

NCAC1 2026 Annual Meeting Report
Jan 8-9, 2026, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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NCAC1 2026 Meeting Agenda

Date: January 8 and January 9, 2026

Location: Agronomy and Horticulture Department, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Conference room: 279M Plant Science Hall Conference Room, East Campus and Zoom

January 7th

All times are CDT

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM Group Dinner, Lazlo's at Haymarket

January 8th

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM Coffee and roll

9:00 AM – 9:45 AM Welcome and introduction
IANR research overview, Derek McLean, Dean and Director ARD

9:45 – 10:00 AM Updates from Gary Pierzynski

10:00 – noon Multistate projects reviews

Noon – 1:00 PM Catered lunch

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM Career pathway coordinators (Mittelstet, Feit, and Barta)

2:15 – 4:00 PM Continue Multistate project reviews and/or State Reports

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM Innovation Campus Greenhouse Tour

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM Group dinner at Fleetwood at Haymarket

January 9th

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM Coffee and roll

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM Digital Ag Initiative (Balboa and Luck)

9:30 AM – noon Vice Chair selection, identifying meeting location
Complete any remaining multistate project reviews and state reports

Noon Lunch box and departure

Attendance

Steve Anderson (UM; remote), Laura Bowling (Purdue), Adam Davis (UIUC), Bailey Feit, Doug Karcher (OSU), Martha Mamo (UNL), Gary Muehlbauer (UMN), Glenn Ritchie (ISU), Karen Sanguinet (SDSU)

UNL Agriculture Research Division (ARD) Overview

The Agriculture Research Division (ARD) continues to advance its research, engagement, and statewide impact while navigating significant financial, enrollment, and policy pressures. Associate Dean Tala Awada highlighted the following key elements of ARD's current landscape and priorities. *(slides were shared with attendees)* <https://ard.unl.edu/>

Strategic Leadership & Priorities

- ARD co-leads the Long-Term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) program in partnership with USDA-ARS.
- Ongoing key concerns include budget constraints, declining enrollment, funding pressures, political influences, and ensuring the continued value proposition of agricultural programs.

Nebraska Agricultural Context

- Nebraska features a strong rainfall gradient from southeast to northwest, shaping production systems.
- Grazed beef remains a major agricultural commodity for the state.
- Statewide, 92% of land is in agriculture, split roughly half grazing and half in corn/soybean systems.

Water Resources & Management

- Nebraska maintains robust management of the Ogallala Aquifer, with:
- 115,000 active irrigation wells
- 13 Natural Resource Districts using data-driven incentives and regulations to manage pumping and water allocation

Economic & Institutional Positioning

- Nebraska holds the third-largest agricultural economy in the United States.
- IANR has a dedicated state budget line representing 25% of the university's total allocation, established 50 years ago to ensure the prominence of agriculture in Nebraska. This structure elevates political interest in UNL's success and supports strong Extension presence statewide.

CASNR Structure & Academic Changes

- CASNR enrolls 3,300 students across 15 academic units, supported by 230 tenure-track faculty and a similar number of specialized faculty.
- Significant restructuring is underway:
 - Statistics and Textiles units will close at the end of 2026; select faculty will transition into other units. This decision followed a flawed ROI analysis that contributed to a no-confidence vote and the departure of the Chancellor.
 - Entomology and Plant Pathology will merge into the new *School of Integrated Plant Protection*.
 - Ag Leadership Education & Communication will merge with Agricultural Economics.

Extension & Statewide Engagement

Extension activities continue to focus on three statewide objectives:

- Strengthening Nebraska agriculture
- Inspiring Nebraskans and their communities
- Enhancing overall health and well-being

ARD's infrastructure and research report

- 40,000 acres across 16 Research, Extension, and Education Centers (REECs), supporting applied research and statewide outreach.
- In 2024, ARD reported \$182 million in annual research expenditures, representing half of UNL's total research spending, generated by 25% of the faculty.
- Indirect cost recovery is allocated one-third each to the campus, IANR, and individual units after central expenses are removed.
- A new facility, the USDA-ASR Institute for Resilient and Regenerative Precision Agriculture is under development at Nebraska Innovation Campus, reinforcing UNL's leadership in precision agriculture research.

Update from Gary Pierzinski (AgInnovation advisor for NCAC1)

- USDA staffing plan: The plan involves moving staff out of Washington, D.C. and placing them at locations across the United States, reflecting a decentralization strategy.
- Research Facilities Act: Provides \$125 million per year for the next five years, supporting national research infrastructure.
- USDA Research & Development Priorities:

- According to Secretary Hutchins, future proposals should demonstrate clear outcomes and goal-driven research that delivers direct benefits to ranchers, farmers, and consumers.
- Increasing emphasis is placed on defined outcomes and real-world impacts, with a reduced focus on curiosity-driven research.

Multistate Project Reviews, Discussions, and Recommendations

- NCERA13: (Bowling), Soil Testing and Plant Analysis. **Motion to approve with normal revision (unanimous)**
- NCTemp1203 (Muehlbauer), Lipids in Plants. Lipid metabolism and role in sustainable agriculture. **Motion to approve with normal revision (unanimous)**
- NCERA221 (Mamo): Turfgrass and the environment; IPM, remote sensing to detect turfgrass diseases and environmental stressors. **Motion to approve with normal revision (unanimous)**
- NC temp 1195 (Davis): Appreciated that publications listed were real ones from the group, and not just peripherally related to inflate the pub count; would be nice if reports were structured so that PIs show which pubs are related to which objectives. Suggest to acknowledge NCERA13 as a related project. **Motion to approve with minor revision (unanimous)**
- NCERAtemp59 (Mamo): SOM Function; well-connected group. **Motion to approve with normal revision (unanimous)**
- NC temp 1212 (Anderson): exploring the plant phenom. **Motion to approve with normal revision (unanimous)**
- NC213 (Sanguinet): Marketing and delivery of quality grains; non-destructive quality measurement; many pubs and presentations; good practical outcomes; perhaps some need for tracking interactions with industry; nice seeing grant proposal coming out from the project. **Motion to approve with normal revision (unanimous)**
- NCCC307 (Everhart): Biochemistry and Genetics of Plant-Fungal Interactions; exemplary scientists looking at the top fungal pathogens in crop production; meet as multistate in conjunction with Asilomar conference; put graduate student training first, which is an important goal that the multistate groups can support; some question as to whether objective 4 can really achieve the translational goal mentioned. **Motion to approve with normal revision (unanimous)**

UNL CASNR Career pathways, with K-12 School engagement

(slides were shared with attendees)

Tammy Mittelstet and Bailey Feit serve as UNL CASNR's K–12 Outreach Coordinators, working across Lincoln, Omaha, and rural communities to integrate agricultural concepts into science and math classrooms. Their role focuses on expanding ag education to students who may not otherwise have access, tailoring support based on each community's specific needs. As college-level lecturers, they contribute to the broader mission of preparing future problem-solvers and leaders in resilient food, energy, water, and societal systems through the FEWS Education and Career Pathways framework. Their key goals include: 1) Strengthening college and career readiness, 2) Increasing educational attainment, 3) Enhancing K–12 outreach, 4) Supporting improved rural prosperity

Website: <https://casnr.unl.edu/teaching-learning/k-12-partners/>.

State Reports

A. University of Minnesota (Gary Muehlbauer)

- Dean is stepping down 7/1/26 (max of two 5-yr contracts)
- Faculty Searches:
 - Landscape agroinformatics
 - Forage extension
 - Perennial grains breeding and genetics (64 applicants)
- 20 faculty
- College is pushing for faculty to retire (VPR program); retire by 7/1, receive 1.15 of their salary for a year; aiming to reduce people who aren't bringing in resource
- Also allow 2 year phased retirement, with \$50K into health savings acct
- ICR: 50% to university, 25% to college, 25% to dept.; college is planning on taking 35%
- UG: 120 in Plant Science (mostly HORT from Twin Cities); GR: 66
- Culturally, Twin Cities are so different from the rest of MN that it's a barrier for students attending UMN.

B. Mizzou, School of Natural Resources (Steve Anderson):

- See report from Steve Anderson.
 - Six divisions in CAFNR
 - SNR has become a major player in the college over the past 9 years
 - Programs of Distinction, based on how much research funding they bring in
 - UG: 900+ (1/3 of college); GR: 125 (1/3 of college)
 - SNR is under-supported with positions, relative to enrollment
 - Several soils hires in past year;
 - Soil judging team has been successful
 - Johnny Morris Institute (private-public partnership, creates flexibility)

C. University of Illinois Urbana Champagne (Adam Davis)

- See report from Adam Davis
 - No enrollment cliff
 - 125 U; 52 MSc, 54 PhD, 15 online
 - Several faculty hires: 35 faculty, 6 USDA, 2 high profile hires. 22 with extension appointment
 - Strategies to get high performing students into U of I
 - AI Institute funded by NSF
 - Faculty retreat: curriculum focus
 - Lost USAID fund, some employees retained with private donor fund
 - \$10M in grant cancelled
 - System president departing

D. Iowa State University (Glenn Ritchie)

- Agronomy UG: 200 (35% out of state), lose some to NE and SD; goal is to have > 200 in future. 200 Graduate students with 40 MS online
- 27 TT, 10 affiliate;
- President retired, new president installed – David Kirck
- Large Endowment
- Finance and IT moved centrally

E. Purdue (Laura Bowling)

- Crop, Soils, Breeding, Genetics
- 27 tenure track faculty; 4 clinical, 3 lecturers
- 80 grad, 140 UG; good engagement, strong crops and soils judging teams, their agronomy club is hosting spring SASES meeting
 - 6 UG majors:
 - Actively working to reduce number of majors; state legislature ; < 15 graduates per year is a low-enrollment major; so now they have to reduced majors
 - Crop Science and Applied Meteorology will go away
 - Digital agronomy is rolled back into Agronomy
 - Active debate on Soil and Water major (will likely go back into agronomy)
- Purdue is currently stable; in 2023, there was a lot of turnover in upper admin
- Faculty hiring is still reduced:
 - Megan Burns, new soil fertility ext specialist
 - Talent based hiring system ('movable dream' hires); these negotiations don't work out too well
 - They've refocused on bringing in more talented Assistant Profs; rising stars
- Agronomy Farm is operating well, operated on state funds; don't charge plot fees on their research farms; 1400 acres

- Major investment (\$2M) in grain bins to hold entire crop so they can sell at better prices
- Stress points:
 - Reduction in Extension appointments (only have 3 now)
 - Research funding hit: \$7.4 M this year, previously \$11.8; did get some late grants in Nov. ; college was down 25% in research awards
 - Increased political intervention
 - Low enrollment programs
 - IN state law for Research Security; \$0 for research funding from countries of concern (can't work with Syngenta)
 - Purdue wants to centralize scholarships; will sweep the funds and take them to campus; campus is using anti-DEI as the justification
- Budget
 - In 13th year of tuition freeze at Purdue
 - 10% budget cut
 - Extension budget has been flat for 20 years; moving to clustered model

F. The Ohio State University (Doug Karcher)

- 43 faculty (3 lecturer, 3 prof. practice, 37 TT)
- 50% in research, 25% teaching, 25% extension
- 2/3 in Columbus, 1/3 in Wooster
- GR: 70 (increase in the past few years due to new asst profs, increased research expenditures), UG: Horticulture and crop science (several specializations), Professional Golf Mgt (possibly being deactivated), Sustainable Agriculture (being deactivated) [legislation: any program not graduating 5/yr will not continue]
- 3% budget cut to college; using capacity funds to pay salaries => hiring freeze
- University: President Carter finishing second yr, liked by stakeholders, knows importance of agriculture
- Provost: 2nd yr; new initiatives, wants to see improvement in quality: more endowed chairs (matching program, 1/3 from campus; CSS now has endowed chair in Plant and Microbial Ecology), create pillars of excellence across the university
- Emphasis on gifts to bolster financial position; CSS spends lots of time on advancement.
- Have several Associate Dean vacancies at College level
- New initiatives at dept level:
 - New Professional MS program, asynchronous online (MS of Plant Health Mgt)
 - Investing heavily in UG recruitment, esp for FFA students; developing partnerships with regional campus (if students apply to Columbus and don't get in, refer them to regional campuses)
- Pain points:
 - Deferred maintenance in research facilities (yet College is investing in new facilities while not addressing the maintenance needs)

- Staff morale: hard to pay staff what they're worth; difficulties with new career road map from HR; this is especially difficult for Research Staff.

G. Michigan State University (Sydney Everhart)

- 72 faculty, 16 with joint appointments
- 9 staff
- 7 faculty hired in last year, 5 TT, 2 spousal
- Challenges in replacing teaching capacity from retirement
- Phil Robertson, elected to NAS
- Budget reductions: FY 26, ~\$40K
- UG: Crop and Soil (113), certificate program (2 yr; 31, Ag Industries, 34 golf students, 100 ag management; delivered both in-person and online; World of Soils and World of Turf each have over 2000 students; in-state tuition for the program for all students);
- GR (100): Plant Pathology , Crop and Soil Sciences, Global Plant Breeding (online), Plant Breeding and Biotechnology (inter dept)
- New President (non-LGU, background in Sports Medicine), new Provost (non LGU), pushing for initiative in One Health; new Dean
- SNAP ed cut led to some layoffs

H. Sout Dakota State University (Karen Sanguinet)

- See report
 - Founded 1886, Agronomy was first
 - SD is 2nd least populated state, with 800K people
 - 12,139 students in 2025 (48 states, 78 different countries)
 - 56% of students from SD, 17% from Sioux Falls; 83% retention rate (98% of students get in)
 - \$94M in res expenditures for SDSU in 2024
 - 'R1 our way' by 2030; 'the Jackrabbit Way', people-centric;
 - President does much outreach to tribal colleges in state
 - CAFE (College of Food, Ag and Envir Sci)
 - Agronomy, Horticulture & Plant Sciences dept resulted from plant path, ent, hort mergers
 - 38 faculty, 30 TT, 14 pre-tenure, 10 extension field specialists
 - UG: 170 agron, 22 Hort, 120 Precision ag
 - GR: 35 PhD, 35 MS
 - Faculty are supported by state GRF
 - Raven Precision Ag bldg. (35K sq ft); \$46M investment from SD Corn and SD Soybean
 - Increase in endowed positions across the university
 - Challenges:
 - Faculty retention is a challenge (often leave after getting a large federal grant)

- HORT program is shrinking
- Graduate program needs more courses, seminars
- State budget is flat

I. University of Nebraska (Martha Mamo)

- New President
- Chancellor just left under a cloud (no confidence vote); a lot of chaos in 2025 (budget cuts, dept elimination)
- Many testified for preservation of the Statistics dept including Agronomy and Horticulture
- \$27M deficit
- Revolving door in UNL admission Director position; finally have one
- Trust fell apart among faculty groups; need to rebuild now; morale is low, focus on LGM
- IANR: Mike Beohm stepped down, went back to Plant Path faculty; Tiffany Heng is interim vice-chancellor for IANR
- 68 TT faculty, expecting 5 voluntary separations, will retire by June 30 and get 70% of salary as separation
- Post-academic review strategic work completed
- 3+1 program with Northwest Ag in China; this was terminated in 2025
- Has hired an innovation partner for student recruitment and retention
- Distance ed (40); \$300K/yr lost from dept as it went to central campus; they teach about ~40 courses; faculty have been entrepreneurial in developing new courses.
- UG: 179 (down); GR: 105 including about 40 online MS (60% MS, 40% PhD)
- New initiatives:
 - Workforce development in cooperation with Seed Industry (McCullough)
 - Husker Produce Food Drive (led by Sam Wortman)
- 38 FTE in Research, \$12M in research expenditures
- Extension
 - Commodity board engagement in fall, used to focus retreat on collab.
 - 13 Extension FTE; how to broaden connection with the rest of the faculty
- Digital Ag initiative was submitted as an Operational Strategic Initiative
- Teaching initiative: quantifying teaching effort of each faculty member
- Impact conference: March 3 and 4th

IANR Digital Agriculture Hub, Drs. Guillermo Balboa and Joe Luck

(slides were shared with attendees)

- Survey of digital agriculture 35 that farmers know/use
 - Lack of info about value of DA led as adoption barrier (75%)
 - Lack of qualified labor
- Develop private-public partnership
- NFARMS: data platform to aggregate all data from farm operations into centralized system

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- Chair-elect: Karen Sanguinet, SDSU campus in Brookings, SD in 2027
- Vice-Chair: Sydney Everhart, location: KBS in 2028

Appendix – NCAC1 Location History and Submitted State Reports

NCAC1 Location History

NCAC-1 Location History Crop and Soil Research

Year	Location	Chair
1989	Washington, DC	Orvin Burnside (MN, Agronomy & Plant Genetics) – Fall Meeting
1990	Washington, DC	Fred Miller (OH, Agronomy) – Fall Meeting
1991	Fargo, ND	Eldor Paul (MI, Crop and Soil Sci.) – Fall Meeting
1992	Chicago, IL	Earl Foster (ND, Crop Sci.) – Fall Meeting
1994	St. Louis, MO	Ronald P. Cantrell (IA, Agronomy)
1995	Indianapolis, IN	Gary Heichel (IL, Agronomy) – Joint with NCAC4 (Horticulture)
1996	Washington, DC	Kent Crookston (MN, Agronomy & Plant Genetics)
1997	Indianapolis, IN	William McFee (IN, Agronomy)
1998	San Antonio, TX	H.H. Cheng (MN, Soil Sci.)
1999	Orlando, FL	Boyd Ellis (MI, Crop and Soil Sci.) – Joint with NCAC14 (Plant Path.)
2000	Kansas City, MO	Lynn Brun (ND, Soil Sci.)
2001	Tucson, AZ	Joe Stucki (IL, Soils – NRES)
2002	Washington, DC	Dale Gallenberg (SD, Plant Sci.)
2003	Argonne, IL	Birl Lowery (WI, Soil Sci.)
2004	St. Louis, MO	Al Schneiter (ND, Plant Sci.)
2005	Des Moines, IA	David Mengel (KS, Agronomy)
2006	Indianapolis, IN	Craig Beyrouthy (IN, Agronomy)
2007	Ponce, Puerto Rico	David Sylvania (PA, Crop & Soil Sci.)
2008	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Don Eckert (OH, Environment & Natural Res.)
2009	Washington, DC	Steve Anderson (MO, Soil, Environmental & Atmospheric Sci.)
2010	Raleigh, NC	Jim Kells (MI, Crop and Soil Sciences)
2011	Portland, OR	Mark Lagrimini (NE, Agronomy and Horticulture)
2012	Washington, DC	Kendall Lamkey (IA, Agronomy)
2013	St. Louis, MO	Mike Collins (MO, Plant Sciences)
2014	Indianapolis, IN	Joe Anderson (IN, Agronomy)
2015	San Diego, CA	Rich Horsley/Frank Casey (ND, Crop Sci./Natural Resources)
2016	Manhattan, KS	Gary Pierzynski (KS, Agronomy)
2017	San Diego, CA	Carl Rosen/Nancy Ehlke (MN, Soil Sci./Agronomy & Plant Genetics)
2018	San Diego, CA	Brian Slater (OH, Environment and Natural Resources)
2019	San Diego, CA	Jim Kells (MI, Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences)
2020	Ponce, Puerto Rico	Adam Davis (IL, Crop Sciences)
2021	Virtual	Kendall Lamkey (IA, Agronomy)
2022	Virtual	Rich Horsley/Frank Casey (ND Crop Sci./Natural Resources)
2023	San Diego, CA	Gary Muehlbauer (MN, Agronomy and Plant Genetics)
2024	Virtual	Doug Karcher/Brian Slater (OH, Hort. & Crop Sci./Env. & Natural Res.)
2025	San Antonio, TX	Adam Davis (IL, Crop Sciences)
2026	Lincoln, NE	Martha Mamo (UNL, Agronomy and Horticulture)

Updated in Feb 2026 by Martha Mamo. History compiled by Steve Anderson.

NCAC1 Annual Report School of Natural Resources University of Missouri January 2026

Faculty/Administration:

College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR)

- **CAFNR at a Glance:** 55+ degree programs, minors and certificates; 97% of graduates report a successful career outcome; \$64Million+ (CAFNR is a campus leader in research expenditures).

School of Natural Resources (SNR)

- **Dr. Patrick Market**, Director and Professor of Atmospheric Science
- **Dr. Sonja Wilhelm Stanis**, Associate Director and Professor of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
- **Dr. Neil Fox**, Director of Graduate Studies and Professor of Atmospheric Science
- **Dr. Ron Revord**, Director, The Center for Agroforestry
- **Dr. Michael Stambaugh**, Director, The Center for Tree Ring Science
- **Dr. Zachary Leason**, Director, The Missouri Climate Center

SNR leadership will be tasked to work on:

- The SNR Strategic Plan (2025-2030) was completed and distributed throughout SNR, CAFNR, SNR Advisory Council. Faculty and staff will continue to focus on increasing grant expenditures, publications, graduate rates and continue to brand SNR and its programs to increase recruitment.
- Fall semester search for a Parks, Recreation, Sport Management and Tourism Non-Tenure Track Assistant/Associate Teaching Professor.
- Consideration of Artificial Intelligence in the Learning Environment.

Enrollment Highlights [as of Fall 2025 official census data]:

- **904 TOTAL undergraduates:** Environmental Sciences = 233; Natural Resource Science & Management = 226; Parks, Recreation, Sport and Tourism = 445.
- **126 TOTAL graduates:** M.S. = 78; Ph.D. = 48; Distance (Agroforestry) = 16.

Funding Highlights/Budget:

In FY2025, our faculty applied for \$30,283.888 in funding resulting in \$13,223.696 in new awards.

SNR Activities/Highlights:

New faculty hires:

- **Christine Brodsky**, Assistant Professor of Urban Ecology
- **Sam Lord**, Assistant Research Professor
- **Muhammad Rasel Parvej**, Assistant Professor & State Extension Specialist in Soil Testing and Interpretation (joint appointment with the Division of Plant Science & Technology)
- **Rick Relyea**, Professor, William J. Rucker Professorship in Fisheries and Wildlife, Director of the Johnny Morris Institute of Fisheries, Wetlands, and Aquatic Systems
- **Xiaoping Xin**, Assistant Professor (jointly appointed with the Division of Plant Science & Technology)

Division-wide Accomplishments and notable society awards/accomplishments

- **Michael Molloy** received a CAFNR Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (C-DRIG) to support his dissertation research project. Michael's emphasis is in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and is advised by Professor Sonja Wilhelm Stanis
- Assistant Professor **Allison Pease** has received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award to support a six-month research project in Paraguay focused on conserving the country's diverse river fish populations.
- Assistant Professor **Jeff Wood** was recognized by agInnovation North Central as the recipient of the 2025 agInnovation Early Career Excellence in Agricultural Innovation Award.
- The **W.A. Albrecht Lecture** was delivered by Jorge L. Lugo-Camacho, State Soil Scientist.
- The **Dunmire Lecture** was delivered by Dr. Melanie Stiassny, the Axelrod Research Curator of Ichthyology at the American Museum of Natural History.
- SNR Director continues to attend and participate in (Missouri Natural Resources Conference) MNRC, Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Round Table, and Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM) annual meetings/conferences in support of SNR Faculty and undergraduate/graduate/post doc students; Prairie Fork Coordinating Committee and SNR Advisory Council meetings. The Director also continues to serve as Co-Director of the Missouri Water Center.
- The **Mizzou Meteorology Club** helped Mizzou achieve StormReady designation from the National Weather Service.

- SNR staff members Kathryn Leeper, Traci Wren, Taylor Richardson and Assistant Teaching Professor Dana Massengale were recognized with the CAFNR Driver to Distinction Award.
- **Hank Stelzer**, Associate Professor of Forestry, State Extension Specialist in Forestry and Education Director of Extension Natural Resources was awarded the Donald W. Fancher Provost Award for Outstanding Achievement in Extension and Continuing Education.
- **The MU Collegiate Soil Judging** took home third place at the 2025 Region V Soil judging contest in Omaha, advancing to the 2026 National Collegiate Soil judging contest in Raleigh, North Carolina.

During the 2025 CAFNR Celebration of Excellence program, several SNR faculty and staff were honored:

- **Chung-Ho Lin**, Research Professor, received the Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award.
- **Cindy Greenwood**, Program/Project Support Coordinator II received the Mumford Award for Outstanding Staff.
- **Eric Aldrich**, Assistant Teaching Professor of Atmospheric Sciences, was inducted into the CAFNR Teaching Academy.
- **Sonja Wilhelm Stanis**, Professor, was honored as the Outstanding Senior Teacher Award.
- **Shuangyu Xu**, Assistant Professor received the Outstanding Mid-Career Teacher Award.
- **Jenna Fusinato**, Senior Academic Advisor, was awarded the Outstanding Undergraduate Advisor.
- **Samantha Carter** received the William R. Lamberson Distinguished Dissertation Award.
- **Morgan Davis**, Assistant Professor, received the Outstanding Early Investigator Research Award.
- **Eric Kurzejeski** was honored as one of six recipients with the 2025 CAFNR Column Award for Distinguished Alumni. This is the only award specifically for alumni presented by the college – the highest honor bestowed by the College in celebration of outstanding alumni.
- **Shibu Jose**, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Associate Dean of Research and Director of the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, has been named a

member of the Global Council of the World Agriculture Forum (WAF).

- **Cindy Greenwood** received a CAFNR 150 Grant in the amount of \$1500. The CAFNR 150 Endowment was established with the goal of enhancing educational opportunities, supporting student success, and fostering innovative teaching practices.
- **Kerry Clark**, Associate Research Professor, was honored as one of the Top 10 faculty members in research funding over the past decade (2016-25) in CAFNR.
- Associate Professors' **Katherine Nelson** and **Michael Stambaugh** were recipients of the 2025 CAFNR Joy of Discovery Seed Grant Program. The Joy of Discovery Seed Grant Program supports nascent, multidisciplinary research with the goal of developing a competitive proposal for federal funding.

Katherine Nelson; Timothy Reinbott and Steven Pryor, *From page to desktop. Developing an AI-assisted data extraction workflow for long-term historic agricultural data*

Michael Stambaugh; Laura A.E. Marshall; *Developing novel metrics to predict fire-driven vegetation type conversion and forest loss in western U.S. wildfire crisis landscapes*

- Fourteen CAFNR students were awarded [Mizzou Forward Undergraduate Research Training Grants](#). The purpose of these fellowships is to financially support undergraduate students who are serious about pursuing a graduate education in STEM and NSF-funded fields in order to enhance their opportunity to be admitted into the graduate school of their choice. **Sophia Immer**, natural resource science and management, mentored by Leslie A. Lyons.

Our annual *SNR Awards & Recognition Event* honored the following recipients:

- **Allison Pease**, Impact on Teaching
- **Chung-Ho Lin**, Impact on Research
- **Jennifer Wentz**, Impact on Service
- **Cindy Greenwood**, Staff Impact
- **Thomas Schwent**, Undergraduate Student Impact
- **Evan Travis**, Graduate Student Impact
- **Emmanuel Barffour Oppong Adjei**, Alumni Impact
- **Kerry Clark**, Director's Award

Steve Anderson, was honored for his 40 years of service to the University and to the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources.

Ben Knapp was selected for the 2025 Carl Alwin Schenck Award on teaching from the Society of American Foresters. The award "...recognizes outstanding performance in the field of forestry education."

AY 2025-2026 UIUC Crop Sciences updates for NCAC1 mtg, 1/8/26

- 1) Student body:
 - a. Undergraduate: 125 [uptick in enrollment, via more admitted students, in '25]
 - b. Graduate: MS: 52, PhD: 54
 - c. Online MS: 15
- 2) Faculty
 - a. New Hires:
 - i. Dr. John Jones, Assistant Professor of Soil Science
 - ii. Dr. James Santiago, Assistant Professor of Horticulture
 - iii. Dr. Connor Sible, Research Assistant Professor of Agronomy
 - iv. Dr. Carl Bernacchi, Professor of Plant Physiology
 - v. Dr. Rachel Vann, Assoc. Professor of Cropping Systems Extension
 - vi. Dr. Matthew Vann, ACES Associate Dean of Extension, Prof. in CPSC
 - b. Promotions:
 - i. Dr. Jessica Rutkoski, promoted to Associate Professor and named Siemer Chair of Wheat Breeding.
 - ii. Dr. Chance Riggins, promoted to Clinical Assoc. Professor
 - c. Retirements:
 - i. Prof. Jack Juvik, Horticulture
 - d. Overall: 35 tenure line, 6 spec. fac, 6 USDA-ARS
- 3) Education
 - a. Continuing curriculum review and revision; faculty retreat on Jan. 17th, 2025 was successful, and led to increased activity in revising curriculum to better support learning outcomes for majors
 - b. New recruiter joined dept. in Sept. 2025
- 4) Research
 - a. Loss of Soybean Innovation Lab funding from USAID. Anonymous donor provided funding to keep open for an additional year.
 - b. > \$10M in grants delayed or funded in dept. (one as co-PI: we received the award letter in March 2025 and then were asked to resubmit in fall 2025)
- 5) Extension
 - a. Crop Sciences Extension Council working on increasing extension visibility and impact for stakeholders. Prof. Aaron Hager is chairing the council, which includes Crop Sciences Extension faculty and UIUC Extension leaders.

Dr. Matthew Vann was named new Associate Dean of Extension in the College of ACES in August 2025. Working closely with departments to improve service to, and communication with, stakeholders.

South Dakota State University

University

- 1) 12,139 enrolled students in 2025 at census in September up from 12,065 in 2024. Students at SD state are from 48 states, 78 countries
- 2) 56% of students are from South Dakota
- 3) Retention rates at 83%
- 4) Largest majors—nursing, engineering, economics, and animal science
- 5) 94 million in research expenditures in 2025 up from 82 million in 2024
- 6) R1 our way 2030—RE there but need PhD numbers up (~300 total; need 70 per year)
- 7) <https://www.sdstate.edu/american-indian-opportunities-sdsu/wokini-initiative>

CAFES

- 1) **Dean**, Dr. Joe Cassady (~4 years)
- 2) **Associate Dean of Research**, Dr. John Blanton (2 years)
- 3) **Associate Dean of Academic Affairs**, Dr. Jim Connors (2 years)
- 4) **Associate Dean of Extension (Interim)**, Dr. Sandy Smart (~ 6 months, permanent search underway)

AHPS (Agronomy Horticulture & Plant Sciences)—Founded/merger in 2016

- 1) Disciplines
 - a. Agronomy
 - b. Horticulture
 - c. Precision Ag
 - d. Entomology
 - e. Plant Pathology
 - f. Soil Science
 - g. Plant Breeding & Genetics
 - h. Plant Diagnostic Lab
 - i. Master Gardner Program
- 2) Faculty
 - a. 38 faculty, 30 Tenure-track, 14 pre-tenure
 - b. 10 Field Specialists
- 3) New Hires
 - a. **Dr. Teng Yang**, Controlled Environment, Horticulture
 - b. **Dr. Govinda Shrestha**, IPM
 - c. **Dr. Sachin Dhanda**, Weed Ecology
 - d. **Dr. Abigail Martens**, Entomology—biodiversity and pollinators
 - e. **Dr. David Karki**, Crop Performance Testing, Extension
 - f. **Forage Breeder, approved 1/26—will start advertising soon**

g. **4 Tenure-track, 1 lecturer in process (Nematology/Epidemiology, Ornamental Horticulture Ext, Soil Health (Pierre))**

- 4) **Organization.** Raven Precision Ag building houses AHPS and Ag Biosystems Engineering. Young Brothers Seed Tech houses plant breeders, food testing lab, and the SDSU seed testing lab. Berg Ag Hall houses the Plant Diagnostic Lab, which recently received national accreditation, and weed science, entomology, and plant pathology faculty. McFadden Biostress houses an additional 8 faculty in quantitative genetics and horticulture.
- 5) Undergraduate students
 - a. **Majors:** Agronomy (147), Horticulture (24), Precision Ag (85);
 - b. **Minors:** Agronomy (68), Horticulture (15), Precision Ag (66), Sustainable Local Foods (5), Crop Protection (12), Soil Health (15)
- 6) Graduate students (70—35 PhD; 35 MS as of Fall 2025)
MS, PhD in Plant Science
- 7) Budget & FY25 Numbers
-flat, no raises but no cuts

AHPS by the Numbers FY 2025:

Research Expenditures: \$12,932,401

Total grant Expenditures: \$6,520,232

Research Proposal Submitted – 113

Research Proposals funded – 67

Research Awarded \$5,499,104

Average award: \$82,076

Total Publications 153

- 8) Challenges
 - a. Retention
 - b. HR
 - c. Building managements
 - d. Horticulture major
 - e. Graduate studies
 - f. Ag Science major run by the college (2.0 GPA requirement) to PA/AG/HO (2.5 GPA requirement)