New Faculty Highlight

Dr. Theophilus Udeigwe is a new soil and environmental science assistant professor in Plant and Soil Science. He officially started his teaching and research at Texas Tech University on September 1, 2012. Dr. Udeigwe is continuing his research in soil and environmental chemistry, water quality, and soil fertility and nutrient management. He previously was at Louisiana State University as research associate and assistant professor.

While at LSU, he served as project leader on various agronomy and environmental projects. At LSU, his research focused on water quality monitoring of Lake St. Joseph, as well as designing and implementing management practices in Louisiana’s Tensas River watershed. Additionally, he worked on developing crop coefficient for cotton irrigation in the Mid-South United State, and evaluating performance of transgenic and conventional cotton and soybeans.

Dr. Udeigwe received his bachelor’s degree in soil science from the University of Nigeria, and his master’s degree and doctorate in soil and environmental chemistry from LSU.

Dr. Udeigwe will be teaching soil and plant nutrient management, advanced plant nutrient management, environmental soil chemistry, and advanced environmental soil chemistry.

Welcome back, to all students, faculty and staff to the Spring 2013 semester!
We start a new calendar year with a renewed sense of optimism. Washington did NOT fall off the fiscal cliff. Domestic and international economies continue to grow, albeit at a slower that wished for rate. The Plant and Soil Science Department continues to be a student oriented, research intensive, multidisciplinary, science based department. Our research dollars generated and student numbers remain strong. As more and more people worldwide move into the middle class, there is increasing demand for food and fiber as well as aesthetically pleasing, safe environments. PSS is the department at the forefront of all of these science-based needs. When I conducted my exit interviews with our students, I was impressed with their poise, knowledge and employment opportunities. Our graduates are ready to tackle the ever-growing, people-centered needs and demands. Our new faculty, such as Drs. Joey Young who recently started and Theo Udeigwe featured in this newsletter, are examples of very talented faculty members that will take us to the next level. To borrow a sports analogy we are not rebuilding we are just reloading. Guns Up and Go Raiders.

**Faculty Presentations and Publications**

**Dr. Cynthia McKenney:**

**Dr. Scott Longing:**

**Dr. Jennifer Moore-Kucera:**

**Dr. Moore-Kucera** also organized a special session at the ASA-CSSA-SSSA meeting, Cincinnati, OH. 21-24 October 2012, entitled, “Integrating Livestock Into Cropping Systems: Ecosystem Responses From Long-Term Studies.” She and her graduate students were co-authors on four presentations highlighted during this session. She and Dr. Gerald Henry (former PSS Turfgrass specialist) also co-authored an additional poster presentation for the turfgrass section.

**Dr. Chuck West:**

* indicates a PSS graduate student.
**Presentations Continued**

Dr. Jennifer Moore-Kucera and her graduate students made a total of 12 oral and poster presentations at the following meetings (lead graduate student in parentheses):
- Annual Meeting of American Geophysical Union, December 2011. San Francisco, CA (Lisa Fultz)
- Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of American, August 2012, Portland, OR (Lisa Fultz)
- Annual meeting of the Society of Environmental Journalists hosted by Texas Tech University. October, 2012, Lubbock, TX (Josefine Dathe)
- 3 presentations at the American Society for Horticultural Science, Miami, FL. August, 2012 (two with M.S. student Chenhui Li)

Dr. Noureddine Abidi:

**Faculty News**

Dr. Vivien Allen was awarded the 2013 Distinguished Grasslander Award at the American Forage and Grassland Council conference in Kentucky. This award recognizes Dr. Allen’s very productive career as a scholar and researcher in forages.

Dr. Noureddine Abidi was awarded the Chancellor’s Council Distinguished Teaching and Research Award for 2012. Dr. Abidi’s research evaluates and modifies biopolymers and cotton fibers to advance the quality of cotton and its functionalities. Joining Texas Tech in 1999, he has received more than $3.8 million in external research grants and secured one patent and four invention disclosures.

The Texas Alliance for Water Conservation (TAWC) received the Blue Legacy Award for Agriculture from the Water Conservation Advisory Council of the Texas Water Development Board for enhancing water conservation on area farms while maintaining or improving profitability. The award was presented at the Texas Commodity Symposium in Amarillo on Nov. 30, 2012. Members of the TAWC team are Mr. Phil Brown, Mr. Rick Kellison (project director), Dr. David Doerfert (Ag. Ed. & Comm.), Dr. Chuck West (project supervisor), Mr. Jay Yates (TAM AgriLife), Ms. Samantha Borgstedt (Ag. Ed. & Comm.), Mr. Jeff Pate (TAM AgriLife), and Dr. Stephen Maas.

Dr. Joe Young has joined the PSS Faculty team as the Turfgrass Science Assistant professor. He has recently completed the requirements for the Ph.D. at Arkansas university.

Dr. Mark Burrow and the Peanut Breeding and Genetics program has released two new peanut varieties: Tamrun OL12 and Schubert.
- TamrunOL12 is a high oleic runner peanut that matures 2 weeks earlier than standard runner varieties, and is expected to reduce the chance of developing off-flavors due to immaturity. The high-oleic trait improves the shelf life of the peanut, and has benefits for coronary health.
- Schubert is a high-oleic Spanish peanut that matures about a week earlier than the standard OLin cultivar, and yields about 500 lb/acre greater than Olin.

Dr. Scott Longing conducted a meeting in November to determine interest in re-establishing the Donald Ashdown Entomology Club. The purpose of the club is to promote interest in entomology and provide students with opportunities for educational, service and social activities. At least one official meeting will be planned for the Spring 2013 semester.
We are in the process of re-arranging the administrative office in the Plant Science Building. Lori Walraven and Christi Chadwell have moved to new offices, rooms 259 and 255, respectively.

A total of 22 PSS students graduated in the December 2012 commencement ceremonies. Among those students, four PhD graduate, 10 master of science students, and eight bachelor of science students.

Liv Severino, who complete his Ph. D. degree in December, was selected as the Outstanding Graduate Student at the Association for the Advancement of Industrial Crops (AAIC) in Sonoma, CA in November 2012. Liv was also selected as the Program Chair of the Oilseeds Division of the AAIC for 2013-2015.

The Texas Tech Soils Judging Team placed 3rd overall at the Regional IV Soils Judging Contest, held November 5th – 9th, hosted by Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Team members, David Bookman, Trey Roach, Trent Smith, and Parker Noel, will be traveling to the national contest at the University of Wisconsin this spring. Bookman placed 2nd in the individual contest; the judging team is advised and coached by PSS graduate student Travis Conley.

Recent Student Presentations at the Beltwide Conference in San Antonio, Texas:

- Misha Manuchehri: “Roundup PowerMAX as Influenced by Water Quality and Ammonium Sulfate” presentation.
- Bralie Hendon: “Stabilizing a Naked Seed Mutant in Upland Cotton” presentation.
- John Sherman: “In-season cotton growth of four cultivars under different irrigation regimes” presentation.
- Shanshan Li: “Preparation, characterization, and functionalization of porous cellulose materials.” presentation.
- Zhuanzhuan Ma: “Multidisciplinary approach to investigate the effects of drought stress on cotton fiber quality” presentation.
- Caleb Albers placed 2nd in the Cotton Agronomy and Physiology Graduate Student Competition for his “Evaluating Fiber Properties in Verticillium Wilt Susceptible and Resistant Cotton Cultivars in Relation to Increasing Nitrogen Rates” presentation.
- Curtis Schaefer placed 1st in Agronomy and Physiology Student Competition for his “Effects of Irrigation and Environment On Cotton Growth, Maturity, Yield, and Fiber Quality in West Texas Producer Fields” presentation.