

# ORC Newsletter

University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

January 01 to 31, 2026



## UAF LOOKS FORWARD TO EXPAND PROFESSIONAL TIES WITH US INSTITUTIONS

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, held a meeting in Faisalabad with U.S. Consul General H.E. Stetson Sanders and discussed with him areas of mutual interest. The meeting focused on UAF's collaboration with the University of Florida and the University of California, along with key areas including climate-smart farming, cotton-related challenges, soybean production, groundwater assessment, small-scale farming, cutting-edge technologies, and other important agricultural sectors.

The Vice Chancellor emphasized the importance of faculty exchange programs and joint research initiatives to benefit from shared experiences and expertise, which would contribute to agricultural uplift and boosting rural economy. He also proposed revival of the Center for Advanced Studies in Agriculture and Food Security.

Director External Linkages Dr. Muhammad Tehsen Azhhar, Chairman Department of Agronomy Dr. Nadeem Akbar, Director CABB Dr. Bushra Sadia, and Dr. Nadeem Saddique from the Irrigation Department were also present at the meeting.



- UAF looks forward to expand professional ties with US institutions
- UAF signs LoL with University of Agriculture, Sawat
- UAF and Uzbekistan to explore strategic cooperation
- PHEC selects UAF as lead University in two and partner in five R&D Clusters
- AUB students depart after imparting one month internship at UAF
- UAF to strengthen its managerial and administrative wings
- Prof. Dr. Sultan Habibullah Khan takes reins as Director ORIC

Inside

# NEWS

## UAF SIGNS LoI WITH UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, SAWAT

In a significant move to strengthen agricultural education and research across provinces, the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad and the University of Agriculture Swat have inked a Letter of Intent (LoI) to foster collaboration in teaching, research, and faculty and student exchange.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali and UOAS Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Dawood Jan signed the agreement. The agreement brings together UAF, premier and top-ranked agricultural institution, and UOAS, a vital public sector university in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Under the terms of the LoI, both institutions have agreed to a collaborative arrangement designed to enhance their respective academic programs. Student and Faculty Exchange Program facilitating the mobility of scholars and students between Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to share knowledge and cultural experiences. Collaborative teaching and training activities will further the professional development of



staff and students.

The initiative was facilitated by focal persons and teams from both institutions. From UAF, the team included Dr. Sadaf Mahmood (Chairperson/Focal Person, Dept. of Rural Sociology, Dr. Muhammad Atif, Dr. Asif Kamran (Registrar), and Dr. Muhammad Tehseen Azhar (Director, External Linkages). From UOAS, Dr. Hafiz Khurram (Focal Person) and Dr. Ibrar Ul Haq (Deputy Registrar) coordinated the process. Other distinguished participants were also present.

## UAF AND UZBEKISTAN EXPLORE STRATEGIC COOPERATION

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, convened a productive meeting with a delegation from Uzbekistan, led by the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Jamshidjon Abduzukhurov, accompanied by Dr. Diyor Juraev and Mr. Saeed. The dialogue centered on exploring new avenues of mutual cooperation in agriculture, advanced research, higher education, and technology exchange. Both sides expressed keen interest in building collaborative frameworks that would not only strengthen academic and scientific linkages but also contribute to addressing pressing agricultural challenges faced by both nations. The meeting underscored the critical role of international partnerships

in fostering innovation, enhancing food security, and promoting sustainable farming practices. By sharing expertise and resources, Pakistan and Uzbekistan aim to accelerate progress in areas such as crop improvement, climate resilience, and modern agri-technologies. The interaction also highlighted the UAF commitment to expanding its global footprint through meaningful collaborations that benefit farmers, researchers, and students alike. The partnership with Uzbekistan marks another milestone in UAF's journey toward sustainable agricultural development and international recognition.



## PHEC SELECTS UAF AS LEAD UNIVERSITY IN TWO AND PARTNER IN FIVE R&D CLUSTERS

The University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF) has marked a remarkable academic milestone under the Punjab Higher Education Commission's (PHEC) Thematic R&D Clusters (ODP Scheme FY 2025-26). PHEC has selected UAF as the Lead University in two thematic R&D clusters, Food and Nutrition and Migration and Labour Affairs, while also recognizing UAF as a Partner University in five strategic clusters including Climate Change, Public Policy and Economics, Renewable Energy, Water, and Education under the Other Development Projects funding framework. This monumental achievement is the outcome of years of sustained investment in faculty development, research culture, interdisciplinary programs, and institutional systems. These foundational efforts have enabled UAF to excel in today's competitive, merit-based evaluation framework. The success reflects institutional strength built in the past, effectively leveraged in the present, and now being carried forward under the dynamic leadership of Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, Vice Chancellor UAF, aligning the University's research agenda with provincial and national priorities. Under this framework, PHEC finances and supports universities in Punjab for initiatives such as research clusters, scholarships, and institutional development. At UAF, Dr. Sadaf Mehmood, Chairperson Department of Rural Sociology, will lead the Migration and Labour Affairs cluster, while Food and Nutrition will be headed by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Issa Khan, Director General NIFSAT. Among the five clusters where UAF is a partner, Dr. Muhammad Zaman, Director WMRC, will represent UAF in the Water cluster alongside other sister universities, Renewable Energy will be represented by



Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naveed, Director Punjab Bioenergy Institute (PBI), Education by Dr. Alhafiza Shafia Tehseen Gul, Director Academics, Climate Change by Prof. Dr. Abdul Wakeel, and Public Policy and Economics by Prof. Dr. Asif Kamran, Director Policy, Law and Governance Center. Congratulating the UAF community, Prof. Dr. Sultan Habibullah Khan, Director ORIC, described this mega achievement as a gratifying outcome of the capacity built over the years by former Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan (HI, SI), who played an instrumental role in strengthening the University's academic and research foundations to pitch themselves in a competitive environment.

## CAPACITY BUILDING SESSION AT ENGRO LEARNING CENTRE

Engro Learning Centre UAF organized a capacity-building session for Agricultural Officials (BPS-17 to 19) from the Agriculture Department currently undergoing mandatory training with Professional Training and Skill Development Center (PTSDC-UAF).

Under a public-private partnership, the EFERT team shared insights on Engro Fertilizer's product portfolio, FCO, innovative nutrient solutions, and their role in enhancing crop productivity and food security.

A valuable step towards knowledge sharing, collaboration, and sustainable agriculture in Pakistan.



## AUB STUDENTS DEPART AFTER ONE MONTH INTERNSHIP AT UAF

University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) proudly hosted students from the American University of Beirut (AUB) for a one-month internship program focused on learning innovation, modern agriculture, research, and academic collaboration.

Upon successful completion of the internship, the students held a meeting with Vice Chancellor UAF, Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, where meaningful discussions were held on academic excellence, innovation in agriculture, and international academic cooperation. On this occasion, Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Ali presented certificates to the interns in recognition of their learning and engagement. Throughout the month, the students actively interacted with UAF's academic community and gained valuable hands-on exposure to Pakistan's agricultural education and research ecosystem.

During their one month stay at UAF the students



held an orientation meeting at ORIC and was briefed about the overall R&D activities of the UAF followed by their engagements in Faculty of Agri. Engineering & Technology. Such international academic engagements under the leadership of Professor Dr. Zulfiqar Ali play a vital role in strengthening global academic linkages, promoting cross-cultural learning, and advancing innovation in agriculture.

## UAF TO STRENGTHEN ITS MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WINGS

The University of Agriculture Faisalabad has mapped out a comprehensive strategy to further strengthen its managerial and administrative wing with the focus on timely service delivery, transparency and smart working, helping to become a mature and exemplary organization of the country.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali said this while addressing at the participants of five-day national outreach program for university management arranged by UAF in collaboration with National Academy of Higher Education, HEC.

He added that UAF has implemented e-Filing and Office Automation System (eFOAS), ensuing e-tracking of files, operational and cost efficiency, data security and merit-based governance. He said the agriculture sector is backbone of our economy and UAF had played a pivotal role in the agricultural uplift. He emphasized that initiatives,

including climate resilient varieties, strong academic industry and others are survival strategies designed to bridge the yield gap and ensure national food security.

National Academy of Higher Education Dr Munir Ahmad said that training was meant to further polish the skills as a step towards smart working. He added that renowned resource persons will enlighten the participants about modern administrative trends.

Director Academic Dr Hafiza Shafia Tehseen Gul said that 30 university administrate staff is being imparted training. She added that second cohort of the training will also be held in the months of come. Dr Rao Zahid Abbas told that during 2025, UAF witnessed Rs 200 million added to UAF research portfolio. Registrar Dr. Asif Kamran said that all-out efforts were being made to address the issues of campus community.



## PROF. DR. SULTAN HABIBULLAH KHAN TAKES REINS AS DIRECTOR ORIC

Following the notification issued by the Directorate of Human Resource, Prof. Dr. Sultan Habibullah Khan took charge of new assignments as Director ORIC. A distinguished biotechnologist whose illustrious academic and research career spans more than two decades, earned his PhD in Plant Sciences from the University of Manchester, England, in 2004, and has since been a part of the faculty at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF). His postdoctoral journey includes prestigious appointments as a Visiting Scientist at the University of California, Berkeley, and as a Teaching Consultant at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman, experiences that enriched his global perspective and scientific expertise. Currently, serving as a Professor at the Centre of Agricultural Biochemistry and Biotechnology (CABB), UAF, Dr. Khan has made pioneering contributions in plant biotechnology, breeding, genetics, and molecular biology. His research is particularly focused on tailoring climate-resilient crop varieties through advanced breeding techniques and genome engineering, thereby addressing the pressing challenges posed by environmental change and food security. Before assuming his present role as Director, Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), UAF, Dr. Khan successfully led the Center for Advanced Studies in Agriculture and Food Security (CAS-AFS) for more than four years. His leadership was instrumental in transforming a concept note into reality as establishment of CAS-AFS by USD 30 million. This achievement stands as a testament to his vision, professional command, and multifaceted expertise in institutional development and scientific advancement. Dr. Khan's academic excellence has been recognized through numerous national and international scholarships and accolades, including the Research Productivity Award



(2014). He has authored more than 80 scientific publications and two books, alongside contributing chapters to textbooks and publishing in renowned international journals. His growing citation record and H-index reflect his scholarly impact and influence within the global scientific community.

Beyond his research and leadership roles, Dr. Khan remains an active member of elite international forums of biotechnologists. His commitment to advancing agricultural biotechnology continues to foster innovation, collaboration, and excellence at UAF and beyond, positioning him as a leading voice in shaping sustainable solutions for global agriculture.

**Database development would remain foremost priority, Dr. Sultan Habibullah Khan**

In his maiden meeting with the ORIC staff, Dr. Khan underscored the importance of developing a comprehensive database that would enable faculty members to update and manage their significant professional achievements. He emphasized that such a system must ensure the rapid retrieval of verified information for onward submission to national and international ranking agencies, as well as other stakeholders. Dr. Khan urged the staff to devise and implement action plans aligned with the Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) of the office, which serves as a driving force for institutional growth and development. He further tasked the office with refining Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure the smooth organization of seminars, workshops, conferences, annual functions, competitions, and festivals. Highlighting his vision, Dr. Khan declared that database development would remain his foremost priority, as it would provide real-time data essential for compilation and transmission to funding bodies and ranking agencies. He anticipated that this initiative would significantly enhance UAF's standing at both national and international levels. The ORIC staff, in turn, expressed their full commitment to translating this vision into reality within the shortest possible time.

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Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali  
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+92419200183, +92419200997  
oric@uaf.edu.pk  
[www.facebook.com/oric](http://www.facebook.com/oric)