**Faculty Update from Dean Waller – February 2014**

**Update on AGRI/NRES 103: Introduction to Agricultural and Natural Resource Systems**

I want to thank Dr. Jim Brandle for coordinating and teaching the AGRI/NRES 103 course for the past 5 years. Jim and his team of instructors and recitation leaders have done an exceptional job of challenging our students to analyze and evaluate the interrelationship between agricultural and natural resource systems and the impact of increased human involvement on these systems.

In anticipation of needing to identify a replacement for Jim starting Fall 2014, the College has been working with Drs. Tom Field and Lindsay Hastings to pilot a new model of instruction for the introductory course that focuses on students exploring the “questions that matter” for the future of agriculture (food, energy, water, and landscapes). The feedback from the pilot project was very positive; however, the scalability of the instructional model to 450 students is not possible at this time.

For the past five months, the CASNR Dean’s Office has been working with Dr. Jenny Dauer to develop a conceptual framework model for the AGRI/NRES 103 course that builds upon the existing AGRI/NRES 103 course and the pilot course. I am pleased to announce that starting Fall 2014, Jenny will be assuming leadership responsibility for coordinating the course. The overall framework for the course will be to empower students to be able to evaluate socioscientific arguments that are relevant to food, energy, water, and landscapes.

As a result of the course, students will be able to:

ｷ distinguish between questions that can be addressed by science and those that cannot;

ｷ identify the components of a scientific argument (a claim that answers a scientific question, evidence and reasoning that supports the claim by providing a logical connection between the evidence and the claim);

ｷ evaluate a scientific argument based on criteria that scientists use such as replication, scope of inference, peer-review, experimental control, multiple measures, etc; and

ｷ ask a big question about a socioscientific issue related to agricultural and natural resource systems in Nebraska and use a scientific argument to support their position.

Another feature of the course will be to provide opportunities for our first-year students to interact and learn from distinguished IANR faculty that are global leaders in their field.

We are in the process of finalizing a team of instructors that includes representation from multiple units in IANR to partner with Jenny on the delivery of three sections in the fall semester and one section in the spring semester. Tom Field and Lindsay Hastings will continue to offer a section of AGRI/NRES 103 to students in the Entrepreneurship and Leadership Learning Community.