The fall semester is underway. This time of year we’re always glad to welcome both returning and new students. The School of Natural Resources now has 149 graduate students. This growth is a reflection of our faculty’s huge success in receiving external funding for their research, teaching, and outreach. I expect these numbers to keep growing over the next couple of years as large projects ramp up.

SNR has also experienced significant growth in faculty and staff. We’re now up to 176. It’s hard to keep track of all of the new faces, but we appreciate all of the new employees who add value to our research, teaching, and outreach programs.

Availability of SNR’s Comprehensive Review Document

SNR’s document for the comprehensive unit review scheduled for September 21-25, 2009, was completed and distributed to members of the review team, UNL administration, and members of the SNR administrative team last week. SNR faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to visit the SNR website to download an electronic copy of the review document. On the website you will find the executive summary, the main document, accompanying appendices, and the review schedule. You will also find two videos that we had prepared especially for the review. One of these videos presents an overview of SNR programs. The other video is focused on SNR’s on-campus and off-campus facilities. I strongly encourage all SNR employees to download a copy of the review document and read it thoroughly. You may think that you know SNR, but I believe you will all learn a great deal about the history, current status, and, most importantly, the future vision that we have for the School, as well as the roadmap for achieving our vision.
Faculty, staff, and students received the final review schedule from me last week via email. You are encouraged to attend review sessions that are organized around our five current and emerging issues. I also expect to see you at the opening and closing sessions. It is also important for staff to attend the session on Thursday afternoon with the review team. Graduate and undergraduate students also have sessions with the review team on Thursday. Let’s have a great turnout for these sessions.

These periodic reviews are our opportunity to reflect on the past and plan for the future. Our issue-based strategic planning process has provided many opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to come together in a collaborative process. I believe the process has provided the opportunity to increase integration across the unit and develop an even stronger sense of community. I applaud all who participated in this process. Your contributions will lead to an even stronger and more successful unit.

SNR’s Fall “Pep Rally”

Thanks to the more than 125 faculty, staff and students who attended the Pep Rally on August 20. Thanks also to all of those who provided updates on the wide range of activities planned for the fall and spring semesters. The many short presentations were a reminder of the wide array of programs that are underway in SNR. I trust that you were as impressed as I was with the diversity of ongoing and planned activities for the unit this academic year. Given the size of the unit, it is easy to become overly focused on our own program or project without recognizing the many other exciting activities that are going on around us. This event gave us the opportunity to share this excitement with one another.

We will continue to have SNR-wide events each fall and spring to help keep all of us informed of our accomplishments and plans for the future.

SNR’s Participation in Monthly Extension Update

Last winter I volunteered SNR to host one of the monthly update sessions for Cooperative Extension. Several SNR faculty and staff participated in this webinar in August. The purpose of these monthly events is to better acquaint extension educators and others with exciting new programs underway in departments within IANR.

Thanks to Shashi Verma, Mark Svoboda, Annabel Major, and Cindy Larson-Miller for their
participation in last month’s event. Shashi discussed plans to offer a Summer Institute on Climate Change during the summer of 2010. Faculty from other faculty areas in SNR will also participate, as well as faculty from five IANR departments. The audience for this one-week institute will be extension educators, state and federal agency personnel, natural resource district employees, and science educators from K-12 schools in Nebraska. Mark discussed some of the web-based decision-support tools that the National Drought Mitigation Center has developed and their relevance to Extension personnel. Annabel presented information on the evolving Nebraska Master Naturalist Program, its purpose, and how extension personnel can become engaged in the program. This program is funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Cindy discussed evolving opportunities for distance education for extension educators in various science areas. These webinars are recorded and available to others via the UNL Extension website.

**SNR’s Fall Seminar Series**

I am working with Sunil Narumalani to finalize the schedule for our fall seminar series. The series this fall will be an abbreviated one, given the comprehensive review scheduled for this month. I am anticipating that seminars will only be scheduled in October and November. The final schedule will be released soon. We have lined up some outstanding speakers representing each of the prominent science issues which are the focus of our research, teaching, and outreach programs.

**International Science and Policy Initiatives**

A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) has been approved between the Instituto De Investigaciones Agropecuarias in Santiago, Chile, and UNL. This agreement is with the School of Natural Resources, the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC), and the High Plains Regional Climate Center. Other MoAs are pending with Spain, Vietnam, and Portugal. Discussions are underway to develop an MoA with the Republic of Korea through the efforts of Jae Ryu in the NDMC.

The International Conference on Food Security and Climate Change that I was invited to participate in during October 2009 has been postponed to February 2010 due to conflicts with other major international conferences. I still plan to attend the meeting, if my schedule permits.

**SNR Welcomes New Faculty and Faculty with Teaching as a member of the Scientific Organizing Committee and to meet with U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization officials on future program collaborations (Cairo).**

February 9-13, 2010

**Madrid, Spain**

To participate in the International Conference on Droughts and Water Scarcity (2010).
Appointments

The annual fall College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) faculty meeting was held on August 20 to welcome new faculty to the College and other faculty who have recently acquired teaching appointments. I had the pleasure of introducing five SNR faculty members.

- Martha Shulski joined SNR on August 1 in the area of applied climate science. Her appointment is 50 percent research, 30 percent extension, and 20 percent teaching. A portion of her research appointment is devoted to an administrative appointment as director of the High Plains Regional Climate Center.
- Qingfeng (Gene) Guan joined the SNR faculty on August 17 in the area of advanced GIS. His appointment is 50 percent research and 50 percent teaching. Gene has a joint appointment between IANR and the College of Arts and Sciences.
- Mark Burbach and Paul Hanson have both acquired teaching appointments in CASNR this fall.
- Russanne “Rusty” Low is a new Professor of Practice working with David Gosselin’s science education program.

Opportunities for SNR to Add New Faculty in Science Education

The NU Teach project funded through Program of Excellence funds from UNL will be interviewing three candidates in September for three faculty positions in science education. Two of these faculty may have faculty positions in SNR. Dr. Sharon Locke will be interviewing on August 31 and September 1. Sharon’s background is in geology and geosciences. We have been discussing the possibility of a joint appointment for Sharon in
SNR and Geosciences, if she is offered and accepts a position at UNL. The second candidate is Geary Don Crofford whose background is in biology and science education. There may be a possible joint appointment with the College of Education and Human Sciences. His interview is scheduled for September 10 and 11. Both candidates will be giving research and teaching seminars during their interviews.

**Extension Educator in Climate Variability and Change: Status**

This Extension Educator position for SNR has been advertised for several weeks. The search committee will now begin to review applications for the position. The successful candidate will have a great opportunity to enhance SNR’s outreach education program in climate change and variability. I look forward to the successful outcome of this search process.

**Building Sustainable Partnerships Forum: Next Steps**

October 30 has been selected as the date for the next Building Sustainable Partnerships Forum. The planning committee is currently lining up speakers for the meeting. Please hold this date on your calendar! Sponsors for the second forum will be SNR, the Mayor’s Environmental Task Force, and the Nebraska Rural Initiative. I expect the focus of this meeting to be more action oriented, with an emphasis on providing successful models for the university, the City of Lincoln, and the industrial sector.

**Wiegers-Maunder Scholarship Fund Established**

Bruce and Kathy Maunder have established a new scholarship fund for undergraduate students in SNR who are studying in the fields of fisheries and wildlife or related majors or majors in water or climate sciences. This scholarship is in honor of Howard Wiegers, a former faculty member in IANR and mentor of Bruce Maunder. The scholarship will be awarded each spring beginning in 2010 to junior or senior students. Thanks to Bruce and Kathy for investing in SNR students.

**Kudos to John Quinn**

John Quinn is the recipient of a 2009-2010 Widaman Trust
Distinguished Graduate Assistant award. I will attend a lunch honoring this year's recipients in early September. John is also a member of the comprehensive review committee. I greatly appreciate the contributions John has made and continues to make to SNR. Congratulations, John!

**Kudos to Mary Bomberger Brown**

Mary Bomberger Brown is the recipient of the 2009 Elliott Coues Award that recognizes extraordinary contributions to ornithological research. The award is presented by the American Ornithologists’ Union. Mary is the program coordinator of the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership in SNR. Congratulations, Mary.

**Grants Awarded and Proposals Submitted**

SNR faculty and staff were awarded grants totaling $1,435,423 in August. Congratulations to Don Rundquist, Ayse Irmak, Mike Hayes, Mark Svoboda, Brian Wardlow, Steve Hu, Craig Allen, Paul Hanson, Ken Hubbard, Bob Oglesby, Matt Joeckel, Cody Knutson, Song Feng, and Jesse Korus. The total for grants awarded in 2009 (January through August) is $8,641,690. As I mentioned at the Pep Rally, I am expecting external funding for SNR to exceed $14 million in 2009. Keep up the excellent work!

Faculty and staff submitting proposals in August included Tadd Barrow, Jim Merchant, Cody Knutson, Dave Gosselin, Mark Kuzila, Ayse Irmak, Anatoly Gitelson, Paul Hanson, Scott Hygnstrom, Ken Hubbard, Steve Hu, Mike Hayes, Cindy Larson-Miller, Jinheng You, Song Feng, Bob Oglesby, and Martha Shulski. The total amount for grant proposals submitted in August was $12,032,212. Many of these proposals are collaborative efforts with faculty from other UNL departments. These cross-campus connections demonstrate the strong interdisciplinary linkages SNR has with other units. The total for grant proposals submitted by SNR faculty from January through August 2009 was $50,766,547.