November is the Season for Evaluations

Each November, all IANR faculty are required to submit their electronic Annual Report of Faculty Accomplishments (eARFAs). The due date this year was November 3. For those faculty who met this deadline, thanks! When you are on time in submitting your eARFA it provides me more time to complete the evaluation process. It also provides the P&T Committee with more time to complete their review of faculty who are not fully promoted or tenured. This additional time is also important to get the evaluations processed for SNR faculty with joint appointments in other departments or at IANR’s Research and Extension Centers. In each case, I must seek the input of the appropriate department head or director as part of the evaluation process.

This year, I prepared a document, Writing Effective Goals, and distributed it to faculty to help them improve their formulation of goals for 2009. I encouraged faculty to write goal statements that were issue-based and outcome-oriented, linking them to SNR’s Current and Emerging Issues. If this model is followed, it not only simplifies reporting the next year, it makes my task of evaluating accomplishments and impacts easier. In this document, I provided tips on how to report accomplishments and impacts of goals from 2008. This is the most important component of the eARFA. Documenting the impacts of faculty accomplishments is a difficult, but essential, task. We all should strive to demonstrate how our research, teaching, scholarly service, survey, and extension activities have affected our clientele, broadly defined. How has the information we provided changed behavior, i.e., their management of natural resources? We all struggle with the task of identifying impacts since these are not immediate and are often unknown. This challenges
each of us to consider innovative approaches to document impacts.

For the past month much of my time has been devoted to reading the more than 70 eARFAs and completing my evaluations of each faculty member. On November 30, I began sending my evaluations to faculty for their review. These evaluations must then be provided to the deans by December 12 for review over the holiday break. In January, I will begin meeting with each faculty member to discuss their evaluation, goals for 2009, and any issues associated with their appointment. This part of the evaluation process will extend through mid-April.

Although it is a long and arduous process, the evaluation process is critically important to the professional development of our faculty and to achieving the vision and mission of SNR. Meeting with each faculty member individually is a great opportunity for a one-on-one dialog about their program of activities. My goal is to make this evaluation session equally rewarding to faculty.

The staff evaluation process will begin early next year. I look forward to reviewing the results of that process. It is equally important for staff to focus on the development of outcome oriented goals for 2009. Please work closely with your immediate supervisor in this process as it unfolds.

**Halloween at Hardin Hall**

About 75 SNR faculty, staff, students, and family members celebrated Halloween in the second floor lobby of Hardin Hall with food, a costume parade, and a pumpkin contest. Thanks to our tireless Social Committee for organizing the good times!
Geography grad student Nathan Freitas brought his daughter, Marley, dressed as an ear of corn. Having recently moved from Utah, Marley wanted to demonstrate loyalty to her new home.

Bob Kuzelka sported a bright orange shirt proclaiming that he was not in costume, and Todd Schimelfenig came as Ivanhoe.

The Australian Drought Workshop: Outcomes
Last month I travelled to Canberra, Australia, to participate in a joint U.S.-Australian workshop, *Drought in a Changing Climate: Sharing Management Approaches*. Mike Hayes and Mark Svoboda of the National Drought Mitigation Center also participated, as did others from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and various universities. The objectives of the workshop were to 1) identify opportunities for future collaborative research that will inform drought policy; 2) share information and approaches on drought management between the two countries; and 3) produce a publication relating to the outcomes of the workshop. Australia recently emerged from what was considered to be a 1 in 100 year drought, only to return to drought again this year. The Australian government is investing 10 billion Australian dollars in water and climate related research, given current water and drought issues and sobering projections of an even drier future climate. The government has also launched a review of the national drought policy that was implemented in 1992. Linda Botterill, who was a visiting scientist at SNR in September 2006, is actively engaged in this debate and discussion and participated in this workshop. Linda and I co-edited a book on Australian drought policy in 2005. It is likely that the U.S. will host a second workshop in this series in 2009 or 2010.
strongly Australians feel about climate change. Harbor Bridge is in the background.
Look closely and you will see small dots at the top of the bridge. One of the
adventures available to tourists is to climb to the top of the bridge. Mike, Mark, and
Don did not take that particular challenge.

Progress on the “Greening” of Hardin Hall

Installation of occupancy sensors in the Hardin Hall tower has begun. As
most of you are aware, these sensors will be tied in with both the HVAC
system and the lighting in offices. The energy savings achieved from the
installation of these sensors is expected to pay back the cost of the
sensors in two to three years—a good investment for UNL. If you read
the recent remarks of Chancellor Perlman on UNL’s spiraling utility
costs, the university’s intent is to reward departments for energy savings.
SNR is and will continue to be a leader in that regard.

As previously reported, we are nearly ready to launch the Hardin Hall
recycling program. Our Sustainability Committee is currently working out
details with the coordinators of the UNL recycling program.

Kudos to SNR Students Who Received Awards

Greg Clements, a graduate student working with Scott Hygnstrom, was
recently awarded a $4,000 scholarship by the Shikar Safari Club. The
Shikar Safari Club was founded in 1952 for the purpose of advancing
knowledge concerning wildlife of the world. It provides annual awards to
students, biologists, and law-enforcement officers in the field of wildlife
conservation. Congratulations, Greg!

Brenda Pracheil and Wesley Moses received graduate fellowships from
the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources through
funds provided by the Irvin A. and Agnes E. Nelson Memorial Fellowship
Fund.

SNR also submitted recruitment grant and fellowship requests to the
Office of Graduate Studies. A request was also made by the Geography
Program that recently merged with SNR. Both SNR and Geography received $2,000 recruitment grants from Graduate Studies. In addition, SNR and the Geography program each received one Othmer Fellowship grant. SNR also received a Chancellor’s Fellowship and both SNR and the Geography program received a Larson Diversity Fellowship. In addition, SNR and the Geography program received numerous August Edgren Tuition Fellowships. All of these fellowships will be awarded in the spring by the graduate committees in SNR and Geography on a competitive basis.

Current SNR fellowships recipients are Sandra Jones, Othmer Fellowship; Yi Peng, Chancellor’s Fellowship; Rebecca Howser, Larson Diversity Fellowship; and Jamie McFadden and Gregory Cutrell, Centennial Fellowships. Congratulations!

**Grants Awarded and Proposals Submitted**

SNR faculty were awarded grants totaling nearly $200,000 in November. These awards were received from the Nebraska Department of Roads, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Lower Loup Natural Resources District, the University of California-Riverside, and Pacific Northwest Labs. Congratulations to Drew Tyre, Steve Thomas, Kyle Hoagland, Sue Lackey, Jim Goeke, and Scott Hygnstrom. In addition, grant proposals submitted for funding totaled nearly $3.5 million. Good luck to Kevin Pope, Rachel Herpel, Paul Hanson, Tim Hiller, Larkin Powell, Steve Thomas, Dan Snow, and Scott Hygnstrom.

SNR faculty and staff have submitted grant proposals totaling more than $21 million and have been awarded nearly $5.4 million between January and November 2008. Let’s hope for a good month in December!