

AHGSA remains active despite pandemic – students find ways to foster engagement, career development, and community spirit

By Osler Ortez | AHGSA President & Fernanda Krupek | AHGSA Vice-President

“Every adversity carries with it the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit” - - - Napoleon Hill

There is no playbook in this unprecedented time, the club is so proud of students and leaders who have stepped up to provide some normalcy with the Agronomy and Horticulture Graduate Student Association (AHGSA) by continuing to support the out-of-classroom experience. The following bullet points highlight the 2020 events organized throughout the year to foster interactions and closer relationships in-and-beyond the Department:

- Social game (January): a social gathering where a group of graduate students received free passes and watched hockey UNL Lincoln Stars game in town. It was a great opportunity to meet and interact with one another and get to know better colleagues.
- Mental Health Workshop (February): Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) experts presented an overview of what MHFA is, what it covers, and more. This was a great opportunity to learn more about this important and timely subject, and how it could help everyone’s success.
- Pre-packaged sweet corn giveaway (August): sweet corn plots were harvested, pre-packed, and then distributed by students to the community at the East Campus on a first-come, first-served basis. Great turnout this year with all packages distributed in time record, less than two hours. This is the club’s biggest fundraising event, and the free-will donations help to keep the association’s functioning. The club is thankful to TJ McAndrew and the Agronomy Farms at Havelock and ENREC for all of their continued support.
- Elevator Speech Contest (October): first-ever contest hosted virtually in partnership with Plant Pathology Department and the Entomology Bruner Club. This year, winners were selected not only by invited judges but also by the audience. The 15 finalist students submitted their 3-minute videos and over 115 students, staff, and faculty members from different departments watched and ranked the videos. The contest was co-sponsored by participating departments, IANR, and industry. Congratulation to Michael Meier (UNL Agro. & Hort. Grad Student) for being awarded third place.
- Welcoming & orientation meeting (September): the invited speaker and department head, Dr. Martha Mamo, introduced new students to the state of Nebraska, explained the department structure, following by introductions of officers, chairs, current, and new students. The meeting wrapped up with the ambitious 2020/2021 strategic plan.
- Monthly Meetings (October to December): club met once per month to learn from experts in different areas. Highlighted topics include mental health and coping strategies for graduate students; building a network and career opportunities at Corteva; and packaging information/research on social media.

The club activities may have functioned differently this year, but they still managed to maintain the connections and engagement with students. AHGSA members excelled at the local, regional, national, and international levels in 2020. Their participation includes but is not limited to research presentations, awards selection, scholarships, fellowships, scientific societies, and conferences.

All of this has been possible because of collaborations, partnerships, and support from others. AHGSA would like to thank all those who provided their continued support, especially its advisers Dr. Paul Read and Dr. Sam Wortman, Department Head Dr. Martha Mamo, Tanya Gulchuk, Casey Lundberg, Lana Johnson, Danielle Lopez, Keenan Amundsen, and TJ McAndrew. The current officers: Osler Ortez,

President; Fernanda Krupek, Vice-President; Santos Barrera, Treasurer; and Alyssa Kuhn, Secretary. The club's success would not be possible without the leadership and participation of ten committee chairs, and the protagonists of all – the graduate students.

AHGSA thanks everyone for taking part in who the club is and what the club does, they could not have had another successful year without the support of everyone.

Follow AHGSA on Twitter (@ahgsa_unl) and Facebook (UNL AHGSA).



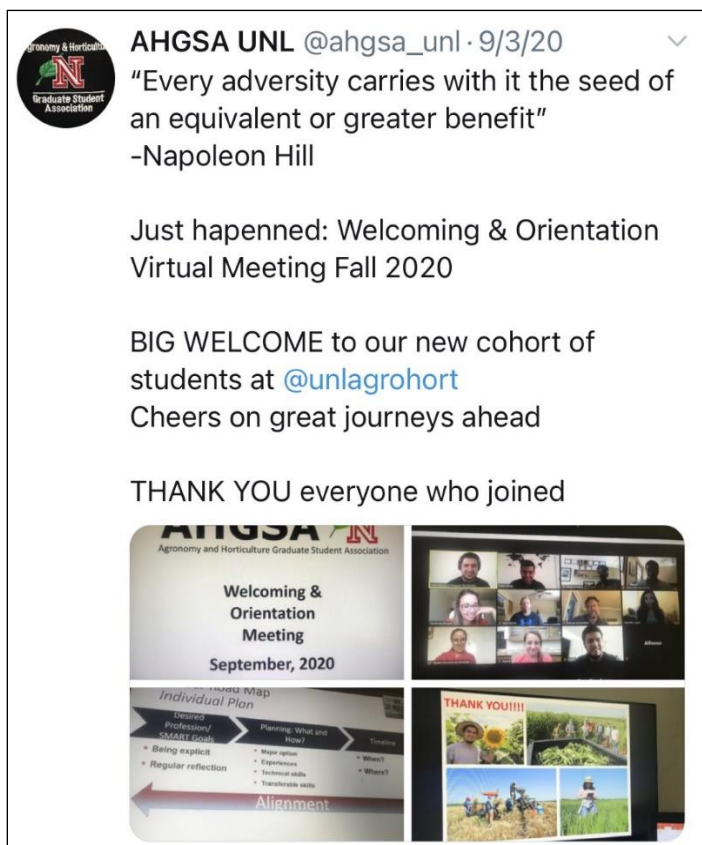
Picking sweet corn, August 2020. Department of Agronomy and Horticulture's graduate students Fernanda Krupek (from left), Yavuz Delen, Osler Ortez, Nicolas Cafaro, Christopher Anuo, Jasmine Mausbach, and Gonzalo Rizzo pick a truckload of sweet corn for the annual giveaway. Picture: Lana Johnson.



Smiling Sunflower, July 2020. Department of Agronomy and Horticulture's doctoral student Yavuz Delen creates a happy sunflower. Picture: Lana Johnson.



Scoring Wheat Flowering, May 2020. Fang Wang, Department of Agronomy and Horticulture's doctoral student records wheat flowering at Havelock Farm. Picture: Lana Johnson.




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-Napoleon Hill

Just hapenned: Welcoming & Orientation Virtual Meeting Fall 2020

BIG WELCOME to our new cohort of students at [@unlagrohort](#)
Cheers on great journeys ahead

THANK YOU everyone who joined



AHGSA experiencing the Zoom wave, September 2020. Welcoming & Orientation meeting hosted via Zoom. New and current students residing in the US and abroad participated. Picture: AHGSA Twitter account.