JESSICA G. DAVIS’ ADMINISTRATIVE PHILOSOPHY

First of all, in my role as the Deputy Director of AES and Associate Dean for Extension (DD-AES/AD-X), I will be a compass pointing steadily to the land-grant mission and reminding our faculty and staff of this three-fold mission as it guides the direction of the AES and the College. Secondly, one of my primary roles would be as steward of AES resources (human, physical, and financial) as entrusted to the land-grant university by taxpayers. A steward takes responsibility for the money, makes decisions about its allocation, and accounts for how it is spent and what its impact is, specifically, in achieving the land-grant mission.

I plan to actively contribute to the development of the CAS strategic plan and lead the development of an AES plan, including individual milestones for each research center (including ARDEC). A strategic plan should be the guiding document for all administrative decisions. Therefore, after CAS and AES strategic plans have been developed, I will evaluate the current administrative structure of AES and evaluate whether there are ways we could improve the structure in order to better facilitate the achievement of AES goals.

During the strategic planning process, I will encourage our faculty on-campus and around the state to be dreamers of big dreams and to envision a path to achieve those dreams. The AES vision cannot come from the deputy director alone but must be an interweaving of dreams of stakeholders, faculty, staff, and students. I see strategic planning as the process through which the goals of individuals come together to create a map for the future. I will be a strategist who weaves a common vision and develops a long-range course of action to align with the dreams of AES and CAS Extension faculty.

One of my strengths is as a bridge. There is a Welsh proverb that states, “He (or she!) who would be a leader must be a bridge.” This position requires someone who will act as a bridge to connect people together to meet their goals and thus enable development and function of strong teams. This bridge-building must occur within the college, the university (with other colleges, the Research Centers, and Extension), and with stakeholders around the state. Teams with a common goal and mutual respect will work towards benefits for individuals and the whole. In this way, I will pro-actively align stakeholders, capabilities, and resources to get things done to address real-world problems.

In addition, as DD-AES/AD-X, I will serve as cheerleader and coach, especially of the Research Center faculty and CAS extension specialists. Recognizing jobs well done and energizing people to achieve their goals are keys to organizational success. In addition, as coach, I will facilitate the function of teams by helping people work together to optimize their strengths and diminish their weaknesses. To have a good team, individual skills need to be developed, and, therefore, I will facilitate and encourage professional development of faculty. Providing feedback to individuals and groups is another key coaching role critical to the development of a mature team.

Ultimately, character is more important than metaphors. I will be an honest, visionary, trustworthy, transparent, and fair DD-AES/AD-X who does what she says she’s going to do.