

Jeff Wong Appointed to J.G. Boswell Professorship

A new faculty position in the College of Agriculture has been made possible by the James G. Boswell Foundation of Pasadena, which provided a \$1.2 million endowment for the college. The foundation is the charitable arm of the Corcoran-based J.G. Boswell Co., California's largest and most diverse cotton production and farming operation.

Appointed to the J.G. Boswell Professorship is Jeffrey C. Wong, formerly of the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Sara Hake, director of the USDA Plant Gene Expression Center in Albany, Calif., calls Wong one of this nation's most outstanding young scientists. "I am sure California agriculture as well as the students at Cal Poly will benefit from his hands-on approach to discovery and learning," she says.

"Jeffrey's acceptance of our offer was a major step forward for Cal Poly," says David Wehner, dean of the College of Agriculture. "He was the unanimous choice of the search committee and is a perfect blend of teacher, researcher, and mentor."

"I'm honored to join Cal Poly," Wong says. "I feel that my research, teaching, outreach, and collaborative experiences will make me a highly effective teacher, both in and out of the classroom."

Wong has collaborated with researchers at many institutions, including UC Berkeley and the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York. For his doctoral thesis at the University of Illinois in plant breeding and genetics, Wong worked on a team project studying how to increase levels of the antioxidants vitamin E and vitamin A in commercial corn. He mapped corn genes that control the

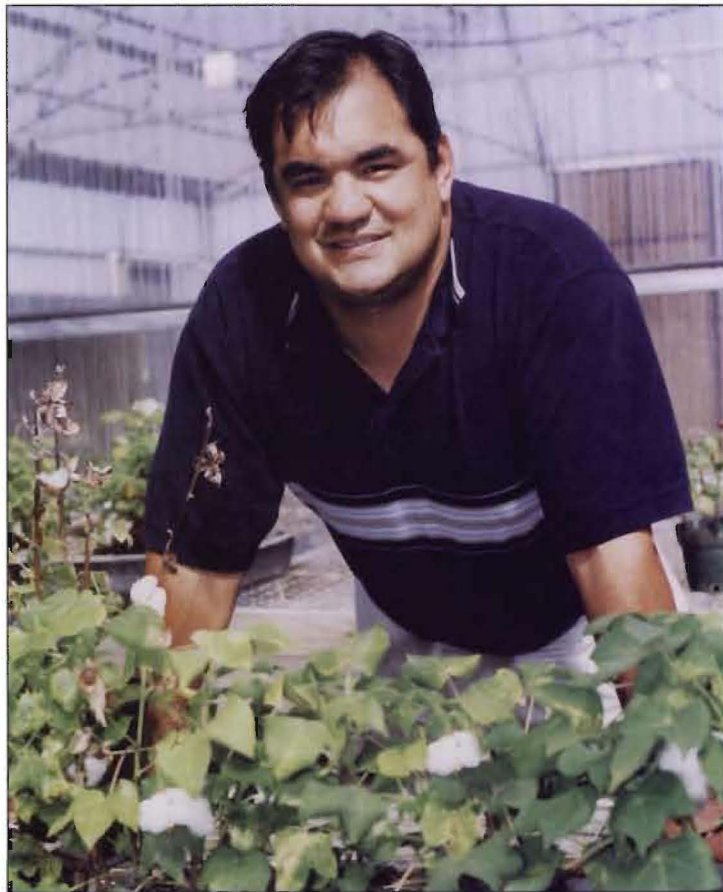
accumulation of these vitamins as the first step in a research effort to enhance the nutritional value of corn for human and animal consumption.

At Cal Poly, Wong is teaching an introductory class and laboratory in genetics. "The techniques and experimental approach I use can be applied to many plant species. Crop and vegetable species grown on the Central Coast could be used to provide the link between the basic science concepts and the field application," Wong explains.

Wong also wants to design and teach a laboratory techniques class at Cal Poly. The course would use the newest technologies to differentiate plant DNAs to help select genes that would provide the best plant types for cultivation.

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Jeff Wong
Photo by Jeff Greene