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CASNR Chronicle



August 2016

The end of summer comes all too quickly for students who are finishing internships, taking summer classes, and in some cases, just taking time off. For faculty, there is a mixture of thoughts like, "Where did the summer go?" and a sense of anticipation about meeting new students and teaching favorite classes again. For me, the middle of August evokes images of autumn leaves, fresh-faced freshmen, students parking in the wrong places, relief from the summer heat, excitement of football, seeing students triumphantly return from internships and international trips, reconnecting with seniors for one last year, and just being blessed to be an integral part of the great land-grant mission by educating the next generation of agriculture and natural resource professionals.



Carla A. Byr

Caula A. Beyl, Dean

H.S. Team Wins at International Science & Engineering Fair



How did you spend your summer? For two 2016 high school valedictorians, the answer was working in the laboratory of Dr. Kimberly Gwinn. Taimur Kouser and Emma Batson spent their previous summer getting ready for the research experience of a lifetime.

The two returned from last spring's INTEL International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Phoenix, Arizona, with a fourth place finish in the Plant Sciences category. The duo earned the right to compete in ISEF by winning the Reserve Champion prize at the Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair (SASEF). View their [poster presentations here](#).

Taimur studied the impact of plant extracts on nematodes. Emma took on the challenge of determining the chemical basis of the nematicidal activity. Dr. Gwinn believes this research may have potential application in agriculture. [Read more here](#).

Annual Fall Kickoff Success!

by John Stier, Associate Dean

CASNR's annual Fall Kickoff for faculty had record attendance on Monday, August 15. The theme was "Beyond Academic: Knowing Your Students." Held in the UTIA Plant Biotechnology Building, sixty faculty learned about new approaches for international programs, advising updates, and welcomed new faculty.



Dr. Beyl presented a State of the College address, highlighting a number of successful students and programs from 2015. Student videos communicated the diversity of challenges they face and how CASNR faculty can and have helped them. Faculty then shared their experiences and how they have addressed various challenges to help students succeed.

Annazette Houston and David Ndiaye from the Office of Disabilities talked about the many types of obstacles students deal with and how faculty and the campus can support students in need. Jenny Richter and Erin Stoner of the Office of Equity and Diversity reviewed UT's sexual misconduct policy and related issues. Jerry Riehl from the Office of Information Technology wrapped up the afternoon with an overview of the new Canvas instructional software that will replace Blackboard as a teaching tool for assignments, grading, and other student instructional services. With an overwhelmingly successful 2016 Fall Kickoff, the pressure is on to mount an equally successful event in 2017!

Stellar Hands-on Learning for Our Students



The University of Tennessee's Turfgrass Science and Management Program provides an exceptional learning experience for its forty-five students through interactive teaching in the classroom and extremely valuable, hands-on training via internships and part-time jobs.

During spring semester, juniors are released from classes in March to pursue internships all over the world, putting them ahead of interns from programs elsewhere. This year, ten students took advantage of the spring semester option. From major league baseball fields, to resort golf courses in far-off places, our Volunteers are spending their spring and summer months working on, learning from, and experiencing the most elegant turfscapes in the world.

This summer Sam Douglas interned at Finca Cortesin Resorts in Spain, which welcomed him (pictured) on its Facebook account. From his workplace, he enjoyed a view of the Mediterranean Sea, the Rock of Gibraltar, and the shores of Africa. The only female in the program, Dallas Taylor, spent her internship time with Tavistock Country Club, an elite, private country club in New Jersey.

Other student interns were in various locations across the United States and Europe applying what they have learned in the classroom. When these students returned to Knoxville this month, they brought new experiences that expanded and applied the skills and concepts they learned and ones to enrich the University of Tennessee community.

UT Turfgrass Student a Part of Wimbledon History



As the last serves were hit by competitors in the 2016 Wimbledon Championships, Ryan Hammitt, a UT CASNR sophomore, served himself some strawberries and cream. The turfgrass science and management major gazed over Centre Court watching the mixed doubles match and marveled at being a part of tennis history.

"I've been here three months preparing the courts for play and finally getting to see them in action is just incredible," says Hammitt. "These grass courts receive more amount of play than any other tournament in the entire world and the practical knowledge I've received here is just invaluable.

"To meet players in person whom I've only seen on television has been simply amazing," he adds. One was British-born Andy Murray, pictured above with Hammitt, who ultimately won the title. Murray took time the day after to visit with the staff and show appreciation for the work they do. Hammitt was also invited to stand on Centre Court with other temporary grounds staff members as Serena Williams received her trophy and claimed her twenty-second record-tying Grand Slam event. [Learn more here.](#)

UTIA International Programs Showcase



This fall, UTIA will host its first annual International Programs Showcase.

The event will feature keynote speaker, Dr. Otto Gonzalez, director of the Center for International Programs (CIP), USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Dr. Gonzalez will speak on his vision for advancing international programs under USDA-NIFA and his plans for expanding international

opportunities for land-grant institutions under the USDA-NIFA portfolio.

The showcase will also highlight ongoing programs from several faculty and recent student international experiences. The event will feature a morning program, a networking lunch, and the chance to learn about future opportunities to travel and work abroad at the CASNR Study Abroad fair immediately after lunch.

Please join us on Wednesday, September 21, in Hollingsworth Auditorium on the UTIA campus in Knoxville to learn more about UTIA's global impact. This event is free and open to UT employees and students, and the general public. A light continental breakfast and lunch will be provided; registration is requested by September 14 so that we may have a headcount for meals.

[Please click here to register.](#)

Nick Baker Serves as National FFA Secretary

The mission of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources is to offer students an outstanding education that will prepare them for a lifetime of informed choices and career success. Nick Baker spends a great deal of time making informed choices and preparing for career success as he travels the United States and abroad as the secretary of the National FFA Organization. Nick was selected in October 2015 to serve FFA as one of six national officers chosen at the organization's convention in Louisville, Kentucky.



As part of the six-person team, Nick works alongside five other officers who hail from Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Ohio, and Utah. "It's a great opportunity to travel the country and interact with many of the 629,000 FFA members in the US." Nick and the rest of his team also traveled to Japan in February to visit with members of the Future Farmers of Japan (FFJ). "Meeting members of the FFJ was exciting and learning about agriculture in Japan really opened my eyes to the real pressure of efficiency on Japan's ag industry. Japan has a land mass that's 4 percent of the United States but their population is 40 percent the size of the US. Efficient use of resources is absolutely essential!" [Learn more about Nick's experiences here.](#)

Connect with FarmHouse Fraternity

by Drew Casteel



From "Builders of Men" to hard-core philanthropists, the University of Tennessee's FarmHouse Fraternity seeks to develop men by encouraging growth in the intellectual, physical, social, moral, and spiritual aspects of their lives.

As they build strong relationships with each other, they remain very active in campus events, such as various activities with several sororities, community service events, and leadership conferences. The brotherhood of FarmHouse focuses on developing its members by allowing them to enhance and grow each of their leadership and communication skills. Whether they choose to run for a leadership role within the fraternity or simply be a member, this is true for every brother.

The fraternity's main philanthropies help support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and Be the Match, an organization run by the National Marrow Donor Program that manages the largest and most diverse marrow registry in the world, among their activities. [Read more here.](#)

Cultivating aGIRLculture



The 2016 Cultivating aGIRLculture Camp, funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, took place on the UTIA campus July 19-22. Collaborating on this effort were twenty-three women faculty and staff representing every unit (CASNR,



Extension, AgResearch, and CVM) and every department across UTIA. Eight female undergraduate volunteers chaperoned and provided peer mentoring to the campers throughout the week.

When asked what they liked most, several campers noted the invaluable interactions with the mentors, faculty, and staff. One camper responded that "getting to meet professors, grad students, and undergrad students and talking to them personally about UT and agriculture" was her favorite part of the program.

The objectives of the camp were to expose and recruit female high school students from rural communities to postsecondary education and/or careers in agriculture and natural resources STEM disciplines; and to cultivate a climate within career spaces, classrooms, and communities that is free of gender biases and stereotypes in STEM degrees and careers. The College is working to boost the participation rate for females in these degrees and careers. [Learn more here.](#)

UT Farm Credit Scholars Start Their Internships

by Taylre Beaty

This summer I had the opportunity to work for Farm Credit Mid-America as a financial services intern in the Maryville, Tennessee, Retail Office. My development partner, Lee Rose, serves as a country home loan officer and is a 2011 graduate of UT CASNR. I spent my summer learning more about rural lending in my community. In addition, I had two main projects that I worked on throughout my internship. One was centered on finding new leads through unconventional channels and unique avenues to share opportunities for company enhancement. It was a



great opportunity to learn more about rural communities and agriculture in my area. My other project was coordinating the statewide initiative partnering with Farm to Families Food Banks.

Overall, my experience as an intern with Farm Credit Mid-America was an extraordinary opportunity to grow and develop my skills both personally and professionally. I had the chance to learn more about the agriculture industry from the lens of a loan officer. I was challenged in ways that I never expected.

[Read Taylre's full article here.](#)

Top 10 Reasons to Join the UT Livestock Judging Team



1. Travel the United States
2. Meet prestigious livestock producers from all over
3. Evaluate some of the nation's top livestock

4. Become a better evaluator
5. Improve your ability to make logical decisions
6. Enhance your public speaking skills
7. Build your résumé
8. Make new friends and relationships
9. It's a fun way to be involved
10. Bring success to yourself and the College

And these are just the top benefits that members of the [UT Livestock Judging Team](#) gain! Livestock judging at the University of Tennessee is not only valued by the Department of Animal Science, but also by the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources as a whole.

"I've learned more than just animal evaluation," says team member Susan Cowley. "I have better learned how to prioritize. In a class of four quality animals, a winner has to be chosen and there has to be a substantial reason."

At the University of Tennessee, we push our students beyond the basics and pride ourselves in developing students holistically. Students from the livestock judging program can comfortably speak to crowds and stand behind their decisions. That showcases time management in stressful situations, and practice sets a foundation for their success. [More here.](#)

Real World Learning

by Drew Casteel



Imagine that you were sitting in a classroom engaged in a lecture about proper techniques to plant a seed. Then when class was over you were informed there would be an exam the following week. You took the exam and your studying paid off. You did not fully understand the concepts, but given a multiple-choice exam you were able to pass with a low B.

Now imagine you are in a class, the professor walks in, hands you a pack of seeds and the proper materials, and tells you to plant them. You do so and your plant never germinates. The professor then gathers the class together and reflects on why your plants grew or why they did not. From these two scenarios, which one would help you learn and retain the information better, the standardized test or the real-life experience?

The University of Tennessee's Experiential Learning Initiative is transforming the learning experience for both undergraduate and graduate students. Experiential learning is an approach to education that emphasizes engaged student learning through direct experience and intense reflection to increase knowledge, acquire lifelong learning and problem-solving skills, and elucidate values.

By students learning from these real-life experiences, they are obtaining the real-life skills that are highly valuable to employers. Jennifer Richards says, "I am excited to see the university take on this initiative for a couple of reasons. First, I feel that, as CASNR educators, we are really strong at providing the experience component for our learning. CASNR is so rich with opportunities to get your hands dirty, both figuratively and literally!" [Read more about the initiative and how CASNR is implementing it.](#)

Important Dates Ahead

- Wednesday, August 31—**CASNR Student InVOLvement Fair** (an event for all CASNR students) Location: Ellington Courtyard (Hollingsworth Auditorium, Rain Location)
- Thursday, September 15—**Résumé Doctor Drop-in Workshop**. All CASNR students invited. Pizza and soft drinks provided by Gamma Sigma Delta—the Honor Society of Agriculture—Location: Plant Biotech Building atrium (1st floor)
- Friday, September 16—**Applications due for Ag 3 Day Startup** [@tiny.utk.edu/startup](https://tiny.utk.edu/startup) (in conjunction with AgResearch)

- Wednesday, September 21—**UTIA International Programs Showcase**—Location: Hollingsworth Auditorium
- Saturday, September 24—**2016 Ag Day** (open to everyone)—Location: Brehm Animal Science Arena
- Wednesday, September 28—**CASNR Career Fair** (all students)—Location: Brehm Animal Science Arena
- Thursday, September 29—**Construction Science Career Fair**—Location: Brehm Animal Science Arena
- Friday, September 30—Sunday, October 2—**Ag 3 Day Start-Up** (in conjunction with AgResearch)—Location: 156/157 Plant Biotech Building
- Tuesday, October 25—**CASNR/4-H Fall Festival** (open to all UTIA employees and their families/children)—Location: Morgan Hall
- Tuesday, November 1—**CASNR Scholarship Banquet** (invitations will be sent and RSVP's required)
- Friday, December 9—**University-wide Commencement**—Location: Thompson Boling Arena

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