The Director's Report, February 2011

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

Brr! January was the 10th snowiest month on record for Lincoln. Fortunately, we missed the early season snows that occurred during the 2009-2010 winter season. I was hoping to be spared any additional snowfall for a few more weeks but this week we have experienced our first real blizzard of the season. Spring can't get here soon enough!

Follow-up to Meeting with Collaborating Agencies and Stakeholders

In January, I reported on the outcomes of a December 6 meeting that I organized with our partners in state and federal agencies and some non-governmental organizations. One of the principal outcomes was a desire by these agencies to have a follow-up meeting with SNR administration and key faculty to discuss ways to expand our areas of collaboration and, thus, strengthen our partnerships. Since early this year, Tala Awada, SNR’s Associate Director, has been pursuing a meeting schedule with these partners. It is hoped that by the end of this semester or by early summer we will have had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with each of these partners.

Tala and I have started setting up one-on-one meetings with these organizations. Our first meeting was held with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) directors on January 27 and was attended by more than 20 faculty, including members of SNR’s administrative team, faculty area leaders and several SNR/UNL faculty identified by TNC. Issues pertaining to undergraduate and graduate student internships, personnel training, and research collaborations were discussed. TNC offers numerous paid and unpaid internships and offers housing for interns. TNC identified key areas of research that are important to the agency, including but not limited to biological conservation, human dimensions, natural resource economics, policy and water. The meeting with TNC was productive and we look forward to strengthening our collaborations with this organization.

Other meetings are scheduled to be held in February and March. Tala will be in touch with faculty for inclusion in these meetings.

As part of this effort to increase our collaborations with other key partners, Tala is planning our fall seminar series in a way that will expand our engagement with key faculty from the UNL campus. More details on this seminar series will be provided in next month’s report.

Building a Partnership with the Institut de Ciencia i Tegnologia Ambientals, Autonomous University of Barcelona

In early October 2010, I attended a workshop for the CapHaz Project (i.e., Capacity Building for Natural Hazards) in Barcelona, Spain. This project is funded by the European Union. The host for the workshop was Dr. Louis Lemkow, director of the Institut de Ciencia i Tegnologia Ambientals (ICTA) at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. (In English, that’s the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology.) The mission of ICTA is to “promote and carry out research, and to train researchers who can contribute to our understanding of the environment and meet the challenges posed by the interaction between society and the environment.” ICTA’s goal is to “become one of the leading European centers in environmental studies, distinguished by its international focus, multi-disciplinary base and cooperation between the various stakeholders within the framework of sustainability based on social civil responsibility.” Does this mission and goal sound a bit
familiar? Given this similarity, Louis and I discussed opportunities to build collaborative linkages between SNR and ICTA.

The emphasis areas for ICTA are:

- Global and climate change. Marine geoscience. Oceanography.
- Industrial ecology. Life cycle assessment, material flow analysis, and ecodesign.
- Energy, economics, society and the environment.
- Water management: social, territorial, technological and environmental considerations.
- Monitoring the environment. Pollution. Aerobiology.

In early March, I will be returning to Barcelona to present an invited talk at a drought workshop organized by the World Climate Research Program of the World Meteorological Organization. While in Barcelona, I will visit ICTA to present a seminar and discuss opportunities for collaboration between SNR and ICTA with Louis and his faculty. On my return to Lincoln, I plan to build on these conversations by organizing a visit to Barcelona for several SNR faculty for more formal talks, and I expect several ICTA faculty to visit UNL. Our ultimate goal is to establish a Memorandum of Agreement between our two institutions in the areas of research, teaching, and outreach that reflects the commonalities between our programs. More details will follow in March or early April on this exciting opportunity.

**Water for Food Institute and Conference Update**

Plans for the next Water for Food Conference are now being finalized. The conference will be held May 1-4, 2011, at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel. The conference planning committee met in January to review the program status and to discuss final plans for plenary session speakers and technical sessions. Please stay tuned for more information on the conference program and registration details. A new website has been developed for the Water for Food Institute (waterforfood.nebraska.edu). Registration for the conference will be available beginning this month at this website with reduced rates for university faculty.

The proceedings of the 2010 Water for Food Conference are now available online at the website given above. Previous proceedings are also available online.

The search for the founding executive director of the Water for Food Institute is proceeding with the help of a search firm. The search committee is meeting regularly. The goal is to have the founding director selected in time for the May conference.

**Strategic Partnership Innovation Team**

If you attended the presentation by Vice Chancellor Ronnie Green on January 13, 2011, you are aware that 11 committees have been created to address various issues related to the *Innovating Agriculture and Natural Resources to 2025* initiative. These committees are:

- Evaluation Reformation
- Acquiring, Retaining, and Developing Human Talent
- Business and Financial Process Reengineering
• Entrepreneurship Education and Integration
• Transforming Food and Natural Resource Literacy
• Multidisciplinary Innovation and Implementation
• Strategic Partnership Development
• Capturing and Measuring Return on Investment
• Renewing Focus on the Future of Rural Nebraska
• Creating and Fostering a Dynamic IANR Community

The full text of the document outlining this initiative is available on the IANR website (ianr.unl.edu) and includes a full description of these committees and their membership.

I am a member of the Strategic Partnership Development team and we have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss the various types of partnerships that currently exist on campus with the private sector, other universities, federal and state agencies, international organizations, and foreign governments. The next stage in our discussion process will be to engage faculty in our discussion to further identify the nature of existing partnerships and constraints to developing further partnerships.

**NU Foundation Campaign**

Ann Bruntz, Development Officer for the NU Foundation and liaison to IANR, and Jill Brown, newly appointed IANR Director of External Relations, attended our faculty meeting on January 25 to discuss the current NU campaign and how SNR faculty and staff can be engaged in this fundraising process. The goal for this campaign, which runs through 2014, is $1.2 billion. Currently, more than $800 million has been raised in support of university programs.

I have been serving as an advisor to the Resource Stewardship Committee for the campaign and the next step in this committee’s efforts at fund raising will be the preparation of a brochure that describes the exciting opportunities available to donors to support the broad area of natural resources in Nebraska. It is critically important for SNR faculty to be engaged in the brochure development process. Some of our faculty will be contacted as this brochure moves forward to capture the excitement associated with various natural resources program areas.

**Proposals Submitted and Grants Awarded**

Faculty and staff were awarded grants totaling $706,569 in January. Congratulations to Dave Gosselin, Bob Oglesby, Mary Spalding, Ken Dewey, Kevin Pope, Sunil Narumalani, Mark Svoboda, Brian Wardlow, Steve Thomas, Martha Shulski, Craig Allen, and Dan Snow.

Grant proposals submitted in December totaled $3,559,107. Good luck to Bruce Dvorak, Jesse Korus, Steve Thomas, Rusty Low, Dave Gosselin, Mark Burbach, Cody Knutson, Matt Joeckel, Tsegaye Tadesse, Brian Wardlow, Mark Svoboda, Scott Hygnstrom, Gene Guan, and Diego Riveros with the review process.