Dennis Dean  
University Distinguished Professor, Stroobants Professor of Biotechnology, and Director of the Fralin Life Science Institute and the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute

MISSION STATEMENT

To strategically invest in targeted research areas within the life sciences. Such investments will include recruitment and set-up support for new faculty, retention and recognition of established faculty, seed funds for new research projects, equipment purchases, graduate student recruitment and support, undergraduate research support, and support for outreach activities. Existing research initiatives within the life sciences that will receive the highest priority for support are vector-borne disease, molecular plant sciences, infectious disease, obesity and inflammation, and cell biology. The Fralin Life Science Institute will be actively engaged in cooperative partnerships with colleges, departments, and other institutes that also support the life science community.

Goals and Objectives Achieved for FY 2012

- Fully implement the “Principal Scientist” model for the Fralin Flagship Facilities (Latham, LS1, and ILSB) to maximize effectiveness of investments and administration of the buildings.
  
  **Goal Accomplishment:** A Principal Scientist in each of the flagship life science buildings (ILSB, LS1, and Latham Hall) was appointed and funds were given for the upkeep and acquisition of shared facilities, equipment, and programs within the buildings ($125,000 to Latham and LS1, $150,000 to ILSB). Funds were used by these facilities for equipment purchase, upgrades, and preventative maintenance and for fostering community and collaboration within the buildings. Problems appear to have been remedied using this model and morale in the buildings is high.

- Effectively communicate the mission, goals, and accomplishments of the Institute.
  
  **Goal Accomplishment:** Towards the end of FY 2011, a communications officer was hired and she competently instituted a communications plan throughout the Institute. A communications assistant was hired on a part-time basis and a communications plan was developed. The Fralin Life Science Institute’s website was revamped, numerous articles were published on faculty and student research, and the Institute participated in a number of outreach events (Arlington opening, Hokie Bugfest, and the University Open House). Individual and Center webpages for Fralin faculty, a newsletter, and a social media strategy were developed and implemented.

- Invest in the growth of targeted areas, particularly obesity and microbial research, by continuing to work cooperatively with other institutes and colleges to establish dynamic research teams.
  
  **Goal Accomplishment:** $174,000 was awarded in FY 2012 to support obesity-related needs, including research support (graduate and undergraduate), faculty retention and startup, and bringing speakers to campus. Microbiology support ($140,339) included graduate student and postdoctoral student support and research support (graduate and undergraduate).

- Develop and institute the Drug Discovery Center.
  
  **Goal Accomplishment:** The Virginia Tech Center for Drug Discovery (VTCDD) is an interdisciplinary group committed to growing and advancing the stature of the existing drug discovery and development programs at Virginia Tech. VTCDD was formed by Virginia Tech researchers who are leaders in the drug discovery and delivery area, having more than $29 million in research support. Under the VTCDD, members are able to coordinate and strengthen programs, share resources, and position themselves for new funding opportunities.

Challenges and Opportunities

As Dennis Dean continues to head both the Fralin Life Science Institute and the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute (VBI), there will be a number of challenges and opportunities for Fralin to collaborate with VBI and potentially becoming more efficacious and deliver better services to the life science community.
Additional Accomplishments

◆ Assist with purchase of shared equipment and maintenance contracts: $366,000 was given to 9 faculty members to purchase new equipment to support research activities and to purchase maintenance agreements to keep equipment running at its peak level. This equipment was used to foster preliminary data so that faculty would be more competitive in extramural funding competitions. All equipment is available to the wider Virginia Tech community for use.

◆ Facilitate graduate and undergraduate research education: Fralin directly supported three graduate students, two from biology and one from FST, with tuition and assistantship support ($32,285) during the 2011-2012 school year. $100,000 was given to the Graduate School to support the MPS IGEP. This money supports four graduate students. Forty-one undergraduate students, researching topics such as disease ecology, cancer, obesity, and tissue engineering, were supported during the summer of 2012 through the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program. In conjunction with Novozymes, the Fralin Life Science Institute also supported five Virginia Tech science and business undergraduate students to participate in a summer internship to develop and conduct market analyses on new products.

◆ Hire a Facilities Coordinator to facilitate capital and/or renovation project planning: Oliver Hirt was hired in April 2012 as Facilities Coordinator for the Fralin Life Science Institute to assist in any capital or renovation projects within the life science community. Hirt will assist in planning and estimating the cost of these projects.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
for FY 2013

Continue to support flagship buildings to increase research output within the life science community. Help to plan for equipment upgrade needs for the life science community and use resources to facilitate implementation of this plan.

Expand communications portfolio, making the Fralin website and social networking sites the “go to” place for life science information on campus.

Work in conjunction with VBI to offer services to the life science community campus-wide.