

Athens
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The Green & Brown

newsletter of
The University of Georgia Department of

Crop & Soil Sciences



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Winter
2008

CRSS Graduate Program Ranked in National Top Ten

As reported by the Chronicle of Higher Education and the UGA Columns, the 3rd annual Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index, provided by Academic Analytics, has ranked the UGA Crop & Soil Doctoral program among the nation's Top 10 most productive graduate programs.

The index examines the productivity of each faculty member, who can be judged on as many as five factors: books published; journal publications; citations of journal articles; federal-grant dollars

awarded; and honors and awards.

For each discipline, a weight is assigned to each variable, with publications having the highest impact at 60 points out of the total possible 100 points. Grants count as 30 points, and grant data from 2004, 2005, and 2006 were used in assigning points. Awards and honors count as 10 points, with the more prestigious awards given more weight. When one or more of the variables are not used in the calculation, the point scale is adjusted accordingly.

CRSS LOSES LONGTIME PROFESSOR

The Department lost a long-time member when Dr. Fred Boswell passed away on Saturday, March 1, 2008. In his 32-year career at UGA, Dr. Boswell served as a professor of soil science, teaching and conducting research in plant nutrition and soil chemistry. For seven years, he served as head of the Department of Agronomy (now Crop and Soil Sciences) at Griffin. After his retirement, Dr. Boswell was appointed Professor Emeritus of Agronomy. Dr. Boswell was a certified Professional

Soil Scientist, and was awarded Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America and the American Society of Agronomy, where he serving as President of each chapter. In 1994, Dr. Boswell was named the Tennessee Technological University Distinguished Agricultural Alumnus. He served on the Board of TTU Agricultural Foundation, as Treasurer. In his spare time, Dr. Boswell enjoyed fishing, and was an avid gardener.

Summer Intern Wins Research Award

For the past 13 years, the University of Georgia Graduate School's Outreach and Diversity Office has organized the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP). This 8-week program offers outstanding undergraduates from historically underrepresented groups an opportunity to work closely with faculty in an intensive summer research experience.

This summer, Dr. Dennis Hancock served as a mentor to Sherri Hammond, a SURP participant and senior at Fort Valley State University. Sherri has a strong background in biology and genetics at FVSU, showing a strong interest in learning how to use molecular genetics to solve complex problems. Sherri was most interested in how these techniques were being used to aid developments in the breeding of high-biomass producing crops. Dr. Hancock arranged for Sherri to visit Dr. Charlie Brummer on this subject and they collaborated on a project that would allow Sherri to get some research experience with

these techniques in Dr. Brummer's lab. The objective of her research project was to link specific regions on chromosomes 4 and 7 on diploid alfalfa with biomass production.

As part of the SURP program, Sherri reported on the progress of her research in biweekly reports and a final report. Then, each of the 41 SURP students from a va-

riety of other disciplines on campus (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and others) competed in a poster and oral presentation contest. Sherri did an excellent job of explaining her research objectives, methods, and findings. Her outstanding presentation skills plus her enthusiasm for the subject allowed her to win the SURP contest! With the win, the Graduate School provided Sherri with a full M.S. or PhD.

Assistantship to the program area of her choosing.

"It was immediately clear that Sherri was very bright and a quick learner," said Dr. Hancock. "Dr. Brummer graciously allowed Sherri an opportunity to learn by doing. I'm very proud of Sherri's accomplishment and how it has highlighted the cutting-edge research and teamwork that we have in our department. It was such a gratifying experience to see her and her parents' faces when they announced the results!"



STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Agronomy Club

The 2008 Annual Peanut Sale, sponsored by the Agronomy Club, took place in November with great success. A new peanut distributor was needed, as the long-time distributor finally closed its doors. Zack Murphy, Agronomy Club President, spent considerable time searching, and found a willing distributor in Dothan, Alabama. Club members spent time after classes printing and mailing order forms. When the peanuts arrived on campus, members spent the two weeks prior to the sale applying the custom printed labels to the 2-lb cans. Their hard work was rewarded, as all 3000 cans of peanuts were sold before the students left on their Winter Break.

Agronomy Graduate Student Association

The Agronomy Graduate Student Association started off the year with a bang, hosting the first AGSA Coffee Hour of the academic year in September. The students provided organic coffee, bagels, muffins, juice, and various other breakfast items. Faculty members, staff, and students were invited to stop by for a quick bite, and an opportunity to get to know each other better. AGSA Coffee Hours have continued on a regular basis, at alternating locations, so as to allow as many people as possible the opportunity to participate. Invitations are emailed out in advance of each coffee hour, so keep an eye on your inbox.

Soil Judging Team

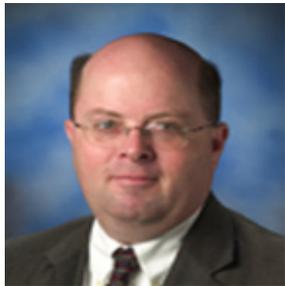
From October 21-24, 2008, the Soil Judging Team competed in the Southeast Regional Collegiate Soil Contest. Ten undergraduate students took one week from their Fall semester to drive to the Blue Ridge Mountains near Blacksburg VA with team coaches William Miller and Larry Morris (WSFNR) and assistant coach/graduate student Russell Henderson. According to Dr. Miller, "All our student competitors were new to soil judging this year, and although our team score was not good enough to advance to the National competition, everyone learned a great deal about soil morphology and the soils of the Blue Ridge."

FACULTY & STUDENT AWARDS

At the American Meteorological Society annual meeting in January, it was announced that the AMS voted to give **Professor Monique Leclerc** the national award for Outstanding Achievement in Biometeorology. According to the Society, Dr. Leclerc received this award “for pioneering research that has advanced our understanding of temporal and spatial patterns of local and regional carbon exchanges, and for global leadership in advancement of biometeorology.”



Dr. William Vencill has been awarded the Outstanding Reviewer Award 2008 by the Weed Science Society of America. This award was presented at the WSSA Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, on February 4, 2008.



Dr. Vencill will also be serving as a Senior Administrative Fellow in the Provost's office from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. His duties will be primarily dealing with academic affairs initiatives and filling in for the Provost when he is not available.

Chompunut Chayawat won 4th place in the student poster competition at the ASA Southern Branch Annual Meeting, held in Dallas, TX, February 3-5, 2008. Chayawat, who is jointly advised by Dr. Monique Leclerc at our Griffin campus and Dr. Chuckree Senthong of Chiang Mai University in Thailand, presented a poster entitled “Response of Soil CO₂ Efflux to Rainfall Variability in Wheat and Peanut Fields.” Her work, done in collaboration with Dr. John Beasley, has been funded by the Peanut Foundation and the Peanut Commission.

A published paper authored by **Feng Chen**, et al. was selected by SSSAJ technical authors for promotion because of its representing interests and well-done research. An interpretive summary prepared by the authors is being distributed as a press release to the industry.



Rajith Mukundan received the 2nd place award in the student poster contest at the annual meeting of the Soil Science Society of Georgia (<http://www.sssga.com/index.html>), held at the State Botanical Gardens on March 3-4, 2008. His poster was entitled “Effect of Soil Data Resolution on Stream Flow and Sediment Modeling.” On April 8, 2008, Rajith was awarded 2nd place by URISA (<http://www.gaurisa.org/>), for projects having a GIS component. Following this award, he presented a 5-minute talk on the SWAT model and his project at Kennesaw State University. Rajith is a graduate student under Dr. Radcliffe, where he is pursuing a Ph.D.

Visiting Ph.D. student **Liang Mao** won the second place award at the American Water Works Association annual conference held June 8-12, 2008 in Atlanta. The award was for his poster entitled Lignin Peroxidase-Mediated Removal of Estradiol in the Presence of Natural Organic Matter. Mao is working on the CAES campus in Griffin with Assistant Professor of environmental water chemistry Qingguo “Jack” Huang.

Natchaya Pingintha was awarded 2nd place in the 2008 American Meteorological Society's Best Student Paper competition at the 28th Conference of Agricultural and Forest Meteorology Conference, held in Orlando, FL. Natchaya is Professor Leclerc's PhD student, in a joint program with Chiang Mai University in Thailand.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to the following scholarship winners:

Aaron Hoskins - Glenn and Harris “Feeding the Hungry” Scholarship

Michael Maw - J. Frank McGill “Up With Peanuts” Scholarship

Jordan Bell - Georgia Golf Course Builders Association of America Foundation Scholarship



Joshua Griffin and Clayton Shiverman the grill at the Annual Fall Picnic, Plant Sciences Farm, November 2008

ARRIVING AND DEPARTING

Athens

AARON THOMPSON - Dr. Aaron Thompson started with UGA in April 2008 as an Assistant Professor in Environmental Chemistry. He comes from the University of Arizona, where he was working on a Post-Doc. Aaron received his Ph.D. in Soil and Water Science from Arizona, in 2005.

LARRY WEST - Dr. Larry West resigned as Professor of Pedology in February 2008, and moved with his wife to Lincoln, Nebraska, taking his "dream job." Dr. West now works with the USDA-NRCS, serving as the National Leader for Soil Survey Investigation.

Statewide

JARED WHITAKER - Dr. Jared Whitaker will start as an Area Agronomist in Spring 2009. He will be located in Statesboro, as a Public Service Assistant. Jared received his Ph.D. in Crop Science from North Carolina State University in December 2008.

PAUL BERTSCH - Dr. Paul Bertsch resigned his position as professor and Administrative Director of the Savannah River Ecology Lab in Aiken, SC. He moved to Louisville, KY, taking a position as an environmental chemist at the University of Kentucky. He leads a university-wide initiative planning process.

ANDREW NEAL - Dr. Andrew Neal resigned his position as an Assistant Research Scientist at the Savannah River Ecology Lab in Aiken, SC, at the end of 2007. Andy returned to his native England to take a position as a Senior Scientist at Rothamsted Research in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, UK.



Tifton

BRIAN SCHWARTZ - Dr. Brian Schwartz will start in Spring 2009 as an Assistant Professor in Warm-Season Turfgrass Breeding at the Tifton campus. Brian received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in December 2008.

STEVE BROWN - After 21 years at the University of Georgia, Dr. Steve Brown resigned his position as Professor and Extension Cotton Specialist in January 2008. He took a position with Dow AgroSciences as a Cotton Development Specialist for PhytoGen Cottonseed, and continues to live in Tifton with his wife, Lisa.



Students and staff huddle around the fireplace at the Plant Sciences Farm during the Annual fall picnic, November 21, 2008



Rajith Mukundan shows his UGA pride, flanked by John Rema, Annual Fall picnic at the Plant Sciences Farm

Griffin

MUSSIE HABTESELASSIE - Dr. Mussie Habteselassie joined us in October 2008 as an Assistant Professor in Soil Microbiology at the Griffin campus. He comes to us from the Institute of Marine Sciences at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where he was working on a project tracing the movement of pathogens through soil using molecular biology techniques. Mussie received his Ph.D. from Utah State University in 2005.

PATRICK MCCULLOUGH - Dr. Patrick McCullough will begin Spring 2009 as an Assistant Professor in Turfgrass Management at the Griffin campus. Patrick received his Ph.D. from Rutgers University in December 2008.



An International "Merry Christmas" at the Annual Crop and Soil Sciences Potluck lunch, December 11, 2008

