

# Helping peers piece by piece



With determination, dedication and a smile, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources' Career Liaisons are ready to lend fellow students a helping hand.

"The Career Liaisons are a team that works hard together. They have a positive attitude of dedication, willingness and service," said Amy Gazaway, Career Liaison adviser. "Career Liaisons have a strong desire to help other people who are in the same situation they are."

In the spring of 2001, Gazaway and Louann Waldner, director of CASNR student career services, had a vision of students helping students with career development efforts. This vision was the beginning of the Career Liaison team.

"The program started out as an advisory board and has evolved into what it is today," said Gazaway. "It has come a long way in a short amount of time."

Every year a group of 12 to 15 CASNR

students are selected to form the Career Liaison team. The selection of the Career Liaisons is coordinated through an application and interview process. From the applications, candidates are selected and evaluated in an interview, which includes a short, impromptu presentation, she said.

When the Career Liaisons are selected, their duties are to inform students of career-related activities, and they are the voice of CASNR students when it comes to needed resources or services.

CASNR Career Liaisons link the classroom to the career by hosting career-related activities and services for their fellow students. Some services include résumé development, mock interviews, career fairs and professional development workshops.

"When the Career Liaisons help their peers, there is a connection we as faculty and staff do not have," said Gazaway.

Career Liaisons offer a variety of dif-

ferent workshops available to all CASNR students. Some include professional etiquette, interview preparation and résumé workshops.

Career Liaisons are required to have an itinerary of the workshop and then submit the itinerary to the Career Liaison adviser for approval.

After every workshop the Career Liaisons pass out an evaluation form to the participants. The purpose of the evaluation form is to get feedback on the performance and effectiveness of the workshop.

Career Liaisons meet collectively on alternating Tuesdays to discuss and evaluate career-related programs, services and activities offered by CASNR.

In addition to attending meetings, Career Liaisons maintain a well-developed knowledge of upcoming career-related activities and are challenged with the mission of helping to inform their classmates about these opportunities, said Gazaway.

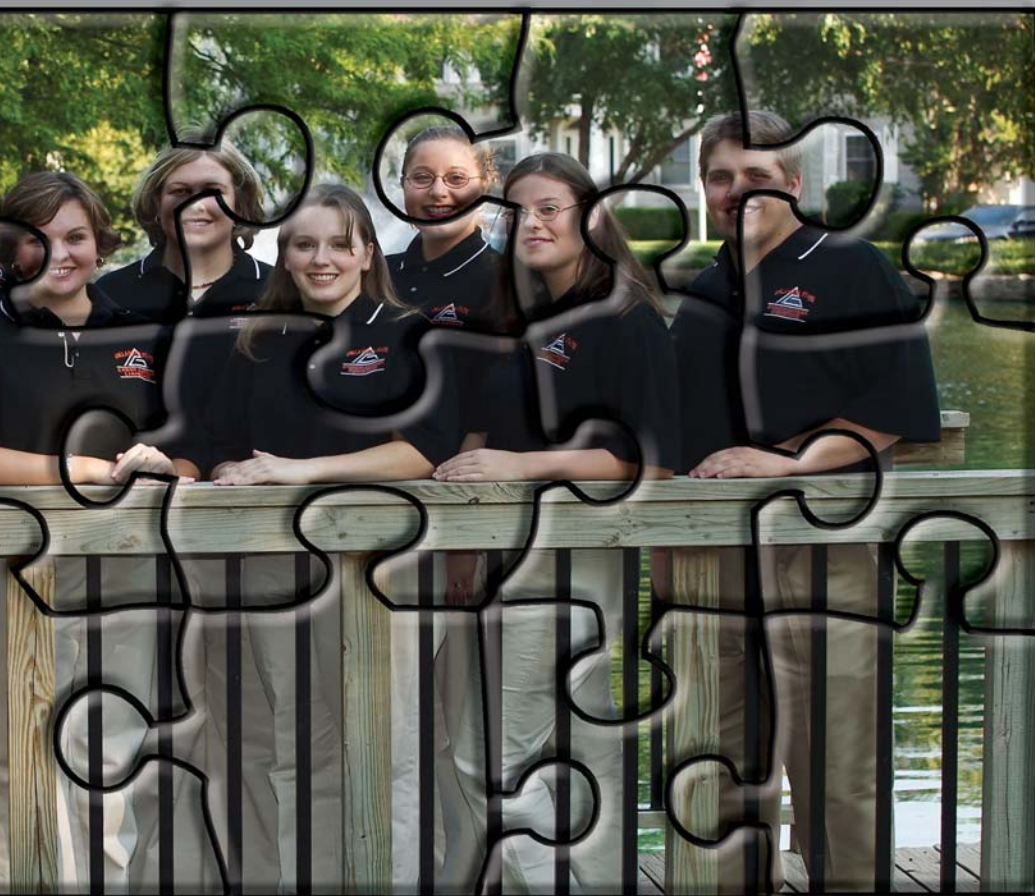
In addition to on-campus activities, the Career Liaisons visit four different employers in the state of Oklahoma. The purpose of the visits is for the Career Liaisons to gain knowledge of career opportunities so they can serve as career educators.

"When the Career Liaisons go on employer visits, they showcase the qualities and skills of CASNR students to potential employers," said Gazaway. "Career Liaisons learn all they can about the employer so they can bring back information and share it with their peers."

One hour every month, Career Liaisons are required to work in the CASNR Career Services office and assist the department.

Being on the CASNR Career Liaison team comes with high expectations. Career Liaisons are expected to bring a positive, cooperative and enthusiastic attitude with them. They are expected to serve as representatives of OSU and CASNR Career Services, as well as the student body.

"As a Career Liaison, I am not only helping my classmates, but also I am helping myself become more professionally



Students selected as Career Liaisons serve for one year. Above: Whitney Yoder (left), Lanie Alley, Brandi Eberhart, Tam Thomas, Katrina Herral and Jay Seaton. Top left: Elyse Bales. Top right: Farley Schweighart. (Photo by Todd Johnson; graphics by Chris Kidd)



sound,” said Amy Brooks, landscape architecture senior.

All Career Liaisons are trained to help other students with their professional development skills, said Gazaway. In the summer, the team travels to a location in Oklahoma for a retreat. The purpose of the retreat is for the Career Liaisons to get to know one another and become a team.

Before school starts, a weekend is devoted to Career Liaison training and professional development.

“It goes further than training; it is the attitude this team possesses,” said Jay Seaton, Career Liaison and forestry sophomore.

Career Liaisons have set goals in helping their fellow students. One specific goal is generating a clearer message about what Career Liaisons do and becoming more visible to CASNR students so they will know help is available, Gazaway said.

Another goal the Career Liaisons have



set is developing a Web site, which will include career development information as well as the Career Liaisons’ contact information.

“Most students experience some level of confusion in terms of making career decisions and planning for their future,” said Gazaway. “That’s why we have the CASNR Career Liaisons.”

Jarrold Boehs, an agricultural economics senior, attended a résumé workshop given by the Career Liaisons.

“It’s different when it comes from someone on our level,” said Boehs. “They are not as intimidating and the things they say are easier to understand. It makes a difference when excited, passionate students are telling their peers about professional development and career-related activities.”

Whitney Yoder, Career Liaison and agricultural economics senior, said the program has helped her as much as it has helped her fellow students.



“The Career Liaison program has made me become more involved on a college level and not just in my department,” said Yoder. “I used to be scared about not knowing what I needed to do to find a career. I want to help other students and show them the process involved in finding a career so they won’t be in the same boat I was in.”

The main goal of the CASNR Career Liaisons is to help their fellow classmates in their career development efforts.

“I feel privileged to help my classmates,” said Lanie Alley, Career Liaison and agricultural education junior. “I know I have assisted them with their professional development skills, which will help them find a career.” ♦ *By Chris Kidd, Waurika, Okla.*

*For more information about CASNR Career Services or Career Liaisons, call (405) 744-5395 or visit <http://casnr.com>.*