

CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2009

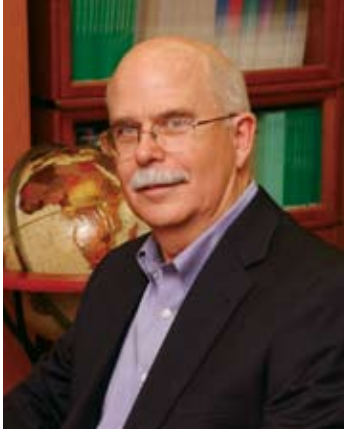
*Students, alumni and staff reach
for a more sustainable K-State,
one bottle at a time*



ARTS & SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear Alumni and Friends:

Over the past 34 years, I have had the honor and privilege of serving our students, faculty, advisors and alumni at Kansas State University. During my tenure at K-State, I have served 10 years as a faculty member, more than 12 years as a department head, 4 years as associate dean, and 7-plus years as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. I have truly enjoyed these administrative opportunities.



When my wife, Susan, and I arrived at K-State, a significant number of our students were raised on farms or in small towns all across Kansas. Today, that is less true.

However, some things have remained the same. Our students are incredibly loyal to our university. They have deep roots in Kansas and love their home state. The same can be said of our alumni.

Thanks to the leadership of President Jon Wefald, former Provost Jim Coffman, and Provost Duane Nellis, K-State has changed for the better. Enrollment has increased, new buildings have been built, technology advances have transformed the way we teach, and research productivity has risen dramatically. These are truly major accomplishments. I am grateful for all of the wisdom, advice and help I have received from these first-class K-State administrators.

I have been very fortunate to have worked with truly outstanding department heads and directors. Perhaps most

“We consider Manhattan and the K-State community our home.”

importantly, I have tremendous esteem for those who worked hard to help make me “look good.” Of course I am referring to Shirley Olson and Annette Maggio, who kept me headed in the right direction on a day-by-day basis.

After much serious thought, Susan and I have decided it’s time for a change. Our children are grown, our grandchildren are calling and our extended family is spread out from San Francisco to Tampa. I am resigning my position as dean effective mid-June 2009. I will take a fall sabbatical leave this year and return to the Department of Geography (my tenure home) on a phased-retirement basis. My plan is to go out the way I came in: serving the needs of students in the classroom, and supporting our Arts and Sciences alumni.

Susan and I are Kentuckians. However, we consider Manhattan and the K-State community our home. Undoubtedly Wildcats forever, as are our kids and grandkids. We left the blue Wildcats at UK to become the purple Wildcats at K-State — long may the purple reign!

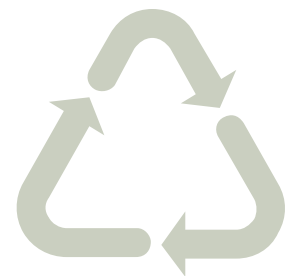
Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen E. White".

Stephen E. White, dean

Striving for Sustainability

This issue of Connections is focused on sustainability efforts around the College. In keeping with this move toward sustainability both college- and university-wide, this issue is printed on 30 percent recycled-content paper with eco-friendly soy ink. What’s more, the paper is certified by SmartWood to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards. We’re even able to bring you this publication at a price comparable to past issues. This is a positive change for the environment and our college — a change we’re committed to as we move forward.





ARTS & SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Stephen White, Dean
Joseph Aistrup, Associate Dean
Beth Montelone, Associate Dean
Alison Wheatley, Assistant Dean
Juanita McGowan, Assistant Dean
Sheila Walker, Director of Development,
K-State Foundation
Tracy Robinson, Development Officer,
K-State Foundation
Damon Fairchild, Development Officer,
K-State Foundation

Dean's Office: (785) 532-6900
K-State Foundation Development Office:
(800) 432-1578 or (785) 532-6266

CONTENTS

- 4 A FOND FAREWELL: Reflecting on 23 years of President Wefald's service
- 5 ALUMNI FELLOWS: Two distinguished alumni revisit campus, their roots
- 6 WALKING THE TALK: Alum returns to lead a statewide conversation on sustainability
- 8 PURPLE GOES GREEN: Student volunteers put the environment first with game-day recycling effort
- 12 ONE MAN'S TRASH: Sculpture students find use, meaning in discarded scrap metal
- 14 BRIEFS: How faculty and alumni are making the College proud
- 16 PRESERVING THE PRESENT... GUARANTEEING THE FUTURE: Faculty and graduate students take a closer look at the Konza Prairie streams
- 18 PRAIRIE POTENTIAL: K-State's Konza research site may become part of nationwide network

Produced by New Boston Creative Group, LLC
Manhattan, Kansas
www.newbostoncreative.com

Some photos by David Mayes, K-State Photo Services



A Fond Farewell

Reflecting on 23 years of President Wefald's service

President Jon Wefald is retiring this summer after 23 years of service to K-State — and to the College of Arts and Sciences. From the beginning of his administration, Wefald understood the central role of Arts and Sciences in a comprehensive land-grant institution such as K-State. As he said, “unlike any other college at K-State, all students take courses from departments in Arts and Sciences.”

Supplemental Funding. Wefald reached out to departments in Arts and Sciences that are traditionally underfunded. For the past 23 years, he has supplemented the operating expenses of departments in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts with money from his presidential reserve.

“In many of these departments, \$3,000 to \$5,000 goes a long way, enhancing faculty travel, allowing departments to invite national speakers and supporting the activities of student clubs,” Wefald said.

Academics. Wefald’s administration worked with donors to endow the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications, used grants to help establish the Institute for Military History and 20th Century Studies, and, most recently, led efforts to develop and fund the interdisciplinary M.A. and Ph.D. in security studies.

Music. He provided similar support for the marching band, purchasing new uniforms in 1988 and providing increased funding. “The band is so front and center in the eyes of many

of our supporters. We wanted to give them something to be proud of,” Wefald said.

Debate, Speech and Forensics. Early on in his presidency, Wefald increased funding and administrative support for the debate, speech and forensics teams. With this backing, they became national powerhouse programs. The debate team won national championships in 1991 and 1993, and this past year, senior Jessie Ohl won four individual titles at a national forensics competition.

“We wanted to show everyone across the country that K-State students could compete with students from any university in the world,” Wefald said, “and we did.”

Scholarship. Long believing that K-State students are on par with students at the nation’s top private schools, Wefald has been highly supportive of students applying for national scholarships such as the Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Goldwater and Udall. K-State ranks first among public universities in the number of these prestigious national scholarships won since 1986.

A large majority of K-State’s 125 national scholarship winners are from Arts and Sciences departments. Jim Hohenbary, K-State’s assistant dean for Nationally Competitive Scholarships, said that Wefald’s support has been “critical for the success of our students. He knows that our students are among the best that can be found. He wants to make sure that everyone else knows it.”

President Wefald, for all you accomplished for the students, faculty and staff of Arts and Sciences, the College extends its sincerest thanks, and wishes you the best of luck with all your future endeavors.

ALUMNI FELLOWS

Two distinguished alumni revisit campus, their roots

One should never underestimate the importance of keeping in touch with the past. So much more than memories, the past is often a mixture of lessons, reminders, motivation and support. It's a way to remain close to the people and experiences that made you who you are. And if you honor it, someday it may honor you in return.

Dr. William C. Deeds of Sioux City, Iowa, and Dr. Lynn Y.S. Lin of Cincinnati, Ohio, spent the last week of February 2009 visiting with friends both old and new after being honored as the 2009 Alumni Fellows by the K-State College of Arts and Sciences. Alumni Fellows return to campus to present lectures and meet with students and faculty. They are chosen based on their high levels of professional accomplishment and distinguished service in their respective careers.



Dr. William C. Deeds

Deeds earned a Master of Science ('77) and a Ph.D. ('79) in experimental psychology from K-State. As a graduate student, he was offered an assistantship and gained invaluable research experience. His time on the graduate student steering committee in the Department of Psychology also gave him administrative experience that he would use in his future career.

After receiving his Ph.D., Deeds went on to Moravian

College in Bethlehem, Pa., where he spent 19 years as a faculty member, eventually becoming chair of the Department of Psychology, associate dean and dean for Academic Affairs. He

“Everything I experienced at K-State has been instrumental in my career, and I’m honored by this recognition.”

— Dr. William C. Deeds

is now the vice president for Academic Affairs and dean at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, where he lives with his wife, Pam Hoadley ('80 M.S., institutional management). He remains an active influence in K-State's Department of Psychology as chair of the department's advisory council.

“My continued relationship with K-State is mutually beneficial. One of the best faculty members I've ever hired has come from K-State's psychology department, and Morningside has sent one of its students to the K-State Department of Psychology for graduate study,” Deeds said. “Everything I experienced at K-State has been instrumental in my career, and I'm honored by this recognition.”

Lin, who completed his Master of Science in statistics in 1963, came to K-State with his wife Lizbie Gee-Sun Lin ('64 Ph.D., economics). He credits K-State for the solid foundation in statistics and mathematics that allowed him to pursue his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota.



Dr. Lynn Y.S. Lin

After earning his Ph.D. in statistics, Lin went on to build a successful career in consulting, and developed the BASES system — the most frequently used new-product sales forecasting model with a 65 percent market share in the world. He is now the president of his own consulting company, Lynn Y.S. Lin Consulting Inc, and is a guest lecturer at universities across the world, including K-State.

“I was very surprised and humbled to be honored as an Alumni Fellow,” Lin said. “My time at K-State provided me with the fundamental knowledge I have used throughout my career.”



Ben Champion, K-State's first director of sustainability

Walking the Talk

Alum returns to lead a statewide conversation on sustainability

On Jan. 23, 2009, the K-State Student Union was buzzing with conversation. Sure, there were the usual lunchtime crowds, the study groups, the students excitedly discussing Friday-night plans. But had you been eavesdropping, you may have been surprised at some of the *other* topics at hand. Everywhere you turned, passionate exchanges were taking place on things such as wind turbines, water quality, and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems. All told, over 400 people gathered to join in one very important conversation about sustainability — the 2009 Leading Kansas in Sustainability Conference.

“It was just a really rich day full of a lot of different presentations,” said Ben Champion, K-State’s director of sustainability, who spearheaded the conference. “It really does help to build a lot of good will and momentum, and I think it did that very successfully.”

Green to its core, the conference featured dozens of presentations on everything from the carbon footprint of the university, to the “greening” of Greensburg in its post-tornado rebuilding. Meanwhile, local food was served in an effort to use more accessible, less exhaustive resources, and printed materials were minimized, with those created being biodegradable.

“I was able to introduce some people that I have a lot of respect for — some of my mentors in many ways — to a really diverse audience,” said Champion, ’02 B.A. chemistry, and natural resources and environmental sciences, minors in Spanish and political science.

Diverse indeed. Among the attendees were faculty, administrative officials, senators, businesspeople, and

representatives from other institutions. Key speakers included David Orr of Oberlin College, an expert in college campus sustainability; Wes Jackson, president of The Land Institute in Salina; and Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky.

Perhaps most notably, about one-third of the attendees were students, many of whom served as presenters as well. Not exactly your typical conference-goers.

But that was all part of the grand plan: To open up a dialogue that spanned the reaches of the university and the entire state.

“This is an important thing. It’s the kind of event that really brings the university as a community together and helps us to build a common identity, to really understand that, yes, we are all in this together,” Champion said.

President Jon Wefald, for one, was more than impressed.

“I am totally blown away by this conference, the magnitude of it, the meaning of it for right now and for the year ahead,” Wefald said in his luncheon speech. “And I cannot believe that Ben was able to put together a program like this in six months.”

No doubt, the conference was one big step toward a better, more sustainable K-State. And though Champion was hired as K-State’s first-ever sustainability professional just a few months earlier, that day had been a long time coming.

An Environmentalist at Heart

Champion has no shortage of honors to list after his name — Eagle Scout, member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa, Rhodes Scholar. But the title that probably suits him best is environmentalist — someone who innately respects the value of natural resources.

“I guess I’ve always been relatively frugal,” he said. “I’d gone on some extended backpacking trips in New Mexico with the Boy Scouts. Those were really valuable in that you spend two



Conference attendees discuss the sustainability-themed posters between sessions

weeks carrying everything that you have on your back, and you realize how little you actually need.”

With a steadily growing passion for the earth and its resources, Champion had a good idea what he wanted to study when he came to K-State as an undergraduate — he just didn’t know what to call it.

“I really didn’t have the word sustainability on the tip of my tongue at that time, but I think that really is what I was aiming for — some kind of interdisciplinary study that really grapples with the future in terms of our social, economic and environmental needs.”

As a student, Champion worked hard to convince anyone and everyone to care about his cause. He started a group called Students for Environmental Action (SEA). He initiated a recycling program at K-State home football games. He studied science, politics and the environment, all the while thinking how he might use that knowledge to achieve real environmental change.

But that was before the green movement really caught on. So imagine Champion’s surprise when he returned to K-State in 2007 (this time as a geography instructor) following his time at Oxford, only to discover that a host of new students now shared his passion.

“The campus was really awakening to sustainability issues, which was a great pleasure, but also a surprise for someone who spent a lot of his undergrad years as an activist struggling to get people to pay any attention at all,” he said.

The Right Time, the Right Job

By spring 2008, Champion was heavily involved with student environmental groups on campus again, so it was bittersweet that he was set to leave K-State for a career in academia. But just as he was beginning the job hunt in earnest, he ran into President Wefald at the Union.

“He wanted to know what I’d been up to, and I told him about how I’d been working with students on sustainability issues, and that whatever I do, wherever I do it, that’s what I want to be doing,” Champion said.

Within two weeks, Wefald offered him the position of director of sustainability, along with an appointment as an assistant geography professor.

In June 2008, Champion hit the ground running, putting years of ideas into motion. He helped ramp up recycling efforts, helped establish the 35-member K-State Sustainability Task Force, and started work on a university-wide action plan with the newly formed group.

The end goal? To harness K-State’s role as a land-grant institution to make it a leader in sustainability. After all, many of the projects Champion is eyeing also serve the main interests of the university: education, research, outreach, and organizational efficiency.

“Can a composting program on campus help our students learn, help us develop new research opportunities for composting at the same time as helping us to reduce our waste going to the landfill, and help to fuel our student farm which is sending food to our dining centers? Absolutely.”

He’s already made believers out of one of his most valued audiences — the students.

“Ben is our biggest ally to our student environmental groups,” said Zack Pistora, senior in political science and head of SEA. “He has the vision and drive to make K-State a top ecologically-sustainable campus.”

As for Champion’s place in it all, he’s right where he wants to be. And he plans to keep the conversation moving forward.

“I want to be working in a large enough organization that it makes a difference and try to figure out how to make it more sustainable,” he said. “It’s exactly what I want to be doing.”

“It’s the kind of event that really brings the university as a community together and helps us to build a common identity.”

— Ben Champion





A student volunteer combs the bleachers for recyclables following a game at Bill Snyder Family Stadium

PURPLE GOES GREEN



Student volunteers put the environment first with game-day recycling effort

It's no big secret on the streets of Manhattan: Where the K-State student body is concerned, home football games are something sacred. On those long-anticipated Saturdays, students converge on the grounds of Bill Snyder Family Stadium well before the warmth of midday and stay well past nightfall, often in finger- and toe-numbing temperatures. The tailgates, the camaraderie, the sun-up to sun-down ritual — it's all part of the K-State student experience.

But in fall 2008, a group of students weathered the game-day elements for a different reason entirely. Led by Ben Champion, K-State's director of sustainability, and Zack Pistora, head of Students for Environmental Action (SEA), a group of approximately 40 students initiated a stadium-wide recycling effort for each of the Big 12 home games.

For Pistora, senior in political science with minors in leadership studies and women's studies, leading the charge is a simple matter of doing what he loves...even if it means working on those cherished game days.

"This is my passion — the environment. It takes time and energy, but I think more and more, you do what you care about," Pistora said. "This is what I love doing, and hopefully I'm making a difference so that the people after me pick it up or make it better."

Fellow environmentalist Champion — '02 B.A. chemistry, and natural resources and environmental sciences, minors in Spanish and political science — knows exactly where Pistora is coming from. It was Champion who formed SEA at K-State in 2000, helming a two-year recycling effort at the stadium before graduating and heading to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. When Champion was hired to lead the university's sustainability efforts in 2008, he knew exactly where he, and the students, could get started.

"We knew we could do this because it had been done before," Champion said.

But the new recycling initiative took past efforts to a whole new level. Instead of just working inside the stadium after the game, the group covered the entire stadium grounds, from the parking lots to the tailgates beyond.

Arriving four to five hours before kickoff, the students walked from tailgate to tailgate, introducing themselves and handing out bags for aluminum cans (the majority of tailgate waste) and plastic bottles (the bulk of stadium waste). They educated students, alumni and fans about recycling, and thanked them for doing their part.

Post-game, they retrieved the tailgate bags and canvassed the stadium, picking up one plastic bottle at a time. After hauling the mounds of recyclable waste to the nearby K-State recycling house, they spent hours the following week sorting the refuse by hand.

Going from no real game-day recycling program to such a sizable endeavor has been no small feat. But the response from fans and volunteers alike has been overwhelmingly positive.

"People have been really receptive, especially the students, just because they're more educated about recycling," Pistora said.

Student volunteers from across campus have responded in droves — with representatives from SEA, the Student Governing Association (SGA), sororities and fraternities, the SEE Green campaign, Student Farm Club, and other groups joining the venture. For one game, two entire Leadership Studies classes volunteered.

"It's a great cause; I am so glad that they're doing this," said sophomore Erin Meyer, a psychology major and SGA intern, as she collected plastic bottles following the Nov. 15 game versus Nebraska. "Just coming here maybe three minutes, I have over 75 bottles."

In addition to student involvement, Champion and Pistora have also drummed up staff support across campus. The Division of Facilities offered collection bags, and trucks to gather and transport the recyclables. Staff from the Chester E. Peters Recreation Complex ("the Rec") provided the group with a tent, tables, chairs and coolers for their tailgate. And



Ben Champion (left) and Zack Pistora (center) talk strategy during the Nov. 15 K-State v. Nebraska game

university administration is supporting the cause with plans for a new, better-equipped recycling center.

“The administration has made a commitment to building a new facility or obtaining a new facility some way,” Champion said. “They have some grant funds they’re going to dedicate to that — about a half a million dollars’ worth.”

And just how is this campus-wide, collaborative effort paying off? Over the course of four games, the group recycled 1,760 pounds of aluminum and 2,200 pounds of plastic. That’s a total of 3,960 pounds of waste that will be turned into something new rather than sitting in a landfill somewhere.

“Just with the first two games, we recycled more plastic than on the entire campus last year,” Pistora said.

But these impressive strides aren’t enough to make Champion and Pistora content to rest on their laurels. As they are quick to point out, pursuing sustainability is an ongoing process. The pair has a number of ideas for how to ramp up involvement at other university events and across campus.

Building on their success at home football games, Champion hopes to incorporate recycling into post-game clean-up at Bramlage Coliseum as well.

“There are community groups and student groups that volunteer to clean up; it’s kind of a fundraiser,” he said. “But if we could make it (recycling) a regular format of cleanup, then everyone would be required to do it as part of getting their money.”

On the campus side of things, the students have taken the

helm. Led by Pistora and Michael Bell — senior in architectural engineering with a minor in leadership studies, and director of sustainability for student government — green-minded students are working to generate the fund infusion necessary for additional staffing and equipment.

“The students are working on a privilege fee concept that would bring some dedicated funding to recycling,” Champion said, noting that they hope to devote funds to reducing and reusing as well. “Composting is another form of waste reduction that we want to get into at the university.”

And, of course, there are also plans to expand the football recycling program.

“Other schools have started out doing what we’re doing, but a couple of them recently have made plans to make their stadium zero-waste, so everything has a recycling or reuse component to it. They’re finding ways to basically compost or recycle everything,” Champion said.

“But I think we’ve got a good little system in place that we can build on. We’ve got to make sure that it perpetuates itself.”

With a stadium full of support behind it, this “little system” is on its way to being one big operation.

“I just think everywhere K-State goes, there should be an idea of sustainability,” Pistora said. “Wherever K-State is, we should have recycling.”

For more information about the university’s sustainability efforts, please contact Ben Champion at champion@k-state.edu or 785-313-3085.



“Just with the first two games, we recycled more plastic than on the entire campus last year.”

— Zack Pistora





Exchange students Patrice McKeivitt and Jasmine McAleavey; Associate Professor Daniel Hunt; and Stephanie Rogers, senior in sculpture, in the West Stadium scrap heap

One Man's Trash...

Sculpture students find use, meaning in discarded scrap metal

Junkyards. Scrap heaps. Landfills. Gold mines. These might not sound like the same thing to you. In fact, that last one may seem more than a little out of place. But if you're looking at the first three through the eyes of an art student studying sculpture, you can see how they're all one and the same.

If you ask just about any sculpture student, the phrase "starving artist" is still relevant. They're no strangers to reusing, recycling and repurposing whatever they can. When the price of art supplies seems outrageous, there's no hope of buying

something like mass quantities of iron for the semi-annual iron pours the Art Department organizes. So it's a good thing Daniel Hunt, associate professor in sculpture, just happens to have a few thousand pounds of scrap iron lying around.

"I don't want my students thinking about their ideas in terms of cash, even though that's the reality. I don't want them to have to be restricted in that way," Hunt said.

The heap of scrap metal, all 15,000 pounds of it, is located in West Stadium and is made up of a wide variety of objects from several different places. In the past, Hunt has solicited scrap iron from places like Howie's Recycling, but he's also managed to find a lot of material on campus as the university

updates and remodels various buildings. For instance, several radiators that have outlived their usefulness have found their way to Hunt's iron heap.

"It's really neat, because you sit and think about how many generations of students those things heated, and how much waste that would create. But instead of scrapping it, we're kicking it back to a department and using it as a teaching resource," Hunt said.

During an iron pour, a type of furnace called a cupola is continually fed with coke, a fuel derived from coal. Once the bed of coke is hot enough, students pour buckets of scrap iron into a different chamber in the cupola to melt it. After it has melted and the slag — or impurities — has been removed, the molten metal is poured into molds students have prepared to create their works of art.

"The idea of recycling is carried on in all different types of art. We use whatever we can to get by," Stephanie Rogers, senior in sculpture, said. "There was this whole movement in the art world where you'd just use whatever you can find to create something new."

With a seemingly endless supply of iron, Hunt and his students are able to organize iron pours every semester. And the phenomenon has grown, with each pour hosting more and more visiting students and faculty from outside universities. As they become more familiar with the process, women are a growing presence at the pours.

"There are a lot more women coming up in this process right now. It's very labor-intensive and it's very challenging, but that makes it very rewarding," Rogers said.

Rogers has become so familiar with the iron pour process that she spent the 2008 spring semester in the United Kingdom at the West Wales School of the Arts helping them build a new cupola and perform an iron pour. While in Wales, she met fellow sculpture students Patrice McKeivitt and Jasmine McAleavey, who decided it might not be a bad idea to travel to the States and get a bit more experience working in the medium.

"K-State has given us a bigger playground in which to use the skills we learned in Wales, and broaden that knowledge," McKeivitt said. "We're able to apply them to things like printmaking and jewelry work here."

When you hear them talk about their experiences as art students, it doesn't take long to figure out that supplies are scarce for these two Irish women as well. While scrap donations from a local steel company give them a relatively steady supply of iron, they and other students have had their share of sifting through the rubbish to find useful items. But iron pours are an event that the students at the West Wales School of the Arts live for, creating not just an exhibition of skill, but a show. Some might even call it a party.

"We have an annual iron pour around Halloween, and we invite the public, have guest artists, get DJs, and have music and food," McAleavey said. "It creates such a great atmosphere, because there's all this hard work, but the event draws people in and promotes what we do."

"I feel like we might get a better idea of the whole process of iron casting here, since the pours are more process-based," McKeivitt said. "We've done quite a few back home, and there

"The idea of recycling is carried on in all different types of art. We use whatever we can to get by."

— Stephanie Rogers

are still times where you feel like you need to know a bit more about what's going on."

At K-State, McKeivitt and McAleavey are working with Rogers and Hunt to increase their understanding of iron and sculpture in general. The plan is to take as much knowledge as they can back with them to the U.K., where they'll share it with fellow students and even professors. The plan fits nicely with the idea of recycling and reusing things.

"We're one of the few colleges in Europe that does iron casting," McAleavey said. "And it's only been at our school for three years, so we're still learning and reusing that information that's passed on."

It's a wonder that the idea of recycling anything in the art world can be taken any further than this — but it can. Even *art* can be reused and recycled to create something new, which speaks volumes about what our society might one day be capable of, if we put forth enough effort.

"It's become tradition to throw art into the cupola and melt it back down. In art, you're always developing and improving yourself," Rogers said. "Instead of having that art that no one is going to appreciate take up space, you can reuse that art by melting it down and create something new all over again."

If you'd like to support the sculpture program by donating supplies, tools or machinery, please contact Daniel Hunt at dhunt@k-state.edu for more information.



Wildcat in the White House

Alumnus appointed chief White House photographer for President Obama



Then-Senator Barack Obama as photographed by alum Pete Souza

Pete Souza, '06 M.S. journalism and mass communications, knows a thing or two about returning to a good gig. On Jan. 5, 2009, he was chosen as chief White House photographer for President Barack Obama. This marks the second time that Souza, who has been photographing Obama's political rise since 2005, will chronicle the presidency.

Souza first served as an official White House photographer for Ronald Reagan beginning in June 1983, only four years after leaving K-State with a nearly completed master's degree. He continued in the post until the end of Reagan's presidency in 1989.

This time, Souza goes behind the scenes of the White House as a Wildcat. Souza earned his long-awaited — and indisputably deserved — master's degree from K-State in December 2006, also serving as the commencement speaker. He is one of the founding members of K-State's A.Q. Miller School of

Journalism and Mass Communications Advisory Council.

Souza's latest book, "The Rise of Barack Obama," was published in July 2008 and spent five weeks on the New York Times Best Seller list. The photographs follow Obama from his first days as a freshman senator from Illinois to his presidential candidacy. Souza previously published three other books, including "Images of Greatness: An Intimate Look at the Presidency of Ronald Reagan."

Also on Souza's resume are stints as a freelancer for National Geographic and as the national photographer for the Chicago Tribune's Washington, D.C., bureau. He has documented the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan; post-Katrina New Orleans; and the 2004 funeral of Ronald Reagan, at the request of Nancy Reagan. Souza is on an extended leave of absence from Ohio University, where he serves as an assistant professor of photojournalism.

Changing the Face of Teaching

Professor uses new technology, methods in the classroom, gains national recognition



Assistant Professor Michael Wesch

Some of Michael Wesch's teaching methods are a little unorthodox. Even he'll admit to that. But that doesn't make them any less effective, which is evidenced by the wildly popular video he posted on YouTube entitled, "Web 2.0: The Machine is Us/ing Us." But the recent honor bestowed upon him may be even more indicative of his teaching abilities.

In November, Wesch, assistant professor of cultural anthropology, was named the winner of the 2008 national professor of the year award for research and doctoral universities from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (Carnegie/CASE). The award brings the number of times K-State has received this honor up to three — making it the only research/doctoral university in the United States, public

or private, to have done so. K-State is also the only Kansas school to have a national winner.

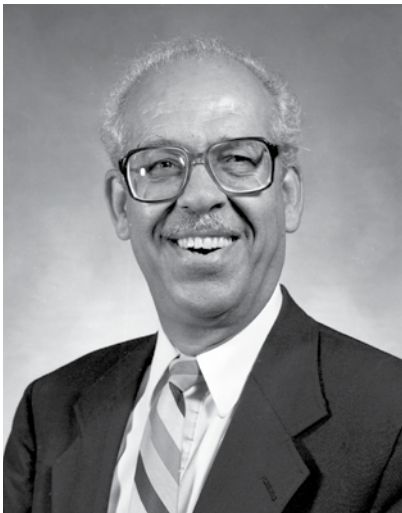
"We are very proud of Michael Wesch and delighted he has joined the elite group of national professors of the year for research/doctoral universities," said K-State President Jon Wefald. "He is earning well-deserved honors from many quarters for his outstanding ability to communicate effectively with students."

Even more recently, Wesch was named one of the National Geographic Society's "Emerging Explorers" for 2009. The honor is presented to only 10 people each year, and is given to individuals who have made a significant contribution to world knowledge while still early in their careers. It includes a \$10,000 award to support research and further exploration.

Courtesy K-State Media Relations

A Lesson Learned, a Life Rewarded

Alumnus establishes chair fund in honor of former professor



*University Distinguished Professor
Michael Suleiman*

Perhaps the most meaningful reward in teaching is proof that you've changed a student's life. That proof can come in many different ways, and in the case of Michael Suleiman, University Distinguished Professor of political science, it may be decades after the fact. But the passage of time only strengthens the sentiment.

In 2005, John Hofmeister, '71 B.S. and '73 M.S. political science, presented a gift of \$100,000 to the College of Arts and Sciences to establish the Michael W. Suleiman Chair in Arab and Arab-American Studies. A former president of Shell Oil Company, Hofmeister supplemented that amount a year later with an additional \$100,000. In October 2008, Shell Oil Company Foundation made a gift of \$210,000 to provide additional funding for the chair.

The total gift of nearly half a million dollars seems staggering, but to

Hofmeister, it's a logical way to honor his former mentor.

"Dr. Suleiman pushed me to the outer reaches of my personal capacity. It is a lesson never forgotten — one which has continuously shaped my life since that extraordinary learning experience," Hofmeister said.

Suleiman, whose teaching career has spanned more than 40 years at K-State, has taught and researched in the areas of comparative politics, Middle East politics, Arab-American community and American images of people from the Middle East. The chair is meant to honor Suleiman and his valuable contribution to Arab-American studies, and will ensure that his dedication to the topic is carried into the future by funding faculty research of the Middle East region.

Courtesy K-State Media Relations

Focusing on Affordable Energy

Alumnus dedicates efforts to helping the environment after retiring from oil industry



John Hofmeister

John Hofmeister, '71 B.S. and '73 M.S. political science, retired from his position as president of Shell Oil Company in June 2008. But his retirement certainly didn't mean the end of his work toward getting Congress to support the new energy initiatives he's proposing.

Hofmeister, founder of the Michael W. Suleiman Chair in Arab and Arab-American Studies in K-State's Department of Political Science, is president and CEO of the not-for-profit association Citizens for Affordable Energy. The goal of the association is to educate the public and promote comprehensive, non-partisan energy solutions for the nation and eventually the world. Central to this goal are Hofmeister's "4 Mores": more energy from all sources, more technology for efficiency, more environmental protection and more infrastructure.

As more countries of the world develop habits similar to the U.S. in terms of travel, lifestyle and energy consumption, more fuel is being used. However, more often than not, little is being done to keep up with the increased consumption. But instead of just focusing on one solution — as many groups and plans for reform do — Hofmeister and his team are promoting the idea of using every form of energy to its fullest potential.

"We have more than enough energy to meet the needs of society for the entire history of the Earth," Hofmeister said. "We have only man-made problems that get in the way of using that energy for the good of society. Citizens for Affordable Energy is determined to solve the man-made problems that prevent affordability and availability."

For details about the association, visit www.citizensforaffordableenergy.org.

Courtesy K-State Media Relations



Preserving the PRESENT...

Guaranteeing the FUTURE

Faculty and graduate students take a closer look at the Konza Prairie streams

The concept of sustainability is a never-ending spectrum of ideas, practices and methods, each one undeniably complicated but each one focused on a simple goal: to preserve what we have. And if we really make an effort, a step toward restoring what we've lost. But sometimes, the public needs convincing that there's a problem. What's the easiest way to do that? Put the problem in terms of dollars and cents.

"I think there was a lot of denial about things like global warming and greenhouse gases," said Walter Dodds, professor of biology. "Economic valuation is one of the tools we have to help relate our research to the general interests of society."

Dodds and two of his graduate students, Alyssa Riley and Kyle Winders, are investigating various aspects that affect water quality in prairie streams. The three conduct the majority of their research at the Konza Prairie Biological Station, one of the few remaining tracts of tallgrass prairie in North America and a representative of the most endangered biomes in existence. The stream that runs through Konza prairie, King's Creek, is a headwater stream — something that is central to the research of all three individuals.

"We've found in the Flint Hills that what happens in the very smallest headwater streams has the single largest impact

on the water quality downstream," Dodds said. "So the influences of land use near the origin of a water source cascade all the way down to the lower streams."

Riley, a third-year doctoral student from Prairie du Chien, Wis., is currently studying the effects of tree expansion on prairie stream ecosystems. Riley has been monitoring sections of the stream that have been subjected to various levels of natural encroachment of woodland vegetation. In one section, this overgrowth was recently cut back so that she and other researchers could study the change in water quality once the vegetation was removed.

"If you have a stream that's naturally open and it becomes closed-canopy, that's going to decrease the amount of algae," Riley explained. "So that's less food for smaller organisms, and that can lead to alterations in food web interactions."

Winders, a native of Gower, Mo., began work toward his master's degree in fall 2008. His research centers mostly on the impact suspended solid loads have on sediments and mineral levels in water — specifically the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen, which can create taste and smell issues for consumers. Much of the cause behind these increases is interference from cattle and other large livestock that are allowed access to streams that run through grazing areas.

"Since those minerals are not dissolvable, they bond to the soil and are transferred to water sources through sediment pollution, often by livestock," Winders said.



Professor Walter Dodds discusses water quality with graduate students Kyle Winders and Alyssa Riley

“Sediment pollution is one of the most important forms of pollution in the U.S., probably the number one pollutant. Not much is known about that in prairie streams,” Dodds said.

Surprisingly, both students’ research projects reveal that not all environments are better left alone. In some cases, sustainability is achieved through stewardship — an idea that has a lot to do with Dodds’ ideas about existing in cooperation with nature.

“To inhabit the environment in a sustainable fashion, you need to understand how natural systems work, and what the implications of human activities on the system are,” Dodds said.

In Riley’s case, it could be that the remaining tallgrass prairie regions in Northern America need more than just to be left alone. Yearly burning keeps vegetation in check, which in turn keeps the water quality in streams at a steady level. Where Winders’ work is concerned, it could be that conservation societies might need to inform farmers and livestock owners and help them get the funding to fence their livestock out of water sources.

“In my research, a lot of conservation managers question whether it’s worth the money to do something like fence cattle out of the streams,” Winders said. “A lot of conservation departments help fund projects taken up by private land owners, and they want to know if that’s the best way to spend their money.”

“Our research shows that there are very specific management-related things you can do to sustain water quality.”

— Walter Dodds

“Policy makers want a dollar amount. We can say, ‘This organism is really important to the environment,’ but they want to know how much it actually costs to preserve something,” Riley said.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of all the research being done at the Konza Prairie Biological Station is that it’s local — which means there are things we can do to improve or sustain our quality of life.

“In a practical sense, Kyle’s research shows that if you fence cattle out of the streams, and it maintains water quality, then it becomes worth the cost to do so,” Dodds said. “Or, if Alyssa’s research shows that woody vegetation is going to imperil an endangered species, there would be impetus for society to manage those areas where the encroachment of woody vegetation is an issue.”

“Our research shows that there are very specific management-related things you can do to sustain water quality,” Dodds said. “People are starting to realize that we really do have an effect on our global environment, and that effect starts locally.”



Prairie Potential

K-State's Konza research site may become part of nationwide network

There are a lot of things that make K-State's Division of Biology unique, among them a strong undergraduate research program, and cutting-edge cancer research. But one of its biggest assets is a roughly 13 square-mile tract of land that lies southeast of Manhattan — the Konza Prairie Biological Station. For the past 30 years, faculty and students have used the site to interact with one of the most endangered ecosystems on Earth, altering natural disturbances like fire and grazing, taking measurements, observing changes, and even manipulating climates in experimental plots. And in the near future, the experience may be made even richer, thanks to a major initiative by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

In July 2008, the Konza Prairie Biological Station was selected as a candidate core site for the proposed National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON). The network is being developed for the purpose of ecological observation, and

will consist of 20 core sites distributed in different ecoclimatic "domains" across the continent. Each site will represent a specific type of environment and ecosystem found within the United States. For example, the Konza site is representative of the native tallgrass prairie ecosystem in the central U.S. Prairie Peninsula region.

"We've been part of the National Science Foundation's Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) program since the beginning of the program in 1981, so we have a history of monitoring the environment that other sites don't have," said University Distinguished Professor of biology John Blair, lead principle investigator of the Konza Prairie LTER program.

"There will be a national effort to link together data from all of these sites, and we'll have access to all of that information here at K-State," said Walter Dodds, professor of biology. "We will be players on the national research scene as part of a very important network."

Each core site within the network will be outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment that will allow for at least 30 years of intensive measurements. The advances in quality equipment will not only mean more accurate measurements, but also

the ability to measure things that scientists, researchers and students have never been able to assess at Konza.

“We will have the capability to monitor things like exchanges of gases between grasslands and the atmosphere,” Blair said. “The NEON sensors will also allow us to monitor variables that we can’t normally measure in real time, like water chemistry.”

Along with the prestige of becoming a part of the first large-scale, long-term ecological observation network in our nation’s history come the many benefits to the Division of Biology, K-State and even the local community. For the Division of Biology, improvements in equipment and cyberinfrastructure will result in increased accuracy and long-term testing abilities, something that is all too important when it comes to environmental trends.

“Some of our experiments that we’ve done have been very short-term — a typical NSF grant is three years, a graduate program is two or three years,” Dodds said. “In long-term experiments, you often see unexpected shifts in the way the system works, which is more relatable to how humans affect the environment.”

While the Konza Prairie Biological Station is already a huge draw for biologists, botanists, agronomists, social scientists and the like, the high-profile status created by the NEON program and NSF funding is likely to create an even bigger incentive for world-class faculty and researchers to come to K-State. This will be the case for K-State’s future student population as well.

“We’re really building NEON for the next generation of scientists. It will be very exciting to see graduate students with new skill sets come in and be able to manipulate these data,” said John Briggs, professor of biology and director of the Konza Prairie Biological Station.

“We’re really building NEON for the next generation of scientists.”

— John Briggs

“This information collected by NEON forms a baseline, so when a student comes in and says, ‘I want to find out how leaves decompose in streams,’ we’ll have all this supporting information that they can draw from,” Dodds said.

But it’s not just about massive amounts of data, or exciting new capabilities, or even the bright futures for various K-State academic programs. After all, what’s the use of all that information if it can’t be applied to the real world? That is something, assures Briggs, that is integral to the NEON program.

“For the most part, scientists live in an academic world,” Briggs said. “NEON really wants to get citizens involved, and they plan to have an aspect of the program that will promote participation by citizens and K-12 students by allowing them to collect and even analyze some of the data.”

And now that sustainability and conservation has finally become mainstream, education is just what we need.

“Our goal is to gather information that can be used to more effectively manage our nation’s natural resources, and to assure that we develop sustainable use of the nation’s ecosystems in the future,” Blair said. “In order to do that, we need to be able to monitor the health of these ecosystems, which is what NEON will allow us to do.”

K-State students conduct research at the Konza



COLLEGE WELCOMES NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN

Political science professor, department head takes on new role



Joe Aistrup

When the world-at-large begins to change in big ways, it's only a matter of time before that change begins to trickle down into smaller places. K-State is no exception; leadership is changing hands at every turn, from the president of the university to the head football coach. The College of Arts and Sciences is going through some major changes as well.

In January 2009, Joe Aistrup became the interim associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Aistrup, who previously served as the head of

K-State's Department of Political Science, took up the position after Larry Rodgers left the College to become dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Oregon State University.

Aistrup, who specializes in American government, Kansas politics, and public policy and methodology, has been a faculty member at K-State since 2002. He was appointed to the position by College of Arts and Sciences Dean Stephen White, who will be stepping down from his post in June 2009.

"Professor Aistrup is an outstanding political scientist and department head, and I think our staff and students will enjoy working with him. I know that he will be a terrific associate dean," White said.

Prior to his tenure at K-State, Aistrup served as a professor of political science at Fort Hays State University, as well as the director of the university's Docking Institute of Public Affairs. He earned his bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State, a master's from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and a doctorate from Indiana University. Associate Professor Jeff Pickering has been appointed the new head of the Department of Political Science.

Courtesy K-State Media Relations



YOU HAD CLOSE FRIENDS
AT K-STATE ...
REALLY CLOSE.

RECONNECT WITH THEM
IN OUR UPCOMING K-STATE
ALL-UNIVERSITY DIRECTORY!

Make sure you're in the book!
Watch your e-mail for details!



298

College of Arts & Sciences
113 Eisenhower Hall
Manhattan, KS 66502-1005

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #525
Manhattan KS 66502

Kansas State University is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, military status, veteran status, or other nonmerit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities, and employment, including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era, as required by applicable laws and regulations. Responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 has been delegated to the director of Affirmative Action, Kansas State University, 214 Anderson Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-0124, (phone) 785-532-6220; (TTY) 785-532-4807. R 04/22/08