

The AEC Department Review

Fall 2007

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New science education Web site launches

by Aaron Kemmer

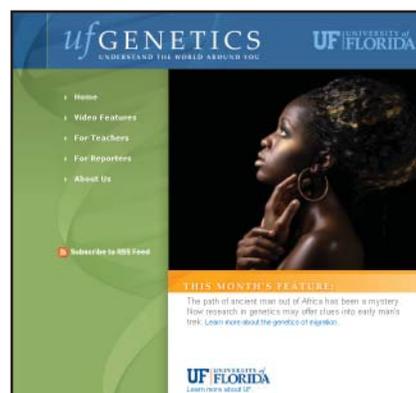
The University of Florida's Scientific Thinking and Educational Partnership Program is changing the way people learn about science.

STEP recently launched ufgenetics.com, an online video Web site that helps teachers and media professionals learn more about genetics. In turn, hopefully these groups will help students and the public make better decisions in areas that directly affect them.

"Genetics affects a lot of what we do," said STEP program coordinator and ufgenetics.com Web site developer Lisa Hightower.

"It used to be that genetics was so separated from a normal person's life that it didn't matter. But now, genetics is popping up more and more in society. It's in the food we eat through genetic modification; it's discussed in the political fronts with stem cell research as a hot topic; it's everywhere."

In addition to the videos, ufgenetics.com also includes news feature stories, photographs, print materials and lesson plans for high school teachers.



The ufgenetics.com Web site features videos, news feature stories, photographs, lesson plans and downloadable print materials to inform people about genetics.

"The content and lesson plans are mainly geared towards high school students, although it could be used by any teacher," said STEP co-director Ricky Telg.

By making the video features brief—lasting three to five minutes each—STEP has created a way for teachers to inform their students about genetics and science at UF.

With the lesson plans and videos on the

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External team completes department review

by Stephen Noble

The University of Florida's Agricultural Education and Communication Department has completed its external review.

The review team, comprised of five representatives of major land-grant universities across the country, read through a comprehensive written description of the department's programs prior to the team's site visit in March. Once on campus, they met with administrators, faculty and students.

Each member analyzed the department for a strong representation of academic,

Extension and research programs.

The review took many months to prepare for and required a small team of AEC faculty to produce the nearly 160-page review syllabus used by the review team.

"I don't think departments look forward to a review because of all of the hard work that it takes to prepare for it," said AEC professor Ricky Telg, who led the syllabus-writing team. "But the process is very rewarding because of everything you learn about your own department."

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Stedman returns to University of Florida roots

by Micah Scanga

After leaving Gainesville for a while, Nicole Stedman is now back in familiar territory.

Agricultural education and communication assistant professor Stedman is working at the university at which she attended for her undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees.

"This is my home away from home," Stedman said. "I had a connection with this department. These are my friends, peers, and I enjoy working with these people."

Her office provides a welcoming environment, with pictures of family, friends and three UF degrees hanging on the wall, a candy bowl and curtains that offer a homey touch. Gator memorabilia are scattered throughout the office and cover her desk.

"Students see pictures of my kids and what I find important in my life," Stedman said.

Her bookshelf, stretching for almost

an entire wall, is covered with books on leadership theory.

"I want people to have the notion that leadership is attainable as well as complex," she said. "I want to increase the reputation of our leadership, so that when people think about leadership and leadership instruction, they think of AEC."

Stedman teaches undergraduate- and graduate-level leadership development courses in the department.

Stedman was promoting the UF leadership development program, even when she was employed at Texas A&M University as an assistant professor before beginning her position at UF this fall.

"Dr. Stedman is the reason that I am at the University of Florida," said UF graduate student Rochelle Strickland, who came to UF in fall 2006. Stedman was one of Strickland's undergraduate professors at Texas A&M. "I went to



Nicole Stedman

talk to her about graduate school, and she recommended UF."

Strickland said she was excited to learn that Stedman, her professor from Texas A&M, would begin working at UF in August.

"I had her as an undergraduate professor at Texas A&M," Strickland said, "and now I have her as a graduate professor at UF."

Stedman said she loves to teach. She also enjoys Gainesville, and because she was married and had children in Gainesville, she plans to stay in the city for a long time.

Harder finds perfect fit with AEC department

by Amanda Allex

University of Florida assistant professor Amy Harder has experienced the ups and downs that come with finding that perfect job.

Harder believes she has finally found her perfect job, at UF. She started in July.

Harder is currently in charge of overseeing the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication's Extension education program. She immediately felt drawn to the family-like atmosphere among the department's faculty and staff.

"Everybody made me feel very welcomed, very interested in having me come here. It was a very warm, friendly atmosphere," Harder said.

Harder credits much of her success to having good discipline and a competitive approach to life.

"I impose high standards for what I expect on myself, and I am very competitive with myself and against those standards," Harder said.

Growing up in a small suburb in Chicago, Harder described her interests as being somewhat unique

from the rest of her family. Her father, a businessman, and mother, a homemaker, showed very little interest in agriculture.

Harder began her studies at Colorado State University where she pursued a bachelor's degree in equine science, with an industry concentration. She graduated Colorado State with cum laude honors.

Faced with the decision to find a job or continue her education, Harder recalled an introductory class that had sparked her interest in Extension. A month after completing her bachelor's, she began a Master's of Agriculture, concentrating on Extension education, at Colorado State.

Upon graduating, Harder found no openings for an Extension position in Colorado. Instead, she took a job working as an inventory manager at a local veterinary supply company. Harder worked there for a year, but was not happy with the position.

"It was promised to be something more than it was, which I think is something fairly common for people



New AEC faculty member Amy Harder with her husband Bret

who are starting in their first job out of college," Harder said.

Harder then applied for and received an Extension position in Boulder County, Colorado, working as the 4-H youth, leadership development, and outreach agent.

"We had a couple things for Extension that required me to be on campus and when I was up on campus it was like, 'Wow, I really miss being here,'" Harder said.

After three years as an Extension agent, Harder went back to college and received her doctorate in agricultural education at Texas A&M University.

Student secretary promotes March of Dimes

by Jennifer Bensted

Juggling the work of being a student, secretary and intern takes a great deal of time and dedication, but one University of Florida student is succeeding in performing all of these responsibilities well.

Amanda Brumby, 23, communication and leadership development major, is the part-time secretary for the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication. She answers phones, files paperwork and is responsible for assisting guests who visit the department.

"We are so fortunate to have Amanda's assistance in the department," said department chairman Ed Osborne. "She's a very professional and conscientious member of our team and provides a welcoming smile and helpful response to everyone who stops in 305 Rolfs Hall."

She also is interning at the North Central Florida March of Dimes, an organization that has played a pivotal role in her and her family's lives.

Brumby's niece, Jada, was born two months premature and has undergone 14 surgeries because she was born with Vacterl association, which can consist of cardiac defects and vertebral, limb and kidney abnormalities. The March of Dimes

was there to support Jada and her family.

"Every week Jada had a new pair of socks or a hat knitted by volunteers from the March of Dimes," Brumby said.

The March of Dimes helped Jada and her family financially, as well as emotionally, through this experience. Jada became an ambassador for the March of Dimes and, in the process, inspired many, including Brumby, to support the cause.

"This organization runs off of interns and volunteers," Brumby said. "Without these individuals, March of Dimes would not carry on."

As part of Brumby's internship, she will help run the March of Dimes' annual WalkAmerica in Gainesville. This national event raises millions of dollars to help fund research to improve the health of babies.

Helping to coordinate WalkAmerica is just one of the many tasks Brumby lends a hand with at the local March of Dimes chapter.

"I do everything, from stuffing



Jada Brumby (right) was Amanda Brumby's (left) inspiration for becoming involved with the March of Dimes.

Erica Der, Christy Windham and Melissa Hinton (l-r),

envelopes, writing cue cards for television commercials and creating brochures," Brumby said. "I absolutely love it."

Brumby aspires to work for the March of Dimes in the future. Although few individuals actually are paid employees of the organization, she hopes one day she can be one of them.

"Amanda's desire to learn is as strong as her passion for the mission of the March of Dimes," said Cherie Rubin, youth and development director of the March of Dimes chapter in Gainesville. "She is a fantastic addition to the team."

Place becomes Extension associate dean in Maryland

by Aaron Kemmer

Nick Place is the new associate dean and associate director for University of Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Place, who was a faculty member in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication for the past eight years and served as graduate coordinator for the past several years, started his new position this fall. Place also coordinated the Program Development and Evaluation Center for the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time at UF. I loved what I did and the people that I worked with," Place said. "This

new position provided me with a great opportunity to move into an extension administrative role."

The people he worked with, both graduate students and faculty members, loved working with him as well.

"One of the reasons I came in as a grad student was to work with Dr. Place," said agricultural communication graduate student Lisa Hightower. "He got me interested in Extension and the impact it has on the general public."

According to those who knew him, Place's dedication to both his students and the betterment of Extension education makes

his departure even harder for the department.

"You always have mixed feelings when someone like Nick Place leaves," said agricultural education and communication department undergraduate coordinator Ricky Telg. "You're sad for loss to the department, but happy he's moved on to a higher administrative position."

Along with the faculty and staff, the students will miss him too.

"It's bittersweet," said agricultural communication graduate student Courtney Meyers. "I'm glad I was here and got to know him, and I'm really proud he gets to help Maryland's Extension Service."

AEC students participate in CALS Ambassadors' trip to Egypt

by Rachel Berry

A group of 17 College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Ambassadors, including five from the Agricultural Education and Communication Department, traveled to Egypt for the first CALS Ambassadors international trip.

The five ambassadors from the department were Erica Der, Melissa Hinton, Jacob Raburn, Amie Taylor and Christy Windham.

The ambassadors, along with CALS Dean Kirby Barrick and former director of student development Chris Vitelli, visited Cairo, Luxor and several historical sites for 12 days in May.

Before the group left, they participated in five weeks of classes to get ready. Communication and leadership development junior Der said the classes prepared her well for the journey to Egypt.



agricultural education and communication students and CALS Ambassadors, pose in front of the Sphinx.

"Every week we took a class to prepare us for culture shock," Der said. "We would have guest speakers and cover a different topic such as food, clothing and religious views."

The group visited two universities in Egypt and was able to see how the everyday lives of Egyptian college students compared to their own.

Windham, a leadership development graduate student, said her interaction with Egyptian students was the most rewarding part of the trip.

"One student asked me about the war in Iraq," Windham said. "It was the big elephant in the room that nobody wanted to talk about. But after talking, we understood that we were all similar in that we want peace."

Der agreed that the best part of the trip was experiencing another culture. She said that knowing she will be able to apply the experience to her time as a CALS Ambassador and a University of Florida student was rewarding.

"I think that the experience opened up my eyes to how big and small the world is," Der said. "It makes you appreciate the diversity around us."

Thoron gains international teaching experience

by Toccara Shaw

Teaching in the United States may have its rewards; however, for one University of Florida graduate student, the experience of teaching in Egypt may be a little more rewarding.

Andrew Thoron, a doctoral student in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, hosted a series of training workshops for the faculty of Egyptian universities and high school Agricultural Technical School (ATS) instructors this summer.

Thoron was part of the project Developing Supervised Experience Programs for ATS Students in Egypt, which focuses on the agricultural development of Egyptian students

based on agricultural curricula and concepts.

"My portion of it was to go over and actually host a series of workshops that were more like trainer-type workshops, in which we trained Egyptian university faculty about specific concepts," Thoron said.

Workshop activities provided curriculum and course development and active teaching workshops for faculty members from five Egyptian universities in animal sciences, horticulture and agricultural business.

Two of the workshop objectives were to plan and conduct effective agricultural internship programs

and establish a Technical Internship Center for the Agricultural Technical Schools.

The Developing Supervised Experience Programs for ATS Students in Egypt project prepares Egyptian students for internships and future successful careers in the field of agriculture, he said.

"We want to develop some type of internships to where the students can go and work



for people in the industry or work for a specific production farmer and learn actual on-the-job skills," Thoron said.

Thoron said the experience in Egypt gave him the opportunity to understand the diversity in people and culture while brushing up on his teaching skills.

"I was looking forward to the international experience with seeing the pyramids and the tombs," he said. "But after working with university faculty and high school teachers over there, they were so accepting and motivated to learn and that turned out to be my favorite part."



Andrew Thoron conducts a workshop with Egyptian university faculty members.

Eckhardt attends student conference in St. Croix

by Amanda Burlison

St. Croix is not only a beautiful island in the Virgin Islands, but it also has a rich agricultural heritage, which one University of Florida student discovered.

Allison Eckhardt, a UF graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, was able to see the island's agriculture features first-hand when she attended the Caribbean Council for Higher Education in Agriculture's (CACHE) Faculty/Student Exchange Conference in St. Croix.

Eckhardt was the first UF student to participate in the CACHE Exchange Conference. One week before the conference, she was asked to attend. Since her schedule was open, she agreed.

The conference, hosted by the Research and Extension Center in St. Croix, consisted of six students and one faculty member from universities in South America and the Caribbean, including the countries of Trinidad, Barbados and the Dominican Republic.

"It's about meeting other people

from different areas that have similar agriculture," Eckhardt said.

She toured St. Croix while learning about its agriculture and the many programs and services sponsored by the Extension Service.

"We got to see the Senepol cows," Eckhardt said, "which were developed on the island."

Eckhardt, along with the rest of the group members, were able to tour with vegetable producers on the island, learning about the varieties of vegetables grown there.

"A great deal of research is being done on the island," she said.

Currently research is being conducted on tilapia, native trees, papayas and hydroponics.

During her visit, Hurricane Hugo swept by the island. The group's plans were canceled for two days.



University of Florida student Allison Eckhardt traveled to St. Croix for the student exchange conference.

"It was interesting to see an island get ready for a hurricane," she said.

Overall, Eckhardt enjoyed her time spent in St. Croix.

"I'm so thankful I got a chance to experience this program," Eckhardt said. "Getting to meet students from all over the Caribbean was extremely rewarding."

Hartmann makes strides for Ethiopian farmers

by Erica Der

From sipping world-famous coffee to learning from the growers who produced the coffee beans, Marta Hartmann experienced it all on a recent trek to Africa's oldest country, Ethiopia.

Hartmann, a lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, spent three weeks in the Horn of Africa helping Ethiopian farmers to "identify and manage local agricultural and social innovations."

The trip was sponsored by an initiative through PROLINNOVA, a non-governmental organization which stands for PROMoting Local INNOVation. PROLINNOVA brought together 18 individuals, including Hartmann, from countries such as Bolivia, Nepal and the Philippines, to participate

in a program called "Participatory Innovation for Development: A Training of Facilitators."

"Our task was to conduct need assessments at the individual, community and organizational levels," Hartmann said.



Dr. Marta Hartmann (front, center) and 17 agricultural representatives from around the world met with Ethiopian farmers to enhance the practices of farmers in local communities.

She and her group traveled to the town of Ambo to meet with local farmers and community members to develop ways to improve leadership, engagement and linkages between agricultural stakeholders.

The work was arduous and time-consuming, as the participants worked six days a week to strengthen facilitation skills and then carry those skills to the local communities, Hartmann said. However, she felt the payoff for such an effort was well worth it.

"I came back so stimulated intellectually and reenergized from this process because you see the change that you are making at all levels," she said.

Once the needs assessments were completed, the participants handed off their findings to PROLINNOVA to carry out the recommendations through new programs and initiatives.

Ball, grad students prepare for Disney marathon in January

by Sallie Ann Sims

The best birthday present that Dr. Anna Ball will be asking for is to complete a 26.2-mile marathon.

Ball, assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, is training with three graduate students in the agricultural leadership graduate program for the Walt Disney World Marathon, taking place on Jan. 13, 2008, which is also Ball's birthday.

The 15th Walt Disney World Marathon will take place at all four of Disney's theme parks in Orlando. The race will begin in Epcot, continue through the Magic Kingdom, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Disney's MGM Studios, and then the runners will cross the finish line back in Epcot.

"The very first time I will experience Disney, I am going to run through it," said graduate student Marlene von Stein.

Graduate students Crystal Mathews, Rochelle Strickland and von Stein, along with Ball, are encouraging each other as they train for the marathon.

Strickland introduced the women to the marathon. She asked von Stein, her current roommate, to support her while she prepared for the run.

"At first I thought she was crazy," von Stein said. "As I found out more about it, I thought that if Rochelle can run a marathon, so can I."

Since then, they have recruited Mathews and Ball to train alongside of them.

Each woman is following a strict training regimen to prepare themselves for the 26.2-mile marathon.

Preparing for a marathon takes discipline and stamina. It's also about getting a body in shape and prepping the mind.

The women have changed their eating patterns to build up their strength and have been drinking more



Dr. Anna Ball (left) and graduate student Marlene von Stein (right), along with with Crystal Mathews and Rochelle Strickland, are training for the 15th Disney Marathon in January.

fluids. They have gradually increased the overall weekly distance that they run, in order to build up endurance. They have been making two long runs a week and two shorter runs to increase speed and stamina.

"Running is tough on your body; it's a psychological thing. It hurts and it's hard to make your body want to do it," Ball said. "But there is such a cool endorphin rush. I feel amazing when I finish with a run."

This is the first time for all the women to compete in a marathon. They are setting goals for what they expect of themselves, Ball said.

"I am not worried about running those 26.2 miles in under three hours," von Stein said. "For me it's more about getting in shape, really getting your body to a place where you can build endurance. It's more of a fitness school."

With training underway and many miles left to run, these women have one goal in mind: to meet at the finish line and celebrate their hard work and Ball's birthday.

Harder leads Extension county review effort

by Seth Rogers

The Department of Agricultural Education and Communication is providing direction for the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' assessment of Florida's Extension programs through county Extension reviews.

County program reviews indicate areas that need improvement, as well as areas where insufficient funding is restricting a county's needs.

"County program reviews are one way we can show the public and legislators what their money is producing for the state of Florida," said AEC assistant professor Amy Harder, who is coordinating county Extension program reviews.

The reviews look at the specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of programs used in a particular county. Review teams take two to three days to make their evaluation and create a final report that is used to help improve the county's Extension program.

"It's an easy document you can hand to your county commissioner," Harder said. "It's very user-friendly and gets to the heart of the matter."

UF/IFAS Extension agents say that the careful review team member selection process allows teams to provide effective feedback on county programs. Review team members are selected based on their expertise, background and work history, in comparison to the county they are assigned to review.

"They are looking at every aspect," said Levy County Extension agent Anthony Drew. "Review teams aren't just looking at our performance, but the acceptance of our involvement in the community as well."

Drew said he appreciated how the review team evaluated whether his selected programs were meeting the specific needs of the community. He said he welcomed the constructive feedback that the county Extension program reviews provide.

Extension students assist with SFCC's Boo at the Zoo

by Kaloa Osteen

Kids dressed as ghosts, ninja turtles and monsters crowded the Santa Fe Community College Learning Zoo on Halloween.

The children were joined by assistant professor Amy Harder's Development and Role of Extension Education class from the University of Florida's Department of Agricultural Education and Communication for Santa Fe's annual Boo at the Zoo.

Amanda Alex was among the UF students who volunteered their time at

the zoo, helping organize and run the event.

"I had a lot of fun talking with all the kids and getting to see all of their creative costumes," Alex said.

Harder said volunteering at Boo at the Zoo allowed her students to practice what they were learning in class.

"I wanted the students to gain first-hand experience as a volunteer working the type of large, often chaotic event which is common within

Extension," Harder said.

The admission was one can of food per person.

"Our job was to collect the cans at the gate and then count and place them into boxes," Alex said.

Boo at the Zoo collected more than 6,000 cans of food for local food banks and charity organizations.

"Even though volunteering at Boo at the Zoo was an assignment for my class, I still enjoyed it. I felt like it was for a good cause," Alex said.

UF's GEAP program addresses global issues

by Graham Garby

The University of Florida's Gender, Environment, Agriculture, and Participation (GEAP) Program, operating out of the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, has been developing the skills needed by students to address current global issues, particularly those concerning the role of gender and participation in agriculture and the environment.

Marta Hartmann, lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, has been in charge of the GEAP program since 2003. Hartmann has been focusing the program to further the knowledge and practice of agriculture through the use

of gender analysis and participatory methods to better address sustainable development.

"Basically we are trying to further expand the knowledge and practice of agriculture and the environment to address gender issues by using participatory methodology," she said.

Participatory methodology is an approach to ensure that all actors or stakeholders are fully involved in a process.

"We focus on the roles that both males and females play in an issue," Hartmann said.

GEAP fosters the integration of individuals impacted by an issue to allow everyone's equal participation. Hartmann said disadvantaged groups,

such as women, can be overlooked in the development process in a society. GEAP serves as a forum for the exploration of gender and participation issues in these processes.

GEAP provides the services for UF students: seminars, gender analysis training, study abroad opportunities, discussion groups, and a graduate and undergraduate course. A certificate in Gender and Development also is available for graduate students studying development and its relationship to gender.

Hartmann's long-term vision for the program is to be recognized for its potential impact in addressing gender and participation in agriculture and environmental issues.

Department review

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The syllabus provided the external review team an extensive list of exactly what to look for and evaluate.

Creating the syllabus was quite a task to complete, but as Telg said, "There is a lot of self-revelation that goes into this."

While the syllabus team had six

months worth of work ahead, the job for the reviewers wasn't any easier. Every day of the review began on campus at 7 a.m. and didn't finish until 6 p.m., followed by several more hours of work each night in a hotel's conference room to prepare the team's oral report.

During the next two months, the review team filed a written report

which indicated the department strengths and areas of improvement.

Overall, the review team's report was very positive.

"The review team's report says we're doing a lot of things well," Telg said. "And the report provided us with several recommendations on how to make what we're doing better. Overall, I think everyone was pleased."

ufgenetics.com

From Page 1

Web site, teachers only have to go to the Web site and find a topic that is relevant to their class.

"It's a very simple process," Hightower said.

The site also provides news stories so media professionals can gain quick, relevant information that they can use

to develop stories on genetics-related topics.

"Because we are a public institution, this site is a public service to the community," Hightower said. "We aren't selling anything. We're just providing information and people respect that."

Although ufgenetics.com officially

launched Sept. 18, the featured videos were originally placed on YouTube as an initial testing of the materials.

One person who stumbled upon the videos was a sixth grade social studies teacher from Michigan. She used the videos in her class as a hook to get her students participating.

"Online video is extremely popular for high school students," Telg said.

Wedgworth Institute named outstanding leadership program

by Morgan Taylor

The Wedgworth Leadership Institute received high honors at the Association of Leadership Educators Conference this summer by being named the Outstanding Leadership Program in the nation.

The award was presented at the 2007 ALE Conference in Fort Worth.

The Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources program develops and refines the leadership capabilities of leaders in agriculture and natural resources.

"To acknowledge an agricultural leadership program and to be recognized by a group that is not agriculturally based is a big honor," said WLIANR program director Hannah Carter.

Recent alumnus David McDonald



WEDGWORTH
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

said the program was presented with this award because it is such a thorough and well designed program.

"The WLI is really set apart because of the broad spectrum of environments, from a community base in rural areas to the metropolitan areas, and on to the state and national levels," McDonald said. "Then it culminates with an international trip."

Nominations for the outstanding programs are submitted to the ALE awards chair and then selected by

the ALE Awards and Recognition Committee, based on four criteria: program design, the significance of results, the program impacts and the sustainability of the program.

"This is a one-time thing and we are just so proud that we could be given this award," said Carter, while admiring the etched glass plaque that was awarded to WLIANR.

The WLIANR has been impacting leaders since 1989 through its six graduating classes. McDonald said that he has seen a change in himself in different areas of his career, after his participation in the program.

"The networking that you gain from the leadership institute is a tremendous help," he said. "I am also more comfortable in environments that I wasn't in prior to WLI. I am a little more organized and willing to take on activities."

Distance ed master's program produces first graduates

by Kati McWaters

Fourteen students have obtained their master's degree in Agricultural Education and Communication without setting foot in a classroom, thanks to the Distance-Delivered Master Degree Program. The program graduated its first class in May.

Program coordinator and assistant professor Brian Myers is pleased that the program has helped students achieve their degrees.

"Basically, we have taken our current master's program and offered it via distance," Myers said.

The program is available to practicing agriscience teachers and

Extension agents and was created to allow working professionals in isolated areas the chance to receive their master's degree by completing online courses.

Mike Swindle, a high school agriculture teacher from Clewiston, Fla., and recent graduate of the program, had a "very good experience" while he was working toward achieving his master's.

"The Distance-Delivered Master's Degree Program is a great avenue to get a degree if you are a working professional," Swindle said.

DDMS students are held to the same standards as on-campus students. They had to submit the

same application to UF to be accepted to graduate school as students who physically attend the university.

The DDMS Program has created an avenue to earning a master's that did not previously exist.

"Living in Clewiston, there's no way that I could have driven to class at the UF campus or even the Extension campus in Fort Pierce," Swindle said.

Myers said the program has created new opportunities for students seeking their master's degree.

"The Distance-Delivered Master's Degree Program is a strong academic program that is serving the needs of our clientele," Myers said.

The AEC Review is produced each semester by students in AEE 4031 (fall) and AEE 4035 (spring).

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Two AEC undergraduates elected to national offices

Two Department of Agricultural Education and Communication students were recently elected officers of national student organizations.

Brady Revels

by Morgan Taylor

A small-town University of Florida student is taking off from school for a year to serve the National FFA Organization and take on a big-time responsibility.

Brady Revels' life changed on Oct. 27 when he was elected the FFA Southern Region National Vice President at the 2007 National FFA Convention. He was elected after competing against eight other southern region vice presidential candidates.



Revels' hometown of Bushnell, Fla., has a population of about 2,100. Now Revels serves more than half of a million FFA members in over 7,000 chapters.

"I look forward to the chance to help set policy for the most dynamic, greatest youth organization in the world," Revels said.

Revels is a sophomore UF student studying agricultural education and communication with a specialization in agricultural education. He will put his studies on hold for his one-year term with the National FFA.

Revels says that the one-year term includes traveling 120,000 miles, visiting 40 states and taking a 10-day trip to Japan. He will travel with the other five members of the national officer team.

The officer team will not only be traveling, they will be changing lives, he said.

"My goal is to further build and strengthen relationships among FFA members, teachers and industry leaders," Revels said.

Revels said that he has always wanted to be a national officer and knew that he would have to work hard to get there. Revels also served as the 2005-2006 Florida FFA State President.

Revels says he is prepared for his job and all the responsibilities that come with it.

"The strength of our organization lies in the potential of each and every student," Revels said. "It is my job to help students to develop their full potential for leadership, growth and success."

Katelyn Crow

by Graham Garby

Holding a high-ranking executive position in any sort of club or organization holds a certain amount of responsibility, let alone to be the vice president of a national organization, as well as the president for the local chapter. This just happens to be the job of the University of Florida's Katelyn Crow.



Crow is currently the second vice president of the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow and is also the president of UF's chapter, the Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow. Crow has been a member of ACLT for two years.

Being the second vice president for a national organization that oversees all of its affiliate chapters requires a lot of work, Crow said.

"Serving as second vice president for National ACT requires me to be responsible for many things, including

enhancing alumni relations, searching for internships with industry leaders and working the Critique and Contest, a contest where students send in their work to be viewed by national industry professionals who then pick a winner to gain national recognition," she said. "I also contact other schools with agriculture programs to try and get them involved with National ACT."

National ACT has 22 chapters and around 370 members across the country.

The UF chapter has been well represented with the national organization over the years.

"We have had five national officers," said ACLT adviser Ricky Telg. "Because we're the only chapter in the Southeast, we are somewhat isolated so when we have an officer elected from UF it is because of the positive presence that the student provides at the national meeting prior to the elections."

ACLT members win awards

The following UF Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow received awards in the 2007 National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow's annual Critique and Contest. Writing: Short Feature/ Personality: Sara Shepherd: 2nd

Publications: Newspapers, Tabloids and Newsletters: Sara Shepherd: 4th

Photography: Animal Photo: Megan Crandall: 2nd

Photography: Other Photo: Sara Shepherd: 1st

Photography: Digitally Manipulated Photo: Sara Shepherd: 5th

Layout and Design: Advertisements: Angelina Toomey: 2nd

Public Relations: Single Item Angelina Toomey: 4th

Department undergrad scholarships awarded

The AEC Department awarded more than \$16,000 in scholarships to deserving undergraduate students for the 2007-08 academic year.

Scholarship recipients are as follows:

Andrea Adams	Kati McWaters
Jenn Bensted	Allison Meharg
Rachel Berry	Jennifer Nobles
Sarah Burleson	Bonnie Pell
Katelyn Crow	Seth Rogers
Meaghann Faison	Brittney Saranko
Natalie Harrison	Alicia Sears
Carrie Howell	Katrina Sharp
Aaron Kemmer	Jenna Shelby
Bernie LeFils	Amie Taylor
Victoria Lyons	Amanda Warrensford
Lydia Masterson	

New Macintosh computer lab opens in department

by Chass Bronson

A new Macintosh computer lab is allowing students in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication to learn with the latest software and communication technologies available.

The new computer lab in Rolfs Hall features 20 iMac flat-screen computers with Adobe software.

The expansion of the lab was funded through STEP, Scientific Thinking and Education Partnership Program, a multi-dimensional education program housed in the AEC department.

STEP coordinator Lisa Hightower said the lab will contribute to professional development of faculty, staff and students. Instructional workshops will be conducted in the lab to teach multimedia skills to faculty members and students.

For professor Ricky Telg, the Macintosh lab is a dream come true.

"I am extremely excited about the lab," Telg said. "STEP provided us with the chance to do activities I have always dreamed of.

"The computers will be Internet capable, and the students will be able to use the best Apple has to offer on their projects and in their education."

The lab is scheduled to be completed by the end of the fall 2007 semester, and will consist of the iMac computers and a LCD projector or flat panel monitor.

"The new computer lab will be as high-tech as we can make it be," Telg said.

"The new lab will be one of



Students use the new iMac computer lab in Rolfs Hall. The lab was funded through the Scientific Thinking and Educational Partnership program.

the best outfitted labs on campus," Hightower said. "STEP invested in the latest and greatest design programs and really brought it all together."

New undergrad capstone course to kick off in spring

by Rachel Berry

Communication and leadership development students will be better prepared for the "real world," thanks to new curriculum changes.

In the spring semester, a new capstone course will be offered to Agricultural Education and Communication students specializing in communication and leadership development. The course will integrate the content and skills students learned through prerequisite courses.

"The focus of the capstone class will be to pull together the different aspects of a communication and leadership development student's undergraduate program," said Ricky Telg, a professor in the AEC department and one of the three instructors of the capstone course.

Telg will work primarily on the video aspect of the course. He will be joined by AEC assistant professor Nicole Stedman, who will focus on the leadership component of the course, and Lisa Hightower, the program coordinator of the Scientific Thinking and Educational Partnership within

the AEC department, who will work with students on digital layout and design.

Throughout the semester, other faculty members will do refresher lectures, giving students an opportunity to revisit major coursework before graduating.

"A lot of times students take classes, and after the semester is over, they forget what they learned," Hightower said. "Students don't use the skills and they then lose them. By taking this capstone course, students will be able to access all of those pieces in a unified way."

The capstone course will be an alternative to an internship, culminating the undergraduate experience, Stedman said. Because not all CLD students gain the same experience from internships, the capstone course will replace the internship requirement for graduation.

"People walk away from internships, and they may not really have a lot to show for it," Stedman said. "We figure this is the best way to get students that culminating

experience, but also show what they have done."

The capstone course will begin with students completing individual projects, and then halfway through the semester, the individuals will form groups putting their pieces together.

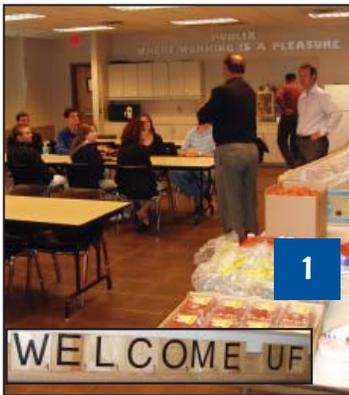
The groups will be responsible for creating videos, photographs, feature stories and promotional and educational materials.

By the end of the semester each student will have created a portfolio containing those materials, as well as a leadership journal and a project management plan, showing the leadership component of the course.

"This has been a course that I have dreamed about for probably the last eight years, but we have not had the opportunity to be able to offer it," Telg said. "We have the facilities now with the new computer lab, we have new equipment, and we have probably the closest to a state-of-the-art communication lab on campus."

The capstone course will only be offered during the spring semester to CLD students who will graduate that semester.

AEC Department Photo Album



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1 - Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow tour Publix's Jacksonville distribution facility in November. ACLT members also visited St. Johns & Partners public relations agency and were welcomed by large Scrabble tiles.

2 - "Team AEC" Heartwalk participants raised money for the American Heart Association.

3 - Nature photographer Carlton Ward speaks at a recent ACLT meeting.

4 - The department developed a Web site for the Florida Agriculture and Natural Resources Awareness Initiative. Several faculty and students were involved in the awareness program.

5 - ACLT members attended the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow Convention in Louisville. ACLT members pose next to a talking tree at a Louisville-area farm.

6-8 - Agricultural Education and Communication faculty, staff and students have some fun at the annual Kickball Tournament at Lake Wauburg. Alpha Tau Alpha sponsors the event each fall.

9 - AEC Advisory Council President Rod Hemphill (center) presents certificates of recognition for retiring Advisory Council members Casey Wohl (left) and Lisa Hinton (right).

AEC Department Photo Album



1-3 - Members of the department's Agricultural Education and Communication Society/Collegiate FFA traveled to Indianapolis in late October to attend the National FFA Convention. While there, the group worked the college's recruitment booth and participated in several National FFA activities.



connecting people and agriculture

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