

LSU AgCenter Global Network

A. VISION

Louisiana State University will become the premier US University in Central and Eastern Europe and Central America and the Caribbean Basin for agriculture and related sciences.

B. MISSION

We will develop enhanced international opportunities for faculty, students, and staff; leverage partnerships for improved value return to LSU and Louisiana; cultivate opportunities for international research and technology development; and recruit for international students and scholars at all levels.

C. OVERALL STRATEGY

In concert with LSU Strategic Plan 2025, we will enhance preparation of students as future agricultural leaders, elevate research and technology activities, support Louisiana economic development, and fuel professional improvement of faculty, staff, and students.

LSU AgCenter and LSU enjoy national recognition for research and cooperative extension programs, academic innovations, technology transfer portfolios, entrepreneurship emphases, and economic development initiatives. Collectively these address stakeholder and student needs, generate and deliver research-based information, promote economic growth, and train a workforce that is broadly educated, adaptable, and globally engaged.

In recent years, we have leveraged our strengths to craft a network of international partnerships that we believe will establish Louisiana State University as the premier US University in Central and Eastern Europe and Central America and the Caribbean Basin. Successes achieved thus far arise from our unique approach to capacity building in our target regions. A brief description of this approach follows.

Like many universities, we train international undergraduate and graduate students to lead 21st century initiatives in agriculture, food, natural and renewable resources, and the environment. But we take these foundational programs an important step further --- we focus on capacity building for University leadership. We work alongside current and emerging University leaders to provide mentorship and training in areas that will be key for relevance and engagement in their respective regions of the world. Problem-solving research, knowledge transfer to stakeholders, entrepreneurship, economic development, alumni relations, fund raising, and leadership development are among the areas that have generated the greatest impact thus far.

We will continue to develop existing and explore new program areas and partnerships that are consistent with our Vision and Mission Statements. Our long term goals are to internationalize LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture through strategic reciprocal partnerships and to establish our identity as the premier US University in Central and Eastern Europe and Central America and the Caribbean Basin for agriculture and related sciences.

D. REBRANDING

LSU Agricultural Center Office of International Programs will rebrand as LSU AgCenter Global Network. This new brand is designed to showcase the international components of our four-fold mission (teaching, research, extension, and economic development) within a growing network of strategic

University and private sector partners. Further it highlights our desire to serve LSU faculty, staff, and students who have interest to work and study internationally. Working closely with LSU AgCenter Communications, we will craft a media presence that conveys these values clearly.

E. GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

LSU AgCenter has enjoyed much historical success with capacity-building projects throughout the world. However changing federal funding strategies coupled with increased need for value return to Louisiana demonstrate the need for sustained program development in selected, strategic global regions. We believe that regionally-focused programming that plays to our strengths and leverages our private-sector and diplomatic relationships will enable development of comprehensive, rewarding partnerships with key Universities and companies.

Programmatic activities will focus on growing the strongest possible partnerships in our two target regions --- i) Central and Eastern Europe and ii) Central America and the Caribbean Basin. Partnership efforts will bring opportunities to LSU faculty, staff, and students; develop fruitful research and technology development initiatives; and engage industry and Embassy partners to promote value return to the State of Louisiana.

1. Central and Eastern Europe

We will elevate strategic University partnerships in four main countries (Mendel University, CZ; Slovak University of Agriculture, SK; Warsaw University of Life Sciences, PL; and University of Debrecen, HU), known collectively as Visegrad Countries. Further we accepted invitation to join Visegrad Universities Association (VUA) and recently won their signature award for Outstanding University Contribution. We will leverage our VUA membership and recent success to explore further opportunities with these and selected other of the 56 universities from 23 countries currently in VUA.

Efforts will be multi-faceted and include joint research and technology projects, administrative mentoring and capacity building, student and faculty exchanges, and appropriate private sector partnerships that we will leverage to develop opportunities for international internships that will produce a globally-engaged workforce. Long term objectives also include dual degree programs with selected partner Universities based on mutual academic interests.

Programs in Central and Eastern Europe will include opportunities for:

Students: Study and Semester Abroad, international Internships, international student joint projects, international research and technology development, and new outlets and audiences for research publication

Faculty: Short term teaching and novel research opportunities, joint publication and funding venues, international private sector partnerships, new outlets and audiences for research publication, and expanded prospects for problem-solving research and technology development on an international scale.

Staff: Opportunities for international experiences based on defined program needs

Other LSU Colleges: Opportunities for strategic engagement often arise outside the arena of agriculture. To date we have facilitated growing relationships between our partner Universities and LSU Colleges of Art and Design, Engineering, and Business. We will continue to forge these relationships as opportunities arise.

Louisiana Private Sector: When appropriate, we will facilitate communications regarding international business opportunities for Louisiana companies. Further will forge research partnerships that will target technology-based solutions that will fuel economic development and deliver value to both Louisiana and our partner country.

Non-Academic Programs: Expertise within LSU AgCenter includes programs such as: intellectual property and technology transfer; knowledge transfer to stakeholders at all levels; alumni relations; economic development and entrepreneurship; leadership development; and many others. Timely engagement of these programs will support strongly our mission for administrative capacity building with our strategic University partners.

One key example was our 2017 Rector's Symposium, wherein we hosted more than 30 University leaders for discussions on technology transfer and GMO's. A second Symposium is planned for 2018. Another example is the LSU AgCenter Food Business Incubator, which has served as a model program for Slovak University of Agriculture and University of Debrecen.

2. Central America and the Caribbean Basin

We will strengthen the presence of LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture in key countries including Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Multi-faceted efforts will focus on expand many areas including recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students, Study Abroad programs, internship and practical training opportunities for LSU students, long-term research initiatives, and fund raising. Current active partners in the region include Zamorano University and National University of Agriculture (HN), Earth University (CR), MESCOT (Dominican Republic), and Go Abroad Nicaragua (NI).

Programs in Central America and the Caribbean Basin will include opportunities for:

Students: Study and Semester Abroad, international Internships, and international student joint projects.

Visiting Scholars and Graduate Student Recruitment: We will continue support for existing programs at Zamorano University and National University of Agriculture and will work to expand a program at Earth University.

Undergraduate Student Recruitment: We will establish a pilot program to recruit high school students at selected private schools for enrollment as undergraduate students at LSU.

Faculty: Short term teaching opportunities, leading student programs and projects, research project development, agricultural capacity building and training, and mentoring graduate students from the region.

Non-Academic Programs: Expertise within LSU AgCenter includes programs such as: knowledge transfer to stakeholders at all levels; alumni relations; economic development and entrepreneurship; leadership development; fund raising; and many others. Timely engagement of these programs will support strongly our programs with our strategic University partners.

3. Other Global Regions

Efforts will focus initially on the two regions of the globe identified previously --- Central Eastern Europe and Central America and the Caribbean Basin. Opportunities for activities in other regions will be considered and evaluated for consistency with our Mission and Vision Statements and ability to deliver value to Louisiana stakeholders. A clear example of this is our highly successful Borlaug Fellowship Program, which brings key scholars and scientists from developing nations to LSU for training and partnership building. All opportunities will be evaluated as they become available.

F. NEW INITIATIVES

Several new initiatives will be developed and introduced. These include:

1. Expand program focus to include support and guidance for faculty, staff, and students.
2. Rebrand program and revise website.
3. Survey current faculty and staff for international interest, experiences, and contacts. This will allow creation of a useful database for relationship building and program expansion.
4. Develop a contact database for all alumni in Central America and the Caribbean Basin region. This will be useful for internship opportunities, alumni relations, and fundraising.
5. Communication and public relations efforts will expand to include contemporary media to strengthen student and parent engagement.
6. Establish defined international internships for graduate and undergraduate students.
7. Travel grants will provide partial support for travel and relationship building among researchers at strategic partner Universities.
8. Seed research support will target research partnerships with technology potential.
9. Manage and distribute Dean's Fund for International Experiences to encourage LSU College of Agriculture students and faculty to engage internationally with strategic partners.
10. Encourage and incentivize LSU College of Agriculture student groups (Le Voyagers, MANNRSS, Global AgAmbassadors, ARC, Clubs and Organizations, and others) to engage internationally.
11. Utilize existing and cultivate new ERASMUS+ funding partnerships.
12. Explore domestic and international funding mechanisms as support for expanding programs.
13. Implement procedures to capture and evaluate feedback from students, faculty, and staff.

G. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND GUIDANCE

Routine meetings with LSU AgCenter leadership will allow timely reporting and focused discussions for program activities. In addition we will establish two advisory committees:

A. Internal Advisory Committee

This committee will include selected senior researcher faculty along with junior faculty who are actively involved in student programs. They will review opportunities for research and capacity building programs, survey appropriate faculty for interest in program development, evaluate and promote student Study Abroad and international internship opportunities, and raise awareness of international opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.

B. External Advisory Committee

This committee will work closely with Global Network staff, LSU AgCenter leadership, Embassy and Consulate staffs, and others as appropriate to facilitate international public-private sector initiatives that may develop. They will provide direction and support on aspects of student study and training, research and development programs, industry needs, and economic development opportunities. Also they will provide program guidance regarding relevant global opportunities and give direction for securing endowed support for the Global Network.

H. OFFICE ORGANIZATION

Following restructuring and rebranding, the LSU AgCenter Global Network has developed several organizational and financial components.

1. New Director: Dr. John Russin now leads the unit.
2. New Associate Director: Ms. Ivana Tregenza now serves in this capacity in addition to her role as LSU College of Agriculture Director of International Relations.
3. New Vision and Mission Statements: A new culture of programs and services consistent with these statements will be developed.
4. LSU AgCenter Global Network will work seamlessly with LSU College of Agriculture Office of International Relations. Staff and interns will be shared and programs will be fully integrated.
5. Each geographical region will be led by an appropriate Region Manager, who will be responsible for all activities in the region. Ms. Ivana Tregenza will manage the Central and Eastern Europe region while Dr. John Russin serve as interim manager for the Central America and Caribbean Basin region. Dr. Russin will fill this role until a permanent Region Manager is identified.
6. Office support will be provided by undergraduate and graduate students and interns who have significant international experience. They will lead communication efforts with other students, recruit interest in Study Abroad activities, and provide logistic and programmatic support.

I. LEADERSHIP AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Effective 31 December 2017, Dr. John Russin will retire from LSU AgCenter. In accordance with separation requirements set by the State of Louisiana, he will be reappointed as Director of LSU AgCenter Global Network beginning 05 February 2018 at a partial appointment of 65%.
2. Dr. Russin will reside in Tucson, AZ but will work physically on the LSU campus for at least one week per month. He will work remotely for the remaining time.
3. Ms. Ivana Tregenza will continue to reside in Houston, TX and will remain at her appointment of 100%. She will work on the LSU campus at least once per month.
4. Dr. Russin and Ms. Tregenza will stagger their times on campus to provide as much in-person leadership as possible.
5. Selected members of the Global Network or Office of International Relations staff will represent Dr. Russin or Ms. Tregenza if necessary when they are not on campus.
 - i.