



CALS Connection

Connecting our Students, Alumni, and Communities Worldwide

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences • IFAS at the University of Florida

Volume 4, June 2004

School of Natural Resources Becomes Part of CALS

by Emily Rhoades, Master's student in Agricultural Education and Communication

With an eye toward better serving the University of Florida and its students, the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) has joined the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS).

"This is an opportunity for CALS to further serve students at the University of Florida with very high quality programs and is also indicative of CALS' interest in continuing to change and innovate to be a more modern and comprehensive college of agriculture and life sciences," CALS Dean Jimmy Cheek said.

The College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE) was established about 10 years ago to offer students a more interdisciplinary program in ecology, environment and environmental sciences, Dr. Stephen Humphrey, director of academic programs for SNRE, said. The program was developed as a "virtual college" that used the existing courses of other colleges for the coursework needed for the degree, Humphrey said.

In 2002, the strategic plan for the university called for CNRE to move into an existing college and become a school of natural resources and environment in order to gain administrative efficiency and serve the university and its students better, Cheek said.

"We think this is a very positive development for the university and students who study in SNRE and the faculty who participate in research and outreach functions," Cheek said. "It will maintain the interdisciplinary aspect of the undergraduate and graduate programs."

A new administrative structure has been set up for the program in order



to capitalize on its initial success and take it to a new level, Humphrey said. The new administrative board for SNRE consists of the vice president of agriculture and natural resources, the dean of the College of Engineering, the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the dean of CALS, the provost, and the vice president of research. A senior associate dean for SNRE manages

the day-to-day operations, Cheek said.

"I believe that the main benefit is that we now have access to resources – financial and otherwise – that are available to other CALS students," Jeff Luzar, a doctoral student in tropical conservation and development, said. "It is also my hope that the incorporation into CALS will heighten the program's profile

on campus and will ensure that this valuable program continues to develop and grow."

SNRE now houses 91 undergraduate and 87 graduate students who participate in courses in the colleges of agricultural and life sciences, business administration, design, construction and planning, engineering, health and human performance, liberal arts and sciences, journalism and communications, law, medicine, veterinary medicine and the Florida Museum of Natural History. The graduate program continues to grow and is the second biggest in CALS, Humphrey said.

"This is a modern, interdisciplinary degree," CALS Associate Dean Jane Luzar said. "A one-discipline perspective can be limited when addressing increasingly complex problems in the resources and environmental area. As a result, today's students need more than one perspective. SNRE students can craft programs uniquely appropriate for their interests."

Students graduating from the program have a deep mastery of the topic as well as a wide breadth of understanding of the theory and are able to communicate with other disciplines, Humphrey said.

"It helped me be a more holistic thinker, a better problem solver and has provided the perfect combination of disciplines to shape my vision as a photographer," Carlton Ward, a master's student in environmental photojournalism, ecology and anthropology, said. "The curriculum allows for highly motivated students to create their own paths."

CALS Administration and Staff

Dean

Jimmy G. Cheek
E-mail: jgcheek@ufl.edu
352-392-1961

Associate Dean

E. Jane Luzar
E-mail: ejluzar@ufl.edu
352-392-2251

Student and Alumni Services

Paul Willis
E-mail: pwillis@ufl.edu
352-392-1963

Computer Support

Joe Spooner
E-mail: spooner@ufl.edu
352-846-1168

Student Recruitment

Emily Sperling
E-mail: sperling@ufl.edu
352-392-2251





CALS has completed another outstanding year of accomplishments. Our faculty, students, alumni and staff have worked diligently to further the college's mission and strategic goals, enhancing educational quality and opportunity. I appreciate this opportunity to report to you about CALS' performance during the past year and about significant actions we have taken to strengthen CALS to better serve the future educational needs of our students.

A college is measured by the success of its students, faculty and alumni. They continue to win prestigious awards and recognition. Dr. Wendy Graham, chair of agricultural and biological engineering, received the UF Doctoral Mentoring and Advising Award from the graduate

school, one of five UF faculty so recognized. James Argento was recognized as a UF Outstanding Male Leader and Marshall Baker was recognized as a UF Four-Year Scholar. Both were also named to the UF Hall of Fame along with Kelly Connaughton. The UF Outstanding Female Athlete, Benevia Jenkins, is a family, youth, and community sciences major in CALS. The Honorable Bill Gunter, CALS Class of 1956, received the UF Stephen C. O'Connell Distinguished Achievement Award. Six CALS alumni received the UF Distinguished Alumnus Awards during the past five years. These are but a few examples.

Our educational enterprise exposes our students to state-of-the-art education, instills in them life-long learning abilities and gets them involved in cutting-edge research and experiential learning. Their education provides the foundation to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow, able to grow and adapt as science and technology change. Because of the creativity of our faculty, staff and students, CALS continues to provide exceptionally high quality educational experiences.

At the undergraduate level we continue to maintain a large student body of approximately 3,100. The quality of the students enrolled in our programs is impressive by any measure. Students enroll in 23 different majors

and can select from 26 undergraduate minors. With partial support from CALS Student Enrichment Endowments, we continue to emphasize five areas of enhancement for our undergraduates: study abroad, volunteer service, leadership opportunities, internships and research with faculty. CALS undergraduates also participate actively in the University Scholars Program and in IFAS Research and Extension internships.

The college is fully participating in UF's goal to emphasize and expand graduate education. This year CALS' graduate enrollment in the 19 graduate programs grew by 15 percent to 934 students. CALS generated significantly more graduate student credit hours and exceeded our growth goal. Enhancing graduate education and further expanding graduate enrollment are continuing priorities in CALS.

We maintain leadership on campus in the interdisciplinary areas of genetics and biotechnology. At the graduate level, the interdisciplinary plant molecular and cellular biology major attracts stellar students to its program. Faculty are currently planning the movement of our current interdepartmental, multi-college animal molecular and cellular biology graduate concentration to master's and Ph.D. degree programs. Our undergraduate minor in plant molecular and cellular biology continues its state-of-the-art status, drawing students from numerous majors seeking exposure to theory, techniques, and applications.

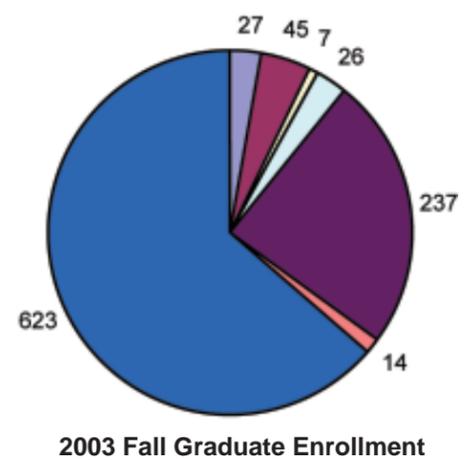
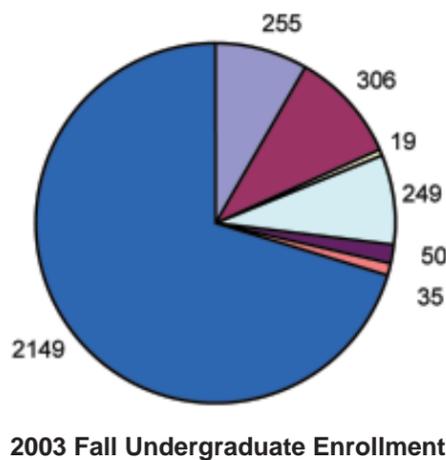
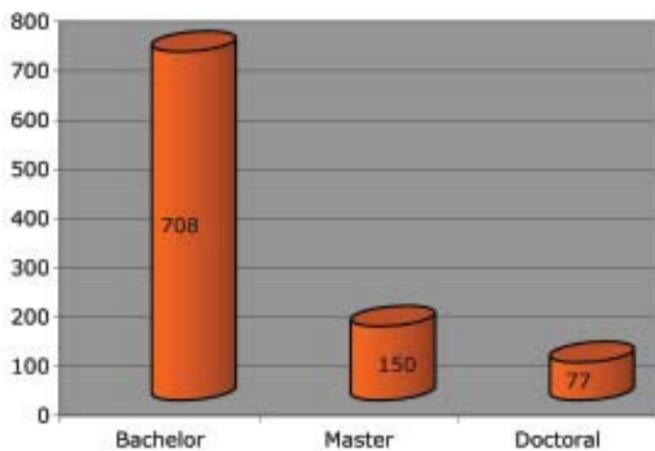
During the past year, we successfully integrated the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) into CALS and IFAS. SNRE will continue to provide a university-wide interdisciplinary approach to education and research in ecology and the environment for UF.

I am enormously proud of what our faculty, students, alumni and staff continue to accomplish. Our vision is to be the best college of our kind in the world. We are well on our way to accomplishing that goal. As you read this issue of "CALS Connection," I am sure that you will share my excitement and enthusiasm about the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

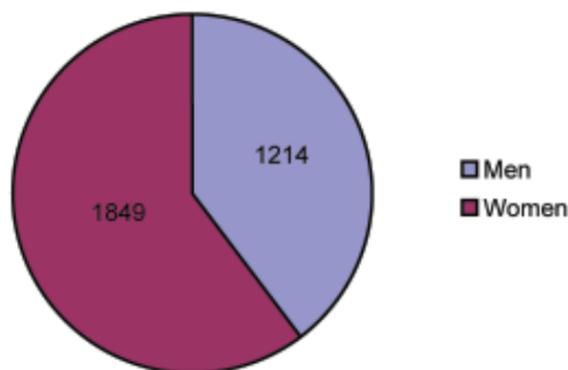
Jimmy G. Cheek
Dean

Student Profile 2004

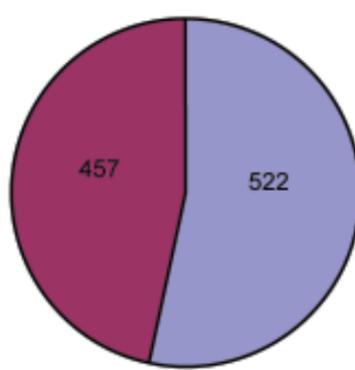
2003 Degrees Granted



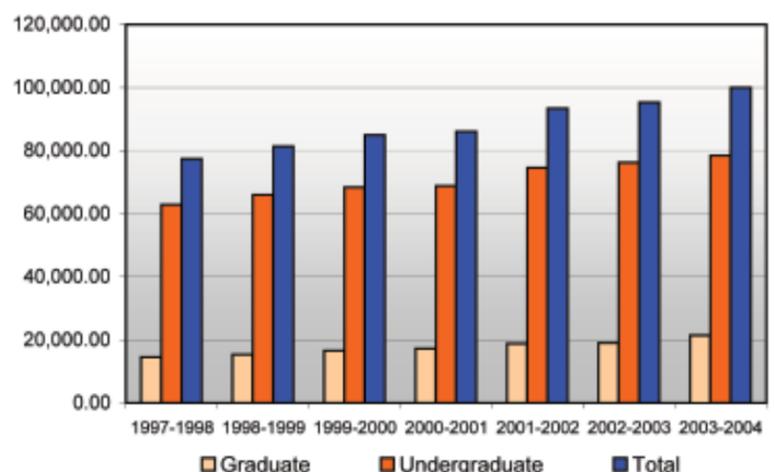
2003 Fall Undergraduate Enrollment by Gender



2003 Fall Graduate Enrollment by Gender



Student Credit Hours Taught



TailGATOR 2004

by Dallas Farrell, Senior in Agricultural Education and Communication

Birthday celebrations were in order as nearly 700 alumni and students from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) came together for the seventh annual IFAS TailGATOR September 20th. The event celebrated the 150th birthday of the University of Florida and honored the 100th birthday of W. Travis Loften, influential alumnus of the college. Loften passed away in November 2003.

Loften graduated from CALs in 1931 with a degree in agricultural education. After graduation, he taught high school agriculture, worked for the Florida Department of Education as the assistant state supervisor over vocational programs, and eventually became head of UF's department of agriculture and extension education. After retirement, Loften remained active in community organizations, and in 1988 a Gainesville high school was named after him. Despite his growing age and the changing times, Loften remained involved in the community and UF.

"Things sure were different when I was here," Loften said. "There was

not but about 1,700 or 1,800 students and parking was not a problem."

In addition to celebrating milestones, TailGATOR recognized both alumni and students for their outstanding achievements in the field of agriculture.

Neal Palmer "Pal" Brooks and Gale A. Buchanan received 2003 Alumni of Distinction Awards. This award recognizes recipients for their success in the field of agriculture and their continued support and commitment to CALs.

Brooks is president of Brooks Tropicals, Inc., a fresh tropical fruit and vegetable provider. He graduated from UF with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics in 1961. Brooks was the first to recognize the marketability of star fruit and was responsible for the discovery of a lower-fat and lower-calorie avocado.

"This is the first time I have been on campus in 26 years," Brooks said. "I am amazed at the number of students and the size and enthusiasm of the College of Agriculture."

Buchanan is the dean of the College of Agricultural and Environ-

mental Sciences at the University of Georgia. He graduated from UF with his bachelor's degree in agriculture in 1959 and completed his master's degree in 1962. He later earned his Ph.D. from Iowa State University. Among his accomplishments since receiving his doctorate are becoming a full professor, publishing over 250 scholarly publications and serving as a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

This year CALs presented its first Horizon Award. This award is presented to an alumnus from the past 10 years who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and accomplishments. This year's award was presented to Adam Putnam, congressman from Florida's 12th district. Putnam, 27, is the youngest member of the United States House of Representatives. He graduated from UF with a bachelor's degree in food and resource economics in 1995.

"It is an honor to be recognized by a college that has a lot of high caliber alumni that are above me," Putnam said. "In addition to an education, CALs prepares you for success in life."



Associate Dean Jane Luzar and honored alumnus Travis Loften enjoy the event.

The CALs Alumni and Friends awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to Elizabeth Raburn for her outstanding leadership skills and involvement in CALs. Raburn is pursuing a bachelor's degree in agricultural leadership.

TailGATOR participants had the opportunity to see the many aspects of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences as they walked through 42 displays of departments, clubs and organizations associated with CALs.

Symposium Offers Teaching Advice

by Lisa Lundy, Ph.D. student in Agricultural Education and Communication



Associate Professor Rick Rudd, speaker Gerald Nosich and CALs Associate Dean Jane Luzar after Nosich's luncheon presentation.

Seasoned educators provided the voice of experience for the Teaching enhancement symposium, which was presented to College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) faculty and graduate students August 19, 2003. The symposium drew 263 faculty and graduate students from across the college.

The symposium included sessions on a variety of topics concerning faculty, such as teaching methods, advising graduate students, department leadership, internationalizing curriculums and critical thinking.

Several retiring CALs professors, including Dr. Bill Zettler, Dr. Ron Labisky, and Dr. Pete Hildebrand, shared their teaching experiences in a session entitled "Message

from the 'Masters.'" These distinguished educators shared stories, ideas and teaching advice with faculty and graduate students.

"As a graduate student learning to teach, it was interesting to hear the perspectives these professors offered," Amanda Ruth, a graduate

teaching assistant in agricultural education and communication, said. "They have dealt with many of the challenges I face today in the classroom. They also reminded me to learn from my experiences and laugh along the way."

CALs faculty teamed up with representatives of the UF Dean of Students Office to present a session on academic integrity. Attendees were introduced to a tool new to the University of Florida, known as Turnitin. Turnitin is a Web-based service which helps instructors identify and proactively prevent instances of plagiarism.

One popular session was "Beyond PowerPoint: Low-Technology Techniques for Effective Teaching." This session focused on using a variety of "low-technology" teaching techniques to effectively present information to students.

According to Dr. Shannon Washburn, assistant professor of agricultural education and communication, the purpose of this session was to offer instructors an assortment of teaching methods to make their lives easier and to enhance student interest in their courses.

"We wanted instructors to realize there are other effective methods to use beyond PowerPoint," Dr. Washburn said. "I think it is wonderful that CALs emphasizes effective instruction because it is not something you see at every institution. It is a strong statement for UF faculty that they place a high value on improving their own instruction."

CALs Student Helps Develop Organic Business

by Matt Thompson, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication

Not many 21-year-olds have played an integral role in the development of an agricultural business, but Amy Van Scoik is not your typical University of Florida student.

Van Scoik, a May 2004 plant science graduate specializing in agricultural ecosystems management, is the vice president of Organic Prospects, a company she helped to build. The company specializes in organic certification, consulting services and organic fertilizer sales.

The agricultural lifestyle is what attracted her to the field.

"Agriculture is meaningful," Van Scoik said. "The lifestyle appealed to me. It is hands-on, and I wanted to make a difference."

She is also driven to help farmers and is interested in agricultural policy.

"I am interested in agriculture development work for nonprofit organizations," Van Scoik said. "I want

to help farmers and promote sustainable agriculture."

Van Scoik is already helping farmers. Organic Prospects is informing farmers of the benefits of organic farming.

"Organic farming is the fastest-growing sector of agriculture over the past decade," she said. "We try to show farmers how to incorporate organic and conventional farming methods."



Graduate Students Share Research

by Amanda Ruth, Ph.D student in Agricultural Education and Communication

The fourth annual IFAS Graduate Research Symposium provided graduate students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) the opportunity to share their research with peers and faculty across agricultural curriculums.

"The symposium is a venue for CALs graduate students and faculty to showcase the many areas of research they participate in," Paul Willis, CALs director of student and alumni services and member of the symposium committee, said. "It also provides a unique opportunity for graduate students to network with each other and faculty across the college."

The event included research and poster presentations on issues ranging from Bermuda grass turf in south Florida to gender roles in agricultural media.

"I gained confidence in my work and oral skills," Emilio Hernandez, a graduate student in food and resource economics, said. "I really enjoyed responding to the questions of the attendants. It allowed me to con-

sider the perspectives of people with different backgrounds in order to present my research in a clearer way."

The oral presentation and poster sessions were divided by a general session that included lunch as well as a thesis and dissertation awards ceremony.

During lunch, Dr. Peter Hansen, the keynote speaker and a professor in the department of animal sciences, spoke about "Practical Tips for Success in Science."

Food science and human nutrition doctoral student Roger Darros Barbosa received the outstanding Ph.D. research award, and Benjamin Ray Warren, a master's student in food science and human nutrition, received the outstanding master's research award.

After the general session, graduate students participating in the poster session were available to answer questions about their research. The poster session provided an informal environment where students could showcase their work and interact



Steve Rocca presents his research during a session at the symposium.

with students and faculty from various backgrounds and interests.

"I would encourage students to participate in either the oral presentation or poster sessions because it is a very good way to gain exposure to the techniques of professional pre-

sentations," Hernandez said. "This experience is indispensable for graduate students and future professionals."

UF Hosts Southern Region Teaching Symposium

by Emily Rhoades, Master's student in Agricultural Education and Communication



Participants enjoy an evening at Silver Springs.

Nearly 50 faculty and administrators from 14 states met at the University of Florida last September for the Southern Region Teaching Symposium. The topic was "Reaching Out

to New Student Audiences."

Funded through a small USDA grant, this event returned to Florida after 14 years of rotating through other institutions, Rick Rudd, associate professor in agricultural education and communication and planning committee member, said.

"I am always interested in learning new ideas or improved ways of teaching," Donna Graham, a participant from the University of Arkansas, said. "The theme of the symposium was in-

triguing in that we are all under pressure to keep student numbers increasing. I wanted to see what could be learned from another institution in this regard."

Faculty and administration from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) presented sessions on "Reaching Students Through Technology," "Reaching Students with New and Revised Academic Programs," "Reaching Pre-Professional Students" and "Reaching Students Using Minors and Certificates." Breakout sessions followed each presentation, allowing participants to openly discuss the topics of the presentation and to share ideas from their institutions.

Over the last decade, UF has em-

ployed some of the most innovative methods for reaching out to new students by offering new curriculums and adapting to change, CALs Dean Jimmy Cheek said. Using examples from professors at UF, the symposium gave participants ideas on how to better reach out to students.

Guest speaker Gail Kauwell, associate professor in human nutrition, gave five tips on engaging new students. According to Kauwell, students are looking for personalized attention, high quality instruction, value-added enrichment opportunities, a sense of belonging, and a reputation of excellence.

CALS Student BBQ and Gator Encounter

by Ashley Craft, Master's student in Agricultural Education and Communication

It was an afternoon of food, conversation and fun when over 300 students and over 60 faculty members attended the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' (CALs) annual barbecue on April 9th. Over 800 students attended Gator Encounter, CALs' annual open house, the following day at the O'Connell Center.

This year's barbecue featured students competing in the CALs Clash, a UF/CALs version of Family Feud. Students tried to guess how 100 random people would respond to survey questions about UF and CALs. Cash prizes went to the top three teams.

"The barbecue is a great place to socialize," said Alison Schwein, a junior majoring in microbiology. "We also get to see all of the departmental and club displays that will be used the next day during Gator Encounter."

CALs Associate Dean Jane Luzar said that students really enjoy the barbecue and that it is a way to thank students for working the next day at Gator Encounter.

Graduating seniors were also recognized at the barbecue and the 2004-2005 CALs Ambassadors were introduced.

Gator Encounter offered high school students and students coming out of community colleges an opportunity to explore the options available to them in CALs.



Encounter participants visit the family, youth and community sciences booth.

Dean Luzar Awarded for Service to Students

by Chuck Woods, IFAS Communication Services

Dr. Jane Luzar, associate dean of the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs), is the 2003 recipient of the Morton Wolfson Faculty Award for outstanding service to students.

The award was presented to Luzar by Michael Rollo, UF interim vice president for student affairs, during the 31st annual Student Affairs "Kick-Off" in the Reitz Union.

"Nominations come from within UF's Division of Student Affairs to recognize one faculty member each year who works with students to improve their educational experience and quality of life at the University of Florida," Rollo said.

He said the division depends on the daily contribution of faculty members who serve as advisors to more than 600 registered student organizations and who provide assistance to individual students on a variety of personal problems.

"In September 1983, the division established the award to recognize those who follow in the footsteps of the person for whom the award is named," Rollo said. "Professor Morton Wolfson of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, a faculty member at UF for some 17 years, epitomized the qualities this award is designed to recognize."

Luzar joined the faculty of UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) in 1999 as associate dean for academic programs after serving as professor of agricultural economics for 12 years at Louisiana State University.

At UF, Luzar administers undergraduate and graduate programs in more than 25 academic majors in the college, which has nearly 4,000 students. She serves as a mentor to Reitz and Lombardi Scholars and is actively involved in efforts to improve advising for UF's students.

Luzar also administers the college's distance education and off-campus programs. She is a strong supporter of more than 30 student organizations in the college.

She completed her bachelor's degree in anthropology at the University of Oregon, her master's degree in agricultural economics at the University of Kentucky and her doctoral degree in agricultural economics at Virginia Tech. In between



Dr. Jane Luzar, associate dean for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

receiving her bachelor's and master's degrees, Luzar served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia, West Africa.

The Girl Behind the Gator

by Ginger Larson, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication

Every Gator fan loves her. Children squeal in delight when she appears. Adults want their pictures taken with her. She is the most popular person on campus, yet no one knows her name.

Alberta, the University of Florida alligator mascot, wins the heart of the crowd at every function. The person inside the suit, though, is often Kelly Connaughton, a food science and human nutrition major. Her goal is to get Gators to grin on and off the field.

"Alberta gets hundreds and hundreds of smiles, laughs and hugs," Connaughton said. "It's like I'm a movie star signing autographs and taking pictures. It's a whole new life I have."

Connaughton is one of five female students who take turns

playing the role of Alberta. They share three Alberta suits and a variety of costumes between them. The costume bag fills the trunk of Connaughton's car and travels wherever she goes.

Alberta is in serious demand, with a full calendar of appearances to be made at university gatherings and athletic events, plus community functions such as birthday parties and weddings. The most hectic week is homecoming, though, with a constant stream of activities.

"When I get out of the suit it's like I've taken a shower," said Connaughton, who sweats off five pounds during the busy week. "My hair is soaking wet, and my face is bright red."

Connaughton plays other roles for UF besides mascot. She is also a resi-

dent assistant for the Springs Complex, an official student ambassador to the University of Florida and an ambassador for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. However, her favorite activity is serving as Alberta.

"It gives you a whole different view of UF," Connaughton said. "You get to see a lot of spirit. Everyone loves Albert and Alberta."



Kelly Connaughton receives tons of Gator grins in her role as Alberta, the UF female mascot.

New Nonprofit Minor Meets Growing Need

by Cindy Herndon, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication

A new academic minor and club are preparing University of Florida students for careers in the fastest-growing business area in America: the nonprofit sector.

Organizational leadership for nonprofits, offered through the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs), is the first minor at UF focusing solely on nonprofits.

The minor is an important addition to UF's curriculum, Elizabeth Bolton, a professor in the department of family, youth and community sciences, said.

"The nonprofit sector is the fastest-growing business sector in America," Bolton said. "It is growing faster than for-profit businesses and faster than government jobs."

Courses in the minor teach students marketing, fundraising and public relations skills, and prepare students to work with volunteers and a board of directors.



Megan Hoot, president of the Gator Humanities Student Association, looks over material for the next GHSA meeting.

Megan Hoot, a junior in the program, began the Gator Humanities Student Association (GHSA) to supplement UF's new minor by adding real-world job experience to what students are learning in the classroom. GHSA invites professionals in the nonprofit field to give on-campus seminars and helps its members obtain their American Humanics certification, which is similar to a "seal of approval" for working with nonprofits, Hoot said.

Graduates with an American Humanics certification receive priority access to competitive employment opportunities.

To receive certification, students must complete the minor and a 300-hour internship, attend the Annual American Humanics Management Institute and be involved in GHSA.



**J. Wayne Reitz Medal of Excellence
Kelli Notestine**

Kelli Notestine is a senior majoring in food science and human nutrition with a specialization in dietetics. Kelli is a member of Gamma Sigma Delta, Phi Kappa Phi, Alpha Chi Sigma National College Athlete Honor Society, and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Honors Program. Kelli has volunteered with Nutritional and Dietary Counseling Practices, creating informational pamphlets for clients. She is an undergraduate representative to the UF Dietetics Program Advisory Board. She has worked

at the Omni Review, Inc. as a tutor to undergraduate students in physics and chemistry. As a student intern with the "Nufit" Program, Kelli developed educational materials and taught obese children about healthy eating habits and exercise.



**Undergraduate Advisor of the Year
2004 UF University Advising Award
Ms. Janna Underhill**

Janna Underhill is the food science and human nutrition (FSHN) department coordinator of Academic Support Services and has been an advisor for nine years. Janna has a master's degree in forest resources and conservation as well as a master's in education.

She has developed a listserv for the nutritional science and food science specializations to keep students up to date with information on registration, job, and internship opportunities and scholarships. She also develops and writes an undergraduate newsletter each semester to keep students informed about upcoming events. Janna has authored an undergraduate handbook for student use that explains basic FSHN, CALS and UF policies, explains each curriculum, and provides information on general resources available to students.



**Alumni and Friends Leadership Award
2004 UF Four-Year Scholar
Marshall Baker**

Marshall Baker is a senior pursuing a bachelor's degree in agricultural education and agricultural leadership. He served as the western region vice president of the National FFA Organization in 1999-2000. Marshall has been a CALS Ambassador for three years and is currently the director of the ambassadors' "Food for Thought" program. Marshall is a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, the Agricultural Education and Communication Society, Alpha Tau Alpha Professional Society, and Florida Blue Key. He is also a student representative for the IFAS External Relations Committee. Marshall is a Reitz Scholar and has also participated in the CALS Upper Division Honors Program and the University Scholars Program.

Marshall is a Reitz Scholar and has also participated in the CALS Upper Division Honors Program and the University Scholars Program.



**Alumni and Friends Leadership Award
Megan Hoot**

Megan Hoot is a junior majoring in family, youth, and community sciences (FYCS). She is one of the founders and board members of the FYCS Club, and is pioneering the Gator Humanics program as its president. Megan is the community outreach director in the Office of Community Service. She is also the associate chairman for Blue Key Divisions and serves as a CALS Ambassador and an Honors Ambassador. Megan is involved in Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and is a member of the

Greek Judicial Board. Megan also was named the Panhellenic Council Outstanding Director of the Year in 2002. She is a Reitz Scholar and an Anderson Scholar.



**Undergraduate Teacher of the Year
Dr. Bruce Welt**

Dr. Bruce Welt joined the faculty of the University of Florida's agricultural and biological engineering department in 2000 as an assistant professor in order to help build a new undergraduate degree program in packaging science.

The packaging science program was officially launched as an undergraduate major in the fall of 2001. By the fall of 2003, the packaging science program was one of the fastest growing majors at the University of Florida and

claims about 20 undergraduate majors and about 10 minors.

Dr. Welt maintains an active research program in areas of smart packaging, modified atmosphere packaging and computer modeling.



**E. T. York, Jr. Award of Merit
Emily DeVane**

Emily DeVane is a junior majoring in agricultural education and communication. Emily is the president of the Gator Citrus Club, member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, member of the Gator Wake and Ski Club, and a mentor for Collegiate Helping as Mentors in Public Schools. Emily also serves as secretary and fundraising committee co-chair for the Food and Resource Economics National AgriMarketing Association.

She is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and the Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society. Emily is a member of the Gainesville Assembly of God Church and the Gators for Christ Christian College Fellowship.



**Jack L. Fry Graduate Teaching Award
Christy Bratcher**

Christy Bratcher is pursuing a master's degree in meat science. She is involved in the American Meat Science Association, the American Society of Animal Science, and is a member of Alpha Zeta fraternity. During Christy's first year of her master's program, she had full responsibility for teaching ANS 2002, an elective course taught both fall and spring semester with an enrollment of approximately 150 students per semester.

Student evaluations of Christy's class revealed that she scored higher ratings than both the department and the college.



**Larry J. Connor Medal of Excellence
David Susa-Salazar**

David Susa-Salazar is a junior majoring in agricultural operations management with a specialization in manufacturing and processing of production. He is also the first student in the master of agribusiness combined degree program.

David is currently a member of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, president of the Agricultural Operations Management Club, and the vice president of membership of the FRE-NAMA club. He is also part of the Greek Judicial Board, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Honors program, Golden Key Honor Society, and serves as chronicler for the Alpha Zeta fraternity. He is the Gator Citrus Club representative to the Agricultural and Life Sciences College Council. David is a CALS Ambassador and a University Scholar.



Graduate Teacher/ Advisor of the Year
Dr. Janaki Alavalapati

Dr. Janaki R.R. Alavalapati is an associate professor and an advisor in the School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC). Dr. Alavalapati also serves as the current chair of the CALS Teaching Technology Committee, is a member of the Graduate Programs Committee in the SFRC and the School of Natural Resources and Environment, and is a member of the Tropical Conservation and Development Curriculum Committee in the Center for Latin American Studies.

Dr. Alavalapati perceives that mutual respect, two-way communication, and an understanding of and an appreciation for diverse cultures are the key components of graduate advisement. His advisement is based on the philosophy of guiding students to explore new potentials, adopt new goals, and to realize their intellectual potential.



Sigma Alpha
CALS
Dean's Leadership Award

Sigma Phi Alpha is an agricultural organization for women at the University of Florida that has worked to support the agriculture industry since 1991. Last May, Sigma Phi Alpha became a chapter of the national professional agricultural organization, Sigma Alpha.

To receive a charter at the University of Florida, Sigma Phi Alpha had to complete many requirements, including preparation of five bound reports for the national office, extra service projects, guest speakers at meetings, tests and quizzes about Sigma Alpha, social events, and hosting a national representative for a weekend.



Undergraduate Teacher of the Year
Dr. Lisa House

Dr. Lisa House is an associate professor in the department of food and resource economics in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Dr. House has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in agribusiness management, strategic management and marketing management. Dr. House served as a mentor for the University Scholars program and is currently the senior advisor for the Alpha Zeta fraternity. She also participates in the American Agricultural

Economics Association.

Dr. House has taken an active part in revising the food and resource economics curriculum, both at the undergraduate and master's of agribusiness level. Dr. House's teaching philosophy is centered on two themes: students learn better when they participate in the learning process, and keeping student interest and motivating students is a part of teaching.



2004 UF Outstanding Male Leader
James Argento

James Argento is an environmental science senior in the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE), with minors in agricultural law and agricultural ethics and certificates in public affairs and international relations. He intends to pursue a law degree at Florida State University, where he will focus on environmental and land use issues. He hopes to enter a career in politics.

Argento has been involved extensively in student government, serving as senator for SNRE and the School of Forest Resources and Conservation, as vice chair for the Senate Rules and Ethics Committee, and as the Senate Minority Party Whip. He also represented the student body to professors and administrators as the nonvoting student delegate to the Faculty Senate.



Tracy Caulkins Award
Benavia Jenkins

Benavia Jenkins is a senior majoring in family, youth and community sciences. Jenkins served as co-captain of the 2003 UF volleyball team, which competed for the national championship in Dallas. Jenkins is a four-time selection to the Florida Volleyball Conference Challenge All-Tournament Team. In 2003, Jenkins set the school record for career blocks with 601, becoming the first player in school history to record 1,000 kills for her

career. She was named to the American Volleyball Coaches Association second team All-American.

Jenkins has served as a counselor for children 6-13 years of age at the Girls Club of Alachua County, a participant in Goodwill Gators and a motivational speaker at Alachua County elementary schools.



2004 UF Faculty/Staff Volunteer of the Year
Dr. Ken Buhr

For over 20 years, Dr. Ken Buhr has been the advisor of the Agronomy and Soils Club, working to make it a more successful and productive club. The club now has five members involved as national officers or committee chairs, has represented UF and won national contests, and this year was named the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Club of the Year. This summer Dr. Buhr will teach his last class before retiring from UF and his role as club advisor.



2004 UF Student Volunteer of the Year
Dannielle Brown

Dannielle Brown, a graduating microbiology and cell science student in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, is co-director of the American Medical Student Association's Arts in Medicine program. She helped to organize more than 100 UF student volunteers to develop art activities for patients at AGH. She also serves as the president of Students in the Healing Arts, which was nominated for the UF Student Volunteer Organization of the Year.

CALS Mission

To provide a high-quality education to students statewide resulting in society-ready graduates in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources, human and life sciences.

CALS Core Values

To meet its requirements to the people of Florida and to serve its mission, CALS advances its core values:

Excellence is the standard for all CALS academic programs.

Through diversity, CALS can ensure gender, racial and social balance.

As part of a land grant university, CALS is responsive and accountable to Florida's citizens.

CALS is global in its perspective and develops world-class programs on behalf of all its students.

CALS accepts responsibility to expand the public's awareness of its programs and benefits.

IFAS Internships Prepare Students for the Future



Sue-Ellen Anderson, a food science and human nutrition major with a specialization in dietetics in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS)

at the University of Florida, interned with the St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension Service. She helped to develop a program that identifies chefs who want locally grown and specialty produce and growers who are willing to sell to these chefs. At the end of the

project, a directory will be created to help the chefs and growers find matches for their needs, Edward Skvarch, commercial horticulture agent for St. Lucie County, said.

Anderson was responsible for contacting and visiting chefs and growers, determining their needs and developing a critique of the program. She traveled throughout Palm Beach, Jupiter, Fort Pierce, Stuart and Port St. Lucie, paying visits to chefs and growers alike.

— by Allison Eckhardt, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication



Tyrell Kahan, a junior in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) at the University of Florida, interned at the Range Cattle

Research and Education Center (RCREC) in Ona, Fla., during the summer of 2003. Kahan assisted Martin Adjei, forage extension specialist, in a study of how different types of grass affect a cow's digestive system. He also spent time assisting the other researchers with a variety of experiments.

Kahan's internship was part of the IFAS Research Internship Program, a cooperative effort between the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station and CALS. The program offers UF juniors and seniors the opportunity to work alongside faculty on an IFAS research project for a span of six weeks during the summer.

The RCREC is one of IFAS' largest research centers in terms of land area, with more than 3,000 acres, Adjei said. Research there focuses on agronomy, animal nutrition and soil science as related to the cattle industry.

— by Cindy Herndon, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication

Chelsey Meeks, a summer 2003 graduate of the family, youth and community sciences department, was chosen to participate in the University Scholars Program after she submitted a proposal on her research regarding the adoption of children over the age of eight. During the year she spent researching, Meeks reviewed studies on the subject of adoption and worked with the Department of Children and Families, interviewing caseworkers and collecting data from the department's files.

The University Scholars Program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to explore the world of academic research. In the program,

students are chosen to work one on one with UF faculty on selected research projects. The program is designed to help students gain an understanding of and appreciation for the scholarly method.

Meeks' research is still influencing her life and future. Meeks is pursuing her master's degree in social work at the University of Georgia. After graduation she plans to work for the Peace Corps before going to work for a child advocacy agency.

— by Tamara Cooper, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication

Four CALS Students Named Reitz Scholars

by Rebecca L. McGovney, Master's student in Agricultural Education and Communication



Top Left: Andrew Lisi, Elizabeth Braddock, Marshall Baker; Inset: Megan Hoot

Andrew Lisi, a senior majoring in family, youth and community sciences; and Marshall Baker, a senior majoring in agricultural education.

Candidates who apply for the program are judged on leadership, academics, and service by a committee composed of UF faculty and staff. Recipients are awarded a \$2,500 scholarship for the school year, participate in community

service activities with the other scholars and are paired with a faculty or staff mentor to encourage their development in leadership, academics and service. Most of the students are already leaders on campus, but according to Dr. J. Michael Rollo, associate vice president for student affairs, the program endeavors to move students to a level where they will be ambassadors for UF throughout their lives.

"I think the values that are espoused by a college of agriculture, that of service to a community, scholarship and leadership in the state, are consistent with the mission of agriculture as a profession,"

Rollo said. "And as an important piece of all our lives, this fits very well with the expectations and guidelines for selecting Reitz Scholars."

The program is named after Dr. J. Wayne Reitz, the university's fifth president and the first to be elected from the faculty, thanks to his commitment to community service and academic excellence. Reitz served during the 1950s and 1960s.

Reitz was and still is considered to be a great friend to the students and to education. During his time as president, the student population doubled, and over 300 buildings were added to the campus. His close relationship with the students was key to the peaceful integration of UF in 1958, making UF the first state university to complete racial integration. He was so well loved by the students that when the current Reitz Union was completed in 1967, the student body secretly went against his wishes to have the building named in his honor.

Scholarship recipient Andrew Lisi is an officer of Beta Theta Pi fraternity, president of the campus Lions Club, co-training director for Gatorship 2004, budget committee chairman for the board of directors for recreational sports and a member of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Megan Hoot is vice president of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, office manager for the Office of Com-

munity Service on campus, a CALS Ambassador and founder of Gator Humanics.

Elizabeth Braddock is a volunteer at the Women's Resource Center, a Bible study leader and member of Campus Crusade for Christ and a member of the Junior Honors Medical Program.

The students can renew their scholarship throughout their undergraduate years as long as they maintain the levels of leadership, academics and service to which the program aspires. Marshall Baker received a renewal on his Reitz scholarship for this school year.

"I applied for this scholarship because it was a unique opportunity to be surrounded by successful students that were practicing servant leadership by focusing on service to others," Baker said. "I renewed because the experience exceeded my original expectations and, to be quite honest, the financial support makes a college education feasible."

Baker is a CALS/IFAS Ambassador, a member and officer in Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, Student Government Cabinet Director for Satellite Campuses, a member of Florida Blue Key, a student representative on the IFAS External Relations Committee, an intern and member of Gators for Christ and a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Batson Family Supports Horticulture Students

by Emily Eubanks, Master's student in Agricultural Education and Communication



Erin Eckhardt working in a garden as part of the Batson Internship Program.

Since 1999, Gene and Barbara Batson have provided scholarships to a total of 48 environmental horticulture students completing internships in the industry. Known as the Batson Internship Program, this opportunity is available to students specializing in landscape nursery management or public garden management, and promotes

careers in the environmental horticulture industry.

"The Batson Internship Program has a very positive impact on our students," Lisa Hall, environmental horticulture academic program coordinator, said. "Many internships end with a job offer. Last year two students were offered management training positions after completing their program."

In addition to the learning and career opportunities the program offers students, it also benefits the horticulture industry as a whole.

The industry looks for students with a good educational background as well as practical experience; this program accomplishes both needs.

"I appreciate the Batson Scholarship because it has helped so many of our students. Almost every student who does an internship gets the Batson," Erin Eckhardt, environmental horticulture senior and current intern, said. "You will not find many donors with that kind of generosity and eagerness for helping students. I also appreciate the

Batson themselves. Their hard work has helped several growers and nurserymen in the industry and thus makes the horticulture industry stronger."

Bill Simeral is the Longwood Gardens student programs coordinator for internships. He looks for interns who are self-motivated, eager to succeed and hard working. He also looks for leadership potential and the desire to make a difference.

"I think internships are incredibly important," Simeral said. "Doing an internship gives a student a chance to find out what work in their field of study is really all about. Sometimes this means a student determines what they do not want to do just as readily as they determine what they like doing."

Simeral said that once interns are finished with their internships, they should be much better horticulturalists, able to take on a heavy work load and feel confident they will succeed, capable of finding top shelf employment anywhere in the United States, and ready to speak

and act confidently about their skills in their chosen field.

Although botanic gardens are a popular internship site, students also seek other work experiences that better complement their career goals, Hall said. Many students opt to work in large-scale nursery production operations both in Florida and outside the state where they see first-hand how successful nurseries operate. At these sites they participate in state-of-the-art growing practices and learn sales, marketing and management skills.

Students interested in landscape installation and management get first-hand experience at nationally known firms Valley Crest Companies, One Source, and Post Properties. Ball Horticultural in the Chicago area offers students diverse experiences in research, sales, design, growing and trailing, Hall said.

The goal of the program is to match students with internships that best fit what they want in their careers and then help them obtain slots in those student programs, Hall said.

SNRE Student Awarded Environmental Scholarship

by Kyle Shaw, Senior in Agricultural Education and Communication

Getting more recycling bins on the University of Florida campus earned James Argento, a College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) senior in environmental policy, a national scholarship.

"I thought that a university the size of UF needed adequate recycling bins," Argento said. "It literally took us years, but we finally got the money allocated last year from student government."

Argento received an annual scholarship from the Morris K. Udall Foundation. The foundation rewards people who help educate a new generation of Americans about environmental awareness.

UF Associate Provost Sheila Dickison said Argento was recommended by the university for the scholarship because of his dedication to the environment of UF and Gainesville.

"James was a natural choice for the scholarship," Dickison said. "The Udall scholarship is for individuals who have more than ideas; it's for students who are environmental leaders, like James."

In the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE), Argento has held leadership positions as president of the school's student-run council and as the school's representative to UF's student government senate.

Off campus, Argento serves on the Gainesville Beautification Board and the Nature Center Commission.

Argento plans to continue his environmental studies as a law student next year. While he has always dreamed of being an environmental lawyer, he now wants to take his law school education and apply it to writing laws as a state representative.

"I want to make the biggest impact possible," Argento said. "I think that helping shape future environmental policy would be an awesome experience."



Group Offers Minorities Networking Opportunities

by Adam Basford, Master's student in Agricultural Education and Communication



As a freshman, Timia Thompson just wanted to find a place to meet new people and interact with other students in her college. When she joined Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and

Related Sciences (MANRRS), Thompson found that and much more.

MANRRS is an organization that promotes academic and networking opportunities for members at the local, state and national levels. Its official purpose is to foster and promote the achievement, advancement

and inclusion of all people in the agricultural and natural resource sciences and related science fields.

Three years after joining MANRRS, Thompson is now president of the UF chapter. She says that

the organization has been very beneficial in helping to guide her and others like her.

"A lot of times...we (minorities) don't know what types of avenues are available to us and we don't know others like us in our respective fields," Thompson said. "MANRRS provides a link between those in the community and many agriculture and natural resource-based fields and students."

Faculty advisor Marta Hartmann agrees. "MANRRS facilitates networking at a local, regional and national level with professionals throughout industry, governmental agencies and academics," she said.

This link between MANRRS and the professional world is promoted through their annual career fair and training conference. At this conference, members are involved in contests, workshops and cultural activities. Prospective employers from around the country also provide on-site interviews and inform participants about their respective companies.

The UF chapter sent nine members to the last conference, held in Des Moines, Iowa. Several members placed highly in contests and the chapter was named Outstanding Chapter of Region II.

Jim Davidson Travel & Davis Nutritional Grants

by Rebecca McGovney, Master's student in Agricultural Education and Communication

As part of one of the top eight public research universities in the nation, the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) look to their faculty and graduate students to showcase their research. Research and researchers within IFAS and CALs have long been supported by generous donations from former students, staff and faculty who wish to continue the tradition of research excellence for years to come.



Dr. James M. Davidson

Davidson Graduate Travel Scholarship:

Interested in a cheap trip to Europe? With a little help from the Davidson Graduate Travel Scholarship, CALs graduate students have that opportunity.

In 1998, the vice president for agriculture and natural resources for IFAS, Dr. James M. Davidson, established this travel scholarship with funds left over from his retirement party.

"Graduate students have a difficult time finding the resources to get them to meetings, or international meetings for that matter," Davidson said. "I've always felt graduate students could use some help."

The scholarship is open to any

graduate student within CALs who wishes to attend a national or international meeting to present research. Both posters and oral presentations qualify.

"Travel to professional meetings is an important part of a graduate student's education," Dr. Jane Luzar, associate dean for CALs, said. "We know that when our students are presenting their research before international and national audiences, it is also the best possible recruitment effort for our programs. Dr. Davidson's generous gift makes this possible for both our students and our programs."

Although the scholarship cannot fully fund trips, the money defrays a large portion of the cost. Students applying for spring 2004 travel could qualify for four domestic travel scholarships worth \$350 each and three international travel scholarships worth \$650 each. Davidson and others continue to contribute money to the scholarship fund each year.

For more information on the Davidson Graduate Student Travel Scholarship, or to donate, please contact Dean Luzar's office at 352.392.2251 or ejluzar@ufl.edu.

George K. and Ruthanna W. Davis Graduate Nutrition Enhancement Award:

After the celebration of being accepted to graduate school wears off, many students become concerned about their financial situations. Thanks to former animal science professor Dr. George Davis and his wife Ruthanna, qualified graduate students studying animal nutrition can receive \$5,000 a year for up to four years of study, in addition to their assistantships.

"I feel I owe a great deal to the University of Florida for the support they gave me for my research in trace elements.... Much of the research that is

done is stimulated by graduate students," Davis said. "We would like to see to it through our gift that the

University of Florida gets the best graduate students possible." —quote courtesy of SHARE, Special Help for Agricultural Research and Education.

To qualify, students must be incoming doctoral students studying animal nutrition through the animal science department or nutritional sciences through the department of food science and human nutrition. The award is fully funded by Dr. Davis and his wife, and is available to students entering in either fall or spring semesters.

According to Dr. Sue Percival, professor in nutritional sciences and chairman of the Davis Fellowship Committee, the award can act as an enticement to attract top graduate students in the field.

"We can tell someone that not only they will receive an assistantship, but they will receive this supplement as well to entice them to come here," Percival said.

Students are nominated by current faculty members, who pass their recommendations on to the Davis Fellowship Committee. The committee then ranks the students, and, depending on available funds, offers two to four awards each year.

For more information on the George K. and Ruthanna W. Davis Graduate Nutrition Enhancement Award, or to donate, please contact Dr. Percival's office at 352.392.1991 or ssp@ifas.ufl.edu.



Dr. George Davis and Ruthanna Davis

Forestry Internships Enhance Combined Degree Program

by Tamara Cooper, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication



Forest resources and conservation senior, Terry Baker, takes a soil sample from the Austin Cary Memorial Forest.

University of Florida senior Terry Baker is a hotshot.

During the 2001 spring semester, Baker, a forest resources and conservation major, took part in a special internship, training and working with the Southern Interagency Hotshot Crew based in Asheville, N.C. The hotshot crew is one of only three hotshot training programs in the United States, providing a national resource for fire suppression, fuels management projects and all-risk incidents.

Baker came to UF as part of a combined degree program sponsored by the School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC), Florida A&M (FAMU) and the USDA Forest Service. The program allows students to complete two years of foundation coursework at FAMU before transferring to UF to major in one of the

SFRC's two programs: forest resources and conservation or natural resource conservation.

Since transferring to UF, Baker has tried to make the most of the opportunities offered to him.

"Terry has been tremendously active," said Scott Sager, SFRC student services coordinator. "His academics are excellent and he's been a real asset for the program, a real strong representative of the combined degree program."

Aside from his work with the hotshot crew, Baker has also participated in forest service-sponsored internships during the past five years at the Apalachicola National Forest.

Baker said that the internships, along with his time at FAMU and UF and his involvement with the forest service, have prepared him for his future. After graduation he plans to work for two years at the Apalachicola National Forest as a forester trainee, then attend graduate school before returning to the forest service.

SNRE Student Receives Award

School of Natural Resources and Environment Ph.D. student, Amy Sullivan, received the Spirit of Susan B. Anthony Award at the 2004 Women's History Month Awards Reception held at the University of Florida. This award for female graduate and undergraduate students honors those who make a contribution to the community. Sullivan served in the Peace Corps in West Africa and is active in the community teaching children to play softball and teaching new students to find their way through UF.

Students Study Forested Watersheds in Prague

by Allison Eckhardt, Junior in Agricultural Education and Communication

Castles, deep forests and Mozart may seem like the stuff of fairy tales, but for some University of Florida students they came to life last summer. For five weeks, 15 students and seven faculty members from UF had the opportunity to visit the Czech Republic.

The students, whose majors ranged from forestry to natural resource conservation, were studying the integrated analysis of forested watersheds. 2003 was the first year the program was offered at UF.

UF and the Czech University of Agriculture in Prague have been cooperating together since 1999, and were looking for ways to collaborate on a study abroad program. Eric Jokela, a professor in the School of Forest Resources and Conservation and one of the professors to teach in Prague this summer, visited the Czech Republic in 2001 with hopes of founding a program. He was specifically interested in creating a program around forestry and water, since both are international issues.

"The demand for clean water is a major issue, and not just for the USA. It is a global issue that is not constrained by political boundaries," Jokela said.

Jokela wanted his students to see how other nations were handling water and forestry issues. He also wanted to expose students to other cultures.

"There is a lot of history [in Prague] that precedes anything we have in the United States. There are buildings that date back to long before this country was started," Jokela said.

Internationalization is important for students to become competitive in the job market today, Jokela said. Many employers now look for international experience.

While in the Czech Republic, students attended five weeks of lectures, went on field trips and took part in critical thinking and problem-solving exercises. Classes were taught in English and some Czech students also enrolled.

The students learned about forested watersheds and ecological practices and how they are related. They visited forests around the country and in some neighboring countries, such as Slovakia.

The program encompassed many different disciplines, such as forestry, economics, water and soil science, wildlife and statistics.

"The students got to work with others who had different majors from themselves," Jokela said. "Because of these integrated teams, the students



CALS students at the Cerhovice Experimental Watershed on June 10, 2003.

got to learn cooperation and how beneficial it is to work with people with other specializations."

The program is supported in part by the USDA Higher Education Challenge program. This program gives grants to institutions for projects that enhance and strengthen America's food and agricultural work force. UF received three years of funding for the integrated watershed program.

In addition to studying the watersheds, students also made trips to cultural sites. They visited Cesky Krumlov, a World Heritage Site and a good example of a central European medieval town. Students also had the opportunity to attend Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni" in the theater where it originally premiered.

Students stayed in the dormitories at the Czech University of Agriculture outside of Prague and ate at the cafeteria on campus. They were given the opportunity to venture into Prague and experience the culture on their own.

T.J. Rew, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in soil and water science in August 2003, said the students tried to go to places that were not Americanized, but also visited some places that were like home.

"We went into McDonald's, and even though it is American, it still has differences from ours. They have a McFarmer on the menu, which is a hamburger made out of pork," Rew said.

The program went really well the first year, but will improve as those involved learn from their experiences, Jokela said.

"I have had students come to me and tell me that this was a life-changing experience. When students look back at their summer and reflect on it, they realize how valuable this experience was," Jokela said.

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) currently offers 15 different international experiences ranging from a week to several months in countries like Brazil, the Czech Republic, France, Honduras, Russia, Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, Mexico, Spain and Venezuela. These programs offer students the opportunity to prepare for the diversity of international challenges they may face in their future careers. Visit www.cals.ufl.edu/GlobalGators for more information.

Sigma Phi Alpha Joins National Sorority

by Kyle Shaw, Senior in Agricultural Education and Communication

After 13 years as the University of Florida's only independent agricultural sorority, Sigma Phi Alpha has joined the national agricultural sorority Sigma Alpha.

The change is the result of a challenge issued to the women of the sorority by College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) Associate Dean Jane Luzar.

Luzar said she was familiar with the Sigma Alpha sorority from her previous job at Louisiana State University and believed the sorority could make a positive impact at UF.

"I was surprised that there wasn't a Sigma Alpha chapter when I came here," Luzar said. "I knew that Sigma Phi Alpha could take the wonderful organization they had and make it even better by affiliating with a national organization."

Luzar was not the only person who was ready for the sorority to have a national association. Sigma Phi Alpha advisor Emelie Matthews said the issue of joining Sigma Alpha has been addressed by the women several times in the past three years.

"The women didn't want to be an average sorority," Matthews said.

"They wanted to make sure that joining Sigma Alpha was the right thing to do."

The women were looking forward to the benefits of being part of a national organization, too, Sigma Alpha Sorority in Development (SID) Vice President Bianca Blakley said.

"The opportunity for scholarship, networking and recognition on a national level has been what we are looking for," Blakley said.

Sigma Alpha SID President Megan Ridenour said that the change was not an easy one.

"The applications and paperwork were the easy stuff," Ridenour said.

"The hard part was planning mandatory meetings, socials and community service for 24 women with 24 different schedules."



Sigma Alpha members attend National Leadership Conference in Atlanta.

It was critical for the women to rearrange their schedules because each member had to attend 75 percent of the activities planned during the activation process to be eligible for

membership, Ridenour said.

"It was hectic," Blakley said. "But in the long run, it will be for the best."

Some of the activities that the women participated in during the activation process included volunteering at the Waldo Elementary School fall festival, making care packages for U.S. Army troops stationed in Iraq and competing in the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity annual Buck-Off philanthropy.

Not only did the women of Sigma Phi Alpha complete the requirements

to join the Sigma Alpha sorority, they did it in record time, Matthews said. The activation process, which usually takes up to a year, was completed in six months.

"I'm so proud of them for all that they have accomplished in such a short amount of time," Matthews said. "Not only will they have the largest charter chapter in Sigma Alpha sorority history, they will have the highest grade point average in the nation."

For their efforts, the group was awarded the Dean's Award for Leadership at the CALs annual convocation in December.

"This is the first time that the award has been given to an entire group," Luzar said. "It was very important for the women to know that they had the support of the entire college. They deserve to be recognized for their efforts."

Stay Connected!

Tell us what is happening in your life

We would like to include current information about you in an upcoming issue of "CALs Connection." We are interested in awards, jobs, moves and family information. Please note changes in your address, employment or professional activities that you want to share with your classmates and colleagues.

Mail your information to:
CALS Connection
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
P.O. Box 110270
Gainesville, FL 32611-0270

Clip & Mail!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Is any of the above information new? _____

Information: _____

Editor-in-Chief
Amanda Chambliss

Managing Editor
Emily Rhoades

Editors
Chana J. Bird
Carol Church

Graphic Designers
Emily Rhoades
Tracy D. Zwillingner

Photography
Tom Wright
Eric Zamora

Produced by IFAS
Communication
Services
Ashley M. Wood,
Director

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
GAINESVILLE FL
PERMIT NO. 94



CALS *connections*

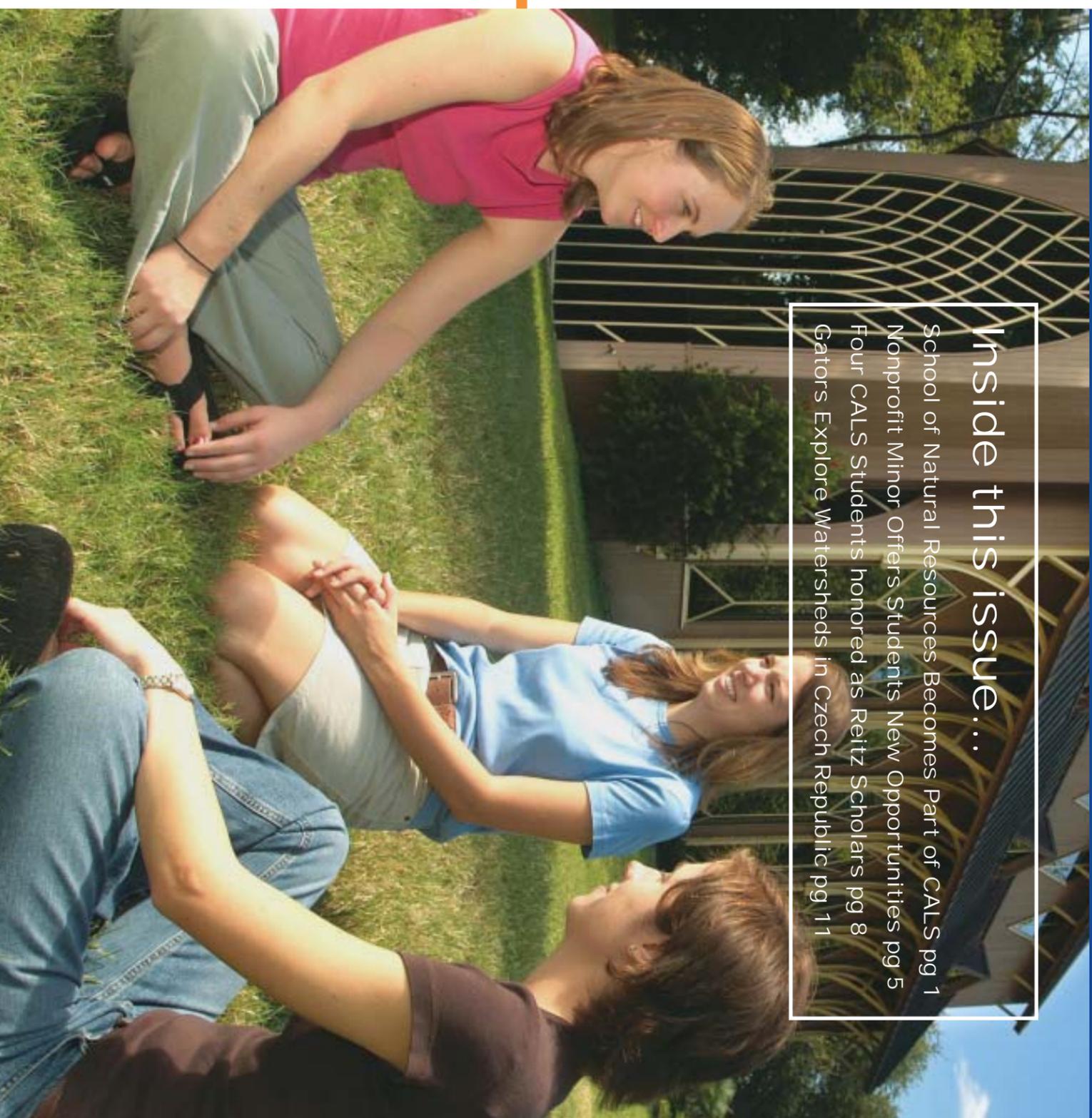
Connecting our Students, Alumni, and Communities Worldwide

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences • IFAS at the University of Florida

Volume 4, June 2004

Inside this issue...

School of Natural Resources Becomes Part of CALS pg 1
Nonprofit Minor Offers Students New Opportunities pg 5
Four CALS Students honored as Reitz Scholars pg 8
Gators Explore Watersheds in Czech Republic pg 11



College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
P.O. Box 110270
Gainesville, Florida 32611-0270