soft Goods Board, and UGA Deans.

As a committee we met with the above internal and external groups on the UGA campus to provide opportunities for input. Additionally, we sent several announcements to these groups using the FACS listserv requesting written or oral comments as well as responses to specific survey questions. Based upon this feedback, we provide the following assessment of Dean Fox’s performance for the past five years. The report is organized into five sections, including: (1) Accomplishments, (2) Leadership, (3) Communication, (4) Strategic Planning, and (5) Recommendations and Conclusions.

Accomplishments

In Dean Fox’s self-assessment she outlines the duties and responsibilities assumed by the Dean of FACS and as directed by President Jere Morehead. These included leadership of the college as well as Associate Director of the Cooperative Extension and Associate Director of Experiment Station; legal responsibility of all budgets; promoting FACS, its programs and budgets to the Georgia legislature; student recruiting; FACS development fundraising; and FACS ambassador for stakeholders.

Under Dean Fox’s leadership, the hiring and recognition of outstanding faculty has improved significantly. Over five years, FACS has hired 38 tenure-track and professional (clinical and lecturers) faculty, four department heads and two associate deans. In total, there are now 68 tenure-track faculty, an increase from 59 since 2011, and 35 non-tenure track faculty. Dean Fox successfully competed in the Presidential Hiring Initiatives between 2012-2015 and the Obesity Initiative, gaining eight new faculty tenure-track positions (with four collaborating colleges) that have enhanced research and instruction in financial planning, obesity, sports nutrition, nutrition/pharmacy, housing/gerontology, nutrition/food science, and textiles and fibers/engineering. Moreover, Dean Fox increased the number of endowed professorships from 5 to 11 over the past five years.

Dean Fox has been very successful as a leader. Dean Fox united and elevated external relations and communications, first by reorganizing staff offices to create new energies and improve efficiency as well as soliciting input from an outside auditor. After hiring a new communications director, Dean Fox developed a marketing strategy, outlined clear goals for Development and Alumni Relations, and published their first Annual Report in spring 2013 that, in conjunction with the FACS Magazine, is mailed to greater than 20,000 alumni. Dean Fox also hosts FACS week, launched in 2015, a weeklong series of academic and alumni events along with the new Celebrating Excellence donor, student and faculty awards recognition luncheon. Dean Fox
continues through various communication mechanisms (college assemblies once a semester; bi-monthly email newsletter) to unite staff, faculty and students, provide stable consistent leadership, and to set a high standard for dedication and work throughout the college. She has positioned FACS in a more prominent standing on campus, in the community and the profession.

Since Dean Fox arrived in 2011, undergraduate recruitment and enrollment has stabilized through the Student Success and Advising Center, hiring a new Director, and creating new experiential learning opportunities commensurate with UGA initiatives; indeed, the Provost rewarded these advancements by supporting two additional academic advisors. Dean Fox has also spearheaded online instruction including 24 online courses, thus increasing summer school enrollment by 80% in the past year.

Dean Fox’s commitment to diversity in FACS has been a high priority. Working closely with the Faculty’s Advisory Committee, Dean Fox led a two-year effort to develop the plan, Diversity and Inclusion: A FACS Plan for Action, to shape and ensure the college’s future of greater diversity, “recognizing, but not limited to, differences of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and abilities, as well as political and religious affiliation and socioeconomic status.”

President Morehead charges all deans with development fundraising responsibilities, and Dean Fox was directed to devote a third of her time to this task. Over the past five years, Dean Fox has successfully launched 15 new academic support funds and space renovations from private and corporate gifts. These include several new endowed scholarship funds at both departmental and college levels. To date, the college has raised $5.5 million toward a campaign goal of $10 million, which is right on target for when the campaign was launched.

In addition to development fundraising, extramural funding has increased substantially under Dean Fox’s leadership. One of Dean Fox’s first accomplishments was to hire a new grants coordinator to assist with pre-awards, and that same individual remains in the position today. Grant expenditures were $7.8 million in 2011 and have increased to $11.6 million, which now places FACS as the 4th ranked college at UGA in total grant expenditures. Extension and public service grants are the largest portion, representing 53% ($6.2 million) in FY 16; under Dean Fox’s leadership, the current “Grants Coordinator” was hired and has assisted faculty with pre-award aspects of the grants process.

Dean Fox has been successful at the national level, serving as a committee member on the Board of Human Sciences of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) as well as appointments to the following: ECOP Health Task Force; National Leadership Advisory Team for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Cooperative Extension System, and The Board of Agriculture Assembly and Board of Human Sciences. In addition, FACS is active in the state legislature and promoted FACS students to serve as interns to Senators and Representatives of the Georgia General Assembly and coordinates FACS Day at the Capital. Next year will mark the 35th anniversary of the FACS Legislative Aide Program, one of two such internship programs at UGA.
Dean Fox has also served as a model Dean at UGA sitting on many committees including the OneSource leadership team and search committees to hire the Dean of Social Work, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Senior Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration, and the Director of Institutional Research. In addition, comments in letters received from other deans are universally positive, indicating that Dean Fox is collaborative, creative in proposing new, cutting edge ideas, speaking clearly and persuasively for her college as well as UGA, and always doing so with a positive, smiling attitude.

**Leadership**

Feedback regarding Dean Fox’s leadership style presented a picture of contrasts. One strong theme that surfaced in the responses regarding Dean Fox’s leadership style was that she was very friendly, personable, approachable and willing to listen. Dean Fox’s personable style was noted by respondents from most key constituents including alumni, faculty, staff, students, and members of the Georgia Soft Goods Board. Constituents most likely to describe Dean Fox as personable were faculty, students, and alumni. Dean Fox was credited with an impressive ability to remember the names of individuals in the college as well as their specific interests and concerns.

Another strong theme regarding Dean Fox’s leadership style was the view that she is autocratic and hierarchical in her decision-making. The view of Dean Fox as autocratic was most prevalent among faculty responders but also evident among staff. However, although a large number of faculty view Dean Fox as autocratic and hierarchical, a similarly large number of faculty respondents highlighted her friendly and personable style. It was difficult to determine if these conflicting perceptions of Dean Fox’s leadership style arose from differing perspectives of individuals or if it reflected different areas of concern. Concerns regarding autocratic leadership style were most often raised in regard to fiscal decision-making in the college. However, some perceptions were at such odds (e.g., Dean Fox micromanages vs. Dean Fox doesn’t micromanage) to suggest that the experiences of individuals across the college are inconsistent.

Dean Fox’s leadership skills were also examined utilizing a “Leadership Circle 360” assessment that includes a self-assessment component as well as twenty responders who completed the assessment as well. The twenty responders included three peers, eleven direct reports, and six others. According to the results of this assessment, Dean Fox’s strongest areas were in the Systems Awareness domain followed by the Achieving domain.

**Communication**

In the past five years, Dean Fox has devoted considerable effort and resources to improving and expanding college communications. She worked with an external communications expert to revamp college communications, redesign the college web site, develop strategies for expanding presence on social media platforms, and redefine the role of a new communications director for the college. These changes have expanded visibility for the college on and off campus.
Dean Fox is highly visible and actively engaged with college, state, and national organizations such as the alumni association, the Georgia and American Associations of Family and Consumer Sciences; the Georgia and National Extension Agents Associations for Family and Consumer Sciences; Family, Community and Career Leaders of America; the Georgia Association of Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the Association of Public Land-grant Universities Board of Human Sciences). She’s an effective spokesperson for the college across campus, in Georgia, and across the nation.

Dean Fox is widely perceived by faculty, staff, students, and alumni to be a transparent and approachable leader who is also a good listener. She regularly shares information about college initiatives; recognition for faculty, staff and students; and opportunities via the FACS College Dean's Update distributed by email every two weeks. During College Assemblies every semester, she shares information about the budget, enrollment, and challenges facing the college. However, some in the college indicated a lack of awareness about the Dean’s accomplishments, her decision-making process, and the rationale for decisions around filling positions, funding, and space allocation.

**Strategic Planning**

In five years as Dean, Dr. Fox has engaged in a number of strategic initiatives to support faculty and staff, integrate the components of the college to maximize impact, foster external relations, and manage resources. In her Leadership Circle 360 Review (completed by 20 raters) her strongest domain was Systems Awareness that refers to whole system improvements, productivity, and community welfare. This strength is reflected in her accomplishments in strategic planning.

In her five years, Dean Fox prioritized the human capacity of the college and strategically expanded both tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty through aggressive hiring initiatives and endowments for distinguished professorships. She has established a close relationship with the Office of Vice President for Research to leverage over $1.7 million (53%) in start-up funding for these new hires. Additionally, sponsored programs and grants have increased dramatically and FACS is now ranked 4th among colleges at UGA in total grant expenditures. These accomplishments are reflected by faculty and staff surveys which indicate that Dean Fox has hired strong associate deans, positioned the college well on campus, has kept the college moving forward when faced with substantial budget reductions, has led improvement and growth in times of transition, and advancement of the FACS name on campus.

Dean Fox has also worked diligently to integrate units of the college to build capacity for community and economic impact and to stabilize student enrollment. She worked with a leadership team to build reciprocal relationships with external departments focused on applied research, outreach, instruction and experiential learning. She reframed and integrated the process of student-centered advising and increased student interest in FACS majors through the student Ambassadors program. She has worked to improve the experience of both undergraduate and graduate students through the pursuit of student funding, increased summer enrollment by 80%, and has worked to offer accelerated BS/MS degree programs. Additionally, she led the
development of a FACS plan for action to support diversity and inclusion within faculty, staff, and students. Survey results for this review reflect these accomplishments as the students feel they have a family in FACS. Students’ state that Dean Fox stands out among Deans for her involvement with students, visibility, approachability, and willingness to listen.

Dean Fox intentionally increased communications and marketing to share the success stories of the college with external constituents and aligned the college’s communication plan with the structure of UGA’s that includes the publication of a FACS annual report and FACS Magazine. Alumni are supported and encouraged to participate in the college though multiple means including engagement events that increased giving to the college to fund scholarships and space renovations. FACS constituents indicate that one of her strengths is her ability to connect with community agencies, corporations, alumni and other groups outside the university. This increases the college's visibility and supports fund-raising efforts and linkages for students/graduates.

Dean Fox has strategically managed the resources of the college. This included seeking funding to renovate spaces in Dawson Hall and by relocating labs and collections to other appropriate sites to best serve the needs of faculty and students. She has also integrated fiscal resources by centralizing accounting and fiscal staff to deploy resources throughout the college. Surveys show that staff and faculty are deeply divided on how effective this strategy has been, but some cite that the Dean has navigated these challenges fairly and that she is earnest in her efforts to achieve high standards by changing the culture, business processes, and re-strategizing the overarching goals for FACS.

Recommendations (in order of importance)

Based on the input from external sources and from various members of the University community, some specific recommendations have been developed to improve Dean Fox’s leadership. Most of these recommendations fall into the category of improving mechanisms and outlets of communication as well as continuing many of the advances that she has developed over the period of this review. Specific recommendations are as follows:

- Improve communication with faculty and staff regarding the rationale behind a strategic decision (such as the reorganization of student advising, indirect costs policy), and the implications for all units across the college.
  - Evaluate process by which major decisions are communicated to the college to ensure that all departments receive the same information.
  - Visit departmental faculty meetings every semester.
- Increase communication and transparency regarding budgetary decisions including decisions on the centralization of resources from a unit level or between units to the college for deployment.
- Respond to perceptions that the College has not been managing and strategically spending financial resources equitably over the past 3 years due to lack of central reporting, inconsistencies in departments, and department heads that have not been held accountable for funding.
• Include Extension more intentionally in the planning process and the work of the college.
• Share the vision for the future of the college with all constituents.
• Engage stakeholders within the college in strategic planning initiatives that impact their units.
• Develop more comprehensive processes for incorporating faculty from across the college in decision-making, particularly with regards to the development and implementation of the college's budget.

Conclusions

Dean Fox has led FACS through major changes over the period covered by this review. FACS has improved its strategic vision, becoming a more prominent college at UGA and increasing its standing in the community, statewide, and nationally. Dean Fox has made significant progress in enhancing all aspects of the College’s programs, especially with regard to the quality and quantity of the faculty and instructional programs. Under Dean Fox’s leadership FACS has also reorganized the administrative team of the College, focusing many new efforts on development and fundraising including various initiatives to build a larger supportive base with alumni. Dean Fox has many accomplishments, building on a vision for the College and improving lines of communication. It is in this arena of communication that the review committee recommends working on timely and effective communication with faculty and staff on key strategic decisions. With a greater empowering and shared leadership model to Departments and Extension Units Dean Fox will have greater buy-in on new initiatives and in turn make more significant gains in productivity and prominence for the College of Family and Consumer Sciences.