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Diane Rowland Named Dean of College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture and Director of MAFES

1 message

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Wed, Jun 23, 2021 at 11:46 AM

Dr. Diane Rowland, professor of crop physiology and department chair at the University of Florida, has been named dean of the University of Maine College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture, and director of the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station, effective August 1, 2021.

Rowland, a graduate of Orono High School, began her scientific career as a research plant physiologist and lead scientist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Georgia. In 2010, she joined the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

For most of her career, Rowland has specialized in the physiological mechanisms of crop stress, particularly related to drought and crop water scarcity resilience. She has received more than \$7 million in funding and, most recently, is part of a \$26 million National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center led by the University of Pennsylvania.

Rowland pioneered the development of primed acclimation, a water management system that capitalizes on the nearly universal priming response in crop plants to enhance drought tolerance. In her teaching roles, she co-established the University of Florida Agronomy Department's internationally recognized agroecology graduate program in 2012, an interdepartmental program made up of master's and Ph.D. concentrations focused on evaluating the sustainability and resilience of global agroecosystems.

She also established and directed the Center for Stress Resilient Agriculture, focused on transdisciplinary approaches to researching, extending and teaching about the complexity of challenges to maintaining sustainable food production worldwide. Rowland, who has chaired the Agronomy Department since 2019, is a Fellow of the Crop Science Society of America.

"I want to thank Dr. Mario Teisl who served as interim dean of NSFA during this particularly difficult time of the pandemic," says John Volin, UMaine executive vice president for academic affairs and provost. "I am excited to welcome Dr. Diane Rowland as the incoming dean of NSFA and director of the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station. Dr. Rowland has deep experience and strengths in integrating diverse research and academic programs, and will be a visionary leader in helping to continue to advance this exceptional college."

Rowland notes that she is "grateful to have this opportunity to come home to serve the state of Maine and to lead such a strong and diverse college."

"NSFA represents many of the core disciplines that are needed to address the grand challenges that society faces — from food security and human health, to the sustainability of the heritage industries so essential to this state," Rowland says. "I look forward to promoting the outstanding work of NSFA and being part of the important impact UMaine makes on the state and beyond."