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TO: Helene Dillard, Dean, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
FROM: Nancy Creamer, Chair of the Executive Committee, Inter-Institutional Network for Food, Agriculture & Sustainability (INFAS)
DATE: October 16, 2017
RE: Annual evaluation of INFAS performance by Tom Tomich and Joanna Friesner, Fiscal Year 2016-2017

This is the fourth annual evaluation of the work of Tom Tomich, network host and Joanna Friesner, network Coordinator, in coordinating and facilitating the Inter-institutional Network for Food and Agricultural Sustainability (INFAS), funded by a W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) endowment to UC Davis. This evaluation follows two years of working on an internal network design process to further describe the focus of the network and its operations. Our work this year aligned INFAS more deeply with the WKKF mission by focusing on racial equity in the food system, including highlighting the importance of further collaboration with communities in the work.

The purpose of INFAS is to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems, including social justice, through collaborative networks linking academic institutions with other sectors of the food system. This is an enormous charge with diverse pathways toward its realization. The group decided to establish an intentional network, rather than organizing ourselves in a more conventional way, because we recognized that our productivity as a national network, and particularly in work that goes beyond our typical academic activities, requires much deeper relationships and shared commitments.

Highlights of the year's activities and outcomes include:

- INFAS Panel: Friesner assisted INFAS member H. Francis to hold an INFAS panel at the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association annual meeting entitled "Building Racial Equity into Higher Education for Sustainable Agriculture"
- Executed Annual INFAS meeting: Friesner organized the annual INFAS meeting during the SAEA conference, including on-site and telephone participation. 21 INFAS members participated. Action items for the coming year were discussed.
- INFAS participated fully in the APLU food security commission, with two members appointed to the Commission itself, and INFAS members serving on each of the commission workgroups. A team is following up to write a response paper to the Commission report and an associated

blog, the latter stemming from the Network prioritizing broadening our impact beyond academia into the public sphere.

- INFAS became a member of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition in February 2017.
- Five INFAS case studies of member programs were developed and are now on-line
- Tomich and Friesner actively led the Executive Committee and broader INFAS network in developing action items and work plans for completion of those action items developed from the annual INFAS meeting. This included Friesner conducting a series of follow-up phone and conference calls and conducting background research in a number of areas in association with developing the action plan.
- INFAS has strategically aligned with other related networks, with a special focus on the southern region or those involved in social justice or race equity. These include: the North American Food Systems Network, the Professional Agriculture Workers Conference, and the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society.
- INFAS is developing an INFAS Graduate Fellows program to be supported by endowed chairs and the Network to facilitate collaboration on joint projects, and to develop a cohort of future leaders and network participants.

Tomich and Friesner's contributions to the above have been instrumental, and the network could not accomplish its many activities without Tom and Joanna's leadership, and Joanna's follow-up with action item development and subsequent follow-through. The network has shifted its focus through a very hands-on collaborative and team-building process, no small feat. The network is tackling the difficult issue of racial equity in the food system and pushing the envelope on food systems redesign. All of the endowed chairs are very busy people and without someone like Joanna that follows-up, gently but persistently, we would not be moving forward so effectively. Both Tom and Joanna are proactive in moving the network forward, but also sensitive to the nature of the Endowed Chairs and Center Directors who often have great vision and desire to act on their vision, but need support to carry things out to fruition. This balancing act is an art that has been greatly mastered by the UC Davis team.

Finally, UC Davis continues to provide great support for the network without needing to dominate, and allows for other leadership to develop through network participants. Everyone perceives they have a stake in network success, which is a great place to be.

Thank you, and we look forward to continuing work with Tom and Joanna.

Sincerely,



Nancy Creamer
Director, Center for Environmental Farming Systems
Distinguished Professor Sustainable Agriculture and
Community Based Food Systems