The AgEds 450 Farm is a capstone course taken by Agriculture Studies students at Iowa State University. AgEds 450 provides students with a unique hands-on experience in running a production agriculture farm for one semester. Currently the AgEds 450 class and Agriculture Studies department is beginning the process of securing funding to build a new Agriculture Pavilion at the 450 Farm location South of Ames. This Agricultural Pavilion is going to contain both a larger shop, which will be specifically used for the AgEds 450 Farm, as well as a much larger classroom. Why does the AgEds 450 Farm need a larger classroom and shop?

The enrollment in Agriculture Studies has skyrocketed over the past five years. More specifically from 2010 to 2011 enrollment in the Agriculture Studies program jumped 39%. From 2011 to 2012 the Agriculture Studies program again experienced a large increase in enrollment jumping 21%.
Growth is a good thing in a climate where you are either growing or you are dying. The agriculture program in general at Iowa State University is continuing to grow each year, as stated above the enrollment in the Agriculture Studies program has been booming.

The current classroom facility at the AgEds 450 Farm site is beginning to be outdated for the needs of the current class. With the increased number of students enrolled in the AgEds 450 class there have been some changes with how the class is operated. One of the glowing weaknesses in the 450 class currently is that the class size has gotten so large that the classroom at the farm can no longer facilitate the entire class at once. Therefore on Tuesday's the entire class is able to meet all together on campus but the lab at the farm must be split into two sections. Splitting the class into two lab sections creates a communication barrier between the
Wednesday and Thursday labs. By having a classroom large enough to accommodate the entire class in one lab section the AgEds 450 faculty team will better be able to deliver this capstone course to students. An improved learning environment will be created as well as allowing for even larger class sizes each semester. Building a larger agricultural facility at the farm will allow for the Agriculture Studies department to continue to deliver a high level education to an even greater number of students. This is a win-win situation for all involved.

The spring of 2013 AgEds 450 class has eight different committees. Each committee is assigned a specific strategic issue that will be worked on throughout the semester, for instance the crops committee was in charge of researching and purchasing a new planter for the farm. The Public Relations committee had the strategic issue of identifying how the AgEds 450 Farm’s mission aligns with acquiring a new facility of this scope. More specifically why do we need the facility and why do we need a facility of this size. Secondly, the Public Relations committee was in charge of arranging a meeting with the new liaison that is representing the AgEds 450 Farm. The liaison for the AgEds 450 Farm is Sarah Roelfs. One of the key points to make in conversations with Sarah Roelfs is showing the AgEds 450 Farm’s continued interest in this project and determining where we are at with funding.

A mission statement is a statement of the purpose of an organization; in essence it’s reason for existing. AgEds 450 Farm’s mission statement is, “To be a practical education resource for Iowa State University and the Department of Agriculture Education and Studies demonstrating quality and sustainable production agriculture in the Midwest.” In order to continue providing practical
education that is both high quality and sustainable for the Department of Agriculture Studies at Iowa State it is vital that the new Agriculture Pavilion be built. The current classroom at the AgEds 450 farm was built in 1988. The need for a new facility is now. The size of facility that we have drawn up a design for will allow for the 450 farm to continue delivering a high quality and sustainable education resource in production agriculture not only now but in the future as well. The size of the facility is specifically designed to be this large in order to accommodate not only the current size of classes but also to be prepared for continued growth in the Agriculture Studies department. Over the past five years there has been nearly a 40% increase in enrollment, a new facility is needed to match rising student demand for experiential training according to Sarah Roelfs, the liaison representing the 450 Farm. In conclusion, the AgEds 450 farm needs a new classroom of this size in order to accommodate the increased growth in the Agriculture Studies department, which has grown by nearly 40% in the past five years. This Agricultural Pavilion is necessary in order for the AgEds 450 class to continue providing the promise of it’s mission statement stating that the farm is a practical education resource demonstrating quality and sustainable production agriculture in the Midwest.

During the spring semester the Public Relations committee has had limited contact with our liaison Sarah Roelfs. This has been partly due to the transition of Sarah into her new position as the liaison. In the limited conversation between Public Relations and Sarah there has been some good dialogue. There are two tentative proposals that Sarah has identified for the new Agricultural Pavilion. It is important to keep in mind that some of the numbers and discussion on this project
are subject to change. Sarah has made several key points in our conversation about the need for this project. Preparing students to become future leaders in agriculture society is one of the main driving forces behind this project. The AgEds 450 class remains interested in this project because a new facility would allow for 50 to 75 students at the AgEds 450 Farm during labs. This increase in capacity in the classroom will be sufficient in handling the increased enrollment seen in the Agriculture Studies Department. The facility that is currently planned will better address the ever-changing needs of production agriculture in Iowa and the Midwest. Currently the facility is estimated to cost around $4.5 million dollars. The AgEds 450 Farm has made a lot of progress on this project having a basic design drawn up on paper for how the facility will need to look as well as having the estimated current cost to build the facility as mentioned previously. Funding is currently the main issue that needs to be addressed. At this time we are still waiting to hear back on some potential donors, which has slowed the conversation between Sarah Roelfs and the Public Relations committee. It is impossible for both Sarah and the Public Relations committee to continue discussing how to move forward on funding at this time until we have heard back from a few of our unique donor prospects. A timeline for how soon we can get back together with Sarah is completely based on when we hear back from these donor prospects. Until that time progress will be at a standstill, however once we hear back from these prospects we can begin building a timeline with goals for certain donation totals (I.E. in two years raise 75% of funding for project). The timeline for the building to be put to use is by the year 2020. In conclusion, the Public Relations committee has a design drawn up for the new
Agricultural Pavilion as well as a cost estimate of $4.5 million dollars. At this time the plan is still in the early fundraising stages with Sarah Roelfs waiting to hear back from some potential donors that have been identified. After Sarah hears back the next stage is determining how much is raised and how much more money needs to be raised. Finally, once all the money is raised the AgEds 450 Farm will be ready to construct and put to use its brand new Agricultural Pavilion.

The Public Relations committee went through a SWOT analysis in order to review their work on the strategic issue of “Planning Ahead”. SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

**Strengths:** There have been several strengths identified by the Public Relations committee. These strengths include having a strong connection with the Foundation as well as having several donors showing interest in the building of an Agricultural Pavilion at the AgEds 450 farm.

**Weaknesses:** Two weaknesses have been detrimental to this strategic issue this semester. They include: slow progress on this project during the time the group has been in the class and only have one semester to work on this project. A new class each semester that has to become familiarized with the project is a big weakness as there is a lot of lost time due to not being familiar with the AgEds 450 class nor the Agricultural Pavilion project.

**Opportunities:** There are several opportunities that have been available through this semester. Some of these opportunities include an increased enrollment in the class allowing more students to get involved, networking between students helps to
build strong bonds and promote teamwork and finally each student brings a unique set of outside sources of learning to the class. This uniqueness allows for several good ideas being brought up during committee work.

**Threats:** Public Relations committee has identified a couple threats that face the building of the new pavilion. These threats include the backing out of donors who no longer wish to participate in the project and the possibility that the Dean would not approve the current proposal.

Throughout this strategic issue project the main goal is making progress on building a new Agricultural Pavilion at the AgEds 450 Farm site. The Public Relations committee has worked hard with not only both lab sections but also with Sarah Roelfs the liaison that has been working with the farm on this project. At this time we are waiting on the Dean to review and accept our proposal on this pavilion. Once we have heard back and received approval from the Dean we will be able to continue on to the next steps in this process. We recommend that future committees continue to strengthen the relationship the class has with Sarah Roelfs as well as with potential donors. The Public Relations committee looks forward to the construction of a new Agricultural Pavilion at the AgEds 450 Farm that will benefit all the students of the Agriculture Studies program for many years. This facility will allow the AgEds 450 Farm to continue provide a practical education resource for Iowa State University and the Department of Agriculture Education demonstrating quality and sustainable production agriculture in the Midwest.