



RICH'S REFLECTION

I just finished hosting the annual meeting of the NCAC-4. This is a group of Horticulture department heads that meets each year to discuss, plan and evaluate regional research projects. The college is mandated to use 25% of its federal research funds to support regional research activities. Since we completed our evaluations of research projects during the winter, we had some time to discuss issues related to horticulture departments. The conversations always wonder quite a bit, but topics of discussion centered on under-

graduate enrollment, department mergers and centralization of administrative services.

Overall, enrollment in Horticulture and Crops majors continue to remain relatively low, but some departments have observed increases in student credit hours. Unlike Penn State, at some universities, funding for teaching tracks directly to student credit hours, so there are incentives to teach high-enrollment courses. At some universities, simple name changes to a course resulted in increased enrollment. For example,

“organic vegetable growing” rather than “vegetable crop production” or “viticulture and small fruit growing” rather than “small fruit science” can result in a tripling of enrollment. Others found that dropping pre-requisites can result in increased enrollment of production courses. General courses in “organic gardening” or “wines and vines” are popular at some universities. As we develop curriculum in our new major, we need to consider some of these strategies.

(Continued on Page 2)

ADVISING CENTER NEWS By: Paige Thomas

The Department of Horticulture Scholarship Committee met on Thursday, May 26th to make scholarship awards to undergraduate students for the 2011-2012 academic year. Thirty-six students majoring in Horticulture applied for a scholarship, and thirty-eight Landscape Contracting students

applied. A total of \$126,703 was awarded. THANK YOU to Martin McGann, Mike Orzolek and Paige Thomas for attending this meeting. THANK YOU also to the faculty members who helped the process by completing ‘recommendation sheets’ during May. And a VERY

SPECIAL THANK YOU goes to Heather Read for her administrative support in preparing materials for the meeting. Martin McGann has graciously agreed to be the Scholarship Chairperson next year. THANK YOU, Martin!



Inside this issue:

Rich's Reflection (Continued)	2
Department Meeting Schedule	2
Penn State Floral Design	3
Graduate Student Information	4
Cellar Market Schedule	5
Department Birthdays	5

Calendar of Events:

- June 1—CGS/UMI Distinguished Dissertation Award Application due
- June 17—Last day to activate intent to graduate (summer semester)
- June 24—Classes End (1st summer session)/Last day for summer graduate to pass doctoral defense
- June 29—Classes begin (2nd summer session)

—Continued from Page 1 (Rich’s Reflection)—

Several department heads attending this meeting were from departments that have been merged for up to 17 years. Being a product of two such programs, I was already aware of many of the issues that they brought up, and this discussion verified many of my observations when I was a student. The general consensus is that the term “Plant Science” does not enhance student recruitment because nobody knows what it means. There is actually some research that supports this conclusion. Most people have an idea, although often incorrect, of what “Horticulture” is. Some indicated that enrollment dropped when the term “Horticulture” was removed from the name of the major. Last fall the four unit leaders of the “Plant Science” departments met to discuss potential names for our soon-to-be combined majors and after nearly two hours we could not agree on anything. I have two degrees in Plant Science, and I don’t like the name, but I can’t think of a fairly short name that encompasses the four disciplines. I think we will have to try to develop some recruiting strategies to prevent losing Pennsylvania students to the Horticulture majors that still remain in neighboring states.

From the group at this meeting, one department is being merged this summer and a couple of others expect to be merged within 5 years, so we were very interested in hearing about the experiences of departments that have already merged. There are more examples of unsuccessful mergers, but there are a couple of successful mergers. After quite

a bit of discussion we were able to identify some of the factors leading to success.

Considerable discussion and fact gathering between the two units is needed before the merger to get buy-in from faculty and staff.

People must be physically relocated to the same building or they will remain independent units. In most cases faculty resist relocation because they want to remain with others in their discipline, but prevents any potential benefits of the merger. The most successful merger that was described involved relocating half the faculty in each department to the other building. When left in the same building, faculty within each discipline simply circle the wagons in an attempt to protect their discipline. This exact situation was obvious to me as a student and the department I graduated from 37 years ago, that was merged 48 years ago, is still a dysfunctional unit composed of faculty from several disciplines.

Mergers should be limited to units of approximately equal size. When a small unit is merged with a larger unit, the small unit will be dominated by the larger unit and the smaller unit will disappear within a decade. Making decisions, based on democratic voting must be avoided because the larger unit will always get their way. Rather than listening to the majority, the department head will have to make decisions that are in the best

interest of the entire department.

Continued routine discussions between faculty, staff and college administrators for several years following the merger is critical to identify and develop solutions to unexpected problems, and to make modifications.

The department head must spend time in both buildings so faculty and staff feel that they are being treated equally.

The biggest problem involves merging very different cultures. So all existing departmental committees must be dissolved and new committees formed with equal representation from each unit. New departmental policies and guidelines must be developed by committees with equal representation from both units to replace all existing policies.

If departments or programs are merged the “right way” a strong unified department can emerge. Experience suggests that the first two or three years will be very difficult and the unification process will require at least a decade. However, if departments are not merged correctly, the resulting department will remain permanently dysfunctional.



The Horticulture Department is hosting a retirement party for Paige Thomas on Wednesday, June 29 from 1 1:30 am to 3:00 pm at Sunset Park.

Please keep your eyes open for additional information to be sent out to everyone soon.

We hope that you will be able to attend and wish Paige the best of luck on her new endeavors!

Penn State Advanced Floral Design on Facebook

Kathy Shumac, instructor of the floral design course, has created a Facebook page to increase awareness of what the floral class is doing and to enjoy pictures of the arrangements placed around campus. Kathy has started uploading pictures of the evening class and of the designs that the advanced class does. The advanced class makes arrangements for Tyson, Ag Admin, Nittany Lion Inn, and Engineering EES buildings. She is hoping that with a larger following, it may pass the word around campus so students have more buildings to be able to create unique arrangements for.

Please check it out and follow Penn State Advanced Floral Design!



Congratulations!



The extension publication “Performance of New Day-Neutral Strawberry Varieties”, by Kathy Demchak, Willie Lantz and Harry Swartz was selected as new extension publication by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.



There are currently no scheduled Department Meetings during the summer months. Regular Department Meetings will resume in the fall.



Graduate Student Information (Thesis Office Calendar and Commencement)

Thesis Office Calendar—Summer and Fall 2011, Spring and Summer 2012

The following deadlines are for theses and dissertations only. Students writing master's papers should contact their departments for deadlines.

Deadlines by semester	SU2011	FA2011	SP2012	SU2012
Activate intent to graduate on eLion	6/17	9/5	1/23	6/15
Submit doctoral dissertation for format review	6/10	10/3	2/20	6/8
Submit master's thesis for format review	6/13	10/5	2/22	6/11
Pass doctoral defense*	6/24	10/10	3/5	6/22
Submit final thesis or dissertation and supporting materials	7/18	11/21	4/9	7/16
Commencement	8/13	12/17	5/6	8/11
	2:30 pm	4:00 pm	tba	tba
	BJC	Eisenhower Auditorium	BJC	BJC

*Questions about the doctoral defense should be directed to Graduate Enrollment Services (814-865-1795). Contact department for information about master's defense.

Graduate School Commencement— Summer Session 2011, Saturday, August 13, 2:30 pm, Bryce Jordan Center

Your commencement will begin promptly at 2:30pm on Saturday, August 13, in the Bryce Jordan Center and will last approximately 2 hours.

If you have questions about whether you have met all degree requirements, please contact your department.

Master's Candidates—Check in at the BJC by 1:30pm. Enter Gate B; then enter the event floor via Portal 15. Please wear your academic regalia, including hood.

Important Notice: In order to reserve a seat, master's candidates planning to attend the ceremony must go to <https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/cosign/registrations/commencement/> and sign up. The deadline is 5pm on August 10. It is not necessary for doctoral candidates to register.

Doctoral Candidates—Report to the Auxiliary Gym of the BJC by 1:30pm. Enter Portal 15 and, once on the event floor, ushers will direct you to the Auxiliary Gym. Please wear your academic regalia (the hood will be carried over the left arm, and hooding will take place during the ceremony). Faculty advisers for doctoral candidates should meet their advisees in the Auxiliary Gym at this time. Personal belongings can be left in the Auxiliary Gym (security will be provided during the ceremony).

General information for graduates—At check-in, you will receive a card with your name and degree on it to be used in the ceremony. This card must be presented to a University Marshal when you approach the stage. After check-in, you will join other graduates by college in the processional directed by University Marshals. Doctoral candidates and their faculty escorts will be paired for the processional and will be seated together. Doctoral candidates who do not have a faculty escort should inform the University Marshal at check-in.

PLEASE NOTE: The use of alcoholic beverages, including champagne, is prohibited. Persons coming to the ceremony with alcoholic beverages will be asked to surrender them to University commencement staff.

Academic Dress—Academic regalia or the dress uniform of one of the U.S. Armed Forces is required. Advanced degree candidates wear the tassel of the cap on the left front edge. Doctoral candidates should carry their hoods over their left arms during the processional; master's candidates should wear the hoods over their shoulders (velvet toward chin).

Additional Information and Transcripts

For more in depth information about commencement, visit <http://commencement.psu.edu/>, call 814-865-5448, or email gradthesis@psu.edu. To order transcripts, visit the Registrar's home page at <http://www.registrar.psu.edu/>.

VISIT THE CELLAR MARKET

EVERY WEDNESDAY

12:00 PM –5:00 PM

HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT VEGGIE CELLAR

ALL PRODUCE GROWN LOCALLY IN
THE HIGH TUNNELS AND FIELDS AT THE
PENN STATE HORTICULTURE FARM
ROCK SPRINGS, PA

ITEMS INCLUDE FRESH FRUITS, VEGETABLES,
HERBS, AND CUT FLOWERS

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horticulture.psu.edu



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\$7.00

Horticulture Sizes: X Large

Landscape Contracting Sizes:
Medium, Large, X Large

**Please come to 102 Tyson for
purchase**

Department Birthdays

June 4—Eric Nord
June 6—Jonathan Lynch
June 9—Quanying Du
June 10—Jim Burrige
June 15—Diane Rudy
June 27—Chris Fernandez
June 30—Molly Hanlon



This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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