

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
September 12, 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 Chana Elgin.

First, the news...

Texas Tech recently wrapped up the Undergraduate Research Experiences Program funded by the National Science Foundation. Ten students from TTU and other universities across the country spent their summers studying a range of issues — from robotics to smart grid security.

Industrial engineering professor Susan Urban helps to lead the program at Texas Tech. She says the program helps to expose undergraduates to the research process in an effort to stimulate their interests in graduate studies.

Urban: They come here, and they work full time over the summer, working with professors and graduate students on research projects. And the ultimate goal is to entice students to go to grad school and do advanced study, not to just get their bachelor’s degree and go out into the job market, but to think about research as a career. They get an opportunity to come in and work with people and see the difference that they can make.

Butler: Urban says the program has been successful in assembling groups of students who are interested in furthering their academic studies.

Urban: We polled the whole group before they left this year. And about 60 percent of them said they were interested in grad school. Some of them had already taken the GREs, and we know that some of them have already been accepted here at Tech and are already applying in some other places. So it really is an effective program for bringing students in, introducing them to research, and letting them see that that’s a career opportunity.

Butler: Urban plans to apply for additional grants from the National Science Foundation. This will ensure that the program remains funded and that interest in research at the graduate level continues to grow.

In other research news, Texas Tech has appointed Michael San Francisco as its interim vice president for research. He takes over for Taylor Eighmy, who will be departing for the University of Tennessee next month. San Francisco is an associate vice president for research. He has taught and served in administrative positions at Texas Tech for more than 20 years.

On the academics front, Texas Tech’s online master’s program in special education is named a best buy. That’s according to a survey by online education resource GetEducated.com. TTU’s online program in the College of Education ranked eleventh in the nation and was recognized for its affordability and scholastic quality.

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 Student of Integrated Scholarship Chana Elgin.

Smith: Having committed herself to a number of internships and community service projects, Chana Elgin has taken seriously the role of active learning experiences while pursuing her undergraduate education at Texas Tech. For Elgin, the many opportunities that have come along have been too advantageous to pass up.

Elgin: If you have an opportunity and you have the means to pursue it, why wouldn't you? I'm definitely understanding that it's easier said than done, but you know try to make it work. This is, I guess the only shot that we get you know in this life, and it's just been, it's been incredible.

Smith: Indeed, Elgin has applied herself as a journalism student in the College of Media and Communication. She has completed two congressional internships in Washington, D.C., as well as interned with several media outlets. This past spring, Elgin was based in the District of Columbia for her internship with CBS's 60 Minutes news program. During her stints in D.C., Elgin has lived in Texas Tech's house near Capitol Hill and completed independent study courses. She explains that her internships have been valuable to both her professional and personal growth.

Elgin: It was just a very informative, educational experience. I learned a lot about how to work with others, how to live better with others. So it just taught me a lot of patience. I learned how to be really keen on details, as frustrating as that can be sometimes, and you know it was just—it's something that I look back on fondly.

Smith: Aside from internships, Elgin has devoted time to more than ten campus organizations, such as the Dean's Student Council for the College of Media and Communication. She also has volunteered her time to benefit a number of groups in the Lubbock community. Elgin says giving back through service to the university and the local community is endlessly rewarding.

Elgin: Community service to me has always been a huge part of my life. I mean I think that that's true of a lot of students at Texas Tech, and I'm almost grateful that that's how it is. If I feel it's something I could truly be involved in and truly take a stance for, I'll participate with it. I'm happy to help out and add people needed, and if it's for a worthy cause that makes it all the better.

Smith: Elgin believes that Texas Tech's high quality faculty and outstanding reputation have afforded her much. And there's no doubt that other students could follow her lead by connecting with faculty who share common interests.

Elgin: The most valuable experience I've had is those good professors and those good learning opportunities. I don't think that I would be at this internship today without the opportunities that they've given me and without the good name that comes you know with being a Red Raider, and I just, I'm so thankful for everyone who's put me in a position to learn and put me in a position to excel.

Smith: Some listeners may recall the admonition of the great 20th Century French Philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, “Il faut choisir: vivre ou raconter” or “One must choose whether to live one’s life or tell it.” For Chana Elgin, living her life at Texas Tech has been as a student committed to learning—in myriad ways, and serving others. Thus, her life represents well the concept of an integrated scholar. Looking down the road, Elgin intends to pursue a law degree and travel internationally. At “AcademiCast,” we wish her well on her journey!

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 Texas Tech’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. TTU’s Lambda of Texas received the Award for Best Chapter at Phi Beta Kappa’s national meeting.

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.