June has seen the near culmination of a year-long, issue-based strategic planning process for SNR, in preparation for our five-year review, scheduled for September 21-25, 2009. We are now in the home stretch. I am pleased with the process and the participation of faculty, staff, and students. I am looking forward to the review and its outcomes.

**Status of Five-Year Review Document**

We are in the final stages of drawing together the document for our five-year review. The five issue chapters along with the traditional unit background chapters are nearly finished. We are now working on the many appendices that will be included in the report and finalizing some of the data components on grants, faculty and staff FTE, and other items. The editing process is underway. Our goal is to complete the document by July 17 and deliver it to IANR and the College of Arts and Sciences administration for comments. After that, the report will be sent to members of the review team. I estimate the main components of the report will be approximately 130 pages, plus the appendices, which will be included on a CD.

I have scheduled a meeting with SNR’s External Advisory Team in July to get their input on the document and expected outcomes of the planning and review process.

**Outcomes of My Week in Geneva, Switzerland: Work, Work, Work!**

The principal purpose of my trip to Geneva in June was to attend and chair the third meeting of the Forum on the Socio-Economic Applications and Benefits of Weather, Climate, and Water Services.
The Forum is essentially a task force established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), under the leadership of their Public Weather Services Program, to assist the national meteorological and hydrological services around the world in interactions with stakeholders and clientele on the services they provide. In essence, the focus of the Forum is to develop and improve opportunities for service delivery to users. I have chaired this Forum (or task force) since it was formed in 2006. Its membership includes broad international representation from the scientific and user communities.

Don Wilhite, front and center, along with Haleh Kootval, to his right, the director of the Public Weather Services Program at WMO, and other members of the WMO Forum on the Socio-Economic Applications and Benefits of Weather, Climate, and Water Services

The outcomes from the meeting included a new plan of action, agreement on a number of pilot studies, and continued efforts to promote improved service delivery by national meteorological and hydrological services.
The Jet d'Eau (Water Jet) is an iconic landmark in Geneva, Switzerland. According to official information, the average height of the jet is 140 meters; it shoots out at 200 kilometers (130 miles) per hour, and it uses 500 liters per second.

The headquarters of the World Meteorological Organization opened in 1999 in Geneva with glass windows and glass walls throughout. It’s designed to minimize the need for electric lighting, automatically adjusting light levels based on motion detectors and on light coming in from outside.

**SNR and NDMC to Host a United Nations Workshop in December**

During my trip to Geneva, I met with M.K.V. “Shiv” Sivakumar, Acting Director, Climate Prediction and Adaption Branch, and Director, Agricultural Meteorology Division, regarding the need for an international workshop to focus on drought monitoring and early warning. Shiv and I have worked together on a wide range of drought and climate-related activities for many years and the concept of a workshop on drought monitoring has been discussed extensively at a number of workshops that he has organized. Recently, the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has expressed an interest in co-sponsoring a workshop focused on this issue and preferred the meeting to be held in the U.S. I offered to host this meeting at UNL and for SNR to co-sponsor the event, along with the National Drought Mitigation Center. They accepted.

As a result, an Inter-regional Workshop on Indices and Early Warning for Drought will be held in...
Lincoln, December 8-11, 2009. Sponsors for the event include WMO, UNCCD, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, SNR, and the NDMC. We expect approximately 50 people to attend, including 35 international scientists, three each from WMO’s six regions, plus other representatives from national and international organizations. Participation from U.S. agencies will be principally from USDA, NOAA, and the U.S. Geological Survey. More details on this important international workshop later. This event will certainly bring considerable visibility to UNL, SNR, and the NDMC.

Engagements with the International Science and Policy Community

As you may recall, SNR has twice hosted delegations from Spain to discuss drought and water management. In May, at the invitation of the Spanish Ministry of Environment and the General Director for Water, Marta Moren, I participated in a meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development at the United Nations in New York. Our session focused on the issue of water scarcity and drought.

Spain is providing critical leadership in Europe in the development of a strategy at national and international levels to help water managers move from a crisis management approach, focused on reactions to immediate droughts, to a proactive, mitigation approach. Spain is working with other countries and the European Commission to organize an International Conference on Droughts and Water Scarcity: The Way Towards Adaptation to Climate Change. The aim is to identify successful experiences as a basis for this new approach on water scarcity and drought. Ms. Moren invited me to become a member of the Technical Committee to present the outcomes and recommendations of this international conference to the European Council and to supervise the contents and agenda of the conference. The conference will be held in Madrid, Spain, February 11-12, 2010.

Another international event, the Second International Conference on Drought Management, is being organized by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute in Zaragoza, Spain, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of Turkey, the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas in Aleppo, Syria, the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization, and the Research Center for the Management of Agricultural and Environmental Risks at the Polytechnic University of Madrid. I have accepted an invitation to be a member of the Scientific Committee. The meeting will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, March 4-6, 2010.

NDMC Scientists to Conduct a Training Workshop in Mali
The WMO has contacted me with regards to their interest in organizing a training workshop in Mali, West Africa, on drought monitoring and early warning. This training exercise is the result of a project that I help to develop with WMO in 2006, Assessment of Natural Disaster Impacts on Agriculture. The Italian government has recently provided support to WMO for this project that will focus on both floods and drought. This training workshop is tentatively scheduled for mid-September 2009 and it is expected that Mike Hayes, Mark Svoboda, Brian Wardlow, and Brian Fuchs, all from the National Drought Mitigation Center, will travel to Banako to conduct the workshop. The goal of the workshop is to transfer the methodology used by the NDMC, NOAA, and the USDA in the preparation of the U.S. Drought Monitor map to Mali and surrounding countries.

**SNR to Organize a Summer Institute on Climate Change, 2010**

For the past two years, the concept of a summer institute on climate change has been discussed. This concept is now becoming a reality thanks to the efforts of Shashi Verma, other members of SNR’s Applied Climate Science and Applied Ecology faculty, and faculty members in the departments of Agricultural Economics, Agronomy and Horticulture, and Animal Science. Details are still being developed on this one-week short course that will be held in Hardin Hall next summer. The principal audience for this institute will be extension educators, water and land managers, especially those associated with Nebraska’s Natural Resource Districts, and state and federal agency representatives.

**More Improvements to SNR Facilities**

I recently met with Barry Shull, IANR Facilities Manager, and Chad Lea and Paul Couture, from UNL Facilities Management and Planning, to discuss updates to the auditorium in Hardin Hall. As many of you know, modifications and improvements to the auditorium during the renovation process were limited in scope due to lack of funds. Given the high volume and diversity of auditorium usage from on-campus groups, it is time to re-evaluate the quality of this facility. More details will follow as we investigate a wide range of options for this critical campus resource.

**Kudos for Faculty and Students**

Sunil Narumalani has been selected by Dean David Manderscheid for the position of Associate Dean for Academic Programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. Sunil's position in the College is a 75 percent appointment; his remaining appointment in SNR will be directed towards advising graduate students and
working on grants and contracts. His teaching commitments in SNR and the Geography program will be covered by other SNR faculty and graduate students. Sunil has also provided leadership for the Geography program for the past year when the program joined the School. Congratulations, Sunil. I wish you great success in your new appointment.

Several SNR faculty were recipients of the UNL Parents Association Recognition Awards. Congratulations to Steve Comfort, Dennis Ferraro, David Wedin, and Larkin Powell. Sara Yendra, Environmental Studies, was also recognized for her efforts.

Ramesh Singh is the recipient of the Mendenhall Award from the USGS. Ramesh graduated in May 2009 with his Ph.D. in Natural Resources Sciences. He was advised by Ayse Irmak. Ramesh’s proposal to USGS, entitled “Remote Sensing of Evapotranspiration, Drought, and Ecosystems in the United States Using Integrated Thermal and Reflected Wavelengths Production,” has been selected to receive two years of support in collaboration with the Center for Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS). Details are still being worked out but Ramesh will likely be conducting his research at EROS, with an appointment in SNR. He is currently working for Ayse as a post-doctoral research associate. He will continue with this appointment through September.
Andrew Furman was awarded first prize for seniors for the best poster presentation at the UNL Undergraduate Research Fair. Andrew is advised by Kevin Pope.

Ashley Barnett was recognized by the Geography Program and the UNL Graduate Student Association (UNLGSA) for her service to GSA this past year as the Diversity Committee Chairperson. Ashley is a Ph.D. student in Geography. She will be continuing in the role for the coming academic year.

Grants Awarded and Proposals Submitted

SNR faculty and staff were awarded grants totaling $553,690 in June. Congratulations to Don Rundquist, Mark Kuzila, Jim Brandle, Larkin Powell, Ken Hubbard, Paul Hanson, Aris Holz, Tadd Barrow, and Matt Joeckel. The total for grants awarded in 2009 (January through June) is $5,953,572.

Faculty and staff submitting proposals in June included Ayse Irmak, Don Rundquist, Kyle Hoagland, Mark Svoboda, Aris Holz, Tadd Barrow, Scott Hygnstrom, Ken Hubbard, Steve Thomas, Susan Lackey, Paul Hanson, Mark Pegg, Matt Joeckel, and Annabel Major. The total amount for grant proposals submitted in June was $2,322,942. The total for grant proposals submitted by SNR faculty from January through June 2009 was $11,322,942.