



Department of
Biochemistry and Biophysics

Bio/Bio News – February 2015

BIO/BIO FACULTY IN THE NEWS



NACADA REGION 7 STEERING COMMITTEE
ANNOUNCES AWARD 2015 WINNERS

Good advising, like good teaching, publication and research, needs to be recognized. The National Academic Advising Association, NACADA, believes a tangible reward system can be an enhancement to effective advising.

The goal of the NACADA Award Programs are to encourage wider support and recognition for academic advising in colleges and universities by providing an opportunity for recognition of outstanding advising. An ultimate outcome of these programs is to improve advising services for students.

A variety of awards, scholarships and grants are offered to NACADA members and others who have demonstrated excellence in advising, faculty advising, academic advising administration, leadership in the field, and graduate student accomplishments

Congratulations to Dr. David O. Peterson, Professor and Associate Head for Undergraduate Programs with the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics, for having been selected as the recipient of the NACADA Region 7 Outstanding Faculty Academic Advising Award. The Outstanding Faculty advising category is to recognize individuals who have demonstrated qualities associated with outstanding academic advising of students. The award goes to faculty members who's primary responsibility is teaching, and who spend a portion of their time providing academic advising services to students. Dr. Peterson will be presented his award at the conference to be held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana March 5-7, 2015. The Region 7 regional conference held each year attracts academic advisors from Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana, Texas Oklahoma and Kansas.



Dr. Peterson is highly respected and revered by the undergraduates he mentors through the Biochemistry

Department. As a Professor in the classroom, the level of respect the students have for him, and encouragement that Dr. Peterson has been to his students is evident by some of the comments given by the students on the course evaluations completed by the students at the end of each semester. The following is just a sampling of some of the comments given by his students:

"He is an excellent professor! His lectures are very engaging and he knows his stuff! Class is always a lot of fun with Dr. Peterson."

"I like how he is always smiling."

"I like Dr. Peterson's chalk-board style. It is refreshing to see him put simplified mechanisms on the board."

"Dr. Peterson is the best professor I have ever had. His method of writing on the board forces students to attend class and take notes as opposed to professors who just post slides online. He is always very caring and willing to help outside of class."

"Dr. Peterson knows his course material well and makes things easy to comprehend."

"His class is awesome! I enjoyed every minute."

"Dr. Peterson is a great professor who really cares about what we learn. He also makes the course material interesting by telling jokes."

"His lectures and style are superb. His lectures are clear and well organized."

Because Dr. Peterson was named recipient of the E. Guthrie and Mervin and Annette Peters Advising Award in 2014, his nomination packet was sent forward to the NACADA. We are very proud of Dr. Peterson for being selected as the Regional winner, he is a professor truly deserving of this recognition!



TEXAS A&M REJOINS NATION'S
TOP 20 RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Published on February 9, 2015 in [Awards & Recognitions, Science & Technology](#)

Texas A&M University has rejoined the nation's list of the top 20 research universities, based on annual expenditures in research and development, according to a recent survey from the National Science Foundation (NSF).



Released this month, the NSF's Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey ranks Texas A&M at

19th with research and development expenditures of slightly more than \$820 million during fiscal year 2013.

This represents an 18.25 percent increase from fiscal 2012, when Texas A&M recorded \$693.4 million in expenditures and ranked 24th in the NSF survey for that fiscal year.

“In terms of research capabilities, our competition is no longer in Texas,” said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. “Texas A&M research is now ranked among the top 20 research universities in America and it has just begun to grow.”

While the improved ranking is a sign of progress, Texas A&M’s long-term goal remains to become one of the top-10 research universities on the NSF’s list, Vice President for Research Glen A. Laine said. “Our move into the top 20 is a result of the outstanding efforts of our stellar faculty-researchers. We are developing programs to compete even more effectively for the limited funding available at the top levels of research,” he said. “We expect these programs to generate millions in additional funding dollars in the coming fiscal years.”

Laine pointed out that Chancellor Sharp’s decision to move the Health Science Center from the System to the university, and his decision to move the Center for Innovation and Advanced Development Manufacturing from the System to the Health Science Center, greatly increased research collaboration and research activities.

The NSF survey provides an annual census of 891 degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States, with a minimum budget of at least \$150,000 in research and development expenditures. The latest survey found that U.S. universities recorded \$67.2 billion in research and development expenditures in fiscal 2013. When adjusted for inflation, the NSF said, that total reflects an increase of less than a half percent from fiscal 2012’s total of \$65.7 billion.

Johns Hopkins University led the survey with \$2.1 billion in expenditures, followed by University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (\$1.3 billion), and the University of Washington at Seattle (\$1.1 billion).

Texas A&M is the only university in the state to make the NSF’s top 20. The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center ranked 26th with \$718 million; The University of Texas at Austin ranked 31st with \$634 million; the Baylor College of Medicine ranked 37th with \$508.7 million; and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center ranked 45th with \$440.6 million. The NSF survey can be viewed at <http://ncesdata.nsf.gov/herd/2013/>

About Research at Texas A&M University: As one of the world’s leading research institutions, Texas A&M is in the vanguard in making significant contributions to the storehouse of knowledge, including that of science and technology. Research conducted at Texas A&M represents annual expenditures of more than \$820 million. That research creates new knowledge that provides basic, fundamental and applied contributions resulting in many

cases in economic benefits to the state, nation and world. To learn more, visit <http://research.tamu.edu>.

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2014-15 AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED!

The 28th Annual President’s Meritorious Service Awards was held on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at Rudder Theatre.

The President of Texas A&M University presents these prestigious awards to Texas A&M staff for their meritorious service to the University. Since 1986, these awards have been funded through the generosity of The Association of Former Students.

Out of 159 nominations, fifteen individual staff members and one team were selected as winners of the 2014-2015 President’s Meritorious Service Award!

The Department of Biochemistry & Biophysics is proud to announce that Ms. Betty Cotton, the Assistant to the Department Head, Dr. Gregory D. Reinhart, has been named one of the recipients of the awards. All University employees are invited to the award ceremony honoring these outstanding staff members. The ceremony was on Wednesday, February 25, 2015, at 9:30 a.m. in Rudder Theatre. A reception with refreshments followed in the Rudder Exhibit Hall following the ceremony.



The President’s Meritorious Service Awards began in 1986. Currently, these awards are presented to recognize 15 outstanding staff employees and one outstanding team for their meritorious service to the University. Nominations are typically called for during the fall and an anonymous committee appointed by the President selects the recipients.

Awards are presented at a special award ceremony. Each individual recipient receives a \$700 cash award, a commemorative plaque, and a lapel pin. The team will be recognized with a plaque for departmental display. Each member of the team receives a cash award of \$200, a lapel pin and a framed certificate of recognition.

Employees eligible must be a member of the Texas A&M University staff (those classified as faculty are ineligible); have a minimum of two years of service with Texas A&M University; be below the level of department or unit head, director or related titles; and be budgeted at least 50% with Texas A&M University. For team nominations, the above eligibility requirements apply, with the exception that the majority of team members must have a minimum of two years of service with Texas A&M University and have not been a past team award recipient. Any member of the faculty and staff of Texas A&M University may make nominations.

The President's Meritorious Service Awards Program is sponsored by the Office of the President, and The Association of Former Students. The program is coordinated by Texas A&M Human Resources.

ANNUAL BICH RECRUITMENT FEBRUARY 27 & 28, 2015

The annual Texas A&M University, Biochemistry & Biophysics Graduate Recruiting Weekend is set to kick off on Friday February 27, prospective new students coming to Texas A&M University to visit and interview with members of the Biochemistry faculty and staff.

The events begin with the annual Vendor show and lunch at 11AM in the foyer of the Biochemistry building. Followed by a Mix & Mingle for recruits and current Grad students in room 106A at 3PM.

A Research Competition will be held on Friday afternoon, beginning at 3:55 in room 108 of the Biochemistry building. Some of our current Biochemistry Grad students will be presenting brief talks in hopes of receiving 1st, 2nd or 3rd place, along with the monetary award and certificate for their placement in the competition. The winners of the Research Competition along with the recipients of the Prescott and Mistretta Awards will be announced at 5PM

Following the activities of the Research Competition, the recruits along with current Grad student will be hosted in the homes of various members of the faculty, allowing the recruits to experience a more relaxed evening and get acquainted in a more casual atmosphere.

THE TEXAS A&M STAFF EMERGENCY FUND IS HERE . . . and you can help!

The Texas A&M University Staff Emergency Fund (SEF) was established to provide limited financial assistance to both classified and non-classified staff employees of Texas A&M University, who are experiencing a temporary hardship due to a significant life event. All applications will be confidential.

The SEF is possible because of the support of the Texas A&M University President, the Texas A&M Foundation, donations by university employees and the efforts of the University Staff Council. Awards are contingent on fund availability and other requirements set forth below.

Give Now
[Printable Pledge Form](#) to mail with your check
or
[Online at the Texas A&M Foundation website](#)
or
Sign up for Automatic Payroll Deduction by enrolling in the [One Spirit, One Vision](#) campaign (A&M Foundation code 996).

Fund Eligibility

- All active, benefits eligible, non-faculty, University staff employees are eligible to apply.
- Applicants must have continuous employment as a TAMU staff member for at least one year prior to application date.
- Applicants must not have received a SEF grant within the past two calendar years.
- Assistance is limited to a maximum of \$500 per employee.
- Only applicants who are experiencing a temporary financial hardship will be awarded funds.

A temporary financial hardship is one caused by a defined, time-limited, specific event including, but not limited to:

- death of a family member
- natural disaster (fire/flooding/tornado/hurricane, etc.)
- serious illness/critical injury

Emergency funding is not guaranteed and is based on demonstrated need, short-term nature of the financial hardship, committee approval and available funds. *Application procedures will be posted when funds are available to support requests.*



TIME TO GET YOUR WELLNESS EXAM!



Reminder!!! To continue your eligibility for the lower premium of the Wellness Exam Incentive program for the plan year beginning September 1, 2015, you will need to complete your annual wellness exam by June 30, 2015.

- Applies to employees AND covered spouses enrolled in the A&M Care Plan.
- A premium differential of \$30 per month will be added to the premium for each individual (you and your spouse) who does not complete a wellness exam between September 1, 2014 and the June 30, 2015 deadline.
- Retirees will automatically receive the lower premium.
- BlueCross Blue Shield will record the incentive completion through the claims payment process.
- You can verify your completion status for the wellness exam incentive on BlueCross BlueShield Access for Members (BAM) website:
<http://www.bcbstx.com/member>
- Your annual exam may be taken before twelve months have passed since your last annual exam.

For more information and detailed instructions, please visit the TAMUS Wellness website. (link to:
<http://www.tamus.edu/offices/benefits/employee-retiree-benefits/wellness/>)

UPCOMING EVENTS IN BIO/BIO

BICH Recruiting Weekend	Feb. 27-28
Spring Break Fac. & Staff (3 days)	March 18-20
Faculty Meeting, N127 3:30PM	March 30
Memorial Day	May 26, 2014

TEXAS A&M STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK, MARCH 23-27

Staff Appreciation Week is back by popular demand! The University Staff Council (USC) is again joining forces with Human Resources (HR) to plan events for the week of March 23-27 to recognize our outstanding staff at Texas A&M!



Learn more about Staff Appreciation Week online and look for additional information to be communicated once more events are finalized. We encourage departments to plan now to host events within your offices. Visit the HR site for employee recognition resources including "no cost or low cost ideas" and review a list of popular department events/ideas to spark some ideas about what your department can do.

Supervisors, remember that a simple "thank you" goes a long way to motivate and recognize employees. Let them know their contributions matter to Texas A&M and to you!



Texas A&M AgriLife supports the efforts of employees on the journey toward wellness and life balance. "Living Well Aware" has kicked off the Employee Wellness Initiative with a set of presentations geared to educate, inform and get you thinking about the importance and benefits of embracing a healthy lifestyle.

If you missed the initial seminar, additional events are scheduled of which you may want to take advantage of.

Upcoming Events:

March 30 – AgriLife Walk Across Texas launch – more details to come!

Upcoming Live Webinar Series:

March 26 at 1:30 pm – "Stifle the STRESS/Stop the Suffering!"

October 8 at 1:30 pm – "How to Partner with Your Provider for Optimal Health"

December 8 at 1:30 pm – "Making Lasting Changes"

Related materials are posted on the website. <http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/wellness/>

PROGRAMS TO HELP YOU ON YOUR ROAD TO WELLNESS!

Take advantage of these FREE programs and other Wellness Works resources to help you achieve your goal of fitness and weight loss.

Walk Across Texas is a program created by Texas A&M AgriLife and the goal to get people in the habit of regular physical activity. You can start at any time. Most of our campuses and agencies will participate as a competition with 8-person teams.

Walk Across Texas, 2015 - February 7 thru April 4. An eight week physical activity program to encourage greater activity levels.

For more information contact your Wellness Coordinator or HR office, or find out more at <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/>.

Health & Wellness Fair - March 4. Visit the information booths, attend a "mini-chat" and see wellness demonstrations. Save the date now!

B/CS Chamber Water Cooler 5k Run/Walk - April 9. Texas A&M is again supporting this Chamber event encouraging you to take a stroll or clock your fastest time yet. Open to all fitness levels. Registration will open soon, so watch for more details.

Health Awareness Bulletins on line monthly to increase your awareness levels. A complete monthly quiz for a chance to win prizes is coming soon.

<http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/wellness/health-bulletins/>

STUDENT RESEARCH WEEK 2015

Student Research week is a platform for showcasing outstanding research undertaken by graduate and undergraduate students at Texas A&M University. The event offers an opportunity to meet experts, interact with them and receive valuable feedback. Get involved as a competitor, judge or volunteer.



The registration deadline for Student Research Week (SRW) 2015 has been extended! The new registration deadline is March 6th 2015.

SRW 2015 will be held the week after spring break, March 23-27. It is one of the largest university-wide, student-led research week programs in the nation. The mission of SRW is to recognize and celebrate student research at Texas A&M University. Get involved as a:

- 1) **Participant** - As a student, you can present your work and compete for prizes! Any undergraduate or graduate student who is the primary author of a research project, class project, or paper may submit an abstract to be

considered for the oral or poster competition. Abstracts will be accepted on a first-come, first serve basis until March 6, 2015 at midnight or until registration is full, whichever comes first. Visit the SRW website (<http://srw.tamu.edu/>) to register.

- 2) **Volunteer** - As a student volunteer, you can play a key role in the continued success of this event. We have many opportunities for your organization members to volunteer throughout the week. The organization that contributes the most volunteer hours will receive a \$500 cash prize! You can also register as an individual.
- 3) **Judge** - If you feel you have what it takes to critically analyze student research, do sign up to participate in the student research week as a judge. To be a judge you must be a currently employed faculty, staff or graduate student at Texas A&M University.

We at SRW support the spirit of learning and feel that it should be encouraged, so we invite you to come be a part of the audience for any poster or oral presentation sessions. Session schedules will be posted closer to the event. For more information please visit <http://srw.tamu.edu/>. In case of any questions, email us at srw@tamu.edu.

FIFTY DAYS OF FITNESS

Forty participants signed up for the department's Fifty Days of Fitness challenge, and are off to a great start. A big "thank you" for the donations received and the willing hearts that signed up for the challenge. Today's top 3 percentage of weight loss appear to be Suzi Aleksander, Betty Cotton and Reed Stubbendieck. Members of the Fitness Challenge who have reported making a cautious effort in exercising for at least 15 minutes a day are Suzi Aleksander, Betty Cotton, Huiyan Jin and Chenxi Qiu. They are in it to WIN it!



HEALTH & Wellness FAIR

Wed., March 4
Memorial Student Center
MSC 2300 Bethancourt Ballroom
10:00am — 2:00pm

Employees, stop by for:

- Over 55 vendor booths!
- Health screenings!
- Wellness presentations!
- Health demonstrations!
- Prizes & Give-aways!
 - ▶ Free pedometers to the first 250 employees attending!
 - ▶ **GRAND PRIZES**, including a Fitbit wrist band activity tracker!

Parking available in the University Center Garage (fees apply) or take the campus shuttle bus to the MSC.

FREE! - NO Registration needed!
employees.tamu.edu/employees/benefits

WELLNESS WORKS
Physical Financial Interpersonal

ATM
HUMAN RESOURCES
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
We're here for you!

HR Benefits Services | GSC, Suite 1201
750 Agronomy Road, College Station, TX

QUESTIONS?
979.862.1718 benefits@tamu.edu
employees.tamu.edu