Individualized learning is central to Stockbridge School’s education in sustainable agriculture and the green industry. Along with completing their course requirements and working as interns, Stockbridge students join extra-curricular clubs, participate in competitions, and attend regional and national conferences. All of these activities are educational—our students are learning by doing—and they provide unique real-world experiences that link what we teach in the classroom to today’s industry needs and practices. Students who have been able to take advantage of such enhanced learning opportunities not only have a better grasp of the duties and responsibilities of their future careers but also are acquiring essential skills in:

**Leadership.** Whether part of a required course or a volunteer effort, special projects give students experience in managing tasks and other workers. Club activities and networking with professionals at conferences and on field trips also help students to build confidence and competency.

*When our students needed a place where competition teams could practice, they took the lead. With the support of alumni, the students designed and built their own training facilities.*

**Team building.** Participating in special projects and competitions gives our students chances to test their technical know-how as members of a supportive team.

Every spring, students in the construction materials class build a garden project, learning how to apply their skills and work together—as well as leave their mark on campus!

**The proper use of equipment and technology.** Our emphasis on real-world and real-time experience gives students plenty of opportunities to practice with the tools, machines, gear and other apparatus they must know how to use and operate safely once they are on the job.

Members of the UMass Turf Club have volunteered to help both the Amherst campus and a local golf course renovate and maintain fields and grounds, giving them the opportunity to hone their turf management skills while they serve the community.

Interactions between students and professionals benefit industry as well as education. Companies seeking well-trained interns and new hires get the chance to see our students in action at national and regional competitions, during conferences, and when special projects are done.

**Annual Conferences**

Our students attend a variety of local and not-so-local meetings and conferences of professional societies and associations, including:

- Annual Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Summer Conference
- Equine Affaire
- The Golf Industry Show

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**Enhanced Learning Opportunities Fund for Students**

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**Stockbridge School of Agriculture**

**Turf Club members at the Collegiate Turf Bowl**

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Student Competitions

Stockbridge students take part in many regional and national competitions throughout the year. Listed below are a few of the national competitions in which our students compete annually, along with the number of students competing, the cost to compete, and the results of the past year’s events.

- **Annual Collegiate Turf Bowl at the National Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Education Conference.** 14-16 Turfgrass Management majors compete in the Turf Bowl at a current cost of $12,000 per year. On February 11, 2010, the UMass team placed 2nd out of 67 teams in the Turf Bowl.

- **Annual Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) Student Career Days.** 12-14 Arboriculture & Community Forestry, Horticulture, Landscape Contracting, and Turfgrass Management majors compete in approximately 20 categories at the PLANET Student Career Days at a current cost of $15,000 per year. Of the 14 UMass students who competed on April 8-11, 2010, 6 earned special recognition for their skills and were awarded $1,000 scholarships. Historically, teams have placed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the categories, with many teams placing in the top 15 of more than 60 participating colleges and universities.

- **Tree Care Industry Association (TCI) Expo.** 5-8 Arboriculture & Community Forestry majors compete at the TCI Expo Student Career Days at a current cost of $5,000 per year. On November 13, 2009, 5 UMass students competed in 6 events against students from colleges across the U.S. All of our students scored well, with 2 of our students winning 4 of the events entered.

How You Can Help

Usually, students themselves finance and raise funds for enhanced learning opportunities. Because the Stockbridge School considers individualized learning central to our educational mission, the School’s Director and the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences have used discretionary funds to support these student activities. Alumni and friends have also sponsored events, contributed equipment and materials, and given generously to cover travel, fees, and accommodations.

To ensure that our students will have the resources to pursue activities that enrich their education and help them build their careers, the Stockbridge School of Agriculture is asking for your support. With the endowment of the Enhanced Learning Opportunities Fund for Students, Stockbridge will have a ready source of income to pay for the expenses related to internships, competitions, club activities, special projects, and other extra-curricular pursuits that often lay the foundation of our students’ professional lives.

A gift of $250,000, which donors may pledge over a period of five years, will set up and name the fund. After the fund is established, we are hoping that alumni and friends will continue to make regular contributions so that the income produced will grow over time as enrollment and student activities increase. Our goal is to help all students have access to experiences that will best benefit their education.

Every contribution to the Enhanced Learning Opportunities Fund for Students will be greatly appreciated. Gifts may be made in a variety of ways—from outright donations of cash or materials, to pledges made for a period of years, to bequests and other planned giving options. Our development team can help you determine how to make a contribution that best accomplishes your personal charitable goals.

For more information about how to give, please contact Rick Robar at 413.577.1692 or rrobar@cns.umass.edu.

To give online, visit www.umass.edu/giving and choose “Stockbridge School” in the drop-down menu.