

on the move

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North Carolina A&T State University
School of Agriculture and
Environmental Sciences
Newsletter

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Hanner of Animal Sciences honored as guiding light

It's easy to see why Dr. Tracy Hanner was voted Academic Advisor of the Year for the second consecutive time by students in A&T's School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. Whether he's dining with them at a luncheon for graduating seniors, driving them to one of the many animal sciences conferences, or just walking to his car in the parking lot of Webb Hall, students surround Hanner at every turn.

It is evident as Hanner reels off the names of these A&T graduates, that he is visualizing their faces, their hurdles and their achievements one-by-one as they passed through the SAES Animal Sciences program. But recognizing that under-represented minorities account for only about 10 percent of the total student enrollment at the 29 American veterinary schools,

Hanner realizes that not every student will make it to vet school.

He prepares them for other animal science careers: sales, marketing, research and product development at such companies as Elanco, Merck and R.J. Reynolds. He makes students aware of opportunities at the National Institutes of Health and Research Triangle Park, and talks to students about learning corporate culture, developing their resumes and attending career fairs.

"Care," says Hanner, "is what advising really is. It's pushing, dragging, carrying. You can't really get to be a good advisor unless you really know them."

He keeps files on the 60 students he advises annually, so when one or more of them is habitually missing class, Hanner will issue an

academic all-points-bulletin: telephone calls, peer advisors, visits, parents and student services help. He tells the student he misses seeing them in class and asks what is preventing their attendance. The answers range from car problems, to depression about an inactive social life, to issues of having no money or no food.

"Poor Dr. Hanner has given money," Hanner says, when pressed to answer how he resolves the food issue. "Poor Dr. Hanner has gotten people to the financial aid office. I call parents. I call student services."

Theresa Henderson, a married, 30-year-old sophomore with two children, returned to school in 2004 after an 11-year-absence and is determined to get her animal science degree. There are days when she feels overwhelmed by her workload, but says Hanner is always there helping her to prioritize her demands.

"When you don't have anybody to stand behind you, you need somebody like him, to push you," Henderson says of Hanner. "Every time I feel like I want to quit, he tells me to sit back and think about the situation."

Hanner's work actually begins before students come to A&T. High school students interested in animal sciences are advised by him on how to prepare, and Hanner also regularly visits area elementary schools with the Pets-on-Wheels animal showcase.

"I've spent 20 years at A&T and I'm still excited," Hanner says, "because these young people are doing things."

Dr. T's Moment

I got a call from a reporter about a survey of alumni and students that the University of Nebraska College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources is conducting. It seems the school wants to drop agriculture from its name. It's too hard to recruit, they say.

A recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* talked about the creative recruiting efforts schools of agriculture are using to attract students who are far removed from rural America. The gist, it seems, is to focus on careers and steer people away from the agrarian concept they get when they think agriculture.

These two concepts started me to thinking. No way are we dropping agriculture from the SAES. It's the "A" in A&T, after all, but our reasons are sounder than just tradition.

This year, the SAES has the largest enrollment of any historically black land-grant institution in the country with a school of agriculture. Our enrollment is up 40 percent from five years ago. As well, 92 percent of our most recent graduates left school with a job or plans for further education.

This means we are doing some things right. But there's much more work to do. We have just created new recruitment materials, and without having seen the *Chronicle* article in advance, they do focus on careers.

We are using our Alumni Association to assist with recruitment, and we are providing our students with the kind of experience and preparation they need to be successful. As well, we are working hard to have scholarship monies on hand so we can attract high-quality students who will do well in SAES.

You can help by donating money, providing internships and jobs, and keeping us informed about the latest trends in agriculture.

With you as a supporter, we remain on the move.

— Dr. Alton Thompson
Dean, SAES



Dr. Tracy Hanner at the SAES Student Banquet

Although it isn't his job to be as popular as he is, it is part of his responsibility, Hanner says, to see that the wide-eyed young freshmen he ushers in at the start of each year, have careers or post-graduate studies to pursue by the time they're graduating.

For example, there's Mario Ingram, who just graduated from medical school and is on his way to do a hospital residency. Next is Rodney Oakley; he completed a small-animal neurosurgery residency and is now a practicing veterinarian in Maryland. Kia Williams went to veterinary school, opened a practice in Florida, and is on her way back to North Carolina to become a laboratory animal veterinarian at Duke University.

SAES faculty trio honored for work in labs and classrooms

Several faculty members of SAES were recognized for outstanding research and teaching at the school's recent annual awards ceremony.

Food scientist keeps research award in SAES

For the second year in a row, one of the school's researchers was named the University's Outstanding Young Researcher of the Year. The award was presented this year to **Dr. Ipek Goktepe**, adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Human Environment and Family Studies.

Goktepe has completed several food safety projects since joining the faculty in 2000, including one which uses special packaging to double the shelf life of shiitake mushrooms, a new crop that the SAES has introduced across the state. She is also co-principal investigator on the project to develop a biosensor that rapidly detects foodborne pathogens in a matter of hours. The sensor now has a patent pending. She is currently researching the anti-cancer properties of mushroom and plants extracts, and is exploring the



human health effects of pesticides on farm workers.



Ag. engineer gets students on right track

A second honoree was **Dr. Abolghasem Shahbazi**, who was cited as Teacher of the Year for the SAES. Shahbazi is professor and director of the Bioenvironmental Engineering Program. He joined the SAES faculty in 1983. The courses he teaches are: Renewable Energy Systems; Engineering Properties of Agricultural and Biological Materials; Engineering Design Processes; and Structures and Environments.

In addition, Shahbazi's research program includes producing value-added products from cheese whey, production and characterization of low cost and biodegradable polylactic acid, photovoltaic (solar) power management and distribution, demonstration of an alternative composting technology, and an assessment of biomass and bioenergy resources in North Carolina.

Top-rung instruction in fashion design and textile marketing

Dr. Jane Walker, a faculty member for 18 years in the Department of Human Environment and Family Sciences, received the Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Excellence in Teaching.

Walker was cited for being "one of the most dedicated professors in the School when it comes to teaching and putting her students first."



Walker teaches: Cooperative Trends in Business and Industry I & II; Historic Textiles and Costumes; Visual Merchandising; Global Trends and National Perspectives in Textiles and Apparel; Introduction to Textiles; Fashion Merchandising and Marketing; Introduction to Family and Consumer Sciences; and Introduction to Fashion Merchandising.



Golden LEAF

The SAES has been the beneficiary of several generous grants from the Golden LEAF Foundation, and the team of researchers, Extension specialists and associates, and farm support agencies that has worked together on these projects is the recipient of the SAES Collaboration Award for the 2004-05 academic year.

Golden LEAF grants to the SAES have focused on new crops, livestock enterprises and production methods for the state's transitioning tobacco farmers. While research scientists have been investigating the potential for everything from organic field corn to heavy-breed chickens (15 projects all total), Extension specialists have been organizing field days and demonstration sites. Members of the award-winning team are:

- Dr. Keith Baldwin
- Dr. Godfrey Ejimakor
- Dr. Marihelen Glass
- Anthony Hooks
- Dr. Jimo Ibrahim
- Mary Mafuyai-Ekanem
- Marsha McGraw

- Dr. Carl Niedziela
- Dr. John O'Sullivan
- Dr. M. R. Reddy
- Dr. C.W. Seo
- Dr. Vestal Shirley
- Grace Summers
- Dr. Charles Talbott
- Dr. Willie Willis
- Dr. Milli Worku
- Dr. Guochen Yang
- Dr. Anthony Yeboah
- Operation Spring Plant
- N.C. Coalition of Farms and Rural Families

The Golden LEAF Foundation was established to distribute funds coming to North Carolina from the master settlement agreement with cigarette manufacturers. The Foundation's grants are distributed to many agencies and institutions working to smooth North Carolina's conversion from a tobacco-dependent economy. Farmers and rural communities are high priorities for Golden LEAF.

Small Farms Week '05



1. The 2005 G. L. and C. Y. Dudley Small Farmers of the Year Award went to Watauga County Christmas tree growers Kirby and Nathaniel Maram.
2. Dr. Claud D. Evans, a veterinarian, inventor and member of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural & Mechanical Colleges gave the keynote address at the Small Farmers Recognition Luncheon.
3. The Small Farms Week Kickoff in Orange County included production workshops and a tour.
4. Part of Small Farms Week '05 was a first-ever farm equipment show at the University Farm (co-sponsored by the John Deere Co.).

5. Ernestine Shaw (center) and Gloria Askew — members of the Columbus County delegation that came to Greensboro on Small Farms Day — stop by the farm equipment show, and get a demo and a high-five from Gary Hardee of Central Carolina Farm & Mower.



Dr. Donald McDowell, associate dean for Academic Programs, was elected president of the Association of Social and Behavioral Scientists (ASBS) at the organization's annual meeting in Nashville. The ASBS is a multidisciplinary organization, founded in 1935 by W. E. B. DuBois and other scholars. Its annual meeting serves as a forum for research, professional development and academic advancement in the social sciences.

Dr. Claudette Smith, family resource management specialist for The Cooperative Extension Program at North Carolina A&T, was part of a 19-member group of Extension personnel from across the U.S. that made a leadership development foray to New Zealand and American Samoa. The trip was part of the National Extension Leadership Development (NELD) program. Smith and the other 18 members of Class IX of NELD represent a cross-section of Extension geographic scope (from Washington to Florida) and organizational structure (county directors as well as state-level administrators and subject matter specialists).

The SAES hosted two national conferences in April, and both were resounding successes.

More than 500 Extension administrators, and finance and human resources officers came to Greensboro April 24-28 for the annual Cooperative States Research, Education and Extension Service administrative conference. It was the first time an 1890 land-grant was host institution for this annual gathering that updates Extension personnel on the administrative and policy issues. The attendance total was a new record.

A second national conference followed right behind, as the SAES joined with North Carolina State to host the land-grant system's National Diversity Conference. The conference brought more than 325 participants to Greensboro April 27-29 for a program built around the work of a 14-state consortium that has developed new strategies for broadening cultural diversity in the land-grant system.

on the *move*

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**SAES student Kyshia Winn tests out a sugar-free doughnut
at the Benbow Hall food preparation lab. An SAES graduate
student, Veronica Campbell, conducted a series of taste-testings
as part of a research investigation of artificial sweeteners.**

mark your calendar



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