The Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Strategic Plan

2012–2016

Strategic Planning Process 2012

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Acknowledgement
Leadership Resources, LLC, of Lincoln, Neb., facilitated the strategic planning process and provided valuable guidance throughout the process.

Contact:
Dr. Mark Balschweid
ALEC Department Head
300 Ag Hall
Lincoln, NE 68583-0709
402-472-8738
mbalschweid2@unl.edu

© 2012, The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. All rights reserved.

The Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication is part of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln not to discriminate based upon age, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, sex, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran’s status, marital status, religion or political affiliation.
ALEC Strategic Plan

Table of Contents

Executive Summary ............................................................................................................................................................. 4
ALEC Vision, Mission, and Core Values .................................................................................................................................. 5
Organizational Description .................................................................................................................................................. 6
Organizational Chart ......................................................................................................................................................... 7
Goals, 2012–2016 ........................................................................................................................................................... 8

Strategic Goal 1: Establish an International Training and Development Center on Innovation Campus ................................. 8
Strategic Goal 2: Develop Skilled and Technical Sciences Preparation Program ................................................................. 8
Strategic Goal 3: Invest in EdMedia Research and Development to Create Emerging Technologies ............................................. 8
Strategic Goal 4: Formally Review the Agricultural Journalism Program to Include Life Sciences ........................................ 9
Strategic Goal 5: Increase Total ALEC Major and Minor Students, and Increase Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates ............... 9
Strategic Goal 6: Provide Leadership in Agricultural/Natural Resources/Life Sciences Literacy—Academic/Campus .................. 9
Strategic Goal 7: Provide Leadership in Agricultural/Natural Resources/Life Sciences Literacy—Outreach/Off Campus ......... 10
Strategic Goal 8: Increase EdMedia Productivity Through Percentage of Billable Hours (Complete Cost Recovery) ............ 10
Strategic Goal 9: Increase New EdMedia Partnerships and New Jobs/Projects ................................................................. 10
Strategic Goal 10: Increase Overall Customer Satisfaction .................................................................................................. 11
Strategic Goal 11: Develop an Internship Program in EdMedia ............................................................................................. 11
Strategic Goal 12: Increase the Number of Grants Applied for and Awarded ........................................................................ 11
Strategic Goal 13: Increase the Number of Scholarly Publications and Presentations ............................................................. 12
Strategic Goal 14: Formally Review the Agricultural Leadership Academic Program .............................................................. 12
Strategic Goal 15: Enhance ALEC’s Global Engagement Through Increased Number of Courses/Initiatives ......................... 12
Strategic Goal 16: Integrate Academics (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) into the Agricultural Education Teacher Preparation Program .......................................................... 13
Strategic Goal 17: Create a New Employee Induction Process Manual and Mentoring Program ........................................... 13
Executive Summary

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL), the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR), and the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication (ALEC) are committed to being national leaders in teaching, research and extension, and advancing Nebraska’s agriculture, natural resources and life sciences industries for the benefit of citizens and their communities.

The interface of human dimensions with food, fuel, water and communities is central to the ALEC department. Nebraska’s agricultural, food and natural resources industries draw upon the people and products of ALEC’s expertise in leadership, education and communication.

Globally and locally, agriculture is facing many challenges. At no time in modern history have the issues facing agriculture been so challenging. Global populations continue to rise, landmass available for cultivation continues to decline, climate change is influencing food production practices, and global demands for energy are increasing rapidly. In addition, technology is advancing at a rapid pace. Discoveries in life sciences, biotechnology and alternative fuels promise to reshape the agriculture and food systems.

ALEC is poised to contribute to agriculture, natural resources and food systems by preparing the next generation of thought leaders. ALEC embraces the challenge of preparing tomorrow’s students to be leaders in their organization and community, educators equipped to teach diverse learners in technologically advanced classrooms, and communicators able to engage consumers with complex scientific information necessary for informed decision making.

The technology in ALEC’s Educational Media unit positions the department to be a national leader in producing and delivering high quality, timely and relevant information to individuals, families and communities. ALEC’s capabilities play a key role in bringing university expertise to bear on local problems, and in using technology to advance the well-being and economic health of Nebraska and its citizens in a global marketplace and a multicultural society.

ALEC is committed to the vision of UNL’s Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources to provide internationally recognized science and education to assure the state’s competitiveness in a changing world.

ALEC embraces the challenge of preparing tomorrow’s students to be leaders.
ALEC Vision

The leader in developing extraordinary teachers, leaders, and communicators, and delivering critical information for Nebraska’s agricultural and natural resources needs in an ever-changing world.

ALEC Mission

We achieve our vision through:
- excellence in teaching through research and best practices;
- premier development and delivery of timely, relevant information from Nebraska’s land-grant institution;
- educating and preparing leaders, teachers, and communicators for career success;
- developing engaged and productive citizens;
- providing innovative strategies and solutions, which support teaching, research, extension, and industry; and
- establishing strategic partnerships within industry and communities.

ALEC Core Values

Community
We seek to build a collaborative environment within ALEC and beyond.

Authenticity
We foster a trusting, open, and inclusive environment by treating each other with respect and dignity.

Excellence
We are committed to continuous improvement to enhance the quality of what we do.

Culture of Service
We meet the needs and exceed the expectations of our students, stakeholders, and each other.

Global Mindedness
We seek to understand and address how our actions affect the global environment, and how global issues affect us.
Organizational Description

The ALEC department has been in existence at UNL since 1918. Originally called the Department of Agricultural Education, the unit is currently the home of five distinct academic programs. It also is the home of Educational Media (EdMedia), a production service unit serving the communication and educational needs of UNL and IANR within an agricultural, natural resources and life sciences context.

The undergraduate academic degree programs are:

- Agricultural Education–Teaching Option
- Agricultural Education–Leadership Option
- Agricultural Education–Skilled and Technical Sciences Option
- Agricultural Journalism
- Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management

The graduate degree programs include a Master's of Science in Leadership Education and a Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership Studies. The faculty and staff serving students in the academic program operate under the tagline **Developing Human Potential.**

Several EdMedia staff serve in faculty roles as professors of practice, supporting the agricultural journalism degree program and working directly with students involved in daily projects within electronic media, web-based framework, or publications. EdMedia serves clients within IANR and across UNL’s campus, and operates under the tagline **ideas. actions. results.**

The ALEC department houses the Nebraska FFA Foundation’s executive director and program coordinator. And, ALEC is the home for the executive director and program coordinator for the Nebraska Human Resources Institute (NHRI). The following organizational chart provides further detail of the ALEC department.
Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication

Mark Balschweid, Head

Academic Support Unit

Nebraska Human Resources Institute

Agricultural Education

Hospitality, Restaurant, Tourism Management

Agricultural Education

Teaching

Leadership

Tourism

Special Projects

Nebraska FFA Foundation

Nebraska FFA Assoc Career Development Events Coordination

EdMedia Support Unit

Agricultural and Life Sciences Communications

Agricultural Journalism

Educational Media

Brandon Schulte

Web Framework

Sys Admin Programming

Electronic Media

Writing, Editing, Design
Goal 1
Establish an International Training and Development Center on Innovation Campus

Objective
Establish a teaching and learning/leadership/communication enterprise built on the skill set of faculty and EdMedia staff, with the recognition that ALEC can provide one-stop service for the premier delivery of products and programs tailored to individual and corporate needs.

Working collaboratively with the IANR director of global engagement and the NU international development office, this center will inform and influence leadership development of collaborative teams for producing highly productive grant writing and research groups, premier mentoring in the teaching and learning process, and high impact communications tools for business, nonprofit and educational pursuits. This enterprise, within Innovation Campus, will utilize business and industry expertise for strategic direction.

Metric: Center developed by 2016

Goal 2
Develop Skilled and Technical Sciences Preparation Program

Objective
Develop the Skilled and Technical Sciences Teacher Preparation Program (formerly Industrial Technology) to fully articulate with community colleges using the 2 + 2 model.

Partner schools will include Southeast Community College, Metro Community College and Central Community College. Students will complete their first two years (and obtain an Associate’s Degree) of technical skill coursework at the community college and transfer to ALEC to finish out their baccalaureate degree with pre-professional coursework.

Metric: Approved program by 2013

Goal 3
Invest in EdMedia Research and Development to Create Emerging Technologies

Objective
Establish a systematic approach for investing in research and development of new products and technologies.

Starting in 2012, EdMedia will provide startup funds on a competitive basis to develop innovative teaching tools and strategies for IANR faculty projects. These competitive funds will target the creation of new products, or the substantial improvement of existing products, to better communicate with stakeholders and/or improve the learning process. ALEC/EdMedia will be known as the go-to place for innovation in creating and/or adapting state-of-the-art technology to increase and enhance opportunities for in-class and at-a-distance learning, as well as for disseminating information.

Metric: By 2013, invest $30,000 each year
Goal 4
Formally Review the Agricultural Journalism Program to Include Life Sciences

Objective
Agricultural and life sciences communications faculty will conduct a comprehensive review of the current agricultural journalism baccalaureate degree program.

The program overhaul will consist of a complete scope and sequence examination of courses, experiences and requirements necessary in the current degree program. Through continued partnerships with NET, the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, and the College of Fine and Performing Arts, ALEC graduates will be uniquely qualified for a broad base of careers and be competitive with graduates from across the country. Future faculty hires will bring critical expertise to areas such as internships and essential components of a 21st century communications program.

Metric: Adopt name change and curriculum by 2013

Goal 5
Increase Total ALEC Major and Minor Students and Increase 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates

Objective
ALEC faculty and staff will enhance recruitment efforts to achieve an enrollment of 250 undergraduate students in ALEC majors and 300 undergraduate students in ALEC minors by 2016.

Recruitment efforts will focus on building strong partnerships with secondary agricultural education and skilled and technical science teachers across Nebraska, as well as creating positive relationships with Nebraska high school students to prepare them to be ALEC students upon admission to UNL. This will be achieved by creating and adopting dual credit courses and other “pre-college” programs within the ALEC department, allowing students access to UNL faculty and services, yielding “almost UNL students” familiar with the department, its course offerings, faculty and staff. In addition, efforts will be made to extend qualified high school teachers affiliate status in the ALEC department to create strong ties with our best local recruiters (high school teachers).

Program improvement efforts to aid in recruitment and retention will include attention to high growth enrollment programs such as HRTM’s tourism program and an agricultural leadership degree program, a full evaluation and revamp of the agricultural journalism program (including a degree name change) to reflect the program’s up-to-date outlook on preparing future agricultural communications professionals, and a revision of the communication and leadership development minor.

Metric: Student enrollment achieved by 2014 and 85 percent retention rate by 2016

Goal 6
Provide Leadership in Agriculture/Natural Resources/Life Sciences Literacy – Academic/Campus

Objective
ALEC will become the lead department at UNL for the agricultural, natural resources and life sciences formal literacy efforts.

Through the development of courses, initiatives and projects exposing UNL students to the complex world we live in, ALEC will provide leadership through communication and education, raising awareness of student decisions and their impact on the world.

Metric: Five campus-based courses and/or separate initiatives by 2016
Goal 7
Provide Leadership in Agriculture/Natural Resources/Life Sciences Literacy – Outreach/Off Campus

Objective
ALEC will become UNL and IANR’s lead department in providing informal education and instruction in agricultural, natural resources and life sciences literacy for Nebraskans.

Utilizing the strengths of faculty in Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management, agricultural education and agricultural communications, and through EdMedia’s delivery systems, ALEC will educate and inform the general public about the complex world we live in and the interrelationships surrounding food, fuel and water.

Metric: Five off-campus initiatives and/or projects by 2016

Goal 8
Increase EdMedia Productivity Through Percentage of Billable Hours (Complete Cost Recovery)

Objective
Utilizing standard business procedures, EdMedia will provide IANR faculty and constituents premier services in education and communication while achieving an average billable hour rate of 75 percent.

EdMedia’s ability to operate as a cost recovery unit will allow expansion of EdMedia’s services to include research and development for the discovery and utilization of new technology to meet the rapidly changing information delivery system.

Metric: Achieve 75 percent billable hours by 2016

Goal 9
Increase New EdMedia Partnerships and New Jobs/Projects

Objective
Through an emphasis on increasing market share through existing relationships with NET and others, EdMedia will grow current partnerships and the current number of jobs/projects each year leading to 2016 (as measured by individual partnerships).

Building on the current relationship with NET will maximize efficiencies of fixed costs and allow for greater flexibility with existing technologies and resources.

Metric: Increase partnerships 25 percent and new jobs/projects 50 percent by 2016

ALEC is poised to contribute to the solutions facing agriculture, natural resources and food systems.
Goal 10
Increase Overall Customer Satisfaction

Objective
Create a culture of continual improvement in EdMedia.

Initiate a customer satisfaction feedback program to track client perceptions of the people, products and services they encountered. The feedback received will be used to inform future practice, and results will be communicated to customers, stakeholders and staff.

Metric: Implement a customer feedback instrument and track results for improvement by the end of 2013

Goal 11
Develop an Internship Program in EdMedia

Objective
The agricultural and life sciences communications faculty, in conjunction with EdMedia, will establish a comprehensive internship program to expose students to the real world of business communications.

ALEC faculty and EdMedia staff will establish a comprehensive internship program. The internship program will capitalize on EdMedia’s human and material resources to provide students with experiential learning opportunities. Students and staff will follow guidelines that establish student learning outcomes and supervisory/mentoring expectations while working on real projects with real deadlines.

Metric: Create an internship program for 20 students by 2016

Goal 12
Increase the Number of Grants Applied for and Awarded

Objective
In an effort to maintain a relevant and robust departmental research agenda, the faculty and staff within the department will generate $3 million per year in external funding by 2016.

This funding will be from grants where ALEC faculty serve as the principal investigators, as well as from collaborative grants in conjunction with other units in IANR and UNL.

Metric: $3 million per year by 2016

by preparing the next generation of thought leaders.
Goal 13
Increase the Number of Scholarly Publications and Presentations

Objective
By 2016, ALEC faculty, graduate students, and staff will publish 60 articles in scholarly and professional trade journals and deliver 60 presentations at regional and/or national conferences per year.

The evidence of a vibrant, departmental research agenda is in the scholarly and creative outputs generated. Increasing the number and quality of ALEC’s scholarly and creative outputs is essential for communicating the research and innovative work being conducted within the department, and enhancing ALEC’s visibility within UNL, across the state and around the country.

Metric: Produce 60 articles and 60 presentations per year by 2016

Goal 14
Formally Review the Agricultural Leadership Academic Program

Objective
Agricultural Leadership faculty will conduct a comprehensive review of the current agricultural leadership option within the agricultural education baccalaureate degree program as well as the Leadership and Communication Minor.

The program review will consist of a complete scope and sequencing of courses, experiences and requirements necessary in the current degree program as well as the Leadership and Communication Minor. Through an emphasis in areas such as personal/interpersonal, team, and organizational/community leadership, ALEC’s program will contribute to IANR’s efforts in the Institute for the Rural Future, the Engler Entrepreneurship Program, and other UNL and community-based leadership and youth development programs. Working in collaboration with other leadership programming and courses at UNL, this review process will address the question of whether the agricultural leadership option should become a stand-alone major and/or move to a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Metric: A revised academic program reflective of student needs and faculty expertise by the end of 2013

Goal 15
Enhance ALEC’s Global Engagement Through Increased Number of Courses/Initiatives

Objective
To align with IANR and UNL initiatives for enhancing the university’s global presence, and to provide ALEC students with greater opportunities to participate in international experiences, the department will increase the number of courses, initiatives, projects and exchanges that are grounded in a global context.

Targeted high-growth areas are in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management’s tourism emphasis and agricultural leadership at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Metric: Increase the number of departmental courses, initiatives, projects and exchanges to eight per year by 2016
Goal 16
Integrate Academics (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) into the Agricultural Education Teacher Preparation Program

Objective
Integrate science, technology, engineering and mathematics into the Agricultural Education Teacher Preparation Program.

Across the national landscape, agricultural education has been challenged to greater academic rigor through the integration of academic subject matter (specifically science, technology, engineering and mathematics). ALEC’s agricultural education teacher preparation program will enhance the program of study through a greater emphasis of academics in the required courses selected, and through integrating core academic subjects within the pre-professional courses and the student teaching experience.

Metric: Integrate sufficient STEM standards into the secondary agricultural education curriculum, positioning Nebraska agricultural education programs to offer dual credit courses with UNL and IANR by 2014

Goal 17
Create a New Employee Induction Process/Manual and Mentoring Program

Objective
Create a new employee induction process, manual and mentoring program

Through current and best practices, faculty and staff will develop a manual to articulate the policies and procedures new employees need to know. In addition, a formal mentoring plan will be established to help assimilate new faculty and staff into the department.

Metric: Create an ALEC new employee manual and initiate a formal mentoring program by 2013
Notes and future opportunities
Notes and future opportunities