



Jordan College of Agricultural
Sciences and Technology

2019-20 Annual Report

Submitted by

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Accomplishments

Updated mission, vision, and goals

- **Mission:** To boldly educate students to be highly productive, innovative, and dynamic leaders in the California food and agriculture sectors, in their communities, and in their families.
- **Vision.** The Jordan College draws on its deep roots in the Central Valley to prepare students today to be productive, resilient leaders in the global agriculture of the future.
- **Tagline:** Jordan College-Growing productive tomorrows
- **Values:** Integrity, Respect, Accountability, Teamwork
- **Strategic Initiatives**
 - Empower students by facilitating hands-on learning, industry engagement and community service.
 - Empower faculty and staff to engage students in applied research and scholarly activities.

Improved morale. With assistance from Plant Operations, we had the Agricultural Sciences Building painted, a long covered water fountain and urinal out of order for several years repaired. While small, these acts led to pride in the college.

Worked to make the UAL sustainable. We empaneled a Dairy Industry Advisory Board to solicit input on how to better manage our dairy, put a consulting team of Ag Business faculty together to gather information to improve the Dairy Processing (creamery) unit, took an active role in determining operating budgets for the coming year, and met with a number of industry leaders to build support for the UAL. Working with the farm manager, we developed a three year plan to increase the acreage of permanent plantings and implemented year one with a 35 acre planting of almonds. We have already acquired, through donations, the trees, land preparation, and irrigation services for the second phase of the project that will launch in late 2020.

Improve operational efficiency. An outside consultant was engaged to deal with problems in the Department of Viticulture and Enology and the Viticulture and Enology Research Center. A plan was put together but it is dependent on being able to search for two faculty positions-one to replace a retiring viticulturist that would serve as chair, and a second for an enologist that would provide the director of VERC an opportunity to get a tenure track position (and eliminate an MPP position). We have been approved for one search and will undertake it in the fall.

I worked with Center Directors to develop a strategy to improve operational efficiency, and outlined a plan that will reduce overhead costs associated with the Agricultural Research Initiative. The first phase, begun in May, is project mapping to better understand all of the elements of the proposal process.

We worked with Technology Services to implement a Digital Agricultural Solutions Hub (DASH). While it took most of the year to get a conceptual model in place, a trial will be launched this

summer/fall. Phase 1 will use artificial intelligence to match faculty researchers with industry partners seeking solutions to problems they face. I anticipate a second phase that will match students with faculty mentors and phase three will match students seeking internships with those providing such internships.

Staff and Faculty Hiring and Development

The Jordan College welcomed two new tenure-track faculty members in August of 2019.

- Dr. Sharon Freeman, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Animal Science and Agricultural Education
- Dr. Megan, Pronovost, Assistant Professor, Department of Child and Family Science

Dr. Charles Hillyer began serving as Director, Center for Irrigation Technology on October 1, 2019.

New staff members joining the Jordan College include

- Ms. Allyson Baldus, Administrative Support Coordinator, Institute for Food and Agriculture
- Mr. Valdemar Cerna, Research Assistant, Center for Irrigation Technology (Foundation)
- Mr. Kevin Davis, Automotive Equipment Mechanic, University Ag Lab/Ag Operations
- Mr. Matt DeGroot, Animal Science Technician, University Ag Lab/Ag Operations (Foundation)
- Ms. Alexis Ford, PR/Communications Assistant, Center for Irrigation Technology (Foundation)
- Mr. Jorge Garcia, Lab Assistant, Plant Science (Foundation)
- Mr. Jose Guerrero, Farm Maintenance Mechanic, University Ag Lab/Ag Operations
- Ms. Grace Manly, Project Assistant, Center for Irrigation Technology (Foundation)
- Mr. Jorge Moreno, Research Assistant, Center for Irrigation Technology (Foundation)
- Dr. Kartik Ramaswamy, Post Doc, Institute for Food and Agriculture (Foundation)
- Ms. Dannielle Rodriguez, Administrative Analyst, Ag One/College Development
- Ms. Gerry Sanchez, Administrative Support Assistant, University Ag Lab/Ag Operations
- Ms. Belinda Munoz, Administrative Support Coordinator II, Center for Irrigation Technology

Faculty, staff and administrator resignations/retirements:

- Dr. Sandra Witte, Dean Emerita, retired
- Mr. Kurt Dietrich, University Ag Lab/Ag Operations retired
- Mr. Danny Sexton, University Ag Lab/Ag Operations, retired
- Mr. Pete Canessa, Center for Irrigation Technology, retired
- Ms. Sadie Hemsath, Ag One/College Development resigned
- Ms. Lisa Montijo, University Ag Lab/Ag Operations, resigned

Graduation Initiative 2025: Graduation Rates, Retention Rates, Closing the Loop

As with all colleges, progress on the GI 2025 may have taken a hit due to our required adjustments to the COVID-19 crisis this past semester. The impact of the pandemic is not yet known. We experienced a fairly normal completion rate for our classes in the Spring 2020 semester, but we may notice some issues because of class offerings and student reenrollment issues starting in the Fall 2020 semester and perhaps beyond. Our enrollment numbers and Dog Days participation are a little

behind trend and we are a bit concerned that students may postpone enrollment in classes with labs because they realize they need the hands-on experience of an in person lab. We are working with faculty and doing what we can to offer laboratory experiences in innovative ways both virtually and in a socially distanced setting but the effects of this are unknown.

Our faculty responded well to the necessity of online delivery of courses during the second half of the semester. We found many instances of faculty helping faculty by sharing techniques and best practices of reaching out to students. With few exceptions, faculty went the extra mile to engage students. Because of these efforts students generally completed all courses for which they were enrolled.

Based on pre-COVID numbers, we are making good progress on graduation rates for those entering as freshmen. Table 1 displays university and college retention and graduation rates. The college's rates for the most recent year exceed those of the university in all three rates-retention, 4 year graduation, and 6 year graduation. Additionally, the rates for the college in the most recent years are above the five year averages for the college although they are below the highest rates achieved since 2009.

Table 1.

Freshmen	University	JCAST		
	most recent year	most recent year	5 year average	range since 2009
1st year retention	82.5	85	83.3	80.4-88.0
4 year graduation	17.8	20.8	20.4	17.2-22.6
6 year graduation	56.3	61.3	60.8	54-66

As shown in Table 2, the college's rates for transfer students for the most recent year also exceed those of the university in retention, 2 year graduation rates, and 4 year graduation rates. The rates for the college in the most recent years are all above the five year averages for the college and are the highest achieved in any of the years since 2009.

Table 2

Transfers	University	JCAST		
	most recent year	most recent year	5 year average	range since 2009
1st year retention	86.7	93.6	90.4	84.7-93.6
2 year graduation	28.4	29.3	26.4	14.4-29.3
4 year graduation	76.2	81	75.5	69-81

Analysis of graduation rates show an improvement when we opened our advising office (2015). There was a slight decline but the rates are now improving with a renewed emphasis on moving students more efficiently toward graduation. The key is having the advising office work closely with students on roadmaps, advising sheets and removing holds; and faculty advisors continually encouraging and working on specific career goals and motivating students to reach them.

Late in the spring semester, the college worked with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to survey our students about their experience shifting to virtual delivery of instruction. We shared this information with our faculty and staff to help them understand the student experience and consider in designing the fall term. Students appreciated faculty communication, the use of zoom and faculty's willingness to be flexible and understanding. They asked for greater attention to the nature and quantity of assignments and instructional quality and continued efforts to communicate with them and consider their circumstances (see the COVID-19 section for specific information).

Fundraising

The Jordan College will end the 2019-20 fiscal year raising approximately \$8.5 million-exceeding our \$4.9 million goal by \$3.5 million. Transformative gifts included the realization of the bequest from the estate of Donald E. Gumz (\$4.66 million) as well as the Ag One Community Salute honoring the Parnagian Family. The year was also marked by the unprecedented cancellation of numerous alumni and friends events due to COVID 19. We continue to find ways to keep our donors and volunteers engaged while reimagining in person gatherings and events.

Development highlights for this past year include:

- A decline in the number of gifts by approximately 25 percent (1,150 this year compared to 1,500 last year) due to the cancellation of alumni and friends events since March.
- The realization of the \$4.66 million bequest from the estate of Donald E. Gumz in support of the enology program (\$3.7 million) and the Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT) (\$933,000). This gift resulted in the naming of the enology building which will house a newly remodeled research winery as well as create a quasi-endowment to support CIT. We plan an on campus recognition of the gift next spring.
- A \$500,000 gift from the Theresa and Tom Polich Family in support of the agricultural business program
- A \$500,000 gift from Bette Ward in support of scholarships for dietetic majors.
- The Ag One Foundation honored the Parnagian Family - brothers Dennis, Ken, Randy and Philip, their Uncle Pete and Cousin Jim – at the biennial Community Salute. Approximately 1,100 family, friends and colleagues gathered at the Fresno Exhibit Hall to celebrate the family's accomplishments. Over \$1,060,000 was raised and the net proceeds of \$800,000 created an endowment in support of the University Agricultural laboratory (UAL).
- Other endowments created this academic year include:
 - Ag One – Rick Cosyns (\$100,000 from The JG Boswell Foundation to support the UAL)
 - Ag One – Ralph and Lisa Hackett (\$25,000, to support the UAL)
 - Ag One – Mel Machado. Mel was honored at the Stanislaus Alumni and Friends dinner and \$7,000 was raised. He has pledged to create an endowment through a bequest for scholarships for students majoring in plant science. Mel will directly fund a scholarship each year until the bequest is realized.
 - Ag One – Dean Emerita Sandra Witte Family (\$25,000 in support of the UAL).
- Gift-in-kind activity continued to be an important component of giving to the Jordan College. The addition of several gifts in process will bring the total value of gifts-in-kind to nearly \$650,000. Donations of Napa and Sonoma County grapes for the winery, feed and cattle for the dairy unit, several high valued horses, irrigation equipment and the first piece of equipment for the nut processing laboratory are among the gifts.

- Other notable gifts:
 - Dr. Art Parham pledged \$10,000 towards the rodeo coach endowment.
 - Marvin Meyers matched President Castro's pledge of support towards the UAL/Chestnut Avenue irrigation project (\$82,000).
 - The Farm Credit Bank Partners gave \$76,000 towards Multi-Cultural Scholars in Agriculture program.
 - The James G. Boswell Foundation through the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation gave \$50,000.
- The University engaged external stakeholders through the Presidents Campaign Leadership Committee (PCLC) – Stanley Kjar, Jr. is the liaison on the committee representing the Ag One board.
- The dairy diagnostic laboratory was celebrated as donors to the laboratory were publically thanked on campus by Dr. Castro. The donors were Land O'Lakes Foundation (Pete Garbani, Justin Curti and Spencer Peck – all Fresno State graduates), Karen and Richard Spencer plus Danny Freitas. Alfalfa hay from the Shehadey Family as well almond hulls from Pat Ricchiuti were realized (additional hulls will be gifted next year).
- California High Speed Rail Authority donated many pieces of equipment from a dairy in Hanford. These were installed on the campus dairy. While the value of the equipment does not appear in our fundraising totals because gifts from governmental agencies are not philanthropic, the impact is noteworthy.
- A proposal to name the UAL was given to John and Carol Harris by Dr. Castro
- The number of donors to the Jordan College during the 3rd annual Day of Giving campaign was down nearly 50% from last year but the amount raised was almost equal (\$26,160 compared to \$29,375).
- Ag One celebrated 40 years. It has raised \$19.5 million in endowed funds since 1979 and this year awarded \$700,000 to deserving students and programs.

Gifts currently in the discussion stages or awaiting finalization include:

- Final Jordan gift: anticipate \$5 million for agricultural research.
- California Certified Organic Farmers: Endowed faculty position (50%)
- Faculty and program support for the Agricultural Mechanics program in Plant Science as well as Viticulture and Enology.
- Greenhouse for Viticulture and Enology.
- Several estate gifts and inductions into the Heritage Society.
- Nut processing equipment for Industrial Technology-anticipate installing summer 2020.
- Olive milling equipment to be used collaboratively among faculty and students in viticulture and enology, food science and nutrition as well as for research conducted through the Institute for Food and Agriculture.
- No cost tractor leases for the UAL.
- Almond and pistachio trees for the UAL.
- Bayer Crop Science to fund a graduate student for two years (\$50,000).
- Several plant protection companies to host field demonstration days on the campus farm.

Workplace Quality Survey

When the Workplace Quality Survey results became available, we distributed the results to each of our units (one department had too few response so it was not included). Each unit was encouraged to discuss in a unit wide meeting. We also identified those issues where the college average was more than 5 percentage points from the Division of Academic Affairs average. We found nine areas where the college average was lower than the division average (see Table 1) and we asked our Administrative Council to consider ways they could work within their units to address those issues they found to be most important.

Table 1. Issues on which JCAST Scored Lower than Academic Affairs as a whole

Issues	Comparison
The facilities (e.g., classrooms, offices, laboratories) adequately meet my needs.	-41.0%
Senior leadership communicates openly about important matters.	-20.8%
The role of faculty in shared governance is clearly stated and publicized.	-10.7%
I believe what I am told by senior leadership.	-10.7%
Issues of low performance are addressed in my department.	-10.3%
Senior leadership provides a clear direction for this institution's future.	-9.6%
I believe a culture of open discussion and debate exists at Fresno State.	-9.3%
My department has adequate faculty/staff to achieve our goals.	-7.9%
There is regular and open communication among faculty, administration and staff.	-6.7%

At the college level, we identified facilities and communication to be issues we could address. Facilities Management was asked to fix an exterior water fountain and a urinal in the Ag Building both of which had been wrapped in black plastic for at least a year. The work was done within a week. We also asked that the Ag Building be painted. During the Fall and Spring semesters, the entire exterior of the building was painted and faculty, staff, and students have continuously expressed their appreciation for this cosmetic upgrade. During spring term, we launched two different email communications. A couple of times each month, the dean sends an email to all faculty and staff updating on happenings in the college, recognizing performance, informing of upcoming events, and reinforcing messages from senior leadership. Similarly, the Associate Dean composes a more substantive email addressing leadership principles-this semester these focused on concepts of change, uncertainty, making connections, complexity, emotional intelligence, etc. We believe that our efforts will improve the perception of workplace quality on a number of the items in Table 2.

COVID-19 response

Everyone on campus had to adjust quickly to the changes in March due to the coronavirus pandemic. All faculty had to adjust to the sudden change with the challenge of keeping students engaged. JCAST was particularly hard hit because we rely on hands on experience and hands on laboratories at the university agricultural laboratory, all of which were discontinued in the middle of March.

From the Dean's office our goal was to keep faculty and staff engaged so they would keep students engaged. Each week for the last seven weeks of the semester, faculty and staff received two weekly emails of information and encouragement - one from Dean Nef and one from Associate Dean

Thomas. We feel our faculty and staff adjusted quickly and generally continued to engage students during these unprecedented times as confirmed by the Student Survey which was sent out April 22.

The JCAST Student Survey received 548 responses. Respondents were open about the difficulties they were facing. Their answers reflected some frustrations but also a great deal of appreciation for caring faculty and staff who helped them through the semester. Our college survey included specific questions about laboratory experiences. Sixty-two percent of the respondents were taking at least one lab. Responses showed a great deal of variation in rating instructors proficiency in providing laboratory exercises virtually with nearly equal spread of responses in all categories ranging from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. Labs continue to be an area of focus as we prepare for the Fall 2020 semester.

Our faculty scored high in instructor availability and responsiveness (61% slightly challenging or not challenging at all). They also rated very highly in accommodating student needs during this time, with 74% of respondents satisfied or extremely satisfied. In spite of the challenges our faculty engaged well with the students. Some issues of student frustration still require work to overcome the students' issues in focusing and paying attention to important details. With more training and planning we hope to do better in these areas in the coming semesters.

Since the beginning of telecommuting our three advisors have had 822 appointments. In addition each of them have reached out to well over 100 students by email to keep engaged with them. Additionally, Imelda has had 100+ appointments related to internships (most internships will be completed, except those where the cooperators could not allow students on premises). Internship opportunities for summer and fall are down slightly but not excessively, which is remarkable. We thank our advising and career development team for staying connected to our students.

At the department level, the response to COVID-19 is best described by one of our chairs as "adapt and overcome". Any efforts to "mitigate its impact" were still largely triage, responding to weekly, daily and even hourly changes. Our students, staff, and faculty adapted as best as they could. Faculty quickly converted lecture and lab activities into virtual modes on the fly, mostly through Zoom meetings, to reduce the impact of campus closure. They also quickly adopted other virtual deliver tools. Faculty and staff in departments met frequently to address the challenges and questions related to coping with COVID-19 disruptions. In these meetings, they collaborated to share tools for online instruction and discuss some of the issues they were facing. A number of faculty received training and approval during spring 2020 for teaching online courses and many are taking advantage of training this summer.

Faculty were asked to be extra observant for any signs of any abnormal behavior like absenteeism, sudden loss of interest and focus, etc. and provide necessary support and direct students to support resources available on campus. Faculty were also encouraged to provide flexibility to students with regard to their assignment submissions, exams, etc. so as to not cause any undue burden to students who lack adequate infrastructure and/or conducive environment at home for studies. Faculty identified issues including students not attending classes, inability to cope with the virtual instruction method, and unknown causes despite instructor attempts to contact them. Some students elected to take a C/NC option or were awarded 'Incomplete'. In some cases the instructor had to assign a 'WU' grade as the students did not respond to attempts to contact them. Hopefully, these students will re-enroll or complete their remaining tasks (those with I's) to get a letter grade.

In departments that faced challenges with the online delivery of laboratories, efforts were made where possible to modify the labs without losing the essential learning outcomes. In others, modifications were made to be able to offer some face to face instruction supplemented with online delivery.

Faculty curtailed travel and presented research findings online. Departments that usually have a number of face to face events such as FFA Field Day, Meat and Dairy Industry Appreciation Dinners, Collegiate Rodeos, Livestock and Dairy Challenge Contests, year-end professional and industry conferences and annual events had to cancel them. Students have the opportunity to gain a significant amount of professional development through involvement in these activities and felt their loss. The reduction in interaction with alumni and friends was a significant blow to most of our programs. Departments did host virtual celebration events for their graduating students.

My summary of the college response is that we are more resilient than we may have thought. Given the summer to prepare, I am hopeful the experience for students, staff, and faculty will be much improved.