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CASNR Chronicle



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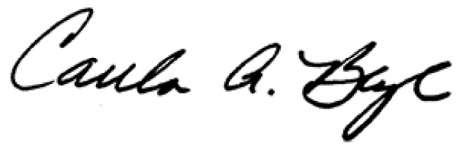


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Spring 2015

The end of the spring semester culminates with a celebration of student achievement in the form of commencement. For many students, this represents finding within themselves the resources and determination over the last several years to earn that degree. Many have discovered new depths and truly appreciate now what they are capable of when asked to reach a high level of performance. For those of us in CASNR, faculty, and staff, it is a bittersweet time because we not only celebrate the beginnings of the next phase of life for our students, but we also are sad to say goodbye to those who have become like family to us. May our students be successful in their professional endeavors and keep CASNR in their hearts!





Caula A. Beyl, Dean

Spotlight: ALEC

The Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication degree prepares graduates for careers in both formal and non-formal education. The major is designed for students who want a broad, general background in agriculture and natural resources and wish to develop their leadership and communication skills to pursue careers in the area of leadership in business and industry, agricultural education, agricultural extension and agricultural communications.

Ashley Harris

Ashley Harris graduated from the ALEC graduate program in May 2014 with a 3.95 GPA. She was also a member of Gamma Sigma Delta—the Honor Society of Agriculture. Ashley majored in agricultural communications with an emphasis in intercollegiate athletics. She is now the athletic academic coordinator at North Dakota State University, where she tracks the academic progress of student athletes for NCAA eligibility for six sports. Ashley shares, "I am now within a career that I love and am often asked about my graduate degree in ALEC. I explain it as a multi-faceted program that allows students to engage in learning different facets of leadership, education and communication."



Josh Cogner



Great things have been happening already for Josh Conger, a student of ALEC, as he has just begun engaging in his future career by serving as a student teacher at David Crockett High School! "We are not only teaching our students about the green industry,



but they will also be learning how to properly apply their knowledge through hands-on experience. We envision these opportunities to make an impression with our students and have a sense of pride as they drive through town and see the end results of their

projects. And also develop a pride in their community," says Josh.

Will Freeman

Will Freeman, a junior majoring in agricultural communications, was elected president of the University of Tennessee's Student Government Association on April 1. Will was a member of the campaign group "Connect UT," whose candidates were also elected vice president and Student Services director as well as many of the Student Senate positions. "A lot of work has gone into this for the past few months," Will told the UT student newspaper, *The Daily Beacon*. Connect UT's platform includes creating a "Presidential Roundtable" composed of students who would come together to talk about issues on campus as well as creating a "Roommate Finder" program that would better match incoming freshmen with their roommates.



Madison Benson



Madison Benson, current senior at Scotts Hill High School in West Tennessee and future freshman in Agriculture Leadership, Education, and Communications, shares her story on being elected a Tennessee FFA State Officer for the 2015-2016 team. "Being elected as the State West Tennessee Vice President is an accomplishment that has already begun to change my life. Through this office, I have

the opportunity to positively influence the lives of over 13,000 FFA members across the state, and I could not be more excited. I am beyond thrilled that the hours of studying and hard work I put into this finally paid off. God's got a plan for each of us, and I am so glad that this is his plan for me." [More »](#)

Recent Highlights

What's Happening with FFA



The Tennessee FFA Association makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. The association is led by a board of directors and the state officer team. We were lucky enough to have five of the eight 2014-2015 teammates enrolled in CASNR and will have three officers from the 2015-2015 team joining us in the fall.

From Orange Country to Rainbow Country



During the month of January, exactly one half of the Tennessee State FFA officer team traveled across the Atlantic Ocean for two weeks while the other half was starting school after a refreshing Christmas break. Nick Baker, Elena Smith, Susan Cowley, and Amy Morgan began their journey to South Africa with seventy-four state officers from around the nation on the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers. While there, the students experienced once in a lifetime opportunities that shifted their entire perspective of the world, but more than anything else, they were challenged. They were challenged to step out of their comfort zones and seek experiences they might never have the chance to do again. They toured several farms and major agricultural companies where they learned about South African agriculture and the differences and similarities with American agriculture. [More »](#)

March a Busy Month for FFA State Officers



March for FFA state officers does not mean the beginning of spring and the budding of flowers; March does not mean spring break or



sand. March means one thing and one thing only, STATE FFA CONVENTION! A month filled with planning, memorizing, rehearsing, and sometimes tears (well maybe lots and lots of tears) boils down to celebrating a tradition eighty-seven

years strong for three days in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. This year 3,500 members, advisors, and guests packed into the Gatlinburg Convention Center making it an all-time high record for attendance. [More »](#)

Elena Smith Reminisces on FFA Experiences



For the past year, 370 days to be exact, eight individuals had the honor to represent our great state as the 2014-2015 Tennessee State FFA officer team. We have traveled high and low, far and wide, through rain and snow! We have literally worked through blood, sweat, and tears for this organization. But I would not change one second of my experience, one aspect of our time together, or one characteristic about any of my teammates. We started out our

journey as eight talented individuals but we ended this year as a family. Read more about FFA Vice President Elena Smith's reflections. [More »](#)

Ambassadors

CASNR Students Are True Volunteers



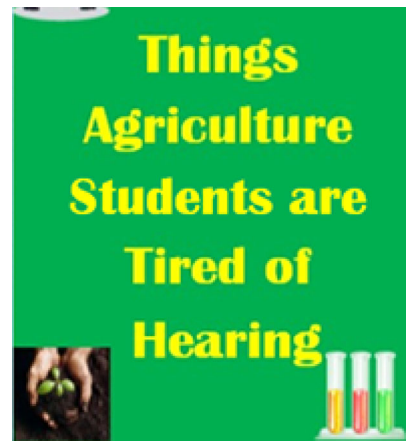
"April showers bring May flowers," and as we all know, this is more than true for Knoxville. However, as agriculturists, we also know that May flowers aren't as pretty without a little help. One cold morning in March, Ijams Nature Center became a little more prepared for the warmer weather as a group of CASNR freshmen prepared the gardens for its plethora of guests in the springtime. Thirteen first year students who live on the agriculture floor of Morrill Hall pulled weeds and spread mulch. Not only did the project benefit the nature center but spending time as an LLC group helped create strong bonds of friendship among agricultural students in CASNR.

Five Things Agriculture Students Are Tired of Hearing



CASNR Ambassador Anna Ingleburger writes at her blog, "Here at my lovely, land-grant university we have an entire campus and a few hundred surrounding acres dedicated to research and education in agriculture. Why? Well, because the AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT INDUSTRY—just in case that's not obvious. Not to discount the value of doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc., but without agriculture, those careers and those people's lifestyles

wouldn't be possible. Bearing that in mind, for some reason, many people—my fellow classmates included—look down upon, scoff at, or don't understand people who study agriculture in college. So, whether you're one of those people, an agriculture major, or somewhere in between, here are the top five things I've heard when people learn that I am or my friends are pursuing a degree in agriculture and why they're absolutely ridiculous." Read Anna's Five Things. [More »](#)



In Memory of Dr. Riley



Rachel Eatherly's spring CASNR ambassador project truly touched the hearts of students, faculty, and staff. Rachel decided that CASNR should construct a wooden swing in memory of Dr. Riley, the professor of agricultural and resource economics who passed away in 2013. Many spring graduates are the last students to have had him as a professor and wanted to leave something in his honor. The swing will allow visitors to enjoy the outdoors and students to relax. [More »](#)

AGR Makes Its Mark Academically and in the Community

Alpha Gamma Rho National Agriculture fraternity is a social-professional fraternity that is devoted to improving its members through each brother's mental, social, moral, and physical growth. Academics are very important to the men at Alpha Kappa as the brothers are always striving to be at the top of their class. The brothers also try to better the community around them. They are getting involved with Habitat for Humanity and also regularly play bingo with seniors on the weekend in a Knoxville nursing home. [More »](#)



Featured

Forestry Alum Jerri Marr to Address Spring Graduates



Trailblazing U.S. Forest Service careerist Jerri Marr (B.S. Forestry and Natural Resource Management '92) will deliver the commencement address to CASNR's spring graduates. The college's graduation ceremonies will be held at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, at Thompson-Boling Arena. The graduating class will include approximately 190 students receiving bachelor's degrees, as well as thirty-three men and women receiving master's degrees and five receiving their PhDs. Marr was recently appointed

assistant director for recreation for the Forest Service in Washington D.C. There she oversees planning and coordination of outdoor recreation program policies and provides technical leadership and guidance to the national recreation program. Learn more about Jerri Marr and her trial by fire in the 2012 wildfires in drought-stricken Colorado in a feature article from the UTIA magazine, *Tennessee Land, Life and Science*. [More »](#)

One of CASNR's Own is UT Hooding Ceremony Speaker

The University of Tennessee's Graduate Hooding Ceremony is always a tremendously special ceremony, crowning the achievements of doctoral students' hard work and dreams. This spring, we at CASNR are especially proud that one of our own, Plant Sciences doctoral candidate Jeneen Abrams, is the Spring 2015 Hooding Ceremony Speaker. Jeneen is the first African American women in the nation to earn a PhD in plant breeding and her achievements in this discipline have earned her two national research awards. [More »](#)



EPP's Proposal for a New Doctoral Program Moves Forward



The Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology (EPP) had a site visit earlier this month from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission along with a consultant from the University of California-Davis regarding its proposal to establish a brand new doctoral program in Entomology, Plant Pathology, and Nematology (EPPN). The site visit was very successful and THEC and the consultant were extremely impressed with the proposal, EPP and UTIA facilities, and with the quality and enthusiasm of the faculty, staff, and students. They gave a go ahead to the program. Read more in a message by department head Parwinder Grewal. [More »](#)

Adam Willcox Steps Up as CASNR Student International Experiences Coordinator



Adam Willcox started in January 2015 as the CASNR student international experiences coordinator, taking over responsibilities from recently retired CASNR study abroad coordinator, Dr. Dave Ostermeier. Adam obtained his PhD in wildlife ecology



and conservation with a minor in agricultural education and communication from the University

of Florida. Adam hopes to continue the positive momentum provided by the excellent work Dave and many highly-motivated faculty, students, and administrators at CASNR and UTK had underway to increase both CASNR student participation and the number of study abroad opportunities offered by CASNR faculty. Adam comes equipped with seven years of international experience in Central and East Africa as an agroforestry Extension agent with the US Peace Corps and as a social scientist, project director, and outreach specialist with several wildlife conservation nongovernmental organizations. Welcome aboard, Adam! [More »](#)

CASNR Welcomes New Leader of Tennessee 4-H/ALEC

A lifelong educator, Richard Clark is dedicating his career to giving young people in Tennessee every opportunity to grow and succeed. It starts as early as the fourth grade and continues through the college years. Clark started work this semester as the new leader of Tennessee 4-H, the youth development program for UT Extension, and Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication (ALEC). These two units—service-oriented and academic—have been merged in an effort to better serve Tennessee youth. "I've been involved in 4-H and ag education in some capacity for almost my entire career," says Clark. "The new department of 4-H and ALEC has the opportunity to serve as a model for other universities for impacting the lives of young people from elementary school through college. 4-H and ALEC have a common, underlying youth development and education knowledge base which makes this merger ideal." [More »](#)



Director of Advising for CASNR Launches the Online Petition Process



When Brent Lamons, director of advising, joined CASNR in 2012, one of the things high on his list



was finding a way to improve the petitions process. Petitions are filed by faculty advisors of students in the department seeking to have substitutions approved for various course requirements. Animal Science and Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science are participating in beta testing the new online process. Faculty and staff have been highly impressed with how fast they were able to enter and submit petitions and appreciate the fact that they can track the progress and status of submitted petitions. Once the process has been fully evaluated by faculty end users, it will be gradually extended to other departments in CASNR over the summer and fall. Faculty feedback has directly said that, "this process should really help the curriculum development process." [More »](#)

Plant Sciences Professor Presented with National Teaching Honor



Congratulations to Bill Klingeman, professor of plant sciences. Klingeman is the winner of two significant teaching awards this spring, one a Teaching Award of Merit from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture and the other CASNR's 2015 W.S. Overton Faculty Award of Merit. Each

honors a faculty member who has made notable contributions to the development of students. Bill received the recognitions from College Assistant Dean John Stier in a surprise presentation in front of his students on April 2 and was formally recognized at the College's awards reception April 10. Read more about his award and honors presented to students, faculty, and staff members at CASNR's 55th annual Awards Recognition Program and Reception. [More »](#)

Career Focus

Tennessee Farmers Cooperative Provides Career Opportunities for Students

Tennessee Farmers Cooperative (TFC) provides excellent opportunities for CASNR students. TFC offers internships as well as full-time jobs for agriculture students attending the University of Tennessee. Paul Binkley, regional manager and training coordinator for TFC, held on-campus interviews with eleven students on March 9. Six of the students were interviewing for summer internships whereas the other five were interviewing for the full-time management trainee job.

[More »](#)



CASNR ACEs Visit



Two outreach coordinators with the American Conservation Experience (ACE) made a special visit to CASNR on March 25, 2015. ACE is a non-profit conservation corps. Their program offers hands-on conservation experience, leadership opportunities, educational awards, and the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for preservation and enhancement of the environment. After a tour of campus, the ACE representatives set up a table display outside Mabel's cafeteria to share information and answer questions from students. Approximately eighteen students stopped by to talk with the representatives. A good number had done previous research on ACE. A majority of the students had insightful questions and seemed interested. One of the reps said she plans to contact all the individuals who left email addresses. [More »](#)

CASNR Constructs a Model of Success



CASNR's Construction Science Program originated the fall of 2010 with a pilot group of five students. These first five graduated within four years and immediately found opportunities within the construction management profession. Over the past four years these original students have been joined by seventy-four additional construction students with fourteen of them already graduating and finding the same employment success. Now, in the fall of 2014, the program has rapidly grown to become a recognized provider of quality graduates to the construction industry. Demand is high for our graduates. Read more about the program. [More »](#)

Experiential Learning

First-time Competitors Win National Honors!



In their first time competing at the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, the University of Tennessee accomplished what many thought was impossible--they came home as National Winners! The team consisting of Stephanie Nash, Rebecca Davis, Jeanette (Ettie) Peterson, and Billy Rochelle, and coached by Dr. Gina Pighetti, professor of Dairy Science at UT, was one of four division winners at the contest held April 9-11 in Syracuse, New York. Dairy Challenge, now fourteen years old, offers college-level dairy students real-world exposure to operating dairy farms that are trying to balance all aspects of long-term sustainability. [More »](#)

AREC Students Experience Learning



Students majoring in either Food and Agricultural Business or Natural Resource and Environmental Economics in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AREC) thrive in a learning environment that embraces the power of experiential learning to help prepare students for careers in the industry. Faculty like to bring the real world in to the classroom and have students engage in experiential learning using actual scenarios. Students in the spring class of AREC 342 (Farm and Financial Management) visited Strong Stock Farms and discussed potential alternative enterprises. Students have opportunities to apply what they learn from participation in events such as the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) annual national contest to the Farm Bureau Discussion Meet. The Farm Credit Scholars Program, supported by Farm Credit Services (FCS), is an internship/scholarship program for CASNR undergraduates, and AREC students are also encouraged to engage in internships. Through these out-of-classroom opportunities, departmental majors really experience learning and that gives them the confidence and ability to excel in their chosen career field. [More »](#)

Powell High School Students Get Hands-on with Turf Research

Students from Knox County's Powell High School visited the UTIA's Turfgrass Science and



Management professors and students at the East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center to learn about the turf program. The idea for the hands-on visit came about after the UT Turfgrass team talked with Powell High School leadership at a college fair last fall. "When I heard about the program at the College and Career Fair, I knew it was something that I wanted our kids to hear about because it sounds like a great opportunity for many areas of interest," says Melissa Glover, Powell High School vice principal. [More »](#)



Students Attend Thirtieth Annual MANRRS Conference in Houston



The UTK Chapter of MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences) traveled to Houston in late March to attend the thirtieth annual national conference. The conference, sponsored by some of the largest companies within the agricultural industry, including John Deere, Monsanto and the USDA APHIS Veterinary Services, provided hundreds of underrepresented agricultural students with the opportunity to come together for three days of networking, professional training and employment. Students

attended a plethora of professional development seminars focusing on internships, resume development, networking, leadership in the workforce, the graduate school application, as well as research and interviewing skills. Several UTK MANRRS students landed on-the-spot internship and job interviews with major companies, including Cargill, Ardent Mills and the USDA, while others met with representatives from graduate programs throughout the nation. [More »](#)

Crops, Cancer, and Chickens, OH MY!



This past year, Anna Ingleburger had the opportunity to travel to Arizona to participate in the Biotech University Conference in Phoenix. She received a great education on biotechnology and its uses in agriculture. She shared, "I also enjoyed meeting with and getting to know our fellow participants, many of whom were studying journalism or other fields of communications and did not have much

knowledge about agriculture or biotechnology." Ingleburger attended two presentations, each with differing points and stances on genetically modified organisms. She also visited the ASU Biodesign Institute to meet with researchers working on crops, cancers, and chickens and saw Kuroiler chickens, a hybrid chicken from India, targeted to aid impoverished farmers in Uganda. These birds produce about ten times more eggs and grow about three times as fast as the native birds. Following that she traveled to a local farm to experience firsthand the joys and discomforts of growing wheat, alfalfa, and cotton in the hot and dry climate of Arizona. [More »](#)

Interviews Abound at the International Production and Processing Expo



Where can twenty-two students have over 120 interviews in a three-day time frame? At the College Student Career Program held in conjunction with the International Production and Processing Expo, that's where! At this event, held in Atlanta, January 27-29, 2015, participating students submitted résumés in advance and were able to schedule interviews in advance of the event, as well as at the event, with the thirty companies interviewing for internships as well as full-time jobs. [More »](#)

Wildlife

Things Seem a Bit Batty Around Here



Last October, Reilly Jackson, a junior in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, attended the forty-third annual North American Symposium on Bat Research in Albany, New York. This meeting brought together over four-hundred



professional bat researchers from throughout North America, Central and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Since transferring to UT

in 2013, Reilly has gained extensive research experience with bats. She initially started working with a PhD student through the McCracken Lab in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology in spring 2013. These initial experiences were spent capturing and handling bats at cave entrances as part of a project investigating the effects of White-nose Syndrome (WNS), a devastating fungal disease that has killed millions of bats across eastern North America, initially sparked Reilly's interest in and love of bats. [More »](#)

She Started From the Bottom

Ariel Elliot participated in the freeform art competition at Virginia Tech's Southeastern Wildlife Conclave held March 12-15. For this competition, students could make an original sculpture, carving, textile, mixed media, etc., but it could only be of a species native to North America. Elliot participated in this event at Clemson University in 2014 using a clay model of a bald eagle, at that time placing 18 out of 21. Though discouraged, she still planned on making something for the wildlife conclave at Virginia Tech. Three days before the deadline to submit projects to the society, Elliot went out and gathered her materials: Eastern white pine needles from the Ag campus, a log from outside Andy Holt, along with Styrofoam balls, toothpicks, and paint from Wal-Mart. "Honestly, I didn't know how the porcupine would end up looking like since I just looked at a photo of a porcupine on Google and began construction. When I finished, I thought it looked decent enough. I didn't think it would even place compared to the other artworks I saw in the room during conclave, so I literally jumped into a teammate's arms when my porcupine won second place," Ariel says.





Congratulations to Our Southeastern Wildlife Conclave Champions!



The Institute's Student Wildlife and Fisheries Society won first place overall and swept top individual honors at the 2015 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave. The 23-member team, co-advised by David Buehler, Chris Graves, Emma Willcox, and Brian Alford from the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, competed against twenty-one college and university fisheries and

wildlife programs at a competition last weekend hosted by Virginia Tech University at Smith Mountain Lake, Virginia. "Winning Conclave is for sure a statement that our academic WFS programs are on the cutting edge of science, teaching, research, and management of wildlife resources and why our program is so widely known and respected," wrote retired faculty member Billy Minser in a congratulatory note to the team's advisers. Minser is a former advisor to the student chapter. [More »](#)

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