

FYI Campus Newsletter

Bismarck State College – May 10, 2007

GIS students place geocache on campus

The first students in **Angie Milakovic's** GIS classes placed a geocache on campus April 26 for cache hunters to find using GPS equipment. Their geocache is one of about 70 located in the Bismarck area. The geocache is above ground, the size of a tackle box, and contains gift items from the BSC Foundation, pencils and pens, a logbook, and disposable camera. The students were accompanied by **Dr. Larry Skogen, Dr. Janelle Masters, and Jane Schreck**, who photographed the activity.

“Hopefully, cache hunters will take their photo with the disposable camera,” said Milakovic, who will monitor the geocache. “The idea is when people find it, they will sign and date the log book, indicate where they are from, take a trinket, and replace it with another. Hunters can then go to the geocaching Web site and make comments similar to a blog.”

BSC students researched rules on types of geocaches and found other cache sites before assembling their own stash of hidden treasure. As in many first attempts, the exercise was not problem-free. Students had to relocate their cache after being informed it was too close to another cache site. After this and other glitches were resolved, the first “drop” by BSC students became a reality. The exercise provided hands-on GPS training and real world experience in coordinate systems, hand-held digital mapping, datums, waypoints, and GPS satellite configurations.

Geocaching has become an international phenomenon since May 1, 2000, when the U.S. government stopped degrading GPS accuracy and opened the technology to individual and commercial users worldwide. To learn more about geocaching, visit Geocaching.com.

Faculty and staff honored with excellence awards

Six recipients of this year's Faculty and Staff Awards for Excellence were honored at the annual Recognition Ceremony April 18. These awards recognize significant or meritorious achievement in performance of professional roles. A total of 91 employees were nominated. A committee comprised of community members and representatives from Board of Governors, faculty, staff and the N.D. University System office selected the recipients. Excerpts from the nominations follow:

Faculty Award for Excellence

J. Michael McCormack, professor of history –

“In all of his activities, he has been a tireless, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic advocate for BSC and its mission.”

“Each semester he brings the same standards and dogged enthusiasm to his classes, while also working to update his craft and subject knowledge. In addition to his exemplary performance as an educator, Mike is a generous colleague, careful academic advisor, tireless advocate for BSC, active presence in the community, and engaged professional in his discipline.”

BSC students:

“He is an amazing history teacher who knows how to relate to his students. He is always there to help with a smile and the first with a joke. He’s a great teacher, mentor and leader.”

“He is great at explaining things and giving us an in-depth picture of what life was like back then – it’s almost like he was actually there. He makes things interesting by telling us facts that pertain to us from the past and about things not even in textbooks. Only four weeks into the class, I’ve learned more than I did all through high school.”

“Mr. McCormack has created a learning environment that makes students want to learn. He inspires you to want to be here.”

Katherine Netzer, assistant professor of English

BSC Student: “Katherine Netzer is a wonderful person and she is willing to help with things you don’t understand.”

“Kitty’s dedication to the remedial English composition students is outstanding. Her organizational skills with labs, students, and instructors are admirable as is her patience and personal attention to these students.”

“Hard-working, involved, cheerful, and optimistic: that’s Kitty in a nutshell. Kitty Netzer upheld the college values and tenets of Learning First before there was a Learning First. She is a devoted teacher and excellent all-around employee. She wrote the book on going the extra mile. In teaching evaluations, students speak highly of her hard work and concern for them. They like that she keeps working with them until they understand the subject material.”

Staff Award for Excellence

Marlene Anderson, director of library services

BSC Student: “Marlene embodies the qualities that define excellent staff. She and her staff create an environment fostering learning and independent inquiry and critical thinking.”

“She is conscientious, courteous, dedicated and innovative.”

Nominators praised Anderson’s efforts in coordinating BSC BookTalk, a “fabulously” successful event noted for its high quality discussions, and said that the esteem of the BSC Library in the community has grown because of BookTalk.

Betty Aberle, Student Union custodian

“She is always cheerful, thoughtful and cooperative and is known to assist custodians at events she attends while off-duty. Betty is active in Staff Senate, served as Staff Senate president and on BSC’s

Presidential Search Committee. She took the task seriously, attending all forums and never missed a committee meeting...contributing greatly to the discussion and decision-making.”

Adjunct Faculty Award for Excellence

Don Bigwood, mathematics lecturer

BSC student:

“He has patience and wants everyone to succeed. Everyone in his class is given the chance to thoroughly understand everything.”

Michelle Stockert, English lecturer

“Michelle is a model employee who believes in BSC’s mission and values. She is a former student who uses techniques learned from modeling BSC instructors. Michelle is a self-starter, articulate, poised and versatile. She has been a loyal, hard-working instructor, who devotes extraordinary energy and time to BSC and her students. She receives excellent evaluations and takes her work seriously and to heart.”

The Learning First Managing Excellence Team coordinates the nomination and selection process. Recipients receive cash gifts from the BSC Foundation of \$1,000 for full-time employees and \$250 for part-time employees.

BSC agriculture program adds technology focus

BSC’s agriculture program has stepped into the technological age with a new focus. Students registering for the fall semester will encounter changes including online courses, technology-based classrooms, and a new department name: Agriculture Technology and Natural Resources.

“The Agribusiness title didn’t fit where we are headed as a program,” said **Carmel Miller**, assistant professor of agriculture. “Technology has become a key strength for us, and agriculture and other fields have started to merge.”

Agriculture has attracted not only people with rural backgrounds but urban students interested in environmental science, Miller said. In addition, those taking traditional agriculture are more cognizant of the role they play in natural resources. As a result, a number of BSC graduates are continuing in these and related fields at North Dakota State University and Dickinson State University.

The department will continue to offer three programs: Farm and Ranch Management (AAS degree), Agriculture Transfer (AS degree), and Agriculture Industry and Technology (AAS), which underwent a name change from Agribusiness Sales and Service.

Changes were made after a strategy session with 38 education and industry leaders last fall to evaluate the Agribusiness program and improve visibility, marketing, and student recruitment. Faculty had previously revamped the curriculum to provide more specialization.

This fall, the program goes online for the first time with three core lab courses: Intro to Animal Science (ARSC 114), Intro to Soil Science (SOIL 210), and World Food Crops (PLSC 110). BSC can now

provide access to people already engaged in farming or ranching and convenience to current students or others interested in distance learning.

One on-campus classroom has become a computer lab used every hour of the day, and another is needed.

“We’re finding the computer indispensable for teaching,” Miller said. “Every student could use one in every classroom.”

Students use a tablet computer in precision farming class, where they can access online resources at the AgrowKnowledge Center in Iowa. These hybrid courses will soon be standard, Miller said. The online classes will use Internet-based information and possible podcasts and video content.

In 2005, BSC became an associate partner of AgrowKnowledge, a national consortium of community colleges that focus on technology in agriculture. AgrowKnowledge provided the \$3,000 grant for the Vision 2020 study group to help restructure the Agribusiness program to accommodate more career interests. Demand is high nationwide in agriculture sales and service, especially agronomy.

“That’s where all the jobs are,” Miller said. “We have many more requests for graduates than students interested. Farming has changed so rapidly, students aren’t aware of these opportunities.”

Based on results of the focus group study, agriculture faculty are doing more one-on-one recruiting in high schools and educating counselors about modern agriculture and new jobs in the field. Faculty members are also marketing the program to BSC alumni and segments of the agriculture industry.

Faculty and Staff News

Jessica Santini, adjunct English instructor, was one of three women named Outstanding Young North Dakotans by the N.D. Junior Chamber (Jaycees) this spring. Santini is also employed as the co-administrator of the Homeless Management Information System for the N.D. Coalition for Homeless People. She has trained over 30 social workers on the use of the software and provides them with additional technical assistance. The Homeless Coalition recently received a \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development. Santini wrote the grant proposal.

Bruce Emmil, ETO program manager/instructor, and **Ryan Caya**, assistant professor of power/process plant technology, traveled to Chicago April 30-May 1 to market BSC’s energy programs at the Electric Power Conference.