Online M.S. Degree Program

The Office of Continuing Education, in conjunction with the College of ACES offers many opportunities for the adult learner to continue their education through degree offerings, non-credit courses/workshops and certificate programs. One of the degree options is the Online M.S. Degree in Crop Sciences. This program enables students to strengthen their education part time through online blended course delivery and optional site-based programming. Students are able to take courses in areas related to crop production, plant breeding, entomology, plant pathology, horticulture, and crop management.

The Crop Sciences program has delivered University of Illinois courses to agriculture professionals for over thirty years (in its previous site-based format) and has a twenty-three year history of granting M.S. degrees in Crop Sciences. Students may enroll in individual courses for personal or professional advance-

tment, complete a certificate of professional development in Crop Sciences, or one may apply for admission to the Online Master's Degree program in Crop Sciences. To date, hundreds of students have completed individual courses, and over 130 students have received a Master's degree.

Students who successfully complete three qualifying courses may also desire to receive a Professional Development Certificate with an emphasis in Crop Sciences or Horticulture. The Online M.S. program in Crop Sciences also works in conjunction with the Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences Online M.S. program and the Agriculture Education Online M.S. program to offer a diverse set of courses.

The Department of Crop Sciences is looking to the future and the needs of the non-traditional student and working professionals by delivering the entire degree requirements through online distance education technologies. Online courses are typically a blended distance education model consisting of “live” class meetings in a virtual classroom setting where student/faculty interaction is maintained to a high level. Additionally, an asynchronous (independent) component for course readings, assignments and a student (chat) web-board is also part of many courses. By using a blended distance education model of asynchronous (independent) plus synchronous (live) lecture sessions via the internet, the rigor and quality of the program is maintained as well as a high success level of the students in the courses. Optional site-based courses may still be offered occasionally in Illinois, but are not required for graduation. Online course offerings are available to in-state students, and out-of-state students at the same tuition rates.

See page 4 for more information about the Online M.S. Degree Program in Crop Sciences.

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Congratulations on Your Retirement

The following long-time employees retired in 2010. We wish them great success in their future endeavors! We will miss you all!

Sharon Conatser started working at the U. of I. in the Department of Agronomy Extension Program in 1987. She was an Office Administrator and Undergraduate Secretary at the time of her retirement on July 31.

Jim Little started at the U. of I. in 1983. He worked as Crop Testing Technician in the Crop Sciences Research and Education Center in Urbana, retiring on July 31.

Nancy Pataky first worked for the U. of I. as a student, later joining the staff after she received her M.S. in 1978. She was Plant Clinic Director and Extension Specialist when she retired on July 31.

Lyle Paul started at the U. of I. in 1983. He was an Agronomist at Northern Illinois Agronomy Research Center in DeKalb when he retired on August 15.

Bob Skirvin started working in the Department of Horticulture at the U. of I. in 1976. He was a Professor in NRES for many years, transferring to Crop Sciences in 2009 when Horticulture merged with our department. He retired on May 15.

Linda Ingram started working at the U. of I. in 1972 in the Department of Geology. She transferred to the Department of Agronomy in January 1986 and was an Office Support Specialist when she retired on July 31.

Jim White started at the U. of I. in 1980. He was a Crop Testing Technician in the Crop Sciences Research and Education Center in Urbana when he retired on May 31.
2010-2011 Crop Sciences Departmental Committees

- **Academic Integrity Committee**: JK Pataky*, MO Bohn, JA Juvik, S Taylor-Lovell, PJ Tranel, RA Weinzierl
- **Academic Professional Advisory**: DJ Maxwell *(12), MT Greifenkamp (12), DJ Maxwell (12), SJ Schultz (11), JR Seebauer (11), WG White (12)
- **Academic Professional Promotion**: RE Dunker*, GL Hartman, GJ Kling, TB Voigt, ED Wagner, M Wiesbrook
- **Affirmative Action Officer**: Academic—GJ Kling; Staff—S Netherton
- **Alumni & Development**: FL Kolb*, BE Branham, DM Eastburn, AG Hager, TA Malkovich, JR Stewart
- **Computer & Web Resources**: VM Davis*, TAhasic, SJ Clough, DM Eastburn, MT Greifenkamp, ME Hudson, CA Smyth, JR Stewart, WG White, YF Zhao
- **Crop Testing**: ED Nafziger*, MO Bohn, VM Davis, RW Esgar, BR Henry, DK Joos
- **Department Advisory Committee**: CA Bradley (12), BE Branham (11), BW Diers (12), ME Gray (12), MA Johnson (indefinite), RL Nelson (12), TL Niblack (12), JR Seebauer (11), X Sun (grad rep) (11), T Voigt (11), F Zhao (11)
- **Faculty Advisory**: BE Branham (11), CA Bradley (12), BW Diers (12), ME Gray (12), TL Niblack (12), TB Voigt (11), YF Zhao (11)
- **Faculty Grievance**: PJ Tranel*, ME Hudson, RH Mumm, TL Niblack, LO Vodkin
- **Faculty Senate**: KN Lambert (10), RH Mumm (11), PJ Tranel (10)
- **Field & Furrow**: PS Stoller*, CA Bradley, VM Davis, RE Dunker
- **Gamma Sigma Delta Representative**: FL Kolb
- **Gottlieb Memorial Lecture**: DM Eastburn*, GL Hartman, YF Zhao
- **Graduate Studies**: JA Juvik*, DP Briskin, P Brown, AS Davis, Y Hanzawa, ME Hudson, JB Masiunas, SP Moose, RH Mumm, ED Nafziger, DE Riechers, MM Williams, YF Zhao, Graduate Secretary: D Carson
- **Herbicide Evaluation Program**: AG Hager*, AS Davis, DJ Maxwell, DE Riechers, PJ Tranel, MM Williams
- **Morrow Plots**: VM Davis*, RE Dunker, MB Villamil, MM Wander
- **Promotion and Tenure**: BW Diers (13)*, DP Briskin (12), G Caetano-Anolles (11), ME Gray (13), FL Kolb (12), ED Nafziger (11), TL Niblack (12), AL Rayburn (11), Tranel (13)
- **Safety and Health Advisory**: DM Eastburn*, LL Domier, RE Dunker, Y Hanzawa, GL Hartman, AL Rayburn, MJ Seufferheld, ED Wagner, D Walker, YF Zhao
- **Social**: DE Riechers* (13), E Brucker (13), AG Hager (11), SD Carson (13), Dianne Noland (11), SJ Schultz (11), S Taylor-Lovell (13), M Villamil (13), CSGO Representative: B Farmaha
- **Space and Facilities**: MJ Plewa (NSRC Representative), DE Riechers (Turner Hall Representative), PJ Tranel (ERML Representative), JR Stewart (PSL Representative)
- **State Advisory**: Brian Deverman (12), Jeff Gibson (12), Eldon Gould (11), Ken Hall (11), Scott Hutchins (09), Greg Oltman (12), Stephen Scates (12), Ann Sorenson (11), ex-officio: S Gray, BW Diers, Coordinator
- **Teaching**: FL Kolb*, MO Bohn, DP Briskin, DG Bullock, G Caetano-Anolles, DM Eastburn, GJ Kling, AL Rayburn, DE Riechers, JR Stewart, PJ Tranel, RA Weinzierl, F. Zhao. Field & Furrow President: W Massey, CSGO Representative: W Barber, Undergraduate Secretary: TA Malkovich

*Chairperson
Dr. Donald Briskin, became the Coordinator of the Crop Sciences Online M.S. Degree Program in May 2009, taking over for Dr. Kevin Steffey. Don brings many strengths to the program including a long-term commitment to teaching, knowledge of distance education programs on the UIUC campus and a dedication to distance learners.

Dr. Briskin was one of the initial creators of the NRES Off-campus program (a similar program to the Crop Sciences online program). He started the NRES Off-campus program in January 2000 as a Chicago site-based program that was patterned after the then, site-based Crop Sciences program. Dr. Briskin was not only the faculty coordinator of the NRES program but also an active instructor in the Crop Sciences program teaching Plant Physiology, Plant Biochemistry and Growth and Development of Horticultural Crops. When the Crop

Sciences program was officially moved in January 2008 to an online program format, Dr. Briskin also supported the move of the NRES program to an online format (May 2008) since the two programs share some course offerings. Dr. Briskin remained the faculty coordinator of the NRES program even after his move from NRES to the Department of Crop Sciences until May 2010, as well as overseeing the Crop Sciences Online program for the past year.

Dr. Briskin serves on the Graduate College Committee for Extended and External Degrees (CEED) on behalf of the College of ACES online and distance education programs and has been a strong advocate for increased support from campus of online and distance education in the College. His experience as both an instructor of interdisciplinary course offerings, as well as coordinating both site-based and online degree programs is invaluable to the current success of the Online Crop Sciences M.S. Program and its students. Dr. Briskin serves as main advisor to all students in the Crop Sciences Online M.S. Program, provides research guidance to students, chairs all oral exams for online students at the end of their degree program, communicates with other teaching faculty in the program, coordinates course offerings with the Office of Continuing Education Program Director, and is a highly respected instructor by students.

From the Champaign County Farm Bureau Newsletter, August 2010

INTERESTED IN NUMBERS? The Illinois Ag Statistics Service reported that 34 percent of the Illinois corn crop was mature as of August 29, compared to the long-term average of 11 percent. The 2010 corn crop was rated at 62 percent good to excellent with 13 percent rated at poor to very poor. What about the beans? Over 5 percent of fields are dropping leaves with 59 percent of beans rated at good to excellent, 30 percent at fair and 11 percent at poor to very poor in Illinois.

2010-2011 Research Board Dates

On Aug. 30, Oct. 4, Jan. 20, and Mar. 14, Nancy Abelmann will review the application and evaluation process. To register to learn how to write a strong Research Board application, contact Kelley Frazier for an appointment (kdfrazie@illinois.edu or 333-6771).

Application Deadlines

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Heather Miller, Program Director for the Office of Continuing Education, plays several key roles in the successful operation of the Crop Sciences Online M.S. program. Heather oversees promotion and marketing of the program which now extends well beyond the state level. Heather’s main objective over the past six years of supporting the program has been to bring a broader awareness of the Crop Sciences Online M.S. program to those in academia, agricultural industry, farming, and the private sector. Heather is also actively involved in student recruitment and spends a considerable amount of time in contact with potential students answering their questions and providing guidance. In collaboration with the departmental faculty program coordinator, Dr. Donald Briskin, and other Crop Sciences faculty, Heather takes an active role in establishing the courses to be offered each semester, development of new courses, technical training for faculty, and long range planning for future course offerings. For those students already enrolled in the Crop Sciences Online M.S. program, Heather has proven to be a valuable and essential resource for providing guidance and assistance including connecting students with departmental alumni and industry professionals.

Heather comes to her position as Program Director with prior education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She received her B.S. degree in Agricultural Communications, and M.S. in Crop Sciences. It should be noted that Heather’s M.S. degree in Crop Sciences was completed in the Off-campus Crop Sciences Program while she was working for Monsanto Company (now the online program) which provides her with an added advantage of direct experience as a non-traditional student. This is very useful in her roles associated with the Crop Sciences Online M.S. program and her ability to relate to current students and the demands of being a working professional and a student. Due to Heather’s agricultural industry connections and also an active Certified Crop Advisor, that experience has enhanced her capability to serve also as a liaison between the program and that sector, as well as provide career guidance to students in the online program.

Contact Heather at 217-265-6568 or hmiller1@illinois.edu if you would like more information about the Online M.S. Degree Program.

Meet Tim Bailey—Online Graduate Student in Crop Sciences

Tim Bailey is a Certified Professional Agronomist and a Certified Crop Advisor with over 27 years of agricultural experience. He has a B.S. in Agronomy from The Ohio State University. Tim is currently a laboratory agronomist for A&L Great Lakes Laboratories, Inc. Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Tim started his career in 1977 at a wholesale/retail fertilizer plant in Northwestern Ohio as a liquid plant operator, sales person, and eventually General Manager. Throughout his career he has held various positions in management and sales in the cooperative system and for major fertilizer manufacturers like IMC Fertilizer Inc. and Arcadian Corporation. In 2006 he was hired by A&L Labs in what he describes as his dream job. “I always dreamed of being a Certified Professional Agronomist for a reputable company. A&L is a leader in the agricultural testing arena with an exceptional reputation. It is fantastic to work for people who put quality first.”

Tim joined the Online M.S. Degree program in Crop Sciences in May 2008, first as a non-degree seeking student to try out the program. Mr. Bailey has been an exceptional graduate student academically while working full time, and is scheduled to graduate in May 2011. Tim commented, “I entered the program because I felt it would complement what I do at A&L. One of my major responsibilities is to conduct soil fertility workshops for clients many who are Certified Crop Advisor’s (CCA). The education at UIUC has been invaluable when it comes to performing my duties as an agronomist. To earn a Master’s degree in Crop Sciences from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is an achievement unparalleled in the agronomic community around the world.”

Mr. Bailey also cites that “The caliber of the instructors in the program is exceptional. Access to the instructors who are undoubtedly highly respected and experts in their field is a tremendous plus to the program! The online program has given many people in the agriculture industry, including myself, the opportunity to broaden their educational horizons regardless of where they live and how old they are.”

Tim is an active member of the American Society of Agronomy. He is a past officer of the Michigan Agra Business Association and also serves as the Ohio and Indiana CCA liaison to the Upper Wabash River Nutrient Management Coalition. Mr. Bailey is the current chairman of the Ohio CCA Crop Production Conference. Mr. Bailey’s graduate program research advisor is Dr. Emerson Nafziger.
**Birth Announcements**

**Kaylee Grace Estes**, daughter of Ron and Kelly Estes, was born at 1:09 p.m. on May 8. She weighed 6 lbs. 11 oz. and was 21 inches long.

**Victoria Esther Fernández**, daughter of Anahi and Fabián Fernández, was born at 8:20 a.m. on May 25. She weighed 8 lbs. 6 oz. and was 19.5 inches long.

**Hazel Alison Ainsworth Leakey** was born on June 18. She was 5 lbs. 12 oz. and 18.75 inches long. The proud parents are Andrew Leakey and Lisa Ainsworth.

**Grady Ronald Nicol**, born on June 28 at 8 lbs. 7 oz., is the grandson of Nancy and Snook Pataky. They were also blessed with a second grandchild this summer: **Claire Emily Cowles**, born August 23, weighed 9 lbs. 2 oz. Claire is shown below with Grandma Nancy.

**Bentley Alan Deany**, son of Kristy and Adam Deany, was born at 1:28 p.m. on July 28, 2010. He weighed 8 lbs. 2 1/2 oz. and was 21” inches long.

**Elsie Claire Wiesbrook**, daughter of Michelle and Scott Wiesbrook, was born at 9:52 a.m. on August 26. She weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and was 20 inches long.
Congratulations to Don Ort who has been appointed by the Provost as the Robert Emerson Professor in Plant Biology and Crop Sciences! This professorship represents an extraordinary opportunity for us to recognize a world leader in photosynthesis research and strengthen ties for interdisciplinary research on campus. Don is well positioned to bring international recognition to this named professorship, which continues the pre-eminence of Illinois in photosynthesis research that was first firmly established by Robert Emerson.

Professor Snook Pataky and UI student Mark Pataky competed in the 2010 Sweetcorn 5k Classic at the National Sweetcorn Festival, Hoopeston, IL on September 4. The father-son duo brought home hardware, with Snook and Mark taking 2nd and 3rd places, respectively, in their age group categories. Congratulations!

Suzanne Bissonnette will be taking over the duties as the Director of the Plant Clinic. Nancy Pataky was the previous Director who retired on July 31, 2010. Thank you, Nancy, for all your years of hard work, and Welcome, Suzanne!

Marty Williams is featured in the September 2010 issue of Agricultural Research, a publication of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Pick up a copy and see Marty’s picture on the cover.

Linda Kemplin, HR Coordinator, had surgery on her arm on August 30th. Recovery is expected to take 10 weeks. She should return to work around mid-November. Feel better soon, Linda!

Recent Passings

Jean Creswell, 88, of Champaign passed away on Aug. 26, 2010, in Peoria, following complications from heart surgery. Jean worked for 10 years as an administrative assistant in INTSOY program, UI Department of Agronomy.

Malcom Shurtleff, 88, passed away on May 20, 2010. Dr. Shurtleff was a Professor of Extension Plant Pathology in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Illinois from 1961 until his retirement in 1992. He held emeritus appointments at the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University.
**Fall 2010 Calendar**

Oct. 4-Nov. 2: Ethics training
Oct. 31-Nov. 3: ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Annual Meetings in Long Beach, CA
Nov. 5: Last day to add name to Dec. degree list using Web Self-Service
Nov. 20: Thanksgiving Day vacation begins
Nov. 29: Classes resume
Dec. 8: Classes end for Fall semester
Dec. 9: Reading Day
Dec. 10: Last day to deposit Dec. master’s theses
Dec. 10-17: Final exams
Dec. 12: Last day to deposit Dec. doctoral dissertations

Visit the Crop Sciences web site for more information: http://www.cropsci.illinois.edu

**Awards Received**

The University of Illinois Weed Science undergraduate team placed third at the Northeast Weed Science Society Contest held on July 27, 2010. The contest was hosted by Cornell University located in Ithaca, NY. There were greater than 100 participants and 12 undergraduate teams from several major institutions in the Eastern half of the U.S. and Canada this year. We are especially proud of this team of students because they were competitive in a different region with unique crops and weeds. On the right is a picture of the team following the awards banquet. In the picture from left to right front row is the 3rd place undergraduate team consisting of

Max Hendrickson, Ross Recker, Sean Breen, and Matt Carton. Others that also competed are in the back row, left to right is undergraduate Jeremy Funk, and graduate students Patrick Henry and Nathan Mellendorf.

**University of Illinois Receives $1.2 million Grant to Accelerate Feedstocks Research**

A $1.2 million U.S. Department of Energy grant will help University of Illinois researchers accelerate genetic breeding programs to create plants better suited for bioenergy production. The project is titled “The Role of Small RNA in Biomass Deposition and Perenniality in Andropogoneae Feedstocks,” and will support research projects for up to three years. The researchers involved in this project include Matt Hudson, Stephen Moose, and Magdy Alabady.

**The Field and Furrow Club** just celebrated the club’s 75th Anniversary at an event on September 12 in Champaign. Alumni and current members gathered to remember 75 years of excellence with tours of campus and the South Farms, a buffet lunch, and speakers, including Chancellor Easter.

In addition, the club is gearing up to sell popcorn, Indian corn and mums during Homecoming. Please come support them on the south quad in early October. More information to come.

A group of club members are then packing their bags to travel to Long Beach, California for the Student Society of Agronomy Meetings. Members will take tours of California agriculture and interact with other students and professionals in agronomy from across the country.

Check out more information and updates at the club website at http://fandf.cropsci.illinois.edu.