The Director's Report, January 2008

School of Natural Resources
From Earth to Sky and Everything in Between

Introduction
by Donald A. Wilhite

I want to welcome all faculty, staff, and students back to campus for the beginning of a new year and a new semester. I trust each and every one of you had a superb Holiday Break. What I most enjoy about the Holiday Break is the change from my daily routine. It's also a time to catch up on work, watch some new movies, and just relax and enjoy some bowl games. Hopefully, the Huskers will be participating next year. Go Big Red!

Evaluation Season is Here!

My report for December will be short since it was an abbreviated month of work. Most of my time was spent completing evaluations of School of Natural Resources (SNR) faculty. I will soon be scheduling time to meet individually with faculty to discuss evaluations and goals for 2008. Later this year I will be working with the Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) administration to organize a workshop on writing goals

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January 14-18
Climate Change Conference,
National Council for Science and Environment, Washington, D.C.

January 20-22
Annual Meeting of the American
and objectives. This workshop will be scheduled in advance of the eARFA season. I feel most faculty will benefit from this activity and it will certainly help me in my evaluation of goals, accomplishments and impacts in the future. I have discussed the workshop concept with Harlan Vice Chancellor (VC) John Owens, Associate VC Susan Fritz, and the IANR Unit Heads, and there is unanimous support for the idea. As plans are developed, I will be providing more information to SNR faculty.

This week I also received information on the evaluation process for Office/Service and Managerial/Professional staff. You will be receiving that information very soon, if you haven’t already. The deadline for the completion of evaluations for O/S and M/P staff is March 15. As an employee, whether you are a faculty or staff member, the evaluation process is the time for you to reflect on your accomplishments for the past year and to envision your goals for the year ahead. I encourage O/S and M/P staff to discuss goals with your supervisors and to set goals that are both challenging and realistic. Let the fun begin!

**IICA Collaboration Meeting Dates Set**

Last month I reported on arrangements being made to host staff from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), based in Costa Rica. The date for the visit of Dr. Jim French and several of his colleagues has been set for February 14-15. In the next few weeks you will be receiving an announcement of a seminar to be given by Dr. French on the programs of IICA and possible collaborative opportunities for SNR faculty, staff, and students. This seminar will be held at 9 a.m. on February 14 in the Hardin Hall auditorium. Faculty, staff, and students from other departments will also be invited to attend this important seminar. The IICA team is especially interested in collaborative programs in the areas of natural resources, rural agri-business, biofuels, and biotechnology. Following the seminar, SNR faculty will be invited to an informal session to discuss SNR programs and centers. I will be in contact soon with
a few SNR faculty to present programmatic overviews of their research, teaching, and outreach areas. All SNR faculty are invited to attend this session and participate in the discussions. Arrangements for the IICA team are being coordinated by Associate VC Susan Fritz. This is an exciting opportunity for SNR and IANR.

External Funding Achievements

I am pleased to report that total grant funds awarded to SNR faculty and staff during 2007 surpassed the $8 million mark -- $8,213,358 to be exact -- but who’s counting? Congratulations to all! During December, proposals totaling nearly $670,000 were submitted for funding and grants awarded totaled $421,268. Thanks to all for your hard work and dedication to the success of SNR. I have very high expectations for 2008.

SNR 5-year Review Dates Finalized (almost)

The date for SNR’s next 5-year review has been set for September 2009, although the exact dates are still pending. My first preference is September 22-24 (Tuesday through Thursday), but these dates are awaiting confirmation from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Dr. Louie Tupas, National Program Leader, Global Change and Climate, USDA/CSREES, will serve as the program team leader for the review. I have already requested that faculty submit the names of other potential review team members to me in advance of my meeting with Louie on January 15 while I am in Washington D.C. attending the Climate Change Conference. Our goal is to identify and invite program review team members well in advance in order to ensure their participation. Because of the diversity of program areas represented in SNR, it is critically important that we select individuals with a broad interdisciplinary
perspective who can properly evaluate our programs. If you have not yet submitted the names of potential candidates, please do so by January 11.

I wish all SNR faculty, staff, and students a very Happy New Year. I hope you all have a prosperous and successful 2008.

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