Dear Alumni and Friends:

The academic year is off to a great start. The state fairs are over, the weather feels like fall, and there is renewed energy and enthusiasm in the College.

The very good news is we have more new freshmen majors than we have had in a long time. This means our recruiting efforts are beginning to pay off. Our next step is to increase efforts to bond with our new students. A good example is the “New Student Picnic” which we traditionally have each Fall. This year we had over 250 attend – so many that we ran out of buns, yet everyone enjoyed plenty of barbecue prepared by our own Tom Welten.

A new feature of the event was a New Student Orientation session prior to the barbecue. It’s always risky to start something new and 10 minutes before starting time we weren’t so sure about the idea. The chairs were empty. Right at starting time the students came pouring in, filling every seat and standing along the walls. The new students came out in force. Our agenda focused on “Ten Commitments to Succeed at SIUC”.

We at Southern are a student-centered research university and we in the College are placing renewed emphasis on our students and their college experience. A good example from the picnic comes to mind. Two Equine Science majors came up to me, introduced themselves, shook my hand, and said they wanted to thank me for establishing the Horse Judging Team. I was blown away as you would have been. They shared what they had been doing to prepare for their first contest in Oklahoma City. They were so excited and so appreciative of the new opportunity.

Larry Fischer, ’68, was awarded the Alumni Achievement Award and was the keynote speaker at Commencement. Fischer is joined by Dr. John Dunn, Provost and Vice Chancellor, on the left and Dr. Gary Minish, Dean.
The over-all enthusiasm of the students at the picnic made me more confident than ever that we are focusing our efforts in the right place. We offer students so much here at Southern and we have more underway.

When you get right down to it, it is the faculty who make things happen in the College. And our faculty is finding ways to continue to add value to our majors. Departments have hired outstanding new faculty in key areas such as human nutrition obesity, community nutrition, dietetics, beef forage nutrition, energy policy, rural economic development, and water quality. Searches are also underway in hospitality and tourism, outdoor recreation, soybean breeding and genetics, and forest resource management.

And changes are occurring in our curricula. For example, based on suggestions from the College Leadership Board, Animal Science has added exciting new hands-on laboratories in their introductory animal science course. Food and Nutrition has split into two new majors called Hospitality Tourism Administration and Human Nutrition Dietetics. Agribusiness Economics has added new career tracks in pre-law, sales and marketing, energy and environmental policy, agribusiness and finance, and farm business management.

We are not being bashful about marketing the College. For example, our 2nd Annual Agriculture Industry Day (reported on pg. 4-5) focused on the student experience with prospective students attending 12 College classes taught by our excellent faculty. Our keynote speakers were our outstanding new President Glenn Poshard, and outstanding alum Ken Maschhoff.

While focusing renewed energy on students we have not forgotten our very important research work. Faculty continue to be aggressive in identifying problems and concerns of our constituents and in securing funding. A little over $8.0 million in active grants was in effect this past year, which equates to over $230,000 per full time research faculty. And, a new memorandum of agreement between SIUC and the University of Illinois was signed for the two colleges to collaborate on research at the Dixon Springs Research Station.

In May, we completed a new College “Strategic Plan.” The plan includes new vision and mission statements and new priorities and goals to help guide the College teaching, research and outreach programs well into 2010. Our goals remain clear: (1) to increase enrollment, (2) to update our curricula, (3) to focus our research programs in areas of excellence, (4) to improve our facilities and farms, (5) and to gain funding for a new Agriculture Building. You can obtain a condensed version by sending me an email at minish@siu.edu.

In summary, it has been a great year in the College of Agricultural Sciences. We really appreciate your continued input and support and we look forward to seeing you at Agriculture Industry Day on April 21, 2007 if not before.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Minish, Dean
Research on Value-added Dairy Products and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources

Dr. Amer AbuGhazaleh’s forage-based nutrition research is designed to help Illinois dairy farmers in rural communities enter the fastest growing sector in U.S. agricultural markets today which is the development of more healthy and nutritious dairy products that are produced on the farm. The number of small-sized dairy operations in Illinois continues to decline at an alarming rate and is leading to a devastating impact on the rural economy and society we serve.

Rotational intensive grazing and on-farm production and processing of value-added dairy products appear to provide the most promising opportunity for small dairy farms to improve sustainability and profitability. Dr. AbuGhazaleh’s research program focuses primarily on boosting the amounts of two fatty acids in milk, namely conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) and omega-3 fatty acids. CLA and omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to help protect humans against heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

CLA is produced by rumen microorganisms. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in high concentrations in fish and flaxseed oil and also in forages. Dr. AbuGhazaleh’s forage-based nutrition program hopes to aid farmers in acquiring the necessary skills and techniques to develop diets for dairy cows so that CLA and omega-3 enriched dairy products can be produced. He hopes this will help the dairy industry grow in Illinois and aid in the production of healthier and more nutritious dairy products for the consumer.

What pictures spring to mind when you hear the word nature? Dr. Mae Davenport and Dr. Jean Mangun asked that question of junior and senior high school students from four schools in rural southern Illinois. Their participatory research and community outreach project, entitled Visions of Nature, was aimed at building partnerships between minority youth and COAS Department of Forestry students. Thirty-four youth, ages 12 through 19, were provided disposable cameras and asked to take photos of nature in their communities.

Each youth photographer was interviewed about the photos they took, as well as what they liked and disliked about nature. Forestry students facilitated workshops and conducted interviews in the schools. The youth photographers received copies of their photographs. Enlarged and matted photos were showcased in an open house held at the Cairo Community Education Center. Participants, their families, teachers, school administrators, and community leaders attended the event.

This project, which explores the human dimensions of natural resources, typifies the social research interests of Drs. Davenport and Mangun. Visions of Nature connected rural minority youth with their environment through nature observation and photography - empowering youth to share their stories and visions of nature, and introducing Forestry students to a population that they may one day serve as park and forest rangers. Based on the positive response from students and their teachers, Drs. Davenport and Mangun hope to sustain the project into 2007.
If you were one of the over 750 alumni, industry clientele, or prospective students and parents at our 2nd Annual Agriculture Industry Day on April 22, you already know our college faculty, students, and staff put on another highly successful event. As the crowd gathered on a perfect spring day they enjoyed coffee and donuts while meeting students who were eager to tell participants about their club activities in the College.

The morning program got off to a great start with five Saluki dogs and owners Don ’63 and Karen Magee ’63, Dr. Sara Long, Kevin Roth, and Scott Lambert in the ring. Don Magee, President of the SIU Alumni Board of Directors 2001-03, told about the history of Saluki dogs and pointed out some of the unique breed characteristics.

The first speaker introduced by Dean Gary Minish was Megan McCallister. Megan recalled her application, campus visit, and acceptance to SIUC and how she found the right major in Dietetics. She shared examples of her activities including Sigma Alpha Professional Agriculture Sorority, College and University Ambassador, Event Coordinator for the College All-Ag Banquet, and a member of the Saluki Shakers dance team. And she gave some advice as she reflected on her four short years at SIUC. “College is what you make of it. This was the time when I found out who I am and what I want to do with my life.”

Next on the podium was Ken Maschhoff ’82 outstanding alumnus and CEO of The Maschhoffs Inc. As Maschhoff prepared his remarks he said he was reminded of how much SIUC meant to him as a student and how much it means to him now. He shared the company’s core values and said the values were shaped while the senior management team was at SIUC. In sharing the secrets of the company’s success, he attributed it to hiring good people with a passion for their product. He noted he is proud that The Maschhoffs have invested more resources in research and development than any other commercial pork producer in the nation. Maschhoff ended with suggestions for the students. “And above all,” he said, “pursue what you’re passionate about.”
Then came time for the introduction of our new President of SIU, Dr. Glenn Poshard, and his keynote address. Since the afternoon programs were “college classes” for prospective students and their families, Dr. Poshard spoke very convincingly on why SIUC and a B.S. from the College of Agricultural Sciences is the right choice. He suggested students look at the place, the programs, and most importantly the people. As he developed the theme, he shared examples of our unique location in the center of a multi-faceted agriculture area and the over 200 programs (20 in the College) to choose from at SIUC.

He applauded the success and contributions of Megan McCallister and Ken Maschhoff and the other 10,000 alumni of the College. In recognizing the College faculty, he used a term used by students — “awesome.” And he thanked the many strong industry and parent supporters of the College.

In summary, Poshard said, “I believe SIUC is the right choice for you. It was right for Ken Maschhoff, right for Megan McCallister and her mom, and right for me and over 200,000 other graduates of the University. It will be the right choice for you.” There was absolutely no question about Dr. Poshard’s support of the College of Agricultural Sciences and his love for the University.

The afternoon program was designed to give prospective students a taste of what it’s like to be a student in the College. The classes were on the following topics:

- SIUC 101: Companion Animal Care
- SIUC 102: Eat Right or Die(t)
- SIUC 103: Reintegrating Fire into Ecosystems
- SIUC 104: Landscape Design & Construction
- SIUC 105: Outdoor Recreation & Park Strategies
- SIUC 106: Agricultural Sales & Marketing
- SIUC 201: Genetics, Genomics, & Biotechnology
- SIUC 202: Equine Reproduction
- SIUC 203: Trading Commodities & Futures
- SIUC 204: Culinary Methods: Chili Cook-Off
- SIUC 205: Application of Automation Technology
- SIUC 206: Soil & Water Quality
What better setting than a corn field to learn about a fungus that has been affecting grain farms in Southern Illinois since 2002? That was the case on July 13th as Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s Belleville Research Center held short seminars about the latest agricultural updates at its 40th annual Field Day.

Reducing the risk of aflatoxin contamination in corn was one of seven topics that agricultural specialists from SIUC presented during the regular program in corn and soybean fields at the research center. Brett Roberts, a state conservation agronomist for Natural Resources Conservation Service, presented a popular early bird program on “Conservation Practices for Greater Profit Opportunities.” Throughout the day, participants could also engage in an “Ask the Expert” session presented by SIUC’s Dr. Paul Henry, a landscape horticulturist. More than 275 local farmers, farm equipment and pesticide dealers attended the Field Day. The Belleville Research Center is devoted to crop research but expanded the Field Day this year to include animal science, turf grass, and landscape horticulture.

Source: Paul Hackbarth for the News-Democrat
Faculty and Staff Receive Awards

Dr. John Preece, professor in the Department of Plant, Soil, and Agricultural Systems, was awarded the 2006 Outstanding Teaching Award at the SIUC Excellence Through Commitment Awards Program. He also received the American Society for Horticultural Science’s outstanding undergraduate educator of the year award. He attributes the 2005 publication of the second edition of his co-authored textbook, “The Biology of Horticulture,” to winning this award. The textbook is said to be the field’s best-selling introductory textbook. Dr. Preece, an SIUC faculty member since 1980, is pictured with Chancellor Walter Wendler.

Dr. Alan Walters, associate professor in the Department of Plant, Soil, and Agricultural Systems, was awarded the 2006 Outstanding Scholarship Award at the SIUC Excellence Through Commitment Awards Program. Walters has established the University’s vegetable program and has made outstanding research contributions in cucurbit vegetables, horseradish, alternative vegetable crops, reduced tillage, and crop disease and weed management. He has received over $1 million in grants, and published 35 journal articles and 30 outreach publications. Dr. Walters is pictured with Chancellor Walter Wendler.

Amy Boren, Instructor, in the Department of Plant, Soil, and Agricultural Systems, was awarded the 2006 Outstanding Term Faculty Teaching Award at the SIUC Excellence Through Commitment Awards Program.

Lisa Hartline, Office Systems Specialist II, in the Department of Plant, Soil, and Agricultural Systems, was awarded the 2006 Outstanding Civil Service Teaching Support Award at the SIUC Excellence Through Commitment Awards Program.

Paul Pinnon, Director of the Agricultural Research and Education Laboratories, received the first College of Agricultural Sciences Staff Appreciation Award. Dean Gary Minish is pictured presenting Paul and his wife, Patti, with the award. Looking on is Patrick Scates, from Senator Obama’s office.

New Faculty and Staff Recognized at State Fair

Pictured L-R: Dr. Rebecca Atkinson, Assistant Professor in Animal Science, Food and Nutrition; Rebecca Stenhaug, College Development Officer; Nancy McCalla, Administrative Clerk; Lucas Maxwell, Coordinator of Recruitment, Retention, and Placement; Sharon Brooks, Administrative Assistant I; Dr. Jon Schoonover, Assistant Professor in Forestry; Dr. Sharon Peterson, Assistant Professor in Animal Science, Food and Nutrition; Dr. Lyubov Kurkalova, Assistant Professor in Agribusiness Economics, and her daughter Svetlana; Dr. Mae Davenport, Assistant Professor in Forestry; Dr. Ira Altman, Assistant Professor in Agribusiness Economics; Dr. Kolapa Ajuwon, Assistant Professor in Animal Science, Food and Nutrition, and his sons David and Tobi; and Dr. Amer AbuGhazaleh, Assistant Professor in Animal Science, Food and Nutrition, and his daughter Bushrah.
2006-2007 Agbassador® Team
“SIUC: A Step in the Right Direction”

Pictured L-R: Tiffany Ochs (Olney), Jessica Pyritz (Normal), Mike Bockhold (Camp Point), Tracy Mellendorf (Louisville), Amanda Barczewski (DuBois), David Swits (Gays), Megan Pulliam (Chatham), Christa Mahnken (Steeleville), Tyler Brown (Gillespie), Fahran Robb (Pinckneyville), and Alyssa Rider (Kewanee).

Building the future one brick at a time!

The Agricultural Student Advisory Council is selling engraved bricks for $35 in an effort to renovate the College’s Patio. We will use the funds raised to purchase four tables for the patio in an attempt to create an atmosphere where students can relax, study, or hold club socials outside. If interested in purchasing a brick, contact Fahran Robb, Ag Council President, at fahranr@siu.edu or (618) 713-6837 for more information. We appreciate your support!