

FOCUS

Teaching, Research and Outreach
in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry
and Veterinary Medicine

The more than 2,000 students enrolled in the three academic units of the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine come from every county in Mississippi, almost every state in the nation and more than 70 foreign countries.

While at the university, they have the opportunity to participate in almost 50 student organizations, ranging from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Ambassadors to the forestry honor society Xi Sigma Pi.

"Students in the academic units of the division come from diverse backgrounds and their career goals are equally diverse," said DAFVM Vice President Vance Watson. "They tend to excel in academics and in the extracurricular activities provided by the student organizations within the division, many of which are student chapters of national and international professional organizations."

CALS Organizations

- Agricultural Economics Club
- Ag. Engineering Tech. Business Club
- Agricultural Pest Management Club
- Agronomy Club
- Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity
- CALS Ambassadors
- American Institute of Floral Design
- American Society of Interior Designers
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- ASAE Student Club
- Associated Landscape Contractors of America
- Biochemistry Club
- Block and Bridle Club
- Dairy Science Club
- Fashion Focus
- Food Science Club
- Horticulture Club
- Human Development and Family Studies Club
- Human Sciences Association
- Institute of Biological Engineering
- Kappa Omicron Nu Honorary
- Landscape Architecture Honor Society
- MSU Cattleman's Club
- MSU Horseman's Association
- MSU Rodeo Team
- National Agri-Marketing Assn. (NAMA)
- Poultry Science Club
- Pre-Veterinary Medical Club
- Society for Agricultural Leadership
- Student Dietetics Association
- Turf Club

Ambassadors Represent the College

Their name says it all—the CALS Ambassadors are truly the ambassadors for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"The Ambassadors are a select group of undergraduate students who represent the college and the university," said Ambassadors advisor Byron Williams. "They must have excellent communication, writing and speaking skills to carry out their duties, which include conducting tours of the college, writing thank you letters, and assisting with official functions of the college."

The opportunity to work with both new students and alumni lets Ambassadors see Mississippi State University from two different perspectives, said Amanda Bousson, last year's Ambassador president.

"The Ambassadors are in direct contact with students, helping them decide on a major and arrange their class schedules," she said. "I also have truly enjoyed the breakfasts we have twice a year to honor our alumni. I love watching them interact with each other and talk about the 'good old days,' but

even more exciting is to have the opportunity to meet someone who was in the same place I am 10, 20 or even 60 years ago."

The current Ambassadors and advisors select new members through an application and interview process each spring.



Ned Brooking

"Previous leadership experience is important because the Ambassadors are student leaders for the college," Williams said. "Usually, candidates have to have been at MSU two full semesters, but it is possible for a freshman to become a member. Once selected, Ambassadors usually serve until they graduate, but each member has to reapply each year and acceptance is not automatic."

The experience benefits the college and the students. "Being an Ambassador has improved my communication skills with my peers and adults," Bousson said. "It also has given me a chance to sharpen my leadership skills by giving me responsibilities that were mine alone to fulfill."

Block and Bridle More Than Riding and Roping

To the casual observer, Block and Bridle may seem to be all about cattle and horses.

While the objectives of the club include bringing together students with an interest in livestock, Skip Glidewell, president of the MSU chapter, said Block and Bridle activities are really about preparing students for life.

"It's a chance to meet like-minded people," he said. "That's important in helping a lot of students adjust to college life and to meet people they will know throughout their careers."

Most of the members of Block and Bridle have majors in the Department of Animal and Dairy Science, but the organization is open to any MSU student. Glidewell is a senior agricultural information science major from Corinth.

"A club is only as good as its members," he said. "To be in Block and Bridle you have to be willing to work and not everyone who applies gets in."

With almost 100 members, Block and Bridle is the largest student organization in the College of Agriculture and Life

Sciences. The members participate in many activities during the school year, the biggest of which is the Bulldog Stampede, the annual MSU collegiate rodeo.

"The rodeo is managed by the students, so they get experience in advertising sales and other business activities associated with this type of event," said Block and Bridle advisor Mike Martin, a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Animal and Dairy Science. "They also get to meet students from other schools. The people they meet will be leaders in the livestock industry, so the friendships they make through participation in our and other student rodeos can last a lifetime."

Block and Bridle places a strong emphasis on class work, and the combination of academics and fellowship within the organization creates a bond with Mississippi State.

"The organization helps instill a love of the university," Martin said. "We have alumni who come back each year to attend or help with the rodeo."



Allison McNamara

Keeping it Real in the World of Floral Design

Real world experiences are one benefit for members of the MSU student chapter of the American Institute of Floral Design.

"As members, students benefit from the Artist in Residence program that brings top floral designing professionals to campus to work with students," said Lynette McDougald, faculty adviser to the AIFD student chapter. "The annual National Symposium and the Southern AIFD regional challenge also provide students the chance to learn from and work with experienced designers. During this year's regional at the Grand Casino in Tunica, nine members of the MSU team assisted professional designers in crafting display arrangements for the four-day event."

Three MSU seniors, Crystal N. Sizemore of West Point, Amber M. Adsit of Riceville, Tenn., and Kathryn C. Stephens of Tuscaloosa, Ala., took top honors during the regional.

"One of the great benefits of student AIFD membership is the chance to work with the latest in floral design, including products and ideas from Europe," Adsit said. "Being a member of the student chapter keeps us up to date with the latest trends in the industry."

Floral industry contacts also are an important benefit of membership in the student AIFD chapter, said James DelPrince, associate professor of floral design and AIFD representative for the MSU student chapter.

"Through connections made while here at MSU, our students can go anywhere in the country and find someone they know," he said. "Alumni of our student chapter have gone on to do such diverse things as owning their own floral shops, working for major retailers as Michael's and Yankee Candle Company, and even working as a stylist for the Paula Dean's Home Cooking show on the Food Network."



Photo and text by Shoshana Brackett

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Student Dietitians Get Career Experience

Cooking breakfast before dawn for a couple of hundred people may not excite most college students, but it's an activity members of the MSU Student Dietetics Association look forward to.

"Our big fund raising events each year are the two College of Agriculture and Life Sciences alumni breakfasts," said SDA president Caroline Jones, a senior from Memphis, Tenn. "Our members cater this event Homecoming Weekend in the fall and Super Bulldog Weekend in the spring. It's a great way to get hands-on experience in food service and to get to know each other and the college's alumni."

The student organization has about 25 members and is affiliated with the 70,000-member American Dietetics Association. Speakers at its weekly meetings during the



Ned Browning