

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
July 11, 2012

Butler: This is “AcademiCast”—Texas Tech University’s biweekly podcast series from the Office of the Provost. I’m Kristina Butler, and I’ll be covering the top academic stories on campus. Later in the program, Provost Bob Smith will spotlight student of integrated scholarship Suzanne Taylor.

First, the news...

Texas Tech scientists are among thousands collaborating on research conducted at Switzerland’s European Organization for Nuclear Research, also called CERN. Last week, physicists at CERN found evidence of a new particle consistent with the Higgs boson, which is proposed to explain the origins of particle mass.

The recent findings at CERN are being compiled and analyzed, thanks to the collaborative efforts of researchers around the world. Texas Tech physics professor Nural Akchurin explains that this large-scale approach is novel. Akchurin works with the university’s High Energy Physics Group and has contributed to research at CERN.

Akchurin: I think it’s exciting in research that actually such coordination can be achieved. It’s not like two or three people discovering something; this is thousands of people discovering something very unusual. So this is also, in science, something new. And our involvement as the High Energy Physics Group at Texas Tech as part of that whole is also very exciting. Because I think we manage to participate, from Texas, in something that is 8,000 miles away in a very effective way. We are excited to bring ideas, news, and discussions to this campus from CERN.

Butler: The High Energy Physics Group is led by Akchurin and other professors at Texas Tech. To learn more about their work, visit our website at academicast.ttu.edu.

In other research news, the university has amended its smoke- and tobacco-free environment policy. This allows Texas Tech to meet requirements from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas. The policy prohibits use of tobacco products in and around buildings where institute-funded research is conducted. On campus, the ban will affect the Human Sciences, Psychology, Electrical Engineering, and Agricultural Sciences buildings.

Enrollment is on the rise at Texas Tech. More than 11,000 students signed up for classes, topping registration figures from previous summers. The summertime surge also follows record enrollment from the past spring and fall semesters.

Along with a commitment to academics, Students of Integrated Scholarship pursue a course of lifelong study through their involvement in active learning experiences. Modes of active learning include internships, service learning, undergraduate and graduate research, and opportunities to study abroad. In this edition of AcademiCast, Provost Bob Smith spotlights Suzanne Taylor, a second-year law student.

Smith: Suzanne Williams Taylor stands out among her peers in the Texas Tech School of Law, because, unlike many law students, the Arlington native did not grow up with the aspiration of becoming an attorney. Instead, Taylor turned her attention to law school during her senior year as an undergraduate at Texas Tech. At the time she was balancing the duties of Student Government Association president while completing her bachelor's degree in advertising.

Taylor: My senior year I was very involved in student government and through that year several doors just opened, and very strategic conversations with some mentors and people that I really have a lot of respect for, just kind of opened my eyes that this was maybe something I needed to look at. And so I think that coming in, my mindset's been different as far as, not necessarily the mainstream law, or that I want to be an attorney and I've wanted this my whole life, but more of just, this is something I feel called to, and something that, I know I'm supposed to be here, and not sure why yet. But each step of the way has been really affirming that this is the right place right now.

Smith: Akin to her undergraduate years, Taylor has filled her schedule with active learning experiences as a law student. She is a recognized member of Texas Tech's advocacy programs, which allow students to compete in negotiations, mock trial and moot court competitions. Most recently, Taylor was part of a team that won a regional championship in the American Bar Association's Appellate Advocacy Competition. Even more recently she was named by Governor Perry as the 2012-2013 Student Regent of the Texas Tech University System Board of Regents.

Taylor: There are many different opportunities to get involved outside of the classroom and many are great in preparing you for, just kind of more the professional world, but also to give you kind of a little insight into what different parts of being an attorney look like, specifically the Advocacy programs. I've just loved being able to really see how it all comes together, and learning how to be a better advocate for others, knowing that in real life, that it's not just a story that's made up and, but it really is impacting where people are at and what their future may look like, based upon how well you were able to advocate for them.

Smith: Outside the School of Law, Taylor is a brief writer in the appellate division of Lubbock's criminal district attorney. She also assists with external relations and strategic initiatives in the office of President Guy Bailey. Taylor's service in the President's Office enabled her to secure a summer internship with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in Washington, D.C.

Taylor: This summer I'm interning at what is called APLU, or the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. It's a nonprofit advocacy organization that provides information and opinions on higher education. And that's through a variety of forums, which could possibly include meetings that are organized for college and university faculty and administrators; also task forces on a variety of topics that include different federal relations people, from the variety of public or land-grant universities; as well as gathering information for meeting with the executive and legislative members to gain more perspective on what the federal agenda is for higher ed, as well as what the institutions' perspectives are, as far as goals that they want to be for the future.

Smith: Taylor's learning opportunities both within and external to the law school have helped her to realize the value of a jurisprudential education. Additionally, she recognizes the

importance of balance and integrates activities that are close to her heart. Taylor serves on the alumnae council of the Christian women's sorority Sigma Phi Lambda, and she and her husband lead a Sunday school class at their church. Taylor believes that other students who also follow their interests will find their efforts well rewarded.

Taylor: Just seeing the doors that have opened based off of interests and passions that I've had, and I think for any integrated scholar that is looking for those opportunities that it's important to find those things that they really are passionate about, but also important to remain with the mindset that there is a bigger picture and to be pursuing those for the opportunity to learn and for what those opportunities may bring in the future.

Smith: Ambassador Karen Hughes, former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs, recently offered the following advice to TTU graduating seniors: "The most important thing that you and I will do in life is to choose our loves and order them very, very carefully. Many of us act and work as if fame or power or money and all the stuff we collect are our true loves, yet if we drag ourselves away from that list that keeps us busy and focus on what is truly important, most of us would say that our family and friends and the people we care about are what we truly love." Consistent with that message, keeping an open mind and an open heart has allowed Suzanne Williams Taylor to achieve much, first as an undergraduate and currently as a law student at Texas Tech. There's no doubt she will continue to make positive impressions upon others where ever she feels called to serve.

Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Butler: Thanks, Dr. Smith! If you would like to learn more about Texas Tech's Students of Integrated Scholarship, please visit our website at **academicast.ttu.edu**.

Finally, AcademiCast would like to recognize three graduate students for earning Fulbright Scholarships. Biology doctoral candidate Kendra Phelps is studying the ecological impact of cave-dwelling bats in the Philippines. Marriage and family therapy master's student Lindsay Huffhines will work with parents of sexually abused children in Iceland. Jennifer Zavaleta is in the master's degree program for natural resources management. She will travel to Chile to evaluate human interactions and then work on a watershed management project.

That concludes this edition of AcademiCast. If you would like to learn more about the stories featured here, please visit our website at **academicast.ttu.edu**. Thanks for listening, and join us again in two more weeks for the latest academic news from Texas Tech University.