

## **Elizabeth Guertal - Vision Statement**

My vision for a Soil and Crop Sciences department includes the following: 1) recruit additional undergraduate and graduate students using the fact that the degree is heavily invested in the sciences, and that a Soil and Crop Sciences graduate can use that science degree in many different careers, 2) find and make new sources of funding available, especially as some of our long-used and consistent (commodity, industry) sources may become less well funded due to mergers or downsizing, 3) strengthen the natural link of global agronomy, sending undergraduates, graduates and faculty out to create an international presence, and, 4) seek to find the best and most resources for faculty, providing the tools and personnel they need to be their most productive.

For example, to recruit students we must go above and beyond our 'comfort zone'. This means we go into the science classes at high schools, and talk about the environmental value of a Soil and Crop Sciences degree. We work with committed alumni to create endowments that encourage international travel for our students, exposing them to places they never thought they'd see. Work-life experiences are created by the development of internships, study abroad experiences, and attendance at scientific meetings.

In addition to undergraduate education there should also be discussion about the value of research, outreach and extension in Soil and Crop Sciences, a value that impacts the soil and water quality of all citizens of Colorado. We cannot ignore the continued importance of agricultural crops and their production, including grain, fiber and forages. Continued education and promotion of all of these efforts requires vision, yes, but it also requires marketing and an astute sense of communication, especially to audiences that are not aware of the role of feed, fiber and forages in their own lives. The Department Head for Soil and Crop Sciences should be able to clearly communicate the importance of what the students, staff and faculty do.

The other day I renewed my membership in the American Society of Agronomy, and when I received my membership card I was a bit startled to discover that I have been a member of ASA for 31 years (I'd like to think I am not *that* old - I've been a member since I was an undergraduate student). As I look back on the 31 years that I already have in my experience, I see Soil and Crop Science departments that were vastly different from what they are today. In many cases current departments are smaller, and they are less well funded (via hard monies in state budgets). There is a far greater emphasis on obtaining outside grants, yet there are fewer resources available to attract those grant dollars. Thus, my vision for a Department Head includes roles that were not needed twenty years ago, including skills in fund raising and knowledge of the political process to

head to Washington, D.C. to obtain federal line items for critical agronomic research. This is, in part, the answer to finding new funding sources.

My departmental vision is to help provide the resources and leadership to assist engaged faculty, staff and students. Resources will only come through a team effort, and that includes support from state, national and alumni groups. This will enable them to continue the quality work of a Soil and Crop Sciences department at a great land-grant university, Colorado State University.