

The College Dean's Office

From its earliest years the college was officially referred to as “the School of Agriculture”. As it expanded in size and diversity, however, its status was elevated to that of a College, and around the mid-1960's it became “the College of Agriculture” and was administered by its first Dean, Professor Richard Delorit. By the early 1970's the college very much resembled its present form, consisting of five departments. Agricultural Education was chaired by Marvin Thompson; Agricultural Economics by Vern Elefson; Agricultural Engineering Technology by Gerhardt Bohn, Animal and Food Science by Richard Gray, and Plant and Earth Sciences by Sam Huffman. Delorit was promoted to the Position of Vice Chancellor of the university, and James Dollahon was moved up from the Animal Science Department to become Dean. Gary Rohde, a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics served as part-time Assistant Dean. Priscilla Creapo became the office Program Assistant.

James Dollahon served as Dean of the College of Agriculture from 1967 until his untimely death in 1979 (**Check Dates**). He greatly strengthened the college through a period of rapid growth both in the number of students and through the addition of new faculty positions. He also worked hard to improve working relationships with the other UW-System campuses, including UW-Madison, through research and extension. He was also successful in obtaining grants for international programs and for public conferences and other events sponsored by the college.

Following the death of Dollahon, Roger Swanson became acting Dean. Then Assistant Dean Gerald “Doc” Matteson was awarded a 12-month sabbatical with the U.S. Army War College. Richard Jensen and Stephen Ridley filled his administrative position on a part-time basis. Linda Paulson joined the office staff as second Program Assistant. The following year saw Swanson move on to become UW-RF Dean of Extension, and Gary Rohde was selected as the new Dean following several years absence from the university during which he had served with distinction in Madison as the state Secretary of Agriculture. By 1982, the administration of the college became solidified with Rohde as Dean, Steve Ridley as Associate Dean and Doc Matteson as Assistant Dean. Ridley and Matteson also continued their instructional positions in Food Science and in Agricultural Education. Priscilla Creapo retired in 1993 and was replaced by LeAnn Huntrods.

Doc Matteson returned full-time to the classroom in 1994, (**check Dates**) and was replaced in the Dean's office by Terry Ferriss, a Professor of Horticulture.

For some time there had been a growing uneasiness among the faculty regarding the name “College of Agriculture”. Although secession from the college was never an issue, there were those who felt overly constrained by a singular focus on agriculture. Therefore in 1985 the Dean proposed changing the name to the more inclusive “College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences” with the acronym CAFES. The suggestion found favor with most of the faculty and the proposal was sent forward and eventually approved by UW-System Administration.

The change, though welcomed, presented a few logistical challenges. The long name was a little awkward to use when answering the telephone. On the other hand the term CAFES was meaningless to those outside the college setting. The staff in the office through default took to answering the phone by simply saying, "dean's office". It seemed to work well, and the staff and students working in the office were appropriately coached in telephone etiquette. On one occasion the Chancellor called and asked for the Dean. One of the students responded truthfully by saying that he was "on break". Further coaching was received from the Chancellor's office. Apparently breaks were something that was not expected of Deans.

Dean Rohde retired in 1999, and William Anderson was the successful candidate to replace him. Charlotte Benck had replaced LeAnn Huntrods. Later Lisa Owens replaced Linda Paulson who retired. Anderson had previously held the post of Dean at the Ohio State University in Wooster. Anderson elected to return to classroom teaching in 2001, and was replaced by Stephen Ridley who had returned from a 12 month sabbatical at the University of Otago in New Zealand. Ridley served three and one-half years prior to his retirement and replacement by Dale Gallenberg from South Dakota State University. Lisa Owens became the Dean's Assistant following the retirement of Charlotte Benck.