

Students come first

New assistant dean serves students on many levels

With an open-door policy, a warm smile and a clear dedication to students, Linda Martin is devoted to assisting scholars in the Oklahoma State University College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Martin is a new member to the team at OSU, beginning her position during the summer of 2002. As assistant dean for academic programs, Martin is pursuing a new role in her career. Her role is one of enhancing academics within agriculture and providing assistance and support to the OSU student body.



“I am excited about being at OSU,” Martin said. “This role allows me to interact with students and faculty, providing guidance and support as needed.”

As an administrator for CASNR, Martin’s intent is to support and enhance interaction between teachers, students and faculty and to help them succeed in and out of the classroom. She also assists the associate dean with faculty development and advises scholarship programs. Additionally, Martin teaches the freshman agricultural orientation class.

Martin’s path to OSU began with a small sheep project in 4-H. She was raised in Uniontown, Md., just 20 miles from Gettysburg, Pa. Martin said her parents felt it was important to have their children raised in a rural environment. Martin learned the value and importance of agriculture throughout her childhood.

“I was exposed at an early age to the diversity and importance of agriculture and took an active role in being involved in the industry through my college and professional career,” Martin said.

Martin acquired a variety of leadership skills during her childhood by showing market lambs and competing on the livestock judging team in both 4-H and FFA. A turning point for her occurred in high school when she was asked to represent the state of Maryland as a spokeswoman for the lamb and wool industry.

“I became much more aware of the breadth and scope of agriculture, of how dynamic the field of agriculture is and the interdependence of the various components of the industry,” Martin said.

As a student at The Ohio State University, Martin decided she wanted to pursue a degree in animal science, maintaining a strong desire to eventually to teach.

She attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for a master’s degree in animal breeding and genetics. While there, she was the livestock judging team coach and traveled throughout the country to many competitions.

“I have always enjoyed teaching and interacting with others,” Martin said. “I have an ability to relate subject matter. While in college, I felt in some way I could use my skills to benefit and help others.”

After the completion of her master’s program, Martin furthered her education at Colorado State University, receiving a doctorate in beef cattle genetics.

Upon graduation in 1988, Martin accepted a position as an assistant professor at Kansas State University where she taught a variety of undergraduate animal science classes and was a club adviser for a number of student organizations.

While at KSU, Martin was assigned two teaching assistants who are now faculty members at OSU.

Mark Johnson, associate professor of animal science, and Udaya DeSilva, assistant professor in animal molecular genetics, had the opportunity to assist Martin in her animal breeding classes while at KSU.

"Dr. Martin is a great asset to OSU and truly a feather in our cap," Johnson said. "She is extremely student-oriented and is a great member of our CASNR team."

Martin has maintained friendships with past and present students. She has been in their weddings, held their newborns and taken an active part in many of their lives.

"Dr. Martin shows an evident love for teaching," DeSilva said. "She is extremely dedicated to her students and wants them to gain experience and knowledge."

While teaching and advising at KSU, Martin sensed she could be doing more for students. She was attracted to OSU and CASNR because it is recognized as an institution that places students first.

"OSU has a great sense of commitment to students," said Martin. "CASNR has developed a national reputation for caring and investing in students and placing a high importance on teaching and advising."

"With the opportunity to come to OSU, it is a chance to make a difference at a different level," she said.

CASNR students have had the opportunity to interact with Martin in the classroom and have found her personality and open-door policy to be welcoming.

"Dr. Martin is extremely organized and works hard to relay information to students in an efficient and professional manner," said Laneha Beard, animal science junior and student academic mentor in Martin's orientation class.

CASNR Associate Dean Ed Miller is happy with Martin's addition to the university.

"Dr. Martin rose to the top during our position search process," said Miller. "We want good role models for students, particularly young women who aspire to academic types of positions, such as Dr. Martin. She represents another woman who is a professional succeeding in an academic situation. She provides a great role model for the college."

Among Martin's other academic and professional achievements, she is the first woman administrator to become assistant dean of academic programs within CASNR.

"Martin offers a professionalism needed within the college and is able to reach students on different levels," Miller said. "She has the ability to reach out to students and teachers, along with offering a high level of enthusiasm to this office."



Linda Martin, CASNR assistant dean, assists students in the agricultural orientation class. She stresses the importance of students getting involved in clubs and organizations within CASNR. (Photos by Nicola Xanthus)

Martin maintains a degree of involvement with faculty members and students, as she understands the value of being a teacher and a role model to all.

"A teacher is far more than an individual in front of a classroom," Martin said. "We are there to assist students in their growth personally and academically."

She not only succeeds in her work environment, but also in her home, devoting as much time as possible to her young family. It is not uncommon to see her 6-year-old son, Travis, and 4-year-old daughter, Hannah, attending Pre-Vet Club meetings with her.

Martin's accomplishments go beyond her dedication and pride in being a teacher, a professional, a mentor, a woman and a mother.

Martin is not only an administrator, but also an individual who wants to see students challenged within the classroom. With her genuine approach to assisting students in agriculture and her energetic personality, Martin is ready to assist students on their road to the future.

By Nicola Xanthus, Hollister, Calif.

Awards and Achievements

- National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Teaching Award of Excellence 2001
- National Award for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences-USDA Higher Education Programs and National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges 1998
- Kansas State University Presidential Award for Teaching Excellence 1997
- American Society of Animal Science Outstanding Teacher-Midwest Section 1994
- National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture 1993 Central Region Outstanding Teacher