



...A report to Soil & Crop Sciences Faculty by David Baltensperger

<http://soilcrop.tamu.edu>  March 13, 2007

Thanks to those assisting with our strategic-planning process the past several weeks. It represents a very large effort across the entire department. Hopefully, it has prepared us to meet the vision of the department: *"To be the best at providing the world with sustainable food, feed, fiber and fuel in a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment through discovery, education and application."*

While both the vision and mission may be modified over time – they provide us with guidance for approaching the next four years. Although our mission was not developed by unanimous opinion, discussions have led us to a better understanding of what we are really attempting as a unit: *"To promote the wise use management and stewardship of soil, plant and water resources by preparing students for careers in soil-, plant-, and environmentally-related disciplines, discovering new scientific knowledge and developing associated technologies to sustain environmentally sound and economically profitable production systems, and ensuring the efficient extension of technological developments to user clientele and society in general."* In a process that will continue to evolve over time, I think it is important to remember some of our discussion on how we differentiate ourselves from other disciplines like range, forestry, horticulture, pathology, entomology, engineering and biochemistry.

Just over ½ of the faculty reviews are complete, so if you have not yet scheduled with Judy, please make sure that you get that taken care of in the next few weeks. It is a critical opportunity as I attempt to get to know each program a little better. If, after some time to reflect you have suggestions for improving the process please feel free to share them with me. Thanks again for the efforts to get all the paper work delivered in a timely manner. It has facilitated getting our materials turned into administration.

We are moving forward rapidly with five separate positions in the department including the water quality scientist at Vernon, the turf breeding position at Dallas, and soil mineralogist and wheat breeding position in College Station. Progress has been slower than expected with the forage position at Overton.

We were fortunate to have Dr. Andy Paterson share some of his genomics work with us in a special seminar this month. We have also had several outstanding seminars in our regular series this semester. I hope that many will support these seminars as it is both a great time for faculty-student interaction and garnering an idea on the breadth of activity that our department excels in.

We were saddened to learn of the loss of Mrs. Norman Borlaug this month. Tentative plans call for a memorial service on Saturday, March 24th.

On a more exciting note we have been pleased to see Dr. Frank Hons return to work from his surgery and share the excitement of a new grandchild. Oliver Gael Reyes was born March 7, 2007. *Congratulations Frank and Tami!*

As shared in our last faculty meeting congratulations to Giovanni Piccinni, Mark Burow, Jim Muir, Darius Malinowski, and Gaylon Morgan on their recent promotions.

I hope that as you read this newsletter that plenty of rain has spread across Texas to get our spring plantings off to a good start and to give a boost to our winter wheat crop and forage resource. Hopefully, spring break will be like rain to each of you and bring you back with a rejuvenated spirit, or at least caught up!

David



On February 5, 2007, at the 51st Annual Meeting of the Weed Science Society of America in San Antonio, Texas, Dr. Mike Chandler was presented the Outstanding Teacher Award. The Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of weed science and is presented to only one person each year.

Congratulations!



Position Updates:

- Turf Breeding Position at Dallas - Interviews Scheduled
- Environmental Soil Scientist at Vernon - Advertised
- Soil Clay Mineralogist at College Station - Advertised
- Wheat Breeder at College Station - Interviews completed
- Forage Extension Specialist at Overton - Open

Future Events

- **March 14 - 16** - Spring Break
- Faculty Performance Evaluations
- Staff Performance Evaluations - Begin March 1
- **April 12** - 2007 Awards Banquet - Reception begins at 6:30 pm at the MSC in room 229
- **FUTURE STATEWIDE FACULTY MEETINGS:** (*at noon in room 440, brown bag lunch*)

Wednesday, June 6th - Tuesday, October 9th

UPCOMING SEMINARS

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|-----------------|--|
| March 21 | Benjamin McKay and Sumitra Biswas |
| March 28 | Jung Hwa Do and Robert Garret-Jones |
| April 4 | Leslie Kuhlman and Daniel Packer |
| April 11 | Ostillo Portillo Rodriguez and Whitney Milberger |

*All seminars are from 4:00 - 5:00 pm.
Room 134*

Have a GREAT Spring Break!

If you have future events for the Aggie Agenda please send them to Judy Young,
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