

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences 2007 Research Awards

By Colin Kaltenbach

## 2007 Research Faculty of the Year

This award recognizes and honors outstanding achievements and contributions in research.

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### **Raina Maier, Professor**

*Department of Soil, Water and Environmental Science*

Raina Maier joined the Department of Soil, Water and Environmental Science (SWES) in 1991. As a senior faculty member in the area of environmental microbiology, she provides leadership and vision for this program area in SWES, CALS and the UA, and among her peers at the national and international level. Her work addresses a critical area in environmental biology.

Maier's research focuses on two main themes. The first is the study of microbially produced surfactants called biosurfactants. Maier is an internationally recognized expert in this field. She has explored the use of these compounds for applications in biotechnology, industry and medicine, and holds a patent for the use of biosurfactants in greenhouse environments. Maier's second research theme explores the activity and function of microorganisms in stressed and nutrient-poor environments such as mine tailing sites, and cave and desert environments. Her work in this area led to the discovery of microbial life in the Atacama Desert of Chile, an environment previously thought to be devoid of life.

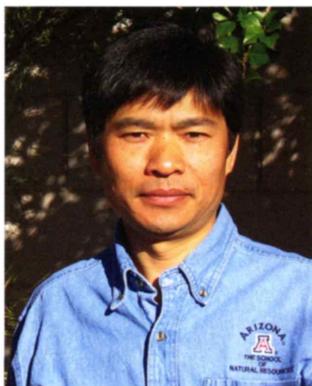
In addition to her research, Maier serves as associate director of the UA's Superfund Basic Research Program, which includes five facility cores, nine research projects and 70 investigators across 10 UA colleges.

Maier generates and manages a very creative research environment in her lab that provides an atmosphere conducive to outstanding scholarship and productivity, incorporating other faculty, students and staff so that all can benefit from the collective process. She also has a genuine commitment to education at all levels, and is an exceptional classroom teacher and mentor.

## 2007 Outstanding Staff in Research

This award recognizes staff whose service has contributed significantly to the support of research in CALS.

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### **Chris Zou, Senior Research Specialist**

*School of Natural Resources*

Since joining the School of Natural Resources (SNR), Chris Zou has been an outstanding contributor not only within the lab group, but also within SNR. He coordinates ongoing research, Web site development, mentoring of graduate and undergraduate students, tracking purchases and budgets, and coordinating lab safety.

Zou's contributions played a critical role in the School's pursuit of designation of the UA as a research site within the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), resulting in the Santa Rita Experiment Station becoming the main site in the Southwest region. In addition, Zou has also been involved in the preparation of every proposal his lab group has submitted. He is always a pleasure to be around, he rises to every challenge, and he excels in his position in every respect.