

CASNR takes seven

OSU faculty and staff receive NACTA awards



Douglas Needham



David Buchanan



Shelly Sitton



William Weeks

North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture recognized seven Oklahoma State University faculty and staff for their excellence in teaching and advising at its annual conference in June in San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Douglas Needham won the 2003 NACTA Southern Regional Outstanding Teacher Award. Louann Waldner and Jamie Patton won NACTA graduate student teaching awards. David Buchanan, Shelly Sitton and William Weeks received NACTA Teacher Fellow awards.

NACTA also gives one journal article award each year, and Kathleen Kelsey, agricultural education assistant professor, earned the award with "A Case Study of Land Grant University Faculty Perceptions Toward Serving Stakeholders."

"NACTA is the only professional organization that promotes and enhances teaching across all disciplines in agriculture," said Linda Martin, assistant dean in the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

According to the NACTA Web site, the organization was formed in 1955 to focus on the promotion and recognition of excellence in teaching agriculture and related areas at the college level.

"We have national caliber teachers in CASNR who should be recognized on a national level, and we're very fortunate to have seven award winners this year," said Martin.

To receive the Teacher Fellow Award, the NACTA member must have been employed on a full-time appointment with at least 25 percent teaching for the last five years.

To be nominated for the regional award, a member must wait two years after receiving the Teacher Fellow Award, and a member can be nominated for the National Teaching Award only after receiving the regional award.

"We show excellence in a competitive field as the Southern Region is one of the most competitive," said Martin.

Other regions include the Canadian, the Central, the Eastern and the Western.

"NACTA provides outside validation and review on the quality of the teaching, advising and mentoring in the college of agriculture," said Martin. "It reaffirms the fact that we have very talented teachers."

Receiving these awards impacts the college.

"It is in the best interest of the students, faculty and the citizens of Oklahoma that our faculty be successful," said Ed Miller, CASNR associate dean. "The reputation of our college is important because it helps us recruit excellent students, recruit and retain good teachers, and therefore increase the value of the degrees we award. It is truly a win-win opportunity."

This year OSU will leave its mark.

"NACTA will know about OSU this year, and OSU will know more about NACTA," said Martin. ♦ *By Chandra Orr, Redmond, Ore.*

Douglas Needham

"I enjoy motivating and empowering students to pursue special interests," said Needham. "I believe students are important resources for our future and modern teaching techniques should be student-centered."

Needham began working at OSU in 1989 in the horticulture and landscape architecture department. He currently teaches four horticulture courses and is an active adviser and mentor to students.

"What sets Dr. Needham apart from the others is his consistent attitude of joy in his work," said Amberly Goodman, former student. "He teaches for the love of teaching, not for the recognition it brings."

David Buchanan

"When I interact with a student, whether it is in class, in my office or just walking down the hallway, I must be at the top of my form," said Buchanan. "I have to always be looking for the 'teachable moment.'"

Buchanan joined the animal science department at OSU in 1980. He has been responsible for teaching 15 different courses and advises undergraduate and graduate students.

"Dr. Buchanan makes a lasting impression on his students," said Andrea Pellegrini, former student. "He is a dedicated professor, mentor and friend."

Shelly Sitton

Sitton started as a CASNR instructor and academic adviser in 1992 and became an assistant professor in 2001. Sitton has taught five different agricultural communications courses.

"I am passionate about my students and helping them learn," said Sitton.

Sitton has provided leadership to the college in the area of undergraduate teaching and advising.

"Dr. Sitton serves as a role model for what a professional mentor should be," said Christy Couch Lee, media communications specialist for the Illian Union marketing department at the University of Illinois — Urbana-Champaign.

William Weeks

Weeks joined CASNR's faculty in 1989. He teaches a number of agricultural education courses and also provides leadership for the Residency Teacher Program.

"My role as a teacher is to help my students interpret their experiences and help them answer their questions," said Weeks.

Weeks helps students to answer questions, and he also teaches them skills to get through life.

"Dr. Weeks has been an asset to OSU and has been an aid in the preparation of agricultural educators and leaders in the past and will continue to do so in the future,"

said Brant Carpenter, agricultural education senior.

Louann Waldner

Waldner began pursuing a doctorate in agricultural education in the spring of 1997. While at OSU, she has worked as director of student career services for CASNR and has taught freshman orientation.

Waldner earned her bachelor's degree in agricultural communications and animal science from the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky, and she earned her master's in animal science from Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kan. She will receive her doctorate in May 2004.

"What has impressed me has been her uncompromising commitment to doing her job and doing it well," said Joseph Emenheiser, former student.

Jamie Patton

Patton began pursuing her doctorate in soil science in January 2000. While at OSU, she worked as a teaching/research assistant in the plant and soil sciences department.

Patton earned both her bachelor's degree in agricultural business and her master's degree in soil morphology and genesis from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. She earned her doctorate in August 2003.

"Her commitment to teaching is absolutely incredible," said William Raun, professor plant and soil sciences. ♦ *By Holly Elliott, Stillwater, Okla.*

(Photos by Todd Johnson, OSU Agricultural Communications Services)



Louann Waldner



Jamie Patton