The Director's Report, April 2008

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

Introduction

The question on most everyone's mind these days is, where is spring? I have yet to find anyone hoping for a continuation of cold temperatures and wishing for one or two more snowstorms. Well, maybe the exception is Ken Dewey. He could add a few more photos of an April snowstorm to his website.

Central Plains Severe Weather Symposium and Weatherfest

Speaking of Ken Dewey, I would like to compliment him and the many other SNR staff, faculty, and graduate students who helped to make the Central Plains Severe Weather Symposium and Weatherfest such a great success on March 29. There are so many people to single out that I will not even try. I'm sure that Ken could provide a long list, if asked. I would just like to say thanks to Ken, Jacki, Kelly, Bev, Deanna, Christy, and the scores of others who helped in so many ways. The original estimate was that we would have between 3,500 and 4,000 people attending this one-day, free event. My guess is that we equaled or exceeded this attendance. This year the event was also expanded to include other departments in IANR. We

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See SNR April 2008 calendar.

Director's Upcoming Travel

http://snr.unl.edu/aboutus/what/directornews/april2008.html
appreciate the participation of seven IANR departments. What a great recruiting opportunity for IANR. Demonstrating what we do in IANR and SNR—bringing it to life for elementary and secondary students and their parents—this is what it is all about. These are our future students!

**Student/Faculty/Staff Field Trip to NCAR**

This past month we also launched what I hope will become an annual event in SNR—the spring break field trip. This year, in partnership with the Department of Geosciences, we took a group of graduate students, staff, and faculty to the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. We boarded a bus at Hardin Hall on March 16 and headed west. We spent March 17-18 at NCAR listening to interesting presentations and having the opportunity to interact with some outstanding scientists on issues related to climate, meteorology, water, economics, and societal impacts. For the full story (with photos) visit the SNR website (snr.unl.edu). Thanks to all of you who contributed your photos of the event. Thanks also to Jacki who made many of the arrangements for this field trip. I think everyone had a great time. By the way, I am looking for suggestions for next year’s trip.

**UNL Climate Change Initiative**

I spent considerable time this past month at the request of Dean Gary Cunningham preparing a proposal for a climate change initiative for UNL. This is part of an internal competition for Program of Excellence funding. These funds are reallocated from within the NU System to stimulate new initiatives. The climate change initiative has made it through the first round of competition and I was invited to prepare another proposal for a planning grant which will lead to a full proposal for submission at a later date. The proposal was submitted to Barbara Couture, Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, on March 31. I was also

April 10-14
Nanjing, China, for a workshop on US/China Digital Government Collaboration: Building a Collaboratory in Hydroinformatics and Water Policy.

May 19-22
North Platte and surrounding areas, to participate in the UNL/USGS Workshop, Sustainability in a Time of Climate Change: Developing an Intensive Research Framework for the Great Plains.

June 10-15
Zaragoza, Spain, to participate in an International Conference on Drought Management: Scientific and Technological Innovations and Water Expo.

July 8-11
Chicago, for an American Council on Education workshop on Leading, Managing, Supporting, and Navigating Change for department chairs and deans.
invited to present the concept of this climate change initiative to Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, an important IANR stakeholder group. It was exciting to engage these key agricultural and natural resources leaders in a conversation about climate change, why it is important to Nebraska, and how the University of Nebraska-Lincoln can provide the leadership to address this issue in a comprehensive manner for our students and citizens.

As a climate scientist, climate change is of major interest to me professionally and personally for several reasons. First, climate change is a serious and complex environmental issue that requires immediate attention by governments, the private sector, and individuals. As you all know, the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Mr. Al Gore in recognition of their collective contributions towards building knowledge, scientific consensus, and awareness of this issue as a threat to global peace, the environment, and national economies. Second, from the perspective of SNR, climate change represents an issue that all disciplines in the School can contribute to in terms of better understanding the science, the potential impacts, adaptation and mitigation strategies, and its policy implications. We can make a difference! The emerging partnership on climate change with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is an example of how SNR can be a major player in this issue. The first workshop on this developing partnership was held at Hardin Hall last October and sponsored by Prem Paul, UNL Vice-Chancellor for Research and Economic Development. A follow-up workshop is scheduled for May 19-22 and several SNR faculty are engaged in planning this event. Dr. Paul is expecting 25 participants to be here from USGS. SNR faculty are encouraged to participate as well. Space is limited so sign up early by going to the Office of Research’s Workshop page: http://research.unl.edu/events/climatechange2008/workshop/

Faculty Promotions and Tenure: Special Recognition Celebration
Congratulations to five SNR faculty who have successfully made it through the promotion and tenure process. Mark Burbach will be promoted from Assistant to Associate Geoscientist. Mark Pegg will be promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. Ed Harvey, Dave Wedin, and Scott Josiah will all be promoted to Full Professor. Please join me in a celebration of their achievements at a special reception on April 17. This is a significant professional achievement for each of these individuals and they deserve “special” treatment—at least for one day—and then it’s back to work.

For your information, the celebration of all UNL faculty being promoted and tenured this year will be held in Hardin Hall the evening of April 29 in the first floor lobby. This is a great opportunity for SNR to show off its programs and facilities.

**Faculty Positions: Setting our Priorities for SNR**

SNR faculty were given the task at the March faculty meeting to meet within their program areas to begin the process of identifying the highest priority faculty positions for SNR given an improved budget climate for IANR. The top one or two faculty positions in each program area will be submitted to me by April 20 and these positions will be discussed at our April 29 faculty meeting. I asked faculty to submit their top priorities with proper justification. I am most interested in faculty positions that integrate SNR disciplines and contain a significant teaching component, as well as a proper balance with research and/or extension. My goal is to work with SNR faculty to identify a short list of three positions as our top priorities by early summer. A longer list of priority faculty positions will be developed as part of our five-year review and planning process.

**Status of Improvements to Hardin Hall Facilities**
I have met with Emily Casper of Landscape Services and we are finalizing plans for benches and picnic tables for Hardin Hall. We will also be adding more bike racks outside of the southwest door of the building under the canopy. Unfortunately, these benches, picnic tables, and bike racks will not be available as soon as I had hoped. They will be ordered in the next couple of weeks and will likely be delivered in mid to late May. Landscape Services will get them installed at the earliest possible date.

Jim Hines has been working on the process of installing large TV monitors for Hardin Hall in the lobby areas on the first and second floors and in the north wing lobby. I have scheduled a meeting of key staff to begin discussing content for these monitors and who will be responsible for maintaining the content.

We also have funds for the purchase of new chairs for the auditorium. We are now finalizing our “chair of choice.” These will be ordered soon and should be delivered by mid-summer. We have also improved the lighting and sound quality in the auditorium. Thanks again to Jim, Gregg, and Ron for helping with this process.

Paying Tribute to SNR Directors

We will soon be hanging portraits of all SNR Directors in the vestibule area outside of the auditorium. It has taken some time to collect portraits of all past SNR Directors. This presentation will pay tribute to our past leaders and their contributions to the successes of SNR. Look for these pictures to be mounted in the near future. Thanks to Dee Ebbeka for her help with this process and for all that she does in support of SNR activities.

April Travel Plans

I will be travelling to Nanjing, China, on Thursday, April 10 to participate in a workshop on US/China Collaboration in
Hydroinformatics and Water Policy, sponsored by the National Science Foundation. The purpose of my participation is directed at the recruitment of Ph.D. students at Hohai University for SNR and UNL. If we are successful, these students will be fully supported by the Chinese government. It is a short trip, in terms of time away—I'll be back in the office on Tuesday, April 15.

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