Press Release for Public Affairs Professorship

Melissa Burnett,
Professor, Department of Marketing
Director, Advertising Program

Dr. Burnett was graduated from and has taught at Missouri State University for 20 years. During the 20 years, she developed community partnerships between her classes and over 100 organizations, developing and applying classroom knowledge with real-world experience.

Dr. Burnett and her students have produced many national, award-winning advertising campaigns for public agencies both large and small. Many of the awards won by her students capture the spirit of Missouri State University’s public affairs mission. In the past two years, the MSU Advertising Team has won two consecutive first place national honors. Her team participated in the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) “Green Means Go” National Advertising Competition in spring 2008. The team provided solutions for sustainability, encouraging people to “go green” by riding public transportation. This campaign was presented to APTA officials and the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. This effort generated over $75,000 of local and national PR, recognizing MSU and the efforts of the Advertising Team. One of the most important results was the APTA is now running the MSU team’s “Go Green, Go Public” campaigns, backed by a $21 million budget.

Dr. Burnett has a national reputation for excellence not only in advertising but also in her marketing activities with many government administrators. These governmental agencies now consider Missouri State University as the provider of choice when seeking solutions to promotional issues.

Dr. Burnett is well published and recognized for her work in the area of “Ethics in Advertising.” She has published in many journals.

Melissa Burnett has continuously engaged with the community for many years and has served countless hours on numerous committees providing pro-bono services. She is very active in the area of the arts, public education and healthcare.

Murney and Associates Realtors, edVenture Partners, and Nixa Public Schools are among the many client’s Melissa Burnett and the MSU Advertising Team are associated with.

Dr. Burnett is well respected by her colleagues.
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Alexander Wait, Professor
Department of Biology

Dr. Wait has been at Missouri State University since 1999.

He is a plant ecologist, with a passion in the name of “Sustainability”. Dr. Wait’s research, teaching and service evolve around sustainability being a public affair. He is a founding member and President of Ozarks New Energy (ONE); a co-organizer of sustainability in the curriculum workshop, and a co-organizer of monthly brown bag “green lunches”.

His passion for sustainability issues began to attract the interest of students, and in 2007 he became the faculty sponsor for the university organization “Students for a Sustainable Future”. He was responsible for Missouri State University’s involvement in “Focus the Nation”, a national teach-in held in 2008-2009. This event encouraged faculty across campus to discuss sustainability in their lectures. The event received national attention.

Dr. Wait served as the Provost’s Public Affairs Fellow when the theme was sustainability. In this position he organized the Public Affairs Conference. Dr. Wait also helped organize the first two Ozarks New Energy (ONE) conferences in 2008-2009, and is helping organize the next ONE conference for October 2010.

Dr. Wait worked with the Springfield-Greene County library on a film and talk series associated with sustainability. He works to involve various non-profit groups such as Ozarks Friends of the Environment, Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, Springfield Public Works and Ozarks Clean Air Initiative with the campus community.