NEWSTRI

STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

Agricultural science graduate Beth Sequeira took home a first-place finish and $2,500 from the national Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference. After winning the statewide Collegiate Discussion Meet in December 2005, Sequeira traveled to Des Moines, Iowa, where she won the national discussion contest, sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation. Sequeira discussed topics such as changing public perception of agriculture and protecting farms from terrorism.

Environmental horticultural science majors Susan Malisch and Ruth Sanborn were awarded 2006-2007 Arnold D. Haskell scholarships, the largest scholarships given through Cal Poly. The Arnold D. Haskell Fund was established by the M. H. Sherman Company in honor of Haskell, who established the Sherman Library and Gardens in Corona Del Mar for the advancement of environmental horticulture education in California. Now in its third year, the scholarship is designed to cover the annual cost of attendance for two environmental horticultural science students and includes an internship.

RODEO STARS

Construction management senior Ben Londo won his second consecutive Men's All-Around title at the 2006 College National Finals Rodeo this summer in Casper, Wyo. The 58th annual event ended the 2005-2006 season for the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association.

Londo finished second overall in saddle bronc riding. In bareback riding, he finished second in the second go-round, ending the competition with 220 points and the Men's All-Around title. Londo had a spectacular rodeo season, finishing as best male all-around competitor in the West Coast Region and third best nationally.

Former Cal Poly rodeo coach Frank Mello said winning the NIRA all-around title twice is extremely rare. "He's good — really good. He's just a good kid, and he works hard," said Mello.

Other rodeo news: JoAnn Switzer, a longtime supporter of the Cal Poly rodeo team, was inducted into the California State Fair Rodeo Hall of Fame in Sacramento.

PHIL TONG EARN NATIONAL AWARD

Professor and Dairy Products Technology Center Director Phil Tong (above, right) received the International Dairy Foods Association Research Award for his work in the area of dairy foods processing.

The award recognizes leading researchers in applied dairy science. Tong received the award during the American Dairy Science Association's annual meeting in Minneapolis, Minn.

Tong is the 13th award recipient and the first from the Western United States. He was recognized for his research in dairy ingredients processing, functionality and composition control. Tong and his Cal Poly research application team have helped professional processors use dairy ingredients to develop new dairy-based beverages, as well as bakery products and other foods.

For more information, visit the Web site http://www.calpoly.edu/~dptc/.
TANYA KIANI APPOINTED ASSISTANT DEAN

Tanya Kiani was appointed assistant dean of advancement and external relations for the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences in June. She will lead all aspects of the college's fund-raising campaigns, alumni affairs, publicity and industry relations.

Prior to her appointment, Kiani directed advancement programs for the College of Architecture and Environmental Design and for the Cuesta College Foundation. She has also served as Cal Poly's director of development for capital projects at the Performing Arts Center.

Kiani earned a bachelor's degree from CSU Long Beach and M.B.A. from Cal Poly.

She was selected through a national search after Mike Barr, former director of advancement, left to direct the California Agriculture Leadership Program.

CHANGING PLACES

The first of September marked the beginning of new leadership in the Agribusiness department.

Wayne Howard has been named the department chair, succeeding Kenneth Scott. After serving successfully for eight years as chair of the largest agribusiness program in the nation, Scott decided to return to teaching.

Howard has taught seven different courses during the seven years he has been at Cal Poly. He earned his Ph.D. from Texas A&M and specializes in farm management, farm appraisal and microeconomic theory.

ORGANIC FARM FINDS FAME

Cal Poly's Organic Farm was featured on an episode of the Huell Howser-hosted PBS Series "California's Green" earlier this year.

The show highlighted the farm's Community Supported Agriculture program and included interviews with the farm's manager, Terry Hooker, as well as Cal Poly students working on the farm.

"One of the first things people want to know is what it was like to work with Huell Howser," said Hooker. "He was full of energy. He really knew what he wanted in terms of a good program. We had a good time with him."

To learn more about Cal Poly's Organic Farm and the CSA Program, visit the Web site http://www.calpoly.edu/~sarc/farm.htm.
DEAN DAVID WEHNER IS LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE.
WHAT'S IN A NAME?
BY SUSAN MCDONALD

Dean Wehner is thinking about the next decade and the students his college will attract, the kinds of programs they will need and what consumers will demand from future college graduates.

He is also mindful of the past and the rich and proud tradition the College of Agriculture has enjoyed since Oct. 1, 1903, when Cal Poly opened as a vocational high school offering animal husbandry and crops classes to students.

Agriculture, Wehner is sure to say to anyone, has been a vital part of Cal Poly since "Day One," and agriculture education at the university will continue to thrive if it adapts and evolves just as it has for the past 103 years.

"There have been many changes that have eventually led to the College of Agriculture as we know it today," Wehner said. "At one time the name of the college was the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Degree programs and departments have been added, combined and renamed over the years. If these changes had not occurred, we would still be a vocational high school, not a leading university."

With respect for the past and his sights set on the future, Wehner has announced that the name of the college has once again changed. The new name is the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, a name that Wehner and his colleagues believe most accurately and clearly reflects the diversity of the college today and where it will lead students tomorrow.

What is not changing, he is quick to say, is the most important component, the learn-by-doing programs that prepare students to be industry leaders and contribute to society.

The college currently offers 18 majors ranging from traditional production-oriented agriculture disciplines, such as animal science, crop science and dairy science, to programs not typically found in colleges of agriculture, including nutrition, forestry and natural resources, earth sciences, and recreation, parks and tourism. "Our name should reflect our diversity," the dean said. "It should also help pique the curiosity of those 17- and 18-year-olds who are considering a college education, but might not investigate the College of Agriculture."

So, what's in a name? Well, in the case of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, the new name spells out the depth and breadth of the college, and the addition of "Food" and "Environmental Sciences" to the name reinforces agriculture's important connection with the food supply and stewardship of the environment.

"It's a mouthful," Wehner laughs, "but it tells everyone who we are."
DISCOVER
HIDDEN GEMS
BY TOM ELTZROTH
Located a short 15-minute walk from the campus core is the Leaning Pine Arboretum, a five-acre living laboratory of beautiful landscape plants in a quiet setting with stunning vistas. This "hidden gem" sits near the end of Via Carta above the new sports complex.

As part of the Horticulture and Crop Science department, the arboretum is used extensively by students. Plants are labeled with permanent identification signs and are attractively arranged by geographic origin, often by natural plant communities. Visitors will learn much from colorful interpretive signs and a self-guided tour brochure.

The main focus is the display and study of water-thrifty plants appropriate for landscape use throughout California's vast mediterranean climate area. Its main collections feature plants from the world's five mediterranean climate regions: Australia, California, Chile, South Africa, and the Mediterranean basin. Other sections showcase native plants of New Zealand, palms, succulents, primitive plants such as cycads, and a collection of conifers and topiaries. The arboretum doesn't attempt to collect and display rare plants; instead, it emphasizes plants available in the California nursery and landscape trade.

In keeping with Cal Poly's famous learn-by-doing approach to education, nearly all design, installation and maintenance work is done by students. Almost all of the operating budget comes from outside donations. Student labor is supported by generous contributions to the arboretum's Student Assistants Program. Supplies, plants and other non-employee expenses are also provided by donations, often supplemented by generous in-kind gifts.

Campus visitors are invited to set aside time to tour the arboretum. Bring a camera and enjoy some of the world's most fascinating plants. A colorful guide to the arboretum and brochures for self-guided tours are available at the Poly Plant Shop and at the arboretum entrance. For directions, hours of operation and other information, visit http://www.leaningpinearboretum.calpoly.edu.
Arden Oreggia didn’t graduate from Cal Poly. In fact, the Salinas valley farmer wasn’t able to go to college at all.

Yet, the Oreggia Family Foundation of Salinas has donated $1.5 million toward planning and construction of Cal Poly’s new $20-million Agriculture Technology Center, a facility to be funded totally by private contributions.

“This latest gift from the Oreggia Family Foundation is a very important one,” said David Wehner, dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. “It will allow us to get started with design work for the center, while we move ahead to secure additional private funding.”

The new high-tech center will provide critically needed lab space for faculty members to conduct applied research and to work with students on senior projects, Wehner said. The 35,000-square-foot, three-story building will house “wet labs” for agricultural and environmental chemistry and biochemistry research, as well as other laboratory space.

“Our goal is to support the priorities of the college, and the Agriculture Technology Center appears to be the number-one priority,” said Oreggia Family Foundation trustee Robert Taylor. “We’re happy to help, and we hope this gift will encourage others to support the center.”

The estates of Arden Oreggia and his sister, Sabina, created the Oreggia Family Foundation. Oreggia grew up on the family dairy outside Gonzales, and later, as a produce grower, he greatly expanded the family’s operations. Oreggia did not have the chance to attend college, but he developed a long relationship with Cal Poly, periodically hosting groups of students for field lessons, according to Taylor and Denny Bertelsman, another foundation trustee.

Before his death, Oreggia took a keen interest in the creamery and its dairy operations, donating $425,000 to the college to support hiring a full-time creamery manager and to purchase commercial-grade equipment for the ice cream lab. A subsequent student-led tour through the creamery during Open House so impressed Oreggia that he decided to set up a foundation to benefit the college.

The Oreggia Family Foundation supports the development of agriculture facilities and programs at the university. Foundation donations so far include $45,000 per year for five years for enology; $68,000 toward the creamery; $24,000 for discretionary projects; and $337,000 to purchase new equipment for a variety of activities. Oreggia funds paid for new equipment in the beef center and for a state-of-the-art retort, a key piece of commercial food-processing equipment, for the Food Sciences and Nutrition department.

“For students the learning really is in the doing,” said food science Professor Hany Khalil. “The Oreggia retort will open the door for them to a deeper understanding of food processing techniques.”
Some call it "Andy's 16-Million-Dollar-Story." It's a true tale about four facilities under construction to expand and improve animal science instruction at Cal Poly and the man who is charged with finding the money to pay for them.

Animal Science Department Head Andy Thulin is looking for $8 million in private donations to add to $8 million from the state to build the new beef, meat-processing and animal nutrition centers and expand the cattle evaluation facility. Cal Poly relocated the aging facilities to make room for new student housing.

"We saw a unique opportunity and decided to go for it," Thulin said. "We are now seeking partnerships with alumni, parents and industry supporters to build centers where our students will learn to apply scientific principles and use the latest technology. These facilities are vital to our learn-by-doing philosophy."

John and Gay Lau, owners of the family-operated Yosemite Meat Company in Modesto, have donated $1 million to build the Meat Processing Center to be located near the Poultry Unit. Their sons are both agribusiness alums; Michael graduated in 1999 and Steven in 2005.

"John Lau and his family truly believe in developing young people to become industry leaders," said Thulin. "With their support and the support of others, our meat-processing and food-safety programs will be among the best in the country."

Plans for producing ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook foods are especially exciting to Thulin. "That is where the meat industry is going. Convenience, portion control and flavor are important to creating a pleasurable dining experience."

The nearby Animal Nutrition Center is under construction this fall, replacing the 60-year-old feed mill. It will provide hands-on learning for feed manufacturing, using industrial-grade equipment like larger commercial feed plants use. Mass production capability will be 10 tons per hour. It will provide all the food for university livestock and will manufacture specialty diets for animal research.

The state contributed $2 million for this facility, and industry supporters have contributed state-of-the-art equipment and more than $1 million.

Construction of the Beef Center at the Escuela Ranch is about 85-percent complete. "The new center will give us some much-needed elbow room for programs like embryo transfer and bull testing," said Thulin.

To find out more about the animal science projects, go to http://www.animalscience.calpoly.edu, or contact Thulin at (805) 756-2419 or athulin@calpoly.edu.
The bull test is part of the university’s new Beef Center located on 2,200 acres south of campus. Beef programs include heifer development, embryo transfer, commercial cow-calf operations and the purebred Angus herd.

Cal Poly is also testing radio frequency identification on the bulls, fitting them with tags that can be scanned to identify each animal and trace its history. “This is state-of-the-art and absolutely critical because of health concerns,” Hall said. Radio frequency ID tags will be required by the USDA in 2009.

Technology aside, it is really the animals that drew Jalisca Fry into the beef program. “Learning how to work with large animals is hard,” she said. “You have to know their blind zones and how to make them move. Out here, I get a real sense of accomplishing something. It feels good.”

The efficient design of the new facility let the students move the rambunctious animals safely and in rapid succession. “With the double alleyway, the animals go through a lot smoother,” said Mike Hall, Cal Poly’s beef cattle specialist and supervisor of the bull test facility. “The emphasis here is on low stress.”

Planning for the facility, which has a large barn and a labyrinth of silver and red portable pens, began about six years ago, Hall said. “We broke ground last January, and then we had to deal with the late rains. We started building the pens in late May.”

The animals are kept on fenced hillsides, with water provided at the top of the hill and food at the bottom to encourage them to exercise. “It’s a very nice set-up,” Hall said.
For some high school students from the Salinas Valley, Cal Poly was the first place to find that learning can be fun.

Mostly children of fieldworkers at the Tanimura & Antle produce company, the 20 high school students – 10 boys, 10 girls – came to campus for two learning-filled days in early August as part of the produce company's "Welcome to Our World" summer camp.

The company has sponsored a free summer camp for the past three years, introducing students to computer software programs, Internet research, business attire and etiquette, and career and higher-education options.

Though not an alumna, Tanimura & Antle Community Affairs Director Cheryl Ward-Kaiser had her mind set on Cal Poly, "Three-quarters of the people we hire come from Cal Poly, and I love the high-tech emphasis of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences," she said.

Ward-Kaiser worked with college-advising resource specialist Bradley Kyker, who recruited professors Dan Peterson, Arlene Grant-Holcomb, Ben Burgoa and Ken Scott to set up on-campus lessons on animal science, food science, bioresource and ag engineering, and agribusiness. The high school students and their chaperones stayed overnight in Yosemite Hall.

In their biotechnology lab class with Peterson, for example, students learned about cell mutation and how cells act differently in the solutions surrounding them. They mixed different solutions, extracted samples with pipettes and studied them under microscopes – just like Cal Poly students.

Grant-Holcomb took the students into the Cal Poly Chocolates enterprise project production area. She gave them an overview of nutrition, including how to decipher nutrition labeling on packages, and talked about food safety and food processing. Then the students dipped graham crackers and pretzels in chocolate – making two Cal Poly Chocolate specialties. The high-schoolers got to taste their creations the next day.

Burgoa gave a lesson on water delivery systems, aqueducts and water engineering at the Cal Poly water treatment plant, as well as a lesson on the sustainable water system for the campus and its farms. Scott represented the Agribusiness department and described careers available to ag grads.

For the students, the two days were eye-opening. "The one thing I kept hearing from the kids was 'I never knew you could have fun and still learn!'" said Ward-Kaiser. "They were so excited. That hands-on teaching in science is exactly how teaching is supposed to be."

Kyker said the two-day camp gave the college a chance to partner with longtime supporters Tanimura & Antle and to reach out to a diverse population of high school students. "They were potential first-generation college students. For us, it was a chance to do some recruiting – and a real treat."
PITCHING IN TO SAVE PINES AND OAKS

BY KATIE HOFSTETTER

After years of examining diseases that are killing California’s native tree populations, a pair of natural resources management professors decided to take their research across the globe.

In years past, Doug Piirto and Wally Mark worked with graduate and undergraduate students to study the effects of pitch canker on Monterey pines at the Ano Nuevo stand. The forest, which extends into Cal Poly’s Swanton Pacific Ranch, is one of only three native mainland populations of Monterey pine. Mark was based at Swanton Pacific Ranch, while Piirto continued his research in San Luis Obispo.

Through the study, Piirto began working with Finnish forest biometrician Sauli Valkonen, who urged Piirto to reconnect with his own Finnish roots. As a result, Piirto helped create an exchange program between Cal Poly and Finland’s Seinajoki Institute, and he is the first Cal Poly faculty member to participate.

It is a perfect fit for both universities and for Piirto. Forestry plays a major role in Finland’s economy, and Piirto teaches introduction to forest ecosystem management, forest harvesting and utilization, among other classes, at Cal Poly. He is currently continuing his research in Finland during fall quarter.

His counterpart has taken his research abroad, as well. Mark is spending fall quarter in Australia and New Zealand studying populations of Douglas firs, redwoods and pines.

Before traveling to the South Pacific, Mark was studying sudden oak death, which has killed over a million native oak and tanoak trees throughout California and Oregon. Through aerial mapping and stream sampling, it was determined that sudden oak death is traveling south, and Mark focused on preventing the spread of the pathogen into San Luis Obispo County.

For information about project research by Mark and Piirto, visit the Web site http://ari.calstate.edu/research/index.aspx?ProjectCampus=San%20Luis.
Agriview

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