

AEC REVIEW

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Emily Horton, an AEC senior, is one of the students selected to play the carillon bells atop Century Tower.

AEC ON TOP AGAIN

The University of Florida's Department of Agricultural Education and Communication has been recognized as being the best...again.

AEC received the University of Florida's first-ever Distinguished Departmental Award in early October. The new award, presented as part of Florida Blue Key's Education Celebration prior to UF's Homecoming, was created to recognize the UF department that demonstrates the highest degree of commitment to scholarship and academic success for its undergraduates.

The award comes with \$1,000 to be used for undergraduate scholarships. Six other UF departments submitted applications for the inaugural Distinguished Departmental Award, initiated by UF Provost and Senior

Vice President of Academic Affairs Joe Glover, who presented the award to AEC undergraduate coordinator Ricky Telg.

In 2009, the department was recognized as the leading department of its kind in the nation. A survey conducted by researchers at The Ohio State University found that agricultural communication and education chairs rated UF's AEC department as No. 1 in the country.

The Distinguished Departmental Award focuses on the department's efforts with its undergraduate program, complementing the national study's rankings. Respondents in that study cited the department's graduate program, faculty and research as the department's outstanding features.

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Teaching Globally

by: Miranda Tidwell



Faculty members from multiple universities are working together to reach food, agricultural and environmental sciences students with a globalized undergraduate curriculum by using reusable learning objects.

Teaching Locally, Engaging Globally is headed by Agricultural Education and Communication associate professor Grady Roberts, with a team of other AEC faculty members and faculty from the University of Georgia and Texas A&M University.

The project, funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture Higher Education Challenge Grant, will develop reusable learning objects, also known as RLOs, to enhance

undergraduate curricula first at the partnering institutions and then nationwide.

This first year of the grant is dedicated to traveling and gathering information for the RLOs to implement in the classroom. Year two, 2011, will be for developing the RLOs to work into the curriculum for the students, followed by implementing them with examples of case studies, live examples and video clips in year three.

"We want to bring the world to the classroom," Roberts said.

Each university is going to a different location to gather their RLOs. The University of Georgia group visited Costa Rica, and Texas A&M professors will visit Trinidad and Tobago in March 2011.

The project participants from UF gathered their RLOs during their 13-day trip to Ecuador in August. In addition to AEC faculty, other College of Agricultural and Life Sciences faculty representing such areas as family, youth and community sciences; wildlife ecology; sustainable farming; religion; and food science and human nutrition participated in the Ecuador trip.

The planning team chose Ecuador because of its diversity of agriculturally rich communities. They focused on three main regions of Ecuador: the coastal region, mountains and the Galapagos Islands.

"We visited three very different parts of Ecuador to get the most out of our time in the country," Roberts said.

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AEC faculty lead Ecuador trip

by: Audra Lewis

Thirteen University of Florida faculty members recently experienced a new kind of classroom: Ecuador.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded a grant to faculty in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication in an effort to add cultural and international aspects into the undergraduate curricula, specifically in agriculture classes. AEC associate professor Grady Roberts is the principal investigator for the grant.

"What if we worked with the faculty, the professors, giving them an international experience? In turn, the professors would come back and integrate that into what they are doing in the classroom," Roberts said.

Of the 13 participants, six came from the AEC Department. The other six faculty members were from other College of Agricultural and Life Sciences departments and one from the UF's Department of Religion.

The project calls for faculty to create reusable learning objects (RLOs) of their experiences to "internationalize" first their courses, and then to make the RLOs available to all agriculture colleges. During the trip and the

curriculum development process, faculty have done some learning of their own.

"It was very eye-opening," said AEC professor Ricky Telg, who videotaped the trip. He gathered footage of scenery and interviews.

His job was to help the faculty get the information they needed on video so they could complete their RLOs.

"Being behind the camera, I saw things a lot differently than they did," he said. "I was able to see how the faculty interacted with the people of Ecuador. It was fun seeing how they were learning."

AEC assistant professor Nicole Stedman also had an altered perspective, serving as the group as the faculty reflection facilitator.

"I was a little bit removed because I wasn't a participant in the way that they were," she said. "It was really



fascinating for me to be listening to the faculty."

Telg and Stedman said they both learned as much from the locals of Ecuador as they learned from each other. The rural town of Salinas left its mark.

"My favorite part was realizing that people there were very happy with a lot less things than we have here," Telg said. Stedman also mentioned the people of Salinas.

"You're in these poor areas and what you perceive as economically poor but they're happy, they're laughing," Stedman said.

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UF Faculty Travels to Egyptian Ag Technical Schools

by: Lauren Der



Two agricultural education and communication faculty members traveled to Egypt in March to plan a more cooperative relationship between agricultural education in both Egypt and the United States.

Kirby Barrick and Brian Myers met with agriculture students, teachers, parents, headmasters and agribusiness affiliates in the Egyptian towns of Aswan and Fayoum through a grant from the Foreign Agricultural Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Accompanied by two American high school agriscience teachers and an agricultural education doctoral student, they used the trip to devise a plan for implementing inquiry-based teaching methods in Egyptian agricultural technical schools.

Inquiry-based teaching methods are designed to promote active learning strategies: students propose questions, participate in discussions, organize into groups and learn to apply their knowledge. These methods would provide a more practical approach to teaching, Barrick said.

"Students learn more when they inquire into, rather than be instructed in the content," Barrick said.

In addition to adjusting teaching methods, changes must also be made to the traditional Egyptian way of instruction where

few materials are used, Barrick said. They lack laboratory equipment needed to conduct tests in soils, food technology, animal sciences and horticulture, he said.

While the goal is to improve Egyptian education, the U.S. high school teachers also found ways to better educate their students on Egyptian agricultural education. They photographed each school to create virtual field trips and wrote blogs for their students to involve them in the agricultural diversity they were experiencing.

It is hoped that this grant will give U.S. students a more international experience, Myers said.

The final decision of whether or not these teaching methods can be included in Egyptian classrooms will be made by the USDA after a final report is submitted by the grant's five team members in November.

Barrick sees this project as what could be the beginning of a learning exchange program between teachers from both countries.

Barrick hopes this grant will be followed by another grant so that Egyptian students can experience this "new, but different way of thinking about getting students learning," he said.

"They want to learn. They want to do well. They want to succeed," Barrick said.

AEC Students Lead Outside of Class

by: Jason Mathis

Three Department of Agricultural Education and Communication students learned leadership skills in and outside of the classroom as members of the inaugural College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Leadership Institute.

AEC students Sarah DeLoach, Rusty Hartline and Jason Davison participated in the program over the 2009-2010 academic year.

The CALS Leadership Institute was designed to emulate the two-year Wedgworth Leadership Institute program, offered through the AEC Department.

"The amount of material determined the length," said Charlotte Emerson, director of Student Development and Recruitment for CALS and the CALS Leadership Institute program director. "There are so many things that we want them to be exposed to."

DeLoach, a senior in the communication and leadership development specialization, said the program brought out a "tight-bonded group mentality" that helped to facilitate the learning process.

To gain knowledge of leadership outside the classroom, Leadership Institute participants took a 10-day trip to Costa Rica in August to study its agricultural processes and to learn about community leadership.

"The trip's goal was to have the students step outside of their comfort zone," Emerson said.

The students took part in activities that highlighted different applications of leadership in the community. They visited with farmers and business people in Costa Rica, and they participated in a group project with EARTH University to build a biodigester for a local family.

"They are very resourceful," DeLoach said. "I respected their openness and positive attitudes."

Davison, an AEC graduate student, said that while the trip's extracurricular activities were fun, they also provided the group another opportunity to see "leadership from the people."

The institute focuses on leadership development through a combination of leadership modules, group and team activities, leadership courses and workshops and conferences. The CALS Leadership Institute, a United States Department of Agriculture grant-funded program, requires a three-semester commitment and a lengthy application process from students to cover the nine program components that focus on business, communications, science, natural resources and pre-professional.

AEC Welcomes Back Arrington and Barrick

by: Ashley Preston

The University of Florida's Agricultural Education and Communication Department has two faculty members returning to teaching after years in administration.

Larry Arrington and Kirby Barrick have assumed faculty positions this fall in the department. Arrington and Barrick were previously in administration positions within UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

"It's a unique opportunity to have not just one, but two senior and such experienced faculty members join a department," said AEC Department chair Ed Osborne. "They bring an advanced level of expertise and perspective and insight that you typically don't have come into a department."

Arrington has returned to the position of a faculty member after nearly 20 years in administration. He most recently served as interim senior vice president of agriculture and natural resources at UF. Previously, Arrington served as UF's dean of Extension.

Before completely assuming the role of a faculty member, Arrington will be going through a three-step process: orienting the new senior vice president, Jack Payne, to the position; creating legislative budget requests for UF/IFAS; and undertaking a six-month sabbatical leave project before fully returning to the department.



Dr. Larry Arrington

In fall 2011, Arrington will teach an administration and supervision class. In addition, he will work with the Caribbean Agricultural

Research and Development Institute that IFAS collaborates with to improve student exchange, research and extension in the Caribbean.

"I've got too many stories to tell now, but bottom line is I think I can give a lot of real world examples now for students who might be interested in moving into higher education and doing administrative jobs," Arrington said.

Barrick has assumed a faculty

appointment position in AEC with a 30 percent teaching, 40 percent research and 30 percent extension split. Most recently, Barrick was dean of UF's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Prior to UF, he served as a professor, department chair and administrator at The Ohio State University.



Dr. Kirby Barrick

"I was a full professor for only 13 months before I became a department chair, before I became an administrator," he said.

Barrick has worked 21 years in administration and now has decided to do what he set out to do originally: teach.

Barrick will teach graduate-level courses, conduct research in teaching and learning and conduct extension work internationally in food-deficient countries. He said he hopes his experience in administration will have a positive effect on his role in the department.

Osborne said Arrington and Barrick are well known leaders among colleges of agriculture and both strengthen UF's reputation nationally.

Growing Pains

by: Tori Farina

With the University of Florida's Department of Agricultural Education and Communication undergraduate and graduate enrollments increasing, initiatives are being taken to accommodate students in more ways than in the classroom.

"This year is the largest fall class we've ever had," said AEC undergraduate coordinator and professor Ricky Telg. "Roughly half are junior transfers."

Telg said that since the undergraduate enrollment is 154 students this fall, having enough classrooms and resources for everyone is one of the department's biggest challenges. Since fall 2006, the department's undergraduate enrollment has increased

from 63 students to its current total.

Telg said that some courses are now being divided into multiple sections, with the smaller groups meeting for class at different times. Telg said smaller classrooms are easier to find on campus, therefore accommodating the increasing fall enrollment is achievable.

With more AEC undergraduates, Telg said he has received more interest in graduate school from students now than ever before. Currently, the department has 64 graduate students.

AEC associate professor and associate chair Brian Myers said the transition for students from undergraduate classes to graduate school can be difficult. Myers said many undergraduate courses have 40 or more students. Graduate courses, in contrast, will have 25 or fewer students.

"The transition from undergrad to grad school is very different," Myers said.

Watermelon Royalty

by: Kearston Andrews

One Agricultural Education and Communication student is staying busy as a full-time student while traveling the country promoting the watermelon industry.

AEC junior Jessica Southard was named the 2010 National Watermelon Queen in February. Southard was the Florida Watermelon Queen in 2009.

Since then Southard has used her role as spokesperson for the National Watermelon Association to promote agriculture across the United States. Southard emphasizes the importance of developing relationships between the farmer and consumer.

As part of her travels around the country to promote the watermelon industry, Southard will attend school presentations, food shows and other functions to teach the importance and fundamentals of agriculture, with a focus on the basic nutrition and marketability of watermelons.

"I am an advocate for the watermelon industry," Southard said.

As the 2010 National Watermelon Queen, Southard strives to make sure that the agricultural industry receives

accurate and positive media coverage.

"Consumers infer about where their product comes from, and my job is to relay accurate information to ensure them their food is safe and educate them on how to trace their product," Southard said.

This opportunity will also allow Southard to see how other states market watermelons and different agricultural commodities.

As queen, Southard receives a scholarship, plus all-expenses-paid travel to various places across the country and around the world. As an employee of the National Watermelon Association, Southard attends many promotional and media events.

"I want consumers to harvest a positive relationship with agriculture so that they will continue to support



our industry," Southard said.

Southard became involved in agriculture around the age of 12 after joining the Florida FFA Association. Around that same time she began competing in the local watermelon pageants.

After being encouraged to participate in the pageant by a family friend, Southard was crowned Newberry Jr. Teen Queen. She continued to compete in the years after until being crowned National Watermelon Queen in February. She served as Florida Watermelon Queen last year.



UF Collegiate FFA members and CALS Ambassadors traveled to Indianapolis for the 2010 National FFA Convention in October. The groups staffed booths at the trade show to recruit FFA members to the University of Florida.

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One main purpose of the grant is to provide the participants with a diverse background on the global issues they want to implement in the classroom. Doing this is a more effective way of having a globalized curriculum, because everyone is not fortunate to take part in a study abroad experience, Roberts said.

Marta Hartmann, lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, was the organizer for the trip to Ecuador. She, Roberts and AEC professor Ricky Telg took a planning trip in May to map out the destinations they would visit in their final trip in August. Nicole Stedman and Amy Harder also took part in making this grant possible.

"Planning a project like this was quite a large task," Hartmann said.

Hartmann played a major role in making sure that culture was strongly embedded into the RLOs, not letting anyone lose focus of the reason they were on the trip.

"I am very excited to see the RLOs in effect in our classrooms here at UF," Hartmann said.

Both Roberts and Hartmann agreed that their trip to Ecuador was a major success, and in 2012 the three universities will be seeing their hard work pay off in the classroom.

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AEC doctoral student Alexa Lamm recorded much of the faculty members' thoughts and experiences. Her journal is now helping to put together a research publication, which will highlight the best practices for planning a faculty abroad trip, she said.

The faculty returned from the trip just before the fall semester began. The next step is to bring the international knowledge to the classroom.

"It's cool. It gives the professors some things to talk about in a context that they have actually experienced," Lamm said.

However, there is still work to be done before the grant is fully completed. The students are the next main concern, Roberts said.

"We have not realized our final, big goal of impacting the undergrad students, so far we're just had an impact on the faculty," Roberts said.



(TOP) Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow assisted with the quadrennial Farm Credit of Florida/Ag Institute's Candidates Forum in Orlando in September. (BOTTOM) Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow took their fall 2010 industry tour to the Publix distribution center near Jacksonville and to St. John & Partners public relations and advertising firm.

UF Alumnus Inducted to Florida Agriculture Hall of Fame

by: Candy Munz

A University of Florida agricultural education and communication alumnus has been selected as a 2011 inductee into the Florida Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Florida Farm Bureau Federation's Pat Cockrell has spent his life dedicated to agricultural education. His commitment has paved the way for years of progress in Florida's agriculture industry.

After graduating from UF, Cockrell spent six years as an agriculture teacher at Bartow High School before becoming an employee for the Florida Farm Bureau Federation.

Cockrell said an Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity brother of his informed him about an opportunity to work for the Florida Farm Bureau. Although the position was not in a classroom, education has been Cockrell's driving force during his time with Farm Bureau.

"I work for an organization that believes in education," Cockrell said. "Farm Bureau educates the public, its members and professionals. I get a lot of fulfillment from that."

Cockrell has been with Florida Farm Bureau for more than 30 years now. In his time with Farm Bureau, Cockrell has worked for many aspects of the agriculture industry in Florida.

Most notably, Cockrell worked with the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services to reimburse farmers for lost trees due to citrus canker in the 1980s. His work has had a major impact on the citrus industry over the years.

"In the '80s, farmers were dealing with some big freezes and were losing all the nursery trees,"

Cockrell said. "Without those, we couldn't rebuild the industry. It was important that we could help the farmers rebuild their groves and protect their private property."

He also led efforts to find new ways to control the Mediterranean fruit fly while avoiding aerial spraying.

"A group of us made a trip to California to see how they managed this in Los Angeles and these practices are implemented today here in Florida," said Cockrell. "I'm very proud to have helped legislatively."

Additionally, he worked with Florida growers to oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement in the 1990s.

"It was not just about opposing something though," Cockrell said. "It was important to educate Florida's farmers so they really understood Farm Bureau's opposition to NAFTA."

To aid in this education, Cockrell made three trips to Mexico to learn more and to help educate others.

Most recently, Cockrell's work has had a more direct effect on the agriscience classroom.

With Farm Bureau, Cockrell has worked to implement certification programs so that high school students are able to complete technical training in agriscience classes and then graduate with certification in various fields.

"Florida Farm Bureau's board of directors truly value education," Cockrell said. "This certification program really has potential for employers, as well as the potential

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Eubanks back at UF

by: Kirsten Rhinesmith

Agricultural Education and Communication alumnus Emily Eubanks may have a self-professed "brown thumb," but that hasn't stopped her from communicating landscape and gardening information.

Eubanks received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the AEC Department. She uses the communication skills and knowledge she learned in the department in her current position as the communications coordinator for the University of Florida's Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology.

Prior to her job at CLCE, Eubanks worked in the University of Florida's 4-H office and then became a training coordinator for Publix in Lakeland.

"I was almost done with my master's when I started with Publix," Eubanks said. "I wrote curriculum and did software testing."

Eubanks moved back to the Gainesville area because of her husband's family farm.

"I started off at UF but knew if I was going to work at UF I wanted to work with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences," Eubanks said.

At CLCE, Eubanks manages the consumer horticulture communications office. She uses outlets such as websites, radio, television and print media.

Through her efforts, CLCE has been able to partner with the University of Georgia on a PBS television program to educate viewers about such programs as Florida Master Gardeners and Florida-Friendly Landscaping.

"The show is on a couple stations in Florida and all throughout Georgia on their PBS stations," Eubanks said.

Even though Eubanks works with plants, she admits that she "has a very brown thumb." Eubanks said she can write about plants, but she cannot execute at home what she writes about on a daily basis.

Center readies agriscience students for the real world

by: Daniel Jabiri

The Florida Banner Center for Agriscience is partnering with the University of Florida's Department of Agricultural Education and Communication to help students prepare for the workforce with specialized training and curriculum.

The partnership's curriculum focuses on the current skills agricultural industry employers are interested in, said AEC associate professor Brian Myers.

"The Florida Banner Center for Agriscience works in partnership with secondary school agricultural education departments to help better connect them with the employers in the industry and help teachers identify the skills that employers are looking for to better personalize instruction depending on the student's preferences," Myers said.

The program consists of partners, grants, governmental business and industry-related affiliations. The major partners are the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, the Florida FFA and the Florida Department of Education.

The Banner Center for Agriscience was formed in 2009 by the Florida Workforce with a grant to the Florida Farm Bureau, said Melissa Raburn, Florida Banner Center of

Agriscience coordinator.

We are constantly focusing on the industry, and each year we change our programs with the changes in the economy," Raburn said.

The program is recruiting students from elementary school all the way through high school.

"The partnership between the Banner Center and the University of Florida is committed to making the program closely related with student-teacher relations," Myers said. "The program is strictly Florida-based, and we work with grades six to 12."

The Banner Center is researching ways to develop the curriculum that the agriculture industry wants, while focusing on localized programming.

"The Florida Banner Center is using focus groups, an advisory council and industry tours to help make students more involved in real-world activities, while giving them experience in their field," Raburn said.

The department's agricultural education and communication professors will work with the Florida Banner Center and agricultural industry representatives to create more opportunities for students interested in the field, but need help focusing on a more precise career option.

"The program is constantly observing the industry. We know that many students are unsure of where they can go after graduation, and we will help alleviate those anxieties," Raburn said.

AEC grad finds passion in politics

by: Jacqueline Bond

A recent Agricultural Education and Communication graduate got a quick on-the-job learning curve to the world of politics.

Erica Der never thought she would work in politics, but after applying for Adam Putnam's grassroots and coalition coordinator, Der discovered a passion for politics.

"Originally, I thought I would be working for a commodity organization. Then, after graduation I entered graduate school," Der said. "It was during my time in grad school that I learned of this opportunity and while I didn't think I would be working in politics, it has been a terrific fit for me."

Der grew up in an agriculture family that raised cattle and citrus and operated a feed and farm supply store. Der said that understanding the agriculture industry "can only come from having your hands in the soil."

"Agriculture is in my blood," Der said. "My family has lived both the ups and downs of agriculture and it has left a lasting impact on me. One obstacle that is a constant is the

public's lack of agricultural knowledge."

This lack of knowledge was an important reason why Der became so passionate about working on Putnam's 2010 campaign for



Florida Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

"Adam Putnam was the only candidate with an agricultural background, the only candidate with full support of the agriculture industry, and the only candidate offering real and sensible solutions to our state's most

difficult challenges," Der said. "These factors and more made his message resonate with voters who, ultimately, made their voice heard at the ballot box."

As grassroots and coalition coordinator, Der used the knowledge she gained from her education in the AEC Department.

"On a daily basis I assisted with everything from writing press releases to coordinating social media efforts to attending events on behalf of the congressman," she said. "The job entailed many, many tasks rolled into one, but it was always exciting and certainly never boring."

"I hope to continue to be involved in agriculture and in politics because I believe both are important for the future of Florida. They certainly go hand in hand and neither can be overlooked," Der said. "I'm not certain as to my next job, specifically, but I am confident that wherever the career path leads, my training from UF will play a vital role in my ability to succeed."

Wedgworth Leadership Institute welcomes Class VIII

by: Anna Theoktisto

The eighth class of the Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Florida, was welcomed in on November 5.

The 30-member class participated in their first week of the program, focusing on interpersonal leadership and leadership within local communities. WLIANR prepares potential leaders for greater leadership responsibilities in the private and public sectors.

"This class is one of the best representations of the industry, geography and gender of Florida agriculture and natural resources," said Hannah Carter, University of Florida assistant professor and WLIANR director.

Carter, who has served as director since 2004, has three goals for the eighth class of the program.

"First, to select 30 individuals that represent the industry and strive to become a larger part of it," Carter said. "Second, to get them out of their comfort zones, because when you get comfortable you quit learning. And third, I want these individuals to understand that all issues are not black and white, I want them to see shades of gray."

The 22-month program includes 11 study/travel seminars. The first year, participants focus on the understanding of current and projected issues facing decision-makers at the local and state levels. While in the second year, participants focus on the understanding of national and international issues and the

impact these issues have on Florida.

"The WLIANR has a phenomenal reputation within the industry and I am honored to join the ranks of many frontline leaders in Florida's agricultural industry," said Staci Braswell, director of government and community affairs at the Florida Farm Bureau Federation and Class VIII member. "I hope to take away many life-long relationships with my classmates and the many alumni that have graduated from the program."

The program not only focuses on issues facing the agricultural industry, but also emphasizes crucial skills in communication, interpersonal relations, decision-making and problem-solving.

"I have always enjoyed the opportunity to learn, and I see my participation in Class VIII as an opportunity to continue to grow," Braswell said. "I expect to refine my leadership skills, improve upon my communication skills and become more familiar with the many issues that affect our industry. More than anything, I expect to be taken out of my comfort zone."

The program includes one international seminar in developed or developing countries, lasting 15 to 17 days. The international destination for Class VIII has yet to be determined. The recently graduated Class VII traveled to China, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

Carter said she is looking forward to seeing Class VIII grow to recognize they are the opinion leaders of Florida agriculture and natural resources.



A group from the Wedgworth Leadership Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources' newest class stands by an airplane as they prepare to do a fly-over of Gainesville. From left to right: Carl Bauman, Susie Bishop, Amanda Taylor, Tim Dooley, Lee Cutshall and Fred Fanizzi.



WLIANR new class members, Staci Braswell, Roland Yee, Amy Kinder and Daniel Hunt, work in a small group during one of the program's sessions, in November 2010.

Cockrell, continued from page 8

to improve Florida's workforce.

Cockrell said Florida's agricultural industry will remain strong because of the people who work in the industry.

"My vision is that agriculture will be a major economic pillar for Florida 100 years from now," he said. "It won't be the same agriculture I knew 30 years ago, and it won't be the same agriculture you know today, but Florida has the greatest and the most adaptable farmers in the world."

AEC Welcomes New Employees

by: Bianca Blakley

The Agricultural Communication and Education department welcomed back a familiar face in February when Becky Raulerson started as the coordinator of research and services for the Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Her work with the PIE Center is to provide social science research results that can better help leaders in the Florida agricultural and natural resource sectors communicate with the general public about public issues.

Raulerson and fellow PIE coordinator Christy Chiarelli will team-teach a new undergraduate course, Issues in Agricultural and Life Sciences, in the spring 2011 semester.

Raulerson received her bachelor's degree, specializing in agricultural communication, from the University of Florida in 1998; in 2000, she received a master's degree in agricultural education.

Raulerson, a Florida native, enjoys being back in the department.

"It's nice because it always felt like home," she said. "This is the first place I came to when I left Bonifay, so it felt like coming home."

Raulerson worked in UF's Food and Resource Economics department as the coordinator of alumni relations while working on her master's degree. After working as a sales representative for Novartis Animal Health, Raulerson

returned to UF and the AEC department in 2002 to work on a grant project for professor Ricky Telg.

She relocated to Orlando for a few years but wanted to return to North Florida. Raulerson and her family moved to Lake Butler where she taught high school English at Union County High

School before returning to work at UF.

"I got a call from the AEC department looking for a coordinator for the PIE Center so I came on board," she said.

Raulerson also stays active

in the community. She is involved with supporting two philanthropies: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the Mason G. Smoak Foundation. While she says she feels like a chauffeur for her children most days, Raulerson also takes time to enjoy the outdoors and train for 5k runs.

A newcomer to the Agricultural Education and Communications Department, Kristin Lightsey started as the department secretary in May after graduating with her bachelor's degree in classical studies.

Lightsey stays busy communicating with faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students about a variety

of daily activities including reserving meeting rooms or the department car, sending out letters or email and creating Excel databases.

"Whatever the department needs assistance with, I am here to help," she said.

Some of that assistance has been helping associate professor Grady Roberts upload articles from the Journal of Agricultural Education to the JAE website. With Lightsey's assistance, articles back to the first issue in 1960 are now available online.

Lightsey says that having the opportunity to interact with the AEC faculty has been rewarding.

"I love the sense of pride the department takes in the accomplishments of the faculty, staff and graduate and undergraduate students while still remaining humble," she said.

Lightsey has spent her life in Alachua County calling Alachua her hometown.

"An interesting fact, my family has moved 14 times, never once out of Alachua County," she said.

Her dream is to become a professor of art history or classical studies. She enjoys reading and studying art history, especially the classical influences on both American and European art and architecture.

In her personal life, Lightsey has been staying busy planning her upcoming wedding in March 2011.



Becky Raulerson



Kristin Lightsey



UF's Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow received the Yamaha Corporation's travel scholarship for the second year in a row. For the past two years, Yamaha has provided \$2,500 to the winning school to attend the Agricultural Media Summit. Both years, UF/ACLT has won. The contest focuses on developing educational materials on ATV safety. This year's ACLT entry included a news release, a video script and graphic design elements. ACLT members are pictured here with Yamaha Corporation representatives at the Yamaha booth during the 2010 Agricultural Media Summit in St. Paul, Minn.

Gator Grad now a Buckeye

by: Jason Mathis

An Agricultural Education and Communication Department alumnus left the Gator Nation in Gainesville to become a Buckeye.

Katy Groseta, who received a master's degree from the department in 2007, did not turn in her orange and blue apparel for a stylish Ohio State Buckeye-colored silver and red sweater vest. She is in Buckeye, Ariz., teaching agriculture to students at Buckeye High School. Buckeye is a small dairy-turned-bedroom community about 40 miles west of Phoenix.

"I ended up in Gainesville for my master's program and loved it," said Groseta, a northern Arizona native. "I probably would have stayed, but I was just too far from my family."

During her final semester, Groseta called on friends to keep her posted on job openings in Arizona. In March of her final semester, she applied and got an agriculture teaching position at Buckeye

High School.

As a teacher in agriculture, Groseta initially focuses on her student's basic literacy in agriculture, but her main objective is to help the students make good choices and become critical thinkers.

"I use the content of agriculture to teach them about making good choices, and it fits, naturally," Groseta said.

Students at Buckeye High School get agricultural content from three classes that Groseta teaches: Introduction to Agriculture and FFA, Applied Biological Systems and Plant Science.

To get her students motivated about agriculture, Groseta uses two interest approaches. First, she tries to make the students aware of the basic societal needs for food, how the needs will in the future and how those needs will be met. Second, she tries to connect with career-motivated students by showing some of the opportunities in agriculture.



"I try to use career focus to get students motivated or I go back and talk about the basic principles of agriculture to get them involved," Groseta said. "Why are we doing what we're doing in agriculture?"

AEC ALUMNI PROFILES

Double major pulls double duty

by: Ashley Preston

University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension has provided a Agricultural Education and Communication graduate with a meaningful career serving others and learning new things himself.

Randy Gornto is a graduate of UF's Agricultural Education and Communication and Food and Resource Economics departments. With a double major, he was able to have a broad range of experiences related to agriculture.

Gornto began his professional career as a vocational agriculture teacher in Palatka, Fla., and had a successful FFA chapter. After a year as a teacher, he took a position with Purina Mills. While as a feed sales director for Purina Mills, between 1984 and 1999, he was responsible for writing understandable feed programs for a variety of producers.

In 2008, Gornto left Glisson's Feed in Sebring, Fla., for a position with UF/IFAS

Extension. He began as a livestock agent in Highlands County.

"As a livestock agent, I am responsible for passing along knowledge from university research and studies through educational programs," Gornto said.

Extension utilizes a variety of sources to provide the public with the most accurate and up-to-date information on agriculture, community development, the environment, youth development and other topics.

"As an extension agent, I am a faculty member with the University of Florida and provide the public with research-based educational programs that provide solutions for their lives," he said.

In 2010, Gornto became interim county extension director for Highlands County. Currently he is serving as both director over the entire county and as the livestock agent. He will remain in both positions until a new county director is



hired and he can return to his livestock agent position.

Gornto is currently enrolled in distance-learning classes through UF, including leadership development and evaluating programs in extension education to complete his master's degree.

Former AEC student finds teaching rewarding

by: Tori Farina

An Agricultural Education and Communication graduate has found a rewarding life teaching college students in Charleston, S.C.

AEC graduate and College of Charleston assistant professor of Corporate Communication, Amanda Ruth-McSwain said, "When I graduated, there were not many faculty positions available in agricultural programs, so I was forced to apply to schools that had public relations positions open."

McSwain has a master's degree and a doctorate in UF's agricultural communication specialization. McSwain said that even though there were no agricultural communication jobs available when she graduated with her doctorate in 2005, she believes everything happens for a reason and now loves her job.

Not only is she an assistant professor, but she is also an adviser for the College of Charleston's Public Relations Student

Society of America and a board member for the Charleston American Marketing Association and the South Carolina Public Relations Society of America.

"I think the most important thing about being the PRSSA adviser is the resources and mentorship I can provide for the student members," McSwain said.

She said that she loves the challenge students bring to her and finds her jobs rewarding.

"Most of my community work is done with the intention to forge relationships with local professionals in order to identify internship opportunities, guest speakers, professional development activities, and networking events for the PRSSA chapter," McSwain said.

Being in Charleston for six years, McSwain said she never thought she would end up there, but she loves it.

"I live outside of the downtown of Charleston on the Isle of Palms, so I get



to enjoy the best of all worlds," McSwain said, "a wonderful city environment and a beautiful beach."

McSwain and her husband enjoy being in Charleston with their 8-month-old son and dog.

AEC ALUMNI PROFILES

AEC alum assists South Florida college president

by: Paul Saintil

A Department of Agricultural Education and Communication alumnus has served as the right-hand man to the president of a South Florida college and now leads marketing efforts for the college's latest venture.

Bryan Beaty served as the executive assistant to the president of Indian River State College for five years. His responsibilities included organizing every speech and appearance the president made and serving as the college's state legislative affairs coordinator where he examined proposed legislation and worked to combat legislation that had a negative effect on IRSC or higher education.

Beaty said his undergraduate experience in the AEC agricultural communication specialization taught him the essentials he has needed in his job. While at UF, Beaty served as president of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow for two semesters.

"(The department) helped me know how to interact with the media and reporters," Beaty said. "It helped me understand how to write more effectively."

Last year Beaty was tasked to coordinate the statewide and national marketing and outreach efforts of the college's latest venture: the Treasure Coast Public Safety Training Complex, a 50-acre living laboratory for public safety and first responder training.

"I coordinate all marketing for the academic programs and develop new and expanded relationships with local, state and federal agencies," Beaty said. "I also work with the media whenever they take photos for training activities."

Beaty said the knowledge he learned as an agricultural communication undergraduate has prepared him to manage the internal and external communications efforts of the complex, such as the website and various promotional publications.



"I wouldn't know how to do my job without going through the (AEC) program," he said.

Beaty is a member and former president of the Florida Public Relations Association, an organization that provides services and opportunities to public relations professionals.

Preserving Florida's natural resources with research

by: Ashley Smith

An Agricultural Education and Communication assistant professor is conducting research with the University of Florida's Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology to protect and preserve Florida's natural resources.

Agricultural Education and Communication assistant professor Paul Monaghan has been working with CLCE on and off since he was a graduate student at the University of Florida.

He is also a statewide Extension specialist in community-based social marketing. He said that he has always been interested in working with the agricultural industry.

"I have had a long-term interest in agricultural issues, from the different decisions that go into production to the environment and labor costs of agriculture," Monaghan said.

Monaghan said he first became involved with the extension and research programs while working on an extension program in North Florida, collecting evaluation data for a farming systems-type intervention for small farms in the area.

He has also conducted research in Haiti through a United States Agency for International

Development contract. He also taught classes in anthropology and epidemiology.

After working on a grant for six years at the University of South Florida, Monaghan returned to the UF in 2008 to take a faculty position in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication.

He is currently working with an extension program that is focused on providing training to agents in the methodology of social marketing, Monaghan said.

"I work with agents, homeowners and other stakeholders around the state on issues surrounding the environmental sustainability of landscaping," Monaghan said.

The purpose of the research is to promote water conservation and reduce pollution from water run-off.

Research for the extension programs is ongoing and requires time and effort because it entails a series of steps.

"Research is a continuous process in social marketing, from the initial formative research to identifying behaviors and target audiences," Monaghan said. "The results are continually reviewed by the participants in the process and it shapes the next round of questions."

Department hosts Dillman visit

by: Geoff Beaugrand

The Department of Agricultural Education and Communication hosted the visit of one of the leading experts in research methodology.

Washington State University professor Don Dillman specializes in innovative research techniques and rural sociology. Dillman accepted an invitation to speak to AEC students and faculty in April. His book is currently used in the research strategies course offered thorough the department.

"Dr. Dillman hosted a university-wide seminar, which was attended by faculty and graduate students from the department," said AEC professor Glenn Israel, who served as Dillman's host.

Dillman also took time to meet with Israel one on one, and shared his ideas on survey research techniques and issues.

"I hosted an evening reception at my house for Dr. Dillman and other departmental folks," Israel said. "Topics such as survey techniques were discussed, and Dillman's expertise in the subject was very enlightening."

"It was such a privilege to have Dr. Dillman visit Gainesville," said Colleen Porter, coordinator of the College of Dentistry's Community Dentistry and Behavioral Science program. "I have used his books for years in my own research, conducting mail and web surveys, as well as designing data collection forms for use in clinical setting."



Paul Monaghan (far right) and other observers monitor the amount of run-off into this public pond. Monaghan is an assistant professor of Agricultural Education and Communication, as well as the statewide Extension specialist in Community Based Social Marketing.

AEC Student Plays Carillon Music

by: Stefany Stanbury

Every day across the University of Florida's campus a melody of dings and dongs can be heard coming from atop Century Tower.

Some students believe this is just a recording, attempting to bring tradition and history to campus. Few actually know that responsible for the daily chimes of the carillon bells are 10 devoted musicians.

Among them is Emily Horton, who will graduate in May with a degree in Agricultural Education and Communication with plans to start teaching in the fall.

On this day, she just came down 11 flights of stairs from Century Tower after playing a carillon version of "Unchained Melody."

"We joke about not having an elevator," Horton said, "I take it slowly, one step at a time."

Although Century Tower was built in 1953, in 2008 it was recognized as one of Gainesville's historic buildings. It has gained popularity for carrying the biggest carillon out of the total of four that exist in Florida. The UF carillon consists of 51 bells that play a range of 61 keys.

Horton said that each note is played by hitting the corresponding baton with a fist. Lower notes are played by the bigger bells and higher

notes by lighter bells. But as the weight and size of the bells vary, playing lower notes becomes more difficult since the different weights of the bells can be felt when pushing down on the batons.

It is impossible to practice the carillon without being heard throughout campus. That is why a studio was built for the students to practice using a digital version of the instrument.

"We have our own carillon studio where we can translate a song to the carillon and practice it before playing it on Century Tower," Horton said.

The one difference when playing the two versions of the instrument is that when playing the digital carillon, the weight of the bells cannot be felt through the batons. Therefore, it is always a challenge to play a new piece for the student body.

"If you mess up," said Horton, "you just have to move on and keep playing."

One thing is sure: Horton loves playing the carillon.

"My friend gave me a tour of the tower and I just fell in love with it," she said, "so I decided to try out."

In order to be selected to play the carillon a student has to audition for musicality which tests knowledge of music and rhythm. For Horton this



was an easy task because she has been playing the piano since she was 10, played percussion in high school and, as she put it, "dabbles on the guitar."

"Although most of the students that audition are piano players, musicality can be tested on any instrument," Horton said, "so all types of musicians are encouraged to audition."

Although Horton said she would love to continue playing the carillon, she said she knows that it will be difficult since the instrument is not easy to find. In the meantime, Horton said she is enjoying her time as one of UF's carilloneurs.

Department plans first alumni gathering for spring

by: Jessica McDowell

The Agricultural Education and Communication Department is planning its first all-day alumni event for spring 2011.

Earlier this year, Emily Eubanks, educational media and communications coordinator for UF's Department of Environmental Horticulture, presented her idea to have an AEC alumni gathering. Eubanks has two degrees from the department.

"Graduates are proud to be a part of the Gator Nation by participating with their college alumni events," Eubanks said.

She said having an alumni gathering would be the start to getting AEC graduates more involved in the department.

"I think it is a good idea," Eubanks said, "and I plan to work as a volunteer to help organize the event."

"People who have graduated from UF are very proud," said AEC department chair Ed Osborne. "They like to participate with the Gator Nation."

A committee will be assembled this fall to begin the process of contacting alumni and organizing the event.

Osborne said the department's faculty, staff and students are looking forward to meeting and bringing back the graduates.

"It gets the graduates reconnected to the department, and us reconnected with them," Osborne said.

Save-the-date newsletters will be sent to alumni informing them about the gathering, which probably will take place in March, Osborne said. Preliminary plans are to hold the event around a Gator baseball game.



AEC Spotlight: Awards and Accomplishments



Bridget Carlisle (MAG, AEC, 2005), livestock agent for Polk County Extension, received the CALS Alumni and Friends Horizon Award at the 2010 TailGATOR event. The award is presented to CALS alumni who have completed their most recent degree within the last 10 years. The award recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions and potential as leaders in agriculture and related industries and professions. Carlisle is pictured (center) with Roger Scarborough (left), CALS Alumni and Friends Board of Directors, and CALS interim dean Mark Rieger.



Frankie Hall (BS, Ag & Extension Ed, 1979), director of Ag Policy for the Florida Farm Bureau, received the CALS Alumni and Friends Award of Distinction at the 2010 TailGATOR event. The award is presented to CALS alumni or friends in recognition of their outstanding contributions to UF, IFAS, CALS and agriculture and related industries and professions. Hall is pictured (center) with Roger Scarborough (left), CALS Alumni and Friends Board of Directors, and CALS interim dean Mark Rieger.

Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education

- Outstanding Graduate Student Poster – Lex Lamm (with Amy Harder and Tracy Irani)
- Outstanding Graduate Student Research Paper – Lex Lamm (with Glenn Israel and Tracy Irani)
- Outstanding Research Paper – Kirby Barrick, Brian Myers (and Mohammed Samy, Egypt)
- Outstanding Early Achievement Award – Amy Harder

American Association for Agricultural Education's

- AAAE Outstanding Young Member: Brian Myers
- AAAE Outstanding Agricultural Educator: Jim Dyer
- 2010 Distinguished Lecturer: Ed Osborne
- 1st Place Innovative Poster: Kirby Barrick
- 2nd Place Innovative Poster: Kate Shoulders & Brian Myers
- Outstanding Research Paper Presentation: Alexa Lamm, Emily Rhoades, Lori Snyder, Grady Roberts, Tracy Irani, & Joel Brendemuhl
- Distinguished Research Paper (Top 5): Anna Warner & Brian Myers

National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow

- 2nd Place, Electronic Media, Video: Avery Sams
- 2nd Place, Public Relations, News Release: Jaime Spivey

Extension Evaluation Education Topical Interest Group of the American Evaluation Association

- Sustained Excellence Program Evaluation Award: Glenn Israel

Larry Arrington received the Eugene Trotter Leadership Award for his leadership in Florida agriculture at the 2010 Wedgworth Leadership Institute's Annual Alumni Meeting.



Gators win Collegiate FFA Amazing Race: Indy Style

by: Geoffrey Miller

Standing outside the Indiana Convention Center along Indianapolis' Maryland Street, patience wasn't on the mind of the teams in the Collegiate FFA Amazing Race: Indy Style.

In fact, once they received their first clue from the event organizers, not a single team stopped to read it. The preferred method, instead, was reading on the run -- toward Indianapolis' Military Park for the first station of the seven-stop race.

When it was all said and done, one team comprised of three members representing the University of Florida's Collegiate FFA program stood as victors. Each team member won a \$100 gift card.

The teams from Texas A&M and Oregon State tied for second, while the University of Tennessee squad placed third.

Sarah DeLoach, Bernie LeFils and Alyssa Porter comprised the winning Florida team.

"I'd like to thank the random construction

worker who helped us look up Lady Gaga's real name on his Blackberry," said DeLoach, laughing about assistance the Florida team sought during a stage near the Indiana War Memorial.

That stage also featured questions about musician John Lennon, questions concerning the Constitution and the U.S. Supreme Court justices and the names of the three ships that Columbus sailed to the Americas on.

Other stops in the race included a research component at a library, a game of blackjack at the downtown Hilton, a food challenge at the Hyatt and then a "Where's Waldo"-type game at Circle Centre Mall, said Marty Tatman, a Collegiate FFA educational specialist.

"This is good opportunity for the collegiate members to have fun after a long day, and also a cool way to see all the things Indianapolis has to offer," Tatman said.