

# UTIA Office of International Programs Strategic Plan 2017-2022

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## 1. Background

The Office of International Programs (OIP) at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA) was established on July 1, 2015 with the appointment of the Donald and Terry Smith Chair in International Sustainable Agriculture, Dr. Thomas Gill. The opening of OIP was a significant step towards realizing the goals of the 2012-2017 UTIA strategic plan for internationalization of the Institute. The plan was developed by a team of UTIA faculty, commissioned by Chancellor Larry Arrington, in order to revitalize the international engagement of UTIA. This team of faculty acted both as the International Advisory Council (IAC) and the search committee for the Smith Chair. The OIP exists to provide a focal point for facilitation and acceleration of international engagement across UTIA's four divisions (College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources [CASNR], College of Veterinary Medicine [CVM], AgResearch and UT Extension).

*Mission:* To advance the international engagement of UTIA by empowering faculty, staff and students to think and act globally in pursuit of sustainable solutions to our world's agricultural, food and natural resource challenges.

*Vision:* To place UTIA as a leader in international engagement, widely recognized for its expertise in generating sustainable solutions to our world's agricultural, food and natural resource challenges.

## 2. Acknowledgements

OIP would like to acknowledge the following sources of funding for UTIA international programs: Smith Chair Endowment and start-up funds, established by Donald and Terry Smith; the Milam Family Endowment; Start-up funds from UTIA Chancellor Larry Arrington; Office programmatic funds over 3 years (2015-18) from UTK VP David Millhorn; and matched funding for seed grants from UTIA Deans.

## 3. Strategic Planning Process

This document provides a strategic plan for OIP for the period of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022. The current UTIA international programs strategic plan expires in 2017. OIP has undertaken the following activities in order to generate a new strategic plan:

- A. OIP held two meetings with the IAC on August 20, 2015 and April 26, 2016. These meetings helped to discuss and establish immediate and longer-term priorities for OIP. Discussions were also held about re-vamping the IAC, as some IAC members had left UTIA, some new faculty were interested in joining the IAC and others were interested in seeing the committee re-worked. We continued the IAC format discussions in academic year 2016-17, deciding on the structure and composition of the IAC, the purpose of the IAC (in supporting OIP and UTIA), the frequency of meetings, and the need for term lengths and/or limits on members (Appendix). The IAC is being relaunched with the initiation of this new strategic plan.
- B. Dr. Gill traveled to three land-grant institutions to learn about their international agriculture programming, the structure and organization of the international agriculture programs offices, opportunities for partnership, and recommendations for generating “quick wins” for OIP during the first couple of years:
  - a. Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI – September 28-29, 2015
  - b. University of Florida, Gainesville, FL – February 15-16, 2016
  - c. University of Georgia, Athens, GA – May 5-6, 2016 (Dr. Tom Gill and Dr. Adam Willcox traveled together).
- C. Meetings were held with all UTIA deans, assistant deans, and department heads to learn about the international engagement of their departments or components of UTIA. These were conducted in July and August 2015, and were useful in identifying key faculty contacts within UTIA to approach and learn more about past, current and future international engagement.
- D. Meetings were held with UTIA faculty members to learn about their past, current and intended future international activities. We also identified a number of other faculty with ongoing international activities, with a current total of 77 faculty members engaged in 51 different countries worldwide.

- E. A database of faculty international travel and activities was established to be a UTIA-wide resource cataloguing the institute's international engagement by its faculty. This was done in order to track changes in UTIA faculty international engagement over time.
- F. A strategic planning half-day “retreat” was held on March 30, 2016, in Plant Biotechnology Building 156/157 with OIP faculty and staff (Drs. Tom Gill, Dave Ader and Adam Willcox). An outline of a strategic plan for 2017-2022 was developed and then shared at the April meeting with the IAC for their feedback and input.

## 4. Personnel Plan

OIP will maintain the following **core** positions:

- A. Smith Chair in International Sustainable Agriculture, who serves as the Director of OIP. This director oversees all activities of OIP, represents UTIA as chief international officer, and leads a team of OIP faculty and staff in internationalizing UTIA’s portfolio. This role includes providing leadership for ongoing OIP projects and programs, and for developing collaborations with faculty across UTIA to pursue international engagement opportunities.
- B. Faculty position in International Agriculture. This faculty member will actively seek new business/external funding opportunities to build OIP and UTIA international programming, will lead project proposal development and work with faculty teams to develop project proposals, project implementation and reporting, and lead monitoring and evaluation activities on funded projects.
- C. Research Associate/Faculty position. This researcher will lead activities under the Milam Family Endowment, as well as work with OIP faculty to seek and secure external funding opportunities, particularly for training and capacity building programs (e.g. USDA Borlaug and Cochran), be the lead coordinator for hosting international delegations, and serve as the liaison to UTIA faculty on international agreements.
- D. Student program leader/coordinator and outreach lead. This person will serve as the CASNR study abroad and International Agriculture & Natural Resources (IANR) minor coordinator, as well as the program coordinator for the Peace Corps Prep program. This role includes leading engagement with UTIA faculty and students in developing, implementing and evaluating all CASNR and CVM opportunities that involve students. This role includes working directly with UTK’s Center for International Education on a consistent, regular basis to synergize student international engagement. This person will also lead the development of international outreach events and media items, including the annual showcase event, participation in UT career and study abroad fairs, updating website content, and co-developing outreach materials with faculty, staff, students and UTIA Marketing and Communications.
- E. Undergraduate student intern(s). Student interns will help with various projects, including media outreach, for OIP on a part-time basis throughout the academic year and during the summer.
- F. Administrative assistant. This role will provide budget support, including purchasing for OIP, travel reimbursements, etc.
- G. Other positions will be maintained throughout this five-year plan, as funded by external grants and contracts.

## 5. Program priorities

### 5.1. Facilitate international engagement of faculty

- A. Teams: Faculty international seed grants. We will offer an annual competitive internal seed grant program for UTIA faculty interdisciplinary teams to begin or build international collaborations that would lead to future funding opportunities. Each year's seed grant competition will have a different theme, which will be identified by the OIP together with the IAC.
- B. Individual: Faculty travel fund. We will establish and provide a travel fund for individual faculty members to build international collaborations that have high probability of sustainability and successful partnership. We will offer two deadlines per year for faculty to submit proposals for funding. This program will be launched in late 2017/early 2018.
- C. Smith Faculty Fellows. In 2018, we will launch a faculty fellows program to support buyout of up to 25% each of one/two faculty members time to work on focused international initiatives. Interested faculty will be competitively selected by the OIP and IAC based on proposals for internationalizing their portfolios in teaching, research and/or extension. Buyout of faculty time will be aligned with their current appointment and approved by the Department Head and appropriate Dean(s). This program will be initiated by gift funding, will run initially for three years, and piloted with tenured faculty. Smith Faculty Fellows will serve one year terms and work closely with the OIP to fulfill their objectives for their fellowship.
- D. Faculty support for study abroad preparation. We will provide matching support to faculty wishing to build new study abroad classes/opportunities for CASNR/CVM students. This support will match the UTK CIE offering of up to \$1500 per faculty member. This program will be offered for the first time in the 2017-18 academic year.

### 5.2. Increase student international engagement

- A. International Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) minor.
  - a. We will continue to advise undergraduates pursuing the IANR minor.
  - b. We will continue to teach AGNR 180 *Global Dynamics: Food, Biodiversity and the Environment*, currently taught every Fall semester.
  - c. We will continue to instruct FWF 420 *International Natural Resource Issues*, one of the capstone courses for the IANR minor.
  - d. We will expand the number of elective course offerings for the IANR minor, and look for ways to introduce courses that could fit into other existing CASNR majors.
  - e. We will continue to promote the minor through student events and classroom visits.
- B. Develop graduate-level international agriculture and natural resource course content. We will work with faculty across UTIA to:

- a. Co-develop classes on international agriculture and natural resource topics
  - b. Integrate international modules/content into current or future planned course offerings
- C. Student study abroad.
- a. We will organize and implement a CASNR study abroad fair every Fall semester.
  - b. We will continue promoting study abroad opportunities at CASNR first-year orientation, appropriate student events and classroom visits.
  - c. We will continue to offer existing May mini-term classes and actively recruit students to ensure these classes reach necessary capacity to run. When existing courses are phased out, we will work with UTIA faculty to replace these with new offerings.
  - d. We will increase faculty-led offerings by exploring alternative times of year for international travel components to classes, e.g. Spring break, winter break, later in Summer.
- D. Peace Corps Prep (PC Prep).
- a. We will submit a revised Peace Corps Prep application to the US Peace Corps in Fall 2017 and launch a Peace Corps Prep program at UTK/UTIA in the 2018-19 academic year.
- E. Student scholarships.
- a. We launched a competitive annual funding opportunity for CASNR undergraduate students in Spring 2016 to study abroad on a UT-led or UT-approved program. Awards range between \$250 and \$500 per student. This will continue to be offered every year in Fall (for winter and spring programs) and in Spring (for summer and fall programs).
  - b. We will provide scholarships (for undergraduate and graduate students) for international agriculture and natural resource conferences hosted annually in the US, including, but not limited to:
    - i. Annual meeting of International Association of students in Agricultural and related Sciences (IAAS). <http://www.iaasworld.org/>
    - ii. Association of International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD) annual meeting in Washington, DC, every June. [www.aiard.org](http://www.aiard.org)
    - iii. World Food Prize in Des Moines, IA, every October. [www.worldfoodprize.org](http://www.worldfoodprize.org)
  - c. We will provide an annual travel scholarship for graduate and professional students (open to CASNR and CVM) for these students to conduct visits to international partners. Priority will be given to students who want to incorporate an international component/focus into their thesis or dissertation work. Funds will be available for research, teaching and/or extension/outreach activities.
- F. International Ambassadors.
- a. We launched the UTIA Student International Ambassadors program in Fall 2016. CASNR undergraduates must submit an application and, if selected, serve for at least one year with no term limit. We will recruit annually for the Ambassadors, based on number of available Ambassador spots available each Fall. We will maintain a core of at

least eight (8) International Ambassadors, who will be identified on the UTIA International Programs website.

- b. The Ambassadors represent OIP and promote international opportunities among UTK students, including promoting study abroad opportunities and the International Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) Minor. They also assist with UTIA OIP Showcase, the CASNR Student Career Fair, and the UTK Study Abroad Fairs.
- G. The Milam International Scholars Program has been established with the funds from the Milam Endowment. This will continue to be run on an annual basis. Scholars can receive:
- a. Competitive scholarships for undergraduate or graduate students to increase student engagement and internship opportunities in Guatemala.
  - b. Funds to support student costs for Guatemala-based study abroad programs.
- H. East Tennessee State University (ETSU). We will develop a partnership with ETSU's College of Public Health, with foci on international activities and hands-on learning. Initial partnership activities will focus on student learning on global public health and agricultural production.
- I. Support students' ability to articulate the value of international engagement. We will support UTIA students through: i) providing opportunities to present at the annual showcase and study abroad fair; ii) working with peers through the international ambassadors program; iii) working with CASNR career services to provide assistance to students on how to integrate their international experiences into cover letters and CVs.

### **5.3. Seek and secure external funding for projects**

We will seek and secure external funding for project work both led directly by OIP faculty and staff and also led by faculty across UTIA. We will also seek opportunities to subcontract to other organizations and partners who propose to lead international projects that fit with our strategic plan. We will therefore develop strategic partnerships with organizations and institutions both in the US and abroad to enhance our international engagement. Strategic partnerships will be based on opportunities to 1) build on the expertise of OIP and UTIA faculty and staff and 2) build on ongoing projects.

In order to concentrate our efforts for long-term sustainable impact, we will focus on strategic regions and countries at the **institute-level**. This does not detract nor discourage faculty, staff and students from engaging with programs in other countries around the world. These regional and country-specific foci were selected based on three criteria: 1) current level of faculty and student interest and engagement, 2) availability of sustainable funding sources, 3) strategic opportunity based on country or regional importance attributed to agriculture and natural resource system development.

- A. The four focus regions of OIP engagement are:

- a. Southeast Asia
  - b. Eastern and Southern Africa
  - c. Central America and the Caribbean
  - d. Central and Eastern Europe
- B. The two strategic focus countries of OIP engagement are:
- a. China
  - b. Brazil
- C. In line with these foci, we will continue ongoing funded projects (listed below) and continue to seek external funding to build upon these projects.
- a. USAID SIIL Cambodia (2015-2019)
  - b. USAID GDA Rwanda (2017-2019)
  - c. USDA-NIFA Belize (2017-2019)
- D. We will also continue to look toward one-time and ongoing opportunities to augment our international engagement, including, but not limited to:
- a. USDA-FAS Borlaug and Cochran programs (annual)
  - b. USDA-FAS China Scientific Cooperation Program (annual)
  - c. USDA-NIFA-AFRI, where opportunities arise to build international components into proposals, or build proposals that are international but have clear bring-back to the US, e.g. Higher Education Challenge (HEC) and the Education and Literacy Initiative (ELI)
  - d. USAID Innovation Lab opportunities (as they arise, based on Feed the Future funding)
  - e. Foundation opportunities (as they arise), such as Gates Foundation, Howard G. Buffett Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, etc.
  - f. Opportunities to source funding from foreign government programs or foreign-based organizations, as they arise.
  - g. Other private organization opportunities, as they arise.

## **5.4. Raise the profile of UTIA international engagement**

### **A. Events**

- a. We will hold an annual international showcase, every Fall, to highlight the ongoing activities of UTIA in the international arena.
- b. We will attend local events, regional, national and international conferences and workshops to promote UTIA international engagement through oral presentations and using various displays, including posters and other exhibits.
- c. We will offer a seminar series on a regular basis throughout the academic year. This series will bring in outside speakers on international issues related to UTIA engagement and will also highlight the role of UTIA faculty, staff and students in international activities.

### **B. Meet with stakeholders and visitors**

- a. We will meet with delegations from overseas who are visiting UTIA OIP, faculty and/or staff to further international collaborations.

- b. We will support UTIA units to host delegations and/or visiting scientists.
- c. We will link visiting international students and scholars with UTK's Center for International Education, to support them with immigration services and integration into campus and Knoxville life.
- d. We will visit with US-based groups and individuals who are current or potential partners in furthering our international engagement. This would include visitors from other academic institutions, non-profit groups, private sector, government, etc.

C. Donor relations

- a. We will meet with current and potential donors to the Institute who may have an interest in UTIA international activities. We will both host current and potential donors on our Knoxville campus and also visit them at their locations to discuss ways in which we can advance the institute together through enhanced international engagement.

D. Outreach via various media

- a. Website: Continuously update the website for UTIA International Programs, keeping it current with news on international activities (including publications) by OIP and UTIA faculty, staff and students, as well as keeping events calendars and social media accounts active and up-to-date. <https://ag.tennessee.edu/international>
- b. Social media: Keep all social media accounts active under OIP including:
  - i. Facebook page for UT CASNR study abroad
  - ii. OIP twitter account @UTIAGlobal
  - iii. OIP Instagram account @utiaglobal
- c. Journal publications:
  - i. We will publish journal articles in the peer-reviewed and lay literature with an international focus.
- d. Newsletters:
  - i. Provide a presence in the Chancellor's monthly newsletter, *Common Ground*.
  - ii. Provide articles for AgResearch, UT Extension, CASNR Chronicle, and UT CVM as activities occur.
  - iii. Provide articles for department and other unit newsletters, as activities occur.
- e. News articles.
  - i. Provide regular items and feature articles for the UTIA magazine, *Land, Life & Science*.
  - ii. Provide regular items that could be picked up by local news outlets.

E. Develop messaging for UTIA stakeholders about importance of international engagement.

We will work across UTIA units to articulate outreach messaging to communicate the value of international engagement to UTIA, the state of Tennessee, and the stakeholders that UTIA serves both within Tennessee and within the United States. We will use the various activities outlined in this section (5.4 A through D) to enhance UTIA domestic audiences' understanding of the economic, cultural and academic benefits of increased international engagement.



## 5.5. Data aggregation

There are currently multiple pieces of relevant data on international engagement collected by different units across UTIA and UTK. These data are not currently being aggregated to provide updates on international engagement. We will work together with 1) CASNR, CVM, AgResearch and UT Extension, 2) UTIA Information Technology Services, and 3) UTK CIE and other units, to aggregate data of international engagement by UTIA faculty, staff and students, in order to track international engagement across our institute. Data not currently aggregated in one location that we intend to track include:

- A. International travel data for UTIA faculty, staff and students
- B. Study abroad locations and numbers for UTIA (CASNR and CVM) students
- C. Number of international students at UTIA (CASNR and CVM)
- D. Journal and popular press publications by UTIA faculty, staff and students that contain international components or foci
- E. External funding secured by UTIA faculty for projects that involve international components

We expect this to be an ongoing process, as we work with different units to develop methods to track and aggregate these data. By serving as a central data repository for these “big data” items for UTIA, OIP will be able to track institutional progress towards internationalization.

## 6. Metrics and targets for success

The following tables represent specific indicators (metrics) that we will use to monitor and evaluate success for our international programs. We have established indicators for activities where quantitative metrics are appropriate and monitoring methods available and have developed targets based on 1) reasonable growth of our international portfolio over the next five years, and 2) UTIA peer land-grant institutions (Appendix 7.2) and their international programs' targets. We intend to have an external review in 2021-22 by a peer land-grant institution's office of international programs to evaluate our progress towards these targets.

### Faculty engagement

Measure	Target	Target attainment year
Number of funded seed grants	5 per year	2017
Number of first-time faculty recipients of seed grant funding (as PI or co-PI)	6 per year	2018
Number of seed grant applications from faculty teams	10 per year	2018
Number of different UTIA faculty and staff on seed grant applications	25 per year	2017
Direct financial support offered to faculty from OIP	\$60,000 per year	2018
Number of faculty provided with financial support from OIP funds (including seed grants)	20 per year	2018

### Student engagement

Measure	Target	Target attainment year
Number of CASNR students studying abroad	30% of graduating class	2019
Number of students graduating with IANR minor	30 per year	2022
Number of students receiving OIP funding support for international activities	20 per year	2019
Number of UTIA-organized, faculty-led study abroad opportunities	8 per year	2020
Number of students graduating with Peace Corps Prep certificate	20 per year	2022

Value of financial support provided by OIP to CASNR and CVM students to study abroad, or have other international experiences	\$15,000 per year	2022
Number of students supported to attend national and international conferences on international agriculture and natural resources	10 per year	2022
Number of international fellows and interns hosted as a direct result of OIP activities	10 per year	2019

### Project funding

Measure	Target	Target attainment year
Value of external funding secured (3-year average)	\$800,000 per year	2019
Number of externally-funded international projects in implementation phase	5 in progress per year	2018

### Raising international profile

Measure	Target	Target attainment year
Number of peer-reviewed journal articles published or co-authored by OIP	10 per year	2020
Number of non-peer-reviewed outreach pieces published by OIP or about programs run by/through OIP (e.g. news items)	20 per year	2018
Number of presentations (oral and poster) made at conferences (domestic and international) by OIP faculty and staff	10 per year	2019
Number of individual website views	500 per month	2019

### Data aggregation

Measure	Target	Target attainment year
Number of pieces of data (as identified in 5.5) aggregated	All five data pieces identified in 5.5 aggregated	2022

# 7 Appendix

## 7.1. International Advisory Council

### **Purpose**

The UTIA International Advisory Council (IAC) serves to advise and provide strategic planning support for UTIA OIP in international programs' activities across teaching, research and extension/outreach.

### **Structure**

The IAC is comprised of faculty members at UTIA who hold appointments in CASNR, CVM, AgResearch and/or UT Extension. There are 14 members of the IAC; 12 from CASNR/AgResearch/UT Extension and 2 from CVM. IAC members are appointed at the invitation of the UTIA Director for International Programs, and with the approval of each faculty member's department head.

### **Term lengths**

Initial members of the IAC participate for term lengths of one, two or three years, in order to stagger rotations off the committee. Terms may be renewed. A member leaving the IAC will work with the OIP to identify potential faculty from the same unit to rotate into the Council.

### **Meetings**

The IAC meets with the OIP twice per year, once in Fall and once in Spring semester.

## 7.2 UTIA Peer Institutions

The following is a list of US universities approved by the UTIA Board of Trustees as "peer institutions" for the institute:

Auburn University

Clemson University

Louisiana State University

Mississippi State University

Oklahoma State University

Rutgers University

University of Arkansas

University of Georgia

University of Kentucky

University of Maryland

University of Missouri

University of Nebraska

Virginia Tech