EARTH WIND & FIRE

FINDING THE RIGHT GROOVE FOR AMERICA'S ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES
sought to discover what language helped to motivate participation in these energy programs. Our researchers are studying OPPD’s communication and marketing components and will share the results with OPPD.”

CBA faculty Jonna Holland and Phani Tej Adidam, meanwhile, have added green components to their courses in the college’s Executive MBA program.

Holland and five students traveled to Costa Rica for two weeks last fall to work alongside students at EARTH University. A private, international, nonprofit entity, EARTH University’s mission is to contribute to sustainable development in the tropics by seeking a balance between agricultural production and environmental preservation.

Holland says her students learned extensively about the university’s sustainability efforts and programs, such as how to deal with waste produced by banana plantations throughout Costa Rica.

Adidam’s students visited major airports in Madrid, Frankfurt, London, Amsterdam and Paris last fall to examine how ground power units (GPUs) in Europe compare to those in the United States. Airlines use GPUs as a temporary and alternative power source while passengers deplane and board.

Planes can sit 24 gates from 90 minutes to two hours or more, emanating exhaust and wasting fuel. Switching to a GPU at such times is a cleaner way to keep the plane on auxiliary power while on the ground.

For two weeks, Adidam and four students studied ways to display and store the green GPU hardware, varying from a dangling black cable (cost: around $3,000 per unit) to a glass-enclosed box ($14,000 per unit).

The trip provided Adidam’s students a global view of an initiative designed to make air travel slightly kinder to the environment.

Back home, that’s something the folks in CBA know more than a little about.

The project she is particularly excited about is the compilation of a large agriculture/environment database that will look at farming practices over time, in some cases more than a century, and the resulting changes in environmental quality. While it will take years to assemble, the hope is once the information is in place computer modeling will provide accurate predictions about land use and its impacts.

Another project, sponsored by the state’s Game and Park Commission, has Wolfenbarger examining the environmental impact of wind power (see Page 24). Bird and bat populations can be negatively affected if the giant turbines are placed incorrectly.

“It’s got me really interested in how we provide the right ecological information to agencies and developers so that wind power is a win-win,” she says.

— Tim Kaldahl, Associate Editor

\textbf{Prairie Professor}\n
\textbf{UNO’s LaReesa Wolfenbarger explores man’s impact on native tall grasses and their inhabitants}

Considering it’s in the heart of the Great Plains, Nebraska surprisingly has little undisturbed tall grass prairie left — 99 percent of it has been altered for some other use.

“Most of it has been converted to some sort of farmland,” says UNO Business Professor LaReesa Wolfenbarger.

That’s bad news for birds like the Eastern and Western Meadowlarks and Grasshopper Sparrows, which need tall grasses to survive. They’ve at least got a great advocate on their side — Wolfenbarger.

A researcher at UNO for 10 years, she studies how land use affects species that traditionally live in tall grass prairie.

Her field research has brought her to a part of the country she loves after spending a couple of years carrying out policy work as a scientist with the Environmental Protection Agency.

Understanding the impact of agriculture is important to everyone — from the farmer in the field to the consumer buying food for their family, Wolfenbarger says. Those impacts can range from the unknown effects of genetically engineered crops to the overuse of chemicals, damaging ground water.

“When humans degrade ecosystems there are cascading effects that affect humans directly in those locations,” Wolfenbarger says. “We know that increasing the use of pesticide is something we want to avoid or minimize because those chemicals may impact humans in some way.

“We also put a lot of effort in agricultural policy to avoid soil erosion. Controlling soil erosion has benefits to wildlife as well as benefits to humans.”

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\textbf{IT’S BEEN NEARLY A YEAR since UNO’s College of Business Administration relocated to its stunning new home, Mammel Hall. The 120,000-square-foot facility opened to rave reviews, and not just because it was easy on the eyes — it’s easy on the environment, too.}

Mammel Hall, however, isn’t CBA’s only eco-friendly initiative. The college in various ways is trying to help businesses reduce their energy costs, while faculty and staff incorporate green studies into assorted curricula.

“As nice as it is to be working in a great facility,” says Rick Yoder of CBA’s Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC), “it’s even nicer to have the collective efforts of campus and community working for future improvements.”

Granted, those efforts shine most brightly with Mammel Hall. In January it became the first building within the University of Nebraska system to earn LEED gold certification for its green and energy-saving features.

Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is an internationally recognized green building certification system. LEED provides third-party verification on construction projects built using strategies aimed at energy savings, water efficiency, carbon dioxide emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

Among the features earning Mammel Hall LEED certification:

- Expansive windows that allow significant sunlight to stream in throughout the day.
- 97 percent of Mammel Hall’s construction waste was diverted from landfills.
- Proximity to campus and city bus routes.
- Energy-efficient light fixtures that reduce overall energy consumption up to 30 percent.
- Diversion of 20 percent of the rainfall that falls on and around Mammel Hall to recharge the aquifer and reduce the demand on storm sewers.
- Many businesses have and are making the change to be more green, and many businesses are being created to provide green services and products,” says Yoder, director of NBDC’s Pollution Prevention Regional Information Center. “What I think most of us are happiest about is that Mammel Hall — and the evolving initiative in sustainability — is representative of what can be accomplished through the great work of a team of many people from across the campus and the community.”

\textbf{Local, global}

CBAs other eco-friendly strides are taking faculty and students through Omaha and around the world.

In recent years the college has participated in a tour of homes with the best green practices. Yoder also points to an economic and marketing research project that the Omaha Public Power District funded.

“OPPD has about 12 programs for businesses to help them reduce their energy costs,” Yoder says. “Our marketing professors

\textbf{By Wendy Townley, University Relations}