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CASNR Chronicle



November 2015

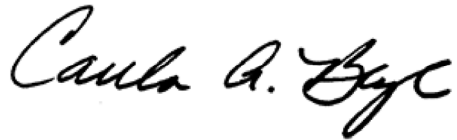
Fall semester always brings the excitement of returning students, football, and holidays. We have also been excited by the number of incoming students joining CASNR, and we now celebrate our tenth consecutive year of undergraduate enrollment growth. Much of this increase is about the job growth for agriculture and natural resource career areas. Other contributing factors may be our generous scholarship support, the great faculty advising, and the desire to make a difference in a world facing challenges of feeding its population and safeguarding the environment we live in.



This fall semester seems to have gone by much faster than any previous one—a sentiment shared by many of our students, who are preparing for end-of-term assignments, finishing projects, and studying diligently for exams. This fall also heralded great opportunities for graduating students who took part in the successful CASNR Career Fair and, just a month later, the Construction Science Career Fair.

We believe the College is succeeding in preparing students well for future professional careers with toolkits that include enhanced opportunities to become proficient in communication, leadership, and teamwork skills, and the confidence that only comes from experience learning and internships.

As we enter into the holiday season, we, in the CASNR family, have much to give thanks for—talented students, hardworking staff, and dedicated faculty!



Caula A. Beyl, Dean

Spotlight: Leadership Opportunities Within CASNR

CASNR Students Thrive in Leadership Summit



As the agriculture industry grows and career opportunities for students continue to expand, it's our duty to ensure CASNR students are well-equipped to succeed in the workforce. Many of our students are already developing essential soft skills in their classes and through internships, student

organizations, and professional development opportunities. The Dean's Office desired to take this a step further and become more intentional in training our students on the important attributes of leadership, management, and professional success, both on the Ag Campus and within the agricultural industry.

On Saturday, October 24, CASNR hosted its first Student Leadership and Professional Development Summit. The purpose of this half-day initiative, sponsored by River Valley AgCredit, was to provide both current and aspiring student leaders on the Ag Campus with an opportunity to come together and discuss key aspects of leadership, career development, and future success.

[Click here to read more about the success of the summit.](#)

Get InVOLved

A major goal of our College is to connect our bright students with opportunities to develop their hard and soft skills. Beyond the classroom setting, students can obtain those critical skills (leadership, management, teambuilding, listening, budgeting, programming, etc.) by getting involved in student



organizations, clubs, honor societies, and competitive teams. CASNR is proud to offer our students over thirty different organizations in an effort to promote involvement, engagement, and success. [Click here for more information on the Involvement Fair.](#)

College Prepares Students for Success with Career Fair



At the thirty-first annual CASNR Career Fair October 7 in Brehm Arena, a record 452 students, up 150 from 2014, visited with representatives of forty organizations. Representatives offered internships



and job opportunities from AgriGold, Cargill, Case Farms, Cobb-Vantress, Farm Credit Mid-America, JBS, Pictsweet, Tennessee Farmer's Cooperative, Tyson Foods, and UGA Extension among others. First-time participants included Bartlett Tree Experts, Bunge, River Valley AgCredit, Phillips-Creasey, and YMCA Camp Widjiwagan. Five USDA and three state government organizations also participated. Five UT groups presented graduate programs of study as well as study abroad opportunities. In addition to the students, several faculty and staff members visited with company representatives. CASNR Student Ambassadors helped with setup, employer check in, student check in, and cleanup. [Read more about our Career Fair.](#)

MANRRS Students Take Over Atlanta, Georgia



The UT Knoxville Chapter of MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences) traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, this semester to attend the MANRRS Region II and Region III Cluster.

MANRRS is a national society that welcomes people of all racial and ethnic groups participating in agricultural, natural resources, and related sciences. MANRRS members are encouraged to be full participants in other professional societies for their basic disciplinary and career interests. The organization

provides networks to support professional development of minorities. It is a springboard for their entry into and advancement in careers where they otherwise could be lost in the sheer number and established connections of mainstream participants. For student members, MANRRS provides role models and networking opportunities.

The UT Knoxville Chapter of MANRRS took almost a dozen members to the organization's Regional Cluster, a three-day professional development opportunity. [Learn about the success of our MANRRS students.](#)

Big Orange in the Nation's Capital

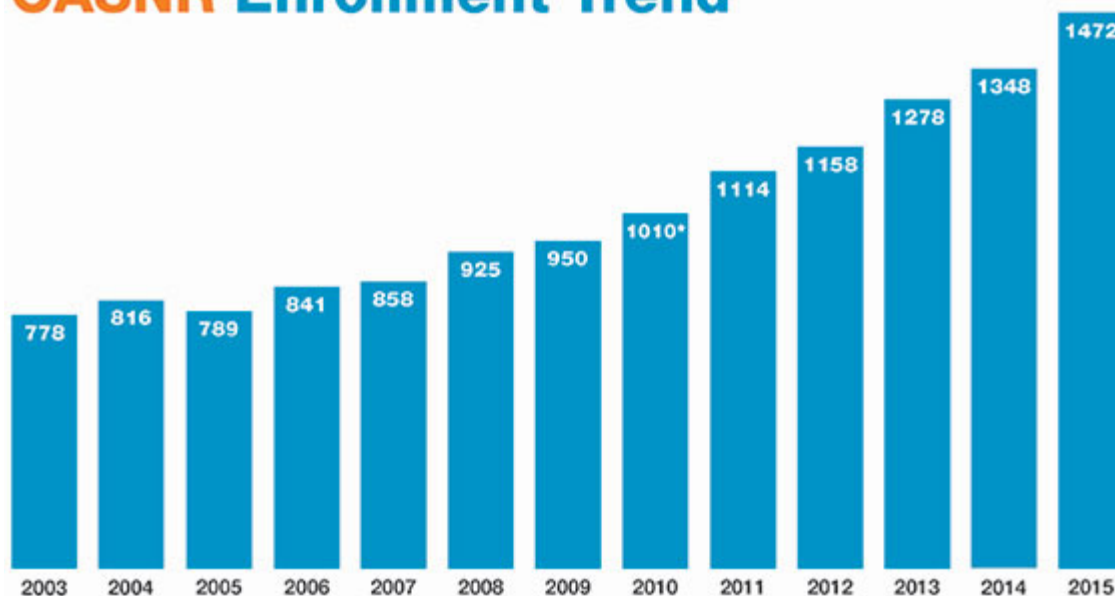
This September, Dr. Bill Park, director of the Farm Credit Scholars Program and Undergraduate Coordinator of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, took eight CASNR undergraduate students to Washington, D.C.

The educational trip was granted to Samuel Koeshall, Victoria Campbell, Taylre Beaty, Anna Ingleburger, Kristen Sommerfeld, Katie Shields, Jared Bruhin, and Lynsey Jones for their acceptance into the Farm Credit Scholars program.



In Washington, the Scholars had the opportunity to tour the Capitol with Don Walker, Congressman Jimmy Duncan's Deputy Chief of Staff, as well as meet with lobbyists and visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

CASNR Enrollment Trend



Imagine that you're a junior in high school and still undecided on a career. You want a job that pays well, is secure, and can make a difference in the world. You ask yourself: Where do these jobs exist in today's economy? It seems like many careers are in a state of flux, and employment prospects are dim. But there is a career where you can find a well-paying, secure job that will serve the greater good. That career is agriculture.

With its long history of experience learning, service learning, undergraduate research, and internships, CASNR offers students significantly more and better experiential learning and networking opportunities than students in other colleges.

This fall's enrollment data shows CASNR has experienced an 86 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment since 2003. [Learn more about CASNR's enrollment increase and the student demand fueling it.](#)

Big Orange Give Benefits Our Students & Faculty

Big ORANGE
.....
GIVE

Thank you to all of the alumni and friends who helped the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources raise more than \$24,000 during Big Orange Give, surpassing

 THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE its goal of \$17,000.

"For the third year in a row, our Volunteer family has exceeded our goals for the Big Orange Give campaign," said UT Knoxville Chancellor Jimmy Cheek.

The annual online giving campaign sought to raise a grand total of \$1 million in one week, with smaller goals for each college. With 80 percent of all gifts under \$100, UT surpassed its goal and went on to raise nearly \$1.5 million.

Gifts through the campaign assist students and faculty in numerous ways throughout the year. [Learn more about Big Orange Give.](#)

Grad Students Advance to Farm Bureau Finals



Pitching an innovative product with potential to save farmers money, M.S. students Shawn Butler and Austin Scott, along with UT Martin student Daniel Wiggins, placed in the top four in the Farm Bureau Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge this fall.

The students' company, Farm Specific Technology (FarmSpec), has

developed a patent-pending technology that will more effectively terminate cover crops, therefore saving farmers time and expense. The team now advances to the contest's final round, a "Shark Tank" playoff for \$25,000, at the American Farm Bureau Federation's ninety-seventh annual convention in January.

The Challenge is a national competition that judges the merit of ideas for food and agricultural businesses by rural entrepreneurs who are committed to helping rural communities. By placing in the top four, FarmSpec received \$15,000 in start-up funds. [Learn more about their company and the competition.](#)

It Was a **Magical** Day on the Ag Campus

The Institute of Agriculture held its annual Ag Day festival on campus Saturday, October 3, before the Tennessee versus Arkansas football game.

Students and alumni gathered to celebrate UTIA's positive impact on the state of Tennessee and beyond. This year's theme was "TN Magic Moments," a new statewide grassroots campaign based on the Governor's Rural Challenge and in collaboration with UTIA and industry partners. Using social media and speaking engagements, it's designed to raise awareness of the important role agriculture plays in all our lives. Learn how you can be involved by visiting tnmagicmoments.com and join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).



Brehm Animal Science Arena was filled with booths representing each of the college's departments and student organizations. Jordan Johnson, a student assistant in the CASNR Dean's office, experienced Ag Day from preparation to

execution. "Knowing that everybody benefits from Ag Day is rewarding. It's important because you're able to have people network with people and to have a great time to celebrate that agriculture is strong."

This year's festival united hundreds of agriculturalists and visitors in a casual setting—optimal for spreading agricultural literacy and networking.

CASNR students, faculty, staff, and alumni hold pride in the annual Ag Day celebration as it represents the past, present, and future of Tennessee agriculture. [Learn more about Ag Day.](#)

National FFA Convention Offers Big Orange Welcome



FFA member Abby Gass was the face of CASNR to FFA National Convention-goers. In an essay for the Chronicle, she shares her perspective on what that experience was like. "When the leaves start to change, you know its time for National FFA Convention. This year I, along with several other CASNR students, had the privilege to travel to Louisville, Kentucky, to hang out with 68,000 FFA members from across the United States.

"With this being my fifth year attending convention, I knew what to expect, but I will say, it was much different than past years. This year I hung up my blue corduroy jacket, set aside my black heels, and traded them in for UT Orange and Big Orange spirit." [Learn more about Abby's experiences recruiting at the largest youth convention in the country.](#)

Sterges Biosystems Learning Hub Debuts



When Athan Sterges was a distinguished soil sciences professor in the College from 1948 to 1962, the innovations that will exist in a new lab named in his honor weren't even dreamed of in science fiction.

Today, though, the Athan J. Sterges Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science Learning and Innovation Hub is one step closer to reality thanks in part to the support of his family, who gathered at Ag Day for its dedication.

The Sterges Learning and Innovation Hub is the pioneering idea of professor John Wilkerson. The Hub will put real-time streaming data and observations at BESS students' fingertips. Information will flow into the university from environmental systems, processing environments, and production automation systems, some as far away as computers onboard harvesters in Nebraska and Iowa cornfields. [Learn more about the Sterges Learning and Innovation Hub.](#)

CASNR in the Community



In 2009, a couple of years before Billy Minser retired as instructor from the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, he was asked to visit Carpenters Elementary School in Blount County. Erich Henry, director of the Blount County Soil Conservation District and a 1991 UT Animal Science graduate, was seeking his help in developing an outdoor environmental classroom on a woodlot next to the school.

Minser accepted the challenge and six years later the environmental classroom is in place, complete with a curriculum. This October, Minser and Carpenters Elementary School hosted an Environmental Field Day for all 600 students at the school. Twelve subject matters were taught and more than twenty Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries students and alumni were on hand to help.

Brewing a Big Idea



Excitement and enticing aromas filled the conference room in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics this fall when professors and students gathered to sample free trade coffee from Blake Thomas (M.S. agricultural economics '12). Thomas founded Tiny House Coffee, tinyhousecoffeeroasters.com, to improve market opportunities for smallholder coffee growers in Nicaragua.



"It's relaxing, kickback coffee," pronounced associate professor Dayton Lambert.

"Hearing the story behind it, there's obviously hard work that goes into it, and you can tell it's made by people who care," said Matt Edwards, second year master's student.

"Blake's work highlights two focus areas for the University and the Department: entrepreneurship and the pursuit of international opportunities," said Thomas' former major professor Chris Clark. "His work to improve the lives of others is a source of pride for the department and all who have worked with Blake." [Read more of Thomas' story.](#)

Say Cheese, All Vol Cheese!



Looking for a holiday present that supports student programs and research at the Institute of Agriculture? Say cheese!

The Department of Food Science and Technology has introduced All

Vol Cheese, just in time for the gift-giving season. Four flavors are available for purchase—Checkerboard Mild Cheddar, Game Day Sharp Cheddar, Smokey's Smoked Gouda, and Torchbearer Jalapeño. The blocks are 10 ounces.

All Vol Cheese can be ordered at tiny.utk.edu/cheese. People on campus can buy from students at fundraisers and from the Department. A gift box is also available. [Learn more about how All Vol Cheese came about.](#)

You Can't Have Football Without Ag



Brigitte Passman, a CASNR junior double majoring in agricultural leadership, education, and communications and food and agricultural business, served as the student honorary coach for the UT versus Western Carolina game during Family Weekend. Passman got to watch the game from a coach's perspective

and participate in several pregame activities.

During her time at UT, she has been involved in Collegiate 4-H, has served as a resident assistant in Hess Hall, and has been active within Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women and Phi Sigma Theta National Honor Society. [Watch Brigitte's reaction to being selected as an honorary coach.](#)

International Experience Learning at its Finest



UT June graduate Alison Shimer (B.S. forestry) had the experience of a lifetime. Thanks to Dr. Scott Schlarbaum, Dr. Don Hodges, and the Dr. Bronson Fund, Shimer was able to travel to Ljubljana, Slovenia, last summer to work with the Slovenian Institute of Forestry for three months. [Learn more about Alison's international experience.](#)

Contact Us

CASNR Office of the Dean

2621 Morgan Circle Drive · 126 Morgan Hall · Knoxville, TN 37996

(865) 974-7303

casnr@utk.edu · www.casnr.utk.edu

