AWARDS & HONORS EVENT
2014
MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2014
UCONN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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Welcome to the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture

2014 Awards and Honors Event

Welcome to the 2014 College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Awards Banquet. The College and the College’s Alumni Association have a long history of recognizing outstanding and distinguished alumni, faculty, staff and supporters. The College is pleased to partner with the Alumni Association in recognizing these individuals. On behalf of the entire College, I would like to thank the members of UCANRAA and the members of the Committee on Excellence for identifying the exceptional awardees we will recognize this evening and congratulate those receiving awards.

Dean Gregory Weidemann
Awards and Honors Event
Monday, April 21, 2014

5:30 PM  GENERAL RECEPTION
Rome Commons Ballroom
UCANRAA ANNUAL MEETING
Rome Commons Portico

6:30 PM  WELCOME
Gregory Weidemann
Dean and Director, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

DINNER

7:30 PM  RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS
CANR Awards of Excellence
UCANRAA Awards
UConn Extension Awards
Connecticut 4-H Volunteer Awards
Augustus and Charles Storrs Award
College and Ambassador Recognition

CLOSING REMARKS
Professor Mark Brand, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, demonstrates excellence in research and is nationally known for his work focusing on invasive ornamentals plants. His research has established standards used by states to determine whether a species should be considered a cultivar or invasive, and he works closely with the nursery industry, providing data on the invasiveness of commercial cultivars of barberry and euonymus. Dr. Brand also chairs the University’s Arboretum Committee and acts as the first line of defense against loss of valuable tree specimens on campus.

Dr. Brand seamlessly integrates research goals with extension and teaching, which is historically at the heart of a land-grant university. He regularly releases new plants to the industry and his research keeps his teaching up to date, providing students with new information not yet found in textbooks. Dr. Brand is highly successful in mentoring PhD students and his students are frequently hired directly into faculty positions without any intervening postdoctoral training.

Dr. Brand has made tremendous contributions to both the environmental community and the commercial nursery industry. One of his most notable accomplishments has been the application of AFLP mapping to determine the parentage of ornamentals that have escaped into the wild, making it possible to know whether these are the progeny of old plants already in the landscape or modern cultivars. His most important recent research on invasive ornamentals was recognized by the American Society for Horticultural Sciences when he received their Outstanding Extension Publication Award, a recognition that led to UConn being the lead institution for the New England Invasive Plants Center.
KINSMAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
Kristen Govoni, Department of Animal Science

Dr. Kristen Govoni is an assistant professor in the Department of Animal Science with responsibility in the area of physiology and growth biology to identify methods to improve animal health and efficiency of production. Dr. Govoni is one of the primary undergraduate academic advisors for pre-vet students, with more than 50 advisees. She firmly believes in the importance of faculty assisting students in making their career plans and course selection and contributes to changes in the department by serving as chair of the curriculum task force and a member of the Curricula and Courses Committee.

Dr. Govoni is clearly committed to continuously improving her teaching. She routinely participates in teaching workshops on campus and uses constructive criticism to improve teaching her lectures. Her commitment to excellence in teaching is evident by providing students with more than basic knowledge through lectures. Dr. Govoni regularly evaluates her courses and revises the curriculum based on the needs of the students and to integrate new information into her courses.

Dr. Govoni provides the opportunity to develop students’ communication skills, both written and oral. She incorporates undergraduate students into her research program by linking classroom lectures to hands-on research opportunities and instruction. Her students conduct independent projects and work on larger collaborative projects in her lab, and present their data at local and national meetings. Three of Dr. Govoni’s students competed at the 2014 National Animal Science meetings, placing first, third and fifth out of 27 students from across the country. Locally, her students have earned SURF grants, OUR grants and IDEA grants, and recently one of her students was named a University Scholar. Her greatest impact outside of the classroom is in mentoring undergraduate researchers.
EXCELLENCE IN OUTREACH AWARD
EFNEP, UConn Extension
Erica Benvenuti, Angela Caldera, Toni Ellis, Sharon Gray, Doris Little, Heather Pease
Heather Peracchio, Dianisi Torres, Umekia Taylor, Zoraida Velazquez

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is a USDA-funded community-based food and nutrition education program targeted to low-income families and youth. EFNEP began in 1969 and has been an important part of the land-grant mission of the University of Connecticut within the Cooperative Extension System. Over the years, EFNEP has reached over 48,000 families with more 150,000 family members, and close to 200,000 youth.

The community-based educators work with state and municipal agencies such as WIC, SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), schools, after school programs, emergency food programs such as food pantries and soup kitchens, housing projects, health clinics, community gardens, town recreation programs, farmers’ markets, grandparent programs, prison release programs, substance abuse and mental health residential programs to reach the individuals, families and youth in Connecticut who have the greatest needs. The relationships built with the agencies help involve the EFNEP educators in community efforts to help reduce food insecurity and improve nutrition. Several educators are involved in local food policy councils, school wellness committees and other coalitions.

The work that EFNEP does in the community to address nutrition-related health issues, including obesity, among those living in poverty is essential for improving health and quality of life. EFNEP is an important program at the national level and has been recognized by Connecticut Representative Rosa DeLauro and. The community-based educators deserve recognition for their dedication and commitment to their communities, the passion they have about food and nutrition and their ability to stay positive in very difficult times.
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Thomas Hoagland, *Department of Animal Science*

Dr. Thomas Hoagland, professor in the Department of Animal Science, has taught almost every major course in the department and continues to be a very valuable teaching asset. Dr. Hoagland is an enthusiastic teacher at all levels, and his passion is reflected in highly positive and complimentary student evaluations. His teaching load demands a great deal of flexibility based on the various academic levels of the classes and the diversity of the material he teaches. He is committed to enhancing students’ hands-on experiential learning, critical thinking and academic success.

Dr. Hoagland’s primary emphasis is on teaching his students critical thinking by using quantitative skills and focusing on engaging students through his own passion and interest in the courses he teaches. He updates his courses frequently and uses activities that increase student participation. Dr. Hoagland’s requires his students to use data, critical evaluation and integration of material to make logical and convincing arguments.

Dr. Hoagland is an active and caring academic advisor and advises three extracurricular student organizations, including UConn’s oldest student organization, the Block and Bridle Club. He is active on graduate student committees, is a strong team member on numerous research projects and also serves the University on the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Dr. Hoagland really cares about his students and makes himself available to discuss their needs, often going out of his way to ensure that his students succeed.
OUTSTANDING STAFF AWARDS

William Sciturro, Department of Animal Science

Mr. William Sciturro, manager of the Creamery in the Department of Animal Science, is responsible for the production of UConn Dairy Bar ice cream and the maintenance and sanitation of all its production equipment and freezers. Mr. Sciturro has been at the University of Connecticut since 2007, and in that time, ice cream production has increased 45 percent. This is a result of improved efficiency, production redesign and strategic planning that he implemented beginning in 2008. In addition, he has implemented two comprehensive programs to help maintain production and quality of the product. One of these is a preventive maintenance program to reduce unexpected production interruptions and/or product loss. The other included overhauling the sanitation program to bring the Dairy Bar in line with best practices for dairy food production. During multiple power outages over the last several years, Mr. Sciturro also participated in planning and implementing steps to preserve the integrity of the Dairy Bar ice cream.

In 2012, UConn Dairy Bar ice cream was selected as Best in Connecticut by Connecticut Magazine. This is a testament to Mr. Sciturro’s tireless efforts. Mr. Sciturro’s positive impact on the department and the College reaches every person who has had the good fortune to taste UConn’s award-winning ice cream.

Edan Tullman, Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

Mr. Edan Tullman has been a research associate in the Center of Excellence for Vaccine Research since 2004. Mr. Tullman brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in virology, molecular biology and bioinformatics to UConn. He has been instrumental in conceiving hypotheses and assisting with writing proposals, all of which have been critical for success in obtaining extramural, federal research funds. In the past five years, his contributions have been directly responsible for success in obtaining awards from the National Science Foundation, the Binational Science Foundation, Department of Homeland Security, National Institutes of Health and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Mr. Tullman is organized, thorough, and possesses maturity of vision. He has the ability to identify research questions and to develop effective strategies to address them. He is highly sought after for advice and training by faculty and students within the department, and he is excellent at instructing students and faculty on complex procedures. He goes far beyond expectations and represents the laboratory in a positive and professional manner.
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

James Hsiao

Dr. James Hsiao received his PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Connecticut in 1968 and has since made notable contributions to academia and industry in Connecticut and on the national and international levels.

Dr. Hsiao was the founder and dean of the School of Business at Southern Connecticut State University. Under his leadership, student enrollment at the school increased from 100 to 1,300 between 1979 and 1983. He also served there as professor of economics and management science, as visiting scholar at Yale University, visiting professor at UConn and a member of the visiting faculty at the University of Chicago. For his contributions, Dr. Hsiao was recognized by the Legislature of the State of Connecticut (1985) and the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities for outstanding contributions to the state (1984).

Dr. Hsiao has been active in the development, economic reforms and open-door policies in the People's Republic of China. In 1979, he proposed to Vice Premier Den Xiaoping a policy to introduce western management education and an “opening of the coast cities to international trade and invigoration of the inland.” Based on this, educational and management training programs for executives and government officials in China and the United States were established. In 1998, Dr. Hsiao’s proposal to General Secretary Zhao Ziyang for a program to transform state-owned enterprises into people’s ownership was well received and led to a 90-minute face-to-face meeting with the General Secretary.

Dr. Hsiao has also promoted cultural, educational and scientific exchange between the United States and China. This included a proposal to establish the China Small Business Innovation Research Fund to fund entrepreneurial companies. This concept was accepted and initiated in 1998.
In the 1990s, Dr. Hsiao was one of the six original founders of Inframat Corporation, a start-up company that focused on nanotechnology and originated with the guidance of UConn Emeritus Professor Peter Strutt. In 2005, Dr. Hsiao, in collaboration with three other leading scientists, established Cross Ocean Labs, Inc, an emerging high-tech company focusing on cosmetics and sensor technology.

In addition, Dr. Hsiao has authored and co-authored numerous books and articles. He has been a consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation, the United Nations Development Program and Future Group Inc. He was also a panelist at the World Economic Forum Regional Conference at Beijing in September 2003.

Throughout his career, Dr. Hsiao has enthusiastically promoted technological innovation and a commitment to cultural exchange. His contributions to academia and to industry have had an impact in Connecticut, nationally and internationally.

UConn Cooperative Extension Awards
Epsilon Sigma Phi CES Awards

MARY “LIB” JACOBSON AWARD
Rineicha Otero, UConn Extension

Ms. Rineicha Otero is a program administrator for the AFRI 4-H program at UConn’s New Haven County Extension Center. Innovative and engaging, she works in community nutrition with a focus on youth. Ms. Otero promotes fitness, good nutrition and leadership. After high school, Ms. Otero became an assistant supervisor in the community nutrition programs while attending UConn to earn her BS degree. She spent a summer abroad in Italy and did a special project on the country’s school lunch program.

During her junior and senior years in college, Ms. Otero worked on 4-H FANs curriculum development, and she supervised the summer program. Ms. Otero is currently working towards her MPH degree at Walden University and expects to graduate in the spring of 2015. Ms. Otero traveled to Colombia with the Economic Empowerment Program for Latin American Fellows UConn’s Global Training and Development Institute. She now collaborates with another nutrition and youth program for 4-H teens in the 4-H Fitness and Nutrition (FANs) program, developing an international dialogue on teen leadership and community development activities.
ARLAND R. MEADE COMMUNICATIONS AWARD
Dawn Pettinelli, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

Dawn Pettinelli manages the UConn Home and Garden Education Center and the Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory. Ms. Pettinelli also oversees several educational programs and services, including the Plant Diagnostic Laboratory, the UConn Master Composter program and until 2014, the UConn Master Gardener program. As coordinator of these programs she is editor of three publications: the Home & Garden News, Home and Garden monthly e-updates and the Compost Cable. She contributes to the UConn Ladybug Blog, the Knowledge to Grow On weekly newspaper column and the eXtension Consumer Horticulture Regional FAQ.

Ms. Pettinelli is an extremely knowledgeable and dedicated contributor to public education. The magnitude of her publications is evidence of her tireless commitment to the outreach mission and is truly a credit to the College.

DORIS LANE AWARD
Carol Quish, UConn Extension

Carol Quish is the voice and face of the UConn Home and Garden Education Center. Approximately 4,000 calls and emails come into the Home and Garden Education Center each year requesting information on a variety of home and horticultural topics. Ms. Quish sees that they are all answered.

Ms. Quish has provided technical assistance to home owners, apartment dwellers, backyard gardeners, municipal employees, landscapers, community gardeners, lawn care specialists and more for nearly 13 years. In addition, she gives talks to garden clubs and other public service organizations. Ms. Quish researches and writes articles for the Home & Garden News subscription newsletter. She also manages the Center’s Facebook page and is an eXtension “Ask the Expert” responder to questions originating throughout the United States.
Ms. Quish enthusiastically represents the Center at several events each year, including the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show, Cornucopia and UConn’s Work/Life Expo. She mentors and helps train new employees. Ms. Quish helped develop the Master Composter Program and teaches a section on vermicomposting. In addition, she continually builds her horticultural knowledge base and is pursuing a BS degree in horticulture at UConn. She shares all that she has learned and is often quoted as a resource in local newspapers and is asked to be a guest on radio shows like WILI’s Connecticut Outdoors.

**ALPHA CHI CHAPTER AWARD**

**Lorraine Downing, Department of Extension**

Ms. Lorraine Downing, a secretary at the New Haven County Extension Center, is currently pursuing a BS degree in accounting from the National American University of Rapid City, South Dakota. She began this program of professional improvement in 2009 while working full time and caring for her two school-aged daughters and an older son. A single mother, Ms. Downing worked at the Extension Center and took up to three courses each semester, including summers, in the online degree program. While balancing career and motherhood and helping her aging parents, Ms. Downing received an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Accounting in 2011. She expects to earn her Bachelor of Science degree by the end of 2014.
Awards

DAVID AND NANCY BULL EXTENSION INNOVATION AWARD

Connecticut Shellfish Initiative: Tessa Getchis, Nancy Balcom, Anoushka Concepcion
(all from Connecticut Sea Grant/UConn Extension)
Julie Rose (NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Milford Laboratory)
Sylvain De Guise (Connecticut Sea Grant/Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science)
Peg Van Patten (Connecticut Sea Grant)

The Connecticut Shellfish Initiative is a two-year program that will drive the development of new programming (research, extension, policy, etc.) based on future needs assessments. The initiative is supported by a steering committee that includes business owners; farm business service providers; industry associations; recreational harvesters; natural resource managers at local, state, and federal levels; private and non-profit NGOs, researchers, and extension professionals from within and outside UConn. Recognizing the potential for growth among important shellfish sectors. Connecticut Sea Grant/UConn Extension is facilitating the development of a Visioning Plan for Connecticut’s natural, recreational and commercial shellfish resources. The plan will identify specific goals and actions that work toward improved agricultural viability and sustainable seafood production; protected and enhanced natural shellfish resources; improved access to recreational shellfishing opportunities; increased understanding of producers’ risks and how to manage them; improved outreach related to shellfish consumption and human health; improved public understanding and appreciation of Connecticut shellfish resources; and improved communication and collaboration among stakeholders.
Connecticut 4-H Volunteer Awards

4-H ALUMNI AWARD
Kathy Dillon Orduz

Kathy Dillon Orduz learned to “Make the Best Better” as a 4-H member in Hartford County by participating in food shows, fashion revues, fairs and more. She continues to follow that philosophy now by serving on the Hartford County Camp board of directors, with the 4-H Fair Association and as a club leader. She is the heart and soul of the food building at the Hartford County 4-H Fair and works tirelessly as many 4-H volunteers do to provide a wide variety of activities for her club members, encouraging them to do community service and participate at fair meetings. Ms. Orduz is truly committed to the 4-H program and its ideals.

4-H MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD
Robert E. Beaudoin

Dr. Robert Beaudoin has been a volunteer for the past three years with the Connecticut 4-H Mentoring Project conducted at the Waterbury Youth Services, Inc. He is the CEO of Beaudoin Karate Academy in Waterbury, and has provided the support of his school and trainers at no cost to the participants of the programs conducted at the Waterbury Youth Services, Inc. Under Dr. Beaudoin’s guidance, the program has grown into a major part of the 4-H Mentoring Project, with about 45 youth participating in workshops that meet twice a week throughout the year. Four of his staff volunteer their time as trainers and mentors for the 4-H members, enabling youth to participate in local and regional contests, earn their belts and demonstrate their skills at agency functions as well as the 4-H Fair.

4-H LEADERSHIP AWARD
Cathy Verbridge

Cathy Verbridge has been a 4-H leader since 2006. She has a keen sense of the strengths and weaknesses of each youth and encourages each to stretch beyond their comfort level. From the beginning, Ms. Verbridge has encouraged her youth members to see the entire world as their community and to be involved in community service projects. Cathy encourages the youth members of her clubs to take leadership roles and to put their ideas to work. She keeps up to date on what is happening in 4-H in her county, across the state and across the nation and helps her 4-H’ers to pursue their interests locally and nationally.
In 1881, Augustus and Charles Storrs made a gift of 170 acres of farmland with buildings and $5,000 to establish a school of agriculture. The Storrs Agricultural School opened September 28, 1881. In April 1893, the General Assembly changed the school’s name to the Storrs Agricultural College, allowed for the enrollment of women and made it the beneficiary of the federal Land Grant Act of 1862.

From the beginning, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the original school and college of what became the University of Connecticut, has served the state with distinction, providing undergraduate, graduate, extension, family and 4-H youth education, research and service in a wide variety of areas related to agriculture, food, natural resources and the environment.

The Augustus and Charles Storrs Award is given by the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The award recognizes and honors those who, through their leadership, generosity and belief in the future of Connecticut, support the College in its service to the state, region and nation.
Nancy Weiss

AUGUSTUS AND CHARLES STORRS AWARD
Nancy Weiss

Nancy Weiss officially retired from the College in 2003, but the effects of her work for the College both before and after retiring continue today.

Ms. Weiss earned a BA in political science from UConn and an MA in English from Eastern Connecticut State University. As an undergraduate at UConn, she was a member of the Following completion of her BA, She taught high school English in upstate New York, then worked at the Northeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. After coming to the College in 1973, Ms. Weiss served in a range of roles: assistant 4-H Club agent, assistant program leader and instructor, assistant director and associate professor in the Cooperative Extension Service. She started Connecticut’s wildly successful 4-H Double Dutch program in the 1970s. She also proposed, created and implemented the College’s development office, and as the College’s first director of development, tirelessly worked to raise millions of dollars in support of College programs, including construction of at least three major buildings. With her leadership, the College was the first to reach its goal in the University’s first capital campaign. As director of development, she was also at that time responsible for alumni relations. Former Dean Hugo John credited her with reviving UCANRAA, and helping it become the University’s most active and engaged alumni association. She initiated the College’s annual alumni awards banquet and worked with UCANRAA on creating the University’s first endowed alumni scholarship.
After her retirement, Ms. Weiss continued to work part time in development for the College and assumed yet another role: writer. She wrote articles for the College’s print newsletter, the CANR Journal. She was one of three authors, along with Nancy Bull and Anne Rideout, of Education in Action: A Story of Commitment, Challenge and Change: Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, 1960-2008. She writes on agricultural, environmental and other issues for a variety of publications, including the Edible Nutmeg, a magazine celebrating Connecticut food and agriculture, the Villager newspapers of northeastern Connecticut and the Putnam Traveler, in which she often profiles the area’s growers, producers, eateries and small businesses. She also writes articles on the College’s teaching, research and extension programs for Naturally@UConn, the College’s blog.

Ms. Weiss and her husband, Jim Weiss, are generous supports of the College and UCANRAA and are members of the Charles Lewis Beach Society.

Ms. Weiss is a champion of Connecticut agriculture, natural resources and open space. She lives on an 18th century farm in Pomfret, which she and Mr. Weiss have preserved as open space by making a gift of 80 acres to the Connecticut Audubon Society. She was a charter member of Pomfret’s Conservation Commission. She served as development consultant on Ken Simon’s documentary Working the Land and is a development consultant for the Connecticut Farmland Trust.

With her energy, optimism, excellent analytical and writing skills, her gifts for communicating and connecting people engaged in similar or complementary pursuits and her desire to serve the public good, Ms. Weiss’s influence extends well beyond the programs she is specifically involved with. Her curiosity and fascination with nature and science—the realm of the College—coupled with her deep and abiding interest in people from all backgrounds and circumstances made her a natural at inspiring enthusiasm in prospective donors to the College. Now she uses these same qualities to continue to spread the word in her lively articles for a diverse audience on the program and activities of the College faculty, staff and students.
Recognition Awards

10 YEARS
Rhonda Brownbill
Kristen Govoni
Susan Gregoire
Milton Levin
Denise Long
Vivian O'Donnell

15 YEARS
Paul Bleimeyer
Judith Brown
Lynn Grabowski
Pamela Gray
Linda Horn
Yi Li
Thomas Meyer
Dawn Pettinelli

20 YEARS
Carol Auer
Claire Bazzano
Nancy Bull
Donna Ellis
Kirklyn Kerr
Leanne Pundt
Sandra Rodriguez
Rachel Shore
Umekia Taylor

25 YEARS
Lori Barlow
Mark Brand

35 YEARS
Marilyn Altobello
Karen Filchak
David Schreiber

COLLEGE AMBASSADORS
Antonia Brunetti
Yamini Chalikonda
Abigail Colburn
Emily Daly
Kayleigh Fay
Daniel Feder
Audriana Finney
Alycia Fulton
John Garcia
Monica Garvey
Elizabeth Houston
Sumia Hussain
Katherine Lainas
Katelyn McFadden

Elizabeth Petrosus
Marco Ribeiro
Elizabeth Tomasco
Stephanie Watko
Dustin Yaworski
Jillian Trottier-GA
John Alexopoulos