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Recycling ruckus in Rolfs Hall

By Cristy Groce

A group of Agricultural Education and Communication graduate students are using their class project to bring convenient sustainability to Rolfs Hall.

Lisa Hightower, Tre Easterly, Lex Lamm and Amanda Brumby called their project "Recycling Ruckus," Hightower said. Tracy Irani's Methodology of Planned Change graduate class is where the idea for "Recycling Ruckus" came from, but it may not be where the idea is going to stop.

"We wanted to change people's recycling behaviors so they will recycle cans and bottles instead of just throwing them away," Easterly said.

He said preliminary research with faculty and graduate students in Rolfs Hall showed most people would recycle if it were made easier for them. "If it (recycling) can be



Diane Mashburn posts recycling facts on the recycling ruckus board on the third floor of Rolfs Hall.

For convenience, the group set out two bins on each of the three high traffic floors in Rolfs Hall where recycling bins did not exist, Easterly said. The bins were placed on the three floors that the group found had the most amounts of faculty and graduate students: floors two, three and four.

"Once the project got rolling the Institute of Food and Agricultural Resources' Green Team heard about 'Recycling Ruckus' and wanted to get involved," Hightower said.

So IFAS may be replicating this project in other buildings later, she said.

"I am hoping to see recycling like this spread to other buildings on campus. It will take people in those buildings to start cleaning up their own houses, because people won't clean up other people's houses," Hightower said.

Another key goal of the Recycling Ruckus project at Rolfs is educating the faculty, staff and students about how important it is to recycle, she said. This goal is based on the idea that students are the next generation of leaders taking UF into a sustainable future, Hightower said.

"I am seeing in my research the impact and the difference recycling can make," she said, "This is becoming important to me and motivating me to continue recycling."



Angelina Toomey joins the recycling ruckus by using the bins outside of Rolfs Hall to recycle an aluminum can.

convenient, easy and something people do not have to think about, then they will do it. But if they have to walk to a separate building or floor they won't," Hightower said.

AEC's student leaders

By Viviana Giraud

Students in the University of Florida's Agricultural Education and Communication Department are stepping into leadership positions. These students are applying what they learn in their courses to their extracurricular activities, through leadership in organizations and clubs.

Two students hold major leadership positions in the Agricultural and Life Sciences College Council (ALSCC).

Kelvin Moreno, an AEC senior, was elected ALSCC president in spring 2008. His duties include presiding over the meetings and representing the council.

"Being exposed to this kind of environment and enthusiasm for agriculture and policy has made me a better leader for my community and a savvier agriculturalist, equipping me with the proper tools and knowledge and molding me into the kind of agriculturalist I need to be to protect and further this industry for tomorrow," Moreno

said.

Moreno assists organizations within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CAL S). Moreno worked with the

"They strive to make the college better and take initiative in their work."

**-Cathy Carr
ALSCC adviser**

Agricultural Garden Club. He helped them acquire an annual budget for their operation and establish themselves as a formal student organization.

Another student from the department who is applying leadership and communication skills to a leadership role is Tom Adams. Adams, a junior majoring in communication and leadership development, was elected ALSCC treasurer in spring 2008.

"Tom and Kelvin are enthusiastic and

innovative when it comes to the council," said ALSCC adviser Cathy Carr. "They strive to make the college better and take initiative in their work."

"I've been lucky because my coursework has often helped develop skills to use in the various leadership roles I have filled," Adams said. "This has given me an in-depth experience in managing budgets within the college."

Moreno and Adams are examples of the students in the department who are making a difference in the college through leadership, Carr said. One of the courses that Adams is currently taking is AEE 3414: Leadership Development.

Nicole Stedman, Adam's leadership development professor, said students in her courses learn critical thinking and embrace the potential to be a leader. Also, she said that the course helps students take concepts and implement them in everyday situations.

UF students tackle national leadership responsibilities

By Steven Steiger

For students and parents looking for academics who embody the essence of initiative and achievement, they should look no further than the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida.

The AEC program has the distinction of having two students involved as leaders in their respective national organizations. AEC students Seth Rogers and Brady Revels represent UF through their prominent positions in separate renowned agricultural institutions.

Rogers, currently a senior, serves as the national editor of the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT)

Web site. Revels, a junior, acts as one of the vice presidents of the National FFA Organization, traveling the country and even abroad to attend FFA conferences and meet

corporate partners.

Rogers works to maintain the ACT Web site while developing new ideas to modernize its design, a responsibility that he said allows him some control over certain aspects of the organization.

"The ability to serve others gives you a sense of leadership," he said. "It provides you with an opportunity to show your true character on a national level and get name recognition in the field."

Revels said that his early experiences in leadership positions, specifically his obligations as a state FFA officer after high school, prepared him for his present role in the FFA.

Revels said he was proud to represent UF across the country through the organization.

"It's cool for me. I spend a lot of time at land grant universities, and to come from a university with a strong reputation like UF, it gives you automatic

credibility," he said. Both Rogers and Revels agree that all AEC students should engage in leadership activities as often as possible. In doing so,

it will facilitate their careers in agricultural education and communication.

"Other students should consider joining a national organization to better understand and appreciate the importance of leadership," Rogers said.



Brady Revels (top left) with his National FFA officer team.



Seth Rogers (back row left) with the National ACT officers.

"Seek out internships, job shadows, real-world experiences and knowledge about agribusiness if you want the best chance of succeeding in an agriculture-and communication-related profession," Revels said.

Going global

By Eddie Winkle

A new course in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication is aimed to educate students on being effective leaders in an increasingly global society.

Marta Hartmann's Global Leadership course was taught in fall 2008 and will be taught each fall semester.

"We have introduced a new dimension to our leadership curriculum," said Hartmann, an AEC lecturer.

The class is an upper division

undergraduate-level course and is intended for the Communication and Leadership Development students, and to enhance the minor in leadership.

"The world of work has been transformed," Hartmann said. "Today's world requires new types of leadership."

The class helps students become more aware of the impact of the global workplace, said Jeff Langille, a CLD major and a student in Hartmann's class.

"We could be doing business with

someone in Indonesia," Hartmann said. "Corporations are all over the world. They are becoming transnational."

Some of the course content includes helping students become literate in global policy and familiarizing them with 21st century leadership competencies, she said.

The necessity of the class focuses on the ever-present globalization of the workplace, and the need for leaders who understand how to adapt and interact in a globalized environment, Hartmann said.

AEC graduate students educated by international experiences

By Musa Farmand

Three graduate students from the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication traveled abroad to gain intercultural experiences they will remember forever.

Christy Windham, who is working on her master's degree in agricultural communication, spent a week backpacking



Christy Windham in Venice, Italy

through Italy, France and England over summer 2008. She and her friends traveled efficiently by backpacking with as little luggage as possible, packing moderate

lunches and staying in affordable hostels.

"Even if I could afford to stay in nicer hotels, I would definitely backpack again," Windham said. "It was what made the whole experience."

Windham said her most memorable experience was being proposed to by her boyfriend, Elio Chiarelli, in Venice, Italy, making her international experience one that she will cherish forever.

Anna Warner, a master's student specializing in agricultural education, traveled with the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' Ambassadors to San Jose, Costa Rica, over spring break in March 2008.

"I recommend a trip to Costa Rica. I would definitely go back, to study or for vacation," Warner said. "I encourage all students to consider studying abroad."

The purpose of the trip was for the students to gain experience in different areas of international agriculture. The students focused on five major areas of agricultural and natural resources: Tropical agriculture, tropical forests, protected land policy, ecotourism, and agribusiness and cooperatives.

"It really opened my eyes to a lot of different areas of international agriculture," Warner said.

Karen Cannon, a doctoral student in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, spent the end of her summer vacationing in London for two weeks.

"I spent some time growing up in London,



Karen Cannon posing in front of the Thames River in London

so I have family and friends that I stayed with," Cannon said. "Their approach to food and agriculture is very different."

Cannon said she spent her time enjoying the company of her family and friends, relaxing and reminiscing about her personal experiences as a child, comparing them to her experiences as an adult.

"When you travel as an adult, you can make a connection with what you're interested in," Cannon said. "For me, having seen these same things as a kid makes them even more special now as an adult seeing how they connect everything to life."

Hartmann learns mediation approaches in Italy

By Austin Irby

A University of Florida lecturer in the Agricultural Education and Communication Department learned a new approach to mediation and got a taste of Italian culture when she attended a conference in Bologna, Italy, in June.

Marta Hartmann's purpose in attending the seminar was to develop knowledge and learn the method for resolving conflicts preferred by the National Conflict Resolution Center.

"Mediation is an alternative approach to resolving all kinds of conflict," Hartmann said. "This includes environmental, family, health and community issues."

Hartmann applied the mediation method while learning it by using case studies and conducting mediation. She said the method

was very hands on.

The case studies were based on situations dealing with disputes or conflicts in different contexts, such as academia, family, community and religion.

The conference consisted of a two-week training program. Hartmann was one of 23 participants, representing several universities from the United States.

The program was a collaboration of three partners: the NCRC, the University of Bologna and San Diego State University.

One aspect of the conference was to learn Italian culture and current issues in Italy. Hartmann took field trips through the region of Emilia-Romagna, including a visit to two wineries.

"I was intrigued by Italians and the value they placed on food preparation and consumption," Hartmann said. "It is their favorite activity and a significant aspect of their culture."

Hartmann also visited San Marino, a country on the Italian peninsula, and met with government officials who discussed relations between San Marino and Italy.

"I definitely gained insight into the Italian culture," Hartmann said.

"I found the conference to be extremely valuable, particularly the final exercise," Hartmann said.

Since participating in the 2008 conference, Hartmann has been approached by the University of Bologna to facilitate sessions for the 2009 conference.

Active learning in Egypt

By Katelyn Harris

The Gator Nation is everywhere, including Egypt.

As part of the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities, the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has helped develop better agricultural education in Egypt.

In the summer of 2008, CALS dean Kirby Barrick traveled with AEC doctoral student Andrew Thoron and assistant professor of agricultural education Brian Myers to Upper Egypt to implement more tools of the Agricultural Exports for Rural Income program. The purpose of the trip was to build upon the progress of previous trips.

As part of MUCIA's five-year process, the focus of exposing university faculty to new teaching concepts was extended to high school teachers, enabling better education at a younger age. The overall goal is to help prepare a well-educated workforce for the agricultural economy of Egypt.

Since last year, the focus on improving agricultural education has transitioned from university faculty to high school faculty. Myers, Barrick and Thoron spent a day with

university faculty teaching new concepts and in the following days university faculty used the information from those workshops to train high school teachers.

Barrick said the schooling system in Egypt lacks programs for preparing high

school teachers of agriculture, as well as materials for effective teaching and learning. He also said that one of the goals of MUCIA is to get faculty to learn new teaching styles through active learning.

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Andrew Thoron (third from left), Dean Kirby Barrick (third from right) and Dr. Brian Myers (second from right) with Egyptian educators.

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Holly O'Ferrell: helpful and hardworking

By Lindsey Apuzzo

Agricultural Education and Communication Department administrative assistant Holly O'Ferrell has her hands full as a wife and mother of six.

"We're very busy," O'Ferrell said. "My husband and I are going in all directions all the time."

When O'Ferrell does have some free time, said she likes to spend time with her family.

"Three of my kids play volleyball, so we're always busy with that," she said. "We're very family-oriented."

O'Ferrell's six children range in ages from 19 months to 17 years old, but she also has dogs, cats, chickens, rabbits and is planning on getting a cow or a pig soon.

"It's like we have a little family farm," O'Ferrell said.

While in between volleyball practices, games and taking care of all the animals, the O'Ferrell family is currently in the final stages of building a new home in Alachua.

"It's been exciting watching the whole process from beginning to end," she said. "You can literally walk from one porch of our old house to our new porch."

Though the whole home building process

can be very stressful, O'Ferrell said she never lets it interfere with her work.

"I put people first, always others needs before mine," she said.

O'Ferrell interacts with students, faculty and staff on a regular basis and her "people person" charisma doesn't go unnoticed.

"Ms. O'Ferrell is always very helpful and delightful," said AEC undergraduate Erin Johnson. "She always has a smile on her face."

O'Ferrell shares her office space with fiscal assistant Rachel Harris in Rolfs Hall.

"Holly and I work

on different things together, so it is easy to turn my chair around and just ask her about whatever," Harris said. "I miss her when she takes time off."

Working so closely in their office together, Harris said she witnesses O'Ferrell's character and work ethic every day.

"Holly is caring, hardworking, and everything she does is fast and correct,"

Harris said. "She is a great supervisor; she's helpful and understanding, and she's always there when I need her."

AEC Department chair Ed Osborne said O'Ferrell is very dedicated to her work and does many things to proactively strengthen the AEC team.

"The great thing about Holly is that her work here in AEC is not just a job," Osborne said. "She feels ownership and pride in what we achieve together."

With that foundation in her work, all the other desirable traits one seeks in an employee just naturally follow in O'Ferrell, Osborne said.

"Holly's efforts always present the department in a highly professional manner, whether this work involves people in AEC or others across the campus or state," Osborne said.

O'Ferrell brings a positive attitude to work every day and is a pleasure to work with on any project, Osborne said.

For O'Ferrell, working hard and maintaining her relationships is a simple concept.

"I just try to treat people as I would like to be treated," O'Ferrell said.

Holly O'Ferrell is a busy mother of six but doesn't lose sight of always putting others first.



Holly O'Ferrell

Rolfs: under construction

By Jeff Langille

Rolfs Hall, one of the oldest buildings on the University of Florida campus, is adding new features to the second floor to benefit students and faculty members.

Jodi Modica and Marta Hartmann are two members from the Agricultural Education and Communication Department who made some office adjustments during the construction.

"The construction workers are installing a new air conditioning unit and updating the ceiling with new lights," said Modica, the department's academic support services coordinator. "They are ripping up the old carpet in the hallway to put in new tile and painting all of the doors."

Modica said that the construction on the second floor started in May and was supposed to be completely finished by October. She said her office is all

finished, but the rest of the construction will hopefully be done by the end of the year.

AEC lecturer Hartmann said she was excited when the construction was finished in her office because it was challenging to adapt to a temporary office upstairs without being able to get her books and files packed up in boxes.

"Looking at the construction on a positive side, I was able to rearrange my

office and clean it up to stay organized," she said. "We have to be patient with the challenges of change because they help us to be more adaptable and flexible."

Hartmann said the construction is great for the second floor because this was the last floor of the building to get upgraded.

"I feel more a part of a unit in the department because Jodi Modica and Dr. Nicole Stedman have offices right next to mine where we have a waiting room," she said. "The changes improved our appearance because students are more open to visit with better hospitality."



Photo provided by Jeff Langille

Workers repair Rolfs Hall's air conditioning and ceiling.

AEC spotlight: awards

American Association for Agricultural Education

Anna Ball, Outstanding Early Career Member Award

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Brian Myers, Food and Agriculture Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award

Kati McWaters, Essay winner for the USDA Outlook Forum Diversity Program

North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture

Ricky Telg, Southern Regional Outstanding Teacher Award

Grady Roberts, Teaching Award of Merit

Alpharma Video Contest

Congratulations to Lisa Hightower, Seth Rogers, Micah Scanga, Rusty Hartline, Kati McWaters, Rachel Barber and Katie Wimberly for placing **second** in the nation for their video entitled "Today's Agriculture."

National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow

Seth Rogers, elected National ACT Editor

Seth Rogers, video Production, first

Seth Rogers, web design, second

Allison Eckhardt, Katelyn Crow, Brandon Telg, Lisa Hightower, online publications, first

Katie Wimberly, photography (other photo), first

Toccaro Shaw, Katelyn Crow, Brittney Saranko, public relations (single item), second

Florida Nursery Growers and Landscapers Association

Angelina Toomey, FNGLA scholarship

Association for Communication Excellence

Tracy Irani, Excellence in Academic Programs

Lisa Hightower, Ricky Telg, Tracy Irani, Brian Myers, Gold Award

Courtney Meyers, Tracy Irani, Erin Eckhardt, Journal of Applied Communications' Article of the Year Award

Katie Abrams, Courtney Myers, Tracy Irani, Lauri Baker, Outstanding Graduate Research Paper

Katie Abrams, Outstanding Graduate Student Thesis

Alpha Gamma Rho

Grady Roberts, Grand President's Award for Outstanding Professional Accomplishments of an Alumni Under 40 Years Old

Institute of Food & Agricultural Scientists

Sebastian Galindo, IFAS International Student Award



Stock Exchange Photo



Each year at TailGATOR, CALS Alumni and Friends recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions to UF, IFAS, CALS, and the agricultural, natural resource, life sciences and related industries and professions.

The Horizon Award recognizes a UF/CALS alumnus who has completed his or her most recent UF degree within the last 10 years. The 2008 recipient is Emily (Eckhardt) Eubanks, BS '01, MS '04, of Micanopy. Eubanks is a graduate of the AEC Department.

Former AEC chair receives distinguished award

By Tom Nordlie

Carl Beeman, former chairman of the University of Florida's Department of Agricultural Education and Communications, has received the E.T. York Distinguished Service Award, to honor his contributions to the people of Florida through UF agriculture and natural resources programs.

Beeman received the award Nov. 21 at Rolfs Hall, during a department faculty meeting. His name will be added to the plaque commemorating all recipients of the award, which has been given to only a handful of individuals since 1983.

"If it hadn't been for Dr. Beeman, I might never have come to UF," said Jimmy Cheek, UF senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources. "Thanks to his efforts, the agricultural education and communications department had become one of the finest programs of its kind."

Beeman was department chairman from 1975 until his retirement in 1996.



Photo by Thomas Wright

Dr. Carl Beeman accepts his award from Dr. Jimmy Cheek.

Honors and awards to Beeman include the American Farmer Degree from the National FFA Organization, the UF President's Medallion for Distinguished Service, and the Southern Region Outstanding Service Award from the

National Vocational Agricultural Teachers' Association. He has also been inducted into the Florida Vocational Association Hall of Fame and the Florida FFA Hall of Fame.

In 2006, the Carl E. Beeman Scholarship and Student Enrichment Fund was established in his honor; it's awarded to Department of Agricultural Education and Communications undergraduates for academic achievement, leadership activities and professional potential.

He has written, edited and presented numerous educational documents including books, monographs, scientific papers, presentations and curriculum materials. He also served as associate chief marshal and chief marshal in UF commencement ceremonies for many years.

Beeman and his wife, Ruth, live in Gainesville and have two daughters, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

AEC student receives scholarship for research

By Jackie Eager

A University of Florida doctoral student received a \$12,000 scholarship from the National Cattlemen's Foundation this past summer to do her dissertation research.

Crystal Mathews, 25, a long-time cattlemaster and doctoral student in UF's Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, was awarded the prestigious W.D. Farr Scholarship this summer in Denver.

The W.D. Farr Scholarship is awarded each year by the National Cattlemen's Foundation to two graduate students across the nation whose research will benefit the beef industry.

"I feel blessed by the scholarship, and I am really thankful to the people that provided the opportunity and look forward to using it to offer valuable research back to the industry," Mathews said.

Her research is based on volunteer leadership in the beef industry. Mathews plans on developing leadership programs tailored to beef professionals to help prepare leaders in the industry.

"I am passionate about serving agriculture, but the beef industry in particular because that's where my roots are," Mathews said.



Photo provided by Crystal Mathews

Crystal Mathews received a \$12,000 scholarship from the National Cattlemen's Foundation to do her research on volunteer leadership in the beef industry.

"I want to work to do leadership programming and facilitation for agriculture organizations, particularly beef industry organizations."

Mathews, who was the first social science

award recipient, said she is glad to see that the beef industry is beginning to see the value and need for more volunteer leaders.

Mathews' adviser, Hannah Carter, assistant professor in agricultural education and communication, said she is excited and surprised about the recognition Mathews is receiving for her work. Carter was not surprised by Mathews' talent or knowledge but was surprised that the industry is acknowledging the need for social science.

"She has always been really focused on the beef industry, and the industry is recognizing the importance of leadership development in agriculture," Carter said.

The beef industry is a natural fit for Mathews who is following in the footsteps of her father and grandfather, buying her first cows at age 15 and being a long-time member of the NCBA. Mathews grew up being a junior member of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association and, while an undergraduate student at the University of Missouri, served as National Beef Ambassador and Missouri Beef Queen.

Focusing on floriculture

By Katelyn Harris

Students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences are taking part in focus groups to explain why certain students choose floriculture as a specialization of the environmental horticulture major.

Tracy Irani, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, is directing three different focus groups to research the floriculture specialization.

“We want to find out why certain students are choosing or not choosing to study floriculture,” Irani said. “The focus groups consist of three different groups of students: 10 students from the environmental horticulture major, 10 non-environmental horticulture major CALS students and 10 students from the Plants, Gardens and You class.”

Also helping direct the research are AEC graduate students Katie Abrams and Lauri Baker. The groups are spread out over two days and asked questions from a list of questions to discover their opinions about the

floriculture specialization.

The American Floral Endowment gave a grant to the University of Florida to explore why the area of floriculture is shrinking.

“The jobs are there, the people are there,

“We want to find out why certain students are choosing or not choosing to study floriculture.”

**-Tracy Irani
AEC associate professor**

but there’s a marketing problem,” Abrams said.

Abrams said that floriculture is a multi-faceted area of study and includes the aspects of plant science, business and retail sales and includes ornamental and flowering plants.

“The American Floral Endowment normally doesn’t fund social science research, but there is a growing concern because the major is shrinking,” Baker said.

Baker said that the industry includes growing, marketing, producing and managing the nurseries that grow the flowers.

“Because of the number of students in the environmental horticulture major (approximately 22), this research is important to determine why students are not specializing in floriculture,” Irani said.

The research will also help UF’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences gain information on why students have chosen the major they’re currently studying.

“This is a problem for many agricultural majors,” Abrams said. “Agriculture is not just plows and cows.”

Communication and leadership development program grows

By Dara Strickland

The Communication and Leadership Development program is making changes as a result of enrollment growth and changing curriculum needs.

The 2008 academic year saw the biggest incoming class ever, 28 students, since the program began three years ago. In its first year, CLD had a total enrollment of only about 25 students. Today, the program has a total enrollment of 47 students.

“With that many students, we had to make considerable changes,” said Ricky Telg, the department’s undergraduate coordinator.

This fall, Telg had to split his digital media production class into two groups with separate meeting times. They, along with his communication process in agricultural and life sciences class, had to move from Rolfs Hall to McCarty Hall because the classrooms in Rolfs were too small for the number of students.

“Thankfully the students were flexible,” Telg said.

The CLD program has expanded so much that admission into the leadership minor for non-CLD majors was suspended this fall until curriculum changes could be made to help control enrollment growth.

Telg said growth is expected to continue into the spring semester. To account for the larger classes, two CLD courses will each have two sections beginning in January.

“We’re running out of space,” Telg said. “It’s a good problem to have.”

The program is also experiencing change in the curriculum. Global leadership is a new class being taught this fall. The class teaches students how to lead in a global environment.

Another new addition to the program is the capstone experience course. Last spring, Telg, along with assistant professor Nicole Stedman and Lisa Hightower, coordinator of the Scientific Thinking and Education Partnership program, co-taught the course for the first time. Associate professor Tracy Irani and Stedman will be the lead instructors for the course in the upcoming spring semester.

Previously, an internship was required before students graduated from the program.

Telg and Irani noticed that some of the internships weren’t providing students with the experience they desired.

“That’s always the issue with internships. You never know what you’ll end up doing,”

Irani said.

The capstone experience course can be taken in lieu of or in addition to an internship and will provide students with an internship experience in the classroom.

“We want students to be able to have a semi-internship experience that we can oversee,” Telg said.

Two programs, agricultural communication and leadership education, were combined three years ago into the current CLD program as a result of small enrollments and similar course content.

“We went through a massive evaluation of both curricula, trying to determine if there was an overlap in courses and content,” Telg said.

Also, both programs had very few students enrolled; agricultural communication had nearly 20 and leadership education had only three or four.

Telg said that he thinks CLD was initially a program overlooked by potential students, but that the skills graduates walk away with are vital to the agriculture industry.

“Not only do you have to grow and produce the food, you have to communicate about it,” Telg said.

Educator comes “home” to the AEC department

By Kati McWaters

For one AEC associate professor, coming to the University of Florida is like “coming home.”

Grady Roberts, associate professor in the Agricultural Education and Communication Department, was a former AEC student and is returning to school, this time as an educator.

Roberts made the move from Texas A&M University to UF during the summer, and arrived shortly before classes began.

“The quickness of the situation was difficult,” Roberts said. “[But] it was an easy decision to come back [to UF].”

Roberts is no stranger to Rolfs Hall. He received all three of his degrees (bachelors, masters and doctorate) from the AEC Department.

Roberts’ office is familiar as well. His

current office once belonged to both his undergraduate advisor and his doctoral advisor during his school days at UF.

The people and faculty at AEC made the transition back to UF smoother, Roberts said.

In addition to teaching undergraduates in the department, Roberts is also director of the CALS Teaching Resource Center. The center provides services like the University of Florida Teacher’s College, a program designed to assist new faculty members in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.



Dr. Grady Roberts

“I teach people to teach,” Roberts said.

Since Roberts has come back to his old alma mater, he has taken on new responsibilities. Effective Jan. 1, Roberts has taken on the role of advisor for the UF Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, a fraternity devoted to agriculture.

Roberts and his wife Michelle, daughter Elizabeth and son Alex have settled into Florida living.

“Really, I came home,” Roberts said.

AEC welcomes new employees

By Holiday Griffin

Micah Bolen

Micah Bolen works as an information technology specialist not only in the AEC Department, but also in the Agronomy Department.

“I do network administration, field help requests from faculty and staff in the department, and deploy new computers and printers,” Bolen said.

Bolen also advises on the purchasing of distribution software and technology equipment. He assists in tracking the department’s technology inventory.

“I love working with the people here in



Micah Bolen

the department, as well as IFAS in general,” Bolen said. “Learning new things is a byproduct of working with so many intelligent, respectful people.”

“I enjoy pretty much every aspect of my work,” Bolen said. “I particularly enjoy the fact that I can ‘geek out’ while helping others.”

Bolen’s home life is just as busy as his work life.

“My free time is completely consumed by my wife, son and school,” Bolen said.

In regards to Bolen’s position with the AEC Department, chair Ed Osborne said, “It’s pretty hard to find a person who is



Photo provided by Micah Bolen

The Bolen Family

skilled in hardware support, software support and networking support. He does have skills in all those areas, so we’re real fortunate to have him here working with us in the department. He brings just a real, solid, stable level of IT support for all of our faculty, staff, and grad students.”

Jodie Telg

Jodie Telg is the AEC department’s secretary.

Telg, who has a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Texas A&M University, has lived in Gainesville for 13 years.

Some may think of secretarial work and associate it with boring hours sitting behind a desk, but not Telg.

“I very much enjoy my work,”



Jodie Telg

Telg said.

Telg does whatever the professors need her to do, from ordering materials to making copies of papers they need to hand out in class. Currently, she is training to do the department’s course scheduling, Telg said.

She finds her work extremely rewarding as it

allows her to help other people.

“I feel like I’m also lightening their load,” she said. “Because with the budget cuts basically across the United States, it affects all levels, especially education.”

“She’s a fantastic new hire,” said Agricultural Education and Communication Department chair Ed Osborne. “She really brings a high level of capability, professionalism and efficiency to the department in that position.”

Teaching teachers to teach

By Caitlin Shafnacker

The second session of the University of Florida Teacher's College, a program designed to assist new faculty members in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, is wrapping up after a successful session.

The Teacher's College is a recently created course that provides assistance to new professors on incorporating effective teaching methods within their classrooms.

"Most professors have degrees in the subjects they're teaching, not how to teach," said Grady Roberts, associate professor and

director of the CALS Teaching Resource Center.

The course provides examples of teaching methods and styles in a classroom-like setting. Throughout the 10-week course, professors participate in activities similar to what they might use in their own classrooms, with their own students. The professors play the role of the student, and the instructors of the course try to model good teaching behaviors.

"[The instructors] try to instill that all of us are continuing to learn; we're all in here learning together," Roberts said. "In

our professional and personal lives, we still continue to learn."

The Teacher's College creates an inviting atmosphere for the professors who participate, Roberts said. The instructors understand it could be intimidating to enroll in such a course and try to create an inviting, learning environment for the new professors.

"The course instructors are all very nice and use different teaching styles," Roberts said. "This is great because it allows for the professors to see varying methods they can bring back to their own classrooms."

Wedgworth goes to Washington, D.C.

By Rachel Barber

The members of the University of Florida's Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources recently embarked on a 10-day trip, learning leadership from others' perspectives and political viewpoints from agricultural leaders in different states.

The members started with a visit to Washington, D.C., with a tour of the White House led by UF alumnus Congressman Adam Putnam. The agenda also included Des Moines Iowa; Chicago; and a few stops along the way.

"I feel like I am a better informed person because of the trip," said Raymond Royce, WLI participant and executive director of the Highlands County Citrus Growers Association.

The trip focused on the presidential election and the mechanics of the national government and included industry tours of Iowa's corn and pork industries.

"It was very interesting to see how different people are thinking when it comes to political views," Royce said. "Despite all of the government's flaws, I still think it inspires me to be in Washington, D.C."

WLI program coordinator Rochelle Strickland said the trip was "certainly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

"With the presidential election being a hot topic at the time, it was amazing to me to

see how the individuals in D.C. spoke about both candidates at the time," Strickland said. "Before I went to D.C., I thought I knew exactly what I would do (about voting for a presidential candidate), but after the trip was over and I had been home for over a week, I still didn't know what to do."

As part of the WLI class, going beyond their comfort zones and thinking about other perspectives is not uncommon for the leaders to experience, Royce said.

"Listening to the other people's ideas

think is important," Royce said. "You need to get out and not talk to the same people."

"Florida is so diverse and to hear about all the different forms of agriculture that it has made me think it is huge," Strickland said. "But in Iowa or Illinois, it's all about corn, soybeans, and hogs. They focus on a few agricultural commodities, and do it very well."

WLI participant and Highlands County resident Joe Collins said the WLI program, in general, and the trip to the Midwest and Washington, D.C., specifically, help develop Florida's agricultural leaders.

"While agriculture is still a large part of Florida's economy, there are rapidly becoming fewer and fewer people who are directly involved and knowledgeable about agricultural issues," he said. "It is more important than ever that we have strong leaders to address the many issues that agriculture is facing."

Each WLI class is actively involved for about 22 months, traveling and attending seminars throughout Florida and around the United States

and the world to help further their leadership and build confidence in their careers, Strickland said.



Stock Exchange Photo

and thoughts involved in the agricultural industry opened my eyes and made me realize that we tend to just talk to people that are just like us to reinforce what we

Alpha Tau Alpha

By Brittany Slossberg

Alpha Tau Alpha is an honor society at the University of Florida that invites both graduate and undergraduate students in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication to experience an organization that values hard work, service and academic success.

To be nominated for induction into this club, undergraduate students must obtain a 3.0 GPA and graduate students must have at least a 3.5 GPA.

“The diversity of thought, backgrounds and future goals from all students is the strength of ATA,” said ATA graduate president Robert Strong.

ATA is known for hosting the annual kickball tournament. The kickball tournament was hosted by the undergraduate officers of ATA on Nov. 8.

“The kickball tournament provides everyone in our department - faculty, staff, grads and undergrads - a relaxing, and food-filled half-day to get to know one another,” Strong said.

In addition to the kickball tournament,

“The diversity of thought, backgrounds and future goals from all students is the strength of ATA.”

gives them the opportunity to meet and ask questions of the professors and graduate students involved in AEC.

“It gives undergrads a great opportunity to know our professors,” Strong said.

“ATA is a national honorary organization, and it looks very good on one’s resume,” said Lauri Baker, graduate vice president of Alpha

**-Robert Strong
AEC doctoral student**

Tau Alpha.

“When you apply to a position and list ATA member of your resume, educators and industry representatives understand what that signifies,” Strong said.

ATA also hosts the AEC Graduate Programs Showcase. It is a new event that focuses on interested undergraduates, giving them the opportunity to learn about the graduate program that AEC has to offer. The event

AEC professor attends agriscience conference

By Katelyn Harris

DuPont is teaming up with the National FFA Organization and the University of Florida to offer a select group of teachers an opportunity at the National Association of Teachers Ambassador Academy to expand their knowledge in agriscience.

UF agricultural education assistant professor Brian Myers worked with Larry

Gossen, a program success specialist for FFA, at this year’s conference, held at DuPont’s

research center in Chesapeake Farms, Md. Gossen

and Myers have returned this year after the 2007 conference to continue improving NATAA’s program.

For the past six years, NATAA has selected 18 teachers with a strong science background from around the country, to attend the agriscience conference to strengthen the science aspect in their

teaching curricula. DuPont has provided sponsorship and funding for all six years in hopes of enhancing science in every agriculture teacher’s classroom.

The purpose of the conference is to “prepare teachers how to teach agriscience to students, as well as enabling the teachers to go forward and put on workshops at the FFA convention, extending the knowledge to other agriculture teachers,” Gossen said.

Myers became involved with the conference two years ago. He joined the planning team as a consultant to help improve the conference from year to year. Myers also took part in the actual instructional aspects of the seminar.

“Skills are taught through inquiry-based instruction,” Myers said, “which transitions the teaching style from being teacher-centered to student-centered.”

Myers said that inquiry-based instruction and student-centered learning are when concepts are geared to illustrate what is being taught and not just explained to the students through lectures or PowerPoint presentations. The labs assist in explaining

concepts and giving a visual method of teaching.

From July 13-18, teachers attended workshops and labs to learn effective ways to teach science to agriculture students. One day during the conference was set aside for



an outdoor lab to focus on environmental aspects of the seminar.

“The environmental impact on water contamination in Chesapeake Bay is an important area of concentration for this conference,” Gossen said.

Gossen said improvements to the conference this year can be seen through the addition of several new labs. Teachers learned about DNA extraction, copper mining and the differences of genetic modification to selective breeding.



LPC contest is a success, thanks to ACLT

By Krysta Van Alstine

Coordinating an event such as the Livestock Publications Council's Critique Contest requires not only a main coordinator but also many helping hands from the University of Florida's Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow.

The LPC Critique Contest consists of numerous agricultural publications such as articles, print advertisements, catalogs, media kits, and other miscellaneous works to be entered and judged for overall design, writing style, grammar and more.

In July 2008, 10 student ACLT members traveled to the 10th Annual Agricultural Media Summit held in Wesley Chapel, Fla. Part of the Agricultural Media Summit was the Livestock Publication Council's Critique Contest conducted by UF/ACLT.

Angelina Toomey, an Agricultural Education and Communication graduate student, and Ricky Telg, a professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, happened to be discussing whether Toomey should complete a thesis or non-thesis project for her master's degree when the LPC Critique Contest was an option.

"Together we decided the LPC contest was a good fit, based on my communication specialization," Toomey said.

Toomey worked almost a full year as coordinator of the LPC critique contest. With the helping hands from ACLT, Toomey

completed everything from sorting entries and redesigning the contest results book to making videos and editing finalized materials.

Toomey overcame many obstacles



(L-R) Lisa Hightower, Toccara Shaw, Rusty Hartline and Katie Wimberly sort through Livestock Publication Council entries.

throughout the process such as misspellings, computer formatting issues, compiling information or simply not having enough data.

"I could have never imagined completing the amount of tasks that I did without the help of ACLT," Toomey said. "Everyone who helped with the contest did such an amazing job, and I'm thankful to all of them because it was a team effort."

As part of Toomey's graduate project, she created a how-to guide for upcoming

coordinators of the LPC Critique Contest and presenting it to a committee in November 2008. This non-thesis project will help Toomey fulfill graduation requirements.

National ACT editor, Seth Rogers, and current ACLT vice president, Kati McWaters, were selected to be co-coordinators for the 2009 LPC Critique Contest held in Fort Worth, Texas.

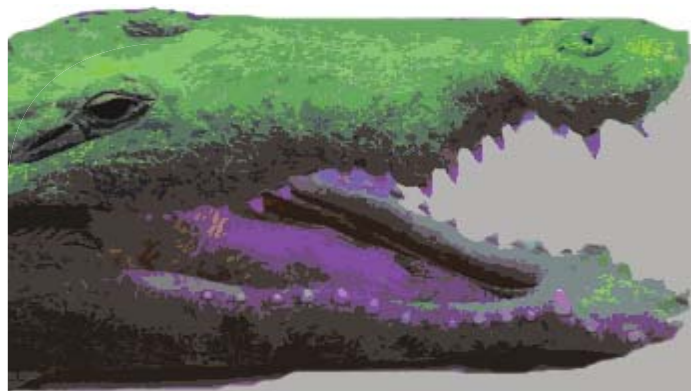
"Seth Rogers and Kati McWaters both worked on the LPC contest when I coordinated it in 2008, so they will be prepared to oversee the contest next year," Toomey said.

"Trying to coordinate from three states away may be difficult, but if we stay organized and focused, we can successfully coordinate the contest," Rogers said.

McWaters and Rogers are planning to design the contest as simple as possible with the idea of a vintage cowboy theme.

"There will still be a lot to do, and we will definitely need and want the help and support of the ACLT chapter to successfully coordinate the contest," Rogers said.

Katelyn Crow, former ACLT president, submitted a letter of intent to the LPC explaining the reasons why UF would be highly qualified to coordinate the LPC Critique Contest. The University of Florida has an agreement with LPC that they will be the coordinators for at least three years.



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