

November 13, 2025

Eric W. Triplett, Professor and Chair, Department of Microbiology and Cell Science  
Chair of the Animal Sciences Chair Position Search and Screen Committee  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences  
University of Florida

Dear Dr. Triplett,

I am writing to apply for the Professor and Chair position at the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences (Job Number: 537393). I am enthusiastic about this opportunity and confident in my ability to succeed in the role. Below, I outline how my experience and qualifications align with the requirements for this position.

### **Academic Leadership and Management**

I have served as Department Head of Animal Sciences at North Dakota State University (NDSU) since April 2022. Additionally, I have served for five years as Associate Program Leader for Agriculture and Natural Resources at Louisiana State University Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter). These programs have been instrumental in my personal development, equipping me with valuable skills in communication, leadership, and conflict management. They have also deepened my understanding of organizational structure and the complexity of our food production systems. I continually strive to become a better leader through personal experiences, scholarship, and learning from others.

One of my priorities when I assumed the Head's position was to develop a Strategic Plan (2023-2028), which was posted on the Department's [website](#). This strategic plan aims to provide direction for our community, ensuring that our vision and mission are achieved through the application of our core values. In it, we offered students, staff, and faculty the opportunity to participate in the process, providing their input and weighing in on various aspects of our land-grant mission.

In the last two and a half years, we have worked tirelessly to develop the post-tenure review guidelines and a workload policy for Faculty. These tasks brought some anxiety and unrest to Faculty; however, through the discussion of all issues and respect for all opinions, we were able to complete them.

Please refer to my CV (item D) for more about my philosophy for academic leadership and management.

### **A Student-Centered Approach to Education**

A student-centered education can shift the paradigm from viewing learning as a transaction between expert and student to seeing it as a collaborative process that considers and involves the whole student. This practice is beneficial since we can better meet the needs of the students' communities. In our curriculum, we address the learning activity and the broader context of

students' lives, including their personal, social, and emotional development. Our new classes, developed over the last 2-3 years, emphasize active learning approaches that incorporate project-based learning, case studies, group work, and experiential learning to encourage student participation and critical thinking. We provide opportunities to work in our animal units, where animal husbandry tasks are reinforced through hands-on experiences, and also offer opportunities for undergraduate research. As part of the curriculum, students have to participate in an internship (3-6 months) outside campus (ranches, farms, agricultural organizations, veterinary clinics, etc.), where they are involved in "real-world" experiences, where students apply their knowledge and understand how to integrate service-learning opportunities. A major factor I have requested from the Faculty is an open-door policy for our students. I consider that Faculty accessibility fosters a supportive environment where professors are readily available for individual guidance, mentoring, and feedback. This "holistic" approach to mentoring is complemented by extracurricular activities (meetings, carnivals, clubs, teams, etc.), all of which are good examples of our efforts to support our students' mental health and well-being.

### **Experience in Fiscal and Personnel Management**

During my eight years of experience in a leadership position, I have been responsible for research and extension operating funds at the LSU AgCenter (\$1.5-2 million annually) and over \$2.8 million in research, extension, and teaching funding for the Department of Animal Sciences at NDSU. In both Institutions, fiscal responsibility and accountability are major issues, with justification and allotment of funding to Programs based on impact to stakeholders.

At the LSU AgCenter, I managed three employees at the Iberia Research Center (IRS) and four at the Dean Lee Research and Extension Center (DLREC). They provided support for my research and extension programs. As a faculty scientist at the LSU AgCenter, I successfully managed research teams in ruminant nutrition, grazing management, and grazing ecology, providing direction, resources, and mentorship to advance these programs. I built collaborative, interdisciplinary teams that included food scientists, forage agronomists, agricultural economists, ecologists, and animal scientists; more importantly, from different institutions within Louisiana and out of state. I was responsible for capital projects and investments related to beef cattle research and extension programs.

For several years now, NDSU has experienced a decline in undergraduate enrollment, which has had a significant impact on our teaching budget. In turn, this has added another layer of fiscal responsibilities since I needed to adjust faculty appointments, change job descriptions to staff members, and balance the department animal units' budgets (equine, swine, beef, dairy, sheep and research units such as the Beef Cattle Research Complex and the Animal Nutrition and Physiology Complex). The most difficult of these budget discussions was the Equine Unit's; however, with the appropriate approach to maintain the structure of it, reducing animal numbers, adapting fees, supporting the loaner program (horses from producers are loan to use in our Program), better administration of facilities use fees (including teams, external and internal programs, etc.), among other adjustments, we were able to balance the Unit's budget after more of a decade of annual deficits.

Starting in late 2022, recruitment efforts became a significant task for the department. I adjusted two faculty appointments so that they could concentrate on developing an undergraduate recruitment plan for the department. We added six recruitment events (two in North Dakota, two in Minnesota, one in South Dakota, and one in Nebraska), which the department funded. We also developed materials (factsheets, fliers, media posts) that have been used since then. Since 2023, we have increased our enrollment by 3%, following a period of constant decline since 2015.

At NDSU, we have created the Precision Livestock Technology Initiative (collaborating with industry partners such as 701x and Grand Farm, both located in the Fargo area, North Dakota), which has secured funding from commodity and state boards. In June 2025, we initiated the expansion of our swine unit, which is supported by donations from North Dakota crop commodity boards (for more information, please see Section E of my CV). We are building a 500-head weaning-to-finishing hog barn and retrofitting our existing barn to house 120 sows (up from the current 65 sows). Additionally, we are installing a classroom with a capacity for 50 people and a loading/unloading site for trailers and double-deck trucks (refer to the CV for further information, Section E). In addition to the swine barn, we are currently developing three capital projects: a smart dairy facility (utilizing robotics and a smart heifer development barn), a state-of-the-art feedlot barn (featuring precision feeding and management), and a new livestock arena to support our three land-grant missions.

As an Associate Program Leader and Department Head at these two institutions, I uphold the philosophy that successful teams are collaborative, integrated, and interdisciplinary. I facilitate faculty scientists, extension specialists, and agents in building and maintaining these teams and developing successful programs that address our mission in animal agriculture.

### **Strong Demonstrated Abilities as a Successful Communicator**

With 35 years of experience in research and extension in beef and sheep production systems, spanning my roles at INIA-Uruguay to becoming a faculty member in land-grant universities, including eight years in a leadership role, I have developed strong interpersonal and communication skills. My role has required effective engagement with diverse audiences, including students, stakeholders, alumni, donors, scientists, colleagues, the public, and parents. I excel in written and oral communication, delivering clear and persuasive messages tailored to each audience. My ability to foster positive relationships, facilitate collaboration, and communicate complex ideas accessibly has been integral to my professional success.

### **Experience in Land-Grant Universities, Extension and Research Programs Development with Revenue Generation**

I have 20 years of experience in the land-grant University system. Most of my research projects contained an outreach program (integrated projects). They were developed with a holistic approach to livestock and pasture management (more details on this work can be found in my CV). This allowed me to conduct applied and basic research on a large scale, helping not only to address the same issues that producers faced but also to study the interconnectivity between factors affecting the sustainability of production systems. Specific basic research was conducted in laboratories partnering in these projects (Southern University and University of Arkansas). At

the LSU AgCenter, I spearheaded the effort in developing three outreach programs: 1) Grazing School; 2) Artificial Insemination (AI) School; 3) Advanced Master Cattleman. These three programs were directed at producers, extension agents, and state/federal agriculture employees (e.g., NRCS, FSA). We successfully reached out to these stakeholders not only in Louisiana but also in neighboring states, including Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Alabama. In these Programs, the syllabi included in-person lectures, but we also used the flipped learning model to more efficiently utilize the time when in-person. These allowed for plenty of time of hands-on work at the Grazing School (building permanent and electric fences, moving animals in and out of pastures, estimating forage mass and stocking rates, weed ID and control, etc.), AI School (palpation, use of ultrasound, semen collection, freezing techniques, etc.), and at the Advanced Master Cattleman (diet formulation, marketing experience, etc.). The model in the first two Programs allowed for revenue generation, so that even though they were both developed as part of two NIFA-funded grants, which supported the first two years of their inception, they could remain operational after the expiration of the grants. The Advanced Master Cattleman was developed in response to stakeholder demand, who requested an in-depth understanding of nutritional and marketing issues. After moving to North Dakota, I have no longer been directly involved in these programs. Still, they have continued as originally planned and developed, and remain as successful as they were when first conceived.

At NDSU, I have worked in strengthening the state's livestock industry through educational outreach, partnership development, and producer engagement. The department serves as an academic unit for Extension specialists for beef cattle, sheep, and swine. I provided new leadership to programs such as Barbecue Boot Camp, while supporting organizations such as the North Dakota Stockmen's Association Convention, the North Dakota Livestock Alliance (NDLA), and the North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association. As a board member, I have worked closely with NDLA, providing academic support for their outreach efforts on services that remove barriers for producers considering livestock diversification. These services include free site analyses, examining everything from power availability to road infrastructure, as well as guiding farmers through complex permitting processes. Another milestone was securing support from the crop commodity councils (corn and soybean) to fund the expansion of the Swine unit on campus. Through all these activities, we have created measurable impacts on producer knowledge, industry collaboration, and public awareness of animal agriculture.

### **Roles Crossing Traditional Boundaries Between Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Areas**

My career, spanning 35 years, has been mainly dedicated to research and extension on how to positively impact the sustainability of the beef cattle and sheep industries. The evaluation of the impact of forage system on grass-fed beef production, consumer evaluation, beef quality, and muscle characteristics allowed me to better understand the characteristics of this product from the standpoint of its acceptance to consumers from different ethnicities (Carabante et al., 2018; Torrico et al., 2015; Torrico et al., 2014). Over the last 10-15 years, a growing support for studies on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has garnered our attention. We were able to secure funding to determine the impact of grazing systems and pasture types on these emissions.

Collaboration with Dr. J. Wang at LSU enabled us to make these determinations, resulting in one of the first reports from the Gulf Coast region (Scaglia et al., 2014). This research also laid the groundwork for future work on the use of various products to reduce GHG emissions (Mikhael et al., 2022; Meng et al., 2021). More importantly, this research demonstrated that reductions in methane production led to more efficient grazing systems, thereby increasing the profitability of livestock producers.

I am excited about the possibility of serving as Professor and Chair of the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences, and bringing my experience in leadership, research, extension, and collaboration to this role. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the position further. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guillermo Scaglia', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Guillermo Scaglia, PAS  
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North Dakota State University  
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