

aec REVIEW

FALL 2013

in this issue . . .



P.3

Leadership Development graduate student Brandon Telg developed a website called SelfNarrate that encourages storytelling to expand self-awareness



P.5

CLD senior Nicole Liles was selected as one of six students in the nation to visit Burkina Faso in West Africa to participate in the GO: Africa program



P.12

Two agricultural education students, Clay Sapp and Joenelle Futrell, recently completed their year of service as National FFA President and Eastern Region Vice President.

NEW CLD PROGRAM IN PLANT CITY

Written by Collier Clemens

The Department of Agricultural Education and Communication is extending its reach with the addition of the Communication and Leadership Development specialization to the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center located in Plant City, starting in fall 2014.

“Bringing this specialization to such a prolific agriculture area is a great opportunity for students and the community,” said Tiffany Dale, academic program coordinator on the Plant City campus.

Dale will serve as one of the primary instructors for the CLD courses and, though new to teaching the program, she said she

expects to be successful teaching undergraduate students.

“The CLD specialization is one that is in high demand among individuals in the Plant City area and surrounding counties,” said James Dyer, professor of agricultural education at Plant City.

Having this specialization at Plant City will broaden career opportunities for students upon graduation, he said.

The students will follow the same course curriculum as students on the Gainesville campus, said AEC undergraduate coordinator Ricky Telg.

“Courses will be taught in different ways,” Telg said. “Some

“Bringing this specialization to such a prolific agriculture area is a great opportunity for students and the community.”

will be taught solely on campus at Plant City, while others will be taught in a hybrid format of face-to-face and online elements, and other courses may be taught solely online. We’re trying new things to better meet the needs of the students in the Plant City area.”

(Continued on page 6)

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Scholarships and endowments offer much needed student and program support in the department. Current endowment campaigns include a graduate student professional development fund, study abroad scholarships, and an AEC Program Excellence Fund. Other gift opportunities also exist. Please contact Ed Osborne (ewo@ufl.edu) for additional information.



CLD SENIOR INTERNS AT DISCOVERY COVE

Written by Amber Huff

One Agricultural Education and Communication undergraduate student used her videography skills to achieve a lifelong dream of working with marine animals.

"I had always wanted to work for SeaWorld," Tory Boyd said, "forever and always."

Boyd, an AEC senior with a specialization in Communication and Leadership Development, spent her summer as a videographer intern with SeaWorld's Discovery Cove in Orlando, Fla.

Boyd worked in the dolphin interactions area, where she would tape a family's 30-minute interaction with the dolphins. The dolphin interaction taping could then be purchased by the family.

Boyd said that she attended certain expert seminars to build on communication skills and learn more about the company. Seminar topics included growing with the company, goal and decision making, professionalism in the workplace and theme park risk management.

One of Boyd's seminars was about animal training, where they brought in an animal training expert.

"I was able to network," she said, "and get to know people I did not think I could get to know."

Boyd said that her childhood dream was to be a whale trainer. She said she had always loved marine mammals, yet did not know how her future career as a professional communicator could incorporate working with these animals. However, Boyd said that in her internship she was able to have the "best of both worlds."

Boyd said that the Discovery Cove internship showed her that an Agricultural Education and Communication degree provides more possibilities than one would think.

"I was able to have my cake," Boyd said, "and eat it too."

Boyd said her favorite part of the internship was being around the dolphins, although she said she also got to meet an otter.

(Continued on page 8)

SELFNARRATE: EXPANDING SELF-AWARENESS THROUGH STORYTELLING

Written by Kate Kesselring

An assigned class project gave three graduate students in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida the motivation to reach out to society in order to hear people's stories of significant life events that shaped them into the individual they are today.

By offering \$1 to individuals in exchange for their story, the three graduate students heard an array of stories ranging from success to grief with one shared element: the need to be heard.

The experience inspired Agricultural Education and Communication graduate student Brandon Telg, founder of the website SelfNarrate.com, to create a way for people to share their stories knowing they will be heard.

"When you give someone the opportunity and freedom to share their story, they have already built

the story inside of them," Telg said. "They're just waiting to let it out."

Self Narrate was formed into a website composed of multiple videos featuring individuals telling their story. With the determination of connecting individual experiences to leadership theories and the expansion of self-awareness, Self Narrate allows for any story to be heard, he said.

"Self Narrate is an open space that allows for the development and sharing of people's stories," Telg said.

Impacted by Paulo Freire who wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Telg, a leadership development student, incorporated the underlying message of the book into his mission for Self Narrate.

"Society is oppressive, but the way you help individuals move out of that state is by moving them out of that cycle of oppression and help create self-awareness," Telg said. "It is a duty as citizens to help others develop self-

awareness."

Motivated by the stories he has heard, Telg plans to expand Self Narrates presence within society.

By inspiring the people who have shared their story to reach out and ask other individuals what their story is, Telg produced Self Narrate's slogan, "Grow your story. Grow yourself."

"There is an empowerment that comes from both telling a story and hearing a story," he said. "It's not my growth, but other people's growth."

Growing one's story by reflecting, analyzing and editing his or her life experience is the essential framework for self-awareness, which is the core vision of Self Narrate.

"It's the reason I wake up in the morning and think about the project," Telg said. "I believe that what I am doing is creating more than an open space. It's helping people develop self-awareness, and like Freire says, I'm doing my duty as a citizen."



3

TELL US YOUR STORY AND WE'LL GIVE YOU A DOLLAR

Graduate student, Brandon Telg, listens to fellow students tell their stories in exchange for one dollar at UF's Turlington Plaza

DOCTORAL STUDENT INTERNS WITH USAID

Written by Ashley Cook

An Agricultural Education and Communication doctoral student interned with the U.S. Agency for International Development in Ethiopia and returned home reflecting on how USAID could better serve food insecure people.

Mary Rodriguez was among other students from different schools during her internship with USAID.

USAID has been helping developing countries with food aid, infrastructure and providing investments. Rodriguez was working on part of the Feed the Future program, which is a program that works with partner countries to advance their agricultural divisions and break the cycle of poverty and hunger.

“Part of the Feed the Future program that I worked on was assets and livelihood in transition,” Rodriguez said. “We work with those people receiving direct food aid by trying to help build their assets and pull themselves out of chronic food insecurity.”

The Feed the Future program makes food aid about more than just receiving food, she said; it’s also about building families assets so they can provide for themselves at home.

Rodriguez reported her research findings to the organization in order to help with policymaking and program evaluation. After conducting several focus groups within different regions of Ethiopia, Rodriguez found that the farmers were not diversifying their livelihoods in effective ways to increase their income.

“Some farmers would tell me they had two cows and a few chickens. When asked if that’s all they had, they would say, ‘Yes.’ That’s not diversification,” Rodriguez said. “There are options for crop production, small trade and going to work as a day laborer to bring more income home.”

USAID tries to take food-insecure households and bring them to a higher level of food security, Rodriguez said. Ultimately, she saw that Ethiopia was receiving a significant amount of food aid. However, whether the food aid is sufficient is still in question.

“I think that if people are well fed, then they have the opportunity to work and bring more income into the household,” Rodriguez said. “I think food is the basis of the well being in a family and its household.”

ISSUES IN AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES

Written by Logan Perry



A University of Florida Agricultural Education and Communications lecturer developed an agricultural issues class to enhance students’ critical thinking about agricultural and life sciences.

The Issues in Agricultural and Life Sciences class has been available to students since spring 2011. After the second semester teaching the class, AEC lecturer Becky Raulerson decided to change the curriculum and add speakers to discuss the science content.

After AEC faculty members noticed that students were graduating with an extensive background in communication and leadership, but lacked a firm background in agriculture, they decided to improve the curriculum, Raulerson said.

“The decision was made to start a course that enhanced students’

agricultural understanding in the area of critical thinking,” Raulerson said.

Some of the topics discussed throughout the course include food security, food safety, immigration labor, obesity, nutrition, water quality and water quantity, as well as the history of the land-grant system.

“What students ultimately learn is that putting all of that information together into one big package helps them to think more critically about agricultural and life sciences at a bigger level,” Raulerson said.

(Continued on page 10)

CRITICALLY THINKING

Raulerson (pictured above) works with students in her Issues in Agricultural and Life Sciences course, ensuring that they are thinking about these issues on a bigger level.

GLOBAL OUTREACH IN AFRICA

Written by Sydney Stone

An Agricultural Education and Communication student traveled to Africa and worked with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) while attending an international FFA experience.

Nicole Liles was chosen as one of six students across the nation to travel to Burkina Faso in West Africa. The GO: Africa program, which stands for Global Outreach, is an experience provided by the National FFA Organization and sponsored by the Howard G. Buffet Foundation. Buffet is a philanthropist in world hunger relief efforts.

“Thankful, humbled and motivated. These three words describe my feelings as I think about my experience in Burkina Faso,” Liles said.

Liles saw multiple perspectives of foreign aid and was personally impacted in a positive way by CRS.

“I learned of the hardships, as well as the positive impacts, of foreign aid administration, through the gracious staff of CRS,” Liles said. “Because of these eye-opening experiences, I am motivated to take what I have learned and share it.”



For two weeks the team of six worked with CRS in the agricultural division and learned about the aid CRS is providing within the agriculture sector and natural resources in the country. CRS is a mission-based group headquartered in Baltimore and not only deals with agriculture, but also healthcare, relocation and other needs internationally.

“It was really cool to see some of the practices that CRS does, like what they teach them and what they have the field animators teach them,” Liles said.

In the country of Burkina Faso, a field animator would be similar to an extension agent in the U.S.

Burkina Faso has approximately 80 ethnic groups, about 70 spoken languages and multiple religions that provide the country with diversity, she said.

“The diversity causes a need for flexibility in agricultural practices, because as one practice method might be productive in one region, it is not effective in another,” Liles said. “Thankfully, the Bukinabé (the residents of Burkina Faso) are open to trying new practices.”

CRS is working to develop and implement practices that assist the people in making the most out of their land. Liles said that CRS makes individual needs a priority and prepares the people for a stable, sustainable future.

“As the future of Burkina Faso lies on the horizon, these values of community, openness and generosity are advantages in progress towards a sustainable lifestyle,” Liles said.



5

EXCHANGING IDEAS ABOUT AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Nicole (seated at table, second from left) exchanges ideas about agricultural education with village leadership.

PROFESSOR DEVELOPS HIGH SCHOOL AQUACULTURE PROGRAM

Written by Mike O'Connor

An Agricultural Education and Communication associate professor whose roots come from corn farming in Illinois is taking part in creating a curriculum on an unfamiliar subject, the water.

With growing numbers of Florida universities beginning to talk about aquaculture in their programs and no real curriculum to teach it, AEC associate professor Brian Myers is taking part in developing a high school curriculum for aquaculture.

The project was sponsored by a grant from the Florida Aquaculture Research Council and consists of a team of content technical experts in marine sciences.

Myers has designed an academic program for a new subject in aquaculture, the farming of aquatic life.

With no prior background in aquatic life and being prone to seasickness, Myers said his friends and colleagues like to joke with him about his not-so-seaworthy attributes.

"When my friends and I would go down to the Keys for dolphin fishing, I was in charge of the chumming," Myers said, referring to vomiting. "They call me the Flatlander."

The content that was given to Myers from the technical experts gave him enough information and material to develop almost a semester-long program.

Being just a part of the curriculum development stage of the project, Myers was never able to get in the water in the field study portion.

"I'd love to go out there and work with them, but I'd be completely useless," he said.

The curriculum for the program

ranged from cultivation of shellfish to mangroves.

The curriculum was designed to be able to take any topic from the program and teach the students what section they are interested in, or they could go through all of the material.

The publications of the curriculum are now offered free online through the University of Florida's Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) and at Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.

After completion of the course, a follow-up review is given on how the teachers liked the course and how the curriculum could be improved.

"I know a lot more about aquaculture today than I ever have before from working on this project," Myers said.

NEW CLD PROGRAM IN PLANT CITY

(Continued from page 1)

Another difference includes the student transfer process into the program. The Plant City campus students begin CLD course work upon completion of their Associate of Arts degree from a state community college and acceptance into the University of Florida.

"We work closely with community colleges as we are housed on the Hillsborough Community College Plant City campus," said Nessmith, academic program coordinator and recruiter at Plant City. "We advise students to ensure the right track for success in the CLD specialization."

Although discussion about having

CLD taught at Plant City had been going on for almost four years, Dyer said that once the process of adding CLD began in early spring 2013, the faculty and staff were ready to make the addition of the specialization happen in a very short period of time.

Dyer, Dale and Nessmith are working diligently in promoting the program and recruiting students for the first CLD courses in August 2014.

"As next August approaches, we are very hopeful, as rigorous preparation and planning are taking place for a successful and exciting opportunity for incoming students," Nessmith said.



The Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (pictured above) will house the new CLD program.

FORMER DEAN WORKS ON AGR CONNECT

Written by T. Buddy Miller



Former dean of the University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is helping a national agricultural fraternity make connections for the future.

Kirby Barrick, a former president of AGR Beta chapter at Ohio State in 1969 and Grand President of the national fraternity, still works with the fraternity today. He said AGR is an outstanding organization that can develop young men.

Alpha Gamma Rho is the largest social and professional fraternity with 48,000 members in the United States and has a focus of “making

better men” in the agricultural field. AGR is found at every land-grant institution, which totals 71 active chapters.

“AGR has been very, very good to me,” Barrick said “Between the National FFA Organization and AGR, I am the person I am today.”

AGRconnect is a current \$3 million project that Barrick is working on for AGR. Barrick, a professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, is chairman of the AGRconnect campaign and solicits money from alumni across the country.

Barrick said AGRconnect is a way for officers in the fraternity to be more effective at their current position, stay connected with all the other AGRs across the nation and develop agricultural men into agricultural leaders.

“It is very good education material,” Barrick said. “It’s clearly to make better men, and you do that through education.”

Every AGR chapter is assigned a coach to make sure that AGRconnect is working and being used to its maximum potential.

At UF, Micah Scanga, an AEC alumnus, is the coach for the Alpha Gamma chapter.

“My job as a coach is to act like the oil in an engine and hopefully make this process a little smoother,” Scanga said. “I am an additional resource for brothers who choose to participate.”

Both Scanga and Barrick said that they believe AGRconnect will expand and help put the fraternity ahead of all other Greek organizations. Both agree this can be an effective tool for all AGR men.

AEC VISITING SCHOLAR

Sang-jin Ma has completed his Visiting Scholar program in the department. Ma spent most of 2013 at the University of Florida, studying US agricultural education to draw implications for secondary and post-secondary school agricultural education in the Republic of Korea. He also completed an English language course to improve his speaking skills.

Ma is a three-time graduate in agricultural education from Seoul National University, the premier public university in South Korea.

Between the master’s and PhD studies, he fulfilled the required obligation to military service. Since completing his doctorate, Ma has been employed in the Korea Rural Economic Institute where he is currently a Senior Fellow and a member of the Center for Rural Policy.

Ma’s wife and three children also spent the year in the U.S. They enjoyed visiting many areas of the country, from Disney World to the west coast. Ma will be assisting with the UF and Penn State agricultural education study course and four-week tour in Korea in summer 2014.



DISCOVERY COVE

(Continued from page 2)

She said her favorite dolphin named CJ was “super vocal,” always excited, yet carried a bit of a mischievous attitude.

“It is truly amazing to see how unique they are,” Boyd said.

Boyd said that even though SeaWorld is a large company, she was able to communicate and work with her boss “one-on-one every day.” Boyd said that she was able to get to know her boss on a personal level.

“Above all, I learned that SeaWorld is a great company,” Boyd said. “They treat their employees really well.”

Boyd said that it all comes down to targeting the application.

“Make your application as specific as possible,” Boyd said, “and target the application towards what you really want to do.”

Boyd said that she referred to her video experience in her resume, including many of the video classes she took through the AEC department.

Boyd received her internship position through SeaWorld’s competitive program called College Experience.

Lindsay Leroy, a human resources supervisor in SeaWorld of Orlando, said interns are placed at certain positions based on availability and the company’s business needs. She said that a rough estimate would be having “30 interns in the fall, 50 to 60 in the spring and around 150 during the summer.”

“Each semester we get easily over 300 applicants,” Leroy said. “It depends on the semester, but sometimes it is up to 600 a semester.”

At the end of her internship, Boyd said that she was offered a part-time position at Discovery Cove and now works there on the weekends.

“I was excited to go to work,” Boyd said, “and wanted to keep my career going with them because I enjoyed it so much.”

Not only was she around the marine animals she loved, Boyd said, but the internship also helped her with her communication skills.

AEC LAUNCHES NEW AG STEM PROGRAM

Written by Andrew Phillips

A team of Agricultural Education and Communication faculty is working to improve high school lab environments through the recently launched Ag-STEM program.

One project of the University of Florida’s Ag-STEM program is to teach educators how to be effective high school teachers, while helping students become interested in pursuing an Ag-STEM-related field when they graduate high school and start college.

STEM, which stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, has been offered to students in grades six to 12 for many years, said AEC professor Kirby Barrick, one of the team members advancing STEM teaching and learning in the field of agriculture.

“High school students are graduating with general STEM diplomas, but only 47 percent of these students go into a STEM-related field after they graduate,” Barrick said, “Sixty thousand STEM students are enrolled in grades six through 12, and this is a small number compared to the 1.3 million students in the state of Florida.”

Techniques used in agriculture apply heavily to the principles of STEM, Barrick said. For example, Barrick said people who understand biomechanics in agriculture are desperately needed in today’s workforce, because technology and engineering make it possible for America to produce and ship its own food nationally and globally.

Barrick and the AEC team are creating a list of current and potential research projects that address fundamentally important problems in education and apply them in the lab.

AEC research assistant professor Katie Stofer is bringing the science/STEM education perspective to the



Two agricultural education undergraduates examine the root of a plant during lab.

team by creating a portfolio of lab products, such as STEM education journals, and a database of STEM literature. The work of the Ag-STEM lab will be translated into high-quality products used by researchers and practitioners, Stofer said.

“Looking at agriculture and STEM through a different lens and breaking out of the boxes to integrate agriculture and STEM are what the lab is trying to accomplish,” she said.

AEC professor and Ag-STEM member Brian Myers is helping create a higher level of lab synergy, cohesiveness and visibility by establishing a plan of action and clarifying the way the lab will operate.

“The reason for creating the lab group was to formalize and have other people know the kind of work we are doing, and to highlight the science and math being taught in agriculture,” Myers said.

The Ag-STEM program is very small right now, Myers said, but the team is starting to get the name of the program out and, with increased awareness, they hope that more students realize how STEM applies to agriculture. Barrick said the team is excited to help expand UF’s Ag-STEM program and potentially make it known nationally for its superior work in STEM education.

2013 FLORIDA FFA CONVENTION

Written by James Barringer

Agricultural Education and Communication students and faculty continued the National FFA Organization's motto of living to serve at the Florida FFA State Convention this past June.

AEC assistant professor Andrew Thoron, along with many other students and faculty, dedicated their time to more than 4,000 Florida FFA members. During the week of the convention, students and staff served in many capacities, from judging professional development events to working backstage in the convention hall.

UF also had a booth in the career show which served as a recruiting tool for students interested in pursuing a degree in agriculture.

"We believe our presence at the convention is vitally important to agricultural education students and teachers," Thoron said.

Throughout the year the AEC department has a continued commitment to Florida FFA. Students and staff judge and coordinate eight different Career Development Events either on campus, or at the convention. In addition to supporting FFA members, Thoron coordinated teacher professional development for agricultural education teachers.

"Seeing teachers take advantage of professional development to improve their own courses is what I enjoy most about the convention," Thoron said.

Valerie McKee, an AEC student specializing in communication and leadership development, worked in the convention media room. McKee



CONVENTION MEDIA ROOM

AEC students interview department alumni, notable public figures and FFA members in the media room at convention.

utilized her communication skills to create the convention highlights video, write press releases and conduct interviews.

"Working in the media room was an excellent opportunity to capitalize on my skills and serve FFA members," McKee said.

Many AEC students had the opportunity to work as convention staff. Past Florida FFA state officer and AEC student Nicole Liles worked as a backstage assistant for the Florida FFA State Convention. Liles assisted with stage set up, lined up award

recipients going on stage and helped state officers practice their retiring addresses and speaking parts.

"My involvement in FFA is what encouraged me to pursue the specialization in communication and leadership development," Liles said. "Without the experiences I had, I probably wouldn't be in the AEC department, or even at the University of Florida. While working at the convention, I was able to see my FFA career come full circle."

Liles became familiar with the backstage process when she served as a Florida FFA state officer. She used her past experiences to help the current state officer team and help the back stage process run smoothly.

"The State FFA Convention is the biggest week of the year for FFA members," Liles said. "I wanted to help contribute to making that experience as memorable for members today as it was for me throughout my years of involvement."

"We believe our presence at the convention is vitally important to agricultural education students and teachers."

ISSUES IN AG AND LIFE SCIENCES FACULTY TRAVEL TO PERU

(Continued from page 4)

AEC junior Mary Hannah Miller took the Issues in Agricultural and Life Sciences course in spring 2013.

"The class was very informative, and it helped me to see agricultural issues in an unbiased way," Miller said. "It was nice to be able to look forward to the guest speakers present their real-world experience to the class."

Some of the guest speakers have presented every year since the class started.

"Students are taught how to recognize biased and unbiased information," Raulerson said.

This student-and-speaker interaction allows students access to greater knowledge about the issue in the professional world, Raulerson said.

Students are exposed to 11 guest speakers throughout the 15-week course. Students write a one-page speaker reflection on 10 of the 11 guest speakers. After each presentation, students are allowed to present any questions or concerns to the speaker in order to better understand the presentations and issues.

"There are so many components to agricultural and life sciences issues, and a lot of times students don't put the puzzle pieces together," Raulerson said. "This class allows them to think of those individual pieces and then put them together into one big package."



In October 2013, three AEC faculty members traveled to Lima, Peru to deliver workshops at the **Andean Conference for Innovation in Teaching Agriculture and Natural Resources**. Dr. Kirby Barrick (left) presented some of his work on teacher clarity. Drs. Amy Harder (center) and Grady Roberts (right) presented on creating meaningful learning experiences. The conference was attended by university faculty from all across Latin America, as well as presenters from Europe and North America.

ATTENTION AEC ALUMNI:
Don't forget! The Second
Biennial AEC Alumni
Gathering will be held on
Saturday, April 5, 2014 (the
same day as the Orange and
Blue game). Stay tuned for
more details!

UF ACLT ATTENDS AG MEDIA SUMMIT

Written by Jenna Garrett

Each year, members of the AEC student organization Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow (ACLT) attend the Agricultural Media Summit (AMS) to meet students and faculty from other land-grant universities, make professional connections and possibly acquire jobs.

AMS is the largest gathering of crop and livestock media professionals in the United States, and is held in a different location within the U.S. each year. Previous locations have included Fort Worth, Texas; St. Paul, Minnesota; New Orleans, Louisiana; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and most recently, Buffalo, New York.

Andrea Davis, a recent graduate of the department and a four-year attendee of AMS, said that many times the 85 or more vendors will conduct professional job interviews at the conference.

"Generally, any company that promotes agriculture is present at AMS, and they sometimes will offer jobs on the spot," Davis said.

Caroline Roper, a one-year attendee and a graduate student in the department, said the greatest benefit she got out of the 2013 Agricultural Media Summit in Buffalo was to see all the agricultural communications practitioners in action.

"It was nice to see that agricultural communications really is a big field and there is a large job market out there," Roper said.

Davis said that AMS also offers day-long educational sessions.

"There are many sessions offered daily, including sessions on agricultural issues, agricultural policy, research, and also skills-based courses on design and video production



ACLT STUDENTS VISIT NIAGARA FALLS
While at the 2013 Agricultural Media Summit in Buffalo, NY, the students had the opportunity to visit Niagara Falls.

software," Davis said, "I always try to attend the sessions Adobe offers each year on InDesign."

Davis said she really enjoys the creative sessions, but that all sessions offered are interesting and important.

"One of my favorite parts of the conference is the professional development that is offered through the wide array of sessions available at AMS," Davis said.

Roper said John Deere hosted her favorite workshop this year.

"They won a Silver Anvil for their public relations campaign, and it was neat to get to talk to them," Roper said.

Davis said there are always multiple sessions running, and attendees are able to pick which sessions interest them.

"They offer something for everyone," Davis said.

Roper also said she enjoyed speaking with students and advisors from different universities.

"I had the opportunity to meet advisors from different universities and meet students and talk to them about their programs," Roper said. "I would definitely say I made connections."

Roper and Davis both said they plan to attend the Agricultural Media Summit in 2014, and the future summits to come.

"I think I'll continue attending AMS for as long as I'm in the agricultural industry, which I hope is the rest of my life," Davis said.

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Joenelle Futrell
2012-2013 Eastern Region
Vice President

AEC student, Joenelle Futrell, completed a successful year serving as the **Eastern Region Vice President of the National FFA Organization**. Futrell, a Kentucky native, will attend the University of Florida to pursue her bachelor's degree in agricultural education starting in January. We are excited to welcome her into our department. Welcome to the Gator Nation, Joenelle!



2012-2013
National FFA
Officer Team

AEC students, Clay Sapp (far left) and Joenelle Futrell (second from right), with their fellow members of the 2012-2013 National FFA officer team at the National FFA convention in Indianapolis

Last year it was realized that we could more effectively reach potential undergraduate students by having some of our enthusiastic AEC majors represent the department at various recruiting events both on and off campus.

Thus, the AEC Advocates were created! The mission of the AEC Advocate Student Representative Program is to connect current students with prospective undergraduate students and share valuable experiences and information about the AEC undergraduate program. Two representatives from each specialization at the Gainesville campus and one representative from the Plant City campus were selected this past fall by the undergraduate faculty after a thorough application and interview process.

The AEC Advocates for the 2013-14 academic year are Amber Huff, Valerie McKee, Rebecca Mickler, Katie Whidden, and Trevor Williams. This group of students attends state and local events to educate high school students and prospective transfer students about the opportunity to become an AEC major at the University of Florida.

Upcoming spring events include the UF Majors and Minors Fair, Gator Encounter (held in conjunction with the Orange and Blue Debut), and FFA State Leadership Summit.

2013 - 2014 AEC ADVOCATES

Amber Huff
Valerie McKee
Rebecca Mickler
Katie Whidden
Trevor Williams

LIVING TO SERVE

Written by Sydney Stone

A student in the Agricultural Education and Communication department served the National FFA Organization while advocating for the organization and the agriculture industry.

Clay Sapp was elected as the 2012-2013 National FFA president at the national convention in Indianapolis last October. He said he looks forward to getting more involved on the University of Florida campus while utilizing the skills he learned as the National FFA president.

"I am currently looking at trying to get more involved with organizations on campus that will allow me to explore creative ways to advocate for FFA, agriculture and leadership in the future," Sapp said. "With the training and knowledge that I have received this year, I hope to speak in front of groups that haven't had as much exposure to agriculture as others."

Sapp said he learned valuable lessons throughout his year of service that has shaped him into the person he is now and that he wants to continue to be.

"The one thing that I have learned that I will take with me throughout the rest of my life is that no matter how busy you may be, you can always make time for the things that you believe in and care about," Sapp said.

Sapp said several factors played a role in him deciding to run for national office, but a certain instance helped him make the final decision.

"I had the chance to facilitate a

chapter officer training a few months after I had finished serving as the State FFA president," Sapp said. "Working with those chapter officers allowed me to realize that I still had a desire to serve FFA members and build the organization that I loved."

Throughout the past year, he served as a leader to over 500,000 FFA members. Sapp said he credits many individuals for helping him reach his goals, but one in particular.

"I would be remiss if I didn't mention my dad because he played a large role in developing me into the leader in agriculture and leadership that I have become," Sapp said. "He was my high school agriculture teacher and FFA advisor, and he has provided so much guidance along the way."

When his term as national president ended, he said he felt like he had put everything possible into his year of service.

"I felt fulfilled. It has been an

"The one thing I have learned is that no matter how busy you may be, you can always make time for the things that you believe in and care about."



Clay Sapp
2012-2013 National FFA
President

amazing year and I have learned so much, so I took a lot of pride in knowing that I had accomplished more than I could have ever imagined when I took office last year," Sapp said.

Sapp said he looks forward to returning to UF and becoming a proactive student.

"I am most excited to get more engaged on campus. I was only a student at UF for two semesters before I was elected into this position, so I hope to get more involved with student government and some of the social aspects that are offered on campus," he said.

RECENT AEC HAPPENINGS

...a snapshot of exciting departmental events from 2013!



In Fall 2013, a new group of students were inducted into Alpha Tau Alpha, our department's honor society.



Students in the Teacher Education specialization worked on exciting projects during their intern block.



In Spring 2013, graduate students, faculty and staff worked on the Rebuilding Together volunteer project.



Members of the Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow (ACLT) visited Orlando public relations firm, Purple Rock Scissors, during their Fall 2013 industry tour.



In Spring 2013, members of the Agricultural Education and Communication Graduate Student Association (AECGSA) held their annual farm tour.



In Fall 2013, Dr. Grady Roberts gave his first professorial lecture at the Emerson Alumni Hall.

AEC AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AWARDS

-December Ph.D. graduate **Avery Culbertson** has been selected as a semifinalist for the **UF Graduate Student Teaching Award**, based on her teaching performance with AEC 3030 in the fall 2013 semester. A second set of semifinalists will be chosen in the spring 2014 semester, and 20 teaching assistants will be recognized as the 2013-2014 winners at a special event in April.

-**Kirby Barrick** and **Brian Myers** received a **Southeastern Conference Visiting Travel Grant** to support collaborative research activities with **Dr. Kate Shoulders** at the University of Arkansas.

-**Amy Harder** was selected as the Southern Region winner of the **Early Career Award** presented by Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP). AEC PhD student and Marion County Extension agent **Norma Samuel** received ESP's Southern Region International Service Award.

-**Kirby Barrick** received the **NAAE 2103 Southern Region Distinguished Service Citation**.

-AEC graduate **Keri Milligan Sidle**, agriscience teacher at Oakleaf High School in Clay County, received the **2013 FNGLA Outstanding Educator Award**. Keri's agriculture program was also recognized as the 2013 Outstanding Secondary Agriscience Program by the Florida Association of Agricultural Educators.

-AEC graduates **Kelly Mosley** (BS, '04) and **Andy Andreason** (MAG, '82) received the **CALS Alumni and Friends Horizon Award and the Award of Distinction** at the IFAS TailGATOR event on October 5. Kelly is the Career and Tech Ed Specialist for Clay County Schools, and Andy is the Extension Director in Washington County.

-**Nicole Stedman** and **Brittany Adams** received the **NACTA 2013 Jack Everly Journal Article Award**. **Chris Estepp**, **Grady Roberts**, and **Hannah Carter** received the **NACTA 2013 E. B. Knight Journal Article Award**.

-The UF Chapter of **Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow** won the **2013 Yamaha Scholarship Contest** and received a check for \$2,500. The UF chapter has won this communications campaign competition four of the last five years.

-AEC undergraduate **Jenna McDaniel** was selected as one of **15 student teaching scholarship winners** by the **National Association of Agricultural Educators**.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

-**Brian Myers** was appointed **Interim Associate Dean and 4-H Youth Development Program Leader for UF/IFAS Extension**, effective December 1.

-**Tracy Irani** was appointed **Interim Chair of the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences**, effective November 1.

-UF Explore Research videos created by **Ricky Telg** and students in his advanced video production course have been added to NSF's **Science 360 Video Network**.

-AEC PhD student **Mary Rodriguez** is the **2013-2014 Student President of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education**.

-**Catherine Clark** has joined the department as a program assistant.

-**Laura Sanagorski** was selected as a **2013 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Fellow**.

-The University approved the department's new **Graduate Certificate in Leadership in Agriculture and Natural Resources**, effective August 2013.

-AEC undergraduate **Clay Sapp** completed his one-year term as **President of the National FFA** and will continue in the Department's teacher education program in January.



aec REVIEW



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