

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
September 27, 2013

Pierce: This is AcademiCast—Texas Tech University’s podcast series from the Office of the Provost. I’m Rachel Pierce, and I’ll be covering the top academic and research stories on campus. Later in the program, we’ll spotlight Student of Integrated Scholarship Kendra Phelps. First, the news...

Texas Tech is working with teachers and principals to improve effectiveness in the classroom. The university is doing so thanks to \$4.7 million in funding from the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. During a three-year period, Texas Tech and the institute will partner to reach almost 750 teachers and administrators in 18 high-need schools in the state that are part of the Teacher Advancement Program. Their efforts will also extend to 90 new teacher candidates at Texas Tech.

The university’s fall enrollment has set a record for the fifth straight year. More than 33,000 students are enrolled at Texas Tech this fall. The figure represents a nearly 16 percent increase over the last decade and was accomplished following a second-straight record year of more than 7,000 degrees conferred.

The Texas Tech University System concludes its most ambitious fundraising effort. The Vision and Tradition campaign topped the system’s original goal of \$1 billion well ahead of its Aug. 31 end date. That makes it the most successful capital campaign in the history of the TTU system. Donations received during the campaign benefit student scholarships, faculty endowments, research, and other areas.

Texas Tech is a great place to work. That’s according to a Glassdoor report naming Texas Tech the No. 1 university to work for in the nation. The report was released this month and was based on user ratings and employee feedback. The report follows CareerBliss.com ranking the university as third in the nation for having the "happiest employees." This ranking was also based on employee feedback.

To learn more about these stories and others, visit our website at academicast.ttu.edu. And now we turn to Texas Tech’s Student of Integrated Scholarship, featured here by Kristina Butler.

Butler: Growing up in the countryside of Iowa, Kendra Phelps imagined she would one day work with animals. Her interest in zoology led her to Texas Tech, where she is a doctoral student. Phelps has been working with zoology professor Tigga Kingston in the area of conservation biology. This area of biology aims to preserve natural ecosystems and wildlife. Phelps focuses her conservation interests overseas, and last year she was named a Student Fulbright Fellow by the U.S. State Department. The fellowship helped to support a study about communities of cave-dwelling bats and their interaction with

humans across the Philippines. Phelps says the experience was rewarding on many levels, but mostly for the opportunity to share her knowledge of bats with the locals.

Phelps: Conservation biology really focuses on educating people, so they understand the importance of the animals. Particularly for bats—pollination of fruit, forest regeneration by spreading seeds, most importantly insect control, reducing in the tropics malaria, dengue, which are life-threatening diseases for humans—so they have a lot of benefits, which people don't know. All they know is the negative side.

Butler: Since her recent return to Lubbock, Phelps has been analyzing the data she collected, working on her dissertation and teaching. Additionally, her work is being used to develop policies that protect cave-dependent bats and their habitats. After she completes her doctorate, Phelps hopes to continue preserving wildlife species and their habitats as a conservation biologist. AcademiCast is proud to introduce Kendra Phelps as Texas Tech's newest Student of Integrated Scholarship.

Pierce: Thanks, Kristina! If you would like to learn more about Texas Tech's Students of Integrated Scholarship, visit our website at academicast.ttu.edu. That concludes this edition of AcademiCast. We hope you've enjoyed our program spotlighting the top academic and research news from Texas Tech University. Thanks for listening!