

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources
Spring 2009 Academic Notes

Recent Developments

The last six months continue to witness changes in the College. A new Doctor of Plant Health recently received final approval and will be administered by Dr. Gary Hein. Also approved were undergraduate certificates in Leadership and in Agricultural & Natural Resources Legal Studies. Our general enrollments have continued to exhibit moderate growth and programs approved last year in plant science, forensic science and food technology for companion animals are off to strong starts. The first class of students to complete two years in the Professional Program in Veterinary Medicine (joint with ISU) will be moving to Ames in the Fall to complete their studies. Student engagement continues to be a vital aspect of the College and we want to particularly recognize the revitalization of Sigma Alpha, a national organization to promote women in agriculture. Our levels of student retention from the first to second year continue to exceed the University average, as do the ACT scores for our incoming students.

It is clear from recent projections, that the next two years will present special challenges for our units, our faculty and our students. Where possible, budgetary decreases will be implemented in ways that ameliorate the impact on student curricular options and student learning. However, it is likely that many units will be called upon to accommodate changes. It should be kept in mind that planning should focus on achieving long-term goals, rather than short-term budgetary accommodations. This College needs to move in the next decade to provide students an education encompassing an interdisciplinary foundation for sustainable food, sustainable resources and sustainable environment. We have moved farther in this direction than many Land Grant Universities, but we must increase our efforts to better educate students who will become our future leaders.

A new vision of the future of Land Grant Universities has just been published by the National Academy of Sciences (http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12602&page=1). We suggest that this will be interesting reading and stimulate discussions on the future of institutions like CASNR. We also remind faculty of the external review of life sciences education and research that will take place on March 25 and 26 (<http://ianrhome.unl.edu/strategicplan>). Faculty are encouraged to attend the Lunch/Open Forum at 11:45 on March 26 in the East Union (please RSVP to Murd Holland).

ACE General Studies Update

The new Achievement Centered Education (ACE) system of general education requirements will start in Fall 2009. The system will consist of ten different student learning objectives in which all students will have to take courses. The UNL ACE committee has been busy certifying these courses and a listing of these courses is

available on line (<http://ace.unl.edu>). To accommodate this new system, each unit is identifying a faculty or staff member to serve as ACE Coordinator. All instructors of ACE-certified courses will have to archive student assessments defined in the certification proposal, as well as a copy of the syllabus and a reflection on student outcomes. More information about the mechanism for reporting on the ACE courses and necessary steps for their recertification will be circulated in the Fall. CASNR owes a huge thanks to Tiffany Heng-Moss and Lloyd Bell who serve as Interim ACE Committee members for the past year and assisted units in preparing their proposals.

Enrollment Forecast

Currently our enrollment data is looking a little different than last year at this time. While the number of applications we've received are comparable to last year (which is good), our freshman enrollment deposits are down (28 as of March 16, 2009). Students have until May 1 to pay their \$250 deposit and it appears this year, some are waiting until the deadline. Enrollment deposits for the university are also down and it is still early, but the data only reinforces the importance of staying in contact with prospective students. As the Chancellor recently noted, increased attention to student recruitment will help us to continue serving as many Nebraska students as possible.

Credit Hours for Graduation Under Review

Following a proposal in the CASNR Curriculum Committee to reduce the 128 credit hours required for the B.S. degree, a committee was formed to examine this issue and report back to the College faculty on the issue. The committee consists of members of the Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Advisory Committee and has an Emeritus faculty member, Dr. Lowell Moser, as members. It is anticipated that this committee will conclude its deliberations during the Spring semester.

Policy on Minimum Class Enrollments

The CASNR policy on class size is that undergraduate classes with less than ten students, or graduate classes with less than five students, require permission to be offered. Instructors of such classes should contact their unit administrator requesting that an email be sent to the CASNR Dean seeking permission to offer the class. If permission is not received, the class will not be used for CASNR teaching load calculations. In a survey completed last year, it appears that a significant number of classes in CASNR are being offered in spite of low enrollments. Units should consider whether it is possible to offer such classes on a less frequent basis, or move a class with multiple sections to a larger room; such action may help increase curricular flexibility and help with staffing shortfalls.

Update on PEARL Assessments

Units continue to become more participatory in the PEARL assessment program. In the 2007-2008 cycle, thirteen of the seventeen undergraduate programs completed their assessments and input the data into the system. We also have five CASNR graduate programs participating in PEARL assessment and plan on increasing the number next year. Problems with the PEARL assessment system should be reported to either John

Markwell in the CASNR Dean's Office, or Jeremy Penn in the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

Reminder on Implementing CIEQ

It is time to start thinking about administering the CIEQ evaluation for the Spring semester. For the most meaningful results, the instrument may be administered anytime during the last five weeks of the semester. Do not administer the instrument on the day before an exam, the day of an exam, or the day following an exam. Make sure that students have adequate time to provide feedback on the back of the instrument. Please make sure that the information bubble sheet has the instructor's correct name. If you have questions about interpretation of the CIEQ results, contact John Markwell.

Reminder on Implementing Program Evaluation for Instructional Improvement

Unit plans for implementing the Instructional Improvement program are due in May to the CASNR Dean's Office. If you have questions, please contact John Markwell. There is flexibility in implementation of this program; we have already been contacted by two small units about combining efforts to facilitate peer reviews.

Campus Safety Awareness

After the recent shooting incident at 33rd & Holdredge, it became clear that most of us don't know what to do when we receive a UNL Alert by email or phone. This may be something that Units want to discuss with faculty and staff. By the time that an electronic message is received, any threat may be over, but we should also prepare for what we should do if we are presented with an immediate serious threat in or near our office or classroom. It is suggested that all buildings review and advertise evacuation routes, establish "shelter-in-place" locations, and establish personnel and mechanisms for building-wide emergency communications. At a minimum, it may be a good idea to post signs in all classrooms and public areas to call 472-2222 in an emergency or when faced with threatening circumstances.

Hollings Family Awards

The 2009 winners of the Hollings Family Award Program for Teaching Excellence were presented on March 11 in the East Camus Union. Awards for Senior Faculty Teaching excellence were given to John Foster (Dept. Entomology), Paul Hay (Southeast REC), Phillip Miller (Dept. Animal Science) and Connie Reimers-Hild (Southeast REC). Awards for Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence were given to Cheryl Bailey (Dept. Biochemistry) and Cory Reng (Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture). Awards for Teaching Assistant Excellence were given to Joana Story (Dept AgLEC) and Jeremy Wagnitz (Dept. Entomology). Congratulations to all our winners for continuing the CASNR tradition of commitment to excellence in education.

Justin Smith Morrill Scholars Update

The Justin Morrill Scholars club held their yearly elections to select new officers in December, 2008. Derek Jagels was elected the new club President. He and his executive team are already busy planning this year's service events and social activities. The program held its annual awards luncheon on January 24, 2009. Freshman scholars were

pinned and welcomed formally into the program after completion of the fall seminar course which examines Morrill's life, the land grant university system, and leadership and service examples from Morrill's service in the U.S. Congress. A slide presentation of the scholar's Labor Day trip to the Morrill Homestead in Strafford, Vermont preceded the awards. Several Scholars were on this year's ASUN ballot and the Scholars Program co-sponsored one of this year's debates. Finally, planning is underway for this year's fall trip to Strafford, Vermont to conduct a service-learning project at the Morrill Homestead.

CASNR Week Activities

This year will feature the usual calendar of activities for faculty, staff and students. The calendar includes the following events, so mark your calendars:

April 17-18 UNL Rodeo at Lancaster Event Center

April 19 CASNR Involvement Reception, International Studies Reception, CASNR Week Reception and CASNR Week Banquet

April 20 Club Adviser Luncheon

April 21 Lunch on the Lawn, Community Night

April 22 Undergraduate TA Luncheon, Career Opportunities in Science

April 23 Blood Drive, Alpha Gamma Rho BBQ

April 24 Block and Bridal Banquet

April 25 Burr Hall Bull Fry

Scholarships Are Available For Study Abroad

CASNR-led study abroad for 2010 will include:

December (2009) - January (2010) Winter Break

Group study: in New Zealand (led by Dr. Jones, 472-5566)

Spring 2010

Group study: Spring Break in Puerto Rico (led by Dr. Ferraro, 472-08248)
in Argentina (led by Dr. Mason, 472-1523) and
in Ireland (led by Dr. Mike Zeece, 472-2827)

Summer 2010

Individual study: full semester in Mexico (check with Dr. Keown, 472-6453)

Group study: in France for two weeks in May (led by Rosalee Swartz, 472-5234)

Fall 2010

Individual study full semester in Mexico (check with Dr. Keown, 472-6453).

In 2008 there were 74 CASNR students who visited 24 countries on study abroad. Nebraska Foundation funds allowed CASNR to provide over \$80,000 for study abroad scholarships. We are currently working on future study abroad programs for Germany, Spain, Croatia, Brazil and Morocco. Other individual internships, semester study or short-term travel can be arranged with time and patience. For questions about those programs, call Arlen Etling at 2-7018 (aetling1@unl.edu).

Faculty Fulbright Fellowships

Fulbright Fellowships provide funding for faculty for teaching, research or outreach, at a university in virtually any country in the world. The generous stipends are awarded through the U.S. State Department and bring honor to the individual faculty member, the departments and the universities involved. UNL hosts visiting Fulbrighters and sends Fulbright Fellows abroad every year. A new “senior specialist” program allows faculty to consult on a short-term basis (two to six weeks). For questions about Fulbright opportunities and procedures, call Arlen Etling at 2-7018 (aetling1@unl.edu).

Beyond Borders

CASNR International Studies Interns Azureen Erdman and Nora Spath organized a new student organization whose full name is Students Involved in Global Agriculture and Natural Resources Connecting Beyond Borders. The focus of the club is to connect CASNR students with international students, faculty and issues important to CASNR and to help students with fund raising for study abroad. So far the group has held a Holiday kickoff party, three business meetings with speakers on different study abroad programs, a pizza and movie night and a bowling party. Average attendance for each of the events has been almost 30. We encourage advisers to recommend that students with an interest in Study Abroad attend meetings of this organization.

Salute to Graduates

The spring 2009 Salute to Graduates will be held May 8 at 4 pm in the East Campus Union, preceded by departmental receptions in the Union and other locations on campus. During the ceremony graduates are personally honored in the presence of family, friends, faculty and staff by sharing their stated accomplishments while in the College and their future plans. Each graduate is individually recognized by the College and the sponsoring CASNR Alumni Association with the vice chancellor, dean, department head and alumni association president officiating. The 4 pm ceremony allows travel time for families, the opportunity to get together that evening for dinner and then be on hand for the Senior Send-Off and general commencement exercises the following morning. To date 2200 family members have visited campus to attend receptions and the ‘Salute’.

The May ceremony will also honor August graduates and the inaugural two-year class of veterinary medicine students who will go on to complete their last two years at Iowa State. The ‘Salute’ began with the December 2005 graduating class, where 41 percent of graduating seniors participated. By last May the participation rate had grown to 65 percent. Faculty support and their encouragement of graduating seniors are keys to its growth.

Emeriti Faculty

Dean Waller had the opportunity to speak at the emeriti faculty luncheon and was reminded of the willing participants and rich resource emeriti can be in the College. As a result, CASNR emeriti will be made honorary life members of the College Alumni Association.

Additionally, the dean initiated a College-wide departmental award sponsored by the College and the Alumni Association to recognize the unit most involved in engaging emeriti faculty. The award will be presented annually at the CASNR Week Banquet and is open to all academic departments. A brief self-nomination process allows departments

to list activities involving emeriti faculty so the Alumni Association Board can select the recipient.

Alumni News

The CASNR Alumni Association held its spring meeting in conjunction with the Cattlemen’s Classic in Kearney February 20. A brief summary of board action includes:

- Allocation from last fall’s football reunion silent auction to fund five, \$1000 freshman recruitment scholarships;
- Selection of Achievement and Service Award nominees for CASNR Week presentation, and Henry Beachell Distinguished Alumni Award and Legacy Award nominees for recognition at the football reunion.
- Board members were apprised of a student recruitment mailing with referral cards to alumni members, the next Salute to Graduates May 8 and Senior Send-Off May 9, football reunion ticket request and an East Campus tour for 50-year alumni in conjunction with the NU Alumni Association 50-year reunion in April.

2008-2009 CASNR Scholarship Report

Total number of Scholarships given by CASNR	923
Total number of Students receiving Scholarships from CASNR	810
Total percent of students receiving awards from CASNR	49.3%
Total Amount Awarded through CASNR	\$909,523.44
Average Value of all CASNR Scholarships	\$985.40
Maximum Value of all CASNR Scholarships	\$10,000.00
Minimum Value of all CASNR Scholarships	\$50.00

College Level Awards

Total Awarded through Dean’s Office	\$611,438.00
Total Number of Scholarships Awarded through Dean’s Office	578
Total Number of Students receiving Awards through Dean’s Office	502

Departmental Level Awards

Total Awarded through Departments	\$298,085.44
Total Number of Scholarships Awarded through Departments	345
Total Number of Students receiving awards through Departments	308