

An aerial photograph of a vast agricultural landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by a grid of rectangular fields in various shades of green, brown, and grey, indicating different crops and stages of cultivation. In the background, rolling hills and mountains are visible under a clear blue sky. A white rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text 'AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE'.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

STRATEGIC PLAN | 2019–2022

ARI STAKEHOLDERS:

Since its inception in 1999, the Agricultural Research Institute has been helping solve challenges and build opportunity for California's agricultural community while cultivating students as the next generation of agriculture professionals. While our efforts to date have been substantive, in 2018, the ARI initiated a strategic planning process designed to build on previous success and to leverage the power of the California State University system to take the organization to a new level of effectiveness and reach.

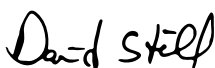
At its core, strategic planning is about answering three basic questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? And, most importantly, how do we get there?

We brought together a planning team to lend their time and expertise and agreed upon a comprehensive process designed to create the strategic plan. You can learn more about the process and read the entire plan in the following pages.

The key elements of this plan include mission, vision, values and strategic priorities. It is the intention of the strategic planning team that these elements hold true for the duration of the plan, which will span from 2019–2022. Assessments and action plans will be reviewed annually and adjusted as warranted.

The strategic plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for the ARI, Board of Governors, Deans' Council, Logistics Group and others whom are critical to helping the ARI achieve its new vision — to be a leading catalyst for timely, applied research and student development making California's agriculture, natural resources and food systems more resilient and sustainable.

By working together, we can make this vision a reality.



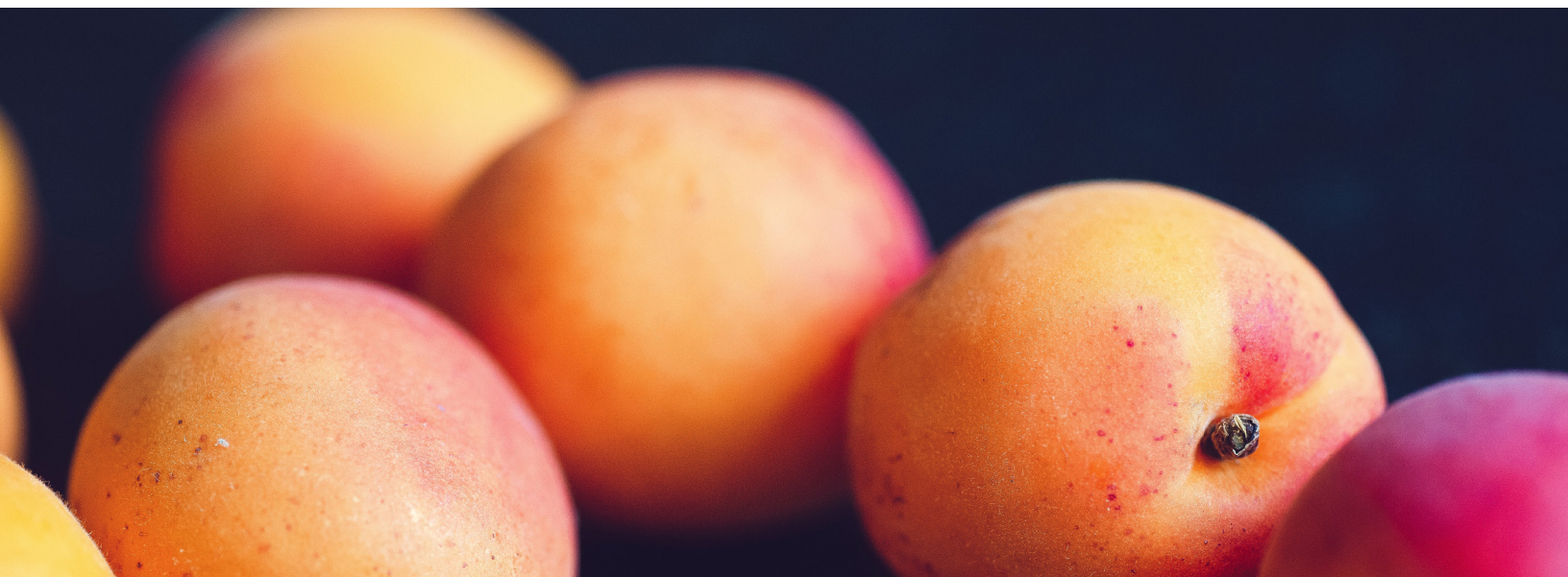
David Still
Executive Director
Agricultural Research Institute



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

A comprehensive strategic planning process, facilitated by Nuffer, Smith, Tucker, was used to develop the plan. The process was designed to garner input from a variety of stakeholder groups that included industry and ARI-supported campuses, including leadership and faculty. The planning process included:

- **One-on-one interviews with leaders in California agriculture** — Interviewees were selected by our strategic planning partner, Nuffer, Smith, Tucker, to provide qualitative input about the awareness level of the ARI, perceptions of the ARI and guidance on how the ARI can better serve industry. Interviewees represented various sectors of production agriculture and leaders of commodity and trade groups.
- **One-on-one interviews with the strategic planning team** — The planning team was interviewed to gather input on strengths and weaknesses of the ARI as well as external threats and opportunities. Input was also garnered on mission, vision, values and areas of focus to achieve the vision.
- **Electronic survey of logistic group members and faculty** — As implementers and end-user of the ARI program, an electronic survey was sent to these important groups. Input was solicited on similar topic areas as those discussed during one-on-one interviews.
- **Strategic planning meeting and development of draft plan** — Information from the interviews and surveys was used as the foundation for a strategic planning meeting held in July 2018. At the meeting, the group came to consensus on key areas of the plan and key actions. Working closely with ARI leadership, Nuffer, Smith, Tucker, refined the plan — based on direction at the meeting — before presenting a draft back to the planning team and other stakeholders.
- **Review and refinement of draft plan by logistics group, faculty and campus stakeholders** — Campus stakeholders had multiple opportunities to review a draft plan and provide feedback. Drafts were circulated via email, followed by separate discussion and feedback sessions led by Nuffer, Smith, Tucker, with the Deans' Council, Logistics Group and faculty attending the annual PI meeting in Sacramento in September 2018. Based on this feedback, adjustments were made to the plan.
- **Approval of final plan by Board of Governors** — The plan was formally presented and approved by the Board of Governors via a Zoom Conference meeting in December 2018.



STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Members of the strategic planning team were carefully chosen by the ARI to represent each ARI campus* and obtain perspectives at each level of the organization, defined below. Planning team members included:

Board of Governors

JEFF ARMSTRONG, President — Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

GLENDA HUMISTON, Vice President — University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

GAYLE HUTCHINSON, President — California State University, Chico

A.G. KAWAMURA, Grower/Shipper — Orange County Produce

GREGG KELLEY, President and CEO — California Olive Ranch, Inc.

EDUARDO OCHOA, President — California State University, Monterey Bay

DONN ZEA, Executive Director — California Dried Plum Board

ARI Staff

DAVID STILL, Executive Director — Agricultural Research Institute

Deans' Council and Logistics Group

LISA KESSLER, Interim Dean for the Don B. Huntley College of Agriculture — Cal Poly Pomona

JIM PRINCE, Campus Coordinator and Associate Dean for the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences — Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

JOHN UNRUH, Campus Coordinator and Dean for the College of Agriculture — California State University, Chico

Other Stakeholders

JOHN BUSHOVEN, Chair for the Department of Plant Sciences — California State University, Fresno

DAN DOOLEY, Principal — New Current Water and Land, LLC.

* *The Power of the CSU system: While this plan draws heavily from the input from ARI supported campuses, it is the intention of ARI to engage the full CSU system both in research and in driving the organization toward achieving its vision.*

ARI GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Board of Governors

Consists of four CSU presidents and an industry representative from the ARI Member campuses (Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly SLO, Chico State, and Fresno State), presidents from ARI Associate Member campuses (Humboldt State University and Cal State Monterey Bay) and the University of California Vice President for the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Deans' Council

The Council consists of the deans of the four ARI Member colleges of agriculture and the deans from Associate Member campuses, College of Natural Resources & Sciences at Humboldt State and the College of Science at Cal State Monterey Bay.

Logistics Group

Consists of Campus Coordinators who are responsible for campus daily administration and research project oversight for ARI.

STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

Key elements of the plan include a new vision and mission statement, the addition of ARI values that will drive decisions made within the organization, and setting S.M.A.R.T.* strategic priorities.

MISSION Enable applied research — through the power of the California State University (CSU) system — that benefits California agriculture, natural resources and food systems while cultivating the next generation of agricultural leaders.

VISION The Agricultural Research Institute will be a leading catalyst for timely, applied research and student development making California's agriculture, natural resources and food systems more resilient and sustainable.

VALUES ARI values reflect an emphasis on innovation, collaboration, engagement, scientific integrity, accountability, and diversity and inclusion.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Set research focus areas and align the organization — including its processes — to support those focus areas and the vision.
2. Communicate with and engage key stakeholder groups in collaborative strategies supporting the vision.
3. Develop and implement long-term sustainable funding and faculty capacity strategies.

* *S.M.A.R.T. Objectives and Assessments: The ARI believes strongly in measuring success via S.M.A.R.T objectives — specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound measures of success. However, at the time this report is being developed, the organization has extremely limited data to serve as a baseline from which S.M.A.R.T objectives can be made. What's more, the process of collecting such data may take several months to a full year. Thus, the ARI will perform numerous "Assessments" in year one of this plan. After the first year, objectives will be made for future years that meet the S.M.A.R.T criteria.*

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Mission: The organization's core business

Vision: Destination we are working toward

Values: Principles to drive decisions

Strategic Priorities: Areas of focus to achieve the vision

Actions: Activities that will be completed annually

USING THE PLAN

The strategic plan is designed to provide direction, and activities of ARI should be measured against this plan.

Mission, vision, values and strategic priorities are intended to span from 2019–2022, while actions and assessments/ S.M.A.R.T. objectives should be reviewed annually.



MISSION: Enable applied research — through the power of the California State University (CSU) system — that benefits California agriculture, natural resources and food systems while cultivating the next generation of agricultural leaders.

**THE ORGANIZATION'S
CORE BUSINESS**

VISION: The Agricultural Research Institute will be a leading catalyst for timely, applied research and student development making California's agriculture, natural resources and food systems more resilient and sustainable.

**DESTINATION WE ARE
WORKING TOWARD**

VALUES:

**PRINCIPLES TO DRIVE
DECISIONS**

- **Innovation:** We seek knowledge breakthroughs through innovative thinking, ideas and approaches.
- **Collaboration:** We work with a variety of partners who share our commitment to making California's agriculture and food systems more resilient and sustainable.
- **Engagement:** We involve students, faculty and various stakeholders in dialogue and solution creation.
- **Scientific Integrity:** We fund sound, peer-reviewed science held to the highest standards of ethical conduct, transparency and best practices.
- **Accountability:** We are responsible and efficient stewards of public funds and trust.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** We seek out a diversity of ideas, disciplines and backgrounds.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

1. Set research focus areas and align the organization — including its processes — to support those focus areas and the vision.
2. Communicate with and engage key stakeholder groups in collaborative strategies supporting the vision.
3. Develop and implement long-term sustainable funding and faculty capacity strategies.





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Set research focus areas and align the organization — including its processes — to support those focus areas and the vision.

ARI CAMPUSES

Action 1.1. Conduct outreach to ARI campuses to gather input about industry research focus areas as determined at a campus level. Sources may include Deans' Council, Advisory Boards or Board of Governors. Future efforts should also include outreach to all campuses in the CSU.

INDUSTRY

Action 1.2. In collaboration with ARI campuses, identify high-priority industry contacts and determine their research focus areas. Sources may include commodity boards, trade associations, etc.

CALIFORNIA AGENCIES/UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Action 1.3. Identify relevant California agencies and UC contacts to determine their research programs and focus areas. Agency sources may include CDFA, EPA, State Water Resources Control Board, Natural Resources Agency, Department of Water Resources, etc. UC sources may include ANR and other UC campuses/departments.

Action 1.4. Assess and define areas of expertise and capabilities for each ARI campus and the ARI system.

Action 1.4.1. Develop a keyword database as part of the application process to capture faculty research expertise and commodities / focus of research to allow for collaboration between researchers, campuses and industry.

Action 1.4.2. Analyze and coalesce data to identify areas of strength, overlap and synergies among campuses and faculty.

Action 1.5. Develop a report that aligns and defines research focus areas for ARI based on a) identification of issues/problems identified in Actions 1.1–1.3, b) the amount of available funding by research area/commodity/industry/program, c) program funding rates, d) faculty expertise that exists throughout the entire CSU system and available faculty time, and e) institutional capacity (equipment and infrastructure).

Action 1.6 Integrate results of the above with ARI processes (proposal, review and de-brief/past-research processes) to ensure alignment with the research needs identified, and the mission, vision and values of the organization. Any adjustments should ensure flexibility to address quality proposals that may not necessarily fit top research focus areas. Process should be reviewed every three years to ensure continuous improvement.

YEAR ONE ASSESSMENTS

- Determine research focus areas for future tracking of the percentage of ARI funded projects that align with those focus areas; future goal to increase the percentage of research funded that aligns with established focus areas over time.
- Conduct a baseline study with industry members, including current and prospective research partners, to determine their perspective on:
 - The extent to which ARI addresses their research focus areas.
 - The level of impact of ARI research.
 - The return on investment.
 - The ease of implementing a project.
 - Overall satisfaction of working with the ARI.

➔ STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Communicate with and engage key stakeholder groups in collaborative strategies supporting the vision.

GENERAL - ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Action 2.1. Create a positioning and messaging strategy for the ARI and target audiences (develop in first year; assess annually). Messaging should address priority areas, including accountability; benefits for industry, faculty and students; and rationale for increased funding.

Action 2.2. Audit and update materials (brochure, website, annual reports, etc.) to ensure alignment with positioning and messaging. On the website, consider organizing information by issue. Emphasis should be placed on search engine optimization and using the website to connect researchers with each other.
Industry

Action 2.3. Conduct annual outreach visits to key industry stakeholders. Visit vertically integrated industries, commodity boards and trade groups such as the Western Growers and Produce Marketing Association to inform them of the ARI and receive industry perspectives.

Action 2.4. Develop a calendar of quarterly touch points with industry contacts. Calendar may include invitations to student events, emails from the executive director on developments at ARI or other updates to keep ARI top of mind.

CSU FACULTY

Action 2.5. By providing training and tools, empower ARI Campus Coordinators to become ambassadors of the ARI providing outreach at their individual campuses to encourage and help develop ARI projects. Focus on benefits for interdisciplinary faculty, information on how best to work with the ARI and guidance on pursuing faculty research agendas within the parameters of the ARI.

Action 2.5.1. Develop a system for ongoing collaboration and communication back to ARI regarding the status of campus-specific outreach efforts.

Action 2.6 Develop a mechanism whereby ARI can serve as a referral source for faculty, connecting them to each other and industry stakeholders who may be potential collaborators on research.

STUDENTS

Action 2.7 Partner with Seed and Food Central to connect students to interdisciplinary internships for the advancement of California agriculture; explore additional leadership development opportunities for students.

Action 2.8 Foster relationships with key groups, such as MANNRS and HSI, that will increase student engagement; encourage Campus Coordinators to do the same on behalf of the ARI.



UC ANR

Action 2.9 Develop model of collaboration between the ARI, CSU and UC ANR, including ideas for how CSU researchers can collaborate with the UC. Consider joint appointments.

Action 2.10 Roll out the model to internal and external stakeholders, including UC ANR statewide program teams.

YEAR ONE ASSESSMENTS

- Determine baseline awareness of the ARI among California agriculture. Long term goal of continually increasing awareness year over year; this metric can be captured within the survey outlined as part of Strategic Priority #1 Assessments.
- Track number of events, faculty contacts and nature of outreach activities conducted by Campus Coordinators.
- Track number of faculty who collaborated with industry, other faculty members or the UC; assess industry connections made as a result of work with the ARI.
- Monitor the number of students placed via the internship program.



➔ STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Develop and implement long-term sustainable funding and faculty capacity strategies.

Action 3.1. Develop a cadre of supporters who could advocate for additional funding to statewide budget allotment; equip them with tools to speak and advocate to legislature on behalf of ARI.

Action 3.1.1. Additional resources will be used to support more faculty time, more student training and more supplies for research.

Action 3.2. Create an integrated fundraising strategy that may include an endowment strategy, options to pursue additional grant support and other tactics.

CSU FACULTY

Action 3.3. Advocate for joint appointments across CSU/UC system and CSU/USDA to expand capacity in identified needs areas.

YEAR ONE ASSESSMENTS

- Track the number of grants submitted and success rate.
- Measure the amount of tenure-track faculty conducting ARI-supported research and the amount of time those faculty devote to ARI-supported research.
- Quantify the number of joint faculty appointments with UC or USDA.

