



SECUTM Quarterly

The Academic Initiative of the SEC

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Missouri's Birchler Named SEC Professor of the Year

Dr. Jim Birchler, the Curators' Distinguished Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Missouri, was named the 2017 SEC Professor of the Year in April.

Dr. Birchler teaches classes in general genetics and advanced plant genetics and is well-known for his entertaining, informative and knowledgeable teaching methods. During his career, he has mentored 41 undergraduate research students, three master's students, 20 Ph.D. students and 35 post-doctoral fellows.

"Faculty members guide students through meaningful learning experiences at each of our 14 member universities," said SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey. "As the 2017 SEC Professor of the Year, Dr.



Dr. Jim Birchler works with students at a Missouri greenhouse.

Birchler stands as an example of the quality and caliber of educator encountered by students throughout their college experience. We are pleased to bestow upon him the highest SEC faculty honor."

In 2014, Birchler was named a fellow of

the National Academy of Inventors for his development of the first engineered synthetic plant chromosome, as well as a method for visualizing chromosomes in plants. Both discoveries have broad scientific and industrial application and sustained impact.

The SEC Professor of the Year Award is given annually to one SEC faculty member whose record of teaching, research and scholarship places him or her among the elite in higher education. Winners are selected by the SEC Provosts

from among the 14 SEC Faculty Achievement Award recipients. In recognition of the honor, the SEC provided Dr. Birchler with a \$20,000 honorarium and he was recognized at the SEC Awards Dinner.

[Click here to watch a feature on Birchler.](#)

Spring College Tour Draws Big Crowds in Southern California



San Diego school counselors listen to presentations from SEC universities.

More than 220 high school students and 100 school counselors attended the 2017 Spring SEC College Tour in Southern California, April 18-21. The event included stops in San Diego, Pasadena and Irvine, and the trip to the region was the first since 2014.

"We learned so much about these universities that have top-tier research programs that are accepting California students," said Becky Mertel, College and Career Guidance Specialist at Westlake High School in Westlake, Calif.

In each city, the college fair provided a time for high school students and their parents to visit with SEC admissions representatives. The school counselor breakfasts centered around brief presentations on SEC institutions. [Click here to read the full story.](#)

Georgia Wins SEC MBA Case Competition

The University of Georgia won first place in the 2017 SEC MBA Case Competition held at the Warrington College of Business at the University of Florida in April. The winning team was comprised of Rohit Banerjee, Matthew Green, Desiree Sullivan and Noah Winterer.

A team of four MBA students from every SEC university was presented a business case by Nationwide on the first day. The teams, who were separated into four divisions, proposed their solutions to a panel of judges the following morning in divisional rounds. The top four proposals moved on to the final round to determine the winner of the competition.

"Winning this competition is so rewarding because we gave so much effort and stayed up late into the night," said Sullivan. "We put together a bold strategy and it took a lot of endurance



The Georgia team poses with the trophy.

to prepare our presentation."

The University of Florida finished second in the competition, followed by Auburn University and the University of South Carolina.

"Our team was well-prepared because we knew we would be going against some of the best business schools," said Anne Cooper, Georgia's team advisor. "But I felt confident because they are all great presenters."

Other awards given during the divisional rounds included Best Presenter and Best Q&A. [Click here to read more.](#)