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When Dick Byers was instructed to put Entomology Hall in storage earlier this summer until contractors could begin a major renovation of the historic building, he knew exactly what to do.

Byers, the general manager of Purdue’s mechanical and electrical structures, had all the window air conditioner units removed from the building, shut off the power and water, and changed the locks on the back doors.

After all, who knew how many keys were floating around? The building had been in service to the university for 99 years.

But before the heavy steel cable and lock could be threaded through the building’s massive oak front doors, Byers knew there was one more thing to do.

“We had to make sure John Osmun was out of the building,” Byers says with a laugh.

Osmun, entomology department head for 17 years before his appointment as professor emeritus in 1987, had been a fixture in Entomology Hall for as long as, literally, the fixtures themselves.

The lights that illuminate the grand, twin staircases in the main foyer are about 50 years old. They were installed about two years after Osmun first occupied office space in the building in 1948. It was the first of six offices he occupied in Entomology Hall during his celebrated career.

Classes were not held in Entomology Hall after the 1999 fall semester. Building personnel then began the process of moving out, relocating to adjacent Whistler and Smith halls.

The entomology department moved to Smith Hall in 1999, leaving Osmun and a cadre of computer programmers as the building’s only inhabitants. They moved out earlier this summer when the building was put in storage.

But just short of its centennial celebration, the old building’s future is once again as bright as the old light fixtures that had illuminated Osmun’s portrait, hung in tribute to his career as an educator.

Dean of Agriculture Vic Lechtenberg expects the building to reopen in 2003, when the planned restoration project, with the anticipated price tag of around $14 million, is completed.

A partnership between the School of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service will provide partial support for the project. Other funding will come from private contributions and the John S. Wright Fund for the promotion of forestry in Indiana.

“Osmun had many wonderful memories in each of his six offices in Entomology Hall. ‘Removing it would be like losing a member of the family,’” Osmun reminisces.

Forestry professor Michael Hunt is chairman of the historic plaque committee of the Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation. His committee was making plans to celebrate the existence of Entomology Hall in 1992 when plans were announced to demolish it to make way for a new food science building.

“We looked at Entomology Hall as an asset, an architectural treasure,” Hunt says.

Oldest ag building gets new life

University to invest $14 million in Entomology Hall

BY TOM CAMPBELL

Purdue Entomology Hall is locked up and will remain empty until completion of a $14 million restoration and construction project sometime in 2003.
David Parrish, Purdue associate professor of art and design, agreed. “Entomology Hall is an excellent example of Beaux-Arts Classicism,” Parrish says.

Other existing examples of this architectural style include the Tippecanoe County Courthouse in Lafayette and the Art Institute of Chicago. “Entomology Hall is a worthy counterpart to these more celebrated structures and represents a historically significant period of American design,” Parrish adds.

But it was obvious, even to members of the Campus Preservation Committee, that the building could not be saved simply for preservation’s sake. “You can’t just preserve old buildings,” says Lechtenberg. “You have to make them useful. But what the preservation committee has helped us do is take a step back and say ‘let’s see if there is another way to build this part of campus.’”

Schmidt Associates, an Indianapolis architectural firm, presented a variety of design alternatives. One plan called for adding building space onto the back of Entomology Hall. Another called for Entomology Hall to be the connecting link between the Agricultural Administration Building and Whistler Hall of Agricultural Research, creating one giant, meandering architectural version of a connect-the-dots puzzle.

“Quite a bit of the agricultural campus is history that needs to be appropriately preserved, yet sometimes the buildings need to be restructured and redesigned so they may be used for modern programs,” says Lechtenberg.

“We’ve got a good plan now. It’s a plan that makes sense from the interests of the preservation committee, and it’s a plan that makes sense to us programmatically. Now we just have to get it done.”

Thomas R. Schmenk, the university’s director of planning and construction, says the plan calls for a 25,000-square-foot addition on the south side of the 35,455-square-foot building, with a covered walkway from the addition to Whistler Hall.

The front of the building, which faces State Street, will be preserved. The roof will be strengthened so its shingles can be replaced with clay tiles, similar to the original. Schmenk says he says the project will repair the structural weaknesses of the building; replace all the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; provide full wheelchair access; bring everything up to fire safety codes; and preserve both the exterior and principal interior architectural features of the building.

Lechtenberg says he hopes the 18- to 24-month construction/restoration process can start by spring 2001.

“The reason I’m excited about this project is that we can make good use of the existing space by adding on to the back of the building and do it at a reasonable cost,” Lechtenberg says.

“The new space will be predominantly high technology, electrobiology, biotechnology and modern biology-type laboratory space, and that is something we are desperately short of right now.”

Lechtenberg says the addition provides the School of Agriculture with an opportunity to increase research space quickly. “It also gives us space to do something we have not been able to do in Whistler Hall,” Lechtenberg says, “and that is to have adequate office space for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.”

Plans also call for a small lecture hall (125- or 150-person capacity) on the second floor of space that had been used for the insect free flight lab. In addition, the building, which will reassemble its maiden name of Agricultural Hall, will also house some classroom space. And who knows, perhaps there will even be enough space left over for John Osmun’s seventh office.
Three ag alumni receive honorary doctorates

BY TOM CAMPBELL

Purdue awarded honorary doctoral degrees to three representatives of the School of Agriculture during May commencement ceremonies. The recipients are Ronald L. Phillips of Shoreview, Minn., Ronald R. Rice of Osprey, Fla., and Larry N. Vanderhoef of Davis, Calif.

“Those we are honoring have reached unparalleled heights in their professional lives and have unfailingly lent their skills and experiences to their communities and to Purdue,” said Purdue President Steven C. Beering. “It is our great privilege to grant them the university’s highest honor to recognize their stellar lives and accomplishments.”

Ronald L. Phillips, BS ’61, MS ’63, is regarded as one of the world’s most influential plant genetics and biotechnology researchers. He is Regents’ Professor and McKnight Presidential Chair in Genomics at the University of Minnesota. His 32-year affiliation has yielded numerous contributions in research, teaching, national leadership, and coordination and administration of plant science research. His pioneering research program also laid the groundwork for the application of biotechnology to understanding and improving agricultural crops, and he is globally known for his work in improving cereal crops. Phillips has shared his expertise with several scientific societies and repeatedly has been appointed to government advisory committees, including service as the program director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Competitive Research Grants Office and chief scientist of the USDA-National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program. He is president of the Crop Science Society of America and is chairman of the Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences Section of the National Academy of Sciences.

Ronald Rice, BS ’57, is retired president of the Kroger’s manufacturing group and senior vice president of Kroger. After service in the U.S. Army, Rice joined Kroger as a management trainee in the dairy area, beginning a four-decade affiliation with the company. In 1967, Rice was promoted to plant manager of Kroger’s Indianapolis dairy. He was instrumental in the construction of a new facility there in 1972. Rice joined Kroger’s corporate office as director of operations of the Dairy Foods Division in 1973 and held a variety of executive positions before being named senior vice president and president of manufacturing in 1992. He headed an alumni team to raise funds and equip laboratories for the new state-of-the-art Food Science Building. In honor of his Purdue connections and commitment to his company, Kroger has established an undergraduate scholarship endowment in Rice’s name.

Larry Vanderhoef, PhD ’69, is chancellor of the University of California at Davis, a position he has held since 1994. Vanderhoef earned a bachelor’s degree in biology and chemistry education and a master’s degree in plant physiology, from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. He joined the faculty of the University of Illinois Department of Plant Biology in 1970 as assistant professor, conducting research on plant growth regulators and nitrogen fixation in plants. In 1980, he accepted an appointment as provost of the University of Maryland. In 1984, he was named executive vice chancellor and provost of the University of California at Davis. In his scientific career, Vanderhoef has been influential in helping plan, set policy and direction, and secure funding in numerous areas of agricultural and biological research. As a university administrator, he has been active in the Kellogg Commission project on how higher education can evolve to meet the challenges of the new century.

Wood Is Good

BY TOM CAMPBELL

To say “Wood Is Good” is good is not being redundant, but it is an understatement.

Developed by Purdue’s forestry department for high school industrial arts teachers and career counselors, the two-week-long Wood Is Good program has tripled its enrollment in just its second year.

Wood is so good, in fact, that program coordinator Rado Gazo, assistant professor of forestry, is already busy planning the sequel, “Wood Is Better.”

“We had six teachers participate in the Wood Is Good program in 1999,” says Gazo, “and 18 people participated this year. We’ve already had six of them say they want to come back next year. It’s all very exciting. So maybe we need to change the name to Wood Is Better.”

Jason Hemmerling agrees.

“This is a wonderful program,” says the industrial technology teacher at Westfield High School north of Indianapolis. “I think I learned as much in one week with Wood Is Good as I learned in one year of college. There were so many different applications I can use in my classroom, it was just amazing.”

The program brings high school industrial arts and science teachers to campus to learn teaching modules they can use in their own classrooms. The program’s growth in just two years mirrors the success of the department’s wood product manufacturing technology program for undergraduates, started in 1997.

Bringing high school teachers to campus through the Wood Is Good program is part of an overall plan to recruit more students for the department and to fill employers’ needs in a field that is woefully short of qualified graduates.

“There are about 200 manufacturing technology graduates for about 2,000 jobs in North America each year,” Gazo says. “I get calls every week from companies looking for good people. It’s hard to tell them they have to wait.”

Eight students now are majoring in wood products manufacturing technology. Gazo would like to see that expand to 20 or 30 students within the next two years.

“We’re starting to see some real positive results; it’s been quite nice,” he says.

The teachers spend one week participating in computer classrooms before their arrival on campus. Online materials cover a wide variety of subjects, including an introduction to wood products, lectures on paper manufacturing, furniture design and furniture manufacturing.

On June 5, participants reported to the West Lafayette campus for an intense week of hands-on activities. But they didn’t stay on campus for long. They visited a nearby tree farm; toured forests, woodworking shops and furniture manufacturers in southern Indiana; made paper; learned to measure and evaluate lumber; and operated a portable sawmill.

A big hit with each participant was the Wood Is Good souvenir they will produce with the help of forestry professor Dan Cassens.

Each received a 40-inch-long peg of white ash cut from 10-foot logs on Cassens’ tree farm. The teachers will turn the lumber into baseball bats on lathes when they return to their own schools this fall.

It’s a hit that Gazo hopes turns into a recruiting home run for Purdue’s forestry department.

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Graveel earns 6th Murphy for agronomy department

BY TOM CAMPBELL

John Graveel now has collected more teaching awards than neckties in his 17-year academic career. His most recent acquisition is the Murphy Award as one of Purdue’s outstanding undergrad teachers. Graveel, a professor of agronomy, previously earned the outstanding teaching award from the American Society of Agonomy and the University of Tennessee National Alumni Outstanding Teacher Award, and he was named outstanding counselor in Purdue’s School of Agriculture in 1998. “Yeah,” Graveel admits with a laugh, “I probably own about three neckties.”

The Murphy Award breaks the, uh, unofficial tie between ties and teaching awards. The $5,000 prize would buy a lot of ties. But don’t look for that to happen. One of Graveel’s performance reviews after he joined the Purdue faculty in 1992 even suggested he receive a pay raise just so he could afford a new tie. Graveel got the raise, but didn’t spend any of the money expanding his tie collection. In fact, Graveel’s tie collection hasn’t changed much since 1983, when he started his collegiate teaching career at the University of Tennessee.

“He hated neckties,” recalls Beth Madison, a former student at Tennessee. “The students in his class used to bet on which tie he would wear to class. He only wore them out of respect to the school and for his position as a teacher. We used to see him walking to class was over.”

Madison, who took four of Graveel’s agronomy classes, learned about more than neckwear and subject matter. Graveel’s teaching technique also played a big part in Madison’s life. She now is adjunct professor of environmental science at Waycross (Ga.) College and gives Graveel much of the credit for her own academic success.

“He is so enthusiastic in class,” Madison says. “He challenges you to reach a certain level in the classroom, and if you did that, he made you feel very special. He obviously cares a lot about what he teaches. But he cared a lot about us as students, too. We had about 80 people in our class, and within a month John knew all of our names. You knew what he taught was real, not just theory out of a book.”

Current student Beth Penick agrees. “Dr. Graveel likes to weave in stories about real life situations to make the information we are studying seem more important and to answer the common question of ‘What am I going to use this for?’

Graveel puts the Murphy Award above his other teaching awards for one simple reason: “It’s because Purdue is such a great university. To win an award like this is a very humbling experience.”

Graveel is the sixth Purdue agronomy department teacher to earn the Murphy Award. In Purdue’s School of Agriculture, only the agricultural economics department has earned more Murphy Awards, with seven.

“To see people who have won the award in the past, people like Jim Ahlrichs, George Van Scoyoc, Jim Vorst, Arvin Hilst and Lee Schweitzer, these are just outstanding teachers,” says Graveel, who, as the old cliché goes, is just happy to be part of the team. “I really am just a part of the teaching team. It’s like being on a basketball team.” He should know. He still hoops three times a week with fellow Purdue staff members to stay in shape.

“When you have players that aren’t very good, you play down to that level of being mediocre. When you play on a basketball team with great players, like Ahlrichs, Vorst, Van Scoyoc, and (department head) Bill McFee, you just want to be a good player, too. I’m just trying to play up to their level. To be looked upon as being similar to them in the way I teach is a great honor.”

Winning is a ‘snap’ for student inventors

BY STEVE LEER

Thanks to the creative thinking of three Purdue juniors, between-meals nibblers can munch their way to stronger hearts and bodies. Three students have invented a soybean-based snack cracker they call SoySnaps. The product is the winning entry in the sixth annual Soybean Utilization Contest, sponsored by Purdue and the Indiana Soybean Board. The inventors split a $4,500 prize.

The garlic-flavored snacks are baked and resemble Ritz crackers. SoySnaps are packed with soy protein, which studies suggest lowers blood cholesterol levels and may reduce the risk of cancer.

Melody Marshall of Elkhart, Ind., a chemical engineering major, says she and her teammates got the idea for a soy cracker when a dietician told them there are no soy snacks.

Developing a crispy, tasty cracker was no small feat, says Amanda Zeltner of Granger, Ind., a food process engineering major. The team tried dozens of ingredient combinations and baking variations before hitting on a successful recipe. “It was tough to come up with a cracker without the soy taste,” she says. “Getting the right texture was hard, too.”

“Graveel the highest honor.”

“I have tried to fashion my own teaching style much the same way he taught me,” she says.
BY TOM CAMPBELL

Eric Lucas had a decision to make. It was the spring of 1994 and the Purdue sophomore’s career goals were slipping through his hands. Sure, his grades were OK, but he was struggling to grasp many of the design concepts of his major field, landscape architecture.

Lucas admits he was lost in LA 226, his landscape architecture design course taught by Rob Sovinski. He was ready to get out of the program altogether.

He made plans to transfer into philosophy as soon as the semester ended, bide his time, then figure out what he wanted to do.

“Everything was set for me to say goodbye to landscape architecture when I noticed a sudden change in my outlook,” Lucas recalls. “Over the course of several projects, Rob Sovinski was able to open my eyes to a fuller vision of landscape architecture. Rob has a terrific way of connecting with his students and making them feel great about themselves. He convinced me of my potential.”

With Sovinski’s guidance, Lucas not only earned his bachelor’s degree in 1997, he flourished academically, earning the American Society of Landscape Architecture’s Honor Award. Now Lucas is a landscape architect with Carol R. Johnson Associates, a firm based in Cambridge, Mass. He is working on projects in Cambridge, Atlanta, and Cairo, Egypt.

“All in all, out of the 50 to 60 teachers I had at Purdue University, Rob Sovinski was the most dependable, helpful, thoughtful and complete,” Lucas says. “Rob changed my entire life.”

It is testimonials like this, plus Sovinski’s innovative teaching techniques, that earned him the 1999 Murphy Award, as well as the Class of 1922 Helping Students Learn Award.

But Sovinski’s path to a career as an award-winning practitioner turned professor started 15 years earlier, planning to get his bachelor’s degree in architecture in New York City. The South Bend native had started his career 15 years earlier, planning to get a little practical experience before getting into teaching. But his career kept getting in the way.

“I thought two years of practical experience would do it,” recalls Sovinski. “Then I said five would be enough. Well, that turned into a 15-year career. I thought to myself, ‘If I am ever going to teach, when is it going to happen?’”

A Purdue alumni newsletter in 1992 informed Sovinski (BS ’75) that his alma mater was looking for a landscape architecture teacher and asked if anyone out there had any suggestions.

“Sure. How about me?” was Sovinski’s reply. “Opportunities come by, you evaluate them and you hope you take the good ones and ignore the bad ones,” says Sovinski, who says the two things he misses most about New York are good restaurants and Carnegie Hall.

Sovinski uprooted his wife, Margot, and daughter, Robin, now 26, bought a few things he never needed in New York, such as a car and a lawn mower, and relocated to Lafayette.

“I wanted to do some research, push the profession forward,” Sovinski says. “What better environment could one be in than at a university where your administration and your peers are supportive of that? At Purdue, they not only permit you to be involved in research, they encourage it. The development of new knowledge and new ideas, that’s where I wanted to be.”

But he wasn’t so sure he wanted to be in a classroom in front of a group of students.

“I was extremely nervous about the teaching part of the job. I was not an experienced public speaker,” Sovinski admits. But it didn’t take him long to get over his initial fear.

“My nervousness went away in the first five minutes of my first class,” he says. “Having people actually sitting and listening to what I was saying, I thought, ‘This is an awesome responsibility.’ I couldn’t get enough of it.”

And his students can’t get enough of him.

“In the classroom, Rob has provided quite a spark to the landscape architecture program,” Lucas says. “He is dedicated to the student as a whole and as an individual. Rob strives to include students in the teaching and learning process in a creative and innovative way.”

One of Sovinski’s innovative teaching techniques helped him earn the Helping Students Learn Award. He teaches a virtual office project as part of the department’s professional practice course. In the computer simulation exercise, students form professional design partnerships. Each week, student teams pursue work in a competitive environment and allocate funds toward the pursuit of new work, capital improvements of their offices and personnel changes.

Sovinski reviews all submitted proposals and awards jobs based on qualifications, track record and mission statements, giving students valuable insights into the priorities and types of decisions facing their employers and supervisors.

Implementation of the program, run concurrently online this past semester in Poland (where Sovinski was teaching while on sabbatical) and on the West Lafayette campus, earned Sovinski a $3,750 cash prize. The landscape architecture department receives a $1,250 academic expense account for his use.

Sovinski says such awards reaffirm that his family and Landscape Architecture Department is in the right place and that he made the right decision to leave New York and private practice eight years ago.

“Having come out here without any teaching experience, there was a lot of doubt and trepidation,” Sovinski says. “The Murphy Award is validation of the decision to leave private practice, change lifestyles, haul the family halfway across the country and come back to Purdue and teach. It’s all worked out for the best.”

Ag School Murphy winners

The Charles B. Murphy Outstanding Teaching Award honors faculty members for outstanding teaching in all phases of undergraduate instruction on the West Lafayette campus. It is the university’s highest undergraduate teaching award, and carries a $5,000 prize.

Murphy Award winners from Purdue’s School of Agriculture:

1967 - Richard L. Kohls, Agricultural Economics
1968 - Arvin R. Hilst, Agronomy; Don Paarberg, Agricultural Economics
1977 - James L. Ahlrichs, Agronomy
1978 - Lawrence P. Bohl, Agricultural Economics
1979 - W. David Downey, Agricultural Economics
1980 - Robert W. Taylor, Agricultural Economics
1982 - Hobart W. Jones, Animal Sciences
1985 - George E. Van Scyoc, Agronomy
1987 - Lee E. Schweitzer, Agronomy
1988 - Donald J. Molnar, Horticulture
1989 - Ronald P. Lemenager, Animal Sciences
1990 - James J. Vorst, Agronomy
1992 - F. Thomas Turpin, Entomology
1994 - Merle D. Cunningham, Animal Sciences
1995 - Steven P. Erickson, Agricultural Economics; Robert J. Joly, Horticulture; Gary W. Krutz, Agricultural Engineering
1996 - Jay T. Akrige, Agricultural Economics
2000 - John G. Graweil, Agronomy; Robert W. Sovinski, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

Photo by Nick Judy

Rob Sovinski earned two top teacher awards this year, the Murphy Award and the Helping Students Learn Award for innovative teaching.
Purdue writes book of love, economically speaking

BY STEVE LEER

A textbook written by three Purdue professors borrows a page from dime store romance novels, using the language of love to teach basic economic principles.


“Life, Love and Economics” was written by Gavin Sinclair, assistant professor, and Dee Cuttell, associate professor, in the Department of Organizational Leadership and Supervision; and Robert W. Taylor, professor of agricultural economics.

They wrote the textbook to reach a generation of students turned off by traditional economics texts.

“There are a lot of good economics texts. The trouble is, students don’t like them,” Taylor says. “We wanted a textbook they would read.”

The idea for “Life, Love and Economics” took root about a year and a half ago, when Taylor and Sinclair discussed the problem of getting students excited about economics. Sinclair suggested the pair pen a romance, weaving economic tenets into the storyline. Sinclair soon brought Cuttell, with whom he’d written another book, into the project.

Sinclair and Cuttell did most of the writing, with Taylor contributing economic material.

The book tells the fictional story of Jason Cooley and Samantha Fletcher. Cooley, a graduate of “Bloomington University,” meets Fletcher, an alumna of “West Lafayette University,” while the two are in line at a frozen custard stand. They discover they’ve accepted positions at the same computer company, and their relationship blossoms from there.

Each chapter covers a different economic topic. In “The First Date: The Paycheck and Financial Planning Chapter,” Jason learns about federal and state withholding taxes, Social Security and 401(k) plans. Chapter 9 – “Samantha Buys a House: The Real Estate Chapter” – takes the female lead through the rigors of realizing the American Dream.

“We thought with a fictional setting the students could better relate to and see how the application of economic principles affects everyday life,” Sinclair says. “We asked ourselves, ‘What are all the economic questions a person will face in life?’ and we went about writing a chapter about each.’”

Sinclair says that while the economic lessons in the book are serious, the story is not. He says he and his co-writers “tried to outdo each other with romance.”

Each scene has Jason and Samantha on a dinner date whispering sweet nothings ... about savings plans. Jason thinks to himself, “I know I should be bored, but Samantha sure is cute when she talks economics.”

Later in the book, Jason explains the investment value of the engagement ring he’s about to give Samantha.

There are no steamy interludes. The closest the book comes to a love scene is in Chapter 13, when Samantha leads Jason upstairs.

“Apparently things were successful, because nine months later, Jason and Samantha’s first child was born, Jason Junior,” the next sentence reads. Cuttell says the book is meant only as a supplement to traditional classroom lectures. He says some educators might frown on the treatment economics is given in the book, but the writers are more concerned about connecting with students.

“We broke with tradition and produced a work that we believe students will read. And when students read, learning is likely to take place,” Cuttell says.

So far, students are devouring every paragraph of “Life, Love and Economics.” Taylor says one student came to class upset after reading the chapter where Jason’s wise Uncle Mitchell dies — a chapter on estate planning.

“He’d been reading ahead,” Taylor says.

Small Grains Team wins $10,000 award

BY TOM CAMPBELL

The Purdue University Small Grains Team, at the forefront of wheat and oat breeding for 50 years, has earned the Purdue Agriculture Team Award for 2000. The award carries a prize of $10,000 to help further research.

Team members are Herbert Ohm, team leader and professor of agronomy; Joseph Anderson, adjunct assistant professor of agronomy; Stephen Goodwin, adjunct assistant professor of botany and plant pathology; Don Huber, professor of plant pathology; Keith Perry, assistant professor of virology; Roger Ratcliffe, adjunct assistant professor of entomology; Gregory Shaner, professor of botany and plant pathology; Jeffrey Stuart, associate professor of entomology; and Christie Williams, adjunct assistant professor of entomology. The team works with Purdue and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agriculture Research Service.

“This team is among the leading research programs in the world in DNA marker development for genes of interest in wheat improvement, especially host resistance to disease and insect pests,” says William McFee, head of Purdue’s Department of Agronomy.

Wheat developed from germ plasm created by the research team conservatively accounts for 50 percent to 60 percent of the wheat grown in Indiana and 25 percent of that grown in the eastern Corn Belt and Kentucky, according to McFee. The crop lines and cultivars developed in the program have also been used worldwide in breeding and research.

The group’s research also expanded the potential for double-cropping in Indiana. Production of soybeans after wheat harvest has been one of the most profitable cropping systems in the state, he says.

“The accomplishments of this team are an excellent example of the synergistic effect of interdepartmental and interdisciplinary efforts when the contributors are unfettered in their efforts and generous in sharing the credit,” McFee says. “They are truly deserving of the Agriculture Team Award.”

The multidisciplinary effort was also recognized for its teamwork approach in attacking problems, according to Ray Martyn, head of Purdue’s Department of Botany and Plant Pathology.

“Seldom can people from such different specialties and administrative frameworks come together as a seamless unit to attack what is arguably one of the most complex problems in agriculture: multipest resistance combined with geographic adaptability, winter hardness and yield,” he says.

Hamaker unlocks dietary benefits of sorghum

BY STEVE LEER

Purdue food science professor Bruce Hamaker has found that each protein body in a single sorghum seed is surrounded by a tough inner protein wall. It takes stomach enzymes longer to break down the wall to reach the nutritional proteins in sorghum than it does to reach the proteins in similar grains, such as corn.

Hamaker’s study revealed that in a special sorghum variety, the protein body wall is structured differently, allowing enzymes to digest protein more quickly. Hamaker’s work, which could lead to sorghum crops with greater dietary benefits, has earned him the 2000 Purdue University Agricultural Research Award, a $1,000 honorarium and $5,000 to fund additional research programs.

The digestibility problem has mystified agriculturists for years.

“We’ve recognized this for the last 20 years and not known what to do with it,” Hamaker says. “If this had been corn, you’d probably have had 20 laboratories working on it.”

Among cereal grains, sorghum ranks fifth in total world production, behind wheat, corn, rice and barley. Grown primarily in the Southwest and parts of the Midwest, nearly 600 million bushels were harvested in the United States in 1999. Africa and India also are major sorghum producers.

Studies have shown that humans digest only 46 percent of the sorghum they consume, compared with 81 percent of the protein in wheat and 73 percent in corn.

Hamaker’s research led him to an uncommon sorghum variety that is 87 percent digestible in laboratory tests.

In the coming years, sorghum could find its way onto many Americans’ kitchen tables. The absence of gluten, an elastic protein that gives wheat flour its cohesiveness, makes sorghum-based pastas and cereals natural choices for those who are gluten-intolerant.

Hamaker’s research could lead to sorghum crops with greater dietary benefits.

photo by Mike Kerper
Agricultural and Biological Engineering

The American Society of Agricultural Engineers has selected Dirk E. Maier as winner of the 2000 Nolan Mitchell Young Extension Worker Award. The award recognizes a member who has demonstrated outstanding success in motivating people to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding to improve agricultural operations.

Daniel R. Ess has rejoined the staff as an assistant professor after two years at the University of Missouri. He will teach courses in agricultural systems management, precision agriculture and advanced machinery management.

Agricultural Communication

Joan Crow (BA ‘85), Steve Doyle and Sharon Katz (BS ’76) earned a 1999 gold award from Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE) in the video public service announcement category. Steve Tally earned a bronze award for news writing.

Michael A. Atwell (BS ’96) has joined the department as a Web page instructional designer.

Dan J. Annarino (MS ’82) has joined the department as a graphic artist.

Agricultural Economics

Frank J. Dooley, Joan R. Fulton and Gerald E. Shively have been promoted to professor. Kenneth A. Foster (BS ’81) and Philip L. Paarlberg (BS ’75, MS ’77, PhD ’83) have been promoted to associate professor.

Jay Akridge (MS ’83, PhD ’86) has been selected as a University Faculty Scholar. The designation is for five years and includes a $10,000 annual supply and expense fund.

Marshall Martin (MS ’72, PhD ’76) received the Certificate of Merit from the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for his contribution to the Areawide Corn Rootworm Pest Management project.

Animal Sciences

Dairy trio scores perfectly

Purdue dairy judging students racked up three perfect scores in a unique competition sponsored by Hoard’s Dairyman magazine. Each year, the magazine prints a different class of dairy cattle on the covers of five consecutive issues and asks its readers to place all the classes. Rich Nisen, (BS ’00), Goshen, Ind., placed all the classes correctly for a perfect score of 500 and won the three-way tie breaker by correctly identifying the supreme champion. After the five rounds, Nisen was tied with two fellow Purdue students, junior Derek Blough of West Lafayette and senior Kim Rothenberger of Mulberry, Ind.

Agricultural Education

The Indiana Association of Colleges for Teacher Education selected Rose Wise as a winner of its Outstanding Future Educator award.

Jerry Peters, professor of agricultural education and head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education, received a 1999-2000 Outstanding Service Award from the Indiana 4-H Foundation.

Agronomy

Craig Beyrouthy has been appointed department head effective Jan. 15, 2001, to allow him to fulfill current obligations to the University of Arkansas.

John Gravelle received the 2000 Murphy Award for outstanding undergraduate teaching. (See story on page 4.)

The Purdue Soils Judging Team placed seventh in the national soils judging contest in Moscow, Idaho. Team members Archie Sauerheber, Loree Johnston, Andy Pitstick (10th place individual) and Wayne Skeens (11th place individual) participated. At the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of America soils contest in Crookston, Minn., April 27-28, a Purdue team placed fourth among seven teams. Team members were Tara Emery, Jill Lambert, Trent Lindeiman (seventh place individual), Natalie Stoops (second place individual), Carolyn Ames (10th place individual) and Ryan McKinney (11th place individual).

Cliff T. Johnston and A. Paul Schwab have been promoted to professor; Sylvie M. Brueder and Cindy H. Nakatsu have been promoted to associate professor.

The Future Black Scientists of America honored Thomas L. Housley for providing summer and graduate experiences for science students at Shaw University.

Biochemistry

Barbara Golden has received a 2000 Pew Scholarship in Biomedical Sciences. The Pew Charitable Trust awarded 20 scholarships nationwide this year. Each winner receives $240,000 in research funding over a four-year period. Golden is using X-ray crystallography to try to map the three-dimensional shape of RNA molecules.

Clinton C. Chapple has been promoted to professor.

Botany and Plant Pathology

Stephen B. Goodwin and Keith L. Perry have been promoted to associate professor.

Entomology

Luke Jacobs of Columbus, Ind., has been named outstanding senior in the School of Agriculture. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, Jacobs is conducting a biodiversity study of mayflies in the streams, rivers and lakes of New York state, and he is enrolled in graduate school to continue his studies of mayflies. Jacobs also represented the senior class as the responder at the Purdue commencement ceremony May 13.

Eileen Eliason has been appointed research scientist and director of the industrial affiliates program in the Center for Urban and Industrial Pest Management. Eliason’s program will focus on the ecology and control of urban pests such as ants, termites and wood-boring insects. Eliason earned her PhD at the University of Kentucky and her BS and MS degrees at Michigan State University.

Rick Foster has been promoted to professor.

Three staff members were among the 23 scientists in six states who earned the USDA-ARS 1999 Technology Transfer Award. C. Richard Edwards, Larry Bledsoe (BS ’76, MS ’81) and Corey Gerber (BS ’95) helped develop an innovative pest control strategy that promises to halve U.S. corn insecticide use. The award cites the outstanding cooperative efforts of the scientific team that implemented a national corn rootworm control program.

Food Science

The 28,000 members of the Institute of Food Technologists have honored Department Head Phil Nelson president elect of the organization. The IFT also honored two Purdue staff members at its recent national meeting in Dallas. Suzanne Nielsen was elected a fellow

Department Notes, continued on page 8
of the institute, and John Luchansky received the research and development award. The institute is a non-profit, scientific society with members working in food science, food technology and related professions.

James BeMiller, director of the Whistler Center for Carbohydrate Research, is president elect of the American Association of Cereal Chemists. The organization consists of cereal scientists and other professionals studying the chemistry of cereal grains and their products.

Arun K. Bhunia has been promoted to associate professor.

Forestry and Natural Resources

Andrew R. Gillespie has been promoted to professor. In June, John Seifert received the Public Service Award from the National Association of Consulting Foresters, as well as the Forest Conservationist Award from the Indiana Wildlife Federation. Seifert is serving a three-year term as president of the Indiana Woodland Owners Association.

Rob Swihart is the recipient of the department’s Outstanding Teacher Award for 1999-2000.

4-H Youth

Roger L. Tormoehlen (BS ’80, MS ’82, PhD ’85) has been promoted to professor. Natalie J. Carroll has been promoted to associate professor.

Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

Michael N. Dana received the department’s outstanding teacher and counselor awards.

Rob Sovinski received the 1999-2000 Class of 1922 Helping Students Learn Award. Sovinski was also one of five winners of the Murphy Award, honoring outstanding undergraduate teaching at the West Lafayette campus. (See story on page 5.)

BY BETH FORBES

You’ve just graduated from Purdue and now what are you going to do? I’M GOING TO DISNEY WORLD! The Disney ad campaign has become synonymous with championship athletes, but for one Purdue School of Agriculture alumnus, this Florida destination is not where he vacations – it’s where he works. Les Frey, 34, has the kind of job many kids dream about having when they grow up. He gets to clock in daily at one of the most popular fun spots in the world. As a horticulturist at the Walt Disney World Resort’s Epcot Center, Frey combines his passion for plants with all the fun of a world-class theme park. Of course, as with all great jobs, there are some drawbacks. “I do have a lot of relatives who come to visit,” he says. In the fall of 1990, Frey applied for a job with the Epcot Science Program and was one of the final three candidates. Then in December, just before graduating from Purdue with a master’s degree, his hopes of obtaining a job in the Florida sun dried up. International complications had set in, namely the Gulf War and the accompanying uncertainty about the U.S. economy, and Disney put a halt to the job search. “I had to wait until January of 1992 when they reopened hiring for the position. The meantime I went back to Denver and worked in interior landscaping,” he recalls. The Colorado native spent the next year taking care of plants in offices. He says he enjoyed that job, but he was more than ready to give it up when Disney came calling again, offering him a job in March 1992.

While he’s left the Centennial State behind, he still wears a name tag that prominently displays the Colorado moniker. “All of the Walt Disney World cast members, (a Disney reference for employees) have their hometowns on their name tags,” he says. “It’s a nice way of helping guests relate to you, and it also starts up a lot of interesting discussions.”

Frey’s duties include coordinating the “Behind the Seeds” backstage tours of The Land greenhouses and labs. He also helps maintain the plants at this Epcot attraction that showcases the world’s most important food crops grown in unique and exotic ways. “We talk about crops and feature plants from all over the world. We also tell the story of agriculture to people from all walks of life,” he says. “I don’t know of anywhere else on earth where you can do all that. It’s the excitement of Disney combined with agriculture – and for most visitors, it’s a chance to increase awareness about the importance of agriculture in their lives.” Along with meeting folks from around the world, Frey has also communicated the importance of this planet’s plants to government officials - including the secretaries of education and agriculture – and to television stars such as Ed Begley Jr. and to television crews from shows such as Victory Garden. Frey admits his Purdue curriculum didn’t prepare him for his role as storyteller, but the folks at Disney have provided him some training in publicity, guest service and the media.

Frey describes his job as exciting, and he must not be alone in that assessment of his career choice. There’s no shortage of people earning a living the Walt Disney way, as Frey shares his work space with some 55,000 cast members, making the central Florida location the largest single-site employer in the world.

Maintaining the area’s five greenhouses and educating its thousands of annual visitors requires the services of many hands. As such, another of Frey’s duties is the recruitment of students from around the nation to serve as interns in the greenhouses and help with the work. He travels to colleges, hiring about 30 students every six months. The interns host guest tours, explaining the science and significance of agriculture. They also help plant seedlings, and they harvest and distribute the produce. As one might guess, Frey has no shortage of applicants for those positions. Every year more than 100 students, from Maine to Hawaii, apply for the chance to plant their feet—so to speak—in The Land at Epcot. “They work hard, get lots of hands-on experience and get paid,” he says. “They may even rethink their career choices.”

Frey says Disney looks for students who show initiative; have good grades and great recommendations; and who have taken the appropriate course work. One lucky student, Purdue senior Brian Foss of Morris, Ill., recently spent six months interning in the program and the Seeds opportunity exceeded his expectations. “It was a continuous learning process. I learned about crops from around the world using different ways to raise them – things you don’t learn on the farm in Illinois,” he says.

While the experience didn’t change Foss’ career goals, it did give him a renewed respect for the farmers he hopes to someday work with as a controls specialist. “People don’t realize that farmers are not backwoods folks,” Frey says. “They know a lot and need to be aware of what’s happening worldwide.”

In addition to horticultural students, interns are hired for the Epcot Science program who also have experience in agricultural and biological engineering, botany, aquaculture, biotechnology, entomology and communications. Students interested in applying for the positions can check out the Web site at http://wdwcareers/college/internships/.

“It’s never dull. Every six months I get to see new shining faces, from diverse backgrounds and experiences. They all seem to enjoy and benefit from their time at Epcot,” Frey says.

Epcot’s green thumb belongs to Ag grad

Les Frey displays a lettuce plant grown hydroponically at Disney World. The lettuce and the roses hang on metal rods. Water and nutrients are sprayed on the plants.
Crawford Baker (BS ’28), Danville, Ind., recently celebrated his 98th birthday. He is retired from grain and dairy farming, and he was farm manager for the Indiana Boys School and an agriculture instructor in the GI education program following WW II. He used the latest innovations in agricultural practices over 75 years in farming.

Noble Ross (BS ’39), Sheridan, Ind., is still teaching after 60 years in the classroom. He taught vocational agriculture and science for 36 years and has been working for the past 24 years as a substitute teacher in Noblesville schools.

Lowell Knoop (MS ’48) is retired and living in Mitchell, Ind.

John Kessler (BS ’60), Morocco, Ind., is retired after 38 years with USDA’s Farm Service Agency. Indiana Gov. Frank O’Bannon designated Kessler a “Sagamore of the Wabash” in recognition of his inspirational leadership in agriculture.

Edward S. Saugstad (MS ’67), Sinks Grove, W. Va., retired after 33 years combined military and civilian government service as an entomologist. Saugstad, his wife, Marianne, and three cats and an iguana moved from Frederick, Md., to a 17-acre mini farm in southeastern West Virginia. In addition to growing a wide variety of fruits, they devote much of their time to the survey and mapping of caves in their region.

David Stark (BS ’64) retired from the U.S. Forest Service in October 1998, after 35 years and nine assignments in South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado. His primary interest is serving the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the voluntary civilian arm of the Coast Guard. He continues to pursue hobbies such as cycling, skiing, boating, fishing, and others when time allows. David and his life partner, Penny, now live in Evergreen, Colo.

Cindy Kessler (BS ’74), Copley, Ohio, received her MS degree in secondary science education in August 1999 from the University of Akron. She was initiated into Phi Delta Kappa, professional education association, in November. She is a science instructor in the Akron Public Schools.

Bob Richardson (MS ’71, PhD ’73) has become the dean of agriculture at the University of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia. His appointment comes after 20 years in the Australian wool industry.

Jim Ross (BS ’71), Reno, Nev., received the “Award of Commendation” on April 30 from the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture for “outstanding efforts in promoting the planting, care and preservation of trees.”

Larry Turner (BS ’76, MS ’78), Lexington, Ky., is the Chair of the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering at the University of Kentucky. Prior to his appointment in August 1999, Turner was Extension Professor for Livestock Systems Engineering at the university. Larry’s wife, Lois (Lynch), is employed at The Lexington Christian Academy. The Turners have three children.

Jay Bry (BS ’89) has moved to Fitchburg, Mass., to be assistant dean of students and director of housing at Fitchburg State College.

David L. Cook (BS ’83, MS ’85) is technical service manager for Vetlife Inc., which manufactures cattle growth promotant implants and markets implants, feedyard informational tools, and tools that link the multiple segments of beef production with common product objectives and strategies. He lives in Harrisonville, Mo., with his wife, Allyson, and their two sons, Lucas Leo and Ty Williams.

Richard Dean (BS ’81), Springfield, Va., was recently awarded the U.S. Army Commander’s Award for his deployment to Kosovo after the air war and establishing a base camp, “Camp Monteith.”

Dale Griffin (BS ’81, MS ’86), Cutler, Ind., was recognized as “Outstanding Conservation Educator” in Indiana for the 1999-2000 school year. He is a vocational agriculture instructor at Rossville High School.

Benjamin Miller (BS ’80), Boise, Idaho, works for the USDA in the Licensing/Recertification Division specializing in urban pesticide applicator issues.

Roland Taff (BS ’88), Omaha, Neb., is a sales representative with Aventis CropScience. He married Kim Dee Ann Grove on Oct. 5, 1991, and they have two children, Christopher, 5, and Nate, 2.

Britt A. Pulley (BS ’95), Mount Pleasant, Mich., is head of engineering/design engineer with Material Handling System Inc. in St. Louis, Mich.

Hal Friesenheuer (BS ’43), Trenton, Fla., passed away March 24.

Q: Agriculturally speaking, Indiana and Iowa are similar states. Does that help you understand the needs and the problems faced by Indiana farm families?

I surely hope it does. Obviously, both Iowa and Indiana are part of the great farm belt of middle America, and we are both very important producers of corn, soybeans, hogs, cattle and poultry. Agriculture not only plays a very important role in the economy of these two states, but it also plays an important role in the values and traditions of these two states. Family farms are the heart of Iowa’s agriculture, and I am certain that that is also the case in Indiana.

Both states and their agricultural communities face very intriguing opportunities, as well as some challenges. There is new science and technology developing for agriculture that particularly grow out of modern biology that offer real opportunities for farm families to add value to their crops and to be even better environmental stewards. It is technology that offers the possibility of participating more effectively in the global markets that we now have in agriculture.

At the same time, there are challenges to be faced in agriculture. Profitability is always a challenge, particularly in the last year and a half when we’ve seen some very low commodity prices that have created real challenges for some of our farmers and certainly that that is also the case in Indiana.

Impacts on the environment and occasional clashes that take place between the urban and rural communities and the use of land is another challenge that American agriculture and agriculture in the Midwest faces. I am an optimist. I believe American agriculture feeds the world. And because of the efficiency, the productivity and the talents of American family farmers, not just the U.S., but many places around the world enjoy abundant, high-quality, low-cost food. We want to make sure that that tradition of success continues both in agriculture service to consumers, but also in agriculture remaining part of the American economy that allows farmers to get a good return on their investment of labor and capital.

Q: What insights have you gained as president of the Global Consortium of Higher Education and Research for Agriculture?

There is no question that there are forces of change at work in agriculture all across the globe, although the circumstances vary because of the differences and the nature of farming and the economic, political, and social environment that farmers around the world find themselves in.

Clearly the emergence of global markets, the capacity to communicate globally, the capacity to transport goods globally, has made the marketplace for farmers – whether they be American, Chinese or Indian farmers – truly global in character.

Second, the impact of science and technology on agriculture is a global phenomenon. It is everything from better seeds and genetics, to mechanical improvements that increase the efficiency with which farmers can do their work, to a deeper understanding of the economics, means of managing risks, all having their origins in a deeper understanding of the science and the related technology that supports agriculture.

Certainly part of the global trend toward increased efficiency and effectiveness is part of what drives the growing size of farms in the U.S. and other parts of the world.

Third, a growing recognition of the importance of good stewardship moved to preserve the productivity of farmland around the world, but also to be attentive to the environmental impacts of agriculture, on the air, on the soil, on the water.

All of this comes together for colleges of agriculture, agricultural universities, in the need to change, reform. Both in terms of curriculum as well as in terms of a research agenda to ensure that the students are better prepared and that the institutions, the colleges, the universities, are handling the most important problems on behalf of those they serve.

The real need for leadership that can effect that kind of change and reform and that global need for change and reform in the agricultural higher education and research is what brings this consortium together. Today we have nearly 270 universities from around the world that are members of the consortium. It clearly has struck a resonant chord among universities’ presidents, chancellors, rectors, deans of agriculture, faculty members that maybe conversation and discussion and interaction at a global scale can help inform everybody about the opportunities we face as well as the challenges. Additionally, how can one effectively go about meeting these opportunities and challenges?

Q: International Programs in Agriculture at Purdue has increased the number of students who study abroad in each of the last three years. Do you expect this trend to continue in the future?

There is no question the trend will continue. Agriculture is truly operating in a global environment, and for students to be well prepared for that global environment, they have to experience it. They have to learn about it.

We have a generation of young people who increasingly see themselves as global citizens. They are quite prepared to travel to new parts of the world to experience that world. Not only is it easier to get around the world with modern transportation and communication, I think there has been a shift in attitudes where students find travel very attractive and exciting and understand that it is an important part of their education.

I think study abroad can, and does for many students, enhance their education wonderfully. It provides them with a deeper understanding and awareness of another part of the world. The contrast with their experience abroad and their experience at home makes them much more aware, much more sensitive to the U.S. and its role in the world.

The complete text of the interview is available on the Web at http://persephone.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/library/connections/.
Ag Tailgate 2000: The one place to be

The departments of the School of Agriculture are joining forces to host one schoolwide homecoming event called Ag Tailgate 2000 on Sept. 23 at the W.H. Daniel Turfgrass Research and Diagnostic Center on Cherry Lane.

“For the past three years, a number of our departments have hosted fall reunions for their alumni and friends,” says Donya Lester, executive secretary of the Purdue University Ag Alumni Association.

“Last year, several departments inquired about the feasibility of one big event so that those alumni who have relationships with more than one of our departments wouldn’t have to divide their time between reunions or make the difficult choice of attending only one.

“We knew that it would be a challenge, but having everyone at one event also gives us an opportunity to do a lot of other activities on a grander scale.”

Ag Tailgate 2000 will feature a number of activities, including a large exhibit tent housing displays from Agriculture departments and student organizations. Coffee and snacks will be available in the display tent starting at 7:30 a.m. (or 3 1/2 hours before kickoff). The tailgate meal will be served at 9 a.m. (or 2 hours prior to kickoff).

Children will enjoy favors and activities targeted to their interests, including an opportunity to be photographed with Purdue Pete. The Boilermaker Special is also expected to make an appearance during the morning. Everyone visiting the tent will have an opportunity to register for lots of door prizes, including balls autographed by Purdue coaches. A massive tent will accommodate the 1,500 expected guests. Each department will have a designated gathering area in the tent to help attendees find special friends and faculty members. Immediately following the meal, a short pep rally will feature Purdue VIPs, cheerleaders and the awarding of the door prizes.

Then, it’s off to the stadium to cheer the Boilers on to a homecoming victory over Minnesota. Kickoff is scheduled for 11:10 a.m., but the time is subject to change.

The Daniel Center is within walking distance of Ross-Ade Stadium. Shuttle buses will also be available to the game, as well as to the parking area at the game’s conclusion.

Tickets for Ag Tailgate 2000 cost $10 for adults and $6 for children ages 7 to 12, children 6 and under are free. Orders must be received by Sept. 11. For more information about Ag Tailgate 2000, or to register online, visit www.agriculture.purdue.edu/agtailgate. Or contact the Ag Alumni office at (765) 494-8593 or by e-mail at dc3@agad.purdue.edu.

Friday, Sept. 22

3 p.m. John V. Osmun Award

6 p.m. Agriculture Dean’s Club reception and dinner Purdue Memorial Union. By invitation. Reservations required.

6-8 p.m. Horticulture and Landscape Architecture Department alumni and friends garden party HLA Garden and Greenhouse. Presentation of Distinguished Alumnus in Landscape Architecture Award and Outstanding Professional Office Award. Reservations required. Tickets cost $5.

Saturday, Sept. 23

All activities at the W.H. Daniel Turfgrass Research and Diagnostic Center, unless otherwise indicated. Ag Tailgate tickets required for admission.

7:30 a.m. Ag Tailgate 2000 registration and exhibits open
Coffee available for the early birds! Tickets cost $10 for adults, $6 for children ages 7 to 12, and children 6 and under get free admission.

8:15 a.m. Indiana Livestock Breeders Association Hall of Fame Recognition and 1950 Livestock Judging Team Reunion

9 a.m. Meal service begins

9:40 a.m. Pep rally

10 a.m. Shuttle buses to stadium begin

11:10 a.m. Kickoff, Purdue vs. Minnesota, Ross-Ade Stadium

2:30 p.m. (or at conclusion of game) Agronomy alumni and friends reception and awards presentation

Post-game. Ag Ambassador Reunion
By invitation.

4-5 p.m. Tours of the Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department
If kickoff time is changed, Ag Tailgate 2000 will open 3 1/2 hours before kickoff. Other times will be adjusted accordingly.
Shortly after being named Purdue University’s 10th president on May 23, Martin Jischke shared some of his goals for Purdue and Purdue Agriculture.

Q: What appealed to you about the Purdue president’s job?

Certainly, the reputation Purdue enjoys as a very excellent university. I was impressed and pleased with the persistence of the board of trustees and their passion for Purdue. They have been focused on the long-term vision of Purdue and committed to maintaining Purdue as a major research university. I was also impressed with the leadership in the academic units and across the campus.

Q: What do you see as Purdue’s greatest strengths?

There are clearly excellent people at Purdue. The board of trustees, faculty, staff, and students I have met have been very impressive. The university has a strong tradition of excellence in research, education, and service. The faculty and staff are dedicated to teaching and research, and the students are motivated and hardworking.

Q: What would you like undergraduate students to know about you and your wife?

Well, my wife is an absolutely wonderful person and I think she feels the same way about me, so I think students will find us fun and interesting to be around. More importantly, I hope the students all know and understand that we are absolutely committed to doing everything we can to ensure that they get a first-rate education. We are passionate about education, and we believe that a successful university education prepares students for success in life.

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