

TO: Mary Delany, Interim Dean, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

FROM: Patricia Allen, Chair of the Executive Committee, Inter-Institutional Network for Food, Agriculture & Sustainability (INFAS)

DATE: July 24, 2013

RE: Annual evaluation of INFAS performance by Tom Tomich and Joanna Friesner, Fiscal Year 2013

This is the second annual evaluation of the work performed by Tom Tomich and Joanna Friesner in their leadership and management of the INFAS project, funded by a W.K. Kellogg endowment to UC Davis.

The purpose of INFAS is to address issues in ways that “accelerate the transition to food system sustainability and social justice.” This is an enormous charge and there are many and diverse paths INFAS can take in its realization.

We think that both Tom and Joanna have done excellent work in forming the INFAS network. In the past year, INFAS has focused on developing webinars, organizing a research write shop, and seeking funding for research efforts. Tom and Joanna have done a good job in these dimensions, particularly under the challenging circumstances of simultaneous network creation and coordination.

The past year has been an opportunity to learn what works well and to bring to light areas we want to move toward. One of the key revelations from our activities was that we need to invest time in designing the network, including building the working relationships, mutual understanding, and shared practice that would be needed for success in many of our goals. At our June 2013 INFAS meetings, we came to the conclusion that the kinds of activities in which we engaged in the past year are useful and important, but that going forward we want to more closely focus on articulating both the form and content of INFAS.

In terms of form, we plan to emphasize establishing INFAS as a functioning network that goes beyond an assemblage of activities on the parts of our members.

In terms of content, we plan to focus increasing attention on addressing issues that disproportionately impact the most vulnerable members of our society, as stated in the proposal to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation that provided the endowment for INFAS. The specific areas and issues in which we engage will be part of the network formation and deepening effort.

Thus, our work in the coming year will be development of our organizational process and sharpening of our topical focus. In this, we will be asking Tom to play a more instrumental role than he has in the past. Tom has worked hard to form the initial network and, appropriately, has also stepped back over the past year to avoid being directive. We also recognize that Tom is pulled in many directions as a university administrator with

multiple responsibilities, but we would like to see more presence in the next stage of INFAS's work.

In the coming year we want Tom, working closely with the Executive Committee on priorities, to serve as the interface between the INFAS network and Joanna. Tom is Joanna's supervisor, and it is not fair or appropriate for Joanna to take disparate direction from other INFAS members as priorities evolve. This is particularly important because, with the sharpening focus and slightly changed direction of INFAS, some of the emphases of the past year will become less important. As the only staff member of this widely distributed network, Joanna's work is vital to our ability to function.

As part of our network-development process we will want to clarify roles and responsibilities of not only Tom and Joanna, but also the other Kellogg endowed chairs and members who do not have Kellogg funding.

INFAS members and the Executive Committee members are excited about the decisions made this summer to deepen INFAS as a network that will be an effective interface between community members and academicians working on food system sustainability, as it enables vulnerable people and their communities to achieve food security, public and ecosystem health, and social justice through food systems.

We look forward to continuing to work with Tom and Joanna in this important effort.