

oppaga Progress Report



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IFAS Evaluating Fees, But Has Not Made Any Modifications to Previous Consolidation Plans

at a glance

The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) partially implemented recommendations made in our July 2002 report. IFAS has established written requirements for periodic cost analyses to determine whether its fees adequately recoup costs for services, and has adjusted some fees.

IFAS has reviewed but not revised its written plans for consolidating field sites since our prior report. However, IFAS is in the process of consolidating two field sites and disposing of unneeded land and facilities at four sites.

Purpose

In accordance with state law, this progress report informs the Legislature of the actions taken in response to the findings and recommendations included in our 2002 review of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).^{1, 2}

Background

The University of Florida is one of the state's two public land grant universities, and IFAS carries out the University's land grant mission. IFAS offers programs in areas such as agriculture, family and consumer sciences, youth development, natural

resources, and food and nutrition. IFAS comprises the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (teaching), the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station (research), and the Florida Cooperative Extension Service (extension).

- The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, which helps IFAS fulfill its teaching mission, is located at the University of Florida's main campus in Gainesville. The college also offers courses at six sites around the state. In fall 2003, approximately 2,900 undergraduate and 860 graduate students enrolled to pursue degrees in the fields of agriculture, natural resources, and life sciences.
- The Florida Agricultural Experiment Station carries out IFAS's research function. IFAS currently has 13 agricultural research and education centers at 20 locations throughout the state. IFAS faculty conduct more than 570 ongoing research projects each year.
- The Florida Cooperative Extension Service is administered cooperatively with the United States Department of Agriculture, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, and the state's 67 counties. Each county is served by extension agents who provide information and conduct educational programs that extend university-based research to farmers, ranchers, families, youth, and other Florida citizens.

As shown in Exhibit 1, IFAS's funding for Fiscal Year 2002-03 totaled \$242,967,840, of which 54%

¹ Section 11.51(6), *F.S.*

² *Special Examination: Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Report No. 02-40*, July 2002.

was from general revenue. IFAS has 2,110 full-time equivalent employees.

Exhibit 1
In Fiscal Year 2002-03, General Revenue Accounted for 54% of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Funding^{1,2}

| Division | General Revenue | Other Sources | Total |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Research | \$60,825,927 | \$59,186,308 | \$120,012,235 |
| Extension | 26,857,615 | 44,882,324 | 71,739,939 |
| Teaching | 24,575,777 | 2,088,367 | 26,664,144 |
| Administration | 8,131,078 | 2,747,314 | 10,878,392 |
| Facilities | 11,283,726 | 2,389,404 | 13,673,130 |
| Total | \$131,674,123 | \$111,293,717 | \$242,967,840 |
| Percent | 54% | 46% | 100% |

¹ In order to show the full funding picture for some types of IFAS funding, we used actual expenditure figures to substitute for budget figures. This is due to the nature of the type of funding. For example, contract and grants funds may be obtained for multiple years and are not budgeted to a particular year. Due to this limitation, Fiscal Year 2002-03 is the most recent year for which complete funding data are available.

² For Fiscal Year 2004-05, IFAS received \$128,892,713 through legislative appropriations and trust funds. IFAS will also receive additional revenues from several sources, including contracts, grants, and donations.

Source: Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Prior Findings

Our prior report identified two areas in which IFAS could take action to reduce its reliance on general revenue. First, IFAS lacked a uniform and systematic practice for evaluating fee sufficiency. To ensure that its fees adequately cover program costs to the extent allowed by federal regulations, we recommended that IFAS establish written requirements for periodic cost analyses of specific services to determine whether fees should be modified. These requirements should address the set time periods at which staff will evaluate fee sufficiency.

- Second, although IFAS was in the process of consolidating some of its operations, it had not developed comprehensive long-term consolidation plans. We recommended that IFAS continue to develop its plans for consolidating research and education centers and complete a plan by the end of October 2002 that includes the
- number of consolidated regional centers to be established and the optimum locations,
- centers and sites to be closed and milestone dates and cost for each closing,
- client needs for services currently provided at each site, and

- impact of consolidation on staff and clients and the benefits of closing each site.

Current Status

IFAS established requirements for analyzing fee sufficiency, but has not yet revised its consolidation plans.

IFAS developed a process to evaluate the cost of services and adjust fees

As recommended, IFAS established a policy, effective July 2004, requiring units that provide extension services to evaluate and adjust fees if allowed by federal extension mission guidelines. IFAS issued a memorandum regarding the policy in June 2003 that describes the expenses that fees should recover and how to calculate whether fees cover these expenses. The soil and analytical research lab has already responded to the memorandum and adjusted its fees in July 2003, which generated an additional \$221,482 in revenue. IFAS also continually adjusts fees for high quality, multi-color publications and for conference and educational programs to reflect its expenses for these services.

IFAS has reviewed but not revised its written plans for consolidating research and education centers

IFAS has not revised its written consolidation plan since our prior report. IFAS administrators stated that they reviewed the structure of the research and education centers, but did not see the programmatic or financial need to conduct additional consolidation or closures. However, IFAS has begun constructing a new facility in Balm, Florida, to consolidate the Bradenton and Dover sites, as was scheduled at the time of our previous review, and is disposing of unneeded land and facilities at four sites.

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Project supervised by Becky Vickers (850/487-1316)

Project conducted by Rashada Houston (850/487-4971),
 Jeanine King (850/487-4256), and Natalie Walker

Debbie Gilreath, Staff Director (850/487-9278)

Gary R. VanLandingham, OPPAGA Interim Director