Agricultural Education—It is the Best of Times

“IT was the best of times, it was the worst of times” is the opening sentence of A Tale of Two Cities, by Charles Dickens. In regard to agricultural education, the first half of the sentence is certainly true—it is the best of times. I have been involved in agricultural education for 43 years and strongly believe that agricultural education has never been in better shape than it is today.

Enrollment in agricultural education at the secondary level and in higher education is on the rise. In addition to growth in the public schools, we are seeing agricultural education being taught in private schools and by home schoolers. There are even magnet and charter schools that focus on agricultural education.

The curriculum in agricultural education has been revamped to be much more scientific and attuned to today’s agriculture. In many states, the image of agricultural education has been of cows, sows and plows. This image is rapidly being replaced by cells, gels and Dells.

The National Council for Agricultural Education is ready to implement a visionary and ambitious strategic plan. The council has refocused its efforts from curriculum activities to renewing and building partnerships and being an intelligent advocate for the profession.

Not only is agricultural education doing well in America, it is doing well in the world. I recently had the opportunity to represent the Agricultural Education Division of ACTE at a symposium on Developments in and Future of Agricultural Education in Asia, the Pacific, North America, Europe and the Netherlands: Insights from Practice and Research at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Agricultural education is in a growth mode around the world.

Another positive sign is the redesign of the next ACTE convention in Las Vegas to have two solid days of discipline-specific programming. The National Association of Agricultural Educators, other agricultural education groups, and ACTE are working cooperatively to plan an outstanding program for agricultural educators. If you have not attended the ACTE convention in a while, this is the year to do so.

Even though things are going well in agricultural education, now is not the time to sit back and rest. Career and technical education, including agricultural education, is constantly having to prove its worth to legislators and others. Your membership in ACTE helps provide financial support and a unified voice for the profession. We all need to do our part in continuing to advance agricultural education and career and technical education.

ACTE Division vice presidents and committee members are responsible for Division Report content. This report was prepared by Agricultural Education Division Vice President Gary E. Moore.

Technology Education Division Vice President-Elect

George E. Rogers has been elected Technology Education Division vice president-elect. Dr. Rogers is an associate professor and coordinator of technology teacher education at Purdue University. He holds an Ed.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia, an MS from Wayne State College and a BS from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He currently serves on the Technology Education Division Policy Committee and last year served as the Technology Education Division Strategic Planning Committee chair. Dr. Rogers’ term will commence July 05.

Pre-Engineering Education: Justification for its Inclusion in the TE Curriculum

Why should pre-engineering education be included in technology education? The linkages seem to be obvious, as pre-engineering education has a direct correlation to technology education. From our humble beginnings as manual arts, technology education has provided both the career exploration and skill development for students to enter the engineering profession.

Engineering, as a term and a discipline, is more understood and valued than technology education. As we look at the schools of today, technology education is viewed as an unessential area of the curriculum and, in many cases, not even a recognized discipline. In general, technology education is misunderstood. The public understands “engineering.” And more importantly, the public values “engineering.”

Across this nation, there is a serious shortage of engineers and engineering technologists. Adding to this problem is the fact that engineering schools report a very high attrition rate. The root cause is inadequate high school preparation, preparation that must be provided in our technology education courses. By increasing the academic focus of our technology education programs, without losing the hands-on application, the profession can achieve both academic rigor and practical application of skills.

Another important factor for career and technical educators is that engineering provides an advanced career path for technology education students. Students can focus on a path toward mechanical engineering or civil engineering; a career path toward “technology” is ambiguous. The change to include pre-engineering education in our discipline may not be easy for some, but it can provide a vibrant future for technology education and our nation.
**Epsilon Pi Tau Celebrates its Diamond Jubilee**

Epsilon Pi Tau (EPT) was originally conceived and founded on March 13, 1929, by William E. Warner, who is widely known as the founder of Epsilon Pi Tau. An enduring and consistently mutually supportive relationship between a number of internationally recognized technology-related organizations, including the Technology Education Division of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), has continued throughout the 75-year history of Epsilon Pi Tau. ACTE members and technology educators generally benefit from the Epsilon Pi Tau program that fosters academic excellence and leadership development and recognition of individuals in these areas. Through its chapter system in universities throughout the United States and other lands and its members who reside in 49 nations, Epsilon Pi Tau is in a position to identify and recognize, even before individuals enter professional careers, those qualities that are usually inherent in leaders. Thus, the EPT program has often served as a predictor of those who ultimately become recognized for their organization leadership performance. For this reason, it is no accident that virtually all elected and appointed leaders and candidates for the Technology Education Division of ACTE offices have proudly attested to their EPT membership. More than that, most have also earned the advanced Epsilon Pi Tau’s Laureate and/or Distinguished Service membership, the latter being the society’s highest distinction.

In 1976, the Epsilon Pi Tau Board of Directors started what has become an inspiring tradition. They began to conduct Exemplary Initiations at the annual conferences of the national and international organizations that Epsilon Pi Tau serves. Epsilon Pi Tau’s mission and purposes suggested that an Exemplary Initiation would serve ACTE members and enrich the conference program. To this end, EPT Exemplary Initiations to recognize and induct deserving AVA and now ACTE members at their national conferences began a number of years ago. An EPT Exemplary Initiation was conducted at the ACTE Annual Convention in Orlando in 2003, and another initiation is planned for the ACTE Annual Convention in Las Vegas from December 9-11, 2004. Epsilon Pi Tau is proud and pleased to work with the Technology Education Division of the Association for Career and Technical Education in promoting the values and contributions of professionals in technology.

**What New Technology Education Professionals Should Know**

The Association for Career and Technical Education provides direction for technology education through research, publications, annual conferences and leadership that address academic issues and further enhance the vision for the profession. New members joining professional associations may not fully understand the significance of their membership and participation. Your personal involvement can result in many benefits, including professional growth, networking opportunities and leadership development. The mission of the division is “to provide educational leadership in developing a competitive workforce, and more importantly, to instill the belief that technological literacy is essential for all to function as productive citizens of society.”

ACTE Division vice presidents and committees are responsible for Division Report content. Technology Education Division Vice President Joe Scarcella, Vice President-Elect George E. Rogers and Associate Executive Director of Epsilon Pi Tau Dr. Jerry Olson prepared this report.

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**State Update**

State Update features education news at the state and local levels. Readers are encouraged to send submissions to Techniques, 1410 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, fax 703-683-7424 or e-mail susan@printmanagementinc.com.

**Kentucky**

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) has established its own Homeland Security training program. A steering team led by Hazard Community and Technical College President Jay Box is coordinating the program, which will provide specialized training across the state to meet the current and emerging education needs for operational security.

The program will focus on three major initiatives: physical security, first responder, and information and communications technologies security. For each initiative, a specialized workgroup will focus on programming and training. The Physical Security Project Team, led by Bowling Green Technical College President Jack Thomas, will focus on internal security such as property and personnel. Gateway Community and Technical College President G. Edward Hughes leads the First Responder Project Team, which will focus on training such as fire and rescue and emergency medical. The Information and Communications Technologies Security Project Team led by Pam Stafford of Maysville Community College will focus on issues such as cyber security.

**Oklahoma**

The Oklahoma City General Motors plant has donated a fleet of 22 2003 Envoy XLS and Chevy Trailblazers to Oklahoma's Technology Centers. The vehicles are valued at $36,000 each and were in the GM Assembly Plant lot during the May 8, 2003, tornado. GM decided to rebuild the plant following the tornado and donated the vehicles to be used in training future automotive service technicians in Oklahoma. The company has a partnership with the Oklahoma CareerTech system that spans many years.

The Oklahoma Technology Centers receiving the vehicles are: Autry Tech, Enid; Canadian Valley, El Reno; Eastern Oklahoma County, ChocTaw; Francis Tuttle, Oklahoma City; Gordon Cooper, Shawnee; Great Plains, Lawton; Indian Capitol, Muskogee; Kiamichi, McAlester; Meridian, Stillwater; Mid-Del; Metro Tech, Oklahoma City; Midwest City; Moore Norman; Northeast, South Campus; Pioneer, Ponca City; Southwest, Altus; Tri County, Bartlesville; and Tulsa Tech, Broken Arrow and Lemley campuses.