

*Solutions for a more*

# **Resilient Florida**

**UF/IFAS Annual Report FY2024**



A Message from

# UF/IFAS Leadership



## Grounded in the *earth*, shooting for the *moon*

**IT'S** an exciting time for UF/IFAS. We're making a huge day-to-day impact for Floridians with right-now solutions while also launching moonshots aimed at transforming the state's agriculture and natural resource industries.

As home of the **Space Plants Laboratory**, UF/IFAS is excited to be part of the new **University of Florida Astraeus Space Institute**, established with presidential strategic funding. The interdisciplinary initiative is led by our own UF Distinguished Professor, Rob Ferl, of our Department of Horticultural Sciences.

Presidential strategic initiative funding for four additional projects recognizes the value and potential of UF/IFAS. These include **therapeutic horticulture for students**; **modernization of Florida Extension's data systems to leverage AI** and find solutions faster; a **pest management workforce development program**; and a **Crop Transformation Center** to develop new varieties faster—starting with citrus.

We took a major step toward the establishment of the **Center for Applied Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture** when we secured \$19 million in construction funding from the Legislature this year. Our **Center for Land Use Efficiency** continues to shape Florida conversations about the future of development in one of the nation's fastest growing states.

The support and generosity of our donors and stakeholders powers our efforts, and we work every day toward a strong future for Florida.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of J. Scott Angle in black ink.

J. Scott Angle  
Senior Vice President for  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Handwritten signature of Robert Gilbert in black ink.

Robert Gilbert  
Dean for Research and  
Executive Director for Academic Affairs

# Breakthroughs for Today and Tomorrow



**THROUGH** leadership changes, UF/IFAS Research remains strong and vibrant. **John Davis** served as Interim Dean for Research and Director of the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station in January 2024. Davis brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to his new role after serving as Senior Associate Dean for Research since March 2016.

Two of our research and education centers (REC) welcomed new leadership in the last year. The Indian

River REC in Fort Pierce now has **Mark Kistler** at the helm, who is excited to find agricultural and natural resources solutions along the Treasure Coast. The Mid-Florida REC in Apopka is led by **Kirsten Pelz-Stelinski**, ushering in a new vision for urban agriculture.

UF/IFAS researchers are advancing the frontiers in their scientific disciplines. Impactful published results include a novel control method for whiteflies that decimate tomato crops and the discovery of an enzyme that can act as a natural algicide to combat toxic algal blooms.

UF/IFAS researchers also secured **158 licensing agreements**, including the first wheat variety released from the small grains breeding program in over 20 years. From strawberries to peanuts, all University of Florida plant licenses provide stakeholders with higher yield and more disease resistant options.

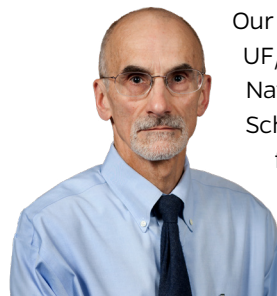
The **UF/IFAS Crop Transformation Center**, funded as part of the University of Florida Presidential strategic initiatives, promises to develop new varieties faster—starting with citrus. Faculty members around the state and across disciplines are collaborating to address unique needs among industries and communities. Advancements in predictive breeding and precision agriculture methods will provide growers and consumers with hardier and more nutritious varieties to improve human and environmental health.



In 2023, UF/IFAS produced a record **2,159** peer-reviewed publications.

**11** new plant varieties released

UF/IFAS conducted **\$269.6 million** in research addressing critical problems in agricultural production, natural resource systems, and human health.<sup>1</sup>



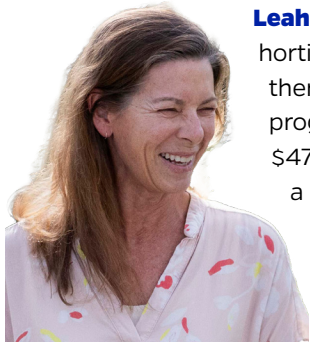
Our faculty recognition continues to grow! **Andrew Hanson**, UF/IFAS horticultural sciences professor, was elected by the National Academy of Sciences as the Griffin, Sr. Eminent Scholar, adding him to the list of 21 University of Florida faculty elected to the academy.

**UF/IFAS also gained three AAAS Fellows, bringing our total to 41.**

<sup>1</sup>This research spending data is based on UF's response to the National Science Foundation's annual Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey, which is the national standard in comparing research spending among the hundreds of universities around the country. The numbers reflect spending for the fiscal year that ended June 30.

# Transformative Teaching

**THE UF/IFAS COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES** is full of teachers who excel at providing best learning experiences for more than 6,500 students. Faculty success stories this year include:



**Leah Diehl**, environmental horticulture, leads the therapeutic horticulture program, which received \$475,000 in funding as a University of Florida strategic initiative, allowing more students to participate. The program has been shown to

reduce stress, boost self-esteem and improve academic resilience. Sarah Lynne, family, youth and community sciences, joins the project to apply best practices in prevention science methodology to the design and analysis of the expanded program.

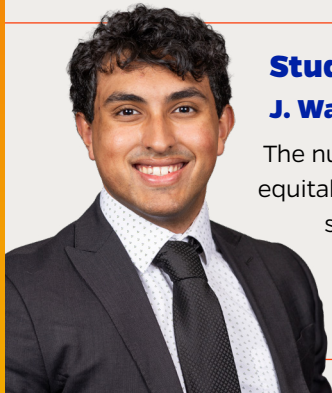


**Lynn Sollenberger**, agronomy professor, was selected as the UF Teacher Scholar of the Year, the highest faculty honor at the university.



In January, we welcomed **Anne Mathews** to our office as the new Associate Dean for undergraduate programs, where she leads enrollment management, undergraduate academic advising, and college-wide curriculum and assessment.

**CALS is No. 1  
for USDA  
Teaching Awards**



## **Student Spotlight: Nick Blumenthal ('24) J. Wayne Reitz Medal of Excellence winner and Outstanding Senior**

The nutritional sciences (now) alumnus spent his undergraduate career advocating for equitable nutrition access on a global scale. Nick has addressed the United Nations, served as the national youth representative at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health, represented the student body on the University of Florida Presidential Food Service Advisory Committee, and researched the role of inflammation in chronic health conditions.



Four CALS alumni, **Sarah White-Springer, Ph.D., ArNelle Wright, DMD, Hannah Shettters, and Jason Lee**, were recognized as part of the **40 Gators Under 40**, for significant contributions to their community and profession.

# Research-Driven, Community-Focused

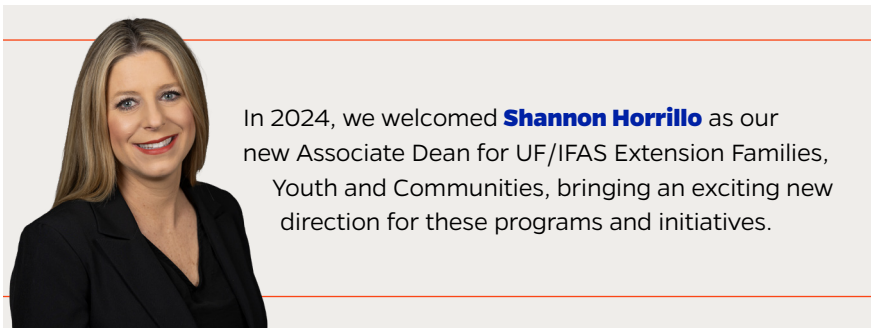
**FLORIDA'S** Cooperative Extension Service, a collaboration of **UF/IFAS Extension** and **FAMU Extension**, has launched a new five-year strategic plan, highlighting seven critical initiatives to meet the changing needs of Florida. This new pathway is designed to be responsive and adaptive as we continue to grow our capacity to offer science-based solutions in a rapidly changing landscape.



*Florida Cooperative Extension:  
Pathway to Creating Engagement  
Through Innovation & Excellence*

UF/IFAS Extension was awarded funding for two strategic initiatives, setting the stage for making breakthroughs at a faster pace:

- The **Innovation Hub for Urban Pest Management** will create a new network focused on finding novel ways to manage bugs and pests. Funded with \$985,000 over three years, the Hub will build up the workforce in the urban pest management industry and provide new solutions to urgent pest and public health problems.
- **Extension's** ability to gather and leverage data will be improved using new tools and AI for data-driven decision making. This \$2.7 million data infrastructure will allow UF/IFAS to enhance productivity and interpret impacts, trends and needs statewide.



In 2024, we welcomed **Shannon Horrillo** as our new Associate Dean for UF/IFAS Extension Families, Youth and Communities, bringing an exciting new direction for these programs and initiatives.



The **Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program** (FFL) won a Regional Emmy® Award for the TV series “**Flip My Florida Yard**,” a one-day remake of a homeowner’s yard using the 9 Principles. FFL, in partnership with Florida Department of Environmental Protection, has also rolled out a new recognition program, FFL Natural, to award homeowners who go above and beyond by creating ultra-low input landscapes that have minimal irrigation, fertilization, and pest management practices.



## Florida 4-H Youth Development

unveiled bold new goals and initiatives to help youth find their spark and make the best better in a changing world:

- **Reach 300,000 of Florida's young people** through 4-H Youth Development programs.
- **Revitalize Florida's 4-H camp facilities** to create accessible and stimulating learning environments offering year-round, hands-on science education programs. More than \$1.4 million in private and state support has been secured for efforts at 4-H Camp Cherry Lake.
- **Increase workforce development programs** to ensure that our children are beyond ready to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.



# Putting Generosity to Work

**FY2024** was a banner year for UF/IFAS fundraising. Solid leadership in teaching, research and Extension combined with a surging economy and a growing pool of generous supporters provided UF/IFAS more than \$28M in private support for the year.

Our 3,700 donors gave to provide funding for scholarships, research projects, faculty positions, Extension and 4-H programs and facility support and maintenance. One particular gift stands out as an example of why donors give to UF/IFAS.



**ON** April 13, 2024, family and friends celebrated the ribbon cutting of the **Tyler “Tyce” Hall Trail at Austin Cary Forest**, the 2,632-acre teaching and research forest northeast of Gainesville. The scenic half-mile trail follows the shores of Lake Mize in the heart of the forest. Tyce was a passionate Gator who never missed a home football game. He was known for his kindness, generosity and positivity, and he loved his time as a forest resources and conservation student. He passed away at age 21.

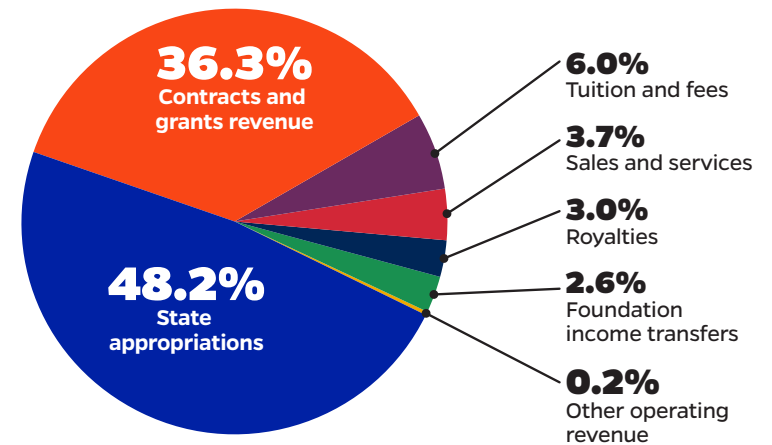
Tyce’s parents, Dave and Kristen Hall, named the trail with an endowed gift supporting maintenance of the route’s trees, plants and signage. The Tyler “Tyce” Hall Trail is a place where people can fall in love with forestry, just like Tyce did. The impact Tyler had on the people who knew him is clear, not only from the well-attended ribbon cutting ceremony, but also from outpouring of love that led to the creation of the Tyler “Tyce” Hall Endowed Memorial Scholarship. Established in 2021 by family and friends, the scholarship benefits juniors and seniors studying forest resources and conservation at the University of Florida.



**Giving Opportunity**  
[go.ufl.edu/tyler-tyce-hall-trail](https://go.ufl.edu/tyler-tyce-hall-trail)

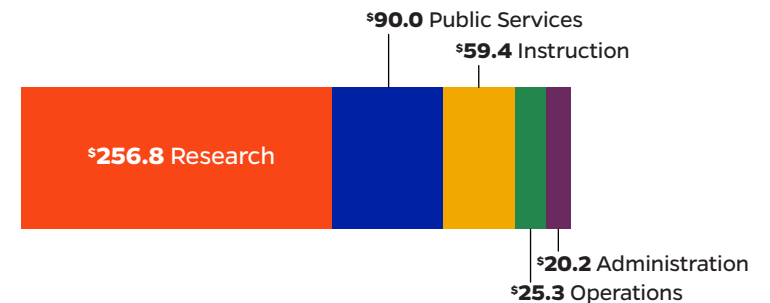
## Operating Revenues (\$ in Millions)

FY2024: \$482.6M



## Operating Expenses (\$ in Millions)

FY2024: \$451.7M



Revenue and operating expenses represent a consolidated net position and exclude transfers between internal units. For more information, please contact [IFAS-IFA@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:IFAS-IFA@ifas.ufl.edu).

# Established Excellence

**No. 1**  
**Public University for**  
**Agricultural Sciences**  
in the U.S.  
- Niche

**No. 1**  
**Total & Federally**  
**Funded R&D**  
**Expenditures**  
(Agricultural Sciences,  
Natural Resources,  
Conservation)  
- National Science  
Foundation

**No. 4**  
**Agricultural**  
**Science University**  
in the U.S.  
- U.S. News &  
World Report

**No. 3**  
**Agricultural and**  
**Biological Engineering**  
**Grad Program**  
- 2024 U.S.  
News & World  
Report

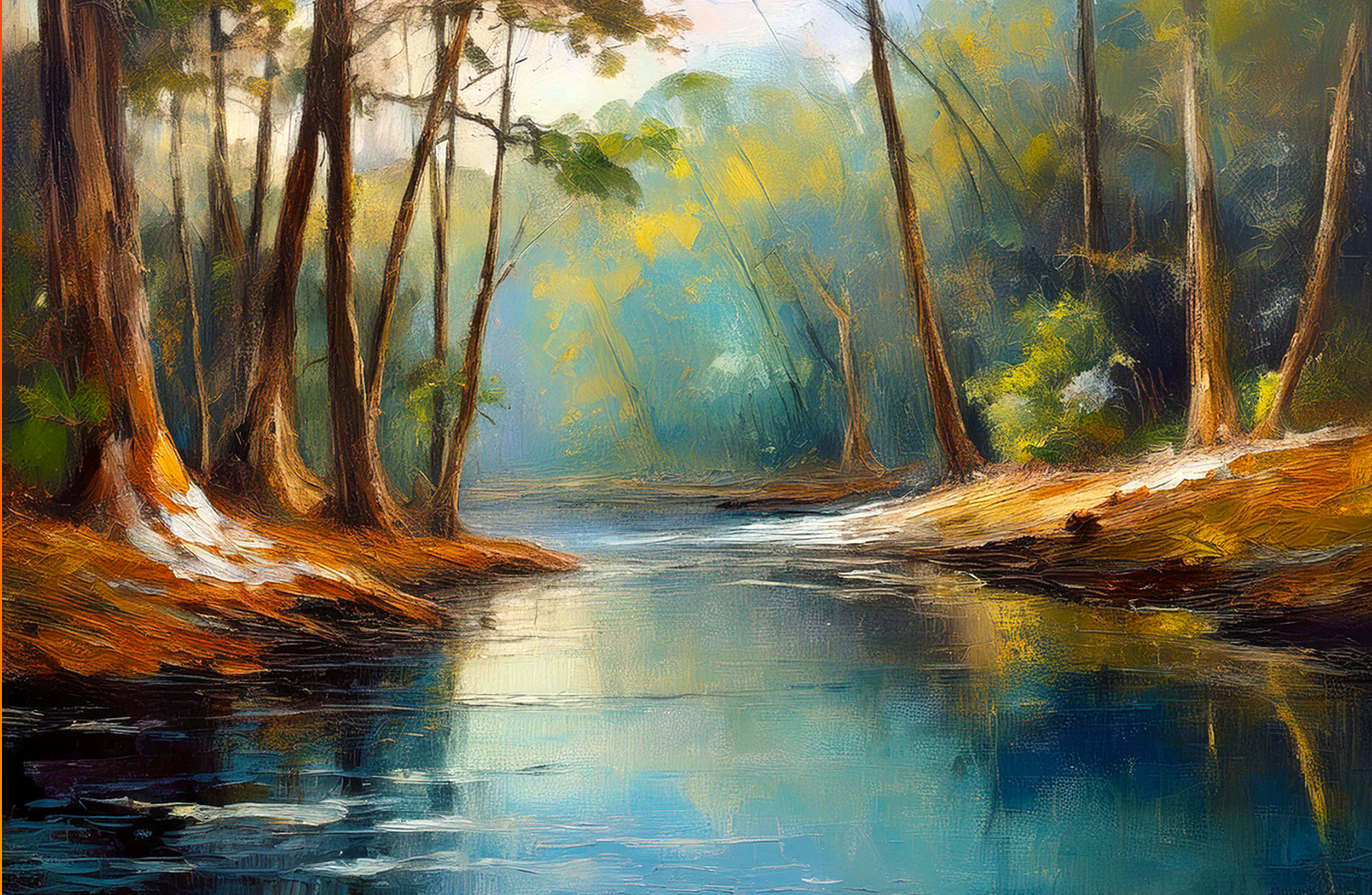
University of Florida ranked  
**No. 4**  
among the  
**nation's best public universities**  
- Forbes

The College of Agricultural and  
Life Sciences has one of the  
**Top 5**  
**highest enrollments in**  
**study abroad programs**  
at the University of Florida, with  
**20+**  
college-specific  
programs across  
**6** continents

One  
of the  
**5**  
largest colleges of  
**agriculture and**  
**related sciences**  
in the U.S.

**Top 100**  
**Worldwide Universities**  
list for seven  
consecutive years.  
**Ranked 13,**  
up from **17** in **2022**  
- Florida Board of Governors





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UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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**Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences**

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