



The University of Georgia

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Office of the Dean and Director

October 8, 2009

Dear CAES Faculty and Staff:

Several of our CAES colleagues have received a USDA HEC Challenge grant in order to support the recruitment and retention of diverse students to our college. One of the mechanisms by which this team intends to accomplish this is to understand the current climate for diversity in the college and to work to continually improve it. I have asked Dr. Kecia Thomas to lead an effort in studying the Climate for Diversity in the CAES. Dr. Thomas is a senior member of the UGA faculty and an expert on this topic. She is a co-PI on the Challenge Grant as well as the instructor for our new monthly Lunch and Learn series that will provide diversity training and dialogue sessions during this academic year.

The reason for the research is to identify the attitudes and beliefs of all CAES faculty, staff, and students as they relate to the diversity practices and goals of the college. We are also interested in learning about the nature of working relationships in the college, and how the experience of working and learning in CAES may differ for different groups represented among our faculty, staff, and students. In addition to asking you to respond to items regarding these issues, this online survey also requests basic demographic information such as age, gender, racial/ethnic group membership, sexual orientation, department (i.e. Animal and Dairy Science, Entomology), and length of tenure in the college. Please be assured that none of this information will be used to identify you as an individual, rather it will be used to group you with other participants like you, in order to understand unique group experiences in the college.

I am writing to solicit your voluntary participation in this online survey for the purposes of this important research (a hard copy of the survey can be downloaded from the college's website [<http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/diversity/>], completed, and mailed to Dr. Thomas at 330 Old College). It is expected that completing this survey should take no more than 15 minutes. This is an important opportunity for you as a voluntary participant in this research to provide valuable feedback to us about how to improve the college and how to effectively create and sustain a working and learning environment in which everyone has the resources to effectively do their work and professionally develop. We expect these data will allow us to build upon our strength and continue to advance as a workplace and education leader in the agriculture community. In the future, Dr. Thomas may also use these data to support her program of research and those of her students.

There is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself given that the researcher cannot ensure confidentiality during the actual internet communication procedure. However, the survey will be maintained on a secure server (surveymonkey.com, SSL2), IP addresses will not be collected, and all identifying information (e.g. myids) will be separated from the data and destroyed prior to data analysis. The results of your participation will be kept strictly confidential. All documents generated for the college will report only aggregate data. In those cases, where group numbers are so small that they identify individual respondents, (i.e., Black female professor in Horticulture) these data will not be reported. In addition, no discomfort, stress, nor risks are foreseen as part of your participation in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time without any penalty and have the results of your voluntary participation, to the extent that it can be identified as yours, returned to you, removed from



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the research records, or destroyed. You can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled

Please feel free to contact Dr. Thomas (kthomas@uga.edu or 2-5383) if you have any questions now or during the length of this study. Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to the Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411[[706-542-199](tel:706-542-199)/IRB@uga.edu].

I hope that the college and I can count on your support of this important research. **Please complete this voluntary survey by November 13, 2009.**

Sincerely,

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In order to provide your informed consent to participate in this research project, please click on the link below which will direct you to the Franklin College Diversity Climate Survey.

[\[CAES Faculty and Staff Survey\]](#)