



Biological and Agricultural Engineering Fall 2024 Newsletter

From the Department Head

FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD **DR. HOWELL**



It's hard to put into words how proud I am of all that was accomplished this semester by our students, staff, and faculty. We have compiled SOME (but not all) of these highlights. I think you will enjoy reading about these accomplishments that recognize their hard work, ingenuity, and drive for success.

I want to recognize the comings and goings of personnel. We lost our Accountant to a promotion in the College of Engineering, but we have hired a great replacement in Jeff Ledbetter. In addition, we added Amy Gimpel as our Communications Specialist. They both started in July and have made excellent contributions already. We are in the middle of three faculty searches right now. Two have Extension appointments, and one is a tenure-track assistant professor in engineering for the circular bioeconomy. There is high interest for all three positions, and we look forward to adding more talented people to our team. We are all in denial about Dr. Osborn's recent decision to retire in January. Please save the date of January 24th, as we have a come-and-go reception to celebrate his career at the University of Arkansas. As you know, we cannot replace his contributions to our classrooms, but we certainly hope to build on the legacy he is leaving here. I know I will personally miss interacting with him on a daily basis.

Many of our alumni will love reading the feature story that Amy Gimpel wrote for the University of Arkansas Daily News. If you have graduated within the last 20 years, there is a high likelihood that you were impacted by Dr. Osborn and others in Sophomore Design Studio. You will smile reading that article. I am also really proud of the various awards that our faculty and graduate students won this year. It is always great to be recognized by our peers.

Our students continue to rebuild their sense of community within the department post-Covid, and the student club is thriving. In addition to their monthly professional development activities, they are staying active by engaging in social activities, including the newly formed BENG Running Club. If you're in town on a Saturday, you are welcome to join us on a casual group run. Dr. Muenich spearheaded the formation of a Graduate and Professional Scholars Organization this fall. They are quickly building some much needed community among our technical professionals.

We had five undergraduates complete their BS and walk the stage this last weekend at Commencement, joining five other graduate students whose projects were supervised by our faculty. I am excited about the impact that these students will have on our profession moving forward.

As I wrap up my third semester here in the program, I continue to remain excited about our future. The department is committed to its mission of developing knowledge and tools that inspire tomorrow's engineers to design sustainable water, food, energy, and agricultural systems among our ever-changing world. It is a mission that unites us as we pursue excellence in our specialties. We would love for our alumni to drop in and say "hello." You are always welcome here.

We look forward to some rest over the holidays and then beginning this spring semester with renewed vigor.

Wooo Pig Sooovie!

Terry

Department Updates



Happy Retirement

DR. SCOTT OSBORN

BENG PROFESSOR FOR 23 YEARS



Dr. Osborn Retiring January 2025

After 23 years at the University of Arkansas, Scott Osborn will be retiring on January 31, 2025. We are grateful for his invaluable contributions to the department and wish him a happy retirement filled with rest and relaxation.

Congratulations on a remarkable career!

Please send your well wishes to Dr. Osborn using the button below.

[Send Well Wishes Here](#)



Amy Gimpel

Communications Specialist



Jeff Ledbetter

Fiscal Manager

New Additions to BENG Staff

Earlier this year, the department welcomed two new additions to our staff, Amy Gimpel and Jeff Ledbetter.

Amy accepted a brand new position in our department, communications specialist. She joined us from Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School in Joplin, Missouri. Amy has been helping us improve department communication through social media, feature stories, newsletters, recruiting, and more.

Our new fiscal manager, Jeff, has extensive experience with Tyson Foods and smaller organizations in northwest Arkansas. From that experience, he has been helping the department streamline processes to make them more efficient and enhance fiscal management.

We are so glad they have joined our team. Their hard work and dedication are already evident throughout the department. Welcome, Amy and Jeff!



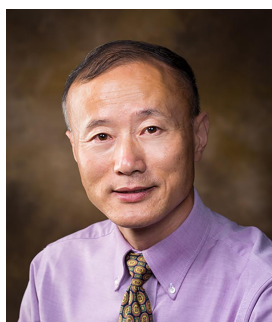
Swimming With Confidence: An Introductory Course Leads to Career Readiness

For 20 years, the unique hands-on Fish Tank Project has captivated students and instilled a lasting confidence that prepares them for successful careers.

Hear from numerous students and alums about the positive impact the class and Dr. Osborn have had on them and their careers.

[Read the story here.](#)

Faculty and Staff Highlights



Dr. Zhu Named ASABE Fellow

Jun Zhu was inducted as a fellow of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers at the society's annual international meeting in Anaheim, California, in July.

Read more about this prestigious honor [here](#).



Dr. Ubeyitogullari Earns Phi Tau Sigma Honors

Phi Tau Sigma, the honor society of food science and technology, has honored Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station researcher Ali Ubeyitogullari with its Early Career Accomplishment Award.

Read more [here](#).



Dr. Runkle Wins AGU award

Ben Runkle was named the recipient of the American Geophysical Union's 2024 Sulzman Award for Scientific Excellence Through Education and Mentoring.

Read more about his award [here](#).



BENG Faculty and Staff Honored at UADA Awards

Outstanding land-grant faculty and staff were honored at the annual Agriculture Awards, held at the Don Tyson Center for Agricultural Sciences.

In our department, Julian Abrams received the Division of Ag Outstanding Support Personnel Award for Program Area, and Chris Henry was recognized for obtaining a U.S. Patent. Read more about the award ceremony [here](#).



Dr. Muenich named provost fellow

Becca Muenich was named the U of A Provost's Fellow for Honorary Awards for the 2024-25 academic year.

During her fellowship, she will focus on assisting the Provost's Office and the Division of Research and Innovation with increasing the number of faculty nominations for honorary awards in the areas of scholarship, creative endeavors and teaching, with the goal of elevating the national reputation of U of A faculty and enabling the university's reputation as an employer of choice. Read more [here](#).

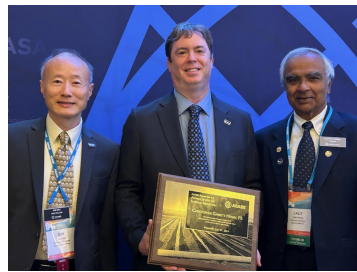


Dr. Matlock's Work Presented at U.N. Climate Conference

Marty Matlock is a leading author of a recently published report, "Potential for U.S. Agriculture to Be Greenhouse Gas Negative," that was presented at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Nov. 20.

The report shows that U.S. agriculture, which currently accounts for roughly 10% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, can more than offset its carbon footprint while increasing farmer profitability and farm resilience.

Read more about the presentation at the conference and the report's findings [here](#).



Dr. Henry Receives Award at ASABE

Chris Henry received the Advancement of Surface Irrigation Award in July at the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers Annual International Meeting in Anaheim, California.

The award is a testament to his significant contributions to the field.



College of Engineering Launches Redesigned Website

The College of Engineering has launched a new website that offers an improved appearance, better functionality, and refreshed content that reflects the college's excellent offerings for prospective students.

Check out our new webpage [here](#).

Student Updates



Congratulations to our December 2024 BENG graduates! We are incredibly proud of each of you and wish you all the best in the next phase of your lives. Wooo Pig!

B.S.

- Yoharis Murillo Chavez
- Galilea Martinez Cruz
- Hope Dwyer
- Owen Hicks
- Kevin Pineda-Vizcaino

M.S.

- Brandy Everett (Environmental Dynamics)
- Akrip Jati (Cell and Molecular Biology)
- Chaitanya Kumar Reddy Pallerla (Food Science)

Ph.D.

- Jaspreet Kaur (Biological Engineering)
- Hanan Wehbi (Environmental Dynamics)



Undergrad Students Visit Kansas City, MO for Industry Tour

Our undergraduate students had a great time on the fall industry tour in Kansas City, Missouri! Students toured the Flowers Bread Factory, the Mid-Missouri Ethanol Plant, and the Kansas City Water Treatment Plant.

The group also explored the city and visited the National WWI Museum and Memorial.

Thanks to everyone who made the industry tour a success!



BENG Student Club Participates in Trail Cleanup Day

In September, our BENG Student Club participated in National Make a Difference Day by cleaning up their adopted trail, Hamestring Trail.

Make a Difference Day encourages people to volunteer their time, money, and resources to make a positive impact in their communities.

Great work, BENG Student Club. We are proud of the positive impact you are making on our community and our environment!



Ph.D. Student Wins Ingral International Diversity Award

Rashid, a doctoral student and graduate research assistant in biological and agricultural engineering and geosciences at the University of Arkansas, was awarded the inaugural Diversity and Representation scholarship from GeoScienceWorld.

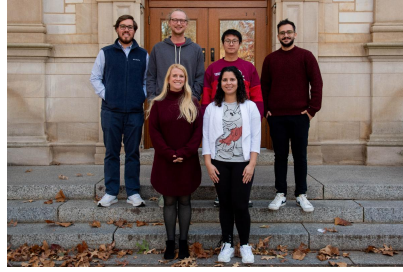
Read more about her award [here](#).



Robotics Team Places 4th at ASABE

The U of A's agricultural robotics team placed fourth in the annual American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers AIM agricultural robotics competition.

Read more [here](#).



Department Founds Graduate and Professional Scholars Association

In September, the department founded the BAEG Graduate and Professional Scholars Association.

The group aims to build a strong, supportive community to support departmental programs and efforts and advance graduate students' and staff's professional and personal development.

GPSA Officers:

Chair: Will Richardson

Vice Chair for Engagement: Danna Valdes

Vice Chair of Strategic Initiatives: Siavash Mahmoudi

Vice Chair of Order: Jeferson Pimentel

Vice Chair of Professionals: Ting Liu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Muenich



Ph.D. Students Wins "Best Science Communication" for Poster at Conference

Danna Villarreal, a doctoral student in biological and agricultural engineering, won the "Best Science Communication" award at the Networking for Engineering with Nature Symposium, held in St. Augustine, Florida.

Read more about her award [here](#).

Support BENG



The pace of change in engineering requires continual investment to provide exceptional professors and students, laboratory space, and state-of-the-art equipment.

Private support plays a vital role in the future of the Biological and Agricultural Engineering department. It provides necessary funding that allows us to strive for excellence in our students, faculty, and facilities.

You can give outright gifts to our department or the College of Engineering through cash, securities, corporate matching gifts, real estate, and personal property. Gifts of all kinds may be designated for immediate or current use or as a long-term investment through an endowment.

Learn more about giving and make your gift by clicking the button below.

[Give Now](#)

The BENG email newsletter is published after the fall and spring semesters and contains feature stories about department happenings, students, faculty, and staff.

After publication, newsletters can be found in the [online archives](#).



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