

CASNR's Arganbright leads UNL student government

Kyle Arganbright says the

relationships he built in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources gave him the confidence and initiative to reach the top of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln student body.

Arganbright, an agricultural economics senior from Valentine, is serving as president of ASUN, Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, the representative voice for UNL students.

The student government leader said he learned quickly at CASNR that administration, faculty and staff members truly care about students, "which is motivating."

"My adviser and everyone in the dean's office have been very supportive and encouraging," Arganbright said. They suggested he get involved in a variety of academic and non-academic activities, including student government, he said.

Their encouragement led Arganbright to work on two successful campaigns for former ASUN presidents, then to seek his own presidency as a member of the College Party. He admits he entered the race for president late, after realizing "there were some other ideas that needed to come out" to give students a greater voice.

Check out CASNR's Web site at
<http://casnr.unl.edu>



Brett Hampton

Arganbright's basic platform was simplification – making it simpler for students to take care of routine business like getting into a full class, thus easing the stress of campus life.

"I had a lot of ideas," he said.

His ideas swept his party to victory in March, with just under 50 percent of the vote. He also credits the win to 50 to 60 people who helped run his party's campaign.

"It was because we put together a good team," Arganbright said. "We had some people who knew what they were talking about."

Arganbright's experience with politics and leadership started before college. While Arganbright was growing up, his grandfather was involved in the local Republi-

can Party in Nebraska and his father has been elected Thomas County attorney several times.

Arganbright was active in FFA and was state president his freshman year of college. He is in his second year as president of his fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon.

As ASUN president, Arganbright weekly works 20 to 40 hours and attends one student government meeting. He represents students on the NU Board of Regents and lets

Kyle Arganbright, an agricultural economics senior from Valentine, represents University of Nebraska-Lincoln students as president of ASUN, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

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The Dean Says:

Every day I come to campus I am reminded of the great tradition of the land-grant university, one part of which is the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

That daily reminder is posted on the entrance doors of most East Campus buildings that are part of the land-grant system and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. On these doors a single sentence captures the gist and significance of land-grants:

"The Morrill Act of 1862 established a Land Grant University in each state where The Leading Object would be instruction in agriculture and related fields."

The Morrill Act and its leading object democratized higher education and created a culture of academic service to the masses. This revolutionary concept came at a time when higher education was limited to the 2 percent of the religious or wealthy elite. The land-grant system evolved to encompass three main branches: teaching, research and extension education, each of which enhances the others.

In Nebraska, I'm very proud CASNR is the teaching branch of our land-grant university, and a very important one. That fact was underscored last year as our state, the university, the institute and this college faced significant budget challenges. State-appropriated funds for the institute were reduced by \$6,794,943; the college was reduced by \$244,512. The college reduction obviously was significant, but much less than the proportionate share of the entire institute's reduction.

That's dedication to teaching — dedication by the vice chancellor, associate and assistant vice chancellors; dedication by the deans and directors of the Agricultural

Research Division and Cooperative Extension Division; dedication to the leading object of the land-grant mission.

In spite of all that happened through four rounds of budget cuts, I am very proud our CASNR students excelled and faculty enthusiasm for the academic mission thrived. Examples of both are reflected in this issue of *CASNR Class Acts*.

There's something else reflected in this issue, an indication that the land-grant system in Nebraska is intact and honored; something that demonstrates this three-way partnership between teaching, research and extension education. CASNR Professor Jim Van Etten is a member of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences, yet he impassions undergraduates and others about science and allows them to work in his laboratory. At Kimmel Orchard near Nebraska City, people can have an enjoyable experience and learn more about alternative crops through CASNR projects that expand extension education. Certainly, our students also benefit.

Simply put, working together benefits us all.

The land-grant mission still is very important in the United States. And in this state, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources makes it very much so. In this state, the institute itself is one very large class act.



Steve Waller

Steve Waller
Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Nebraska Beef Team

helps educate consumers

Many consumers today are learning the finer points of preparing and serving beef, thanks to the Nebraska Beef Team.

Since 1998 more than 35 team members, all students in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, have assisted consumers while promoting the industry, gaining confidence and developing their presentation skills. Team members receive training from the Nebraska Beef Council before taking their beef tips to consumers at participating grocery stores.

“The program is to help people be more comfortable with their beef purchase so they have a more satisfying experience when they cook it,” said Chris Calkins, professor of animal science and a team adviser at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Consumer evaluations of the beef team have been “exceedingly high,” he added.

Team members such as Vicki Wray, an animal science and agribusiness junior from Scotia, have beef production backgrounds. They find talking to consumers gives them insight on how people use the product their families raise.

“Consumers know beef is a high-quality, wholesome product, but some are at a loss as to how to prepare it,” Wray said. “Beef preparation requires a bit of knowledge to receive the full benefit.”

Ann Marie Bosshamer, beef council marketing director, pointed out the example of round steaks, which require moist heat; people who grill them without marinating will be disappointed in the result and not buy them again. Educating consumers benefits the industry, students and consumers, she said.

“Consumers vote every day with their dollar when they buy beef,” Bosshamer said.

“Students gain valuable experience and the beef industry is getting a positive message out and helping mold future leaders in agriculture,” Bosshamer said, adding Nebraska’s \$12 billion a year beef industry is the state’s largest single industry.

When the beef team program began, students worked in pairs



Brett Hampton

and talked to consumers at the meat counter of participating grocery stores. Now it is more in-depth, with team members making individual 20-minute presentations on selection and grades of meat, safety and the best preparation methods for various cuts of beef.

Bosshamer said during summer trial presentations, up to 20 people watched a demonstration, enticed to stay partly by the beef samples given at the end.

Wray said being a member of the beef team increased her own knowledge about beef. She’s also proud to represent herself, UNL and the beef council.

“The beef industry is one of my passions,” Wray said. “If you have a passion for something, you want to share it with people.”

— Cheryl Alberts

Vicki Wray, left, animal science and agribusiness junior from Scotia, and Jessica Warner, animal science sophomore from Allen, offer beef preparation suggestions to consumers. Both were Nebraska Beef Team members last year, while Wray is continuing in the program this year.

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Calendar of Events

November

- 4, 17 Red Letter Days
- 26-30 Thanksgiving break

December

- 5 Red Letter Day
- 13 Classes end
- 15-19 Final exams
- 20 Graduation breakfast and graduation

January

- 12 Classes begin
- 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 30 Red Letter Day

February

- 16 Red Letter Day
- 29 Big Red Road Show

March

- 14-21 Spring break
- 28-31 CASNR Week

Student designs

enhance Kimmel garden and trail system



Steve Rodie

The classroom has taken to the fields at Kimmel Orchard north of Nebraska City.

The orchard is part of the Richard P. and Laurine Kimmel Education and Research Center, which collaborates with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and other entities to promote value-added agriculture and agritourism. The collaboration includes UNL student input for a 2-acre demonstration garden and an orchard trails system.

Students in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources introductory landscaping design class highlighted the use of traditional and value-added crop plantings to illustrate their variety and potential in Nebraska. Students suggested trees, shrubs and

Tony Isabell, left, and Graham Herbst were in an introductory landscaping design class highlighting uses of value-added crop plantings. Herbst is a horticulture senior from Omaha. Isabell, from North Platte and a junior at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, plans to later transfer into the horticulture program in CASNR.

other plants that would produce fruits, nuts, medicinals, herbs and stems for floral arrangements.

Some ideas for the garden were submitted by Graham Herbst, a horticulture senior from Omaha. Herbst said his design is intended to be educational and entertaining, while giving agricultural producers and homeowners practical ideas. His plan accommodated wind, weather, sun, soil types, wildlife and a new educational building to be built on the property.

“Creativity and interest can really take you a long way,” Herbst said. “I have an assignment I’m really proud of.”

Herbst’s instructor for the project was Steve Rodie, UNL associate professor of landscape horticulture who teaches this course and others at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Rodie said he strives to incorporate actual design projects into course curriculum.

“This project shows there was potential, even in a beginning class, to provide students with real-world experience,” Rodie said.

Another example of student involvement at the Kimmel Orchard is a trails system designed and built by Robert Heyduck, a Texas native and UNL agronomy graduate student. Heyduck was one of 18 students in Professor Charles Francis’ advanced agroecology class to propose supplemental land uses for the 90-acre orchard.

Heyduck’s proposal was selected because the orchard’s diversity, which includes cherries, apples, peaches, plums, Asian pears and vineyards, can be experienced and seen by trail users, said Carol Ringenberg, Kimmel center program development director and an NU Cooperative Extension educator based in Nebraska City.

During summer 2003, Heyduck coordinated and built two to three miles of self-guided wood-chip trails. Among the challenges, he said, was designing the trails so people could walk safely and away from orchard work.

“We tried to keep the trail separate, but still close enough to things where people could be out in the middle of it,” Heyduck said,

CASNR Career Fair



Rachel Janousek of Clarkson and Jerad Hutchens of Lincoln, both agribusiness seniors, get ready to visit with company representatives at the 2003 CASNR Career Fair.

adding the biggest educational benefit for him was working with several people and incorporating their needs into the trail design.

Ringenberg welcomes student input because it benefits the public as well as the students.

“Part of the Kimmel mission is education,” Ringenberg said. “We want people to come out here and experience the orchard; we want people to have that face-to-face learning opportunity.”

— Cheryl Alberts



Barbara Rixstine

Katie Frey, an agribusiness junior from Albion and Devin Bird, a 1991 agribusiness graduate, visit during the 2003 CASNR Career Fair Oct. 2. Bird is a sales representative for Dow AgroSciences, one of 48 companies at the annual event. Frey was one of nearly 500 student participants.

Hazelnut husker takes on many types of nuts

Hazelnuts could become an alternative crop in Nebraska, according to several University of Nebraska-Lincoln experts. Like soybeans, hazelnuts have multiple uses but can be grown on rougher ground. To have potential, however, they must be husked mechanically.

Mike Kocher, UNL associate professor of biological systems engineering, had worked with undergraduate students on a promising but inefficient hazelnut husking machine. Kocher was delighted when Lee Pothast, a graduate student studying mechanized systems management, indicated an interest in working on the project.

Pothast was a skilled mechanic in his home state of South Dakota when he returned to school. He undertook the challenge of building a hazelnut husker for his master’s thesis at UNL.

Only after he came up with his own concepts did Pothast study the rough prototype developed by the undergraduates, because he wanted his design to be free of any previous influence. In just a few months Pothast designed and built a machine he said is 95 percent efficient. Besides various sizes of hazelnuts, the adjustable machine has husked about 20 types of other nuts, such as black walnuts and hickory nuts, all of which are varied in size, husk thicknesses and moisture levels.

Pothast said he has benefited by learning teamwork, and credits College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources faculty, including Kocher and Bill Campbell, also associate professor of BSE, for their help.

“The faculty is top-notch; I’ve had the opportunity to work with some extremely brilliant minds,” Pothast said.

— Cheryl Alberts

A brief glimpse



Barbara Rixstine

Lisa Pfeiffer

Lisa Pfeiffer, a College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources agricultural economics graduate from Seward, won first place in the undergraduate research paper competition sponsored by the American Agricultural Economics Association conference in Montreal in 2003.

Pfeiffer's University of Nebraska-Lincoln research adviser, Lilyan Fulginiti, encouraged her to write and submit "Agricultural Productivity Growth in the Andean Community." Fulginiti believes Pfeiffer's paper was chosen because of academic interest in the topic, level and type of results, and research methods.

"In one year, Lisa was able to master the techniques and get herself involved in the topic itself, and that's unusual for an undergraduate student," Fulginiti said. "She was also especially good at writing the results and presenting them to different audiences."

Pfeiffer now is an agricultural economics graduate student at the University of California-Davis. She said working on the paper and presenting it was a good learning experience.

"I learned a lot about how to write a research paper and how to go about doing my own research, which is something I'll have to do in graduate school. Most undergraduates really don't get a chance to start on those things, so it was nice to have an experience like that."

— Barbara Rixstine

Distinguished plant pathologist welcomes

It's easy to tell what is most important in Jim Van Etten's career in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and it's not his recent induction into the prestigious National Academy of Sciences (NAS). It's his students.

"If they weren't here, I would not be anywhere," said Van Etten, UNL William Allington distinguished professor of plant pathology.

At any one time, Van Etten has several undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers working in his lab. He includes undergraduates in his lab because he believes it is important they be exposed to research, particularly if they go on to graduate school.

"It's a tremendous opportunity for them in the sense they get hands-on experience," Van Etten said.

Tony Fehr, a biochemistry junior from Davenport, said he has gained a tremendous amount of knowledge working in Van Etten's lab for the last year and a half.

"Jim has given me an incredible opportunity to develop myself as a scientist," he said. "I love working for him and I know the experience will pay great dividends for me in the future."

As for Van Etten's former students, he can tell you what many are doing today. For example, his first graduate student now is a



Lori McGinnis

professor in the Department of Plant Biology at the University of Minnesota and his second is a research scientist for

Dow AgroSciences in Indianapolis.

Van Etten cares so much about young people who have worked with him that he still has their lab coats hanging in his lab. The coats, dating back to 1969, have characteristics about the students written on them. He ran out of space about 20 years ago, so now he hangs photos instead.

One coat belonged to Larry Dunkle, who worked with Van Etten in 1970 as a postdoc. Dunkle now is a supervisory research plant pathologist with the USDA-

Jim Van Etten, William Allington distinguished professor of plant pathology, thinks so much of his former students that he still has their coats, dating back to 1969, in his lab.

students in his lab

Agricultural Research Service and adjunct professor of plant pathology at Purdue University.

"It was absolutely the best year I've spent in my research career," Dunkle said. "Jim's enthusiasm for all areas of science was just contagious."

Tiara Morehead worked with Van Etten as a graduate assistant prior to earning her master's degree in biology, and now is a research virologist at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

"He's all about getting undergraduates interested in research," Morehead said. "He's always eager to bring somebody new in to learn."

It was more than good student relationships that got Van Etten his NAS membership, however. It was his research with another UNL colleague that led to the discovery

of a new family of viruses called *Phycodnaviridae*.

In April he became only the third UNL scientist — all members of CASNR's Department of Plant Pathology — elected to NAS, one of the highest honors that can be achieved by a scientist.

CASNR Dean Steve Waller said students are fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a professor the caliber of Van Etten.

"Even though Dr. Van Etten is a research scientist, he includes undergraduate students in his research lab and mentors them as emerging scientists," Waller said. "He, like so many of our faculty, has built a tradition of engaging our students in inquiry and discovery at the frontiers of science."

— Lori McGinnis

Two new scholarships benefit CASNR students

Thirty-two CASNR students will benefit this year from two new scholarships available from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. The new scholarships are due to the generosity of the late Ervin and Dorothy Schulz of Doniphan and Ken Morrison of Hastings, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln emeriti professor.

The Schultzes were lifetime Nebraska farmers and designated their scholarship fund for students whose careers will promote and further agricultural sciences.

The Morrison scholarship — funded through the same resource as the Ken Morrison Distinguished Professorship in Food Engineering

— offers funds for freshmen and transfer students.

"It's just great to have dollars we can use to attract quality students on a timely basis," said Jack Schinstock, CASNR associate dean.

Approximately \$450,000 in CASNR scholarships are shared among more than 650 of the college's students each year.

"Donors' scholarship support of our students is a distinct honor for the students who are recognized," said Steve Waller, CASNR dean. "These scholarships are truly an investment in the future of Nebraska's agriculture."

— Barbara Rixstine

A brief glimpse



Lori McGinnis

John Rupnow

John Rupnow continually looks for new ways to teach, and his efforts show. This summer the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources professor won the 2003 Institute of Food Technologists William V. Cruess Award.

The prestigious award honors an IFT member for excellence in teaching food science and technology. It is only the second time a UNL faculty member has won the award from IFT, an organization with 29,000 members around the world.

Rupnow, who tries to make his lectures entertaining, teaches 1,000 students a year at UNL and at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, to where the Harley-Davidson enthusiast commutes on his motorcycle. Rupnow also teaches beginning motorcycle safety and riding classes on weekends.

"These awards are always very flattering and humbling, but teaching is really my passion. You go through life and you find something you enjoy doing and you try to get as good at it as you can. I put a lot of time into planning my lectures. I always try to look at the most effective and entertaining way to teach a concept."

— Lori McGinnis

CASNR CARES

opportunities to succeed

Whether a student is concerned about a family illness, finding a part-time job, adding a class or seeing a friendly face, Sue Voss is there with information, suggestions and a smile.

Voss' goal as the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural

Resources' student development and events director is student well-being. She coordinates the year-old CASNR CARES (Caring Attitudes and Respect for Every Student) program originally designed by Dean Steve Waller to increase student retention by giving every student opportunities to succeed.

During the first two days of the fall 2003 semester, Voss fielded about a dozen calls. Many, but not all, were from freshmen.

"I just try to help them find answers," Voss said. She also often encourages students to

Sue Voss, right, CASNR student development and events director, shows Kaylene Harms to her new room at Burr Hall prior to the start of fall classes. Harms is a biochemistry freshman from Dodge.

participate in campus activities to become more involved in the campus community.

Faculty, staff, parents or students themselves may contact Voss if they are concerned for a student. Voss follows up, often inviting the student to stop by for a brief visit. In some instances, she has contacted professors on behalf of students who must miss class due to illness, accidents or a death in the family. One Sunday she took time to show a new student where the student's classes would be held.

That student's mother said Voss' time was a gift that "made all the difference" to her daughter that day.

"Everybody is very appreciative," Voss said. "I get to know the students a lot better than many people. They feel pretty comfortable coming here."

— Cheryl Alberts



Lori McGinnis

Arganbright *from page 1*

their opinions be known.

"It's been refreshing to see the concern the powers that be have for the students," he said.

That concern was quickly evident when Arganbright entered CASNR and found support by its administration, faculty and staff.

"They're sincerely, genuinely interested in you," he said. "It's like your parents checking in on you sometimes, which after awhile you realize is good."

— Lori McGinnis

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