Dean’s Message

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Supporters,

Each May our graduation events mark the culmination of the academic year (p. 3-4). We celebrate the successes of our students and thank their parents and families for their support. Congratulations to all. Our educational programs center on classroom and lab experiences, but increasingly efforts to assist students in landing that first job has become a priority. This summer we ran the second year of our summer intern program. These efforts provided 39 students with their first taste of working for the US Forest Service, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Logan City, and the National Park Service. The interns have great experiences, working with agency colleagues to build trails, improve wildlife habitat, restore streams, and manage timber. We look forward to hearing their stories as they return to Logan in the fall.

A number of new initiatives were launched in the College this year. The Quinney Scholars decided to begin a legacy research program (p. 8) to track the recovery of the Logan River after a drastic channel reconstruction was completed in 2014. The students began a monitoring program including parameters for water quality, aquatic invertebrates, riparian vegetation and birds. Their efforts will dovetail nicely with efforts of faculty and city leaders to improve this tremendous asset for Logan and northern Utah (p. 7). Congratulations to all involved.

We are encouraged by the support of our central administration to fund a new faculty line in the College. An initiative to provide research expertise in water and climate change resulted in the award of four new faculty lines at the University. We received one of these positions and look forward to participating in a cluster hire for these new positions this coming fall.

We look forward to the approaching fall semester and arrival of new and returning students. We thank you for your continued support and involvement in activities of the Quinney College of Natural Resources.

Chris Luecke
QCNR Budget 2014 -2015

The Quinney College remains in solid financial condition largely because of hardworking faculty whose cutting edge research programs garner substantial research funding each year. As you can see in the chart to the left, our state of Utah appropriation (i.e. tuition money) provides one third of our funding needs. These funds pay for baseline faculty salaries, administrative staff, and needs associated with our undergraduate programs. Almost 70% of our funding comes from competitive research grants. These funds pay for most of the expenses related to graduate education in the College. Our average graduate student stipend exceeded $16,000 this past year. Our faculty works hard to secure funding to support over 200 graduate students.

Research funding also pays for summer salaries for faculty, and provides the research infrastructure that allows us to maintain our position as one the best land-grant institutions in the West. Additional funds come from support from the Quinney Foundations and from individual donors. These monies are essential for providing scholarships for our best and brightest students, for assisting with the internship programs, for maintaining our teaching computer labs at the highest standards, and for assisting with new research initiatives. Your contributions continue to make us a vibrant and productive academic institution.

QCNR Research Funding

This year our research funding has come from a variety of sources, both large and small. Collectively, these sources allow the Quinney College of Natural Resources to continue to address basic and applied issues in natural resources. Faculty research efforts greatly contribute to the education of tomorrow’s leaders in natural resources fields.

Our contributors include: US Bureau of Land Management, NASA, National Parks Service, National Science Foundation, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah Division of Water Quality, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, US Department of Agriculture, US Geological Survey, and the other foundations and organizations that make what we do possible.
New Faculty Highlights

Jereme Gaeta
As a child Jereme Gaeta recalls watching the movie “Shark” and being immediately fascinated by all things related to water – this enthusiasm steered him to Cal State Bakersfield where he earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Biology with an emphasis in ecology (2006). He later earned his Masters (2009) and PhD (2012) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison: Center of Limnology. Jereme described his education and experience at UW as, “Very field intensive with an emphasis on fisheries and human interactions.” While here at Utah State, he hopes to examine the effects of climate change on cold-water fisheries. In his spare time he enjoys fly-fishing.

Kris Hulvey
As she began her post doc at the University of Western Australia, Kris Hulvey was interested in conservation biology and invasive weeds. She worked to involve citizens in the promotion of healthy ecosystems. Kris realized that change only happens when people are motivated by their interests in the environment. She hopes to involve citizen groups in the planning and implementation of land restoration projects. Kris received her BS in Biology from Stanford University, and MS and PhD degrees in Environmental Studies from UC-Santa Cruz. Kris is currently working with a team to determine grazing practices and their impact on the environment. Kris spends her free time rock climbing, mountain biking and backcountry skiing.

Eric Thacker
As a young man growing up in rural Uintah Basin, Eric Thacker searched for a career that would combine two of his passions, science and the outdoors. Eric earned all of his degrees at Utah State University in our College. He received a BS and MS in Rangeland Science, and a PhD in Wildlife Science. Eric is an Extension Specialist for the College with an emphasis in grazing management and wildlife conflict. He comes back to USU after a stint as an assistant professor at Oklahoma State University. At USU he works with farmers and ranchers to insure that management techniques serve the needs of people and preserve the environment. Eric spends most of his time with his wife and six children. He enjoys fly fishing and hunting with his dog.
New Administrators

Chris Lant

Fall Semester 2014 began with Dr. Chris Lant beginning his role as Department Head of Environment and Society. His arrival heralds a renewed focus on quantifying the services ecosystems provide to people and their communities.

Social Science has always been an information rich environment with large data sets involving GIS and census information. Dr. Lant believes that, “It takes a well-trained social scientist to distill knowledge from information.” He is making it the number one priority to have a department of “well-trained” social scientists, who will be able to evaluate data and put meaning to the information.

With further new faculty additions to the department, ENVS will enhance its position a research program. We will be able to focus additional expertise using large-sample data sets to understand how people use and benefit from our outdoor environments.

Dr. Lant received a PhD in Geography from the University of Iowa in 1988, and has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles on water resources, water policy, and ecosystem services. He served as the executive director of the Universities Council on Water Resources from 2002-2014. Chris plans to continue his research in water resources, water transfers, and renewable water systems now that he is in the West. He also has his sights on becoming the premier trout angler in the College.

Peter Wilcock

Peter Wilcock has now completed his first year as Head of the Department of Watershed Sciences and has immersed himself in a variety of issues related to our communities’ relationships with water.

Peter is one of the leaders in the Logan River Task Force (p. 7) and is helping our cities think clearly about how to plan and implement stream restoration. Peter’s global expertise in river restoration is helping our community make better decisions about a variety of local projects.

Peter received his PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences. Prior to coming to USU, Professor Wilcock was a member of the Department of Geography & Environmental Engineering at Johns Hopkins University.

Peter is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and is a leading expert on sediment movement in river systems. Peter plans to continue his research on stream restoration and hopes to establish protocols for scientifically sound restoration practices.
The highlight of our year is the commencement ceremonies each May. This spring 87 undergraduate students and 36 graduate students were awarded their degrees. It was a delight getting to meet many of the families and friends of our graduates on May 2, and see so many smiling faces.

The good news is that the job market has improved substantially for these millennials. Over 85% of our graduates from last year are currently employed as natural resource professionals or have entered graduate school to continue their education. Even better news is that starting incomes for our graduates have increased in recent years. These trends allow more of our students to launch successful careers, improving forests and rangelands, managing wildlife populations, and developing plans and policies to enhance the value of our natural resources and promote the sustainability of ecosystems throughout North America. We highlight a few of our remarkable students in the following section.

**Average Graduate Salary**

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<th>Degree</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
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**Undergraduate Class of 2015**

**Jamie Reynolds**

Jamie was the 2014-2015 Scholar of the Year and graduated with a degree in Wildland Resources. She begins her graduate studies here at USU working with Jereme Gaeta on Utah Lake Ecology.

**Jason Brown**

Jason was the QCNR and Wildland Resources Department’s Outstanding Senior and was recipient of the Jardine Juniper Award. He accepted a forester position in Mississippi.

**Morgan Hughes**

Morgan was QCNR’s Valedictorian for the 2014-2015 Undergraduate Class and spoke during the Undergraduate Commencement. She is currently working with the Peace Corps in Peru.
Graduate Class of 2015

Dustin Ranglack
Dustin recently graduated from QCNR with a Ph.D in Wildlife Ecology. He is now working as a post-doc evaluating and informing elk habitat management at Montana State University.

Monica Blanchard
Monica graduated with an MS in Watershed Science in May 2015 and is now working for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission as a Fishery Biologist. She is based in Portland, Oregon.

Blake Thomas
Blake was honored as the 2015 Graduate Research Assistant of the year. He graduated with an MS in Human Dimensions of Ecosystem Science and Management. He is currently an Alternate Transportation Specialist in the Utah Governor’s Office of Energy Development.

Post-Graduation Employment Rates

Over 75% of QCNR graduates find gainful employment in Natural Resource fields. Another 10% pursue advanced degrees.

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Logan River Project

During the winter of 2013-14, the Natural Resources Conservation Service began the final stages of a program to redesign of the Logan River under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. This redesign stripped the river of woody debris and channel complexity in the name of flood protection. Unfortunately, this project greatly reduced habitat for fish and aquatic invertebrates. This project created an outcry among citizens of the city and mobilized faculty and students in QCNR to take action.

In 2014 the Logan River Task Force was created to develop and implement a plan to restore the Logan River in order to mitigate some of the problems created by the flood control project. Representatives from Logan City, Cache County, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Division of Water Quality, Utah State University, Trout Unlimited, and

Dr. Frank Howe is the chair for the Logan River Task Force. His efforts and leadership have been key in bringing together members of city and state government, the University, local citizen groups.

Professor Nancy Mesner and Jamie Reynolds taking samples at a site along the Logan River.

Flood protection measures underway on the Logan River in the winter of 2013-2014.
citizen groups met monthly to develop a plan to restore sections of the river channel and vegetate denuded shorelines. Dr. Frank Howe chairs the Task Force. Funds from the City of Logan and the Utah Division of Water Quality are being used to implement the plans. The objective of the project is to create a river corridor that improves fish and wildlife habitat, provides resistance to flooding, and enhances the natural beauty of the river for the citizens of Cache Valley.

Efforts to restore the Logan River by the Task Force and the Quinney College of Natural Resources are not only have positive impacts on the river’s ecology, but also enhancing collaborations between the community and our University.

The Quinney Scholars in the College are contributing to this effort by creating a legacy research project to monitor changes in water quality characteristics, riparian vegetation, aquatic invertebrates, and bird abundance (see inset box).
Going “Wild” in Yellowstone

This past spring, while most Utah State University students were in class, 14 students from the Quinney College of Natural Resources watched a pack of wolves hunt a herd of Bison in Yellowstone National Park. For the past two years, members of the USU Wildlife Club have spent a few days in the spring gaining hands-on experience in Northern Yellowstone. Dr. Dan MacNulty, Assistant Professor of Wildlife Ecology and the Faculty Advisor for the Wildlife Club, spearheaded the trip to give students hands-on experience in wildlife research that most don’t get until they enter the workforce.

The trip spanned four days and helped students develop core skills in radio telemetry, field necropsy, tracking, spotting and properly identifying animals. Students were able to observe mountain goats, moose, bison, pronghorn, elk, mule deer, white-tail deer and bighorn sheep. Highlights included observing wolves and conducting a necropsy of a radio-collared elk that had been killed by a mountain lion.

Every night the students are treated to a guest speaker. This year, Jim Halfpenny, a world-renowned tracker, spoke to the group. These trips provide field experiences for our students and better prepare them for careers in natural resources management. We look forward to next year’s trip.
Ronald J. Ryel
Natural Resources Conservancy Scholarship

Over the past fifty years, natural resources management has become increasingly science-based. QCNR faculty and alumni have been major contributors to this trend, at the state, national, and international levels. One of our former faculty members, Dr. Ron Ryel, has established a scholarship endowment to support QCNR undergraduates who are poised to become the next generation of science-based NR professionals.

Dr. Ryel is known in the scientific community for his creativity, enthusiasm, and breadth of research. Since his departure from QCNR in 2011 for health reasons, his presence has been missed by faculty and students alike. According to Dr. Karen Mock, “He was a delight to work with, always enthusiastic about the process of scientific discovery, always inclusive, and very passionate about using research to inform management.”

Dr. Ryel and his spouse Dr. Melanie Spriggs (a retired molecular biologist) made the decision to endow the Ronald J. Ryel Natural Resources Conservancy Scholarship as a lasting contribution to natural resources management.

According to Dr. Spriggs, “Instead of giving a lump sum of money to a natural resources agency, Ron and I decided to set up a scholarship to support the students who will one day become the future leaders of those agencies. We were more excited about investing in the people who will be the future resource managers.” QCNR is honored that Dr. Ryel and Dr. Spriggs chose to make this investment through our College.

According to QCNR Dean Chris Luecke, “This type of support makes an enormous difference in the lives of our students. It is not only a contribution to the next generation of NR professionals, but also a statement of confidence in these students and in our program. This endowment is particularly meaningful since it comes from one of our own faculty members.”

The first recipient of the Ronald J. Ryel Scholarship is Elizabeth Winters, a sophomore majoring in Conservation and Restoration Ecology. Elizabeth is a runner, and spending time outdoors helped inspire her to choose a career in the management and stewardship of natural resources. We are soliciting additional funds for this endowment.

Anyone interested in contributing to the Ryel Scholarship Endowment, please contact Jon Paulding at jon.paulding@usu.edu.