



GROWING *the* FUTURE

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2014

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES ■ UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

OUR 125TH YEAR finds us at a time of great opportunity. The University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is an esteemed leader in addressing many of the grand challenges facing our world today. Providing food for all, developing sustainable energy sources and coping with changes in climate are examples of the pressing global concerns that are central to our purview.

While facing challenges, we also see opportunities. Recent decades have yielded widespread and enormous scientific advances, including the genomics revolution and an explosion of information of all kinds. Basic research has increased knowledge of the mechanisms of living systems. Here at CALS, our breadth of expertise along the continuum—from fundamental knowledge to applied research to implementation—puts us in a particularly strong position to meet the grand challenges of this century.

What are our greatest strengths, and which challenges are we in the best position to address?

People and institutions around the state, nation and, indeed, the world look to CALS for knowledge and leadership. Our students, in ever-increasing numbers, come to us for an education that equips them to address the grand challenges they care about so deeply. In addition to preparing students to meet critical workforce needs in many areas, we also train them to be innovators and creative problem-solvers who can apply their abilities to new issues that will emerge in coming decades.

And so the questions fall to us: How can we, as an institution, best meet the challenges and opportunities that confront us, particularly in an era of resource constraints and changing funding models?¹ How can we continue and expand our leadership as we move further into the 21st century? What are our greatest strengths, and which challenges are we in the best position to address?

Members from all corners of the CALS community came together during the 2012–2013 academic year to address these questions, led by a committee composed of administrative leadership, faculty, staff, students and external partners. The team conducted surveys, interviews and listening/discussion sessions with representatives from industry, business, government, NGOs and other organizations as well as students and alumni. We sought input at two All College meetings devoted to strategic planning and established a website to inform both the university community and the public on progress as well as solicit comments and suggestions.

1. See Appendix 1, “Current Context for Strategic Planning: Changes in Funding, Students, Faculty and Research at CALS,” posted at www.cals.wisc.edu/stratplan.