



CALS *Connection*

Connecting our Students, Alumni, and Communities Worldwide

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences • IFAS at the University of Florida

Volume 5, June 2005





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CALS Connection

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Editor in Chief

Melissa Muegge

Writing Editors

Melissa Muegge

Julie Walters

Ricky Telg

Design Editors

Melissa Muegge

Emily Rhoades

Tracy D. Zwillinger

Adviser

E. Jane Luzar

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Core Values

CALS Mission:

To provide a high-quality education to students statewide resulting in society-ready graduates in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources human and life sciences.

CALS Core Values:

To meet its requirements to the people of Florida and to serve its mission of producing society-ready graduates, CALS advances its core values:

Excellence is the standard for all CALS academic programs.

Through **diversity**, CALS can ensure gender, racial and social balance.

As part of a land grant university, CALS is responsive and **accountable** to Florida's citizens.

CALS is **global** in its perspective and develops world-class programs on behalf of all its students.

CALS accepts responsibility to expand the **public's awareness** of its programs and benefits.

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Making Tracks Studying Abroad

By Kimberly Bellah, Ph.D. student in Agricultural Education & Communication



professor in the family, youth and community sciences department. "They range from short tours during spring break to a full semester abroad."

Swisher said the most popular tour is the France summer program, in which students from UF and five other American universities study agriculture at Purpan University for four weeks. Students further their degree programs and become truly immersed in the culture, she said.

"I wanted to travel as a Global Gator participant because I had not studied in a classroom environment in a foreign country," said Jacqueline Norat, a senior animal biology major. "While



CALS students sitting on a hillside of the Pyreneese Mountains.

Round-trip airline ticket to a foreign country: approximately \$1000.

Living with a local family and learning their language: \$0.

Learning about agriculture from another point of view: Priceless.

The Global Gators program offers CALS students international study experiences with agricultural institutions in foreign countries. Students take required courses for their degree program, while gaining the benefit of travel in

Once the travel bug bites, some CALS students are unable to stop at one international experience.

Ginger Larson was a participant on the France trip, as well as on one of the most recent short-term exchange programs with Canada's University of Guelph. After hosting a group of University of Guelph students in Gainesville for a week, agricultural communication students from UF then went to Canada during spring break to learn about Canadian agriculture. The UF students garnered a better understanding of how Canadians view U.S. agricultural practices and policies.

"Canadians are very tuned in to American agriculture and what is going on with the world's economy," said Larson, a senior agricultural education and communication and photojournalism double

major. "They seem to have a much better grasp of what goes on agriculturally beyond their borders than do most students in the U.S."

As the University of Florida strives to reach the Top 10 tier of research institutions in the U.S., Swisher sees Global Gators as an integral component of meeting that goal.

"Our students and our college cannot be the best if they cannot compete internationally," Swisher said. "We owe these experiences to our students. It is unfair to send them into the professional world without opportunities to explore other cultures."

Students interested in learning more about Global Gators, or who want to participate in an agriculturally based international course of study, should visit the Global Gators website at <http://cals.ufl.edu/globalgators/>.



CALS students boating through mangroves in Costa Rica.

another country. Students can receive course credit towards their degrees in 17 programs offered in a variety of host countries, from Brazil to the Czech Republic.

"We have short-term and long-term programs," said Mickie Swisher, an associate

I was there, I worked on a pig farm for a hands-on internship experience. There is no better way to learn about another culture than to immerse yourself and to be completely free from the tourist aspect."



TailGATOR 2004

By Sorrell Vickers, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication



CALS Alumni, Tom Lanier, class of 1953, and his grandson enjoy eating the delicious BBQ meal.



Lane Jimison, Executive Director Florida 4-H Club Foundation, and Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson, pose for a picture at TailGATOR 2004.



Emily Sperling, CALS director of student recruitment and executive director of CALS Alumni and Friends, visits with Jerry and Jill Southwell, alumni volunteers, as they recruit new alumni to be apart of the CALS Alumni and Friends.

Mardi Gras beads, bangles and bright colors welcomed more than 800 students, faculty and alumni to the eighth annual College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' TailGATOR event in September, an afternoon function that culminated with a football game between the Gators and the LSU Tigers.

The 2004 festival was the first major event coordinated by Emily Sperling in her new position as CALS director of student recruitment and executive director of CALS Alumni and Friends. She attributed TailGATOR's success to the network of Gator graduates, faculty and current students. "I think the real success of TailGATOR comes from the support of departments, student organizations and the alumni," Sperling said. "They

are the heart and driving force."

Sperling's position on the board of CALS Alumni and Friends allows her to work closely with those who preserve and promote the alumni organization.

"A Gator spirit and curiosity to see change in the college and university is what continues to draw alumni back," she said.

The mission of the CALS Alumni and Friends organization is to build a

TailGATOR 2005
Alumni Barbeque
 November 5th
 Three hours before
 kickoff
 UF Gators vs. Vanderbilt
 Commodores
TailGATOR
Golf Tournament
 November 4th
 UF Golf Course
 Information about
 both events will be
 available at:
www.cals.ufl.edu/alumni

network of alumni and industry professionals to enhance awareness and promote quality programs at the University of Florida.

CALS Alumni and Friends President Roger Scarborough said he would like to see graduates stay

involved with the university, because UF continues to have a lot to offer its students long after graduation. "Cultivating relationships with other

alumni in related industries and encouraging outstanding students to attend our college are just some of the benefits of being a part of this outstanding group of people," Scarborough said.

Every year the University of Florida Alumni Association awards the title of Honorary Alumnus. The 2004 award was presented to Charles H. Bronson, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Service. Eleanor M. Green, Ph.D. and Martha R. Roberts, Ph.D. were awarded the CALS Alumni and Friends Award of Distinction. Jason Beutke also was recognized as the CALS Alumni and Friends scholarship recipient.

Gator Helps Red Planet Go Green

By Courtney Davis, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication

Life for Jordan Barney, originally an animal science major, changed when she took a job in a plant research lab at Fifield Hall. Through effort and perseverance, she cultivated a love for plant research and switched her major to horticultural sciences.



"She has an extraordinary work ethic," said Anna-Lisa Paul, associate research faculty in horticultural sciences. "It is hard to find undergraduates who are as hardworking as Jordan is."

Shortly after getting involved with plant research, she decided to change her major so she could focus on her minor, plant molecular and cell biology.

"My minor is my real interest, it is what I really enjoy doing," Barney said.

After graduation, Barney hopes to continue her research to develop crops to sustain agriculture on Mars.

Last year she presented her poster "Tissue Specific Hypoxstress in Arabidopsis," in New York, where she won the undergraduate category.

In addition to her research at UF, last May at the University of Guelph in Canada, she researched growing plants in low atmospheric pressure levels simulating conditions experienced on Mars.

"We worked about 12 hours a day, but it was wonderful work experience," Barney said.

Barney was raised in the small farm town of Baltimore, Ohio, for most of her life until her parents made a job change and moved to Ft. Myers, Fla.

"I was really involved in 4-H in Ohio, but in Ft. Myers they did not have 4-H or FFA and I missed it," Barney said.

Never forgetting her farm town upbringing, she knew that one day she would attend the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. "It is the best agriculture college in the state," Barney said.

Plants are not Barney's only love; she is also an active member of the UF equestrian team, where she has traveled from Atlanta to Miami competing in western pleasure and English events. Barney is also a CALS Ambassador.

Rodeo Gator

By Kimberly Bellah, Ph.D. student in Agricultural Education & Communication

The sound of a swinging lariat cuts through the crisp morning air as cattle shuffle in the pen. Horses are saddled and mounted on what could be any working cattle ranch. What sets this day apart from others, however, is the distinct call coming over the loud-speaker. On this early, rainy morning, the voice behind the microphone belongs to Dustin Bass.

Bass, 23, a food and resources economics senior, uses his vocal talent at rodeos, horse shows, and team penning, cutting and barrel racing events throughout North Central Florida.

"Today, I will be announcing and keeping time for about

300 team roping teams," Bass said, as he crossed the arena, dodging horses and riders as they warmed up. "It makes for a long day, but it's a lot of fun."

Bass has been serving as an announcer for nearly a decade, after coming into the announcing business by accident. "The regular announcer at my parents' arena was a no-show," Bass said, "so my father told me to get in there and do it."

From then on, Bass has worked nearly nonstop. In 2004, Bass worked an average of three weekends a month. The money Bass earns announcing helps pay for

college, but it doesn't come without some sacrifice. "It stresses friendships when I have to work during everyone else's only time off," Bass said.

Bass has decided to put the microphone down more often during the academic year to place more focus on school and his extracurricular commitments. As a College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Ambassador, a business plan writing team member, a Food and Resource Economics/National Agri-Marketing Association team member and club officer, Bass has no difficulty filling the time he saves by cutting back on announcing events.

"Dustin is a highly engaged person," said FRE assistant professor James Sterns. "He is almost like a magnet for opportunity. He is one of the few students who steps up and takes advantage of opportunities outside of class."

Even with the difficulties of time and travel associated with his job, as well as balancing school and social activities, Bass has no regrets about his decisions. "The most rewarding part of my job is the people," Bass said. "There is a lot of overlap with the events I do, so I get to know a core group of people and they get to know me."



CALS Welcomes Chris Vitelli

By Julia Cates, Junior in Agriculture Education & Communication

Creative, student-focused and communicative are three words that describe Chris Vitelli, the new CALS director of student services.



"I enjoy how my job is different day to day. There's always something new, challenging, exciting," Vitelli said.

A recent graduate of UF, Vitelli sees his new appointment as an opportunity to relate to

students on a personal level. "I enjoy learning how academics works from an administrative perspective, having been so recently on the other side of the fence as a student," Vitelli said. "It's easy to forget that the programs we develop are there to benefit students. I'm not so far from being in their shoes that I can't understand them."

Vitelli's position includes working with student organizations, planning events, developing career resources, and academic advising and support services. He works closely with CALS Associate Dean Jane Luzar to plan and prepare for the college's events.

"His fresh, objective look at our CALS events as well as

his significant contributions to our leadership activities has made him a valuable member of the CALS team," Luzar said. "I know students identify with him, and also look to him as an example of what a Gator can become."

In addition to being student-oriented, Vitelli said his creativity and communication skills help him shape CALS programs that are meaningful for all students. "I try to be pretty transparent in everything I do, and to use my creativity to make our programs purposeful and enjoyable for students," he said.

Vitelli also serves as the adviser of CALS Ambassadors, a select group of students who create awareness of academic

programs and career opportunities relating to food, agriculture and natural resources across the state.

"Working with the ambassadors is the highlight of my job," he said. "I love training them and watching them grow."

Emily Hand, a junior agricultural education and communication major and CALS Ambassador, said that Vitelli's passion for helping others makes him great at his job.

"Chris has a heart to help others and a passion for agriculture," Hand said. "He brings fun and creativity wherever he goes."



2004-2005 Ambassadors (Left to Right top row) Grant Copeland, Scott Johnson, Ronnie Simmons, Jake Raburn, Tyrell Kahan, Brad Jahnke, Sara Langmaack, Quentin Singleton, John Faryna, Brian Estevez, Megan Hoot, Jordan Barney, Dallas Farrell, Dusty Bass, Luis Martinez, Arash Esmailzadegan, Anthony Peace (Left to Right bottom row) Ginger Larson, Lindsey Land, Allison Eckhardt, Shaun Fulford, Lauren Schulman, Tashara Martin, Jodi Degraw, Noelle Rivera and Emily Hand.

2005-2006 CALS Ambassadors

Faith Allen
Jordan Barney
Jason Bridge
Jessica Burgess
Lauryn Cannon
Julie Chandler
Courtney Davis
Erica Der
Kathryn Duley
Allison Eckhardt
Arash Esmailzadegan
John Faryna
Anna Flaig
Matt Fournier
Lindsay Griffin
Ashley Hamilton
Emily Hand

Amber Henderson
Scott Johnson
Tyrell Kahan
Ginger Larson
Alina Lovelace
James Modica
David Ortega
Anthony Peace
Kaleena Pou
Jacob Rayburn
Noelle Rivera
Gary Schaefer
Lauren Schulman
Keri Shaw
Thelma Theodoris
Sorrell Vickers
Adviser: Chris Vitelli

Turner Receives National Recognition

By Katie Duley, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication



Elaine Turner, associate professor in food science and human nutrition, receives the 2004-05 National USDA Food and Agriculture Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award from Joseph Jen (right), USDA under-secretary for research, education and economics. UF senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources Jimmy Cheek (left) also attended the award ceremony in San Diego.

The 2004 U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award was presented to one of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' very own: Elaine Turner. Turner, an associate professor in the department of food science and human nutrition, was one of two professors receiving the national award.

"Dr. Turner is an exceptionally talented and dedicated teacher, scholar, adviser and mentor," said Jimmy Cheek, University of Florida's senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources at the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Being recognized by the USDA as one of the two outstanding university faculty nationally for excellence in teaching and

scholarship is an appropriate tribute.

In addition to teaching at UF, Turner serves as undergraduate coordinator for more than 130 students. She works with recruitment, new student orientation and student organizations, and mentors graduate and undergraduate students in their research and independent studies. Turner's passion for teaching students is evident in her day-to-day role as a professor and as an advisor. Her students say they admire her excitement for nutrition and her strong knowledge of the subject.

"Dr. Turner is well respected because she is so knowledgeable and enthusiastic about what she does," said Tarah Freyman, senior nutritional science major. "As a mentor, she

offers appropriate advice and criticism and makes an effort to get to know her students on a personal level."

Vincent Yeung, a senior nutritional science major, said, "Dr. Turner is one of those special professors who make UF great, and I am honored to have learned from her during my time at this university."

"My greatest desire is to create a climate in the classroom that allows students to motivate themselves to learn," Turner said. "Information is always challenging because the information students have is broad. Students always have some misconceptions they have to deal with as they make their decisions."

In addition to helping students, Turner serves as the president of Gamma Sigma Delta, an agricultural honor society, and is a member of a working group designed to develop non-formal Web-based resources and Extension's Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) for biotechnology education in Florida.

Tracy Irani, an assistant professor in the department of agricultural education and communication, has worked closely with Turner on several projects and also serves as a Gamma Sigma Delta officer.

"Nutrition education is an increasingly important area," Irani said. "Dr. Turner is dedicated to advancing the field, and is extremely innovative in her teaching methods."

Turner completed her bachelor's degree from Kansas State University and received her master's and doctorate from Purdue University. Before Turner joined the UF faculty in the summer of 1996, she spent 10 years teaching nutrition at Clemson University.

Outside of academia, Turner has undertaken a variety of professional experiences, including working as a clinical nutrition specialist at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and as a clinical dietitian at the Medical College of Ohio.



Turner advises student on which courses to take for the fall semester.

Going Global in Gainesville

By Ginger Larson, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication



CALS students celebrate diversity with an evening of fun and dancing.

Hola. Bonjour. Ciao. Hello. A simple welcome can be expressed in many ways. This is what people discovered when they attended the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Multicultural Reception at the Keene Faculty Center on Nov. 19.

Those in attendance learned about other cultures, gained new perspectives about each other's backgrounds, and were exposed to the diversity of CALS at the University of Florida.

"When you realize how unique and special other cultures are it enriches you," said Tyrell Kahan, a senior animal science major.

Luis Martinez, a senior food science major, opened

the reception in Spanish and Jimmy Cheek, UF's senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources spoke about the diversity found in CALS.

"We are very proud of the diversity of our college," Cheek said. "Thirty percent of our students at the undergraduate level are international students and 60 percent are female."

The reception was a celebration of cultures coming together with the common bond of being a Florida Gator and a CALS student.

"I personally hope that my students take with them not only academic knowledge, skills and tools but that they

remember the relationships they developed on campus," said Marta Hartmann, a lecturer in the department of agricultural education and communication. "I want them to fondly remember the time beyond the classroom or lecture."

Chris Vitelli, CALS director of student services, said the college has an estimated 4,000 undergraduates enrolled in its 20 majors, 50 specializations and 23 minors, making it one of the more diverse colleges at UF.

CALS faculty members also come from various backgrounds and experiences. Jane Luzar, CALS associate dean, grew up on a farm in

Indiana and spent three years in Liberia, West Africa, with the Peace Corps, sharing agricultural knowledge.

"Agriculture and life sciences are global endeavors," Luzar said. "As we educate our students to be society-ready graduates, we put them in the context of a global society."

Although Luzar realizes that not everyone can devote three years of their life to living in another culture, she encourages students to take advantage of the opportunities available through CALS that will provide them with a more global perspective, such as study abroad.

CALS Alumni Shaping



Betty and Sonny Williamson

The Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame's mission is to "honor those men and women who have made lasting contributions to agriculture in this state." In the last 25 years, outstanding alumni of the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences have been selected by

their peers in industry and academia to receive the honor of induction.

"Alumni are the foundation on which the college's academic reputation is built," said Emily Sperling, CALS

director of student recruitment and executive director of CALS Alumni and Friends.

"CALs has a diverse group of alumni who have achieved success in agriculture, natural resources, life sciences and human services. Being a Florida graduate myself, I understand the pride our alumni take in ensuring that CALS is one of

UF's premier colleges."

The Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame inducted its first group of honorees in 1980. Since that time, 110 people have been chosen for membership. Each year, 700-

900 people from across the Florida agriculture industry gather to honor new inductees at the annual banquet, held in conjunction with the Florida State Fair.

"Being inducted into the Agricultural Hall of Fame is a special honor held by few people," said Erin Freel Best, Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame board member. "It is

"Graduates who are willing to accept change, get involved with commodity organizations or governmental agencies, work hard and take risks will be successful."

-- Carl B. Loop, Jr.

a celebration of the person's accomplishments over their lifetime."

UF/CALS alumnus and one of Florida's premier ranchers, Frank "Sonny" Williamson, Jr. was inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2005. Williamson is a fifth-generation Floridian whose background is in cattle, citrus and aquaculture. His constant support for agricultural and environmental research has made him one of Florida's top agro-ecologists.

"I didn't expect to be inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame," Williamson said. "It's an honor and a humbling experience, because there are so many people around the state who have done so many good things for agriculture. You have a tendency to say, 'why me?'"

Florida's Agriculture Industry

By Rebecca McGovney, Master's student in Agricultural Education & Communication



Thomas Richard Barber, Jr.

"The University of Florida and CALS not only gave me a great education, but a life-long connection to the science of agriculture," Williamson said.

UF/CALS alumnus and peanut farmer, Thomas "Richard" Barber, Jr. was inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2004. Barber is also a native Floridian, with an agricultural background in watermelons,

cattle and peanuts. As one of the founding members of the Florida Peanut Producers Association, Barber has served both the Florida and U.S. peanut industries well. He was among the first to adopt the practice of strip-till farming, an environmentally friendly farming practice that stops wind erosion and conserves moisture.

"Everything I do in my business today, I learned the groundwork at the University of Florida," Barber said. "It opened doors for me in the field of agriculture, and I met a great group of faculty and students, with whom I still do business today. It's meant a lot to me over the years and I wouldn't trade these associations for any experience in my business or social life."

In 2002, Carl B. Loop, a UF/CALS alumnus and

owner/operator of Loop's Nursery and Greenhouse, was inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame. Loop, president of Florida Farm Bureau for 22 years, developed his interest in agriculture while growing up on his uncle's small ornamental farm. Loop has contributed 36 years to the Florida nursery industry, and said his horticulture degree in from UF/CALS provided him with the education and experiences necessary to begin his career.

"The university and CALS helped to build my confidence," Loop said. "I think a college degree teaches you how to do research and to be successful, and I feel my degree gave me a good background for the nursery industry."

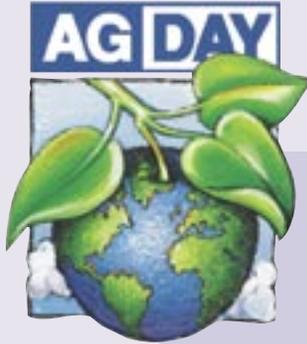
Loop said he sees great opportunities for graduating



Carl B. Loop, Jr.

seniors wanting to begin a career in the agriculture industry, despite the fast changes the industry is facing. "It is going to be so different from what we're used to," he said. "Graduates who are willing to accept change, get involved with commodity organizations or governmental agencies, work hard and take risks will be successful."

UF Celebrates N



By Julie Chandler, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication

This March, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences began a new tradition, celebrating National Agriculture Week with a week of educational and entertaining events around the University of Florida campus.

“Celebrating National Ag Week is a tradition across the country,” said CALS associate dean Jane Luzar. “I wondered for years why we didn’t do it. This year I decided we would.”

Students, faculty and staff from across the college were encouraged to participate in the weeklong celebration from March 20-26. The week’s events included a bike ride and nature walk at Boulware Springs Park, an interdepartmental community service project at UF President Bernie Machen’s home, the Spring Fling Barbecue, informational booths at Reitz Union and a leadership banquet.

CALS director of student services Chris Vitelli said, “This isn’t the first time there’s been a college-wide celebration of agriculture, but it is the first time National Agriculture Week has been celebrated at UF.”

One goal of the CALS recognition of National Agriculture Week was to educate consumers on where their food comes from and about agriculture’s importance to the nation’s economy. The college also hoped to promote awareness of those areas of the agriculture industry that might be overlooked by the general public or not intuitively associated with agriculture and life sciences.



National Ag Week

March 20-26, 2005

"We want this to be a weeklong event that covers all aspects of agriculture," Luzar said. "From our food supply, to wildlife habitat, to advancements in biotechnology, we want to educate our student body and the general public about all aspects of agriculture and life sciences."

CALS' observance of National Agriculture Week opened on Saturday, March 19, with CALS Family and Friends Day at Boulware Springs Park. The following day, more than 100 students from 16 college organizations met on the property of UF President Bernie Machen to participate in the college's first interdepartmental community service project, providing site improvement to the Machens' hurricane-damaged backyard.

"This pilot project was the centerpiece of the Ag Week celebration, because it really showcases our department's unique skills and abilities," Luzar said. "We can do things that no other college can do."

With shovels in hand, students marched through fallen trees and brush, determined to make a difference. At the end of the day, the backyard was transformed into a sanctuary to be enjoyed by students, staff and Gainesville residents for years to come.

On Monday, March 21, the Spring Fling at Florida Field's Touchdown Terrace gave CALS students the opportunity to mingle over barbeque and great music. The following Wednesday, a leadership banquet honored the student and faculty officers of more than 35 clubs and organizations in the college.



Gator Represents Agriculture in the United States and Abroad

By Josh Williams, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication



It may seem unusual for someone from another country to represent American agriculture, but Luis Martinez, a senior food science major from Ecuador, believes he is a perfect fit.

As a College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Ambassador at the University of Florida, Martinez has opportunities to travel around the state to tell people about the importance of agriculture.

"I really share the passion of the college, and the

importance of agriculture in Florida and as a whole," Martinez said. "Someone might think it's weird for me to represent agriculture in the United States, but I think I have an advantage because I have the experience of how things work in another country."

Martinez brought his passion for agriculture with him when he left Ecuador to become a part of the college and the university.

His family background in agriculture dates back centuries. His family has been involved in agriculture in many ways, from growing corn and raising beef cattle to maintaining shrimp farms.

"I have a deep background in agriculture, so it is exciting for me to learn about agriculture in the U.S.," Martinez said.

The experience Martinez has gained at UF will help him benefit the agricultural industry in Ecuador, he said.

"Ecuador is a small country, and we only have 13 million people," he said, "but the country is very rich in resources, so there is a lot I could do there."

Martinez will make a positive difference wherever he goes, said Lindsey Land, an agricultural education and communication major and fellow CALS Ambassador.

"When he says he wants to do something, it is understood that it will be done," she said. "He is very goal-oriented."

Martinez will take the knowledge he has gained at UF to build relationships between agricultural establishments in the United States and Ecuador.

"It is so amazing to be able to learn so much that I can use here and also take back to my country," Martinez said. "It is wonderful that I could be such a part of this college."

Martinez is sure he will excel in food science and make a difference in Ecuador because of the opportunities he has received at UF.

"Ecuador has so much to offer as a country," Martinez said. "We have such a good environment for agriculture."

Luis is also a participant in the UF-ESPOL International Exchange Program.

Students Cover CALS News and Events

The articles in this edition of the CALS Connection were written by agricultural education and communication students with an interest in writing and communication.

Student Contributors include:

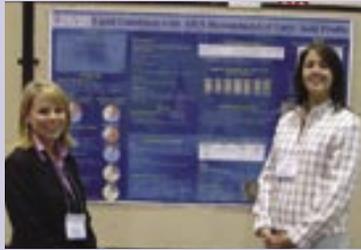
Kimberly Bellah
Julia Cates
Julie Chandler
Courtney Davis
Chelsa Drake
Rebecca Douglas

Renee Durham
Katie Duley
Ashley Hurst
Ginger Larson
Rebecca McGovney
Melissa Muegge

Emily Rhoades
Peggy Rudsor
Amanda Ruth
Jimmy Varvorines
Sorrell Vickers
Josh Williams

CALS FOSTERS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

By Ashley Hurst, Master's student in Agricultural Education & Communication



Sabrina Khouri (right), Lauren Little (left) presenting a research poster at a recent research conference.

Throughout the university and CALS, undergraduate students are expanding their professional horizons in research, an area of academics primarily known to graduate students and professors. These inquisitive students foster their scientific skills and knowledge through an honor society known as the InvestiGators.

"The InvestiGators are a research-based honor society with the purpose of providing students who are involved in an intensive research environment a forum to practice good research procedure, share knowledge and develop friendships," said Peggy Borum, InvestiGators adviser and a professor in the department of food science and human nutrition.

With approximately 40 members in the honor society, members are divided into teams of 10 to 15 students to investigate the role of vital nutrients that the body produces, educate pediatric HIV patients and their families about nutrition, and research ways nutrients can be used to treat seizures.

"The InvestiGators organization provides

members the opportunity to be a professional with their own responsibilities, instead of merely assisting," Borum said. "The learning curve is quite steep, the expectations are very high, and a real commitment is required."

Borum said the interview process is rigorous, and potential members must undergo a series of three interviews before becoming a member. Once a student becomes a member, he or she attends three to four weekly meetings.

These members are in a league of their own, as they present research at professional meetings attended by faculty and graduate students. Lauren Little, a nutritional science major, was the only undergraduate at the 2005 Clinical Nutrition Week's international meeting in Orlando, Fla. to give an oral presentation.

Members also have the opportunity to present their research to doctors and other professionals at national meetings. Sabrina Khouri, a senior food science and human nutrition major, said joining the club allows students to participate in research and expand their knowledge in areas that are interesting to them.

"I would encourage students who want to learn to think outside of the box and who are interested in research to apply for the InvestiGators," Khouri said.

GATOR DOC

By Chelsa Drake, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication



Sometimes lifelong dreams are just that: dreams. However, Nana Ankumah is determined to make her lifelong dream of becoming a medical doctor a reality.

Ankumah is a junior in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, double majoring in microbiology and cell science and Spanish as she prepares herself for medical school.

"I want to be an OB/GYN (obstetrician/gynecologist)," Ankumah said. "At first I wanted to be a pediatrician, but I am more interested in delivering babies."

As a young adult, Ankumah went to work with her aunt, who is a pediatrician. By working closely with her aunt, she knew early on that she wanted to become a doctor and follow in her aunt's footsteps.

"I liked how she had a relationship with her patients," Ankumah said.

Ankumah wants to practice medicine and to build rapport with her patients. She likes helping other people and hopes that by becoming a doctor she will be able to do just that.

"Nana has a sincere love for people and enjoys life," said

Sally Williams, an associate professor in the animal sciences department.

Although Ankumah grew up in Auburn, Ala., she chose to attend the University of Florida over Auburn University. "When I visited UF, I knew this is where I wanted to go to school," Ankumah said. "Even though it is large, it has a lot of opportunities. Kind of like a buffet, it has a lot to pick from academically and socially."

Even though Ankumah has a busy academic schedule, she has made time to be active in five organizations on campus.

"Nana is a perfect example of a student who excels in both academics and commitment to the university community," said Emily Sperling, director of recruitment and CALS alumni. "She is a very balanced woman who is able to maintain school work, extracurricular activities and a social life."

Ankumah hopes to one day open a medical practice and participate in medical missions to help those who cannot afford medical attention.

Student Star Volunteers

By Jimmy Varvorines, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication



"Volunteering with so many different groups helped me figure out what I want to do," she said. "I'm the prime example of involvement equals future career."

Through her job in the Office of Community Service, (OCS) Rush has become involved with several organizations. She takes on a wide variety of roles: peer leadership consultant to campus leaders and organizations, to life skills mentor for elementary school students.

Rush is involved in so many projects and organizations that her schedule is pretty much mapped out for her. "They basically run my daily life," she said. "Some days I

leave at 8 a.m. and don't get home until 10 at night."

Though Rush is often busy volunteering, the long hours do not bother her.

"Sometimes I have to sacrifice my social life, but I do enjoy it," she said. "It's a great way to get started in what I want to do long-term."

Colette Taylor, director of the Office of Community Service, said involvement in so many organizations will help Rush in the future.

"Her experiences in the OCS will give her a great foundation in understanding interaction in community settings," Taylor said. "I find that her desire is an admirable quality in a woman her age."

Rush acknowledges that everything she does has some kind of impact on where she is going after college. "It all ties in," she said. "I can incorporate all of it into my future at some point."

When she is not volunteering, Rush also finds time to minor in dance. She started practicing ballet when she was young and now enjoys ballet, modern and aerial dance classes.

Rush plans to work in community development and organizing to help people create neighborhood organizations. "I've helped people create organizations here, and it's something I want to continue in the future," she said.

Many students join clubs and organizations, but most do not change their majors because of their involvement in these groups. However, Alana Rush, a 20-year-old senior majoring in family, youth and community sciences, did just that.

Returning Student Makes Her Mark

By Rebecca Douglas, Master's student in Agricultural Education & Communication



For Catherine "Cat" Clevenger, volunteering at a small animal refuge was a life-altering experience.

"After volunteering for a few weeks, I knew for the first time in my life I wanted to be a veterinarian," she said.

Soon after, Clevenger enrolled at a community college near her hometown of Brooksville, Fla. Clevenger was later accepted at the University of Florida, and she and her husband moved to Gainesville.

The animal science major, who is also pursuing a minor in zoology, returned to school after a 10-year absence. Clevenger is particularly proud of this fact.

"I am older than most of my fellow students," Clevenger

said. "Some days this feels like a benefit, and other days it feels more like a burden."

"But I don't regret for one minute my decision to return to school to pursue a career in veterinary medicine."

Don Sloan, an associate professor in animal science and Clevenger's adviser, said "She is a very mature, well-rounded individual."

As censor and pledge master in Alpha Zeta, the agricultural honorary and professional fraternity, Clevenger is responsible for initiating contact with all the students in CALS who are in the top two-fifths of their class. This means she contacts about 1,100 individuals each semester and has weekly

meetings with new pledges to plan their activities, which include social, fundraiser and service events.

"Clevenger has tremendous ability and devotes much time and effort to student activities as well as to academics," Sloan said.

Alpha Zeta's largest fundraiser is their annual carnation and rose sale. This year, Clevenger was in charge of cutting, arranging and selling the flowers.

"Her personality is so remarkably positive," Sloan said. "She is a pleasure to be around, and she always looks for ways to do her jobs better without being asked. She is an adviser's dream."

Forum Showcases Student Research

By Ashley Hurst, Master's student in Agricultural Education & Communication

The winners of the 2005 IFAS Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation Awards, Elina Paivikki Garrison and Konstantinos Christos Makris, set this year's standards for premier research at the graduate level.

The awards were conferred at the fifth annual University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Graduate Research Symposium, where graduate students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences showcased their research to peers and faculty within the college through poster demonstrations and presentations.

"There are a lot of graduate students in the college who are working very hard and doing very interesting studies," said Garrison, outstanding thesis winner. "To be chosen as the best is quite an honor. I could not have done it without the help of my committee and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission."

Garrison's thesis is titled "Reproductive Ecology, Cub Survival and Denning Ecology of the Florida Black



Elina Paivikki Garrison, Outstanding Thesis

Bear." She is currently working as a research biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Makris earned the outstanding dissertation award for his work entitled "Long-Term Stability of Sorbed Phosphorus by Drinking-

Water Treatment Residuals: Mechanisms and Implication."

Willie Harris, a professor in the department of soil and water science and Makris' major adviser, said, "I enjoyed working with Dr. Makris because he is respectful, self-motivated, hard-working and always thinking about how to explain or further probe scientific matters pertinent to his research objectives. He thinks independently, but is open to new ideas or different interpretations."

Below: Graduate students present research to fellow students and faculty.

Makris is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Texas, San Antonio, where he works in the Environmental Geochemistry Laboratory Center for Water Research.

In addition to encouraging students' interest and involvement, CALS faculty also see the symposium as a necessary tool for research development.

Mary Duryea, UF/IFAS assistant dean for research, said, "I think it's important for the students to listen to each other, to see the diversity of research that goes on in IFAS, and to learn from that

diversity and the different approaches each student takes.

It's a great experience, and it's a good forum to get that experience among your peers."

Keynote speaker, Kenneth Gerhardt, interim dean of the Graduate School, said

students use this forum as a training ground for presentations at national meetings.

"The research symposium gives our graduate students and opportunity to showcase their wares and to learn to communicate about science in other disciplines," he said.



Konstantinos Christos Makris, Outstanding Dissertation



Awards



Undergraduate Adviser of the Year Ms. Mary E. Hall

Mary Hall is the agricultural and biological engineering Coordinator of Academic Support Services and has been advising at CALS for more than eleven years. Hall provides academic advising to over 200 undergraduate students in Packaging Science, Agricultural and Biological Engineering and Agricultural Operations Management.

Hall enjoys assisting students in setting their career goals and keeping them on track for graduation. In addition, she keeps each student's personal goals in mind when helping them with academic decisions. She actively assists students in finding internships to enhance their educational opportunities. Hall believes that being accessible to listen to a student when they need or want to talk is an important aspect of advising.



Graduate Teacher/Advisor of the Year Dr. Nick Place

Nick Place is an associate professor and graduate coordinator in the department of agricultural education and communication. Place joined the department in 1999, after working as an Extension agent and serving as County and Regional Extension Director for Cooperative Extension at Penn State University.

As an instructor, Place works with students to build their understanding through the use of concrete examples and learning encounters to bridge their knowledge and experiences. Students consider Place a mentor and peer because of his ability to treat all students equally and ability to engage them in open discussions in solving research problems through experiential learning.

Place is a leader and an expert in his professional field, helping shape extension policies and research.



Undergraduate Teacher of the Year Dr. Alan Long

Alan J. Long is an associate professor in the School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC). Long has been at the University of Florida for 18 years, with significant focus on teaching, training and extension. Prior to joining the School in 1986, he worked as a research field station manager and scientist.

Long has individually or team taught seven undergraduate and two graduate courses within the past ten years. These courses include Forest Operations and Wood Utilization, Fire Ecology and Management, Forests for the Future, and Fire in Natural Resource Management. Long believes that courses and programs must be relevant to students by either preparing them for the next level of learning or by having direct application to problems, issues, and opportunities that confront them. Long strives to be responsive to opportunities to maintain or diversify SFRC academic programs.



Jack L. Fry Graduate Teaching Award Amanda Ruth

Amanda Ruth is from Robesonia, Pennsylvania and is pursuing her doctorate in agricultural education and communication with an emphasis in communications.

Ruth has served as the graduate adviser of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT), as well as the vice president of the Agricultural Education and Communication Graduate Student Association (AECGSA).

While completing her master's degree, Ruth was a teaching assistant for AEE 3033, Technical Writing for the Agricultural and Natural Resources, where she taught more than 100 students across the university each semester for two years. Part of this teaching experience included co-authoring a writing workbook for AEE 3033 students. In the fall, she instructed AEE 3209, Instructional Techniques and Special Events Planning, and team-taught AEE 4052, Communication Campaign Strategies.

UF Teaching Awards

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentoring Award

Jim Jones, professor, Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department
Ramesh Reddy, professor, Soil and Water Science Department

UF Academy of Distinguished Teaching

Gail Kauwell, professor, Food Science and Human Nutrition Department
Mike Olexa, professor, Food and Resource Economics Department



**CALS Alumni & Friends
Leadership Award
Elizabeth Paige Wingate**

Elizabeth Paige Wingate is a senior from Pensacola, Fla., majoring in food and resource economics. Wingate serves as president of the Food and Resource Economics/National Agricultural Marketing Association Club (FRE-NAMA), and is actively involved in the club's award-winning marketing competition and quiz bowl team. In the summer of 2004, she interned as a Sen-

tricon quality assurance representative for Dow AgroSciences in St. Augustine, Fla.

Wingate currently serves as the president of the student section of the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA). She also volunteers for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, and leads educational groups as a facilitator for the Adventures Unlimited Ropes Challenge Course.



**Larry J. Connor Medal of Excellence
David Mulia**

David Mulia is a senior from Denpasar-Bali, Indonesia, majoring in food science and human nutrition. His leadership and scholarship are representative of his overall success as a student at the University of Florida.

Mulia is currently a member of the Indonesian Student Association, the Institute of Food Technologists, and the Golden Key Honor Society. In addition, he is actively involved in the Westside

Baptist Church. He has received the SE Food Processors Association Scholarship and has been listed on either the President's Honor Roll or the Dean's list each of the eight semesters he has attended the University of Florida. Mulia has also sought educational opportunities outside of the classroom. He has worked at the Food Science Taste Panel and interned with the Nestle R&D Center, Inc. and Tyson Foods, Inc.



**E. T. York, Jr. Award of Merit
Emily Hand**

Emily Hand is a junior from Blountstown, Fla., majoring in agricultural education with plans to pursue a career as a high school agriculture teacher. Hand is the vice president of the Agricultural Education and Communications Society, as well as a member of the Alpha Tau Alpha honor society.

She currently serves as a CALS Ambassador and has acted as the program coordinator for the Food for

Thought agricultural literacy program, where she helped to elevate the program as an advocate for statewide agricultural literacy. Hand participates in the CALS Honors Program, has completed the University Honors Program, and is a member of the Student Honors Organization.



**CALS Dean's Leadership Award
Megan Hoot**

Megan Hoot is a senior from Wellington, Fla., majoring in family, youth, and community sciences. Hoot is one of the founders and board members for her major's organization, FYCS Club, and pioneered the Gator Humanics program as their president. Hoot is the Community Outreach Director in the Office of Community Service, where she plans and implements events for UF. She is actively involved

in Florida Blue Key, Kappa Kappa Gamma, Reitz Scholars, CALS Ambassadors, and Honors Ambassadors. She was recently crowned as the 2004 UF Homecoming Queen. Hoot was also recognized as an outstanding Female Leader by UF at the spring 2005 graduation.



**J. Wayne Reitz Medal of Excellence
Vincent Yeung**

Vincent Yeung is a senior from Bonita Springs, Fla., majoring in food science and human nutrition. Yeung is a member of the Pre-Professional Student Organization, University Minority Mentor Program, Florida Alternative Breaks, and Club Tennis. His devotion to scholarship is highlighted by the honors he has received, including UF President's Honor Roll, Anderson Scholar, Golden Key International Honor Society, Gamma Sigma Delta, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, and the University of Florida Upper Division Honors Program.

Yeung is the vice president for the UF Pre-Professional Student Organization and has coordinated pre-professional community service projects. He has volunteered in the dementia/alzheimer's unit with the Florida Alternative Breaks, helped establish an oral hygiene program at St. Francis House homeless shelter, and mentors and tutors a second grade student with the Collegiates Helping as Mentors in Public Schools (CHAMPS). Yeung is currently assisting Dr. Chen Liu within the Shand's

Pathology Department conducting research in a pathology lab and will begin dental school at UF in fall 2005.

First Year Students - FYF Style

By Peggy Rudsor, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication



Not all first-year students are alike, but many share the same doubts, fears and frustrations when it comes to exploring their first semester on the University of Florida campus.

That's why the Division of Student Affairs offers First-Year Florida, a program to ease freshmen students' transition to university life. First-Year Florida (FYF), a one-credit, one-hour-per-week course, arms participants with the tips, tricks and tactics necessary for a first-year student's survival.

The course is open to all UF students; however, for the fall 2004 semester, Carl Barfield, a professor in the department of entomology and nematology, specifically instructed sections of the course for College of Agricultural and Life Sciences students.

"It's sort of frightening what these freshmen don't know," Barfield said.

"For many of them, it is the first time they are away from home for an extended period of time."

All of the topics covered in class are crucial for academic success at the university, but one of the most valuable aspects of the program is the one-

on-one time students get with the instructors. The average

freshman-level lecture course enrolls more than 300 students, whereas FYF courses register 25 or fewer students in each class, allowing profes-

sors and students the opportunity to get to know each other on a personal level.

"I've been involved with FYF since it began," he said. "It never fails that in the spring I

get bombarded with requests for letters of recommendation

because even after a year here, I am the only professor who knows them by name."

Lauren Unger, a freshman animal science major, enrolled in FYF in fall 2004. She credits the enthusiastic instructors and mentors for her success in the class and at the university. "We were given assignments that forced us to discover the campus," Unger said. "I have noticed upperclassman without the skills I learned in FYF, especially when it comes to navigating the library."

The course helps students develop the practical, social, emotional and intellectual skills that are essential to a fulfilling four years at UF. Class discussions and projects focus on student skills, social diversity, career decisions and financial management.



Committed to Success and Service

By Renee Durham, Master's student in Agricultural Education & Communication



Travis & Lacy Park dressed for his new career at Cornell.

Travis Park, a doctoral student in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, moved 1,100 miles from Wolcott, Indiana to the University of Florida with two things in mind: service and success.

Park's commitment to these ideals was recognized last year, as he became one of fourteen campus-wide recipients of a 2003-2004 UF Graduate Teaching Assistant Award. He received this honor for his outstanding performance as the lead instructor for AEE 3030, Effective Oral Communication.

"I have no doubt that students in Travis' classes view him as one of the best teachers in their entire undergraduate program," said Ed Osborne, Travis's adviser and chair of the agricultural education and communication department.

Park attributes his success as a teacher to his commitment to putting students and their education first. He said his favorite thing about teaching AEE 3030 was becoming acquainted with the diverse interests of the students in class.

"I really wanted to get to know something about those

students so I could tap into their interests and help them succeed," Park said.

He said he enjoys staying connected with his former students, taking opportunities to learn about their lives and helping them where he can.

Jacob Raburn, a junior majoring in agricultural leadership and former student of Park's, said Park is the type of teacher that he can always count on. "I still feel like I can go to Travis for help with anything," Raburn said. "He's always available to any student."

In addition to Park's role as a teacher and a full-time student, he volunteers with the CALS Ambassador training program in the summer. He counts this experience as one of his favorites at UF and said that that investing extra time to serve the college made him feel like he had a place at the University of Florida.

As Park's three-year doctoral program in agricultural education and communication comes to a close, he credits the university for providing him with opportunities, resources and a degree that can take him anywhere. Park said that these very reasons helped



contribute to his new teaching appointment at Cornell University in the fall.

"The UF doctoral program has prepared me for the Cornell position by introducing me to a variety of research methods, providing an opportunity to specialize in education and leadership, and allowing me to work with great people," Park said. "The great students, faculty, and administrators here at UF have been great people from whom to learn."

Park suggests that students should get involved in a service project or in an organization, develop a mentor relationship with a faculty member and take time to get to know fellow classmates.

"Make at least one personal connection on campus, because you can learn a lot when you get to know someone better," Park said. "Having a great experience at UF comes from giving a little extra. It's only then that you get a little extra."

Preparing LEADERS for the Future



By Amanda Ruth, Ph.D. student in Agricultural Education & Communication

Traditionally responsible for helping to grow food and fiber for tomorrow, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is now also helping to cultivate a new generation of agricultural leaders.

As one component of a five-part initiative, the University of Florida has developed a leadership program that focuses on providing students with leadership skills in an effort to enhance the undergraduate experience. This five-part initiative includes internship, research, volunteer, international and leadership opportunities.

"This effort couples existing leadership opportunities through internships and campus organizations with a strong leadership curriculum, resulting in a powerful experience for undergraduates," said Jane Luzar, CALS Associate Dean. CALS is playing a significant role in the university's leadership program. Though available to students in all areas of study, the program is administered through CALS and consists of two different minors, one in leadership and another in organizational leadership for non-profits.

The organizational leadership for non-profits minor focuses on developing skills and strategies, as well as finding resources in nonprofit management, leadership, fundraising and more.

"Nonprofit organizations offer many job opportunities in every city and town in Florida," said Elizabeth Bolton, a professor in the family youth and community sciences department. "They are the sixth-largest employer in the state and control and manage many millions of dollars each year for the causes and missions they represent."

This is the second year that the organizational leadership for non-profits minor has been offered. It is a structured curriculum consisting of four required courses, two electives and an internship or practicum on nonprofit leadership.

"Every component of the minor is valuable," Bolton said. "The practicum is particularly useful because it is taken after the student has completed the core course on non-profits, which gives them an understanding of the sector and the many subfields."

Bolton claims that there is no typical profile for students who seek to minor in non-profits. Students participating in the minor come from many fields and departments in the university.

Similar in structure to the non-profit minor, the minor in leadership

offers a concentration in organizational, community or public policy leadership. The minor's curriculum includes required courses in leadership theory and practice, ethics, and communications in addition to elective courses in one of three concentrations.

"The leadership minor provides a structured academic component to leadership activities that students at UF are already involved in," said Ricky Telg, associate professor in Agricultural Education and Communication. "I think the collection of courses in the minor showcases the departments in our college and allows the college to shine in leadership and communication development."

The minor is designed to provide students with fundamental skills and knowledge necessary to assume positions in supervision and management within the business sector.

Students in either minor who complete the 15-hour curriculum plus a two-hour internship will also have the opportunity to receive certification through American Humanics, Inc. The certification is not required, but is encouraged, as is participation in the Gator Humanics Student Association.

Both minors are available to all UF students and have been developed with the diversity of the student audience in

mind. Because the minors are interdisciplinary, they both draw on the expertise of faculty and staff in colleges across the campus, including Agricultural and Life Sciences, Business Health and Human Performance, Journalism and Administration, Education, Communications and Liberal Arts and Sciences.

"The development involved representatives from colleges and academic support staff from across the UF campus in order to make the minor more relevant and attractive for all UF students," Telg said. "Leadership skills and abilities are important to possess regardless of the field you are entering."

The leadership initiative will provide UF students an improved academic experience, as well as a competitive advantage upon graduation.

"Our leadership effort give UF students unique opportunities to study and experience leadership while at UF," Luzar said.

For more information on the UF leadership minors administered through CALS, log on to <http://www.cals.ufl.edu/minors/oln> for the organizational leadership for non-profits minor and <http://www.cals.ufl.edu/minors/nonprofits/> for the leadership minor.



Food for Thought

By Chelsa Drake, Junior in Agricultural Education & Communication

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Ambassadors, a select group of CALS students who excel in both academics and leadership, want Floridians to recognize the relationship between agriculture and food.

The CALS Ambassadors present a program called Food For Thought across the state, designed to inform diverse audiences about Florida agriculture and how it is a part of their lives.

"The Food for Thought presentation sheds light on how Florida plays an integral role in producing safe products and how we should preserve agriculture," said CALS Ambassador Ginger Larson.

Ambassadors relay the message that food grown in Florida is safe, affordable and abundant thanks to Florida's farmers and ranchers.

The Food for Thought program originated under the direction of Paul Willis, Director of Alumni and Career Services for Food and Resource Economics, after the Ambassadors attended the National Agricultural Alumni and Development (NAADA) conference at North Carolina State University in 2001.

"NCSU was doing something similar and the CALS Ambassadors wanted

to launch a campaign in Florida," Willis said.

While the initial plans of the program were postponed until fall 2003, Willis and the sponsorship of Farm

Charles Thompson, president and CEO of Farm Credit of North Florida. "What better way to tell the story than by and through some of our best and brightest?"

be completely unaware of the connection the agriculture industry has to the food that they eat.

In March, the ambassadors took part in creating a video that will bring the Food for Thought program to life. The video will be sent to high schools, extension offices and other civic organizations throughout the state.

Although the Food for Thought program is an important part of the CALS Ambassadors organization, it is not the sole purpose.

"Ambassadors also represent the college and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and assist in recruitment," Vitelli said.

To request a CALS Ambassador to attend an event, complete a request form at <http://www.cals.ufl.edu/ambassadors/request.html>.



L to R: Tyrell Kahan, Ginger Larson and Brian Estevez presenting Food for Thought presentation at alumni event in Jacksonville.

Credit of North Florida helped to begin the pilot program. Most recently, all Farm Credit Associations of Florida partnered to sponsor the program in a state-wide campaign.

"Our state demographics are changing so fast that Florida agriculture and the IFAS story needs to be told over and over to as many people as possible," said

Chris Vitelli, CALS Ambassador adviser and director of student services said, "Because of the Farm Credit Associations funding we will be able to take our message to major metropolitan communities throughout the entire state."

Ambassadors speak to various civic groups, high schools and community colleges. Their audiences may





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