News from Dean Paul Winistorfer

Thanks for tuning in to our May edition of CNR Heads Up—our college electronic news and information about the college, campus colleagues, and partners in the state.

• **College Name Change.** The college name change resolution is at the final stage of approval by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, slated for June 7, 2010. The name change resolution will be heard by the Academic Affairs Committee. I will present the resolution and answer questions regarding our name change. If approved by the board, our new name, College of Natural Resources and Environment, will become effective at the start of the second summer session. Once approved, there will be more communications on our name, branding, and website.

• **College Showcase Follow-Up.** Thanks again to everyone for your great support of our inaugural CNR Showcase held April 6, 2010, at the Inn at Virginia Tech. We are discussing future events and the issues of student recruitment, recognition of student awards, and connections with friends and donors. Please provide me with feedback about the showcase, and suggestions on how we can position ourselves for future events. Look for a nice write-up in our spring newsmagazine coming to your box soon.

• **Associate Dean of Academic Programs Search Is Live.** We have opened the search for an associate dean for academic programs in the college. Rich Oderwald, current associate dean, will retire June 30, 2010. We have created a website for this search ([www.cnr.vt.edu/search](http://www.cnr.vt.edu/search)) where you can find the announcement, the process, the search committee members, and other important information about the university and community. Please help us advertise this important position to interested and qualified candidates. Note our June 2, 2010, initial screen date.

• **CNR Student Leadership Institute Funded.** With the generous support of Dr. Frank Boucek and his wife, Susan, and Mr. Jon DeHann, all of Naples, Fla., we are launching our College of Natural Resources Student Leadership Institute beginning in the fall 2010 semester. Development Director Bob Mollenhauer has been promoting the institute to prospective donors and we are getting a positive response to the concept of augmenting a very strong science/technical education with exposure to leadership concepts and to individuals in leadership positions in our broad arena of natural resources and environment. Just this week we secured a five-year commitment from Mr. Guy Crane of Chicago for annual support of the leadership institute.
Twelve students have been selected to participate in the inaugural class of the leadership institute during the 2010-11 academic year. Three of the college’s four departments are represented, with six students from the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, three students from the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, and three students from the Department of Geography. All of the students are rising juniors and seniors with an average GPA of 3.47.

Students participating in the leadership institute will take a two-credit, pass/fail course each semester. In addition, they will travel to Richmond and Washington, D.C., to meet with leaders and policy makers in natural resources. Dr. Steve McMullin will serve as director of the leadership institute and lead the fall semester course. We are looking for another faculty member from the college who would be interested in co-leading the spring semester course as well as a faculty representative from each department in the college to serve on an advisory committee for the leadership institute. Please let Steve or me know if you are interested in getting involved.

Students participating in the first cohort of the leadership institute are:

- Walker Baldwin, GEOG
- Adam Christie, FREC
- Lydia Eggleston, GEOG
- Adam Christie, FIW
- Kathy Hixson, FIW
- Mitchell Kern, FIW
- Hannah Lee, FIW
- Kelly Merkl, FREC
- Brittany Schultz, FREC
- Cari Lynn Squibb, FIW
- Patrick Trail, GEOG
- Charles Turner, III, FIW

• **Congratulations.** Congratulations are in order to:


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  **Bruce Hull,** and colleagues **Jennifer Sparrow** and **Courtney Kimmel,** for winning Virginia Tech’s XCaliber Award from the Center for Innovation in Learning for “Enhancing Student Engagement through Web 2.0 Education Technologies.” (http://www.universityawards.vt.edu/award.php?item=678).
Promotion and Tenure Congratulations. Congratulations to our colleagues for their positive, hard-earned promotion and tenure decisions at the university level in April. Pending approval by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors in June, the following have been promoted this year:

Dan Hindman, promoted to associate professor with tenure
Department of Wood Science and Forest Products

Maren Roman, promoted to associate professor with tenure
Department of Wood Science and Forest Products

Lynn Resler, promoted to associate professor with tenure
Department of Geography

John McGee, promoted to associate research professor and geospatial extension specialist, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation

College Sustainable Natural Resources and Environments Academic Initiative. In the fall of 2008, the college began working on a new academic initiative titled “Sustainable Natural Resources and Environment” as a college-wide major. The vision for this major was founded on our interests in reaching non-traditional students, promoting the college as an academic home, increasing our relevance to all things “sustainable,” and securing new resources for the college. There are several points I want to communicate to you, as this has somewhat stalled out during the past six months:

❖ We’ve not done a good job of communicating to the faculty what this is about, who will be involved, and what outcomes are expected. Without you on board, we will not go anywhere.

❖ There is a perceived lack of understanding of the “curriculum” across the departments, course content, teaching opportunities/responsibilities, and timing. There is confusion with the name itself.

❖ The 15-day review brought to light that the major varies by more than 25 percent from the approved State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHECV) approved degree on record. In fact, most of the undergraduate college platform seems to be “out-of-bounds” on this 25 percent rule. We are investigating!
The Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation has a new major titled “environmental resource management” and we do not wish to jeopardize the start-up of this new effort or be in conflict for recruitment of students, so we need to examine the relationship between the two academic platforms.

The path forward:

- I’ve asked Bruce Hull and Tom Hammett to coordinate or co-direct this effort across the college. They have presented a list of “demands” and we are negotiating on resources to do this well. This is not a personal resource request list, but includes things such as teaching assistant, travel-field trip support, and web support, etc. With a projected enrollment of 140-170 students, help will be needed.

- We desire for faculty representation from each department to serve on a steering/ownership committee. As a college degree-major, we need an oversight committee on the curriculum, teaching coordination, and communication into the departments.

- It is a foregone conclusion that if we continue to move this forward, we will need to prepare a SCHEV degree request. This will require us to backtrack up and bring this into governance once again at the earliest possible date in the fall. If approved by SCHEV, we would be on track to offer this new major effective fall 2011. With our new college name and other developments in the college, I’m confident we can secure SCHEV approval for a new degree in the college.

- Communication is paramount to moving forward on this effort and I will be diligent on keeping you informed of our effort, progress, decisions, and plan for this new degree in the college. Please let me know if you have any questions.

- **Strategic International Opportunity in Chile.** We continue to move towards a strategic working relationship with colleagues at the University of Austral in Valdivia, Chile, on a campus-wide effort for faculty and student exchange between our institutions. Four colleges on our campus are involved in this effort (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, College of Science, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, and College of Natural Resources). This fall, two undergraduate students will join the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation for six months of study. There is faculty interest from our college in plantation forestry, water, sustainable development (Patagonia), study abroad, and other opportunities. We will host an information session soon for anyone interested in this opportunity.

- **CNR Graduation Saturday, May 15, 2010, War Memorial Gymnasium.** Watch for details on the ceremony, annual tree-planting, and reception for graduates and families.

- **Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture.** The Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture (AMJV) office has come to Blacksburg! The AMJV is a public-private landscape partnership dedicated driven by the mission to restore and sustain viable populations of native birds and their habitats in the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture through effective, collaborative partnerships. The AMJV is recognized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a habitat joint venture and is coordinated by the American Bird Conservancy.

Recently the AMJV accepted a proposal from the Conservation Management Institute (CMI), along with help from the College of Natural Resources and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, to provide office space and logistical support. This will facilitate collaborative efforts between the AMJV, CMI, and other departments in the college. AMJV Coordinator Brian Smith and Science Coordinator Todd Fearer are working throughout the Appalachians on important avian conservation issues including impacts of surface mining, climate change, and landscape composition.
This relationship allows the AMJV to work closely with college faculty working on these issues, and provides an outlet for developing collaborative research. We hope you will join us in welcoming Brian and Todd and look forward to a long and mutually productive future.

See map below for AMJV and surrounding joint venture boundaries.

• **Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) Symposium.** The college, in cooperation with the Blue Ridge Parkway 75, Inc., is hosting “Imagining the Blue Ridge Parkway for the 21st Century: Sustaining Communities, Environments, and Economies,” on October 14-15, 2010, at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. This is the second in a two-part conversation about the past and future of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The program is designed to assist community leaders, businesses, economic development authorities, tourism offices, parkway officials, and supporters of the parkway in working together for a sustainable future for the Blue Ridge Parkway. For an overview of the program, general registration and exhibitors showcase information, as well as sponsorship opportunities, [click here](http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/brp21ex).

BRP registration link for participants: [http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/brp21](http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/brp21)
BRP registration link for exhibitors: [http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/brp21ex](http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/brp21ex)