Reyes takes triple crown

**Effervescent** and energetic. Inspiring and motivating. Sincere and spiritual. Ask students, faculty and staff to describe Dr. Manuel Reyes, and these are just a few of the adjectives you'll hear.

Small wonder then, that this dedicated researcher and professor of biological engineering received not one, not two ... but three awards of excellence for the 2007-2008 academic year. Reyes received both the SAES and Gamma Sigma Delta teaching excellence awards, as well as the dean's annual Collaboration Award.

The teaching recognitions are well deserved, according to Reyes' students, who appreciate a mentoring style that extends well beyond the classroom. For instance, nearly every morning Reyes' students find a message in their e-mail boxes, notifying them of some new scholarship, internship or career opportunity.

Amanda Sparks, a rising sophomore majoring in biological engineering and current president of the A&T chapter of the American Society of Biological Engineers, credits Reyes for sustaining her interest and enthusiasm for her chosen field. She chose biological engineering because she sees it as a field that will empower her to make a positive impact on the world. She knew she had made the right decision after meeting Reyes during freshman orientation.

“He was so welcoming,” Sparks said. “He knew my name, he came outside to meet my parents. He even took our pictures.”

Maurice Washington, a junior who plans to apply his biological engineering degree to a career in environmental law, described Reyes as “a great motivator.”

The hydrology class he took with Reyes, “was one of the most difficult classes I’ve ever taken,” Washington said. “But I will actually use his class in my internship with NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service).”

Reyes is also a prolific researcher. In the past five years, he has secured grants for 10 projects, bringing in $2.8 million to A&T. Since joining the faculty in 1993, Reyes has also served the University through activity on many committees, too numerous to mention.

His passion for collaboration is illustrated by his most recent research accomplishment, in which he was awarded leadership of a seven-year U.S. Agency for International Development project that is bringing sustainable agriculture technologies to some of the poorest regions of Southeast Asia. Reyes has pulled together an international team of 28 scientists from major universities and agencies that represent a broad array of biological and social sciences.

“I continue to be impressed with Dr. Reyes’ intellectual curiosity, passion for his work as it relates to improving the quality of life of low-income persons, his delightful personality and his ability to network and collaborate,” said SAES Dean Alton Thompson.

Reyes says that collaboration is not just important — it is essential for progress, not only in agriculture, but in any human endeavor.

“From biological systems to physical and chemical processes, they all demonstrate collaboration,” he said. “Hence, humanity must also collaborate, because we are all created equal, but also endowed with different roles, gifts, status of life and more. It is the intermingling or joining of these roles into one that makes humanity powerful.”

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**Dr. Manuel Reyes** (right), pictured with a farmer in the Philippines, has been leading the way in both hemispheres: garnering two awards for his teaching skills while coordinating a multiple-site sustainable agriculture research project in Southeast Asia.

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**Dr. T’s Moment**

For much of this year, the 16 UNC institutions have focused attention on examining themselves to see how the campuses can best meet the needs of the state and its people over the next 20 years. This study, called UNC Tomorrow and sanctioned by the UNC Board of Governors, will ultimately be used to devise a long-term plan that will position the UNC system to remain demand-driven, proactive and responsibly consistent with the University’s mission of teaching, research and public service.

Since its founding in 1891 as a land-grant institution, North Carolina A&T has always had teaching, research and Extension (public service) as its primary mission. This hasn’t changed. But as a result of the renewed push from the UNC system, the SAES is examining its own Strategic Plan to ensure that the work we do on this campus and ultimately across this state is the work that needs to be done. We believe this to be true; we just want to assure ourselves that our belief and reality are the same.

So when our researchers work hard to find solutions to the problems that are plaguing our citizens — like peanut allergies or alternative crops to replace tobacco — and when our faculty members are making sure that today’s students have the latest information, and our Extension staff takes this same information to the state’s citizens, we do this because it’s our mission. We want to remain relevant, responsive and results-driven. We will accept nothing less. We want to make sure you know us by our good work. Work that makes a difference in this state.

— Dr. Alton Thompson
Dean, SAES

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Academy for Teaching and Learning honors Jefferson-Moore

There’s no mystery as to why Dr. Kentert Jefferson-Moore is being lauded as one of two recipients of a campus excellence in teaching award, this particular honor given specifically to young faculty members. The assistant professor in the SAES Department of Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agricience Education has been able to motivate her students in a way that leaves them clamoring to learn and accepting responsibility for their education. For her classroom techniques, Jefferson-Moore was recently presented a Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award for 2007-08 by the Academy for Teaching and Learning at A&T. The co-recipient is Dr. Stephanie Luster-Traylor of the College of Engineering.

Jefferson-Moore’s teaching honor was also recognized by the SAES in April during the annual student-faculty awards banquet. Jefferson-Moore, who is an agricultural economist, joined the SAES faculty in 2004. She is a savvy presenter with a national reputation and an increasing international itinerary, who has made presentations in Italy and Australia. Her research includes work on the economics of value-enhanced crops, and small-market biotechnology, functional foods and nutraceuticals.

But it was her teaching skill that singled her out for the teaching excellence honor. Jefferson-Moore teaches agribusiness management, price analysis, and agriculture marketing problems and issues courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels. She sets standards for what students are expected to learn, but if a student is better at presentations than a written exam, then they are allowed to choose the option that works best for them.

“I consider myself a facilitator for the learning process,” Jefferson-Moore says. “I think teaching should deviate from the structure of ‘I tell you this’ or ‘I have control over the class.’” She believes in allowing students to play to their own strengths for how they are to be evaluated.

“I present everything to them and it forces them to be accountable for their outcome in the course,” Jefferson-Moore says. “At the end of the day, they don’t really blame me if they didn’t get it. It’s more of a matter of them being accountable for their own actions during the course.”

Gamma Sig Research recognition goes to Yeboah

Dr. Osei Yeboah, assistant professor of agricultural economics and interim director of the SAES International Trade Center, has been awarded the 2008 Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Excellence in Research. He joined the SAES faculty in 2003.

In addition to his involvement in seven research projects — three of which he leads — Yeboah is also very active in teaching and outreach. A rural economic development outreach program that he oversees has assisted more than 325 farms and businesses in rural North Carolina through training and workshops.

Other projects he leads are aimed at evaluating the economic impact of trade policies on southern agriculture, and predicting what the possible impact of bioterrorism could mean for the U.S. economy.

Yeboah also assists in two of the SAES’s international faculty student exchange programs, and lends his economics expertise to other research projects ongoing in the school, including one to develop a new food packaging technology to prevent E.coli contamination.

Yeboah’s contributions to SAES and to the field of economics extend far beyond the classroom, noted Dr. Carolyn Turner, associate dean for research.

“His activities last year alone indicate what a great asset Dr. Yeboah is to the school and to the profession,” she said, citing his attendance at more than 20 workshops and conferences, his production of 10 research posters and presentations, and his garnering of research funding in excess of half a million dollars.

New certificate program promotes horse sense

The A&T School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences is going to load an all-new certificate program into the starting gate fall semester of 2008. The Department of Animal Sciences has received the go-ahead from the A&T Faculty Senate to launch a new certificate program that will prepare students for a broad range of careers in the horse industries. Students pursuing bachelor’s degrees in any of the SAES program areas can now elect to complement their degrees with a Certificate in Equine Management by completing 21 semester hours in equine science and management studies.

According to Dr. Rusty Miller, coordinator for the new certificate program, “The curriculum is management oriented, preparing graduates for the widest range of jobs in breeding, nutrition and management in equine operations.”

A study conducted by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services several years ago estimated the revenue from training, boarding, sales of horse-related products and other equine industries at $724 million annually. That study and other evaluations of the economic impacts of the equine industries have been so swiftly antiquated by changing demographics that the N.C. General Assembly has provided funding for an up-to-date and comprehensive study — now under way — of equine industries’ impact on the state’s economy.

Miller is on the advisory committee for the 2008 study of the equine industries’ statewide economic impact that the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center is conducting with General Assembly support — an indication of 30 years of involvement in the horse world that he brought to A&T when he joined the SAES faculty two years ago.

Miller has judged at many state competitions and two world championship horse shows. Since joining the SAES, he has set the groundwork for expansion of the equine unit at the University Farm and for the Certificate in Equine Management program to establish both a horse judging team in 2007 and an equestrian team at the start of the 2007-08 academic year. The horse judging team has been acquiring itself admirably in competitions with such traditional horse judging powerhouse programs as Kansas State, Virginia Tech, and the University of Florida, and the equestrian team is already bringing “Aggie Pride” to totally new arenas. Two of the riders on the equestrian team qualified for regionals in the team’s first year of intercollegiate competition.
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Mark your calendar

• Institute for Future Ag. Leaders (IFAL): June 15 – 20
• Ford Renewable Energy Summer Program for high school students: June 25 – 29; and July 9 – 13
• Research Apprentice Program (RAP) for high school students: June 22 – July 18
• Small Farms Field Day at the University Farm: August 7

May 1 was graduation day at the Child Development Lab, where 24 young scholars received recognition for their hard work.