

A PASSION FOR CASNR



Twenty-one distinguished adults from diverse backgrounds, that are thoughtful, and passionate about agriculture, Texas Tech University, and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and the advancement of the college. This is how Dr. Michael Galyean, dean of Texas Tech's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources described the CASNR Advisory Board.

"My ultimate vision for the advisory board is to serve as a sounding board. It is a group of people who are very actively engaged in the industry associated with our different departments... that can bounce ideas off of each other," Galyean said.

When Galyean took on the role as dean of the college in April 2012, looking at the advisory board, he said he struggled with what to do with it. The board was not having regularly scheduled meetings and did not have an agenda to work towards.

After much deliberation, Galyean said that he decided in early 2013 to expand the advisory board to three representatives from each department within CASNR as well as three from CASNR's development and alumni office, bringing the total number of members to 21.

Board members serve a three-year term and meet face-to-face once a year during the CASNR faculty retreat. The board members also receive a newsletter mid-year that provides an update to them on things going on within the college.

Galyean said the newsletter seemed to be very well received by the board.

Board members tend to be those individuals who know Texas Tech, know the college and its history and based on their history have a willingness to help. As well as are ambassadors to the people in the discipline they work in."

During the first meeting of the newly expanded advisory board, Galyean said, members toured facilities and were engaged from a curriculum standpoint with the faculty.

Galyean also said the members of the board provides support for CASNR through the board members' personal and political connections, which assists in advocating support and funds for Tech and the college.

Dale Swinburn was pointed out by Chancellor Kent Hance at the press conference announcing the new Plant and Soil Science building and Bayer Crop Science's large donation to the university.

Galyean said that Swinburn was singled out by the Chancellor and said that Mr. Swinburn spoke with the Chancellor several years ago about the potential relationship Bayer and the university could have.

Mary Jane Buerkle, director of communications and public affairs at Plains Cotton Growers and board representative for the development and alumni relations' office, said she just wants Texas Tech to continue to be the best university it can be.

The vested interest and the shared passion is what binds the board together to better the college and the university as a whole, Buerkle said.

Along with facilities, Galyean said that he thinks engaging the board from a curriculum standpoint is an important goal of his.

"One of the most important from the standpoint of how to board can help is to tell them we are think about doing these things and we need your help. Is that the right thing to do? How can we do this? Galyean said.

These people are the individuals who hire our graduates, said Galyean.

Because of this, the board memebbers and through there personal connections they can provide feedback on what we do well with our graduates and may be able to provide feedback on what areas may need improvement in with our curriculum based on our graduate's performance post-graduation, he said.

This steady increase in enrollment keeps the university on track for its goal to have 40,000 students enrolled by 2020. In the Spring 2014 semester, the university had 30,399 students enrolled in classes. The overall spring total marks the largest spring enrollment since the university opened its doors in 1925 and the fifth largest semester total overall. The four largest enrollments occurred during the last four fall semesters, respectively.

Also in the past few years enrollment within the college and university has steadily increased each semester, with a record year in Spring 2013 for both the university and the college's enrollment numbers.

Currently CASNR has 1,928 students enrolled, up over 20 percent from 2008.

With the current administration and continual campaign to increase enrollment, the importance of the advisory board will only increase and become a more vital part of CASNR's success.

Galyean said the advisory board is full of people with a passion for Tech and CASNR and also described the group as a thoughtful group of individuals working to improve the college.

Buerkle who grew up in Rochester, TX on a cotton and peanut farm has worked at the Lubbock Avalanche

Journal, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce and is now employed at Plains Cotton Growers. Just like most of her fellow board members, Buerkle obtained her degrees from Texas Tech. She has a bachelor's in agricultural communications and a master's in agricultural education.

"This vested interest is what makes us all so dedicated to the board and the college," she said. One of the biggest blessings for me is meeting people from all walks of life who have the shared passion for Texas Tech and for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources."

Giving feedback to the administrators and faculty within CASNR is one of Buerkle's most enjoyed activities with the board.

"Connected, innovative and passionate" is how Buerkle said she would describe the board.

"This vested interest is what makes us all so dedicated to the board and the college."

Jonathan Bloxom
SLATON, TEXAS



TTU CASNR Advisory Board Members

Wayne Armacost of Raton, NM
Steven Bender of Austin
Mary Jane Buerkle of Lubbock
Brent Clifford of Lubbock
Mike Glen of Lubbock
Charles Hodges of Dallas
Greg Hogg of Seminole
Nathan Jordan of Lubbock
Amber Miller of Lubbock
Shelly Nutt of Lubbock
Bob Pearson of Spearman

Jim Prewitt of Coppel
Karen Reams of Lubbock
Alex Scarborough of Lubbock
Tom Sell of Lubbock
Mike Simpson of Canyon
Dale Swinburn of Tulia
Dan Taylor of Ropesville
Quenna Terry of Lubbock
Todd Thompson of Lubbock
Ross Wilson of Canyon