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Greetings! It is with profound gratitude that I write this message to you as the new dean of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. After a national search, the SFA Board of Regents approved my appointment effective Sept. 1. During my 24 years at SFA, I have had the privilege of working with outstanding faculty and staff members. I look forward to continuing this collaboration as we prepare students to succeed in society and address the challenges facing higher education and our agricultural and natural resources. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Matthew McBroom, as he began his role as associate dean on Sept. 1, and Dr. Joey Bray, who began his leadership as chair of the Department of Agriculture last January.

Three new faculty members have joined the college this fall: Dr. Candis Carraway, assistant professor of agriculture development; Dr. Franta Majs, assistant professor of agriculture; and Dr. Chris Schalk, assistant professor of forest wildlife management. They bring considerable expertise in agricultural development, soil and crop science, and amphibian ecology, respectively. Majs assumed the responsibilities held by Dr. Leon Young, professor of agriculture, who passed away suddenly last December. For more than 41 years at SFA, Dr. Young was a mentor to farmers, faculty members and students. His leadership and friendship are missed by all.

As you read the newsletter, you will observe that many of our faculty and staff members, alumni and students have been recognized for their significant academic achievements and professional contributions. Of special note is the induction of Dr. Scott Beasley, professor emeritus of forestry, to the Texas Forestry Hall of Fame. Beasley’s significant contributions as a scholar of forest hydrology and academic leader have had long-lasting influence on faculty members, students and our profession.

The college and SFA will be in the national spotlight next March as we host the 2018 Biennial Conference on University Education in Natural Resources. We have a national reputation for providing transformational, hands-on learning experiences for our students. Hosting the conference in Nacogdoches will provide an opportunity to showcase our innovative teaching methods while we learn from our peers about their novel approaches to natural resource education.

Please note the newsletter section that summarizes the outstanding scholarly productivity of our faculty members during the past year. Without the involvement of undergraduate and graduate students, this impressive record would not be possible, since all of our faculty members have significant teaching responsibilities. In particular, our faculty members are increasing the opportunities and encouraging undergraduate students to become involved in research. Often these undergraduate students co-author posters and publications and present their results at professional meetings. Involving students in research enhances their time management, critical thinking, and oral and written communication skills – all highly sought after competencies. Research also gives students an enhanced sense of accomplishment as they work in a team environment toward solutions to agricultural and forest resources management issues.

Enjoy reading the newsletter. If you are visiting campus, please drop by and visit with us.

-Hans Williams
Dr. Hans Williams was named dean of the ATCOFA during a Board of Regents meeting in July.

Williams joined the SFA faculty in 1993 and has served in various roles, including interim dean and associate dean of the college, as well as associate professor and professor of forestry.

“I am honored and grateful for the opportunity entrusted to me by the Board of Regents, university administration, and college faculty and staff members and students,” Williams said. “I look forward to working with our dedicated faculty and staff members as we create innovative ways to enhance the professional development of our students and serve as an important source of information for the citizens of Texas on the management of our agricultural and natural resources.”

Regents also approved Dr. Matthew McBroom as associate dean of the college. McBroom began his career at SFA as a graduate research associate in 1995 and earned a doctoral degree in forestry from SFA in 2005. In 2016, he was promoted to professor of forest hydrology.

Dr. Joey Bray, associate professor and director of poultry science at SFA, was named chair of SFA’s Department of Agriculture.

Bray, who received both a Bachelor and Master of Science in agriculture from SFA and doctoral degree from Texas A&M University, joined the faculty as assistant professor and director of poultry science in 2009. Since that time, Bray has maintained responsibility of all poultry-related research conducted at SFA. Research emphases include, but are not limited to, poultry management practices, disease management, nutritional feed additives and litter amendments.

“I am very excited to be afforded this opportunity to serve the Department of Agriculture, the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture, and SFA,” Bray said. “I appreciate the support I have received from the administration and faculty and staff members in this new position.”

As chair, Bray will serve as the lead administrator for the Department of Agriculture, advocating for the needs of the faculty and staff members and students. This includes developing and implementing policies, cultivating favorable learning and work environments, and demonstrating a commitment toward teaching, research and service.
Dr. Leon Young, professor of agriculture, passed away Dec. 2, 2016.

Young began teaching at SFA in 1975, and during the next 41 years, he touched the lives of more than 2,000 SFA students who passed through his classroom.

According to Young’s obituary, he grew up on a farm in Medina County near Devine, Texas. He spent his youth on the farm herding cattle, planting and harvesting mostly forage crops and was actively involved in Future Farmers of America. In 1970, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in plant science from Texas A&I University, now known as Texas A&M University – Kingsville. That same year he moved to Ames, Iowa, and began graduate work in soil fertility at Iowa State University, where he earned his Master of Science and doctoral degrees.

Young and his wife, Loraine, moved to Nacogdoches in 1975, and he began teaching soil science and agronomy courses. Young also served as the director of SFA’s Soil, Plant and Water Analysis Laboratory, and from 1984 to 1997, he served as chair of the Department of Agriculture. During this period, new facilities were constructed at the Walter C. Todd Agricultural Research Center, the agriculture curriculum was revised, and he assisted in the development of what is now SFA Gardens.

Young directed more than 30 students pursuing master’s degrees and was awarded SFA’s prestigious Regents Professor title in 2008. In 2012, he was named Nacogdoches County Agriculture Educator of the Year. Outside the classroom, he served as a part of the East Texas Regional Water Planning Group and was a contract broiler grower for Tyson Foods.

Young also passionately supported agricultural projects in Africa. He visited Tanzania several times to work with subsistence farmers and partnered with the Citizens’ Network for Foreign Affairs’ Farmer-to-Farmer program in 2013 to set up a soils laboratory in Mozambique. The CNFA asked him to return the following year to Angola, where he trained farmers in techniques to improve soil fertility.

SFA’s Department of Agriculture is working to establish an endowed scholarship in honor of Dr. Leon Young. You can continue his legacy of education and outreach by visiting sfasu.edu/give. Select “Other,” and enter “Dr. Leon Young Scholarship” as the recipient of your gift.
Dr. R. Scott Beasley named to Texas Forestry Hall of Fame

Dr. R. Scott Beasley, professor emeritus of forestry and former dean of the ATCOFA, was inducted into the Texas Forestry Hall of Fame at a reception held at the Texas Forestry Museum in Lufkin.

“Scott’s steadfast sense of values and his leadership as dean of the college influenced the professional development of many students and faculty members and enhanced the reputation of SFA,” said Dr. Hans Williams, dean of the ATCOFA.

Beasley received his Bachelor of Science in forestry at SFA in 1964. He earned a Master of Science and doctoral degree in forest hydrology from the University of Arizona at Tucson. After seven years with the U.S. Forest Service Forest Hydrology Laboratory in Oxford, Mississippi, he accepted a position at the University of Arkansas at Monticello in 1976 and was appointed as the head of the university’s School of Forestry and Natural Resources in 1988.

In 1992, Beasley was named dean of SFA’s ATCOFA. During his tenure as dean, Beasley achieved a number of administrative accomplishments that include, but are not limited to, working with the Texas Coordinating Board of Higher Education to change the Doctor of Forestry degree to a Doctor of Philosophy; initiating a successful effort to officially designate SFA’s College of Forestry as the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and, later, the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture in honor of Arthur Temple’s contributions to forestry and economic development in Texas; developing state-of-the-art geographic information system laboratories for graduate research and undergraduate teaching; increasing the number and value of scholarships awarded annually to students; obtaining the university’s first patent, a cultivar of Camptotheca with enhanced properties for cancer treatment; and working with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the SFA Arboretum to establish the first Native Plants Center in Texas.
Master of Science in resource interpretation receives name change

SFA’s Board of Regents approved an official name change to the ATCOFA’s Master of Science in resource interpretation program during its January 2017 meeting.

The program’s new title, Master of Science in resource communications, reflects the expansion and growing importance of communications in the field of natural resource management.

The program was initiated in 2003 through a collaborative partnership with the National Park Service and was based on core National Park Service competencies for park interpreters.

“As the program evolved, we grew to more reflect an academic graduate program that provides a broader perspective than just that of the National Park Service,” said Dr. Pat Stephens Williams, SFA associate professor of human dimensions of natural resources.

Students from varying academic and professional backgrounds from across the United States have graduated from the 100-percent online program. Many now hold top leadership positions in a number of the nation’s most renowned national parks, such as Glacier and Grand Teton National Parks.

Both Dr. Shelby Gull Laird, SFA assistant professor of communications and human dimensions, and Stephens Williams said communication is an increasingly sought after employee qualification within the science and natural resources field.

“It’s important to emphasize that prospective students don’t have to be a park interpreter to benefit from our program,” Laird said. “They can be a natural resource scientist who wants to learn more about effective communication, or someone already in the communications field who wants to focus on natural resources.”

Currently, Stephens Williams and Laird are rewriting and updating a number of the program’s courses and anticipate adding more classes to the curriculum.

ATCOFA to host 2018 Biennial Conference on University Education in Natural Resources

Leaders in natural resources education will meet March 8 through 10 in Nacogdoches for the 2018 Biennial Conference on University Education in Natural Resources.

The BCUENR provides a unique opportunity for university-based natural resources educators from across the country to share and explore pedagogical innovations and strategies. The three-day event combines plenary as well as break out sessions that encompass diverse subject matter and perspectives.

While the conference focuses on college and university content, it welcomes the broad spectrum of programming that includes extension and non-formal natural resources education, which also provides valuable insight into best practices that shape traditional educational programming.

The biennial conference originated in the 1990s, and during the past decade, has continued to evolve and provide natural resources educators with information on national trends, groundbreaking teaching methods and resources that foster a meaningful educational experience.
Wayne Weatherford

Wayne Weatherford, lab associate at SFA’s Soil, Plant and Water Analysis Laboratory, was one of four recipients chosen for the 2017 President’s Achievement Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement and excellent service. Weatherford, who has worked at SFA for 32 years, was presented with this award during a ceremony held May 11 in the Baker Pattillo Student Center Grand Ballroom.

Weatherford earned a Bachelor of Science in agriculture from Arkansas State University and a Master of Science in agriculture from SFA.

Since its opening in 1952, the SFA Soil, Plant and Water Analysis Laboratory has processed more than 200,000 soil samples, not including the thousands of water, forage, litter and waste samples that pass through its doors on a yearly basis. In addition to serving the public, the lab is actively engaged in research happening across the university, conducting analyses that range from investigating the lead content of snowy plover blood to E. coli contamination in a local watershed.

Dr. Joey Bray

Dr. Joey Bray, chair of SFA’s Department of Agriculture and associate professor, was among seven SFA faculty members honored at the April 11 Teaching Excellence Convocation.

“At SFA, excellence in teaching is at the core of our mission. These honorees represent not only themselves but also many others who are the best in education,” said Dr. Steve Bullard, SFA provost and vice president for academic affairs. “Our mission at SFA is to engage students in a learner-centered environment. This year’s honorees are exemplars of this mission in action.”

The Teaching Excellence Awards were established in 1994 to honor outstanding classroom teachers at SFA. Each of the university’s six colleges selects a faculty member to receive the annual award based on knowledge of subject matter, quality of lectures and assignments, enthusiasm for teaching, interest in and availability to students, commitment to continuous improvement, and contribution to the quality of teaching at SFA by assisting and encouraging other faculty members.

Bray joined the ATCOFA in 2002, and currently serves as director of poultry science, which includes SFA’s Broiler Research Center and Poultry Research Center. He received both a Bachelor and Master of Science in agriculture from SFA and a doctoral degree in poultry management from Texas A&M University. He teaches numerous undergraduate and graduate poultry science courses and introductory livestock anatomy and physiology for the animal science curriculum at SFA. His research focuses on poultry management practices such as nutritional feed additives, poultry health, poultry lighting, poultry husbandry and welfare, and the environmental impacts of commercial poultry production.
Elyce Rodewald

Elyce Rodewald, education coordinator for SFA Gardens, was one of six women to receive a service award from the Nacogdoches chapter of the American Association of University Women during the 2017 Woman of the Year Awards Banquet held March 28.

Since joining SFA Gardens in 2001, Rodewald has reached thousands of children and adults through afterschool and special programming aimed at introducing the community to the natural world. This diverse programming includes garden seminars, lectures, tours and special children's programming, such as Nacogdoches Naturally and Bugs, Bees, Butterflies and Blossoms, a cooperative program with SFA’s James I. Perkins College of Education.

In 2013, the Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce named Rodewald Agriculture Educator of the Year. In 2016, the Texas Forestry Association recognized Rodewald and Kerry Lemon, former assistant education coordinator at SFA Gardens, as Outstanding Forestry Educators.

"We have honored really tremendous women throughout the years we have done this," said Bernice Wright, president of the Nacogdoches Chapter of the AAUW.

Wright explained recipients from varying fields are chosen following a nomination and review process.

The AAUW is a national organization founded in 1881 to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

Dr. Jared Barnes

Dr. Jared Barnes, assistant professor of horticulture at SFA, received the 2017 Sustainability Award from Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful during the SFA Earth Day Celebration held April 1.

Since joining SFA in 2014, Barnes has made great strides in reaching his goal of doubling the enrollment of SFA's horticulture program. Two years into his five-year time frame, the program lacks only two students to achieve this goal.

“I focused on developing programs with edibles and reinvigorating the gardens around the Agriculture Building that would make the horticulture program more attractive and relevant to potential students,” Barnes said.

The expanded and redesigned garden, dubbed Sprout at SFA, provides student-grown produce for a weekly market located behind the Agriculture Building.

Through this endeavor, Barnes also has increased the visibility of SFA’s horticulture students. These students have been featured on the covers of Sawdust, SFA’s alumni magazine, and Nursery Management, a national trade publication.

Learn more about Sprout at SFA by visiting goo.gl/JZyXaA.
Dr. Candis Carraway

Dr. Candis Carraway recently joined SFA’s Department of Agriculture as an assistant professor of agriculture development. Carraway’s courses will focus primarily on agriculture education and teacher preparation.

Carraway brings a wealth of experience to SFA, which includes serving as a secondary agriculture teacher in East Texas for 16 years. She also taught agricultural education classes at Texas Tech University while pursuing her doctoral degree and led the agricultural education program while teaching undergraduate and graduate-level courses at Washington State University for the past two years.

Some of Carraway’s research interests include exploring the integration of science in agricultural education, as well as teacher recruitment, preparation and retention.

“There is currently a shortage of secondary agriculture teachers in Texas and across the nation, so my No. 1 goal will be to recruit students to major in agricultural development and ultimately receive a teaching certificate,” Carraway said. “I hope to prepare students in a way to ensure they will be effective and successful, while also supporting teachers who are already in the profession.”

Carraway received a Bachelor of Science in agriculture with a minor in secondary education from Sam Houston State University, a Master of Education in educational leadership from Lamar University, and a doctoral degree in agricultural communications and education from Texas Tech University.

“I am glad to be back home in East Texas where I was first introduced to agricultural education as a high school student,” she said. “I look forward to serving the agriculture teachers in Texas and preparing the next generation of agriculture teachers.”

Dr. Chris Schalk

Dr. Chris Schalk joins SFA as the newest assistant professor of forest wildlife management at the ATCOFA.

Schalk, who earned a Bachelor of Science in environmental science at State University of New York and a doctoral degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences from Texas A&M University, said his research focuses on understanding the organization and function of ecological communities and the effects of anthropogenic change on these systems.

“My research program is field-based, and I also conduct experiments in the lab and use the lab for various analytical approaches, such as stable isotope analysis,” Schalk said. “As an integrative conservation scientist, I use these results to inform and design conservation and management strategies.”

While at SFA, Schalk will teach vertebrate natural history and wildlife techniques. In the future, he plans to develop a course on wildlife community ecology.

Schalk said his teaching philosophy revolves around four key objectives that include students developing a complete understanding of a subject’s foundational theories and methodologies; understanding the broader impacts of a field of study.
This fall, Dr. Franta Majs joins the ATCOFA as assistant professor of agriculture and director of SFA’s Soil, Plant and Water Analysis Laboratory. Majs earned a Bachelor of Science in soil science and a Master of Science in agroecology from Mendel University in the Czech Republic. He then earned a Master of Science in soil science from the University of Minnesota and a doctoral degree in agronomy at the University of Georgia.

In addition to his responsibilities as director of the Soil, Plant and Water Analysis Laboratory, Majs will teach courses in soil science, soil fertility and forages.

“My plan is to generate some excitement about soils,” Majs said. “Many students discover soils, the role of soils in their area of specialization and soils-related careers only after they go through a rigorous introductory course. Because it is impossible to generate such excitement in a vacuum, I plan to simultaneously build connections in the local agriculture, forestry, environmental and regulatory communities.”

Majs’ past research has focused on the mineralogy of active surfaces in soil and sediment, molecular stabilization mechanisms of plant nutrients and trace elements therein, as well as soil water semi-equilibriums as an intermediary between solid phase speciation and bioavailability.

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“Understanding soils, crucial components of Earth’s Critical Zone, helps us to understand our environment — particularly its stability, as well as sensitivity to natural and anthropogenic disturbances,” Majs said.

Prior to joining the ATCOFA, Majs served as an assistant professor of soil and environmental sciences at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, and as a lecturer in chemistry and environmental science at Queens University in Charlotte, North Carolina.
Zoé Smiley, a junior pre-veterinary medicine major, and Laken Read, a sophomore agriculture development major at SFA, are recipients of the 2016 American Future Farmers of America Degree, recognized as one of the organization’s highest honors.

Fewer than one percent of FFA members receive the honor, which celebrates members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to the organization, as well as significant accomplishments in agricultural education.

To be eligible for consideration, members must fulfill a number of requirements, including a proven record of leadership and community involvement. They must also submit records substantiating outstanding supervised agricultural experiences and participation in at least 50 hours of community service.

“It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to get this award, and considering less than one percent of students involved in the program receive it, it is a tremendous honor,” Smiley said.

Smiley has been an FFA member for seven years. In addition to her commitment to FFA, she also is a member of Zeta Tau Alpha and the SFA Livestock Judging Team.

Read has been involved in FFA for 12 years and plans to pursue a career as an agriculture teacher to share her passion with future generations.

The SFA Swine Show Team showcased pigs raised at the SFA Swine Farm during the Southwest Type Conference in Belton, Texas. All four SFA pigs made the sale, including the pictured Duroc boar, 32-1, that was purchased by Triple B Sires in Eufaula, Oklahoma, for $6,000. Triple B Sires also purchased 32-1’s littermate sister.

According to the National Swine Registry, Durocs excel in durability, growth and muscle quality attributes.

The NSR formed in 1994 with the goal of enhancing the value of pedigreed swine, maintaining breed integrity, and providing relevant member education and youth development experiences.
Environmental science students named Top Scholars

Five environmental science students were selected to represent the ATCOFA as Top Scholars at SFA’s 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference.

Their project, “Testing E. coli Bacteria in La Nana Bayou,” was conducted in an effort to confirm whether the 2012 listing of Nacogdoches’ La Nana Bayou on the EPA’s 303(d) list of impaired water bodies still holds true. The water body was placed on the impaired list due to elevated levels of E. coli, which could pose a threat to those engaging in certain forms of recreation that place an individual at a higher risk of water ingestion.

Based on the students’ findings, the current levels of E. coli in La Nana Bayou, particularly after a rain event, still exceed acceptable limits that would warrant its removal from the impairment list.

The students presented their findings at the Undergraduate Research Conference held April 18.

Environmental science students display strong showing at national competition

Student representatives of SFA’s Division of Environmental Science placed fourth at a student competition held during the Society of Petroleum Engineer’s Health, Safety, Security, Environment and Social Responsibility Conference in New Orleans.

The challenging, four-hour quiz bowl featured students from six universities, including the Colorado School of Mines, Louisiana State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas Tech University and the University of Oklahoma.

The competition focused on three topic areas: the environment, social responsibility, and health and safety. This was SFA’s first time participating in the event, which is traditionally dominated by petroleum and environmental engineering programs.

Dr. Kenneth Farrish, Arnold Distinguished Professor and director of SFA’s Division of Environmental Science, said the five participating SFA students did an excellent job representing the university and the environmental science program throughout the extremely competitive event and narrowly missed a third-place ranking.

Pictured left to right: Dr. Jeremy Higgins, director of environmental health and safety at SFA; Brianna Bueno; Craig Sterling; Dr. Kenneth Farrish, Arnold Distinguished Professor and director of SFA’s Division of Environmental Science; Jill Pickett; Connor Marx; Megan McCombs and Dr. Sheryll Jerez, associate professor of environmental science
Torn blue tarps serving as the makeshift roof of a cinderblock church gently flapped in the wind as representatives of the ATCOFA asked questions of a predominantly male group of subsistence farmers through an interpreter. Those in attendance are residents of Merger, Haiti, a small village located outside of the country’s capital of Port-au-Prince, who struggle to produce food in the dry, rocky and erosion-prone soil surrounding the community.

That initial meeting, arranged by One Foot Raised, a nonprofit organization founded by SFA alumni, marked the beginning of a week defined by early mornings, late nights, research, brainstorming sessions, and the initiation of long-term agroforestry and sustainable development projects that defy the study-abroad experience universities typically offer.

“This experience is not just a ‘let’s go check it out for 10 days and then go home,’’ said Dr. Shelby Gull Laird, assistant professor of forestry at SFA. “This is an actual service-learning experience where you are going to be doing a lot of work, and when you return home, you will likely still have things to do.”

Becky and Zac Weems, founders of the Nacogdoches-based One Foot Raised, first approached Laird earlier this year with the hope of obtaining agriculture and forestry-based assistance for the villages they serve in Haiti.

“(The communities) came to us and asked for information to plant differently to ensure their crops would be successful, and we didn’t have the skills to do that,” Becky said. “It’s a huge asset to have SFA right in our city because it enables us to access a huge amount of knowledge and skills.”

Martha Carnes and Cody Jones, both SFA seniors pursuing a Bachelor of Science in forestry, said they saw this as a unique, albeit challenging, opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained at SFA.

“The language barrier and the sheer gravity of what the Haitians need forced us to be confident in our decisions,” Jones said.

To help bolster this confidence, Laird and the students met weekly in the months leading up to the departure, familiarizing themselves with the ecology of Haiti, as well as its history of deforestation, natural disasters and economic instability.

“Experiences like this force you out of your comfort zone and require you to think critically and adapt to challenges,” Laird said.

During their stay, the group worked in two separate villages where they tested soil and led farmers through a series of lessons and activities focused on composting, crop rotation and how to transplant trees to stabilize soil and reduce erosion on sheer hillsides used to cultivate crops. At two orphanages in Port-au-Prince, rooftop gardens were constructed, and children were taught how to plant and properly care for seedlings.

Although the SFA students have returned to Texas, their work continues. Currently, they are developing a report to present to One Foot Raised that will cover all of the material presented at each of the sites, as well as recommended next steps.

Laird explained that one of these key steps is establishing contact with experts who can better assess whether the environmental conditions in the village of Quicroif are suitable for growing coffee as a cash crop.

“A student’s view of the world can be rocked when they are hand-in-hand standing in the home of a guy who they just tilled a field with, or, in this case, assisted in transplanting a pine tree,” Zac said. “You know that you had a part in making his life better through education.”

Laird explained that although One Foot Raised is a faith-based nonprofit organization, all volunteers from SFA are welcome to participate regardless of their religious beliefs.
Horticulture, Natural Resources and Tourism in the Netherlands

This May, seven Lumberjacks spent two weeks traveling throughout the Netherlands to experience the culture as well as the natural resource management and horticulture practices of the country. The course, horticulture, natural resources and tourism in the Netherlands, was led by Drs. Brian Oswald, Joe C. Denman Distinguished Professor of forestry, and Michael Maurer, professor of horticulture. From national parks and museums to biotech labs focused on improving flower genetics, students explored a range of what the diverse country offers. Learn more about their experiences by reading select journal entries from the course.

May 18

Today was a good day. The group dynamics are starting to kick off and everyone seems nice and pleasant to be around. I’m excited to get to know them better. Today was the first bike riding day, and luckily, I fell right back into the swing of things like I had never stopped riding. We visited a campground and met a Dutch forester while we were out and about. Later, we checked the bikes back in at the hotel and caught a taxi to the BTL Biotechniques office. They showed us the kind of work they do to fight insects and diseases like leaf aphids and Dutch elm disease. I loved being able to work the injector gun that they use to inoculate for Dutch elm, as well as finally seeing one of the tree mover trucks with the bucket made of blades.

– Jerry Weaver

May 20

After breakfast, we went to the market once more to grab some things for lunch. We then made our way to the bus stop and took the wrong bus, which turned out to be a nice opportunity to view the local landscape and towns. We finally made our way to the correct destination — Hoog Veluwe National Park. Once at the national park, we rented bikes and rode through the park while periodically stopping to discuss land management techniques. We then continued to ride through terrain and landscape that seemed to change faster than Texas weather. It had an overwhelmingly simplistic beauty that was breathtaking and captivating. After a few stops, including one at sand dunes that had been restored, we continued on to the Kröller-Müller Museum in the middle of the park. The museum held breathtaking artwork and is most famously known for its Van Gogh collection, but the sculpture garden also was quite interesting and beautiful. The bike ride back was faster since we did not stop as much. Finally, we all returned our bikes before making our way back to the bus stop to head back to the city.

– Margaret Campbell

May 23

Today was another bike riding day, but it was a lot easier than the others because the terrain was flat. Our first stop was a genetic flower market called Zabo where we learned about flower bulbs and how they are distributed. Our next stop was another genetic flower market called Sande. I did not know anything about these bulbs or flowers, so it was really cool to learn about them and how viruses can affect them. We then biked down to the coast where it was cold and windy.

– Cat Dehne

May 26

At the crack of dawn, we all gathered outside the hotel and took the bus to the Aalsmeer Flower Market. This place was cool. It’s a system of warehouses and offices where vast quantities of cut stem flowers are bought and sold. We walked over the warehouse floor and saw the speed and precision that enables this market to move billions of stems a year. We also saw two of the trading floors where company representatives buy flowers from the sellers. The market uses a Dutch bidding system in which the bid starts high and falls until a company is willing to bid. After the tour, we took the bus back to the city center and split up.

– Jerry Weaver
The Sylvans, SFA's timbersports team, reclaimed the championship title at the 60th annual Southern Forestry Conclave held during spring break in Mount Enterprise.

The team, primarily comprising forestry students, competed in a series of technical and physical events against 12 Southern universities, including Clemson, Auburn, Virginia Tech and Louisiana State University.

Dr. Jeremy Stovall, SFA associate professor of forestry and Sylvans faculty advisor, said the win was especially meaningful because it marked the 40-year anniversary of SFA's first Southern Forestry Conclave win in 1977. Many of the alumni who competed on that team were present to support current students during the competition.

“We worked a lot with the alumni this year, and they were fantastic,” Stovall said. “Alumni helped coach current Sylvans competitors in several events and cheered them on in all the others.”

While competing in this annual event is challenging, hosting it is a monumental task. Stovall and his team of student leaders, as well as faculty and staff members from the college, began preparing for the event in 2015. Leading up to the competition, Stovall and more than 35 students worked 15-hour days to finalize logistics.

“We moved about 15 trailer loads of wood and supplies to set everything up,” Stovall said. “We also served 1,750 meals, set up a concert, hosted the Stihl TIMBERSPORTS Collegiate Series, organized the eight Conclave academic events and prepared the 14 Conclave timbersports events.”

Despite these herculean tasks, SFA students still mustered the intellectual and physical skills required to achieve victory.

“This win is huge for the team and for me,” said Zack Ovelgonne, forest wildlife management senior and Sylvans president. “Losing to Clemson University last year by only 13.5 points left a very bitter taste in all of our mouths.”

Ovelgonne said since the 2016 loss, he and the team were determined to redeem themselves by not only hosting the best event in the history of the Association of Southern Forestry Clubs, but also by winning it.

With this 2017 win, the SFA Sylvans strengthened their position as the second winningest team in Southern Forestry Conclave history. Clemson University placed second in the competition while the University of Arkansas at Monticello finished in third place.
Internships

Riley Ellington

Riley Ellington, a senior agribusiness major, completed a month-long internship with WM Dolphin Service in Lufkin this summer. WM Dolphin is a single-source provider of industrial waste processing and resource recovery services that works with a variety of industries, including oil and gas, as well as the food industry.

Throughout the internship, he was exposed to the company’s many facets of operation, including training in the operational procedures of centrifuges.

“I believe the internship program has been extremely beneficial in helping expose me to potential career opportunities upon graduation, while simultaneously allowing a potential employer to see my work ethic and abilities up close and personal,” Ellington said.

Virginia Haydel

Animal science senior Virginia Haydel completed a five-month internship with Tom McCutcheon Reining Horses. The facility, located in Aubrey, Texas, is considered to be one of the premier reining, training, breeding and rehabilitation centers in the U.S.

Under the mentorship of Barb Wibbels, facility breeding manager, Haydel was responsible for various tasks related to the care of the center’s mares, including vet checks and the delivery of foals.

“Foaling out mares was my favorite part,” Haydel said. “The nights were long, but it was amazing to see the foals being born.”

In total, Haydel participated in the delivery of approximately 30 foals, solidifying her interest in pursuing a future in the equine industry.

“I was not sure what I wanted to do with horses, but reproduction was something I was interested in,” Haydel said. “I strongly suggest students participate in an internship. You get so much hands-on experience and a glimpse into your area of interest.”

Madison Law

This summer, urban forestry senior Madison Law completed an 11-week internship with Davey Tree Experts. From office-based tasks to in-field pruning and pesticide application, Law’s responsibilities during the internship reflect the wide-ranging tasks required of an urban forestry professional.

Law said the knowledge she gained working alongside Davy’s many certified arborists will undoubtedly help her better understand future urban forestry coursework and prepare her for future jobs in the field.

“My favorite part was being able to tag along with the consultants and see how they interact with the customers on a day-to-day basis,” Law said.

Law said she learned about internship opportunities offered through Davey during her freshman year when a company representative visited campus to perform a tree climbing demonstration.
Brandon McBride
Master of Science in environmental science student Brandon McBride is working to provide a comprehensive characterization of groundwater associated with natural springs in East Texas longleaf pine ecosystems.

“Springs in the East Texas longleaf pine ecosystem are relatively unknown, and their contributions, significance and properties have not yet been evaluated,” McBride said.

McBride said that although many other studies concerning spring groundwater interactions with the environment have been conducted in the U.S., little is known about the locations, ecological significance, and physical and chemical parameters of springs in East Texas.

McBride’s research will focus on springs located in Jasper, Newton, Sabine, Angelina and San Augustine counties. Sampling began in January and will take place once a month for nutrient parameters and twice a month for in-situ parameters, such as dissolved oxygen and temperature.

The creation of a comprehensive GIS database also will be initiated. Spring locations will be logged, and pictures and collected data of each site will be compiled and georeferenced to each point.

Courtney Biles
Master of Science in agriculture student Courtney Biles is investigating the ways in which beef cattle producers and their herds can benefit from the use of the latest technology in unmanned aerial vehicles, commonly known as drones.

“New technologies, like drone use, are being introduced to the agriculture industry, and their applications are great in number,” Biles said. “Piloting a drone to check for heat or illness, or to check females for signs of calving can be a useful tool to producers of beef cattle.”

Her upcoming fieldwork will take place this fall and in the spring 2018 semesters at SFA’s Walter C. Todd Agricultural Research Center, where she will monitor the university’s beef cattle herd using UAVs. Before beginning official data collection, Biles has spent much time acquainting herself with UAV use and flight techniques.

“I have enjoyed my time out at the Beef Farm. The hands-on experience gained from my time there will help me tremendously in the future,” she said.
Forestry

Joshua Harris

With funding from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Master of Science in forestry student Joshua Harris is investigating how pairing varied rotational phases within pine plantations affects wildlife diversity and abundance.

Harris said the three structurally different stand types he is investigating can be combined to make three different intra-plantation edge types that are based on age ranges mirroring current management practices: A= pre-thinned against post-thinned, B= pre-thinned against pre-clear-cut and C= post-thinned against pre-clear-cut.

Harris said although past research has identified practices that promote biodiversity within pine plantations, they often result in financial loss incurred by the landowner. His research, on the other hand, focuses specifically on how current forest management practices can be most efficiently utilized to increase the ecosystem services provided by wildlife without fiscal losses.

Results from data collection and analysis indicate that more species and individuals were found among the oldest edge combination (edge type C), which had the most developed under- and mid-story. Edge types A and B contributed most to community evenness, and edge type B exclusively hosted 21 of the 55 invertebrate families detected.

Environmental Science

Courtney McInnerney

Master of Science in environmental science student Courtney McInnerney is monitoring the recovery of avian species following a multi-phased project to restore a post-oak savanna ecosystem within the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area in Anderson County.

“Oak savannas were once an abundant vegetation type in the Midwest United States but have now declined to less than 1 percent of their original range," McInnerney said.

Management practices such as clearing dense, woody debris and a prescribed fire regimen released native savanna grasses that had long been suppressed by the shade of an overgrown tree canopy. This, in turn, has reclaimed the desired habitat and breeding conditions for native birds that include the Eastern wild turkey and Northern bobwhite quail.

“Right now, we’re seeing the shift in bird communities from woodland birds such as Carolina chickadees, Northern cardinals and tufted titmice, to more grassland birds such as dickcissels and lark sparrows,” McInnerney said.
The subtle whir of an unmanned aircraft system, commonly known as a drone, may not be the first thing one expects to hear when visiting a forested tract of land managed by the ATCOFA, but the use of such technology in natural resource management is becoming more commonplace.

“Global positioning systems, aerial measurements and drones are the wave of the future,” said Dr. Daniel Unger, professor of remote sensing of natural resources in the college. “The key is its high spatial resolution, its detail, and you can fly it whenever you want the imagery taken.”

Unger said in 2001, he and other faculty members from SFA’s spatial science program initiated a four-county forest-inventory project using imagery from satellites that pass overhead every 16 days. However, due to cloud cover, this seemingly simple process required two years to obtain usable imagery.

Thanks to the availability of unmanned aircraft systems and other advancements in spatial technology, faculty members and students no longer have to rely on inaccessible satellites and combat limiting factors such as cloud cover.

“The key with the new technology is we control the imagery when we want it,” he said. “We can get it when we need it, as opposed to the old-school technology where we had to rely on other people to collect it.”

The quality of the imagery collected also has substantially improved, providing researchers and natural resource professionals with high-resolution images and precise GPS coordinates that can be used to make management decisions.

Because of the growing use of advanced technology in natural resource management and other related disciplines, the college instituted a new degree program in 2008 dedicated to geographic information systems, remote sensing and GPS. The university’s Bachelor of Science in spatial science provides students with an intensive curriculum in the emphasis areas of natural resources or land surveying. Additionally, faculty members consistently integrate aspects of the spatial science program into the core curriculum of the college’s forestry and environmental science programs.

Dr. David Kulhavy, Laurence C. Walker Distinguished Professor of forest entomology at SFA, said students enrolled in the college’s capstone forestry course recently discovered evidence of Ips bark beetles in a forested tract managed by the college. Their discovery is due in large part to the ability to collect 400 acres of high-resolution imagery in roughly one hour and analyze it in the lab.

SFA’s spatial science faculty members conducted a demonstration for the Texas A&M Forest Service to illustrate the use of unmanned aircraft systems in conducting tree-hazard assessments.
“Within about 10 minutes from collecting the imagery outside, we were in the lab looking at the images, and they were pretty much convinced to buy an unmanned aircraft system to use for this assessment,” Unger said. “The imagery was so good, you could zoom in and see galls on the leaves in the canopy.”

Galls, Kulhavy explained, are irregular growths of plant tissue caused by insects or mites and can be used as indicators of tree health.

“The field has moved from being a labor-intensive to a technologically-intensive career,” said Dr. Yanli Zhang, associate professor of spatial science at SFA.

The use of geospatial technology in natural resource management is so substantial that the college, in partnership with SFA, introduced the Journal of Geospatial Applications in Natural Resources last year. The journal publishes double-blind peer-reviewed articles that utilize geospatial technology to quantify, qualify, map, monitor and manage natural resources.

Although this technology continues to rapidly advance and be incorporated into the college’s programs, spatial science faculty members emphasize the importance of in-field experience. They don’t foresee technology replacing traditional forestry techniques; they see it as yet another useful tool for forest management.

View footage taken by one of the college’s unmanned aircraft systems during the 2017 forestry field station at the SFA Experimental Forest at goo.gl/VUdq4L.
Distinguished Alumni

Dr. Michael Fountain, James Hull and Larry Poe were recognized as the 2017 ATCOFA Distinguished Alumni during annual scholarship banquets held in the spring.

Fountain earned both a Bachelor and a Master of Science in forestry from SFA. He continued his academic career at West Virginia University where he earned a doctoral degree in 1977. Fountain served as an assistant professor of forestry at the University of Arkansas at Monticello before returning to SFA in 1981. Fountain served as professor, associate dean and interim dean of the ATCOFA before retiring in 2010. His numerous awards and recognitions include the Society of American Foresters Fellowship Award, commendation from the United States Forest Service for expert guidance in forest management and the Ken Watterston College Teaching Excellence Award.

Hull graduated with a Bachelor of Science in forestry from SFA in 1965 and began a career with the Texas Forest Service the following year. He holds the honor of being the first state forester to receive a forestry degree from a Texas university, as well as being the first native Texan state forester. During his tenure with the agency, Hull served as assistant and associate director. Hull's service has been recognized through multiple awards, including the Texas Society of American Foresters Forestry Leadership Award, Texas Society of American Foresters Distinguished Service to Forestry Award, Society of American Foresters Fellowship Award, Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of State Foresters and SFA Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Poe received a Bachelor of Science in agriculture and a Master of Education from SFA. Poe taught agriculture in East Texas for more than 40 years. Since retiring, he continues contributing to the field of agriculture by raising cattle and growing timber.

Alumnus receives Presidential Field Forester Award

Gary Burns, who earned a Master of Science in forestry from SFA in 1993, was awarded the Society of American Foresters’ Presidential Field Forester Award for SAF District XI during the organization’s national convention in Madison, Wisconsin.

Burns, who is currently pursuing his doctoral degree in forestry at SFA, has owned and operated Burns Forestry, a forestry consulting firm located in Crockett, since 1969.

“I was flabbergasted,” Burns said. “It means a lot whenever peers give you an award like this.”

According to the SAF, the award recognizes foresters who have dedicated their professional careers to the application of forestry on the ground using sound, scientific methods and adaptive management strategies. Additionally, the awards are presented to individuals who have displayed uncommon talent, skill and innovative methods to achieve a record of excellence in the application of forest management.
During the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities' annual conference in Austin, Dr. Zhu H. Ning, professor in the urban forestry and natural resources department at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Lousiana, received the Excellence in College and University Teaching Award from the United States Department of Agriculture and APLU.

According to the APLU and USDA, this national awards program recognizes the extraordinary efforts of educators who distinguished themselves in a field of hundreds of thousands of men and women who work tirelessly to improve the world through research, instruction and community engagement. Established by the Secretary of Agriculture under the authorization of the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act, the national awards program focuses national attention on the role of teaching, which is fundamental to recruiting and retaining the scientific and professional expertise essential to future growth and progress. The award honors excellence in teaching by recognizing faculty members who both practice and promote effective, innovative teaching. Recipients exhibit sustained, meritorious and exceptional teaching achievements.

Ning graduated from SFA in 1992 with a doctoral degree in forestry. In her award acceptance speech, she recognized the important role SFA played in her professional development.

“I have chosen teaching as my profession because I was inspired by the dean who recruited me and the professors who taught me at SFA,” she said. “Collectively, their teaching and mentoring changed my life. I have been paying it forward through nurturing my own students. Many of them have gone on to succeed in the workforce or graduate school, and I am thrilled to have played an important role in their education.”

Throughout her career, Ning has obtained $20 million in competitive grants to support education, research and student professional development. She has provided experiential-learning opportunities for students, such as study-abroad trips, and has organized workshops, symposia and forums to enhance education and research. Additionally, Ning is highly regarded as an urban forestry expert at regional, national and international levels. With 190 publications, she has integrated research into teaching, nurtured scientific curiosity and motivated students to reach new heights.

Ning has a long history of contributing to the Society of American Foresters through her service as the SAF Urban Forestry Working Group chair, International Forestry Working Group chair, chair of the National Committee on Cultural Diversity and National Convention Program Committee chair. She also served as a member of the SAF National Committee on Leadership Development, National Committee on World Forestry, Education Program Review Criteria Committee and as the SAF representative in the Sustainable Urban Forestry Coalition. Her leadership and spirit of collegiality has resulted in three SAF Working Group Merit Awards for contributions in forest science programs.

Ning’s professional services to the International Society of Arboriculture are equally stellar. She is a member of the editorial board of Arboriculture and Urban Forestry, an associate editor of the Journal of Arboriculture and Urban Forestry, and a member of ISA Science and Research Committee. She also has served on the ISA board of directors and as the president of the ISA Arboriculture Research and Education Academy.

Through her exemplary achievements, Ning also has received the James and Ruth Smith Endowed Professor Award, Chancellor’s Award for Teaching Excellence, Chancellor’s Award for Most Outstanding Researcher, College Faculty Excellence in Research Awards, Department Excellence through Faculty Excellence Award from the Louisiana State Board of Regents of Higher Education and awards from the Louisiana State Governor.
Alumnus receives distinguished service award

The Wildlife Society named the ATCOFA alumnus Stephen Rockwood recipient of the 2016 Distinguished Service Award for the Southeastern Section.

Byron K. Williams, chief executive officer of The Wildlife Society, said the Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals who have worked throughout their careers in a variety of ways to further the mission of The Wildlife Society and can always be counted on to serve when needed.

Rockwood earned both a Bachelor and Master of Science in forestry with an emphasis in wildlife management from SFA. He currently serves as the bureau chief of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in Tallahassee. In this position, Rockwood manages the agency’s aquatic habitat management section, which is responsible for managing, enhancing and restoring the state’s publicly owned freshwater, brackish water and estuarine water bodies.

“During his career, he has made significant and important contributions to wetlands conservation, restoration and management in Florida and nationally,” said Diane R. Eggeman, director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Division of Hunting and Game Management.

Of these contributions, Rockwood said the most meaningful is the establishment of Florida’s first and only publicly managed waterfowl management area and the development of moist-soil wetland management techniques for sub-tropical climates.

Alumnus named executive director of Dallas Safari Club

ATCOFA alumnus Corey Mason was named executive director of the Dallas Safari Club in August.

Mason served as regional director of Texas Parks and Wildlife in Region 3 since 2012. In this position, he oversaw 59 staff members and 21 wildlife management areas. He began his career with Texas Parks and Wildlife in 2001 and served in various parts of Texas in different roles. His duties have required him to interact with the public and outdoor media professionals, legislators, universities, private landowners, as well as federal, state and regional agencies.

“We’re excited to welcome Corey to the Dallas Safari Club family,” said Dallas Safari Club President Craig Nyhus. “Many in the outdoor industry already know him, and we are looking forward to introducing him and his wife, Karyn, to our members and exhibitors.”

Mason earned both a Bachelor and Master of Science in forest wildlife management at SFA. He has published peer-reviewed work on several topics ranging from wetlands management to dove populations. Mason is the current president of the Texas chapter of the Wildlife Society and has been a member of the national Wildlife Society since 1998.

“As a hunter and wildlife biologist, I am very honored and excited to have been selected,” Mason said. “Everyone has been extremely welcoming, and I am eager to meet with our members and industry and conservation partners to begin tackling the pressing issues.”
Alumni Careers

Bryce German
In his current position of environmental health and safety specialist for Georgia-Pacific’s Dixie Consumer Products Division, Bryce German, a 2016 graduate of the ATCOFA’s Bachelor of Science in environmental science program, works to solve the complex environmental issues that drew him to science at a young age.

“One of my favorite ways to make an impact is by working with our corporate beneficial reuse team,” German said. “Getting to sit down and figure out how to take a waste stream that’s currently going to the landfill and reuse it elsewhere is a really fun challenge.”

One of German’s most recent accomplishments is spearheading a project to recover waste baling wire used in the company’s papermaking process. Through this new project, the used wire is recycled off site, ultimately diverting several thousand tons of metal per year from landfills.

In addition to special projects, German is responsible for monitoring the facility’s environmental compliance, which includes air and water monitoring, solid and hazardous waste management, as well as the preparation of state and federal reports.

“Georgia-Pacific is a company that puts compliance ahead of everything else,” German said. “It’s great to work for a company that practices such great environmental stewardship.”

Jason Lombardi
For Jason Lombardi, the pursuit of wildlife research and management boils down to one word — passion.

“As a child, I was always fascinated with animals and the habitats they live in,” Lombardi said. “I would say it was a combination of trips to the American Museum of Natural History, the Bronx Zoo, time spent at my grandparent’s house in upstate New York and reading as much as I could about wildlife that sparked this lifelong goal of research.”

After graduating from SFA in 2014 with a Master of Science in forestry with an emphasis in forest wildlife management, Lombardi was accepted by Texas A&M University at Kingsville, where he now serves as a Coates Fellow in habitat research at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute. His doctoral research focuses on the federally endangered ocelot in Texas’ Rio Grande Valley, where fewer than 80 remain in two isolated subpopulations located in Willacy and Cameron Counties.

“The topics of my dissertation research focus on using traditional research methods, such as live capture, GPS telemetry, and remote sensing and non-invasive survey techniques to examine the habitat factors of ocelot occupancy and conservation,” Lombardi said.

Last fall, the Houston Safari Club awarded Lombardi the Dan L. Duncan Conservation Scholarship, and this spring, his urban carnivore research conducted at SFA titled “Coyote, fox and bobcat response to anthropogenic and natural landscape features in a small urban area” was published in Urban Ecosystems, an international urban ecology journal.

Lombardi said after he earns a doctoral degree he aims to pursue a research position at a federal agency or a Research-1 academic institution where he can continue conducting high-level carnivore research on a national or international scale.
ATCOFA at a glance

More than $223,000 in scholarships awarded in 2017

Student Life

A residential-learning community at Steen Hall established in 2016 provides learning opportunities and service activities that complement undergraduate majors in forestry, environmental science or spatial science.

5 international and domestic study-abroad opportunities offered

Costa Rica
Great Smoky Mountains
Haiti
the Netherlands
Sweden
ACADEMICS

60
unique academic publications and contributions during the 2015-16 academic year

$724,419
in grants awarded to the college during the 2016-17 fiscal year.

2
patents granted to the National Center for Pharmaceutica Crops during the 2015-16 academic year

MORE THAN 100
unique academic presentations given across the U.S. and internationally during the 2015-16 academic year

OUTREACH

20
special events and outreach presentations during the 2015-16 academic year

More than
11,500
community members reached through SFA Gardens’ special programming for adults and children during 2016-17

More than
20
special events and outreach presentations during the 2015-16 academic year
Stephen F. Austin State University

Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture
419 East College St.
P.O. Box 6109, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, TX 75962

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