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Cranford: Texas Tech researchers are getting ahead of the storm this hurricane season with new advanced research technology.

Hello everyone, I'm Leslie Cranford, and this is *AcademiCast*, brought to you by Texas Tech University.

The 2011 hurricane season officially began June 1st and according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the season is expected to be above-normal, with up to 6 major hurricanes developing during the 6 month stretch. But Texas Tech hurricane researchers are ready to study the storms in real-time, for the first time. John Schroeder, hurricane researcher and Director of the Texas Tech Wind Science and Engineering Research Center, or WISE, said a new upgrade to the Center's mobile fleet of hurricane research equipment will allow for the collection of critical, real-time data during storms.

***Schroeder:** Historically, all the research is done with looking back. So we would go back and get the instrument after the storm is passed,-collect the data, download the data, and then spend years analyzing it. This coming season, for the first time ever, we have funding to take half of our fleet, we have a fleet of 24 small towers we use now, and we are converting half of that fleet to provide real-time data. And so this year-we will have 12 stations reporting in real time from a hurricane zone. That will be very valuable information that we hope to provide this year.*

Cranford: Schroeder says the real-time data will be helpful to emergency managers, forecasters and others making decisions after the storm.

WISE recently took its tornado research to a new level. WISE has been known for its elite study of testing wind resistance in storm shelters, but now it is focusing on the source of tornado damage and how to develop building codes to prevent it.

By using the construction of a tornado simulator, known as VorTECH, researchers are able to design tornado winds that reach an average speed of 150 miles per hour using eight large fans to suck up approximately 160-thousand cubic feet of air each minute.

Our next integrated scholar feature is Dr. Brian Shannon, a faculty member in Texas Tech's School of Law. Here's Provost Bob Smith with more.

Smith: Dr. Brian Shannon is the Charles B. Thornton Professor of Law in Texas Tech's School of Law. Not only is he a beloved teacher among his students, he is also a leading researcher and outreach provider in various areas impacting the law—from contract law, to property law, criminal law, and law and psychiatry. Although he is recognized as an expert in many areas, becoming an attorney and a professor wasn't always what Dr. Shannon thought he would end up doing.

Shannon: *Interestingly when I was in college, I had not completely decided. I had started out as a physics major and realized pretty quickly that the lab and I were not going to get along. One of my uncles was a lawyer and a judge and I had always been intrigued by his work, as well as maybe just liking to argue as a kid. My parents would probably tell you that. So I gravitated toward going to law school.*

Smith: In addition to Dr. Shannon's teaching duties, which currently include law and psychiatry and contract law, he has served or taken leadership roles in a number of organizations, including the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities, the Lubbock Regional Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center, the Lubbock County Bar Association, Advocacy Incorporated, and the Texas Council of Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers.

Dr. Shannon has also co-authored four editions of the book, *Texas Criminal Procedure and the Offender with Mental Illness*, along with two editions of *Texas Alternative Dispute Resolution and Arbitration Statutes and Commentary*. Considering all that he does, Dr. Shannon also knows how vital it is to serve and help others.

Shannon: *Through that service, we are looking in the local community and also state-wide at policy issues effecting persons with mental disabilities as well as persons with substance abuse issues and the like. It's a real challenge as we go forward and into this legislative session because of the budget challenges that the state faces. And so we've been working some to try and get the message out that these individuals are with us, the state has grown. If services aren't provided upfront for appropriate mental health care, we could end up with much higher costs on the back end with the possibility of more expensive services in the E.R., time in jail or prison. These policy issues feed nicely into some of the research work I have don't in the past too.*

Smith: As if his previously mentioned service wasn't enough, Dr. Shannon also acts as Texas Tech's faculty representative to the National Collegiate Athletic Association or NCAA and the Big 12 Conference.

Shannon: *I grew up around athletics. My father had been a high school basketball coach, and later after he got his Ph.D. we moved to San Angelo and he coached and taught at Angelo State. And so I had grown up around sports but had not been involved after high school other than for fun. But eight or nine years ago I got the opportunity to serve on our university's athletic council and had done that for a period of time. Then my predecessor, Dr. Robert Baker, from biology was the faculty rep until about two and a half years ago. And when he stepped down, first President Whitmore, and then as President Bailey arrived, asked me to serve in that role. And the duties are very different. Having been a professor, and teaching and writing etc. for 20 years involving legal issues, to suddenly be in a different universe had a new set of challenges. But I am learning everyday. It's very interesting and there is a lot of overlap. I know three of the faculty reps within the Big XII are law professors. And I think the legal background is helpful in trying to figure out compliance issues, or delving through procedures and process.*

Smith: What's Dr. Shannon's best advice to new faculty members on how to effectively integrate research, teaching and service? In his words, do not be afraid to say "yes" to opportunities and find ways to integrate opportunities.

***Shannon:** I think new faculty member ought not to be hesitant to say yes as opportunities come in the door. Early on, in addition to some of the work I was doing, I had the chance, for example, to serve on a local board, or be involved with these other things. And I think just stepping out, being willing to say yes. At some point, you have to realize that there might be some projects you have to decline, but for the most part, people who enter academia generally are very smart, very talented individuals who are able to find balance in life and also create balance, while also giving back and being involved in an array of things. So I'd encourage people to boldly give it a try.*

Smith: From engaging the minds of students in the classroom, to studying policy issues in psychiatry, to bringing Texas Tech's voice to the Big 12 Conference, Dr. Shannon is an exemplar of a busy faculty member at Texas Tech where he serves remarkably in all that he does. We are pleased to thank him for his tremendous work and integrated scholarship. Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Cranford: Thanks, Dr. Smith. The Texas Tech School of Law has a new dean. Dr. Darby Dickerson comes to Texas Tech from the Stetson University College of Law in Florida, where she joined the faculty in 1995 as an assistant professor, and moved through the ranks to assume the deanship in 2004. She will take over as the law dean at Texas Tech July 29th.

Texas Tech also appointed Dr. Valerie Osland Paton as the interim dean of the University College. Dr. Paton currently supervises Texas Tech's institutional effectiveness infrastructure, including Institutional Research, Academic Services and Facility Resources, the Office of Planning and Assessment, and the Quality Enhancement Plan/TTU Ethics Center. She also serves as the university's accreditation liaison.

Until next time, I'm Leslie Cranford for AcademiCast.