

Provost Whitten:

In contrast to some of our more *polyannic* colleagues, we believe that just a wee bit of panic might be appropriate as we consider how best to provide safe food and water for the remainder of this millennium. After reflecting on a few sobering facts, such as the amount of arable land available on the planet, the ill effects of climate change, the burgeoning population, and the likelihood that new human, livestock and plant diseases will emerge, we focused our efforts on how the University of Georgia might best position itself to become a center of excellence in food and water safety.

We unanimously agreed that it is important for the University of Georgia to pursue the goal of ensuring safe food and water by promoting a transdisciplinary approach. This will require not only addressing the teaching, research and service missions inherent in land-grant institutions established in 1862, but doing so in new, innovative ways. After much discussion, we agreed on the following two deliverables:

*Deliverable #1: A Combined Fertilizer and Seed Program Addressing Food and Water Safety*

The first step in this deliverable will be to develop a cross-campus community that bridges interested faculty members and students from different disciplines. This will be achieved through a small *fertilizer* approach that will be initiated through a campus-wide call for interested faculty members having complementary areas of expertise and use of an enhanced, searchable cross-campus database. Thereafter, a steering committee will be developed to solicit key ideas, promote brainstorming opportunities, and share ideas for potential collaborations via small TED-like seminars. Only after development of this community will it be possible for faculty members with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise to begin having conversations about how to address this grand challenge.

Completion of these *fertilizer* activities will be followed by a call for seed grants related to food and water safety to competitively support emerging ideas and transdisciplinary teams. The call for applications must define “transdisciplinarity” sufficiently to ensure that all applications take full advantage of the breadth of expertise on campus. It is critical that the seed funds be sufficient to ensure that successful transdisciplinary groups can leverage the results of the funded projects to compete for extramural funding. At the end of the seed grant funding period, the recipients will meet to share their findings, problems and technique issues. This will provide them an opportunity to seek any additional expertise needed to strengthen their ability to compete successfully for extramural support.

*Deliverable #2: A Booster Program Addressing Food and Water Safety*

Transdisciplinary groups that receive funding from the seed program and at least one extramural source will be eligible for *booster* funding provided by the University. The *booster* program would provide additional support that would catalyze the involvement of students. During this program, graduate students will be trained in a transdisciplinary manner and serve as mentors to undergraduate student teams, and faculty members will be encouraged to develop transdisciplinary undergraduate level courses that could result in a Certificate in Food and Water Safety. Furthermore, faculty members, graduate students and undergraduates to participate in community outreach activities through the Archway Partnership and UGA Extension to pursue real-world solutions to problems related to food and water safety in Georgia as well as global research and outreach activities facilitated by the Office of International Education. Simultaneously, colleges and departments on campus will be encouraged to foster new opportunities that stimulate the creativity and leadership potential of our students by providing additional resources and opportunities for students to work together.