

Student Honors and Activities

Alper Kiziltas, Ph.D. candidate, was the PerkinElmer Award winner for 2013 from the Society of Plastic Engineers (SPE) Composites Division. He was chosen out of the more than 50 students who applied across the country.

Yucheng Peng, Yousoo Han, and Douglas Gardner have been chosen to receive Honorable Mention George Marra Award for Excellence in Writing for their paper “Spray-Drying Cellulose Nanofibrils: Effect of Drying Process Parameters on Particle Morphology and Size Distribution.” The award is presented by the Society of Wood Science and Technology.

Yucheng Peng, Esra Erbas Kiziltas, and Alper Kiziltas received awards in the 2013 PMAD Challenge. The PMAD Challenge is a North American college student technical writing competition hosted by the Polymer Modifiers and Additives Division (PMAD) of the Society of Plastics Engineers.

Nadir Yildirim, Ph.D. student, was awarded for 1st place in the oral presentation competition in natural sciences at the University of Maine Graduate Academic Exposition in March 2013. He presented his research on “Structural Insulation Nanofoams.”

The college of Natural Science, Forestry and Agriculture announced the Outstanding Graduate Student Awards for 2013, and four of the seven awards went to SFR graduate students: **Alper Kiziltas**, Outstanding Ph.D. Award; **Alisha Autio**, Outstanding Master’s Award; **Spencer Meyer**, Outstanding Service Award; and **Yucheng Peng, George Dow Award**.

Melanie Blumentritt, Ph.D. candidate, has been awarded a Maine Economic Improvement Fund (MEIF) Fellowship to support her dissertation, “The Influence of Wood Modification on Wood Nano Structures and Adhesive Properties.”

Julie Churchill and Justin Libby, undergraduate students majoring in forestry, represented the School of Forest Resources in the college’s annual event at the State House Hall of Flags in Augusta in February 2013. This is a joint event of the College of NSFA and the UMaine Cooperative Extension to help State of Maine leaders better understand the value and significance of college and extension programs.

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 Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, 101 North Stevens Hall, 207.581.1226.

Faculty in the News

Dr. Robert Lilieholm was selected for the 2013 G. Peirce and Florence Pitts Webber Outstanding Researcher in Forest Resources Award.

Dr. William Livingston, Dr. Robert Lilieholm, Dr. John Daigle, Molly Lizotte, M.F. candidate and **Kara Lorion, M.S.** candidate, along with their research team, were shown in a video special by the Maine Public Broadcasting Network (MPBN). The MPBN special showcased the team’s stakeholder-driven research on “Mobilizing Diverse Interests in the Case of the Emerald Ash Borer in Maine.”

Dr. Jeffrey Benjamin was honored by the Northeastern Loggers’ Association as the recipient of its 2012 Outstanding Service to the Forest Industry Award. NELA President Dennis Allard presented the award to Mr. Benjamin at the Annual Loggers’ Banquet in Brewer in a ceremony attended by more than 200 members of the Northeast’s forest products industry.



Branching Out

University of Maine School of Forest Resources Newsletter

Summer 2013



Director’s Welcome

I welcome you to this issue as I end my fifth year term as SFR Director. On July 1, Dr. Stephen Shaler took over as director of the school. Dr. Shaler comes to this leadership role with a strong background in our program as Professor of Wood Science. He also has significant leadership experience at UMaine serving as Associate Director of the Advanced Structures and Composites Center. The Center is an internationally recognized research program and Steve brings that excellence to his new role as SFR Director.

I am ending my term so that I can focus my efforts as Director of our Center for Research on Sustainable Forests (CRSF) and the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU). Over the past several years I have had responsibility for the school and these research units. The CRSF and CFRU have the potential to substantially increase our forest research capacity, but need more focused leadership to achieve that potential.

I also leave the SFR director position gratified that SFR is in a strong position to meet the forest resource education and research challenges ahead. We have filled three new faculty positions. The renovation of Nutting Hall is now complete. The Barbara Wheatland Geospatial Analysis Laboratory (the first fully endowed lab in Nutting Hall) was also just completed. And our 10-year accreditation review by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and Society of Wood Science & Technology (SWST) was just completed in April with very positive reviews by the visiting teams. So, I leave the SFR Director’s position knowing that the school is in a strong position and that leadership of the school is in able hands. Thanks to all the SFR alumni for their great help and support over the years.

In other news, 70 SFR students received \$243,000 in scholarships from more than 60 named scholarship funds provided by our generous alumni over the years. George Ritz (1971 B.S. in Forestry) received the Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of his long career as a professional forester in Maine and his tremendous humanitarian efforts in South America. During the 2012-13 academic year, SFR conferred 28 B.S. degrees (nine Forestry, three Forest Operations, Bioproducts & Bioenergy, and 16 Parks, Recreation, & Tourism) and 13 graduate degrees (four M.F., seven M.S., two Ph.D.).

Robert G. Wagner, Director



SAF/SWST Accreditation

In April of 2013, the Visiting Team from the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and the Society for Wood Science and Technology (SWST) were on campus to review our undergraduate and graduate programs for reaccreditation.

The accreditation process is very important to maintaining the professional standards of our degree programs. Reviews of accreditation are milestones occurring only once every 10 years. This review was especially important as it was a test and validation of all the hard work done by faculty to develop a new curriculum.

The written report is not yet complete and some recommendations for improvement are expected, but the visiting teams’ verbal reports reinforced that the University of Maine has a very strong forest resources program with a bright future.



Student Focus

Ema Gajic is visiting the University of Maine as part of the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program for Serbia, a part of the Global UGRAD Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This program provides scholarships to talented

students from Serbia to attend U.S. universities for one year of undergraduate, non-degree study. Ema's major is Wood Science and Technology and she has spent her time here in courses like Mechanics of Wood and Wood Composites (a graduate level course) and Understanding Wood with Professor Shaler, and Processing of Biomaterials with Professor Rice. She has taken a few special-interest courses in pulp and paper, dance and design. She has had the chance to work as an undergraduate research assistant with grad student Nadir Yildirim; she commented that "having a chance to gain research experience in an undergraduate program was a unique opportunity for me since the university in Serbia does not offer such a thing." When it comes to the social and cultural experience, Ema was able to travel around the U.S., practice speaking English every day, participate in many campus activities and learn a lot about American culture. An overall positive learning experience, Ema sums it up by stating that "it was very eye-opening--this might have been the most enriching year of my life." Read more about Emma: mainejournal.umaine.edu/story/gajic



CFRU & Wildlife Society Field Tour

The Cooperative Forestry Research Unit held its annual fall field tour jointly with the Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society on Thursday, October 18, 2012. The tour focused on moose density and forest regeneration and was hosted on Plum Creek Timber Company Inc. lands around Moosehead Lake, Maine. Moose are an iconic species in Maine and are both economically and ecologically important to the North Woods. However, where moose density is high, browsing can negatively impact forest regeneration. There were presentations from biologists, scientists and land managers on the topic during the tour. These annual tours are a highlight for forest resource managers, landowners and mill operators across the state, many of whom are UMaine SFR alumni.



Sandra De Urioste-Stone in Tallahassee, FL

Faculty Spotlight

The School of Forest Resources welcomed a new faculty member into the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism program this year: Sandra De Urioste-Stone, Assistant Professor of Nature-based Tourism. Originally from Guatemala, Sandra earned her B.A. from the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala in 1998, her M.S. from the University of Idaho in 2003 and her Ph.D. from the University of Idaho in 2008. Growing up in a tourism-oriented country and being an avid athlete, she was led from a young age to engage and appreciate travel and tourism. She is captivated by the cultural and natural diversity of the world and committed to promoting sustainable tourism planning and development. Before joining the University of Maine, she was Department Chair, Professor and Researcher at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala on sustainable tourism, global changes, collaborative management; and Ecotourism Program Manager for a conservation nonprofit organization in Guatemala working with indigenous/rural communities. We ask that you join us in welcoming Sandra and her family to Maine!

SFR Students Awarded over \$200,000 in scholarships

This year's SFR Student Awards Banquet was held in April. Sixty-eight current students and 17 incoming students received a total of \$246,040 in scholarships and awards. Among them were Emily Patrick, a Wildlife Ecology student, who received the Demeritt Award and Neil Thompson, a Forestry student, who received the Ashman Award. Students were accompanied by faculty, staff, donors and their family members.



Julie Churchill and Justin Libby, undergraduate students at the Hall of Flags in Augusta, Maine.

Julie Churchill and Justin Libby, undergraduate students majoring in forestry, represented the School of Forest Resources in the college's annual event at the State House Hall of Flags in Augusta in February 2013. This is a joint event of the College of NSFA and the UMaine Cooperative Extension to help State of Maine leaders better understand the value and significance of college and extension programs.

Faculty Updates

Dr. Aaron Weiskittel has been awarded tenure at the rank of Associate Professor. This accomplishment is very well deserved based on the tremendous contributions that Dr. Weiskittel has made to our research, teaching, and service efforts.

Joining the SFR faculty on September 1, 2013 will be **Dr. Mehdi Tajvidi**, who accepted the Assistant Professor of Renewable Nanomaterials position. We are thrilled to have Mehdi join our faculty to help advance the science and technology of renewable nanomaterials.

We are pleased to announce that **Dr. Shawn Fraver** has accepted the Assistant Professor of Climate Change & Carbon Dynamics position and will be teaching Forest Ecology in the fall. In this position he will be exploring processes influencing carbon dynamics of regional forests in response to climate change and past management regimes.



Alumni Survey

In the fall of 2012, the School of Forest Resources conducted a survey of undergraduate and graduate alumni who had graduated from 2002 through 2011. The objectives of the survey were to assess the employment success of graduates, and to assess how well the SFR curricula prepared students for employment in the forest resources field. Mail, internet, and phone were used to maximize survey responses from the 394 alumni surveyed. There were 105 total responses with a response rate of 27%.

Among all respondents, 82% reported being employed in the forest resources industry and 73% had found forest resources-related work within one year of graduating. Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported working full-time, while only 5% were holding temporary positions and 3% in part-time positions. Few alumni were unemployed or self-employed. Five percent of alumni are currently enrolled in graduate school and 18% reported having pursued a higher degree program after graduating.

More than 60% of alumni reported that their home state was Maine while they were students. Since graduating, more alumni have left the state than have stayed. Respondents agreed that the SFR had provided them with the skills and knowledge for a career in forest resources. The greatest strengths of the school that stood out for respondents were the faculty, the lessons in practical skills, and the diverse curriculum. The faculty was described as professional, accessible, knowledgeable, experienced, dedicated, passionate, and helpful. Field skills, technical skills, and critical thinking skills were identified by alumni as being an asset for other occupations as well as for those in the forest resources field. Information collected from this survey will be used to inform and educate prospective students and to improve the curriculum to meet changing needs in the job market.