

# THE State Oak

**LSU's capital  
campaign  
shows what  
fierce can do**

■ **Page 22**

**FIERCE**

**FOR THE  
FUTURE**

**LSU** | College of Agriculture

**6** Haymon takes  
team approach  
to giving

**34** Students spend  
spring break  
abroad



# THE Stately Oak

The Stately Oak is published  
periodically for donors,  
employees, retirees and friends of the LSU AgCenter  
and the LSU College of Agriculture  
and is printed and mailed  
with private funds.

Contributions can be made  
payable to LSU Foundation  
and sent to LSU Agriculture Development,  
101 J. Norman Efferson Hall,  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

[www.lsufoundation.org/givetoagriculture](http://www.lsufoundation.org/givetoagriculture)  
[www.lsufoundation.org/givetolsuagcenter](http://www.lsufoundation.org/givetolsuagcenter)

---

**Editor:** Tobie Blanchard

**Assistant Editor:** Kyle Peveto

**Designer:** Roxanne C. Hare

**Contributors:** Brianna Cobb, Craig Gautreaux, Olivia McClure,  
Johnny Morgan, Bruce Schultz

---

William B. Richardson,  
LSU Vice President for Agriculture  
Louisiana State University Agricultural Center  
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station  
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service  
LSU College of Agriculture

Pub. 3657-19F (2,500) 10/19

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs  
and employment.



[www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com)  
[www.lsu.edu/agriculture](http://www.lsu.edu/agriculture)





# Fierce is what we are

Nine billion. This is the estimated global population by 2050. It represents the greatest challenge land-grant institutions will be called upon to address. It's a challenge the LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture are ready to tackle.

LSU has launched an aggressive campaign to raise \$1.5 billion. The Fierce for the Future Campaign unites LSU's campuses statewide in the largest and most far-reaching advancement campaign ever initiated for higher education in the history of Louisiana.

Our goal in agriculture is to raise \$32.8 million. These funds will help us keep our commitment to ensuring a safe and sustainable food supply, enhancing the environment and improving the economic well-being of our world's growing population.

The LSU AgCenter offers one of the most active intellectual property programs in the country, and we rank among the top research universities. Our faculty are passionate about research that generates solutions for all aspects of agriculture, from agricultural economics and natural resources to animal and food sciences and textile science. Through our wide array of programs, we reach agricultural producers, entrepreneurs and consumers.



## Letter to our readers

— **Bill Richardson**

*LSU Vice President for Agriculture  
and Dean, LSU College of Agriculture*

In the heart of campus, the LSU College of Agriculture provides transformative experiences for our students, including valuable opportunities to participate in

undergraduate research, international internships, leadership positions and scholarly pursuits that allow them to transition into agricultural careers and carry on our legacy.

We also reach nearly 179,000 local youth through 4-H activities, which offer strong STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programming, leadership development, and health and wellness education in addition to traditional 4-H elements, including livestock care and camping. Our 4-H leaders across the state work tirelessly to empower 4-H'ers to strive for excellence and to develop successful generations of citizens.

Our global engagement continues to grow and enrich our faculty and students as well as our research and academic programs.

In these pages you can learn more about our capital campaign priorities and our plans to build a strong future for Louisiana through innovative agricultural solutions. With a faculty driven by passion, a student body ready to transform agriculture in the South and beyond, strong industry partnerships and the unwavering support of our alumni and donors like you, we are ready for the 9 billion.

---

To donate to the LSU College of Agriculture and LSU AgCenter, contact:



**Lindsey Fussell**  
Senior Director  
of Development  
lfussell@agcenter.  
lsu.edu  
225-578-7323



**Lindsey Kelly**  
Director of Alumni  
Relations and Career  
Development  
lkelly@lsu.edu  
225-578-4489



**Katherine D'Aquila**  
Director of Development  
kdaquila@agcenter.  
lsu.edu  
225-578-6270



**Andy Schade**  
Director of Development  
aschade@agcenter.  
lsu.edu  
225-578-5162



**Patrick Tuck**  
Executive Director  
Louisiana 4-H  
Foundation  
ptuck@agcenter.lsu.edu  
225-578-1172





Taylor Foundation Grant



Alumni Crawfish Boil



LSU Giving Day



Spring Break in Cuba



## cover story

The LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture capital campaign goal is to raise \$32 million for priority areas that support innovative agricultural technology, fund scholarships and graduate assistantships, and advance food innovation. To learn about how drone imagery (background) advances the use of data in agriculture and more, see **Pages 22-26**.

## donors

- 6 Martin Haymon Gift
- 7 NAADA Sponsors
- 8 Taylor Foundation Grant
- 9 Rice Board Funds Chair
- 10 Hardwick Internship Award
- 11 Sugar Endowment Created
- 12 Dautzats Support College
- 12 Cocktails and Cuisine
- 13 Kimberly Parker Wolverton Honored
- 13 Sugar Scholarship Created
- 14 Bash on the Bayou
- 14 Alumni Crawfish Boil
- 15 Burden Gardens Accepts Gift
- 16 Richard Sivicek Reminisces
- 16 LSU Giving Day
- 17 4-H Summer Camp
- 27 Dean's Council Call to Action
- 27 Planned Giving

## faculty

- 28 Chairs & Professorships
- 30 Annual Conference Awards
- 32 Eubanks in Hall of Fame
- 33 Kirk-Ballard Gets It Growing

## global

- 34 Spring Break Abroad
- 36 Les Voyageurs
- 38 Zamorano Agricultural Society
- 39 Rivera Coffee

## alumni

- 40 Alumni Profiles
- 42 Perron St. Paul Designs Career

## students

- 18 Internships
- 20 Students, Advisor Recognized
- 21 LSU College of Agriculture Student Association Officers
- 21 Stakeholder Survey
- 21 Tiger to Tiger Program

## 4-H

- 43 Livestock Show Sponsors

18

## Student Internships



# Team mentality leads to planned gift benefiting multiple LSU colleges, campuses

By Tobie Blanchard

Coaches always say teams — not individual players — win championships.

Martin Haymon is taking that perennial advice to create what he calls a team approach with his donation to LSU.

The 1971 liberal arts alumnus has created a planned gift that offers wide-ranging support for the university.

Haymon has endowed scholarships within several colleges, including the College of Agriculture, at the LSU flagship campus as well as at regional campuses.

"I wanted to include multiple units and campuses to provide opportunities in different areas and help students from different backgrounds," Haymon said.

Haymon's gift is a celebration of education at LSU and an effort to improve Louisiana, and he hopes it will motivate others.



*Derryl and Helen Gold Haymon*

"I am just one player on a much bigger team, but I hope I can inspire others to also do their part because it is the total sum of many donors that can achieve real results," he said.

The gift also reflects Haymon's belief that a more educated populace can lower crime rates and improve the health and well-being of Louisiana citizens.

Haymon's parents, Derryl and Helen Gold Haymon, instilled in him a passion for LSU and a philanthropic spirit. The Haymons were avid supporters of LSU, endowing scholarships and professorships and giving generously to the LSU Alumni Association.

His father was inducted into the LSU Alumni Hall of Distinction, and his parents received the prestigious

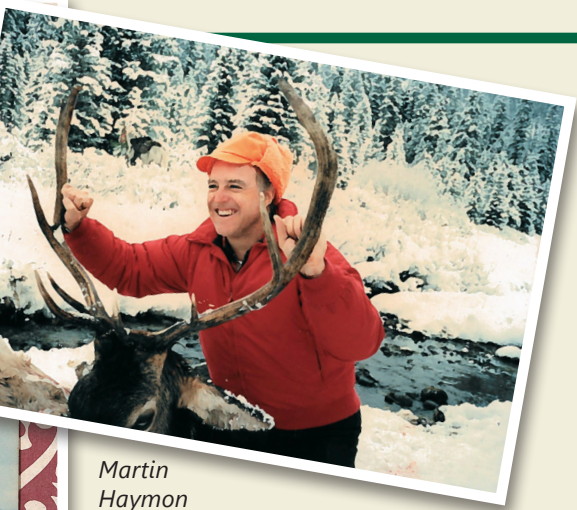
Purple and Gold Award from the LSU Alumni Association and the President's Award for recognition of support for understanding the needs of education at LSU.

It was his parents that convinced the Baton Rouge native to stay local and attend LSU.

"No way am I expecting to ever equal the greatness of what my parents did for LSU. They were the standard by which all of us children tried to follow," he said. "This has been building from them into me, but I didn't have the capability to do it until now."

Upon graduation, Haymon joined the company his father started, ►





Martin  
Haymon

Petroleum Service Corporation, or PSC, where he worked with his brothers. "It was a true family business," he said.

The business expanded over the years, and the Haymons sold it in 2004. Haymon retired after 20 years at PSC and began investing, which he still does today.

Haymon said he was now at a place where he was capable of making the donation he did. The planned gift solidifies his wishes to have LSU in his will.

"One does not know how long one will live, so I am planning for the future," he said. "I entrust the LSU foundation that they will make good decisions with it."

The donation includes an endowed scholarship in agriculture.

Haymon said he recognizes the challenge to produce enough food safely and the need to be innovative and improve ag techniques such as reducing chemical runoff while maintaining production.

"We need to have people who can address these issues," Haymon said, adding that the scholarship can help a student interested in pursuing agriculture who may need assistance along the way.

Haymon's planned gift is also helping the colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences, Engineering, Science and Business; the LSU campuses at Eunice and Alexandria; and the LSU Health Sciences Centers in New Orleans and Shreveport.

"It never dawned on me to help just one college or campus," he said. ■

## NAADA SPONSORS

The LSU College of Agriculture and the LSU AgCenter hosted the 2019 National Agricultural Alumni Development Association Conference in Baton Rouge in June, welcoming development and alumni directors, recruiters and communicators from land-grant universities across the country. A special thanks to the sponsors who made the conference possible:

### Gold

LSU AgCenter  
Liz and Dave Means  
Zen-Noh Grain Corporation

### Silver

Auburn University College  
of Agriculture  
BASF  
Louisiana Farm Bureau  
Globalstar  
LSU College of Agriculture  
LSU Foundation  
Louisiana Beef Industry Council  
North Carolina State University  
College of Agriculture and Life  
Sciences  
The Ohio State University  
McIlhenny Co. Tabasco Brand  
Pepper Sauce  
United States Department  
of Agriculture  
Virginia Tech College  
of Agriculture and Life Sciences

### Bronze

Agriculture Future of America  
Angus Foundation  
Clemson College of Agriculture,  
Forestry and Life Sciences  
Dr. Luke Laborde

Explorations by Thor  
- Custom Agricultural Tours  
Iowa State University College  
of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Louisiana Forestry Association  
Louisiana 4-H Foundation  
LSU College of Agriculture Alumni  
Association  
Michigan State University College  
of Agriculture and Natural  
Resources  
Montana State University  
College of Agriculture  
Penn State Ag Alumni Society  
Purdue Agriculture  
Purdue Research Foundation  
University of Arkansas Dale  
Bumpers College of Agricultural,  
Food and Life Sciences  
University of Florida College  
of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
University of Idaho College  
of Agricultural and Life Sciences  
University of Kentucky College  
of Agriculture, Food and  
Environment Alumni  
Association  
University of Minnesota College  
of Food, Agricultural and  
Natural Resources Sciences  
Alumni Society  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
College of Agricultural Sciences  
and Natural Resources



## Taylor Foundation awards \$1.4 million to AgCenter

PHOTOS BY OLIVIA MCCLURE/LSU AGCENTER

*The Taylor Foundation grant awarded \$1.4 million to the LSU AgCenter. The grant will fund a project aimed at reducing nutrient runoff from crop fields.*

By Olivia McClure

**T**he Patrick F. Taylor Foundation has awarded a \$1.4 million grant to the LSU AgCenter to fund a four-year research project on reducing nutrient runoff from crop fields.

"The issues that are to be addressed during this project are varied and complex," said Mrs. Phyllis Taylor, chairperson and president of the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation. "While there has been some work done in this arena, there is much more required. We hope to advance effective solutions that benefit the farming industry and produce a positive result of a substantial, if not complete, elimination of the nutrient runoff. The team that has been engaged for this project is well qualified to do the work, and we wish them every success."

"The Taylor Foundation funding provides critical on-site research and demonstration for applied and sustainable agricultural production," said LSU Vice President for Agriculture Bill Richardson. "It also funds graduate students, propagating the next generation of agricultural scientists and communicators."

AgCenter soil scientists Lisa Fultz and Brenda Tubaña are studying



*Mrs. Phyllis Taylor, chairperson and president of the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, says funds going toward AgCenter projects are vital to advancing the agricultural industry.*

practices farmers can implement to decrease the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural inputs needed to grow a successful crop. The goal is to reduce nutrient runoff that contributes to hypoxia, or inadequate oxygen, in the Gulf of Mexico.

As part of the project, the scientists will work with Keith Dugas Farm Inc., a sugarcane farm in Paincourtville, and Hardwick Planting Co., a farm in Newellton that grows corn, cotton, grain sorghum, soybeans and wheat.

They will test and demonstrate efficient nutrient management techniques.

Several partner agencies will help disseminate information on the scientists' findings. Those organizations include the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts, American Sugar Cane League, and Louisiana Soybean and Grain Research and Promotion Board.



# Louisiana rice industry gives \$1.5 million to fund LSU AgCenter research, research chair



By Bruce Schultz

**T**he Louisiana Rice Research Board has given \$1.5 million to fund an academic chair dedicated for rice research in the LSU AgCenter.

The presentation of \$1 million was made on Jan. 9 at the annual joint meeting of the Louisiana Rice Council and the Louisiana Rice Growers Association.

The board provided an additional \$500,000 earmarked for research during the annual LSU AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station field day in June.

Don Groth, AgCenter plant pathologist and resident coordinator of the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research

Station, is the first recipient of the chair, and the money will be used to pay for research.

"It took years of hard work by a lot of people to get this established," Groth said.

Research money on all levels is decreasing, Groth said, and funds for the chair will be a significant boost to research at the rice research station.

The money is coming from funds obtained through the Colombian Free Trade Agreement. Interest from the funds is dedicated solely for research purposes.

Board chairman Richard Fontenot said planning for the chair began in 2015.

"The research that has come out of the LSU AgCenter over the years has certainly helped the Louisiana rice industry, but it has also supported and fed the world," Fontenot said. "This endowment has been in the works for a long time, and now that it is official, I feel good knowing the rice industry will continue to benefit from world-class research that will come out of LSU thanks to this strengthened research program."

Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter associate vice president, said the chair will provide a reliable funding source for research.

"This perpetual funding source will help make sure that the LSU AgCenter's world-class rice research will continue uninterrupted," he said.



*The Louisiana Rice Research Board presents a \$1 million check to fund an academic chair for rice research in the LSU AgCenter. From left are Dane Hebert, vice chairman; Brian Wild, former member; Mike Strain, commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and LRRB ex officio member; Donald Berken, former member; Damian Bollich, member; Ronald Sonnier, former member; Mike Fruge, former member; Alan Lawson, member; Jeffrey Sylvester, member; Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture; Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter associate vice president; Fred Zaunbrecher, former member; Jackie Loewer, former chairman; Clarence Berken, former vice chairman; John Denison, former chairman; Richard Fontenot, chairman; John Denison Jr., secretary-treasurer; and Steve Linscombe, former director of the LSU AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station.*

PHOTO BY BRUCE SCHULTZ/LSU AGCENTER





## Internship award follows long collaboration between Hardwick family, LSU AgCenter

PHOTO BY KAROL OSBOURNE

*Mead Hardwick, his son Caleb, Mary, Marshall and Jay Hardwick at their farm in Tensas Parish.*

*By Tobie Blanchard*

**A**fter 40 years in farming, Jay Hardwick still finds himself overwhelmed by the information and support land-grant universities offer to farmers.

Hardwick, who has a Ph.D. in art and education administration, doesn't have a background in agriculture. Yet, he has successfully run the Hardwick Planting Company in Tensas Parish with help from the research and extension programs of the LSU AgCenter, he said.

"When I started, I was shocked by how much free information was out there," Hardwick said. "I didn't have to get an agricultural degree because so much information was available through the land-grant system."

He is giving back to the system that helped him throughout his career by creating the Hardwick Family Internship Award, which will support students who work at any of the LSU AgCenter research stations in northeast Louisiana by helping them with their school expenses.

Hardwick farms with his wife, Mary, and his sons, Mead and Marshall, on

Mary's family land. Over the years, the Hardwicks have worked closely with AgCenter scientists and specialists — especially ones at the AgCenter's Northeast Research Station, which is near his farm.

"They invite you on to the station to see research, and we've participated in on-farm demonstrations," he said.

Hardwick said decisions made on his farm have been guided by research that is nearly in his backyard.

"Ag is always changing from advances on hybrids, to the chemistry we use for dealing with pests, or the purchase of new equipment, which is an extraordinary cost, so having this great resource for information is so valuable," he said.

The partnership between the Hardwicks and the AgCenter earned them the Southern Cotton Ginners Association Ag Achievement Award in 2018. The award recognizes farm families working with land-grant universities.

The family has taken a progressive approach to farming their land and to conservation. They use innovative tools to precisely apply only the necessary amounts of seed and fertilizer to their fields of row crops. Their property

includes cropland and timber that is part of the Louisiana Black Bear Management Plan.

The Hardwicks also are working with the AgCenter on an ambitious four-year research project funded by the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation that aims to reduce nutrient runoff from crop fields.

The Hardwick Family Internship Award is a new phase in the long partnership. Hardwick said it's about investing in the rural landscape and the future of agriculture and perhaps inspiring a young person to seek a career in agriculture.

"It's not easy to articulate what it is about agriculture. There is a magic to farming as you watch it unfold," he said.

Hardwick said he also is challenging other farmers who benefit from the mission of the land-grant system to give back.

"I've seen the returns and how it shaped me as a producer," he said. "I'm hoping other farmers can see what the LSU AgCenter has done for us because without their research many of us wouldn't be producers."





*A donation from Savoie Industries will enhance research at the LSU AgCenter Sugarcane Research Station.*

# Endowment created for sugar research internship

*By Tobie Blanchard*

Savoie Industries LLC has created an endowment to support an LSU College of Agriculture intern at the LSU AgCenter Sugar Research Station.

Mike Daigle, CEO of Savoie Industries, said his family wanted to support the future of the sugar industry with its donation.

"The lifeblood of the sugar industry is research. Without research we would not be here today," Daigle said.

Savoie Industries is a family-owned land-holding company based in Assumption Parish that has ties to the sugarcane industry dating back generations.

Daigle said the company's board of directors decided to support an intern after discussing ways they could give back. They felt funding an intern could benefit researchers at the station who

need more help, promote the sugar industry to students and secure the industry's future.

Kenneth Gravois, LSU AgCenter sugarcane specialist who conducts research at the station, said the Savoie family has had a long and successful history in the Louisiana sugar industry.

"They appreciate the role that new sugarcane varieties have in sustaining the industry," Gravois said. "Their endowment will support research associates and others in the development of improved varieties in the Louisiana sugarcane breeding program."

The Savoie Industries board of directors includes chairman Don Savoie, Rufus Savoie, Chuck Savoie, Danny Savoie, Tommy Savoie, Will Daigle, CJ Daigle, Tom Cancienne, Ed Cancienne and Daniel Mattingly.



# THE DAUZATS GIVE BACK

**‘Without LSU and the College of Agriculture, I don’t know where I would be’**

By Tobie Blanchard

Ruben and Laura Dauzat want young people to follow their path into agriculture — and to the LSU College of Agriculture.

Both third-generation farmers and longtime supporters of the college, they have endowed the Laura and Ruben Dauzat Scholarship in Agriculture.

“It’s an honor for Laura and me to be able to do this,” Ruben Dauzat said. “We’ve been blessed, and we want to share our blessing.”

The Dauzats both graduated from the college. Ruben received a bachelor’s in agriculture mechanization and a master’s in agricultural economics, and Laura earned her bachelor’s degree in home economics. They pair met in college even though their hometowns were just 20 miles apart in Avoyelles Parish, where they reside now and grow row crops and keep cattle on their 1,200-acre Wayside Farms near Simmesport.

Their involvement with the LSU College of Agriculture and the LSU AgCenter didn’t end with their degrees. Ruben said they kept learning



*The Dauzat family includes Tommy, Jennifer Lovelace, Ruben, Laura and Julie Grunewald.*

through involvement in the AgCenter Agriculture Leadership Program and Master Farmer Program.

He said these programs have helped them become better stewards of their land and advocates for agriculture. He employs conservation methods on their farm and was recognized for his work by being named the Outstanding Master Farmer of the Year for 2014 and being inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction in 2016.

The Dauzats raised three children on the farm, and all attended LSU.

“Laura and I felt obligated to give back, and what better way than to reach a young person who may not be able to pursue their ambitions without it,” Dauzat said.

They also hoped the scholarship would encourage young people to go into agriculture and even stay in Louisiana.

“The College of Agriculture prepared me for my career in agriculture, and it stayed with me,” he said. “Without LSU and the College of Agriculture I don’t know where I would be.”



## Cocktails and Cuisine

*The LSU College of Agriculture held its fifth annual Cocktails and Cuisine event at the Andonie Sports Museum in October of 2018. The museum, located at the Lod Cook Alumni Center on the LSU campus, is full of artifacts and memorabilia. Guests enjoyed musical entertainment from Continuum Music as well as a silent auction benefiting scholarships for the College of Agriculture.*

*More than 90 people attended the fundraiser, including Dave and Liz Means, at left, and more than \$10,000 was raised for scholarships. Thank you to the event sponsors:*

*Ag Leader: Zen-Noh Grain Corporation; Ag Ambassador: Louisiana Agriculture Finance Authority; Ag Supporter: Mr. and Mrs. Dave Means; Ag Patron: Louisiana Land Bank, Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association, Visit Baton Rouge, Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts, Falcon Rice Mill, Lamb Weston, Dr. and Mrs. Rogers Leonard.*



# Alumnus creates scholarship to honor late sister

By Tobie Blanchard

J. Wheeler Parker III is honoring his late sister with a scholarship in the LSU College of Agriculture.

The Kimberly Parker Wolverton Endowed Scholarship honors the memory of Wolverton, who died in a car wreck in May 1999 at the age of 34.

"Kimberly was the type of person that when she walked into a room, everybody's mood got better," Parker said.



Wolverton

He had been thinking of some way to remember her for a few years. Both attended LSU.

"She loved LSU, and I loved her," Parker said.

Parker graduated from LSU with a degree in agricultural business in 1982. His sister majored in journalism, receiving her degree in 1986. Their father, who died in 2011, graduated from LSU in forestry.

Parker said the scholarship means a lot to his mother but would have embarrassed his sister, whom he described as never needing recognition.

Parker said his sister endured some hardships in life. She suffered from arthritis but never complained, he said. Also, her high school boyfriend was shot and killed while trying to stop a robbery.

"She kept a stiff upper lip about it," he said. "She was really a strong person."

Their mother, Katherine "Kit" Parker, described her daughter as having a big personality.

"Everyone loved her and flocked to her," she said.

Wheeler Parker said Wolverton was active in the Make-A-Wish Foundation and loved working with children. She was a favorite aunt to her many nephews.

Wolverton didn't have any children. She died just a few months after marrying Gary Wolverton in January 1999.

Parker, a wealth management advisor for Merrill Lynch, lives in Ridgeland, Mississippi. His three children all attended LSU as out-of-state students, as did he and his sister. They grew up in Natchez.

The scholarship will benefit out-of-state students in the College of Agriculture.

"I hope it can help attract out-of-state students and offer financial incentive for them to come to LSU," he said.

## Louisiana Sugar Refining LLC establishes scholarship

By Tobie Blanchard

The sugarcane industry has been an integral part of Louisiana for more than 200 years.

And the leaders behind Louisiana Sugar Refining LLC want to ensure the next generation knows how important sugarcane production remains.

The Gramercy-based company is establishing a scholarship in the LSU College of Agriculture to help educate the next wave of potential employees for LSR, said general manager and CEO Larry Fauchaux.

"This will allow young people to go to LSU and study agriculture, and it can benefit our industry down the line," Fauchaux said.

The scholarship is aimed at students studying plant and soil systems or agricultural business.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LSR

*The Louisiana Sugar Refining facility is based in Gramercy, Louisiana. LSR has established a scholarship in the LSU College of Agriculture.*

LSR is a joint venture between Cargill and Louisiana Sugar Growers and Refiners Inc. Fauchaux, a third-generation employee at the site, said

it serves many farmers whose families have been growing sugarcane for several generations.

Fauchaux described LSR as a blend of old and new — a state-of-the-art facility on property that has been refining sugarcane for more than 100 years.

The scholarship is part of the commitment LSR has to the Louisiana sugarcane industry, a valuable sector of the state's economy. In 2017, sugarcane production in Louisiana was worth \$1 billion, according to the LSU AgCenter Ag Summary.

Fauchaux said he hopes the scholarship will serve as an incentive for students to seek careers in agriculture.

"At LSR we see a need to help young people interested in agriculture," he said.



## Bash on the Bayou

The LSU College of Agriculture, LSU Agriculture Alumni Association and Louisiana FFA partnered for Bash on the Bayou, a tailgate event, before the LSU versus Northwestern State University football game on Sept. 14, 2019. Guests were treated to an afternoon on campus with delicious Louisiana tailgate food, interactive booths, tours and the ag olympics. The event, held at the 4-H Mini Farm and Parker Coliseum, raised money for College of Agriculture scholarships and gave high school FFA students a taste of campus.



*Dale Hall, a 1979 alumnus, was named the LSU 2019 Alumnus of the Year. The former chief executive officer of Ducks Unlimited spent time at the crawfish boil with his wife, Sarah.*



*Brooke Comeaux is an LSU College of Agriculture Les Voyageurs member studying animal sciences and agricultural extension and education.*



*Julie Richard, LSU College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumni of the Year for 2019, and two of her children enjoy crawfish she and her husband, Christian, raised and supplied for the event.*



*Luke Laborde, LSU College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumni of the Year for 2019, and his mother, Peggy Laborde, LSU College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumni of the Year for 2006 and the first LSU College of Agriculture female graduate in agronomy, attended.*

## Alumni Crawfish Boil and Tailgate

The crawfish were big and plentiful at the LSU Agriculture Alumni Association and Friends crawfish boil and tailgate before the LSU versus Texas A&M baseball game on April 6, 2019.





PHOTO BY JOHNNY MORGAN/LSU AGCENTER

*The LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden accepts a \$25,000 donation from Nutrien Ag Solutions to help build the new Welcome Center. Pictured are, from left, Lindsey Fussell, LSU AgCenter senior director of development; Misty Bonfanti and Garry Hiebert of Nutrien human resources; Jeff Kuehny, resident director at Burden; and Katherine D'Aquila, LSU AgCenter director of development.*

*By Tobie Blanchard and Johnny Morgan*

In the heart of Baton Rouge, right off the hustle and bustle of Interstate 10, sits the lush and peaceful Burden Museum and Gardens — a beautiful oasis in the middle of the city.

Plans for the property include a new Welcome Center that will serve as a gateway to the entire 440 acres and a way to unify the property's three attractions, the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, LSU Rural Life Museum and Windrush Gardens. The center will increase visibility and accessibility for visitors and make way for an expansion of the property's successful programming, lifelong learning opportunities and nature spaces in the heart of Baton Rouge.

The LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden recently received two donations to enhance the Welcome Center. The Mosaic Company donated \$50,000 to support the Mosaic Rose Garden Overlook outside of the welcome center. Nutrien Ag Solutions gave \$25,000 for the center.

Jeff Kuehny, resident director of the AgCenter Botanic Gardens, said the companies' support will help provide educational opportunities for the public to learn about agriculture and its importance to the Louisiana economy.

"This Welcome Center will make a very positive impact on the property, the visitor experience and the community," Kuehny said. "The Welcome Center is the starting point for visitors to learn about all that the property offers, the history of the property and the Burden family, so that they can get the most out of their experience here."

Jackie McCreary, public affairs manager for Mosaic's Louisiana operations, said The Mosaic Company is proud to partner with the LSU AgCenter for this project.

"We are happy to support what will be a diverse green space used for youth education and treasured by our community for years to come," McCreary said.

Mosaic, a producer of phosphate and potash fertilizers with two facilities in St. James Parish, also funded the Mosaic Boardwalk at Black Swamp at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden, which plays a key role in wetlands education. The company also supports St. James Parish 4-H and other agriculture-related projects.

Nutrien has Louisiana operations in Geismar and also produces potash and phosphate as well as products for agricultural, industrial and feed customers worldwide.

"We invest in community initiatives and partnerships that enhance the quality of life in the regions where we operate and that reflect the goals and values of our company," said Misty Bonfanti, Nutrien human resources senior advisor.

Nutrien focuses its investment in four areas: food solutions, community building, health and safety, and education. The company also sponsors the Corn Maze at Burden and has been a donor to the annual AgCenter livestock show at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales.



# A life on the force but memories of the forest

By Tobie Blanchard

The smell in the air, the lush greenery and the blooming azaleas at LSU cast a spell on Richard Sivicek. He first came to the campus in the mid-1960s from Chicago to take a placement exam.

He was interested in forestry, and a friend convinced him to go south for his degree. A nice LSU brochure that came in the mail urged him toward Louisiana. One visit to campus sealed the deal.

It's a decision he doesn't regret.

"It was without a doubt the best four years of my life," Sivicek said.

Sivicek graduated from the LSU College of Agriculture in 1969 with a degree in forestry. While his career went in a different direction, he still considers forestry his passion and is giving back to the school that he said gave him so much.

"I want to be able to help students and live vicariously through them," he said.

Sivicek has endowed the Richard P. Sivicek Undergraduate Scholarship and the Richard P. Sivicek Graduate Scholarship in the College of Agriculture School of Renewable Natural Resources.

The undergraduate scholarship will be awarded primarily based on the degree of financial need, with preferential consideration to students concentrating in fisheries and aquaculture or wetland science.

Recipients of the graduate scholarship must be full-time graduate students enrolled in the college who are studying fisheries and aquaculture in the school and have a minimum grade point average of 3.0. Preferential consideration will be given to students pursuing a master's degree, and financial need shall be a consideration in selecting recipients.

Sivicek said he wanted to go for a master's degree in fisheries, but, "life got in the way."



Sivicek

With an active military draft at that time, he signed up for the army reserves following graduation.

His active duty orders kept getting delayed

which pushed back his opportunity for additional schooling.

In that time he got married and took a job at a Georgia Pacific particleboard facility in Taylorsville, Mississippi. He only stayed for a few months before returning to Chicago to work in construction.

"My greatest regret was not sliding over to Louisiana when I was in Mississippi and staying there," he said.

The construction business had its ups and downs, and after a few years, Sivicek left that job to join the police department in Oaklawn, a suburb of Chicago, where he worked for 22 years before retirement.

He resides in the Champaign-Urbana area in Illinois. He said he still thinks fondly about his days at LSU. By endowing the scholarships he felt like he was repaying a debt.

"I made a bunch of friends. They called me Yank and adopted me," he said. "One told me, 'Rich, you are a good old boy,' and I was on top of the world. I knew I fit in."

Sivicek hasn't been back to LSU since graduating. He said he has looked at Google images of the campus and seen how it has changed and expanded.

"I like remembering it the way it was," he said, "but I do want to go back one day, if it's the last thing I do."



## FIERCE MAKES HISTORY

On April 30, 2019, more than 2,700 alumni, fans, family members, students, faculty and staff participated in the first LSU Giving Day, which raised \$845,000 for the university.

Giving stations were set up around campus, and alumni from around the world could donate online. A sea of various shades of purple, gold and white flags were planted on the grounds near the LSU Foundation building. The different colors represented a category of donor, such as alumni or student.

The LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture raised more than \$10,000 on Giving Day, which helped fund scholarships, research, experiential education, 4-H and more.





# New Orleans Saints, Pelicans fund 4-H camp scholarships

By Olivia McClure

One child from each of Louisiana's 64 parishes will get to go to 4-H summer camp for free thanks to a new scholarship program funded by a \$57,600 donation from the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans sports teams.

The donation will support 256 scholarships over four years. One scholarship will be given per parish per year. The first round of awards was for the 2019 camp season.

"The New Orleans Saints and Pelicans are pleased to be able to grant students around Louisiana the opportunity to attend 4-H camps," said New Orleans Saints and Pelicans President Dennis Lauscha. "We are committed to developing our youth and know that these scholarships will help students achieve their educational, leadership and extracurricular goals. We wish students the very best when applying for these scholarships and can't wait to see the positive impact this opportunity makes around our state."

In 2018, more than 4,500 children in fourth through sixth grades went to 4-H camp at the Grant Walker Education Center in Pollock. Nine weeklong camp sessions are offered between May and July of each year.

Campers are placed in one of several educational tracks that provide lessons and activities on topics such as engineering, outdoor safety and fitness. They also have plenty of time for swimming, crafts, games and dances.

The LSU AgCenter administers 4-H programs in Louisiana, including camps.

"Through the support of the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans, Louisiana 4-H will be able to not only extend



the opportunity of summer camp to a young person, but also instill an opportunity to gain valuable life skills that are learned through 4-H camping experiences," said Toby Lepley, AgCenter associate vice president for 4-H and youth development. "These camping scholarships demonstrate the Saints' and Pelicans' belief in the youth of Louisiana and our state's future leaders."

"Louisiana 4-H'ers have been experiencing the outdoors in meaningful ways for over 90 years at Camp Grant Walker," said Patrick Tuck, executive director of the Louisiana 4-H Foundation. "Thanks to the Saints and Pelicans, even more of our youth can



live these invaluable life experiences for years to come. We are ecstatic about the new opportunities that their generous gift will bring to our youth."

4-H membership is required to attend camp and to receive the scholarships. Information on how to apply is available from parish AgCenter offices.





Alumna Paula LaFargue owns her own clothing line, The Maybe Collection. She hired Kayla Sherman to work with her this summer.

## Internships offer a peek at career possibilities

Armed with his phone and a good eye, Preston Dumont walked the fields of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden capturing photos of the many plants and flowers on the grounds.

A senior studying plant and soil systems at the LSU College of Agriculture, Dumont spent his summer as an EXPLORE intern helping run the Botanic Gardens Instagram page, which is full of stunning photos of flowers.

Dumont now has a different outlook toward online marketing and has the skills to perfect his own personal brand.

"It was really a great experience," said Dumont, who also built a sweet potato demonstration plot at the Botanic Gardens. "I definitely honed my photography skills, and I have a whole new appreciation for social media now. One of my favorite parts of my job was to share what I thought was beautiful about the AgCenter Botanic Gardens with the world."

Undergraduate students from LSU, Baton Rouge Community College, Southern University and LSU Shreveport participated in the Project EXPLORE internships, which are funded through a grant with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Each summer Project EXPLORE selects students interested in agriculture-related fields and for 10 weeks partners them with a trained mentor to experience specialized training, lab work and industry shadowing.

Students reconvened the first week of August to reflect on their learning environments and share the knowledge they've inherited.

Many students participate in individual internships they find themselves. Textiles, apparel and

merchandising major Katherine Brunet experienced the summer of a lifetime in New York City working at Maison de Papillon. There she collaborated with a specialized team to design the company's spring/summer 2020 collection.

"It was incredible living and working in New York. I wanted to have an internship experience out of Louisiana to get out of my comfort zone," Brunet said. "Experiencing so many new things gave me a lot of inspiration and new design ideas I would have never thought of. Working at a female-founded company, I am more inspired than ever to possibly start my own business."

LSU values a strong link between its students, faculty and alumni. Another textiles, apparel and merchandising major, Kayla Sherman, had the opportunity to shadow LSU alumna Paula LaFargue, owner and head designer of The Maybe Collection. Hoping to follow in her footsteps, Sherman plans on continuing her work with LaFargue throughout the fall semester, determined to perfect her craft even during the school year.

"Paula was willing to teach me anything I wanted to learn and showed me the insights of what it takes to run a small business. She even allowed me to give some creative input for her fall/winter line," Sherman said. "I aspire to have my own store consisting of clothing made with natural fibers and produced in America, specializing in helping women find their perfect fit."

*Brianna Cobb is a senior studying agricultural business and English. Cobb was an EXPLORE intern and worked in the LSU AgCenter and College of Agriculture Communications office where she wrote press releases, took photographs and worked on websites.*





**LEFT:** Katherine Brunet spent her summer in New York City working at Maison de Papillon, a luxury ready-to-wear clothing line. **RIGHT:** Preston Dumont created this Instagram post for LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden for July Fourth. Dumont was an EXPLORE intern at Burden.



### Mentoring Program

The LSU College of Agriculture Mentoring Program is starting its third year. The purpose of the Agriculture Mentoring program is to provide current students with networking opportunities to help develop professional career goals. Students meet with their mentors throughout the year on their own and at scheduled events on campus. Students also participate in professional development activities, such as job interview practice and networking opportunities.

Interested in being a mentor? Contact Lindsey Kelly, director of alumni relations and career development at lkelly@lsu.edu or 225-578-4489.

Students looking for internships can start their search in the College of Agriculture Dean's Office. Ashley Grant, manager of internships and student engagement, is helping connect students to internships and experiences that will prepare them for their careers. Contact her at agrant12@lsu.edu.





# Outstanding club and advisor recognized

The Agriculture Student Association recognized the College of Agriculture's Outstanding Student Club and Outstanding Club Advisor at the College of Agriculture awards and recognition ceremony April 5 at the Club at Union Square. Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related

Sciences (MANRRS) was chosen as Club of the Year. Marianna Morrison and Tylan Jolivet accepted the award for MANRRS. Don Ator, research associate in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness and advisor to the Agribusiness Club, was chosen as the Advisor of the Year.



**Left:** Don Ator (center), a research associate in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness and advisor to the Agribusiness Club, accepts the Advisor of the Year award with Colt Hardee, president of the Agribusiness Club, and Amanda Martin, assistant dean of the college. **Right:** Tylan Jolivet and Marianna Morrison, members of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), accept the College of Agriculture's Club of the Year award from Amanda Martin, assistant dean of the college.

## College of Agriculture Student Association names officers

The College of Agriculture Student Association strives to assist and connect College of Agriculture students and organizations and host personal, professional and academic development events.

### **Student, office and major**

- Noah Harper, President, Plant and Soil Systems
- Savannah Melch, Vice President, Animal Sciences
- Nick Uzee, Secretary, Animal Sciences
- Amy Burke, Treasurer, Natural Resource Ecology and Management
- Kaylee Boswell, Public Relations Chair, Agricultural Business



From left are Amy Burke, Savannah Melch, Noah Harper, Nick Uzee and Kaylee Boswell.



WE ARE **FIERCE FOR THE FUTURE**, AND WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN CONTINUE TO **LEAD THE CHARGE** TOWARD A **BETTER TOMORROW**.

The LSU College of Agriculture administered a **stakeholder survey** to serve as a foundation for the construction of the college's strategic plan. To help bring this vision to life, the college will host a Stakeholder Summit on March 13, 2020. This program will include time for stakeholders to meet with department heads, directors and deans about the results of the survey and plans for the college. Attendees will be invited to the Agriculture Alumni Lecture Series luncheon and a Farm-to-Table Dinner with the LSU Les Voyageurs. If you are interested, please register at the link below by December 1. A formal schedule will be available in January.

<http://bit.ly/lsuagsummit>

For more information, contact Amanda L. Martin, assistant dean, at [amartin2@lsu.edu](mailto:amartin2@lsu.edu).

**FIERCE FOR THE FUTURE**

**LSU**

College of Agriculture

**TIGER TO TIGER**

The LSU College of Agriculture partnered with 4-H in the LSU AgCenter Southwest Region for a program that paired high school students with LSU College of Agriculture students. Through the Tiger to Tiger program, juniors and seniors were mentored by members of the college's Les Voyageur team. Monthly interactions focused on professional development, resume writing, exploring opportunities at LSU, and the college and scholarship application process. This was the first year of the program, and 13 high school students participated. The 2019 program is underway with 26 participants.



*Shelby Thibodeaux, Dwight Johnson, Nathan Thompson, Heather Goss and Alex Meche were mentored by Allison Sommers and Tate Roussel.*

**LSU**  
College of Agriculture



# We have a **VISION** for tomorrow ...

**F**ierce roots run deep in the LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture. With a sharp focus on research, extension and teaching, we are finding solutions and making advancements that will benefit future generations.

In March of 2019, LSU launched the Fierce for the Future campaign that unites the LSU statewide campuses on raising philanthropic support to advance six pillars: arts and culture; the coast, energy and environment; research and economic development; health and well-being; education; and leadership.

The LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture are uniquely positioned to address challenges that face our state and deliver solutions that have an impact today and meet the needs of tomorrow. Research within our institutions supports agricultural industries, enhances the environment, and improves lives and economic well-being.

The LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture campaign goal is to raise \$32 million for priority areas that support innovative agricultural technology, fund scholarships and graduate assistantships, and advance the AgCenter's Institute for Food Innovation.

## Student success

In the College of Agriculture, the student experience transcends the classroom. Students are encouraged to seek undergraduate research projects, participate in internships and take advantage of international travel opportunities, and they receive support from faculty and staff. Through gifts to support student success, you will help us recruit and retain high-performing, talented, diverse students — the next generation to feed, clothe, and improve the health and well-being of a growing population.

Students with fewer concerns about finances can focus more on academics. Scholarships give students the opportunity to be the first in their families to attend college or participate in research, internships or study abroad programs without the strain and distraction of long hours spent working to earn living expenses.



*Thanos Gentimis, LSU AgCenter manager, is using big data to analyze rice plots.*



# ... one that shows what **FIERCE** can do

## Food innovation

Louisiana knows food — how to produce it, cook it, consume it and celebrate it. The LSU AgCenter and College of Agriculture are there every step of the way, from growing crops and creating food entrepreneurs to educating people about safe food handling at Louisiana festivals. Your support will help us continue and expand these efforts.

Budding entrepreneurs have found success through the LSU AgCenter Food Incubator, and our faculty and students have tested and developed new products through the AgCenter Sensory Services Center. Building upon these existing accomplishments, a new food innovation institute will expand the scope of food-related research.

## LSU AgCenter Food Incubator injecting success into businesses

By Olivia McClure

The LSU AgCenter Food Incubator posted another successful year in 2018, producing an all-time high of more than 100 tons of food.

The incubator, which launched in 2013, gives entrepreneurs access to cooking and packaging equipment as well as the support of AgCenter personnel with expertise in food science and marketing. The incubator also provides food companies services such as shelf-life studies, nutritional analyses and other types of testing.

The incubator began operations with 10 tenants; today, 22 companies use its facilities to make more than 100 products, including snack foods, baked goods, condiments, beverages and more. Six more businesses are in the onboarding process.

According to the incubator's annual report, tenants turned out about 102 tons of their products in 2018, a slight increase from 94.8 tons in 2017. Those figures include a nominal amount made by AgCenter faculty for research purposes.

"Total production in the facility in five and a half years has reached over 318 tons," said Gaye Sandoz,



PHOTO BY OLIVIA MCCLURE/LSU AGCENTER

Joseph Francis, left, a neuroscientist at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine, mixes ingredients for his Pranam Superfoods "antioxidant bars" while talking with AgCenter food scientist Marvin Moncada.

director of the incubator. "That is very impressive, and it shows how the incubator has helped companies grow and become sustainable."



## Agricultural technology

Leveraging global positioning systems and big data to make production decisions is the next advancement in agriculture. LSU faculty and students versed in data science are critical to the future of agriculture, and the agricultural industry is looking for employees with the ability to work with this emerging technology. Endowment funds for research, chairs, scholarships and professorships in agricultural technology research will keep us on the cutting edge, help producers incorporate new technology on their farms, and ensure our graduates have the knowledge and experience they need to succeed in their careers.

Feeding people sustainably and responsibly is one of the greatest challenges facing society. We can't do it without advances in crop technology. Since 2015, the Louisiana Center for Plant Biotechnology and Crop Development, a partnership among multiple state organizations, has been pioneering innovative and environmentally responsible solutions to 21st-century problems. Support for the center will help amplify its impact and allow the center to work toward meeting its goals of feeding the world.

## 'Big data' presents new opportunities, challenges in agriculture

*By Olivia McClure*

Every summer, scientists at agriculture research stations spend hours with clipboards in hand walking down row after row of plants, going about a tedious chore known as rating plots.

Often, the process involves assigning a numeric value to each small-scale plot where the scientist is growing crops for research. Those ratings are subjective, but they offer insight into how well a variety performs, whether an insecticide treatment is effective or if an extra application of fertilizer resulted in a better yield.

Thanos Gentimis hopes to accomplish the same task in a matter of minutes.

The LSU AgCenter mathematician recently "taught" a computer program to analyze an aerial photograph of a rice field and automatically distinguish the different plots. Now he is using data to formulate an algorithm directing the computer to rate the plots for vigor, a measure of plant growth.

In the age of "big data," such time-savers are becoming more common in agriculture.

Data-logging and GPS equipment are embedded on most modern farm machinery. Information on crop yields, soil types and seeding rates — and even visual data, such as drone imagery — can be gathered more easily and quickly than ever before.

Farmers, consultants, ag companies and research institutions alike are trying to figure out how to put it all to use.

"That's the real challenge," said Don La Bonte, director of the AgCenter School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences. Because agriculture is subject to numerous variables — from weather and location to an individual farmer's management decisions — it can generate huge datasets that are difficult to interpret and take up lots of computer storage space.

"We have tremendous capacity to collect data," La Bonte said. "And the data has tremendous value. But you need a way to look at it so that you can extract that information out so you can use it in a practical way."

A few online widgets are available to farmers who want to plug in their own data from a combine's yield monitor, for example, and get a report comparing their results to others in the area. Many farmers now fly drones and can quickly spot signs of diseases, insect damage or other problems with the pictures they capture.

But true "big data" — a term that refers to text and image files too vast to fit on one computer and be handled by one person — is driving change in today's agriculture, Gentimis said. Equipment companies, for example, are hiring more people to study information recorded by their products and use it to improve their offerings to customers.

That is just one aspect of the growing sector of agriculture jobs that require data-deciphering skills.

"There's everything from the companies that design and develop the instruments to agrochemical companies that are going to need these resources," La Bonte said. "We see there's going to be additional need for extension outreach for servicing grower needs in this area."

Recently, the LSU College of Agriculture introduced two graduate-level courses on data.

Gentimis, an assistant professor in the Department of Experimental Statistics, teaches a class on digital agriculture, focusing on using computer tools to store and understand data.





PHOTO PROVIDED BY THANOS GENTIMIS

*Thanos Gentimis, an assistant professor in the LSU AgCenter Department of Experimental Statistics, recently “taught” a computer program to analyze this aerial photograph of a rice field and automatically distinguish the different plots. Now he is using data to formulate an algorithm directing the computer to rate the plots for vigor, a measure of plant growth.*

The second course is on precision agriculture — using data to tailor farming practices to location-specific needs. It is taught by Luciano Shiratsuchi, an associate professor in the School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences.

For precision agriculture scientists like Shiratsuchi, the ability to collect more data means better recommendations can be made to farmers, saving them time and money. And it presents new opportunities for farmers to collaborate with researchers at the AgCenter.

Shiratsuchi offered a hypothetical scenario to illustrate his point.

With a computer program that pulls more than 2,000 points of data per acre from sensors and other equipment, a consultant could write a “prescription” of sorts for a farmer wanting to spend less on fertilizer, seeds and chemicals. The program could produce a map indicating where the farmer could hold off on inputs without losing yield instead of applying the same rate as the rest of the field.

“The idea is to teach students, how can we help the farmers in Louisiana?” Shiratsuchi said. “Give them back something — like if they harvest and I have their yield map, give them an official recommendation or direction on a problem.”

Gentimis said that with enough years of data, computer applications — like the one he used with the rice plot photo — can eventually “learn” to make suggestions and predictions of their own. While that will never replace the expertise of a seasoned agriculture professional, he said, it can give farmers and researchers a new layer of understanding of what’s going on in their fields.

“We are moving now to a new reality where data is going to be equally important as the types of seed that you put in your field,” Gentimis said.

## Alumnus Steven Ward tackles ‘big data’

By Tobie Blanchard

As farm tractors across the globe move through fields, small sensors about the size of a hockey puck gather hundreds of thousands of data points — soil moisture, engine torque, down-force planting pressure and the speed at which a farmer is driving the equipment.

This is agriculture in the digital age.

But what do farmers do with all this data? That is where Steven Ward comes in.

Ward, an alumnus of the LSU College of Agriculture, is a Bayer Scientific Fellow and senior director of geospatial sciences at The Climate Corporation based in San Francisco.

“Farmers look at the data, and they don’t always know how to interpret it. They know there is a story in there, but it isn’t always easy to decipher,” Ward said.

The Climate Corporation is helping farmers make sense of the data with its FieldView technology, which gives them the ability to make data-driven decisions on their farms to increase crop yields while reducing inputs, such as chemicals and water.

With population growing at an exponential rate and the declining availability of arable land, technology must make advances in agriculture, Ward said.

Farming has seen these advances before. Mechanization and biotechnology have revolutionized agricultural production in the past.

Data science is the new revolution, and Ward is at the forefront.

Ward was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, but raised in London, England. He returned to Louisiana to attend LSU, first receiving a bachelor’s degree in environmental management systems, then a



master's degree in agronomy and a doctorate in geography with a focus on spatial statistics.

He spent time with consulting firms in the environmental sector, doing everything from endangered species research to natural disaster response. Through these positions, he gained experience in computer sciences and geosciences, which enhanced his background in crop management.

"I was unknowingly building up a skill set that is sought after in digital agriculture," he said. Ward joined The Climate Corporation four years ago.

Ward has seen a shift in the jobs being advertised by big agricultural companies like Bayer, which acquired The Climate Corporation five years ago. He said they are now looking for as many data scientists and statisticians as more traditional agricultural scientists, such as plant breeders or crop production and management specialists.

Students interested in the field of digital agriculture need three core skills: expertise in an agriculture field such as plant pathology, entomology or soil sciences; an understanding of basic statistics or applied math; and the ability to write computer code.



PHOTO BY TOBIE BLANCHARD/LSU AGCENTER

*Steven Ward, second from left, is a Bayer Scientific Fellow and the senior director of geospatial sciences at The Climate Corporation, based in San Francisco. He is an alumnus of the LSU College of Agriculture and spoke to students during the College of Agriculture Alumni Speaker Series. Also pictured are students Kaylee Boswell, Elijah Hanzy III, Ansleigh Thibodeaux, Noah Harper and Katie Costanza.*

## Endowed chairs

The health and well-being of Louisiana's citizens is in jeopardy. With innovative research and outreach, we can survive in a food-obsessed culture and thrive at the same time. An endowed chair in nutrition and food science will allow the College of Agriculture to tackle the many health issues affecting Louisiana — and impacting people around the world — today. We can't do it alone, and this chair will help coordinate collaborations with researchers at the LSU Pennington Biomedical Research Center, across universities and in public-private partnerships.

There is more than enough food to feed the world, but many people remain food insecure. The safety of our food is also a top concern. Advances must be made to meet the nutritional demands of the world's growing population. An endowed chair in food safety and security will advance research toward the development of a sustainable system of global food security and focus on the complex relationships among environmental health, animal husbandry, agricultural production, land use, natural resource management and conservation. ■



# DEAN'S COUNCIL: A CULTURE OF GIVING

Since the **College of Agriculture Dean's Council** was created in 2012, generous Tigers who invest \$1,000 or more annually to the college have built a **culture of leadership**. Membership in the council makes a **significant impact** on our students and faculty. Throughout the LSU Fierce for the Future Campaign — the largest campaign for higher education in Louisiana's history — every Dean's Council member will have an instrumental role to play. Membership gifts support the Dean's Excellence Fund, which enables the college to direct **flexible support** where it will make the greatest impact. Powered by members' generosity and **partnerships**, the college will elevate student achievement through scholarship opportunities, accelerate crucial research initiatives and make **bold strides** in feeding the world sustainably and responsibly. Student and faculty success hinge on the **passion** of alumni and friends who give generously and demonstrate to others how impactful — and **meaningful** — this level of giving can be.



Call 225-578-7323  
or visit  
<http://bit.ly/agdeanscouncil>  
for more  
information.

## MEMBER

Alumni and friends who give an annual gift of \$1,000 or more to the Dean's Excellence Fund

## ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Alumni and friends under 40 years old who give an annual gift of \$500 to \$999 to the Dean's Excellence Fund

All Dean's Council members have access to special benefits, including invitations to the Dean's Council dinner and awards ceremony, recognition in our publications, and networking with fellow members and LSU leaders.

**Give at:**  
**[www.lsufoundation.org/agleaders](http://www.lsufoundation.org/agleaders)**

# Make Your Mark

## BEQUESTS

A gift made through your will using assets in your estate

## BENEFICIARY GIFTS

Designate LSU AgCenter or LSU College of Agriculture as the beneficiary of a qualified retirement plan or other accounts

## CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

A gift that provides you and others with a lifetime fixed income stream

## TRUSTS

Funded with assets that can provide funds for LSU AgCenter and LSU College of Agriculture and other beneficiaries



Whether you would like to see your gift to the LSU AgCenter or LSU College of Agriculture in action now or for future generations, there is a planned gift option available. We will work to find a charitable plan that is right for you.

Visit [lsufoundation.planmylegacy.org](http://lsufoundation.planmylegacy.org) or call 225-578-7323 to learn more.





## CHAIRS &amp; PRO

Chairs & Professorships	Type	Recipient
G.D. Cain Endowed Chair of Agriculture	Chair	Qinglin Wu
J.C. Floyd Endowed Professorship in Agriculture	Professorship	Michael Burnett
George William Barineau Jr. Professorship	Professorship	Michael Kaller
Martin D. Woodin Endowed Professorship in Agricultural Business	Professorship	Rex Caffey
Ola Cook Holmes Professorship in Horticulture	Professorship	Jeff Kuehny
Meryal Newsom Annison Professorship in Agriculture	Professorship	Phil Elzer
Mary Sandefur Tobin Professorship	Professorship	Vacant
Ann Armstrong Peltier Professorship in Dietetics	Professorship	Georgianna Tuuri
Dr. William H. Alexander Endowed Professorship	Professorship	J. Matthew Fannin
Ralph and Leila Boulware Professorship	Professorship	Vacant
Dr. D.L. Evans Professorship in Dairy Science	Professorship	Cathleen Williams
Daniel Ivy Dupree Endowed Professorship	Professorship	Kenneth Bondioli
Austin C. Thompson Distinguished Endowed Professorship in Entomology	Professorship	Tom Reagan
F.O. Bateman Distinguished Professorship	Professorship	William Kelso
Doris L. & Jules A. Carville Jr. Endowed Professorship of Human Ecology	Professorship	Chaunlan Liu
Dr. Alma Beth Clark Professorship in the School of Human Ecology	Professorship	Vacant
Adrienne Gravois Brazan Professorship in Human Ecology	Professorship	Vacant

Chairs & Professorships	Type	Recipient
L. D. Newsom Professorship in Integrated Pest Management	Professorship	Fangneng Huang
Roy A. & Karen Pickren Endowed Professorship in Extension Water Resources	Professorship	Brian LeBlanc
Tom and Martha Burch and Delta and Pine Land Co. Endowed Professorship in Cotton Production or Genetics	Professorship	Daniel Fromme
Jack E. and Henrietta Jones Professorship	Professorship	Brenda Tubaña
Floyd S. Edmiston, Sr. Professorship in Agriculture and Natural Resources Management	Professorship	Jeff Hoy
ASSCT-Denver T. Loupe Sugar Heritage Professorship	Professorship	Kenneth Gravois
Doyle Chambers Distinguished Professorship	Professorship	Vacant
R. Chabreck Professorship in Coastal Wildlife Research Management	Professorship	Vacant
Chalkley Family Endowed Chair in Agriculture	Chair	William B. Richardson
American Cyanamid Professorship for Excellence in Plant Biotechnology, Molecular Biology and Crop Pest Management	Professorship	James Oard
American Cyanamid Professorship for Excellence in Plant Genetics, Breeding and Variety Development	Professorship	Vacant
John B. Baker Professorship for Excellence in Weed Science	Professorship	Donnie Miller
Jack Hamilton Regents Chair in Cotton Production	Chair	Vacant
G & H Seed Co. Endowed Professorship	Professorship	Rogers Leonard



# F E S S O R S H I P S

## AgCenter (Cont.)

Chairs & Professorships	Type	Recipient
Warner L. Bruner Professorship in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness	Professorship	Kurt Guidry
Donald E. Welge Endowed Professorship	Professorship	Rex Caffey
J. Nelson Fairbanks Endowed Professorship in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness	Professorship	J. Matthew Fannin
Gilbert J. Durbin Endowed Professorship	Professorship	Krishna Paudel
A. George & Mildred G. Caldwell Endowed Professorship in Agronomy and Soils	Professorship	Magdi Selim
Walker T. Nolin Professorship	Professorship	Steve Harrison
Lucien and Peggy Laborde Endowed Professorship	Professorship	Don La Bonte
A. Wilbert's Sons Professorship in Agriculture and Natural Resources No. 1	Professorship	Michael Salassi
Mr. & Mrs. Herman E. McFatter Endowed Professorship in Animal Science	Professorship	Kenneth McMillin
Doyle Chambers Professorship in Animal Science	Professorship	Vacant
Gerald A. Simmons Professorship in Animal Sciences	Professorship	Vacant
H. Rouse Caffey Endowed Professorship	Professorship	Adam Famoso
Paul K. Adams Professorship in Urban Entomology	Professorship	Claudia Husseneder
Horace J. Davis Endowed Professorship in Food Science & Technology	Professorship	Witoon Prinyawiwatkul
Grace Drews Lehmann Professorship in Human Ecology	Professorship	Ioan Negulescu
Luella Dugas Chambers Distinguished Professorship	Professorship	Vacant
Crosby Land & Resources Company Professorship in Forest Sector Business Development No. 1	Professorship	Richard Vlosky
Weaver Brothers Endowed Professorship for Excellence in Forestry	Professorship	Sabrina Taylor
Roy O. Martin, Sr. Professorship in Composites and Engineered Woodproducts	Professorship	Qinglin Wu
Bryant A. Bateman Professorship in Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries	Professorship	Allen Rutherford
Crosby Land & Resources Company Professorship in Forest Sector Business Development No. 2	Professorship	Richard Vlosky
F. Avalon Daggett Professorship in Rice Research No. 1	Professorship	Herry Utomo
F. Avalon Daggett Professorship in Rice Research No. 2	Professorship	Eric Webster
F. Avalon Daggett Professorship in Rice Research No. 3	Professorship	Donald Groth
Mosaic Company Professorship	Professorship	Dustin Harrell
F. A. Eugene, Marcel and James Graugnard Professorship in Sugarcane Research at the Sugar Research Station	Professorship	Vacant
Andrew P. Gay Professorship	Professorship	Collins Kimbeng
Pennington Chair for Wildlife Research	Chair	Lane Foil
Meraux Foundation Supreme Champion Livestock Professorship	Professorship	Toby Lepley
A. Wilbert's Sons Professorship in Agriculture and Natural Resources No. 2	Professorship	Michael Salassi
Sterling C. Bain Professorship in Sugarcane Production	Professorship	Vacant





PHOTO BY OLIVIA MCCLURE/LSU AGCENTER

*Winners of the LSU AgCenter and College of A*

# LSU AgCenter recognizes outstanding faculty, staff at annual conference

*By Craig Gautreaux*

In late 2018, Charles Hebert, 4-H youth development agent from Lafayette Parish, was named the winner of the Floyd S. Edmiston Award, a prestigious accolade for the extension specialist who has worked to improve extension services and benefit the people of Louisiana.

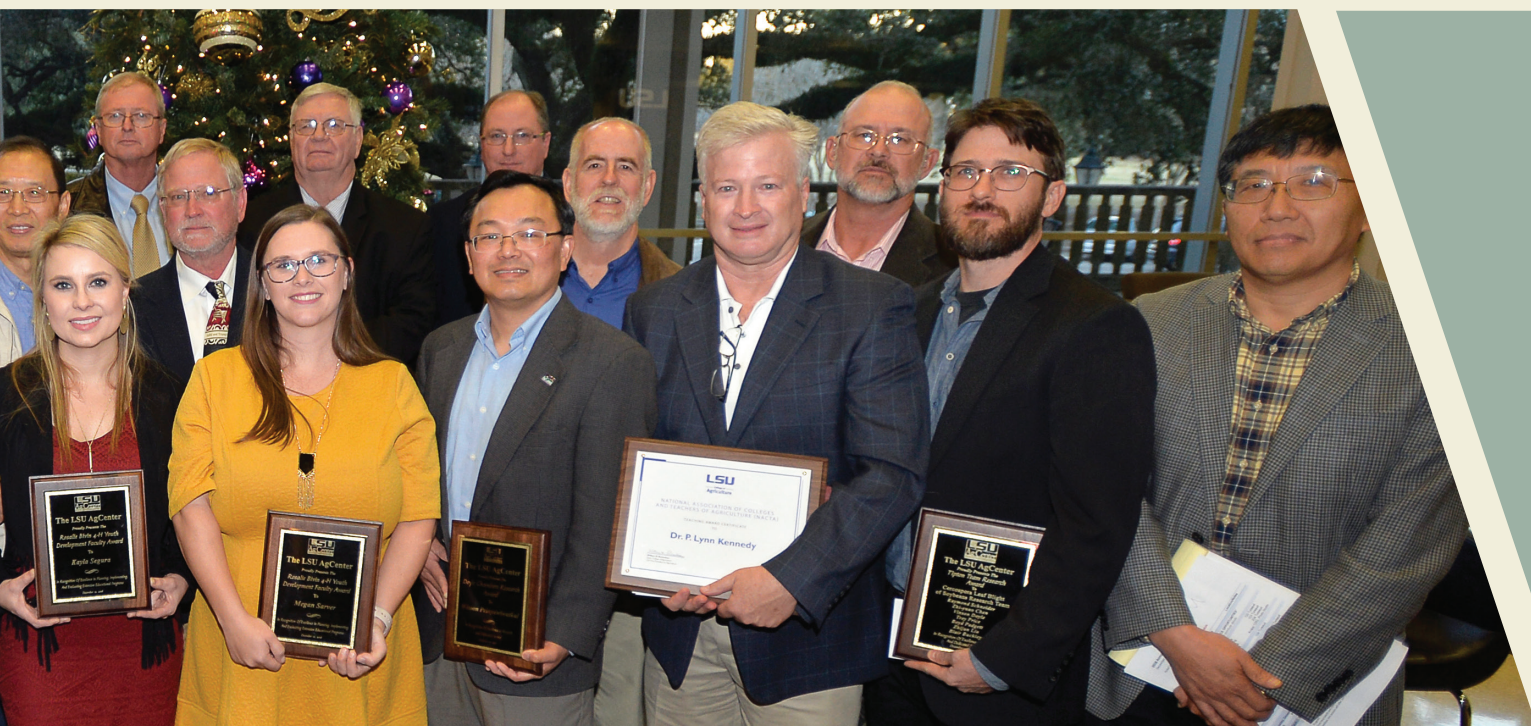
The award was announced Dec. 11, 2018, at the LSU Student Union Theater.

Hebert has worked in 4-H for 24 years and is also the parish chairman. Lafayette Parish has one of the largest 4-H programs in the state with more than 1,600 members and 250 adult volunteers. Hebert played a leading role in establishing the school garden program across the parish and has received more than \$80,000 in external funding to expand the garden program.

Several other awards were given at the event. Ron Strahan, a weed scientist in the School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences, received the Extension Excellence Award. Strahan is regarded as a leading turfgrass specialist in Louisiana.

Strahan developed the Field of Excellence program, which led to safer playing conditions for athletes across the state. His work





*agriculture faculty and staff awards were announced during annual conference on Dec. 11, 2018, at the LSU Student Union.*

with the Golf Course Agronomic Improvement Program helped struggling golf courses survive by improving the turfgrass at the venues. He has authored 10 weed management publications that address common weeds found in lawns.

Receiving the G & H Seed Company Inc. Research Award was Brenda Tubaña, a professor in the School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences. This award recognizes a researcher who has conducted exemplary work during the past five years.

Tubaña has pioneered research using optical remote sensors to determine nitrogen fertilization rates. She is also doing research on the role the element silicon plays in the fertilization process.

Tubaña plays an active role in mentoring graduate students and has received more than \$1.3 million in grants since 2014.

Witoon Prinyawiwatkul was the winner of the Doyle Chambers Award. He is a scientist in the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences. His primary areas of research are in seafood byproduct use and sensory services and consumer research.

Prinyawiwatkul is involved with researching chitosan, a byproduct of crustacean shells that is being examined for its role in extending the shelf life of certain foods. He has helped develop sodium-reduced and low-sodium food products with a goal of reducing health issues related to sodium.

Prinyawiwatkul has written 191 refereed publications, along with one book and five book chapters.

The Denver T. and Ferne Loupe Extension Team Award was given to the Precision Agriculture Team consisting of

AgCenter agents Dennis Burns, Jimmy Flanagan, R.L. Frazier and agricultural engineer Randy Price.

The team examines the use of drones in agriculture, sprayer technology and weather reporting systems and maps. Their work with sprayers and nozzles has helped mitigate drift and protect sensitive crops.

The team has done extensive work with drones and their use in scouting fields and providing information regarding certain inputs, such as when fertilization is needed.

A collection of researchers who study cercospora, a disease that can decimate a soybean field through defoliation, won the Tipton Team Research Award. The team is made up of plant pathologists Vinson Doyle, Boyd Padgett, Trey Price and Ray Schneider, crop physiologist Zhiyuan Chen, and plant breeders Blair Buckley and Zhijun Liu.

Through their research, the group has determined that iron and certain other elements can suppress disease development. They are also working on developing resistant crop varieties and fungicides to control the disease. The team is also developing protocols to detect the disease at an early stage.

Kayla Segura and Megan Sarver, 4-H agents in Acadia Parish, received the Rosalie Bivin 4-H Youth Development Award. Segura and Sarver developed an intense aerospace program focusing on concepts such as aerodynamic principles and Newton's Laws of Motion. The purpose of the program was to enhance knowledge in science and to make students aware of some of the careers available in aerospace.

Charlotte Guerin, administrative program specialist in the vice president for agriculture's office, received



# Eubanks inducted into NIFA Hall of Fame

*Gina E. Eubanks, left, associate vice president of the LSU AgCenter, accepts a trophy from J. Scott Angle, director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Eubanks was inducted into the NIFA Hall of Fame at a ceremony April 25 in Washington, D.C.*

PHOTO PROVIDED  
BY KELLY SPRUTE/  
USDA NIFA

*By Olivia McClure*

Gina E. Eubanks, associate vice president of the LSU AgCenter, was inducted into the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in the spring.

Hall of Fame inductees have helped advance the NIFA mission to address societal issues through agricultural research, education and outreach.

Eubanks, who joined the LSU AgCenter in 2013, leads food and nutrition initiatives. The AgCenter conducts several programs aimed at teaching low-income and rural audiences to make healthier choices, often in collaboration with other agencies and organizations.



She also provides support for the LSU School of Nutrition and Food Sciences, focusing on preparing undergraduate and graduate students to educate and serve the community.

A native of Clinton, Louisiana, Eubanks grew up participating in 4-H. She received a bachelor's degree in clothing and textiles from Southern University. At Oklahoma State University, she earned a master's degree in clothing and textiles and a doctorate in home economics.

Eubanks held teaching roles at Alcorn State University, Oklahoma State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University before moving to the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. There, she spent several years as vice chancellor for extension, beginning in 2002.

While at the SU Ag Center, Eubanks was an active member and chairperson of the Association of Extension Administrators. She also was elected as an administrative representative to the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Board on Agricultural Assembly.

"I can truly say that I am enjoying my 35 years in higher education because it has allowed me to develop as a professional while impacting the lives of people in Mississippi, Oklahoma, Virginia and, of course, my home state of Louisiana," Eubanks said.

the Ganelle Bullock Outstanding Service Award. Joey Quebedeaux, a research associate at the Hammond Research Station, was named the winner of the Outstanding Service Award for Associates.

Tubaña received a second award, the Sedberry Award for Outstanding Graduate Teacher.

As a graduate advisor and mentor, Tubaña actively participates in the entire process of her students' master's and doctoral programs. She helps students design research projects and get their research published in refereed journals.

Michael Kaller, an associate professor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources, received the Sedberry Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teacher.

Kaller has served as undergraduate coordinator and associate rector for the College of Agriculture. These duties required him to schedule courses and room assignments and to aid in recruitment and retention. He played a role in developing an aquatic insect taxonomy and ecology class for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Lynn Kennedy received the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Teaching Award. Kennedy is a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. He has played an important role in the development of the department's internship program. And as chair of the graduate committee for his department, he has been instrumental in the creation of several new graduate courses.

Robert Reigh was author of the Louisiana Agriculture magazine article of the year. Reigh's article, "AgCenter Research Aims to Boost Louisiana Alligator Industry," focused on issues related to alligator nutrition and effects of incubation conditions.

Service awards were presented to two faculty members for their years of service on the magazine's editorial board. They were Dan Fromme, corn and cotton specialist at the Dean Lee Research and Extension Center in Alexandria, and Chris Green, professor at the Aquaculture Research Station in Baton Rouge.

AgCenter employees who received LSU Foundation Outstanding Staff Awards were Victoria Bayless, Donna Landry, Sandra Stevenson and Renee Welch. ■



# Heather Kirk-Ballard helps Louisiana Get It Growing

*By Randy LaBauve*

Surrounded by plants, lights and a video camera, Heather Kirk-Ballard is dishing out gardening advice to Louisiana home gardeners. Kirk-Ballard assumed the helm of the LSU AgCenter's popular Get It Growing program in February 2019 when she was named state consumer horticulturist.

Get It Growing provides horticultural outreach to the public through videos, news articles and other media.

"I'm excited about getting people interested in growing plants," Kirk-Ballard said. "Plants are beneficial to our health and add value to our lives, work, environment and homes."

Besides doing a large amount of extension work with the general public, she is also on the faculty of the School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences and performs research in the school.

Kirk-Ballard comes to the AgCenter with solid work experience and a thorough horticulture research background.

Most recently, she worked for General Electric Co. and Ecolab, monitoring and maintaining water quality for various industrial sites. Before that, she was a high school science teacher and worked in local plant nurseries over the years.

Kirk-Ballard has a doctorate in renewable natural resources from LSU and master's and bachelor's degrees in plant and soil systems.

While doing her graduate studies, Kirk-Ballard worked at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. Her work included field and container studies on the effects of planting depth and mulch application for trees, shrubs and ground covers.

She also worked for nine years as a researcher with the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, studying, among other things, the effectiveness of plant extracts in improving symptoms associated with diabetes, such as muscle atrophy, and improving insulin signaling.

For years, people in her neighborhood have asked Kirk-Ballard for advice in growing their plants, she said.

"It's fun that they come to me for advice," Kirk-Ballard said. "I've always loved helping my neighbors and friends identify plants and garden pests and helping them select plants or solve gardening problems."



PHOTO BY OLIVIA MCCLURE/LSU AGCENTER



# SPRING BREAK

*In their own words ...*

*Alexis Stringfield traveled to Košice, Slovakia, during spring break. She and eight other students participated in animal clinics at the University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice.*



## Slovakia: Alexis Stringfield

Spring Break in Košice, Slovakia, was a phenomenal experience. The trip began on April 14 with a day spent exploring the city. Our tour guide was a well-known author and historian of the city who showed us the historical hot spots of the city center. We saw the ruins of the original city wall, St. Elizabeth's Cathedral, and the birthplace of the architect who created the Corinth and Panama canals.

The second day of our trip was the official start of clinicals. We were introduced to the board of directors of the University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy and then took a 45-minute drive into the mountains to the dairy farm. There we met the lead cattle veterinarian who taught us how to restrain cattle in a manual chute and properly grind down their hooves. Afterward, we were led deeper into the row of barns to a quiet area where we met with the

reproductive veterinarian. Here we learned how to perform a rectal palpation in order to get a better understanding of the placement and feel of the uterus.

We ended the day visiting the Game and Wildlife Facility. Upon arrival, we met with the lead director. He showed us the facility and the different deer, wild boar and birds they had. I was lucky enough to be chosen to help tranquilize and rehouse a female roe deer they had just received.

On the third day of our trip, we got to visit the small animal clinic and the center of clinical skills. There we were broken up into two groups to give us more hands-on experience. My morning began in the small animal clinic observing a neutering. My group buddy and I were able to see how the anesthesia was given and stand in for the entire surgery. Afterward, we ventured to the ophthalmology office and watched as they



# AKABROAD

checked a male border collie for corneal dystrophy, a hereditary deformation of the cornea in the eye. By the afternoon, the groups switched out, and my group ended the day in the center of clinical skills. In the center, we were given practice dummies and mats to learn how to perform cannulations, apply bandages, draw blood and suture three different suture types just like the attending vet students.

The fourth day was spent in the avian and rodent clinic and the equestrian clinic. My morning began in the avian clinic, where we learned to restrain different sizes of birds ranging from budgies to falcons. We performed an endoscopy on a falcon and later observed dental work on a guinea pig. Our morning in the clinic included learning to restrain large rabbits. After a quick lunch, we continued our training in the equestrian clinic, where we did a wellness check on a colicky mare. Once we learned which side had restricted digestive activity, we were able to perform an ultrasound and observe an endoscopy on the mare. We also put our bandaging skills to use and bandaged a knee wound on a 20-plus-year-old mare.

Our final day on campus was spent exploring the equestrian stables, the Institute of Anatomy and a final farewell with the board of directors. Then we made the drive to Vienna, Austria, where we spent our final day in Europe exploring the city, visiting historical churches and visiting the largest Easter market in the entire country.

This trip was one of the most educational and enjoyable trips that I have ever had the pleasure of going on. It's a trip I will remember and enjoy talking about for the rest of my life. I highly recommend it!

*Eight students traveled to Košice with Animal Sciences faculty members Cathy Williams and Erin Oberhaus.*

## Costa Rica: Nikkie Torres

Costa Rica was an amazing experience not just because of the amazing places we visited but because of what I was able to learn from the trip. In the previous places I've lived, agriculture did not seem like a huge part of society — everywhere I lived was very urban.

Coming to the LSU College of Agriculture has opened up my eyes to this hidden world. Going on the Costa Rica trip opened my eyes to the various practices and what farmers and people in agriculture consider in their practices. They even talked about bringing back some of the ideas we learned at Earth University to incorporate in what they are doing with agricultural education.

We were also able to see wild animals in their natural habitat — sloths, capuchin monkeys, squirrel monkeys, toucans and so much more. These are animals I've only ever seen in movies and a few at a zoo. Seeing them in their home, undisturbed, reminds me of why I'm studying natural resource ecology and management and why I want to fight for the lives of animals in the wild once I graduate.

The pictures don't do the beauty of the country justice. The jungles, the beaches, the farms, everything was breathtaking. Each day seemed to just get better and better.

Everyone should have the opportunity to go on a trip like this. It is one thing to learn theory in a classroom, but it's another to go out into the world and see that theory put into practice and learn how different and similar two parts of the world can be. Not only do we get to learn things about our

majors in a study abroad, you also learn a different culture and make connections. Studying abroad broadens your mind, and you're having fun while you do it.

The group was very close by the end of the trip because of how much we bonded each day on the long bus rides to each place we visited. We learned a lot from each other, too. And of course, we learned a lot from Dr. Mike Kaller, Dr. Kristin Stair, and Lorenzo E. Arévalo, who organized the trip with Go Abroad International, and his wife, Valeria.

It amazes me to see how much we were able to do in just a week, but I could not have imagined spending my spring break any other way.

*Fourteen students visited Costa Rica during spring break with Kaller, associate professor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources, and Stair, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation.*





## Cuba: Service project overview with Kaylee Boswell

While in Cuba, our two major service projects were a beach cleanup and a farm workday. For the farm service, we traveled to a community center operated by a group of nuns.

This community center has dormitory space, sanctuary spaces, recreation rooms, a modest basketball court and a playground for the children who come for retreats. In addition to these spaces, the back of the property served as a small farm where food was produced to support the nuns and the children they cared for.

The dirt in that area was rough and rocky and required much preparation before it could be used for planting. Our service centered around the intensive labor of preparing the soil for planting.

This preparation began with hoisting large concrete beams from a rubble pile and laying them in the rows to prevent erosion. Next, we used the hoes, which had handmade handles because of inability to get completed hoes, to break up the tough soil. We added goat manure to the soil and hoed it more. After the soil was as prepared as we could make it, some of us helped the farmers set up the sprinkler system, which was difficult and took a long time because the hose and parts were not specified for this task. The water hose was hooked up to a large water tank that had many leaks.

Our beach service project was simpler but still important. We brought trash bags and cleaned litter and debris from the beautiful Jibacoa beach in Matanzas, Cuba. There was a surprising amount of litter not only on the beach but in all of Cuba. I found this to be partly due to the attitude and culture but also because of a surprising lack of trash cans. As we prepared to leave Cuba and considered the things we'd learned on the trip, we were all in agreement that Cuba was not what we expected it would be and that no matter where you travel, people are just people.

Regardless of your government or market system or position on the world stage, everyone wants to feel safe and happy and have opportunities for success for themselves and their families.

*Eleven students traveled to Cuba with members of the college dean's staff, Amanda Martin, assistant dean; Henry Hebert, manager of recruitment; and Andy Schade, director of development.*

### Les Voyageurs students

- Abel Caillouet, Nutrition and Food Sciences
- Adrienne King, Agricultural Business
- Alexandra Haynes, Agriculture and Extension Education
- Alexis Nguyen, Animal Sciences
- Anna Zaunbrecher, Animal Sciences

- Ashlyn Brewer, Animal Sciences
- Brooke Comeaux, Animal Sciences/ Agriculture and Extension Education
- Brooklyn Hampton, Plant and Soil Systems
- Elijah Hanzy III, Natural Resource Ecology and Management



*Students Katie Costanza, Megan Mincey, Brooke Comeaux and Alexandra Haynes show off their LSU pride on a study abroad trip to Cuba.*



*Brooke Comeaux and Kaylee Boswell were two of the 11 students who traveled to Cuba for spring break. Boswell said Cuba was not what she expected.*



## Cuba: First impressions with Alexandra Haynes

When arriving in Cuba, I was excited to see exactly what I had seen in pictures. The streets were filled with old cars, palm trees and pictures of Fidel Castro. At first, adjusting to the heat, constant walking, and the Cuban diet of pork, rice and beans was challenging, but I enjoyed immersing myself in the culture.

While there, I attended several lectures where I learned about Cuba's economy, syncretic religious practices and its relationship with the United States. I also enjoyed walking around Havana and seeing original pieces of artwork, meeting the locals and listening to Cuban music playing in the streets.

Ultimately, I learned that although Cuba's relationship with the United States has changed during the past decade, the people and the city of Havana are inviting and optimistic. Cuba is very different from other Latin American countries, and I encourage everyone to visit! ■

*Alexandra Haynes pets a stray dog on the streets of Havana. Haynes was one of several students who participated in a study abroad experience in Cuba.*



*Students who spent their spring break in Cuba participated in a service project at a community center where they helped prepare land for planting crops that support nuns and children associated with the center.*



- Noah Harper, Plant and Soil Systems
- Josephine Engelman, Environmental Management Systems
- Katie Costanza, Animal Sciences/Natural Resource Ecology and Management
- Kaylee Boswell, Agricultural Business

- Meredith Giles, Nutrition and Food Sciences
- Michael Marchand Jr., Nutrition and Food Sciences
- Taylor Perrodin, Agricultural Business
- Ty Price, Natural Resource Ecology and Management



# Strong ties connect AgCenter, Honduran school

By Tobie Blanchard

The LSU AgCenter and the Zamorano Pan-American School of Agriculture in Honduras have had a strong history and partnership since the 1980s. Since 2005, the AgCenter has hosted more than 100 Zamorano students for internships and many have returned to LSU to pursue graduate studies.

The Zamorano Agricultural Society held a ceremony in December of 2018 to honor Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture and dean of the LSU College of Agriculture, who has helped keep the relationship between LSU and Zamorano thriving.

Franklin Bonilla, president of the Zamorano Agricultural Society, thanked Richardson for the leadership and generosity he has shown to the society and its members.

The society was established to help facilitate cultural and agricultural exchange among students and alumni of LSU and the Zamorano Pan-American School of Agriculture in Honduras. The society provides guidance, support

and orientation to visiting scholars and students attending LSU.

At the closing ceremony, the society also gave out scholarships and recognized local supporters of the society and board members.

Scholarship recipients included Emilio Gutierrez, a Ph.D. student in animal sciences; Alejandro Castro, a Ph.D. student in agronomy; Cristhiam Gurdian, a Ph.D. student in food sciences; and Katheryn Parraga, a Ph.D. student in food sciences.

Carl Newton, an entrepreneur and founder of the food company Beyond the Equator, was honored for his support of the society. He has donated a scholarship to a Zamorano student from Bolivia. Sarah Bernard, a project coordinator with the LSU AgCenter Global Network, was recognized for her help with coordinating internships and helping acclimate Zamorano students to LSU. Santiago Carias, a Zamorano alumnus, also was recognized for contributing to scholarships for Zamorano students.

The society also donated \$1,500 for the 2019 Zamorano summer internship program through the LSU AgCenter.

*Below, members of the Zamorano Agricultural Society with Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture and dean of the LSU College of Agriculture, at a ceremony held on Dec. 3, 2018, to recognize scholarship recipients, local supporters and to honor Richardson for his support of the society.*







# COFFEE RIVERA'S

## fuels success

By Brianna Cobb

**B**orn and raised in an agricultural environment, Jorge Raul Rivera knew early on that his passion was agriculture. A native of El Salvador, Rivera used his experiences and knowledge gained at Zamorano Pan-American School of Agriculture in Honduras and LSU to expand his father's small-town job into an internationally recognized coffee brand.

Rivera earned his master's degree in agricultural economics at LSU in 2007, a program he says allowed him to participate in research and fellowship programs. While here, he immersed himself in new opportunities.

"I valued the chance to strengthen relationships with my peers at LSU while establishing leadership skills," Rivera said. "The Zamorano Agricultural Society influenced me to form connections and provided me with professional development while pursuing an education."

The Zamorano Agricultural Society is a group of alumni from Zamorano continuing their education at LSU. Rivera served as society president in

2007. He visualized the organization making a difference on campus and was determined to leave his mark at LSU.

"We were always motivated to help our community and develop the club independently. I suggested the idea of fundraising for nonfinancial assets outside Tiger Stadium to show campus the Zamorano Society valued connections, and we shouldn't just ask the public for money. They have much more to offer."

He graduated and began working on a project at GE Capital and AIG in El Salvador, relying on his background in econometrics and finance from LSU to help him excel outside of college.

"Dr. (Hector) Zapata provided me with immense knowledge in econometrics," he said. "His teachings gave me the edge I needed to support my family's business and compete in a fluctuating market."

Rivera gained ownership of his father's company, bringing with him experience from GE and AIG. He was determined to live out his father's legacy and used both his technical and mechanical skills in the fields of Chalatenango in northwest El Salvador.

"Although I had multiple career opportunities, I decided to come back home because I didn't want to leave an abandoned dream behind. I was focused on enriching my father's business and earning the reputation of the best coffee in South America," he said.

As Rivera Coffee expanded, Rivera steadily kept pace and began traveling the world to market his family business. He knew he was in the right field when the foundation he built received outstanding recognition for best cup of coffee in El Salvador.

"Winning the Cup of Excellence three times consecutively is one of my proudest achievements. We also hold the record for the most expensive pound of coffee sold at \$95.75 per pound," Rivera said. "These accomplishments are the accumulation of my experiences at LSU and the motivation my father left me to take the company to the next level."

Selling coffee beans globally, Rivera is grateful for his experiences and hopes to continue to grow Rivera Coffee.

"My plan is to keep breaking the world record," he said, "and winning multiple awards with my ambition to go further while remaining true to my roots here in El Salvador."





### **Luke Laborde: LSU College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumni**

Luke Laborde has an undeniable passion for LSU and the College of Agriculture. He holds three degrees from the university and has taken on a second career as an instructor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources.

Laborde had a successful first career with the Willis Group, an insurance brokerage and risk adviser. There he worked his way up to president of Willis of North Carolina. Upon his retirement, Laborde returned to LSU, earning his Ph.D. in 2014.

"One of the greatest experiences of my life is to work with our students. They inspire me every day," Laborde said.

His service to LSU, numerous professional organizations, his community and church is beyond measure.

While an undergraduate, he was elected president of the LSU College of Agriculture. He returned to leadership in the college in 2014 when he became president of the college Alumni Association. Under his guidance, the organization rebuilt its membership and increased alumni engagement.

His family believes in philanthropy — endowing a professorship, creating scholarships and awards and helping to renovate classrooms.

Laborde embodies what it means to be an outstanding alumnus.



### **Julie Richard: LSU College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumni**

Julie Richard was raised on a rice, soybean and crawfish farm. But farming was not in her plans. Yet today she runs a successful farming operation with her husband, Christian, growing rice, soybeans and crawfish.





BRENT LEBLANC, ALLEN BREAUX STUDIO

Richard holds three degrees from LSU, including a doctorate she earned in 2009. Before joining her husband on the farm, she worked for Louisiana Farm Bureau, where she oversaw the leadership development for Young Farmers and Ranchers and Farm Women.

While working with Farm Bureau, she received a McCloy Fellowship in 2009 and was one of four people to travel to Germany and Belgium to study agriculture.

"You never know where you are going to end up, but LSU means the world to me and set me up to do anything I wanted to do," Richard said.

Richard also is a certified Master Farmer and a true advocate for agriculture. She has long been a devoted supporter of the College of Agriculture by hosting farm tours and alumni dinners and providing her farm-raised crawfish for College of Agriculture events.



### Andrew Alvis and Matthew Braud: Early Career Alumni Award

Determination. Lettuce. Grit.

Andrew Alvis and Matthew Braud have all three in spades. Alvis and Braud are owners of Sustainable Harvesters, a Houston-based aquaponics lettuce company.

The agricultural business graduates said they learned a lot at LSU that helped them with their business.

"People thought we were crazy when we started, so to see our hard work get honored at this university means so much to us," Alvis said.

The pair uses aquaponics to grow their produce in a 12,000-square-foot greenhouse. In 2018, they were named one of LSU's 100 Fastest Growing Tiger-led Businesses. Alvis and Braud



have partnered with schools in the Houston area to create small-scale aquaponic growing systems for educational purposes.

By providing a framework for engaging youth in science and agriculture, Alvis and Braud are creating the next generation of farmers and researchers.

# PROFILES



# SUZANNE PERRON ST. PAUL

## A WELL-DESIGNED CAREER

By Tobie Blanchard



**S**uzanne Perron St. Paul designs once-in-a-lifetime couture gowns for celebrities, brides, debutantes and Mardi Gras royalty. The owner of an eponymous design studio in uptown New Orleans, she is also the designer behind the elegant yet spirited uniforms for the LSU Golden Girls.

"My goal was to come up with a fleur-de-lis-inspired outfit, a lot more gold but still have a white base, and we did it," St. Paul said.

The uniforms include hand-painted fabric and more than 1,000 Swarovski crystals per outfit.

The Golden Girls debuted the uniforms when LSU played Miami in Dallas on Sept. 2, 2018.

"They were comfortable. They felt beautiful. One girl told me she felt glamorous, and that's what I was going for," St. Paul said.

St. Paul knows what it's like to feel glamorous on the football field. She was a Golden Girl in the late 1980s.

"Well it's funny because I almost felt like it was my alter ego. Everyone assumed Golden Girls were tall and blond, and I was this little petite honors student," she said.

St. Paul has a degree from the LSU College of Agriculture in what is now textiles, apparel and merchandising.

She has been sewing since she was five.

"I made a skirt that I wore to kindergarten and kept sewing from then on," she said. "I always wanted to be a fashion designer."

St. Paul gathered accolades for her sewing through 4-H and had her sights set on Pratt Institute in New York. But LSU offered her a full scholarship.

"My experience at LSU, offering me a scholarship and giving me a place that really felt like home for four years, was one of the best things that ever happened," she said, "and just absorbing everything around me was just one of the most valuable experiences."

After graduation she taught for a year at LSU and then was accepted into an accelerated program at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology.

She described the experience like a fashion vocational technical school.

"I was thrown right into the fashion world," she said. "All of our professors worked in the industry, and I met so many designers."

Her talent led her to work with top designers, including Carolina Herrera, Anna Sui and Vera Wang. After 12 years in New York, she was ready to move home.

St. Paul's Oak Street studio currently includes several LSU graduates and interns.

St. Paul was one of the guest lecturers at the College of Agriculture Alumni Lecture Series and offered students advice.

"My advice is to take advantage of opportunities that come your way, even the ones you didn't expect," she said.

### Future speakers in the Agriculture Alumni Lecture Series

- Nov. 15- Roberta Anding, nutritionist with the Houston Astros
- Jan. 31- Ashley Peters, agricultural crop consultant
- Feb. 14- Noble Guedon, corporate manager with Goldman Equipment
- March 13- Richard Fontenot, rice farmer and president of the Louisiana Rice Research Board



## THANK YOU TO OUR LIVESTOCK SHOW SPONSORS







LSU AgCenter Office of Development  
101 J. Norman Efferson Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

## **WE'RE GROWING!**

The LSU College of Agriculture  
undergraduate and graduate  
student enrollment is over

# 1,700

## *Need help with your garden?* **Get It Growing with Heather-Kirk Ballard**

Get the latest lawn and garden information designed  
for Louisiana gardeners from Heather Kirk-Ballard  
and the LSU AgCenter Get It Growing series.  
Find useful lawn and garden tips through television,  
radio, print and the web.



[LSUAgCenter.com/GetItGrowing](http://LSUAgCenter.com/GetItGrowing)

