Good Things for April 25 to April 29, 2016

Publications


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In the Media

Conferences/Meetings/Seminars

The Red River Valley sectional ASABE meeting was held on Monday, April 26. Dr. R. Wayne Skaggs was the outstanding invited speaker for the CoE, nominated by our department. He spoke on his research in drainage engineering, and the opportunities he got through ASABE to collaborate with peers from across the world.

Student News

AWARDS
Dr. Xinhua Jia was selected as the College of Engineering Researcher of the Year Awardee for 2016. The award is based on research accomplishments, research funding, publications, mentoring, and research related services. The CoE formally recognized her on April 28, 2016.

Dr. Xinhua Jia, Associate Professor and Professional Engineer of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, received the Researcher of the Year Award for her contributions to the field of soil and water engineering. Her research focuses on sustainable agriculture from best management of land and water resources.

Dr. Jia joined NDSU in 2007. Since then, she has produced 20 research articles, given 68 presentations and posters. She is the investigator of research projects that have received $1.1 million in state, federal, and industry grants. She is a member of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers and Soil Science Society of America.

Dr. Jia’s research is very applied and useful, and very much needed in the state. Usefulness is her personal goal, and if she can do something creative while working, it is very fulfilling. She enjoys working in the field and observing the crops and the changes they see from their work. Her work gives a visual outcome due to water and crop differences. It is also exciting to use new instruments and new techniques in field research.

*What most motivates you to do what you do?*

Her goals right now as faculty is on teaching and research. She is passionate about sharing her knowledge and her research with students. Students are her priority and she wants to help them in any way she can, such as academic advising, finding a job, help students when they struggle, and do her best to do something good for them.

Prior to coming to NDSU, Dr. Jia was a Post Doc at the University of Florida in water resources research. It was a 3 year Post Doc position, but at 2.5 years, NDSU had an opening. She applied for the position and was interviewed. She had a good feeling about the campus and the thoughtful people, and felt she would like retire in this place. North Dakota has the same four-season environment as her hometown in North West China. North Dakota also has a similar climate and similar crops, such as canola, sunflower, and soybeans as she had worked before.

*Do you have any key mentors or people who deeply influenced you?*

Dr. Slack was a well-known professor in Agricultural Engineering at the University of Arizona. He was the department chair at that time. He treated every student so nicely and patiently, and helped them in any way he can. He had set up a good example for his students to follow. Dr. Zimmt, who passed away last year, was an Adjunct professor at the University of Arizona. He met with me every week to go over my data and writing during my last year in school. He has always been useful to those who needed him, especially several international graduate students. He has a huge influence on the way I think and conduct research.

Dean Steele and Tom Scherer were people I could always talk to about challenging events after my arrival at NDSU. Dean helped me greatly with student and teaching difficulties. Tom Scherer said he would help me on my research, which means a lot to know that I have their support. I could not have gotten to this point in my career without them. Both Dean and Tom have spent a lot of time with me to brainstorm openly and confidentially. Jim Moos helped immensely in the field work at the beginning before I had a research specialist or Grad students. Don Lin increased our research productivity and gives me much support as needed.
I have several hard working graduate and undergraduate students. Three of my graduate students were recruited through undergraduate student research works; of which Kelsey Kolars and Hannah Bye have been my advisees for 7-8 years, and my undergraduate researcher Anne Gatzke is planning to go to graduate school.

Deb Baer has vastly increased my proposal submission, and Sara Ogundolani is a super account tech. I have been blessed with such a good team with all these people. Our Chair, Sreekala Bajwa, gives us strong support. Without her I could not accomplish what I have.

Did you have any life changing experiences that led you to what you are doing today?

I originally had an Agronomy B.S. degree, and worked for a research institute as a Research Scientist for 11 years. The visiting scholar experience in the US was a turning point in my life. I got to know the water resources part of the Agricultural Engineering, and I loved it. I went back to China, returned to the US, restarted my education in Agricultural Engineering, and completed the undergrad courses, and MS and PHD requirements in 6 years. I found something I really liked to do as well as my talent.

What do you do when you are not working?

Movies, talks with friends, gardening, sewing, walking and jogging outside. We go tent camping a lot, sometimes with several families, to places such as Devils Lake, Itasca, the Peace Gardens, and Yellowstone National Park. Our first camping trip was to the Grand Canyon. My husband is very handy, he helps others set up their tents, and we cook a lot while we are camping.
Jim does many things in his job, his main tasks are to build and construct metal and woodworking projects. He is also the teaching assistant for ASM 125 and 374 (Engines), with Elton Solseng as the instructor. Jim is motivated by his job because it is self-driven, he is given a larger timeframe to finish projects, and he likes gaining confidence in his ability. The goals Jim holds personally are reliability, accuracy, and getting along with people.

Jim was interested in this job because of his experience with the ABEN department as an undergrad. Jim graduated from NDSU in May 1975 with an ASM degree. A good friend and dorm mate encouraged him to look at the job list in Old Main. Jim applied and a couple weeks later Bill Promersberger, the chair, hired him. Jim liked the ASM program because he could work hands-on. In addition, the University environment was attractive.

Jim grew up on a small grain/livestock farm near Medina, ND. He went home every weekend and in the summer to work on the farm with his parents and sister. He helped with milking cows, haying, combining, and maintaining the farm equipment and buildings required for growing crops. They also raised sheep and beef cattle.

A key mentor who deeply influenced Jim is Elton Solseng. A life-changing experience for Jim that put him on the path leading to what he is doing today was getting the job in ABEN. He planned all along to gain knowledge in Ag Engineering and take it back to the farm where he would take over when his parents retired.

When Jim is not working, he enjoys motorcycles, cars, NDSU football and basketball, and Twins baseball.
Outstanding Work: Sara Ogundolani

Sara is the Account Technician for the ABEN department (Agricultural & Biosystems Engineering). She has been working at NDSU since July 2012 and more specifically with ABEN since August 2013. Her work involves the budgeting, balancing, and forecasting of over 100 appropriated, grant, and local funds, as well as overseeing purchasing and most of the departmental administrative responsibilities for human resources and payroll processing.

Hard work and doing the best job possible were instilled in Sara at a young age by her parents, and those bits of advice have stuck with her through her life and served her well. She enjoys analytical work and often describes her job as putting pieces of a puzzle together. Her personal goals are first and foremost to be a good person and to be a good wife and mother. She also has a goal of earning an MBA one day and will hopefully be pursuing that dream in the not-to-distant future.

Sara is a native of North Dakota, having grown up on a farm outside the small community of Pekin, North Dakota. She and her three siblings loved the freedom of growing up there, although there was always work to help with! After graduating from the University of North Dakota with a Bachelor’s of Business Administration degree, she moved to Houston, TX where she began working in the consulting industry, and eventually moved to finance where she held a supervisory role at a leading mortgage servicing company. After meeting her husband in Houston and having children, she decided it was a good time to migrate back to her home state so she could be closer to family.

When Sara is not working, she enjoys time with her children, husband, and extended family. She often visits her Dad and siblings in the Dakotas. She is also an avid fan of UND Hockey!

What’s Happening Next Week

- Dr. Xinhua Jia was selected as the **CoE Researcher of the Year Awardee for 2016**. The award is based on research accomplishments, research funding, publications, mentoring, and research related services. The CoE will be formally recognizing her on April 28 (11:30 AM-1:00 PM).

- **Dr. Skaggs luncheon, lecture and RRV ASABE meeting** on Monday, April 25, 1 p.m., Van Es 101.