

# August 2011 newsletter



## A Message From the Department Head

The fall semester has started and we are excited about new and returning students in ACE. A strength of the Department is our diverse student base. In our undergraduate program, we have significant representation from the Chicago metropolitan area as well as students from urban and rural downstate areas. There is also an increased interest from areas outside of Illinois and the United States. It is refreshing to talk with students of varied backgrounds and is a constant reminder of the great and far-reaching reputation of the University of Illinois and the Department of ACE.

All doctoral programs at UIUC participated in a campus program assessment this spring. I am very proud to report that ACE was one of nine campus programs that received the highest rating. ACE achieved this recognition because of the hard and passionate work by all of our faculty and staff.

In this issue, we highlight a highly successful experiential learning class, an example of policy-relevant research in ACE, and new class offerings in the department. We are offering new classes to enhance student experiences and adapt to a changing economy and business climate. Finally, we reflect on a distinguished ACE colleague.

Paul Ellinger, Head,

Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics

## From the Illinois Field to the European Plate -- IBIP Europe 2011

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## Resources

[Department Homepage \(http://ace.illinois.edu/\)](http://ace.illinois.edu/)

[College Homepage \(http://aces.illinois.edu/\)](http://aces.illinois.edu/)

[Extension Homepage \(http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state/\)](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state/)

[ACES Alumni \(http://www.acesalumni.illinois.edu/\)](http://www.acesalumni.illinois.edu/)

[Previous Newsletters \(/about/newsletter\)](#)

[Make a Gift \(/giving\)](#)

[Facebook \(http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sfm=1#!/pages/ACE-University-of-Illinois/406444220861\)](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sfm=1#!/pages/ACE-University-of-Illinois/406444220861)

## Research and Outreach

[Consumer & Family Economics \(http://www.ace.illinois.edu/cfe/\)](http://www.ace.illinois.edu/cfe/)

[Farm Analysis Solution Tools \(http://www.farmdoc.illinois.edu/fasttools/index.asp\)](http://www.farmdoc.illinois.edu/fasttools/index.asp)

[Farmdoc \(http://www.farmdoc.illinois.edu/index.html\)](http://www.farmdoc.illinois.edu/index.html)

[Farmdoc Daily \(http://www.farmdocdaily.illinois.edu\)](http://www.farmdocdaily.illinois.edu)

[FBFM \(http://fbfm.ace.uiuc.edu/\)](http://fbfm.ace.uiuc.edu/)

[Illinois Tax School \(http://www.taxschool.illinois.edu/\)](http://www.taxschool.illinois.edu/)



The 10th International Business Immersion Program Course (IBIP), or ACE/BADM 346, took 23 students to the European Union to follow the food supply chain this past May.

IBIP is a course that consists of three components: a course in the spring semester, a two-week study tour to Europe, and a final presentation in the fall.

The 2011 IBIP program followed the European supply chain in Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

Students focus on international business in the European Union, becoming an expert in one industry from a comparative perspective. The study tour allowed the students to visit multinational companies, regulators, farmers, and local companies.

"Students work in teams on issues of current interest to the European consumer as well as interacting with those in Europe who are leading efforts to move the industry on these issues," said Andrea Martens, assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics and the Department of Business Administration. Martens led the tour along with Meredith Blumthal, program coordinator for the International Business Immersion Program, and Lynnea Johnson, associate director of the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER).

Student teams focused on wind energy, free-range chicken, packaging/recycling, frying oil, fair-trade chocolate, and retail food. The 2011 European Union tour took students to visits at Kraft's Cote d'Or Chocolate factory, McDonald's Food Town, Monsanto, ADM Cocoa, Metro Future Store, KWS Seeds, and Bunge in the three countries visited. Students took lectures and interacted with students at the University of Bonn, Germany, and KU Leuven, Belgium. In addition, an Illinois alumni reception was hosted by Baron Piet van Waeyenberge, alumnus of ACE.

During the immersion, the student teams worked on a video project exploring their topic through interviews with company representatives. These videos will be finalized and presented October 6 during an event held in conjunction with the ACES and Biosciences Career Fair at the Activities and Recreation Center (ARC), Champaign, Illinois. The IBIP video event will be held following the career fair in the iHotel, Champaign.

[International Business Immersion Program  
\(http://ibip.illinois.edu/\)](http://ibip.illinois.edu/)

[International Policy and Development  
\(http://ipad.ace.illinois.edu/\)](http://ipad.ace.illinois.edu/)

[Market Maker \(http://www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/\)](http://www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/)

[Office for Futures & Options Research  
\(http://ofor.ace.illinois.edu/\)](http://ofor.ace.illinois.edu/)

[Plan Well Retire Well  
\(http://www.retirewell.uiuc.edu/\)](http://www.retirewell.uiuc.edu/)

[Program for Environmental & Resource Economics  
\(http://pere.ace.illinois.edu/\)](http://pere.ace.illinois.edu/)

[Rural Health  
\(http://www.ace.illinois.edu/ruralhealth/\)](http://www.ace.illinois.edu/ruralhealth/)

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## Programs

[Graduate Program \(/graduate\)](#)

[Undergraduate Program \(/undergraduate\)](#)

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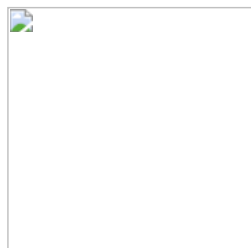
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Enrollment in the class is competitive. Potential students submit an application with an essay. The corporate sponsors of the trip, including Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Bunge, Monsanto, OSI Group and Caterpillar, provide feedback during the selection process. IBIP allows the students to spend time with the companies' executives and University of Illinois alumni, and to investigate job opportunities. Other donors include the Doug Roberts Endowment and the UI Center for International Business Education and Research.

## Stronger Safety Net Leads to Less Childhood Obesity

Social safety net programs that reduce psychosocial stressors for low-income families also ultimately lead



to a reduction in childhood obesity, according to research by a University of Illinois economist who studies the efficacy of food assistance programs on public health.

Craig Gundersen, a professor of agricultural and consumer economics at Illinois, says food and exercise alone are not to blame for the extent of obesity among children in the United States. Psychosocial factors, such as stressors brought on by uncertainty about the economy, income inequality, and a fraying social safety net also must be considered, he says.

“Energy-in, energy-out is important, but energy imbalance isn’t the only thing leading to overweight status among children,” said Gundersen, the executive director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory at Illinois. “We also know that people have very different ways of responding to the same amount of food intake and exercise, and one of the factors that may influence how people react to eating and exercise is through the amount of stress they’re under.”

Gundersen says stressors are particularly prevalent for low-income children, a demographic group that has high rates of obesity in the U.S. and other developed countries.

“As a society, we’re always looking for different ways we can address public health issues, whether it’s reducing food insecurity or reducing obesity,” he said. “Although there have been many different ways to reduce obesity, what we’ve found is that stress is a leading cause of obesity among children. So if there’s any way we can reduce stressors from a policy standpoint, that will also have the effect of reducing obesity.”

The calls for trimming the social safety net that are currently in vogue in Washington, D.C., as part of a larger program of government austerity would likely

lead to more obesity over time because it places more stress on low-income families, Gundersen says.

“Ultimately, placing restrictions on what people can buy only discourage them from participating in the program because it stigmatizes the benefits,” he said.

As many families face financial hardship as a result of the sluggish economy, Gundersen says that public policymakers need to be aware of the relationship between stressors and childhood obesity, which has only become more pronounced as income-inequality has grown over the last three decades.

The study, published in the journal *Obesity Reviews*, was co-written by Duhita Mahatmya, Steven Garasky and Brenda J. Lohman, all of Iowa State University.

The research was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## New Classes in ACE: Fall 2011



Four new ACE classes will be offered this fall to ACE majors and incoming freshmen exploring potential careers.

ACE 199: Introduction to Sales is an 8-week course taught by Kaizad Irani,

visiting instructor in ACE. The course will incorporate lecture, hands-on training and software simulations to teach basic sales and communications principles.

ACE 199: The Business of ACES is designed for entering freshmen interested in potential careers in the food, agribusiness, or consumer industries. Through this 8-week Discovery Course, students explore applied business concepts guided by ACE faculty and leading business professionals in the food, agribusiness, and consumer economics/finance areas. ACE department head Paul Ellinger coordinates the course.

ACE 398: Contemporary Issues in Financial Planning is taught by John Braden, Professor in ACE. This course provides students with exposure to issues involved in financial planning from leaders in the financial planning industry. The course also includes participation in a Financial Planning Day, held in conjunction with Eastern Illinois University in October.

ACE 298: Food and Agribusiness Logistics is a new class exploring how logistics interact in the food and agricultural sectors to deliver quality products to the end user in a global environment. Udatta Palekar, an associate professor in U of I's Department of Business Administration, is coordinating the class.

## Where Are They Now: Lowell Hill



Five years into retirement, Lowell Hill finally had time to return to one of his original passions – horses. He was involved with horses for the first 30 years of his life, but could not fit them into his

schedule during the next 40. In 2003, Hill bought a gaited horse from Tennessee named Blue. Although Hill now plans to give up the responsibility for the horse, he has enjoyed riding Blue over the past seven years “He is the most energetic yet gentle horse I ever worked,” Hill says.

Hill grew up on a farm in Iowa and paid for his undergraduate degree at Iowa State University by working and living in the horse barns. His dormitory room was a made-over stall. After graduating with his Bachelor’s in agricultural education in 1951, Hill taught veterans and then served in the Korean War. Hill continued teaching after the war and also started farming in north central Iowa. He was working on a small farm and, due to low prices and no available acreage for expansion, went to Michigan State University to obtain advanced degrees. He earned his Master’s in 1961 and his Ph.D. in 1963, both in agricultural economics with a specialization in marketing.

Hill came to the University of Illinois in 1963 as an assistant professor. As a professor, he narrowed his focus from general marketing to grain marketing because there was a need for that specialization. In the 1970s, there was an expansion in grain production and exportation, so demand for better marketing and management of grain elevators and transportation also increased. Over time, Hill became the expert on the economics of grain quality.

Hill recalls his work at the University with fondness. He says, “Faculty and administrators have given me the freedom, opportunity, and support to pursue problems and issues that I considered to be important. Even in the face of criticism, objections, and suggestions that I be reassigned, the administration stood firm and my completed research often turned the most vocal critics into my staunchest supporters.”

Hill has over 775 publications and received many awards, including the College of Agriculture's first endowed chair in honor of Professor L.J. Norton, Fellow of the American Agricultural Economics Association, the USDA Distinguished Service Award, the Senior Faculty Award of Excellence, the Paul A. Funk Award, several awards from the American Agricultural Economics Association, and designation as a University Scholar.

Hill retired in 1998 and taught a class one more time after that in the spring of 1999. However, he remains involved with the University and the industry. He continues to contribute to articles in magazines such

as *Prairie Farmer* and still fields questions with answers from projects he conducted over the past 30 years.

For relaxation, Hill enjoys spending time with his family. Hill says, "Betty, my wife of nearly 60 years, has been my inspiration, support, and physical laborer in all of my career." Betty has also been active in the university and community, serving as president of the University of Illinois Women's Club. Betty made notes during their vast traveling experience – traveling to more than 50 countries where Hill was doing research on grain quality programs. Hill explains, "She was an essential part of every trip, coordinating, organizing, photographing, and most important of all, observing."

Looking back on his life's work, Hill derives the most satisfaction from watching his students develop their careers. As an example, Hill explains, "twenty-five students were sent on international assignments with only general instructions, a problem to solve, and a place to begin making contacts. Many of them are now working in high levels in U.S. embassies around the world, as well as in government, industry and universities."

[ACE Newsletter \(/newsletter/ace-newsletter\)](#)