

EDITORIAL

Leadership Emphasized in the Division of Agriculture**By Melissa Mixon**

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"Leaders aren't born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve that goal (of becoming a leader), or any goal."

— Vince Lombardi

Each unit of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State has its own unique missions and goals, but all are in the business of developing leaders for today and tomorrow through teaching, research and outreach programs.

Leaders in the division were recently asked about their experiences, leadership views and what advice they would give future leaders. Their responses included

- Look for and take advantage of every opportunity.
- People grow to the level of expectation – set the bar high.
- Provide opportunities to feel secure taking chances.
- The only limitation placed on aspiring leaders in the division is themselves.
- Establish a plan and a goal and continue to grow.
- Don't get discouraged.
- Be flexible.
- Rise above the situation.
- Never say never.
- Ask why, not why not.
- Keep a balance between professional and personal goals.
- Identify a strong support system.
- Identify a mentor and be a mentor.

More than 50 organizations in the division provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills by leading fellow students. Each of the three colleges has ambassador programs where students sharpen their speaking, writing and service skills. The MANNRS, or Minorities in Agriculture and Related Sciences, is a national organization that provides a network between minority natural resource and agriculture students and professionals from academic institutions, government and industry. MANNRS prepares students for leadership roles by involving them in lead-

ership activities, educational opportunities and job readiness for a lifetime of professional service.

Students interested in international leadership experiences have opportunities through study-abroad programs and the extensive international research programs established by faculty in the division.

Division-sponsored leadership opportunities extend to the young people of the state through outreach programs. Statewide, more than 90,000 young people are involved in 4-H and its unlimited opportunities to develop leadership skills.

The Mississippi State Agriscience Institute for Minority Students (MS AIMS) provides hands on experiences for rising high school juniors and seniors through agri-science, natural resource and agribusiness activities on the MSU campus.

Faculty and staff development programs are critical to the continued development of leaders. Faculty participate in many national leadership programs, including Lead21 and the Food System Leadership Institute (FSLI).

Lead21 develops leaders in land-grant institutions. Likewise, FSLI develops individual and institutional leadership for the 21st century.

Faculty throughout the division serve in leadership roles in their professional organizations. A mentoring program is available to all faculty—teaching, research, extension and clinical—for their first three years at MSU. The program provides them with the tools they need for a long and successful career at the university.

Professional and support staff leaders are critical in day-to-day operations and the division strives to hire the best individuals and invests in their development and retention.

The annual Women in Management program focuses on vital management and leadership skills. MSU has participated in the program for more than 30 years.

Professional and support staff members also have opportunities to participate in programs such as the Mid-Level Leadership Training Program. In its sixth year of existence, the program mentors and develops employees often overlooked by other training programs.

Employees are encouraged to strengthen their personal and professional skills by enrolling in academic courses at MSU.

Finally, as leaders develop, it is important to celebrate successes, and the division seeks every opportunity to recognize employees for their accomplishments in serving the clientele of MSU, industry and the state. A quick inventory of the awards and recognitions in recent months shows more than three dozen.

Points of pride are submitted by individual units and are updated on a regular basis. These can be found on the division Web page at www.dafvm.msstate.edu. Please take the time to visit the Web page and join us in celebrating our successes.

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

— John Quincy Adams