Faculty Highlight: Scott Longing

Dr. Scott Longing has recently been appointed as a tenure-track assistant professor of entomology. Scott joined the Department of Plant and Soil Science in the Fall of 2012 as a visiting assistant professor.

The Russellville, Ark., native indicated that he’s particularly interested in continuing his research efforts on the ecology and conservation of endemic insects relying on permanent groundwater-influenced habitats, particularly how populations are affected by climate and landscape factors.

Additionally, he said he would like to investigate the ecology of insects in ephemeral aquatic habitats in urban and rural settings on the Southern High Plains. One of his goals is to simply teach basic and applied entomology to students in his courses so they will be better prepared for careers and graduate research involving insects.

Prior to joining the Texas Tech faculty, Longing served as a postdoctoral fellow and research associate with the Arkansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Arkansas. He also worked as a postdoctoral associate with the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering – Arkansas Water Resources Center. He received his bachelor’s degree in biology from Arkansas Tech University, and his master’s degree in entomology from the University of Arkansas. His doctorate in entomology is from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
Chat with the Chair

“Turn out the lights, The party is over” are the lyrics of a song that summarizes my current situation. After 40 years at Texas Tech University and 40 months as department chair, this is my last “Chat with Chair.” The next issue of the PSS newsletter will be under the direction of Dr. Eric Hequet. As I think about the changes in the department, the most technological one is that we all had telephones and there were NO computers. The secretaries all had typewriters. Faculty would submit hand written, rough drafts to the secretaries who would give back a typed rough draft. We would then revise and resubmit several more times. Now we all have computers, but no phones or typewriters. Additionally, when I was hired, we were the Department of Agronomy and Production Horticulture. Since that time we have incorporated ornamental horticulture, entomology and the Fiber and Biopolymer Research Institute (formerly the International Textile Center) into our department. While our student numbers have not appreciable changed, our graduate program has significantly increased. Currently, approximately 45% of our students are graduate students. The department was not authorized to grant a Ph.D. until the mid-1970s. Today approximately 20% of our students are enrolled in the Ph.D. program. As a graduate of The Ohio State University, my blood initially ran scarlet and grey. Now, after 40 years at TTU, my blood runs red and black. As I close this “Chat with a Chair” and think about the future of the Department of Plant and Soil Science, I cannot think of a better statement than Chancellor Hance’s “Dream No Little Dream.” I have no doubt that Dr. Eric Hequet will do well and his big dreams will carry PSS to a very bright future.

Dr. Eric Hequet to take reins of Department of Plant and Soil Science September 1

Announced June 3, 2014, Dr. Eric Hequet has been named the new department chairman for the Department of Plant and Soil Science, effective September 1. Dr. Hequet is currently a jointly-appointed faculty member in the department, working with Texas A&M AgriLife Research and associate director of the Fiber and Biopolymer Research Institute. Dr. Hequet has been at Texas Tech since 1997 and has won a number of awards since his start here.
Faculty News

Dr. Mark Burow and graduate student, Ratan Chopra, had a draft of the first Peanut Genome Sequence released recently to the public. Dr. Burow and Ratan have worked with other faculty and research facilities to sequence tens of thousands of genes in each of 22 peanut accessions, 10 wild and 12 cultivated, including varieties in Texas.

Dr. Cynthia McKenney and Dr. Cindy Akers led a study abroad class to Scotland in May. More than 20 students from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources had the opportunity to spend two weeks in Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh. CASNR sponsors a college based trip each year and the spring of 2015 trip will head to China!

Dr. David Weindorf served as visiting professor in Ancona, Italy in June, 2014, conducting fieldwork with Drs. Giuseppe Corti and Stefania Cocco, and giving guest lectures at the university.

Dr. Weindorf served as a coordinator at the 1st International Soils Judging Contest, gave a presentation, and moderated a session at the 20th World Congress of Soil Science in Jeju, South Korea in June 2014.

Dr. Weindorf gave a presentation at the European X-ray Conference in Bologna, Italy. He will also be conducting research in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, during July 2014. To finish out the summer, Dr. Weindorf will be leading two Texas Tech students and serve as a co-instructor of the Arctic Soils Field Tour from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, in late July–early August.

Jalen Scott, a middle school student at Kenilworth Science and Technology Charter School, advanced to an international Science Competition late this spring with project help from Dr. David Weindorf.

Dr. Scott Longing and his students continue biweekly trips to the sandhills to study the distributions and ecology of numerous endemic insects. The project is being funded by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department through the Texas Horned Lizard License Plate program and the State Wildlife Grant program.

Faculty publications and presentations:


Staff News

Teresa Davis has been promoted from Lead Account Processor to Unit Coordinator of Purchasing and Procurement—congratulations Teresa!

Christi Chadwell recently completed and graduated from the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce Leadership Lubbock Program. Christi was also elected to serve as the Texas Tech Staff Senate Secretary for the 2014-2015 year. Christi has been appointed to the Board of Directors for the National Agricultural Alumni and Development Association (NAADA) and to head up the Projects and Publications Competition. Her term with NAADA will last through 2016.
PSS Events

The Turfgrass Science program will be hosting their Turf Field Day at the Quaker Avenue Research Farm!

**When:** Monday, July 21, 2014. Registration will begin at 7:15 a.m.

**What:** Topics presented will range from turf management to water conservation on golf courses, athletic fields, commercial and residential lawns.

Attendance is free for all participants. Lunch will be provided to attendees. Please contact Dr. Young at joey.young@ttu.edu, if you have any questions.

Retirement Reception for Dr. Richard Zartman

Plan to join us Thursday, August 28th, for a retirement reception honoring Dr. Zartman. The reception will last from 4-6 p.m., with remarks starting at 4:30, in the International Cultural Center Hall of Nations Room (601 Indiana Ave). Invitations will be going out soon!

Student & PSS News

Krishna Bhandari, a PhD student advised by Dr. Chuck West, was selected as one of the twelve winners by Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD) across the US to attend the "50th Annual Conference and 2014 Future Leaders Forum" from June 1 to 4, 2014 in Washington, DC. This scholarship is intended to enhance his understanding and appreciation of issues and opportunities in international agriculture and rural development.

Two graduate students from the Department of Plant and Soil Science are living and working in Nadapal, Kenya this summer initiating a sustainable vegetable production system in this sub-Saharan environment. Daniel Cunningham and Kyle Tengler are two horticulture graduate students working with Dr. Cynthia McKenney who headed to Africa immediately after the spring semester was completed. Their project includes Keyline design, water harvesting, mulching, and other agroforestry activities. You may follow their progress at [https://www.facebook.com/TurkanaProject](https://www.facebook.com/TurkanaProject)

Plant and Soil Science Ph.D. graduate student Samuel Discua presented in the 2014 TTU student poster competition in the Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Category 2 and won third place with his poster titled Habitat, trap-type, and seasonal associations of nine endemic insects at the Monahans Dune System (co-authors J. Cokendolpher and S. Longing)

Several new critters are showing up around the Quaker Farm! Thanks to Dr. Scott Longing for taking these photos.

A mature Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) residing in the grove at Quaker Farm.

Harlequin bugs (*Murgantia histrionica*) on some of the organic greens at Quaker Farm.

The three honey bee hives are getting bigger at Quaker Farm! Several pounds of honey and comb have already been harvested!