THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Dean of the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences

Leadership Profile

December 2025

WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of Arizona (U of A) invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean of the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences (CALES). This is a pivotal opportunity for a visionary and strategic leader to guide one of the nation's leading and most innovative agriculture, life, and environmental sciences colleges into its next era of excellence and impact.

A Carnegie R1 institution and member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the University of Arizona is recognized as a top-tier public land-grant research university, serving more than 56,000 students across a vibrant academic community. Located in Tucson, a culturally rich and dynamic borderlands city to Mexico, the university fosters cutting-edge scholarship, interdisciplinary collaboration, and artistic expression.

CALES is the heart of the University's land-grant mission, integrating research, teaching, and statewide engagement across agriculture, natural resources, animal sciences, human ecology, biosciences, and environmental sciences. Its programs—spanning fields from microbiology and biosystems engineering to nutrition, human development, and retailing—prepare students for careers in health, technology, conservation, and business through hands-on learning and research. With more than 4,100 students, 327 faculty, and 800 staff across 10 academic units, CALES spans five schools and five departments, managing over $98 million in annual research activity. Its reach includes Cooperative Extension, with offices in all 15 Arizona counties and services for 22 federally recognized tribes, as well as the Arizona Experiment Station, a statewide network of 11 research centers and 150,000 acres of rangeland. Together, these pillars deliver science-based solutions that strengthen Arizona's communities, economies, and ecosystems while informing global strategies for resilience in arid environments and advancing human well-being through equitable access to resources, opportunities, and evidence-based policy.

The next dean will provide bold, future-focused leadership to position CALES as a next-generation land-grant college that is deeply connected to communities statewide, nationally, and internationally. In alignment with the University's strategic imperatives, key priorities for the next dean include articulating a compelling vision that inspires faculty, staff, students, and partners to new levels of academic excellence and public value; modernizing curricula to enhance student success; advancing interdisciplinary research; and championing Cooperative Extension as a cornerstone of statewide impact. This includes implementing the Academic Success Goals through intentional engagement with each department and school within the college, while cultivating cross-functional collaboration with deans, senior leaders, and the Provost to set a transformative standard for student success.

The dean reports to the provost and chief academic officer and oversees a $145 million budget. This leader will serve as the public face of CALES, forging partnerships with industry, government, alumni, tribal communities, and other community stakeholders, and driving resource development through fundraising and advocacy. The role also requires a strong statewide presence, with regular engagement across county offices, tribal nations, and experiment stations to strengthen relationships and understand local needs firsthand. Success will require strategic vision, strong financial acumen, administrative and organizational leadership experience, and the ability to unify the college around shared purpose and innovation.

The ideal candidate will embody the University of Arizona's land-grant mission and commitment to serving the people of Arizona through teaching, research, extension, and community engagement. A doctoral degree and a distinguished record of excellence in teaching, research, and service are required for a tenured faculty appointment within the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences at the rank of full professor.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Role of the Dean of the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences

Reporting to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Patricia Prelock, the dean is responsible for elevating College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences' mission by articulating a bold and dynamic strategic vision that positions the college at the forefront of the rapidly evolving research and academic landscape spanning from soil and plant sciences to biotechnology and wellness. As the college is the heart and foundation of the University of Arizona's land-grant mission, the next dean will provide clear and strategic direction, vision, and leadership for the college's academic schools, departments, programs, experiment station, and extension activities. The dean will also foster excellence in teaching and curricula development; student retention, progression and career placement; research scholarship and extramural funding; interdisciplinary, regional, national, and international initiatives; high quality faculty and staff recruitment, retention and professional development; stewardship of physical resources; and fundraising and engagement with donors, alumni, the legislature, and industry partners.

A key responsibility of the new dean is to reposition CALES at the center of the university's land-grant mission while strengthening connections among its three foundational pillars: the college, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension System (CES), and the Arizona Experiment Station (AES), to ensure the resilience and health of Arizona communities, people, environments, and economies locally, regionally, and globally.

The dean will nurture cross-campus collaborations to bolster research expenditures and ensure the sustained excellence of its high-impact research areas. The new leader will provide personnel oversight for the college through the recruitment, development, and evaluation of its world-class faculty and staff. As the external face of the college, the dean must be a skilled fundraiser, engaging external audiences such as alumni, legislators, state and federal agencies, industry partners, and community constituents, regularly representing the University of Arizona in important discussions relating to agronomic, economic, environmental, and social policy issues. Because CALES operates across all 15 counties and in partnership with 22 federally recognized tribes, the dean must bring substantial experience with the land-grant system, including Cooperative Extension and county- and tribal-based engagement, and an understanding of how faculty and staff work within rural, tribal, and federally managed communities. Given the oversight of a $145M budget and extensive facilities, the successful candidate will have executive-level fiscal management experience and assume a critical role as steward of the college's diverse sources of support. The dean will also be a transparent communicator, an excellent relationship builder, and a leader who energetically pursues opportunities to be a driver in Arizona's economy and a top enterprise in 21st century agriculture, life sciences, and commerce. This includes leading the college through a period of

transition, restoring stability, strengthening retention, and cultivating a culture of respect, clarity, and shared purpose across the statewide enterprise.

With more than 4,100 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in CALES across 10 academic units and 20 undergraduate and 32 graduate programs, the college is home to 327 faculty (159 tenure track and 102 career track) and 800 staff. Additionally, 46 faculty members serve as Cooperative Extension agents/specialists.

The dean also supervises an executive leadership team comprised of three Associate Deans, three Assistant Deans, five academic school directors, five department heads, a Cooperative Extension director, and an Experiment Station director, along with the multiple facilities associated with the college. An organizational chart for CALES can be found in Appendix A.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next dean of the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences will provide visionary leadership for a college that is central to the University of Arizona's land-grant mission and deeply connected to communities across the state. This is more than a chance to steward a strong legacy – it is an opportunity to lead boldly and define the next era of agricultural, environmental, and life sciences education at a flagship institution in the Southwest, where science in arid environments, applied economics, sustainability, and health and well-being inform solutions for a future worldwide. Working closely with the provost, senior university leadership, and a broad array of stakeholders, the next dean will engage with the following opportunities and challenges:

Articulate and Advance a Compelling Vision for CALES

CALES is at a pivotal moment. With a proud history of serving Arizona through research, teaching, and extension, the college now can renew its strategic direction in a time of evolving societal needs. The next dean will lead efforts to define and communicate a bold, forward-looking vision that positions CALES as a next-generation land-grant college—one that integrates cutting-edge research, modernized curricula, and statewide engagement to advance innovations in arid-land agriculture, biotechnology, human wellness, natural resource stewardship, and the economic and social dimensions of sustainable communities. This vision must inspire faculty, staff, students, and external partners while aligning with the University's strategic priorities and leveraging CALES' unique strengths. The University of Arizona's location and CALES' work are uniquely significant to the future of agriculture and sustainable food systems, as arid lands cover more than a third of the Earth, produce 60% of the world's food, and sustain some of the fastest-growing populations. Solutions developed by CALES researchers for Arizona's $30.9 billion agriculture industry can positively impact food production in drying regions worldwide, giving the next dean a platform for global impact. This moment calls for an adaptive leader who embraces change, questions legacy approaches, and accelerates modernization across programs and operations to meet evolving student, workforce, and research needs.

Shape Innovative Programs and Enhance Student Success

As the next dean works in partnership with faculty and staff to create a compelling vision for CALES, it will be a timely moment to shape innovative programs, expand experiential and applied learning, and refocus academic offerings to meet evolving workforce, industry, and community needs. Additional critical priorities include curriculum renewal, fostering innovation in teaching, and bolstering support for both undergraduate and graduate student engagement and success. The dean will lead efforts to strengthen student recruitment pathways—particularly among rural and agricultural communities—and ensure that CALES graduates are prepared for leadership in a rapidly changing economy. A critical priority will be reversing the loss of Arizona students—particularly in production agriculture and applied fields—to out-of-state institutions by strengthening recruitment pathways, enhancing program visibility, and aligning degree programs with contemporary industry expectations.

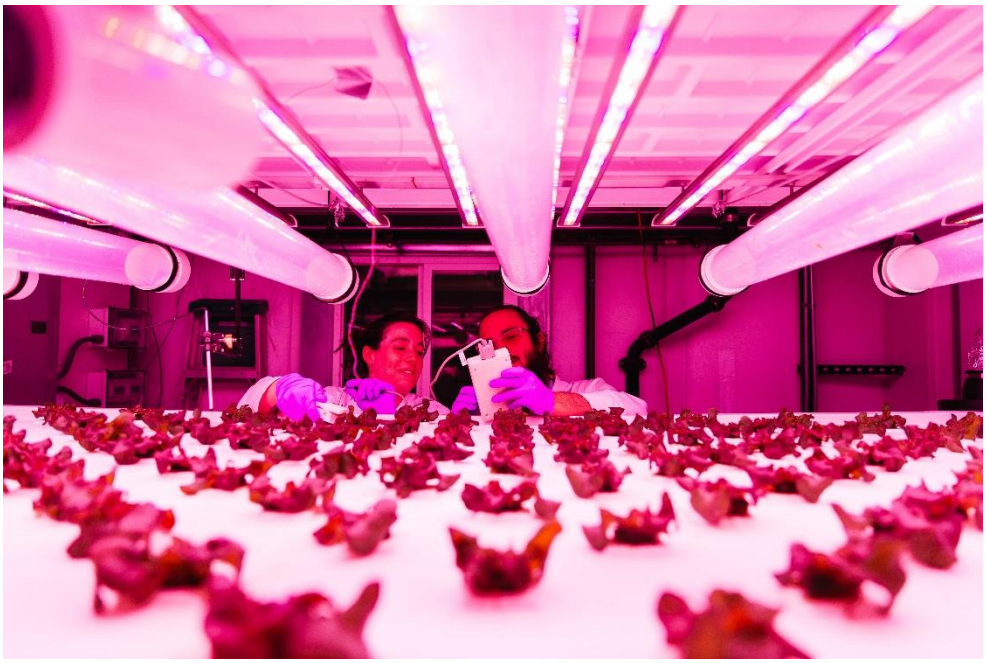
Champion the Land-Grant Mission and Elevate Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension is a cornerstone of CALES and a vital link to Arizona's communities. The next dean must embrace and advocate for Cooperative Extension's recently released strategic positioning framework that is grounded in needs identified by thousands of Arizonans and zeroes in on what matters most to the state: water, education, family well-being, drought resilience, and smart, efficient production agriculture. With the largest tribal extension program in the nation and a presence in all of Arizona's 15 counties, extension programs have been woven into communities statewide for over a century and Cooperative Extension is poised to shape what the next hundred years look like. The dean will play a critical role in strengthening the integration of research, teaching, and extension to ensure these pillars work synergistically to advance the mission of CALES and Cooperative Extension. The dean must also advocate for Extension's unique funding structure, strengthen relationships with county governments and tribal partners, and ensure that university policies account for the needs of faculty and staff whose work is embedded in communities statewide.

Generate New Resources and Serve as a Spokesperson for CALES

The college has made significant strides in elevating its visibility and telling its story, and now is the time to take it to the next level. As traditional university funding sources are shifting, fundraising and external partnerships will be essential to sustaining and growing programs. The next dean will serve as the public face of CALES, building relationships with legislators, industry leaders, alumni, and community partners across Arizona and beyond, developing relationships that lead to transformative philanthropic investments. This role requires political acumen, exceptional communication skills, and a commitment to advocacy. By elevating CALES' profile nationally and internationally, the dean can attract new partnerships, research opportunities, and philanthropic support, reinforcing the college's reputation as a leader in addressing the challenges of the desert Southwest and the world. The next dean must be prepared to navigate challenging fiscal realities, pursue public–private partnerships, and work closely with state and federal stakeholders to secure the support needed to stabilize and grow essential programs.

Recruit, Develop, and Retain Exceptional Faculty, Staff, and Leaders



CALES' faculty and staff are at the heart of its success, and the next dean must be a champion for attracting, developing, and retaining top-tier talent. The CALES faculty, staff, and extension personnel benefit from a diverse range of expertise, but opportunities to enhance recruitment, retention, and resource allocation are ever-present. The dean will be responsible for advocating for competitive salaries; ensuring that all faculty have the support necessary to excel in teaching, research, and applied practice; and strengthening faculty and staff mentorship programs. It will be imperative that the next dean foster a culture of collaboration, active listening, clarity in decision-making, professional growth, and

valuing contributions from all members of the CALES community statewide. Creating an environment where people feel respected, supported, and inspired will be essential to advancing CALES' mission and retaining talent.

Advance CALES' Financial Health and Capacity

Ensuring CALES' long-term vitality will require strategic leadership in resource development and infrastructure renewal. The next dean will oversee a complex financial landscape and must advocate effectively within the university while pursuing creative strategies to secure resources. This includes strengthening philanthropic support, cultivating corporate partnerships, and expanding grant funding to advance research, teaching, and outreach. The ability to create a plan for facilities upgrades will be critical to support program growth and innovation. With a number of retirements pending, the dean will create a compelling need to rebuild tenure-track strength while supporting career-track faculty who are integral to delivering undergraduate instruction. By taking a proactive approach to financial sustainability and academic investment, the dean will play a critical role in positioning CALES for the future—modernizing infrastructure, expanding faculty excellence, and ensuring the college remains a leader in agriculture, life sciences, and environmental education.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The ideal candidate will embody the University of Arizona's land-grant mission and commitment to serving the people of Arizona through teaching, research, extension, and community engagement. A doctoral degree and a distinguished record of excellence in teaching, research, extension, and service are required for a tenured faculty appointment within the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences at the rank of full professor.

- **Vision and Strategic Planning**: Ability to lead the development and implementation of a bold, future-focused strategic plan that advances the mission of CALES as a land-grant college, strengthens teaching, research, and extension, and positions the college as a vital partner to Arizona's communities and industries.
- **Leadership:** Proven record as an academic leader—such as department head, associate dean, institute director, or other senior administrator—with experience fostering collaboration, empowering teams, and championing faculty and staff across tenure-track and career-track roles.
- **Management:** Demonstrated success managing complex organizations, including faculty and staff; ability to delegate effectively, inspire creativity, and create an environment where individuals and teams thrive. Skilled at making and communicating tough decisions with transparency, diplomacy, and respect.
- **Exemplary Communication Skills:** Exceptional ability to communicate clearly and persuasively with internal and external audiences; a collaborative style that builds trust; and a commitment to active listening and integrating diverse perspectives.
- **Conflict Management:** Demonstrated ability to communicate with transparency and consistency; to listen actively; to manage conflict with steadiness and respect; and to build trust across faculty, staff, students, and statewide partners.
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Proven experience engaging with diverse stakeholders, including agricultural producers, rural health partners, alumni, donors, and community organizations throughout Arizona.
- **Shared Governance:** Commitment to participatory leadership—collaborative decision-making, active listening, and empowering faculty and staff.
- **Financial Acumen:** Experience managing complex budgets with transparency and strategic foresight; ability to navigate financial constraints while aligning resources with priorities.

- **Fundraising and External Engagement:** Proven ability to build and sustain strong external partnerships, expand donor bases beyond traditional sectors, and secure significant philanthropic support to advance the college's mission.
- **Collaboration:** Capacity to inspire collaboration across CALES' diverse programs and with stakeholders statewide, including agricultural producers, rural health partners, community organizations, alumni, and industry leaders.
- **Interdisciplinary Focus:** Ability to champion interdisciplinary work across teaching, research, and extension, and to build bridges with other colleges and units within the University of Arizona.
- **International Experience:** International engagement experience in research, teaching, or partnership development, with the capacity to extend CALES' global influence in arid-lands science, sustainability, and community well-being.
- **Student-Centered:** Unwavering commitment to student success, including innovative approaches to teaching, online and distance education, and career readiness for graduates across diverse fields.

About the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences

The roots of the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences run deep, beginning with the founding of the University of Arizona in 1885. Through its teaching, research, and Cooperative Extension programs, CALES faculty and staff translate science into real-world impact, serving all 15 Arizona counties, including tribal communities.

From devising novel technologies to nourish a growing population, to cultivating and connecting communities to foods that optimize lifelong wellness, CALES is committed to advancing sustainable consumer behavior, bridging social and financial disparities, and supporting natural ecosystems and wildlife in the face of a hotter, drier future.

Purpose and Promise

CALES scientists, educators, and students tackle the grand challenges facing Arizona and the world—advancing sustainable agriculture, protecting natural resources, strengthening communities, and improving lives.

Its promise: To integrate the agricultural, environmental, life, and human sciences to deliver world-class education, spark innovation, and provide science-based solutions that sustain Arizona's people, resources, and economies.

Growing a Sustainable Future

Of our 3,900 undergraduate and 250 graduate students, 71% are female, 30% are Hispanic, 2% are American Indian, and 32% are first gen. Sixty percent of our undergraduates are Arizona residents, and 7% are veterans or have military service. CALES empowers its students with the skills they need to be the next change agents in their communities through 20 undergraduate degrees and 32 graduate programs. Notable degree offerings include:

- B.S. in Veterinary Science (School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences)
- B.S. in Nutrition and Human Performance (School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness)
- B.S. and Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Science (Norton School of Human Ecology)
- B.S. in Agribusiness Economics and Management (Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics)
- B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in Natural Resources (School of Natural Resources and the Environment)
- B.S.E.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in Environmental Science (Department of Environmental Science)

CALES is a national leader in student-centered innovation. The college employs proactive “precision” advising as the core service, augmented with peer mentoring, whole-person wellness initiatives, a strong focus on career paths and career-skill development from a student’s first day on campus, and a wide array of first-year experiences. CALES programs build connection, purpose, and belonging, fostering a culture where every student can thrive and persist. The college’s 30,000+ strong alumni base has helped to provide $1 million in scholarships to CALES students each year. Its strong scholarship stewardship—annually awarding over 95% of available funds directly to students—and nationally recognized partnership with the SALT Center underscore the college’s commitment to access and equity. For graduate students, CALES is expanding professional development and mentorship to support career launch for the next generation of scholars and innovators.

To learn more about the academic program offerings, click here.

Why CALES?

- **A Chance to Lead Boldly:** The next dean of CALES will do more than steward a strong legacy. They will define the next era of agricultural, life, and environmental sciences education at a flagship institution in the Southwest, where work in arid environments and inequities in access and opportunity inform solutions for a sustainable future worldwide. This role offers the opportunity to shape innovative programs, expand experiential learning, and refocus academic offerings to meet evolving workforce and industry needs. The dean will also strengthen philanthropic support and corporate partnerships, leveraging resources to advance research, teaching, and outreach. From advancing sustainability and food systems to preparing the next generation of leaders in agriculture, life sciences, and natural resources, the dean will leave a lasting impact on students, communities, and the state of Arizona, with implications for global challenges.
- **What We Do Here Matters:** Arid lands produce 60% of the world’s food, represent more than a third of the Earth and are home to some of the world’s fastest-growing populations. The solutions developed and facilitated by CALES researchers for Arizona’s $30.9 billion agriculture industry can positively impact food production in drying regions worldwide, providing an opportunity for the next dean to have a global impact.
- **A Pivotal Moment for the College:** The University of Arizona has new senior leadership, with new institutional strategic imperatives and a major new investment from the Arizona Board of Regents to advance research. There is a critical opportunity for the next dean to shape the college’s future by leading with vision.
- **CALES is on the Rise:** The college has made significant strides in elevating its visibility and telling its story, and now is the time to take it to the next level.

Innovation and Interdisciplinary Excellence

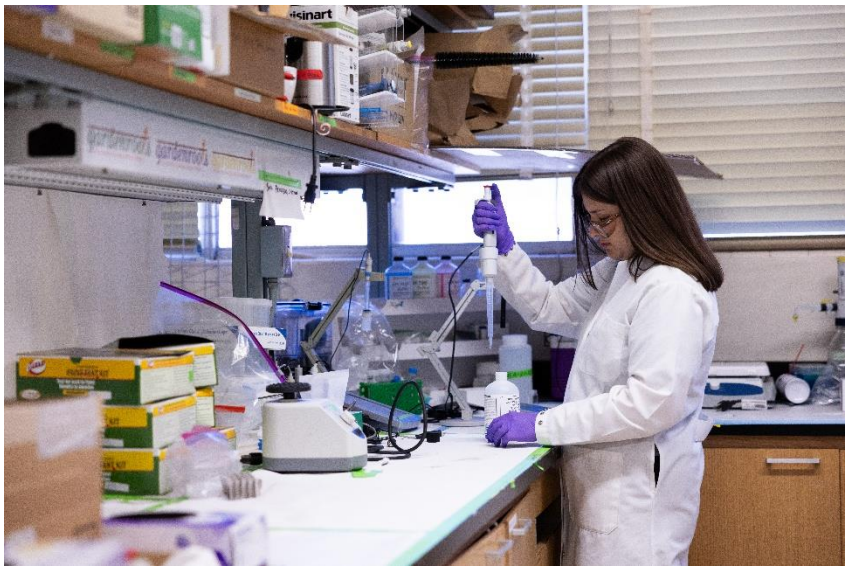
As early adopters of distance education, CALES is actively expanding modalities and access for non-traditional and place-based learners through new online and hybrid degree offerings that prepare students for the workforce. The college also offers more than 40 minors and certificates. Examples include:

- B.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics (offered both distance and online)
- B.A. in Applied Humanities, emphasis in Plant Studies (offered in collaboration with the College of Humanities)
- Minor in Personal and Family Financial Planning
- B.S. in Agricultural Systems Management (offered at University of Arizona Yuma)
- Graduate Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Entomology and Insect Science

Research in CALES

From the Earth's crust to outer space, the $98.3 million CALES research portfolio stretches from molecular biology to global change, and from family and developmental sciences to agroecosystem dynamics. The college hosts strong programs in soil and plant science, natural resource and wildlife management, applied economics, human development and family science, biotechnology, and human nutrition and wellness. Its research touches on nearly every aspect of modern life, and therefore it is truly a life sciences college, broadly defined. As such, it has played a pivotal role in Arizona's and the global economy and environment for more than a century.

CALES drives research excellence in areas essential to Arizona and globally—climate adaptation, food and water security, food systems, sustainable agriculture, and community resilience. College faculty lead and collaborate across campus in applying data science, social science, engineering, and AI tools to real-world problems. CALES Extension network and statewide research stations facilitate use-inspired research and its translation to communities. College faculty and staff partner with industry, Native Nations, and state agencies to advance science that shapes both policy and practice. While university priorities like space and fusion energy advance scientific frontiers, CALES integrates and extends these efforts by addressing how advances in these areas best support the land-grant mission, and how societies live sustainably and equitably in a rapidly changing world, turning knowledge into solutions. Notably, the five strategic research initiatives for the U of A now include “Environmental Systems, Arid Lands Agriculture and Water,” which is firmly in the CALES wheelhouse.



CALES has built a deep collaborative relationship with the Senior Vice President for Research’s Office of Research and Partnerships and is home to nine key research institutes, expanding opportunities for faculty and students to engage in collaborative, cross-disciplinary projects. These include the Center for Agroecosystem

Research in the Desert, the Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth and Families, Natural Resource Users Law and Policy Center, Take Charge America Institute for Consumer Financial Education and Research, Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing, Water Resources Research Center, Yuma Center of Excellence in Desert Agriculture, Controlled Environment Agriculture Center, and the Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory, a World Organization for Animal Health Reference Laboratory. CALES was also recently awarded funding to establish a new tri-university Arizona Hub for Agricultural Innovation.

As an economic engine for the sciences in Arizona, research expenditures in CALES are ca. 10% of the U of A (which comprises 20 colleges). Primary funding sources are USDA, NSF, NIH, DoD, State of Arizona and private industry. Hence, CALES research, which extends along a continuum from basic to applied in natural and social science and engineering fields, is at the heart of this premier land-grant university in the Southwest. It's for this reason that CALES is also a U of A leader in disclosures, patents and startups. While supportive of individual faculty programs across the wide disciplinary domain, the college also cultivates team science, as many of the grand challenges facing its region require a transdisciplinary approach. CALES faculty are national leaders on large grants including those funding NSF Science and Technology Centers, NIH Superfund Centers, and multi-institutional climate assessments, many of these pursued in collaboration with other U of A colleges or institutions worldwide.

World-Class Faculty

CALES is a diverse and dynamic academic community, home to top-tier faculty who are deeply invested in mentoring students and advancing knowledge in sustainable agriculture, applied economics, environmental science, public health, nutrition, family and human development, and more. They are the third-largest research contributor at the University of Arizona and play a major role in educating first-generation and female students in STEM.

Among the many honors, awards, recognitions and accomplishments—13 Fellows in the American Association for the Advancement of Science; a Member in the National Academy of Sciences, two Senior Members in the National Academy of Inventors, four Fulbright Scholars; Fellows in the American College of Sports Medicine, American Phytopathological Society, Entomological Society of America, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Linnean Society of London, Mycological Society of America, Royal Entomological Society, and Society for Range Management; and recipients of the Louis Malassis International Scientific Prize for Agriculture and Food and the Institute for Animal Health (UK) Director’s Award for Service.

Cooperative Extension: Engagement and Community Impact

With offices in all 15 counties and serving 22 federally recognized tribes, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension connects over 3,000 experts and volunteers with communities across the state, turning research into real-world solutions for agriculture, youth development, health, and natural resource management.

Every state dollar invested returns nearly $5 in economic impact, generating $18.4 million in federal funding and competitive grants, preventing $500 million in losses from foodborne illness, poor water management, and healthcare costs, and boosting $138.5 million in economic productivity. This infrastructure ensures Arizona families, farmers, and communities have the tools to thrive, while leveraging public investment for maximum statewide benefit.

Arizona Experiment Station

For more than 130 years, the Arizona Experiment Station has empowered scientists and served as a platform for community engagement, turning research in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and human wellness into solutions that strengthen Arizona communities and resources. Experiment Stations across the state provide an

essential platform for industry partnerships, Cooperative Extension research and engagement, and a living laboratory for students.

The Arizona Experiment Station's 11 locations and 150,000 acres span the geographic and biological diversity of Arizona. For example:

- **Campus Agricultural Center:** Proximity to Tucson's main campus provides opportunities for faculty to explore urban agriculture, human wellness, and biotechnology incubation.
- **Maricopa Agricultural Center:** Co-location with USDA-ARS Arid Land Agricultural Research Center and its size (2,100-acre research facility, 1,700 tillable acres, 15,000 ft greenhouse space, 24 research laboratories) provide for large-scale experimentation and industry collaboration.
- **Yuma Agricultural Center:** Serves an agricultural industry that contributes $3.2 billion to Arizona's economy annually and is responsible for over 90% of North American-grown leafy greens during the winter. Provides large-scale capacity for precision, high-data throughput research and development, launchpad for industry implementation and application testing.
- **Cyber Experiment Station:** Harnesses AI-assisted tooling, native and web application development, cloud computing, and data-pipelines to enable discovery and extend scientific reach and translation. The Cyber Experiment Station is the only one of its kind in the national Agricultural Experiment Station network, and its novel approach positions it to serve national clients, including LGU peers, governmental agencies and industry/corporate entities.
- "Arizona's Beef Triangle" links the **V-V Ranch, the Santa Rita Experimental Range, and the Food Product and Safety Lab** in Tucson, turning real-world rangelands into living laboratories. It combines herd

management, reproductive strategies including artificial insemination, and virtual fencing to track how cattle and rangeland ecosystems respond to management. The program follows animals through processing and state-of-the-art food-safety testing, enabling development of value-added beef products, quality assurance, and a full pasture-to-plate pipeline for healthier beef, smarter grazing, and safer food.

Arizona's Land-Grant in Action

The Arizona Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension are Arizona's core infrastructure for agricultural innovation, community resilience, and rural health transformation. For more than a century, they helped found and establish Arizona's agricultural industries, identifying which commodity crops could thrive in the desert, addressing emerging soil health and plant disease challenges, and managing natural resources, including grazing capacity and water use. They also supported communities through economic crises, including the Great Depression.

Today, their role is critical as Arizona faces prolonged drought, extreme heat, dwindling Colorado River water allocations, and widening health and economic pressures on Arizona families. Cooperative Extension connects research directly to farmers, families, and rural communities, improving health, nutrition, and economic resilience, while the Experiment Station drives the science and innovation needed to address AI, digital technologies, and evolving workforce demands. Sustaining and modernizing these systems ensures Arizona can adapt, innovate, and protect its economy, communities, natural resources, and rural health in the 21st century.

Cooperative Extension and the Arizona Experiment Station carry CALES faculty and students' impact far beyond campus, partnering with communities and industries statewide. The programs below are just a small sample of the hundreds underway.

- Working with vineyard operators and wine producers to provide tailored information to maximize yields and grape quality.
- Integrating Hopi agricultural wisdom to strengthen tribal communities' climate, food, and water security.
- Helping Colorado River Indian Tribes livestock growers improve productivity and our next generation develop STEM skills through 4-H.
- Extension's 4-H metalworking program in Coconino County and Arizona tribal communities teaches youth welding and blacksmithing, building practical career skills and confidence.
- Growing more with less—using plant phenology, advanced breeding, soil microbiomes, and precision irrigation in crops like cotton, lettuce, tepary beans, and guayule.
- Culturally grounded resources for San Carlos Apache caregivers to build literacy skills and early childhood development screenings for county youth.
- Combining disease diagnostics, grower-driven research, and broadband-enabled field trials to make Yuma a premier testbed for high-tech, sustainable desert agriculture.
- Field trials test Upland and Pima cotton varieties under local soil, heat, and water conditions to evaluate yield, fiber quality, and agronomic performance.
- State-wide food systems and seed-to-table projects support small-scale agriculture, help food-insecure populations access fresh food, and teach youth and families practical skills in growing and preparing their own food.
- Using community partnerships to boost food access and health in Cochise County—extension-led efforts have increased produce availability, cut food insecurity, and built local leadership to drive lasting change.

- In addition to statewide programs like the Diabetes Prevention Program, Extension's Family Resource Centers give families hands-on support right where they live—offering parenting education, early-literacy activities, nutrition classes, financial planning, and community resources under one roof. Together, they strengthen family resilience and promote healthier, more secure communities.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Our infrastructure footprint is extensive and mission-critical: nine campus buildings provide roughly 500,000 square feet of assignable space, complemented by another 500,000 square feet across the Arizona Experiment Station's eleven statewide sites. The Station also manages 122,000 acres of rangeland, 2,600 acres of irrigable land, and 76,600 square feet of greenhouse space—foundational assets for research, teaching, and community impact. The Food Product and Safety Laboratory, reopened in 2025 after a state-funded $10.9 million renovation—its first major upgrade since 1988—is a modern USDA-inspected processing facility that expands capacity for teaching, research, and service to the agricultural industry, directly complementing the Experiment Station's statewide mission.

Recent upgrades also show how modern facilities accelerate impact in other areas. A $5 million gift launched the Retail Collaborative in 2022, linking the Norton School of Human Ecology (CALES) and Eller College of Management's Marketing Department to advance consumer-behavior research supported by NielsenIQ analytics. The Lundgren Consumer Science Lab, opened in 2024, gives students hands-on exposure to end-to-end retail experiences, enhanced by digital twin and maker-space technologies developed with the School of Information and the University Center for Assessment, Teaching and Technology.

Other standout campus facilities further drive cutting-edge, cross-disciplinary work:

- The BIO5 Institute complex houses state-of-the-art labs, imaging and genomics cores, and nearly 400 researchers tackling challenges from health to agriculture.
- ENR2 (Environment & Natural Resources 2) is a LEED-Platinum hub for sustainability and environmental research, designed to foster collaboration, teaching, and community engagement.

- The CALES Ales brewhouse in the Student Union provides fermentation-science students hands-on experience in brewing, quality control, and product development.
- The Financial Planning Lab in the Norton School equips students with industry-standard tools to explore financial planning and FinTech applications.

These investments demonstrate what modern, well-supported facilities can achieve. At the same time, many Experiment Station buildings and research-support spaces remain decades old and functionally obsolete. Upgrading labs, field stations, greenhouses, and infrastructure across the system is essential to sustain Arizona's leadership in agricultural innovation, environmental resilience, public health, and community service.

Philanthropy, Alumni Engagement, and Fundraising Success

Philanthropic investment has been central to the college's ability to advance innovation, student success, and community impact while fulfilling its land-grant mission of access, service, and economic development. The College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences proudly counts among its more than 30,000 alumni many leaders and innovators across all areas of the bioeconomy. CALES continues to foster a thriving alumni community, strengthen engagement, and drive impactful contributions through dynamic initiatives such as Homecoming celebrations, reunions, webinars, videocasts, and regional events. CALES schools and departments offer diverse volunteer opportunities, including mentorship, classroom guest speaking, competition judging, recruiting, career placement support, advocacy, and corporate partnerships—creating a culture of shared purpose and collaboration. Alumni leadership groups such as the CALES Alumni Council Board of Directors, the Norton School Council of Alumni and Friends, and Ag 100, a dedicated advocacy group of alumni and agricultural leaders, amplify these efforts and champion the college's mission.

As part of the University of Arizona's $3 billion Fuel Wonder campaign, CALES has embraced an ambitious goal of $147 million and has already raised $131.2 million toward that vision. These contributions directly fund scholarships, faculty-driven research, and infrastructure improvements that will sustain the college's upward trajectory and global impact. Every engagement strategy is designed to cultivate long-term donor relationships, aligning outreach with alumni and philanthropic interests. The college prioritizes building strong stakeholder relationships while stewarding donors in close collaboration with the University of Arizona Foundation and initiatives such as Giving Day and the Fuel Wonder campaign.

CALES is prominently featured in the Fuel Wonder campaign as a driver of innovation and economic vitality, reflecting its transformative role in addressing pressing challenges and strategic priorities that define the college's leadership in solving global resource issues. Through continued philanthropic engagement, the next dean will inspire bold partnerships, expand the college's donor base, and champion a vision that ensures CALES remains at the forefront of discovery and impact while honoring its land-grant mission to serve communities and strengthen the state's agricultural and life sciences sectors.

About Arizona Agriculture, Biodiversity, and Environment

Arizona's agriculture and agribusiness industry is varied and dynamic. Agricultural production in the state ranges from Yuma County's highly specialized vegetable and melon industry cluster; to dairy production in central Arizona; to tribal agriculture concentrated in the northeast portion of the state. Roughly 35% (25.5 million acres) of the state's land area is in farms, including grazing lands. The state's agribusiness system not only involves farms and ranches, but also businesses working closely with agricultural producers to provide key inputs to production, specialized services, and delivering raw or processed products to final consumers. The wider economic footprint of agriculture and agribusiness involves economic activity supported indirectly in industries outside of agriculture and agribusiness that provide goods and services to businesses and households directly involved in agriculture and agribusiness.

Arizona Agriculture by the Numbers

Arizona agriculture and agribusiness supported a total of $30.9 billion in economic activity (sales) in 2022

- The direct contribution of agriculture and agribusiness industries includes $3.0 billion in sales by crop producing industries, $2.2 billion by livestock and livestock product industries, $672 million by agricultural support service industries (primarily farm labor contracting services), $1 billion by agricultural input suppliers, $10.9 billion by agricultural (food and fiber) processing industries, and $2.3 billion by agricultural and agribusiness distribution and marketing industries.

- Arizona's agricultural and agribusiness industries supported an additional $10.7 billion in sales in the state through multiplier effects. This includes $5.5 billion in indirect multiplier effects, business-to-business transactions supported by demand for inputs and services used in production of agricultural and agribusiness outputs, and $5.2 billion in induced multiplier effects, household-to-business transactions supported by individuals employed in agriculture and agribusiness spending their incomes on household expenditures in the state economy.

Arizona's agribusiness system directly and indirectly supported more than 126,000 full- and part-time jobs, employing more than 160,000 unique workers

- The agribusiness system supported $7.2 billion in labor income. This includes wages, salaries, and benefits paid to workers and income earned by business owners.

- Part of the agribusiness system's $7.2 billion labor income contribution included $3.3 billion in labor income supported in non-agribusiness industries. Through indirect and induced effects, spending by Arizona's agribusiness system supports labor income in non-agribusiness sectors of the economy. For example, as a result of agribusiness economic activity, nearly $135 million was paid as income to those employed by hospitals and physician offices, $66 million was paid to workers in retail food and beverage stores, and nearly $70 million was paid to those working in the real estate industry.

Farming in Arizona

- There are 16,710 farm operations in Arizona.

- Arizona farmers and ranchers manage $24.2 billion in farm assets (land, buildings, and machinery).

- The top 5% of farms account for 97% of total agricultural sales.

- The top 114 farms account for 75% of total agricultural sales.

- Arizona's three top producing counties – Maricopa, Pinal, and Yuma – account for 81% of Arizona's agricultural sales. These same three counties ranked in the top 1% among all U.S. counties in total agricultural sales.

- 89% of Arizona farms are operated by families, individuals, or partnerships.

- Arizona has the highest percent of female agricultural producers in the country, at 48%.

- Arizona also has the highest share of Native American and Alaska Native producers in the country, at 56%.

About the University of Arizona

Overview

As Arizona's land-grant university and federally designated Hispanic Service Institution (HSI) since 2018, we are driven to do great things. It's our passion to transform the lives of our student Wildcats and to solve some of the biggest challenges facing our state and the world.

But what makes us unique is how we do it. We live our purpose, mission and values every day. And we do this in one of the most incredible places on Earth, surrounded by majestic mountains and Saguaro forests, and under a sky that ignites imaginations with cotton candy sunsets and diamond-filled nights. At the University of Arizona, everywhere you look is filled with wonder.

Purpose

Working together to expand human potential, explore new horizons and enrich life for all.

Mission

We will continuously improve how we educate and innovate so we can lead the way in developing adaptive problem solvers capable of tackling our greatest challenges.

Leadership

Suresh Garimella, President

Suresh Garimella serves as the 23rd president of the University of Arizona and University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, positions he assumed on October 1, 2024. He was unanimously appointed by the Arizona Board of Regents following a robust national search. On selecting Garimella to lead the university, Board Chair Cecilia Mata praised his collaborative leadership, experience, and vision, calling him a "tireless champion for students" who is well suited to lead the university into a bright future.

Previously, he was president of the University of Vermont (UVM) from 2019 to 2024. Under his leadership, the university underscored its reputation as a premier flagship research university dedicated to providing a world-class student experience and committed to fulfilling its land-grant mission, a focus he brings to the U of A as well.

Throughout his career, Garimella has emphasized the importance of access and affordability for students, and he has worked to promote excellence in the student learning experience. A professor of mechanical engineering, he is both a highly cited scholar and researcher and a passionate educator, mentoring over 90 graduate students and 50 post-doctoral scholars, 29 of whom were placed in prestigious faculty positions across the world. During his tenure as UVM's president, he led an annual undergraduate seminar class devoted to engaging students in civil discourse on multifaceted contemporary issues.

As a researcher, Garimella has made seminal contributions to the field of electronics thermal management and energy efficiency at micro and nano scales, and in sustainable energy systems technology and policy. He is co-author of over 625 refereed publications and 16 issued patents, and he has been recognized as an elected Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Garimella also has made important contributions in national and international policy matters. He serves as a member of the National Science Board, which oversees the National Science Foundation and acts as an independent body of advisers to both the President and Congress on policy matters related to science and engineering. He also chairs the research advisory board of Sandia National Laboratories, is a member of the board of directors at Modine and the executive committee for the Council on Competitiveness and previously served as a Jefferson Science Fellow at the U.S. Department of State and as Senior Fellow for Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas.

Prior to his time leading the University of Vermont, President Garimella served at Purdue University as the Goodson Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Executive Vice President for Research and Partnerships. Under his leadership of Purdue's $660 million research enterprise, the university achieved five consecutive record years in sponsored funding and seeded approximately 50 startups annually. He developed strategic and comprehensive partnerships with major corporations, NGOs, and national governments in Colombia, India, and the Middle East, conceived and implemented ambitious campuswide initiatives in life sciences and integrative data science, and oversaw Purdue's Discovery Park, a unique set of facilities and institutes where the convergence of disciplines helped solve global challenges related to health and life sciences, sustainability, food, energy, and defense and security.

His educational background includes a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, an M.S. from The Ohio State University, and a bachelor's degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.

Patricia Prelock, Provost and Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Patricia A. Prelock is the Provost and Chief Academic Officer at the University of Arizona. Provost Prelock oversees all colleges and academic programs; faculty affairs; student affairs; libraries; Arizona International; Online Initiatives; assessment, teaching and learning; enrollment management; and student support services.

Prior to joining the U of A in May 2025, Dr. Prelock served as Interim President at the University of Vermont during the 2024-2025 academic year. Her extensive leadership experience includes over five years as Provost and Senior Vice President, ten years as Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and over seven years chairing the Communication Sciences and Disorders department.

Dr. Prelock is a highly accomplished leader, scientist, scholar, and clinical speech-language pathologist. She is an internationally recognized expert in the nature and treatment of autism in children, interprofessional education (IPE) and collaborative practice, and family-centered care. She has authored over 220 publications and over 600 peer-reviewed and invited presentations/keynotes in the areas of autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities, collaboration, IPE, leadership, and language learning disabilities. As a PI or Co-PI she has garnered more than $25 million in university, state, and federal funding to develop innovations in interdisciplinary training supporting children and youth with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families, to facilitate training in speech-language pathology and to support her intervention work in autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Dr. Prelock received her B.S. in speech pathology & audiology and a M.A. in speech pathology from Kent State University and her Ph.D. in speech-language pathology from the University of Pittsburgh. She is also an Emerita Professor of Communication Sciences & Disorders and former Professor of Pediatrics in the College of Medicine at the University of Vermont.

Tucson, Arizona

Tucson is a vibrant multicultural city located in the southwest of the United States. The city is known for exceptional opportunities for year-round outdoor activities, and exciting cultural offerings.

Tucson has been continuously settled for more than 12,000 years, and is the ancestral home to the Tohono O'odham and Pascua Yaqui peoples. It is one of the "Mega-Trend" cities of the 21st century known for its Optics Valley, premier health services center for the Southwest, the astronomy center of the world, home to a premier research institution, U of A, and a tourism destination.

Historically, the state economy was based on five key industries; cattle, cotton, copper, citrus and climate. While each of these industries remains central to the economy of Arizona, growth in Tucson is now centered on aerospace, transportation and logistics, manufacturing, health care, and leisure and hospitality.

The greater Tucson area serves 35 million people within a 500-mile radius. Its geographic proximity to Phoenix, Mexico, California and other major markets on the West Coast has made it an economic epicenter. Approximately 35% of Tucson's population is Hispanic and the Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce serves a primary role in ushering trade on both sides of the border, recognizing the Hispanic market is the fastest growing ethnic segment in the country.

Tucson was rated a "mini-mecca for the arts" by the *Wall Street Journal*. Tucson is one of a select few cities of its size that boasts its own ballet company, professional theater, symphony, and opera company. The city's natural history and cultural heritage are also on display in more than 30 regional museums.

Tucson is situated in the Sonoran Desert and is surrounded by five mountain ranges. A trip from the valley floor to the 9,157-foot Mt. Lemmon summit traverses seven of the world's nine life zones. The city lies between Catalina State Park to the North, Coronado National Forest to the Northwest, Saguaro National Park to the East and West and the Tohono O'odham Nation to the South.

Tucson is the perfect place for the outdoor enthusiast. With more than 800 miles of bike paths, Tucson has been ranked by Bicycling magazine as one of the top cycling cities in the U.S. for several years running and is home to internationally known bicycling events such as El Tour de Tucson. Golf is another popular activity with dozens of regional golf courses.

All the exercise options are a great advantage considering that Tucson is a "foodie" destination. It was recently dubbed our nation's first City of Gastronomy by the U.N.'s Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) as part of its Creative Cities Network.

Additional information on Tucson is available here.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Arizona in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by February 16, 2026.

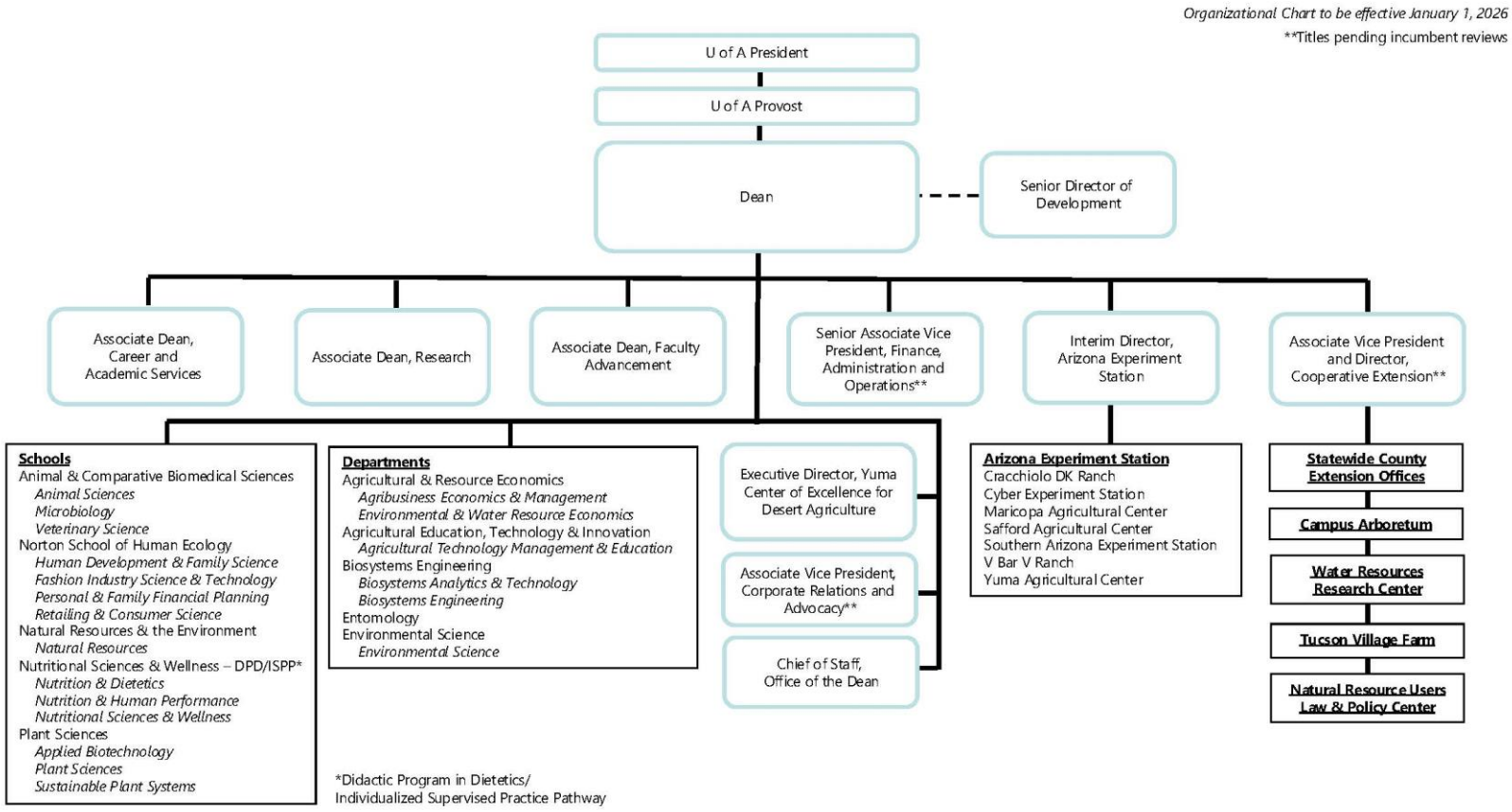
Nominations, inquiries, and application materials can be directed to:

Jen Meyers Pickard, Ph.D., Jessica Herrington, and Jess Cummings

UofADeanCALES@wittkieffer.com

The University of Arizona is an equal opportunity, affirmative action (qualified veterans/people with disabilities) institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information in its programs and activities. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. As required by Title IX, the University of Arizona does not discriminate based on sex in its educational programs or activities, including in admission and employment. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator or to the U.S. Department of Education, Assistant Secretary, or both.

Appendix A


Organizational Chart to be effective January 1, 2026
**Titles pending incumbent reviews
U of A President
U of A Provost
Dean
Senior Director of Development
Associate Dean, Career and Academic Services
Associate Dean, Research
Associate Dean, Faculty Advancement
Senior Associate Vice President, Finance, Administration and Operations**
Interim Director, Arizona Experiment Station
Associate Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension**
Schools
Animal & Comparative Biomedical Sciences
Animal Sciences
Microbiology
Veterinary Science
Norton School of Human Ecology
Human Development & Family Science
Fashion Industry Science & Technology
Personal & Family Financial Planning
Retailing & Consumer Science
Natural Resources & the Environment
Natural Resources
Nutritional Sciences & Wellness – DPD/ISPP*
Nutrition & Dietetics
Nutrition & Human Performance
Nutritional Sciences & Wellness
Plant Sciences
Applied Biotechnology
Plant Sciences
Sustainable Plant Systems
Departments
Agricultural & Resource Economics
Agribusiness Economics & Management
Environmental & Water Resource Economics
Agricultural Education, Technology & Innovation
Agricultural Technology Management & Education
Biosystems Engineering
Biosystems Analytics & Technology
Biosystems Engineering
Entomology
Environmental Science
Environmental Science
Executive Director, Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture
Associate Vice President, Corporate Relations and Advocacy**
Chief of Staff, Office of the Dean
Arizona Experiment Station
Cracchiolo DK Ranch
Cyber Experiment Station
Maricopa Agricultural Center
Safford Agricultural Center
Southern Arizona Experiment Station
V Bar V Ranch
Yuma Agricultural Center
Statewide County Extension Offices
Campus Arboretum
Water Resources Research Center
Tucson Village Farm
Natural Resource Users Law & Policy Center
*Didactic Program in Dietetics/ Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway