

January 2012 newsletter



A message from the Department Head

Happy New Year to everyone. Another semester is just completed and we congratulate 40 December, 2011 graduates. We wish them well as they embark on the next phase of their career. This is also the time of year when high school students are making choices regarding their academic careers.

The high and increasing cost of college comes up many times when we are talking to prospective students. SmartMoney magazine recently ranked public universities and their "payback score", the average of alumni and recent grads' salaries over a period of two years as a percentage of their tuition and fees. Illinois ranked fifth among U.S. public universities. Moreover, students at the University of Illinois tend to finish on time and are successful in finding a job or continuing to graduate school. Industry employers ranked the University of Illinois third in a Wall Street Journal survey of schools whose graduates are the most highly recruited. Even with the rising costs of college, a University of Illinois degree is a great investment.

The rankings put U of I in fair light when considering college, but we're finding we need to do more as a Department to provide additional awareness about the unique opportunities in ACE. Thanks to a recent gift by a generous donor, we are able to do just that. With these resources we are reaching out to high school students directly and through partnerships with organizations like Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). A new [brochure \(/sites/ace.illinois.edu/files/ACEbrochureFINAL.pdf\)](/sites/ace.illinois.edu/files/ACEbrochureFINAL.pdf) highlighting how a major in ACE can lead to business and economics careers has been distributed to high school and community college students. Our voice can never be too loud. If you know of students that would be good fits for our programs, please share the brochure with them!

In this newsletter we acknowledge a generous donor, profile a recent research project, highlight a new class offering and reflect on a distinguished

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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/)

ACE colleague.

Have a great and prosperous 2012.

Paul Ellinger, Head

Department of Agricultural and Consumer
Economics

Gift of seed money for future growth



A unique gift of
\$300,000 from
William (Bill) J.
Condon '61 to the
Department of
Agricultural and
Consumer
Economics will help

expand recruitment of new students to ACE and
expand person-to-person contact with current
student.

“Bill Condon is the ‘go-to guy’ when it comes to
having the vision to understand the needs of the
department and taking action to help his alma
mater develop new programs and initiatives,” said
ACE Department Head Paul Ellinger. “We want to
recruit talented high school and junior college
students who want a career in business, finance
and agricultural economics. Bill's gift will
significantly boost our student advising
capabilities.”

The new Bill Condon Academic Advisor/Recruiting
position is ensuring person-to-person contact with
students to develop an individual success
plan for them, including assistance in the career-
decision process throughout their academic
career. It also supports the development of
marketing strategies to recruit the best and
brightest students to the College of ACES.

Condon has enjoyed a distinguished career in
commodity trading and financial services
industries. He has owned a seat on the Chicago
Board of Trade since 1969. He also owns and
manages the Condon family farm located in Ogle
County near Stillman Valley, IL.

As a loyal alum, Condon has served as president of
the Rockford Area Illini Club as well organized and
hosted numerous alumni events in the Rockford
area. His private giving has made an enormous
impact on the College. A generous gift in 1999 in
honor of his father Harold Condon '23 helped build
the ACES Library and Information Center, and in
2006, he funded a 75th anniversary history book
about ACE.

Condon gives his heart and time to other
philanthropic endeavors as well. He is a long-time

[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/)

Programs

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

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

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supporter of the North American Shrine organization with its network of pediatric specialty hospitals and has marched as a clown in many colorful Shriner's parades over the years.

Carbon Sequestration must Balance Public Good says ACE Professor



A. Bryan Endres, associate professor of agricultural law in ACE, says the lack of a settled legal framework

that balances private property rights while maximizing the public good ultimately hinders the large-scale commercial deployment of geologic carbon sequestration.

The report recently published in the University of Illinois Law Review, says that in order to justify the extensive up-front capital investment by firms, issues with the property rights of the subsurface pore space that would permanently house the captured carbon dioxide must be resolved first.

“You have a new technology that requires a lot of upfront capital investment, but you don’t have a legal framework for how you’re going to be able to implement this technology with regard to property rights,” said Endres. “What’s unique about property rights is they’re usually pretty well settled, and yet here we are dealing with a situation where ownership isn’t quite so clear. That’s a key question, because a firm isn’t going to invest money in a carbon sequestration plant before they are confident about who owns the area underneath.”

Endres says sequestration operations implicate a unique set of property rights issues, one that’s analogous to a plane flying over a house at 30,000 feet.

“Do you own the airspace above your house?” he said “Well, no, and the reason we know the answer to that question is that there was a court case that settled the issue. And that was one of the things that allowed the airline industry to develop, so that planes didn’t have to weave around an easement, like railroads do. Similarly, picture a really deep hole that may start on your land but goes down 7,000 feet. Who owns that? One argument is that a property owner does not have a reasonable expectation of ever using the pore space at such extreme depths.”

Like air transport, carbon sequestration should be thought of as a public good – one that has the added potential to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and curb global climate change.

“It makes more sense to treat it as you would airspace for an airplane, in that it belongs to the state and they can decide who’s going to access it,” Endres said. “It would be a much more efficient system if the state had ownership of it.”

Endres notes that there’s also the potential for states to generate a significant amount of revenue from carbon sequestration, either through an auction or a royalty system.

“It would behoove a state like Illinois to be a leader at settling these property rights issues, and not just for climate change purposes but also for job growth and revenue generation,” Endres said. “It’s a resource the state should take advantage of so that it can become a center of innovation for this new industry.”

While this isn’t necessarily the silver bullet to reverse carbon dioxide emissions, Endres says it’s one of many ready-made and already available tools that could slow the growth rate of global climate change.

The research was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and the Energy Biosciences Institute. The institute is a collaboration involving the U. of I., the University of California at Berkeley, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and BP.

Sales Strategies Class Makes Final Presentations at Banquet



Tuesday, October 11 marked the date for the first Sales Presentation and Award Banquet, held at the I-Hotel in Champaign. The event was held to

provide a venue for the 52 students in the Introduction to Sales Class, ACE 199, to make their final sales presentations to a group of professionals and present awards to outstanding students in the class.

Students interviewed and made a professional pitch on a product individually to a series of local professionals in agri- and consumer-oriented industries. Students applied the strategies that they learned through the class selling a mock product to a professional. The students were graded and highest scoring presentations were awarded a trophy at the end of the evening.

The course was offered in ACE for the first time this fall as a first 8-week class taught by Kaizad Irani. The Sales Presentation Dinner was hosted with a generous gift from Monsanto.

Where are they Now? Steve Sonka

Steve Sonka, Professor Emeritus of Food and Agribusiness



Management in ACE, didn't end his career upon his retirement from the department in December 2002. Instead, his career catapulted into new and exciting challenges, which continue today.

Sonka came to the University of Illinois in July 1975. His career in the department included teaching more than 15 different classes, a job he enjoyed immensely and in large part shaped today's Agribusiness Markets and Management program. Sonka said his favorite course to teach was the Executive in Residence Program. "I learned as much as the students did from that class," Sonka added. Sonka also can be credited with leading efforts to create a class now known as ACE 161, Microcomputer Applications. In 1982, Sonka and a team of college faculty colleagues created the curriculum for the class. The College then turned a former men's locker room in Bevier Hall into a classroom with 10 Apple and 5 IBM computers with the hope of introducing students in agriculture to the importance of computer use in the industry. The class development turned led Sonka to author the book, *Computers in Agriculture*.

In 1996, Sonka was awarded the Soybean Industry Chair in Agricultural Strategy, and was named to the position of Director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory, a national center for production and utilization research for the soybean industry. He served in these roles from 1996 to 2002. Sonka taught the department's introductory course in agribusiness management during this time, but the opportunity to lead the soybean lab led him around the world and expanded his engagement with agribusiness worldwide. "Our department provided an excellent opportunity to work with world agriculture leaders, from Dalton City, Illinois to Christchurch, New Zealand. I really enjoyed the opportunity to provide leadership in this area."

Sonka was instrumental in leading the 1999 Global Soy Forum in Chicago. NSRL led in raising \$2 million to fund this event, which brought together leaders in industry, academia, and development to advance the soybean industry. "There were 2000 people in Chicago for the Forum. The whole industry was represented," he said. "The event

helped the National Soybean Research Lab to grow its international ties, and establish Illinois as the center of the soybean world."

In 2002, when Sonka retired from the Soybean Lab directorship and as an ACE faculty member, most did not expect him to slow down, and he didn't. Subsequently, he was named the University of Illinois' Interim Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement, a post he filled until his recent retirement from that position in July of 2011. There, Sonka directed campus-wide initiatives to interact with the public at the local, national and international levels.

Travel has been a constant during his faculty career, and he enjoys travel personally as well. "I've been on every continent except Antarctica," he says. "I never thought when I came to the university I'd be a lifetime platinum cardholder with American Airlines."

Sonka enjoys spending time with his four daughters and six grandchildren. He is the only adult in his immediate family without a University of Illinois degree, and he and his family are avid Illini sports fans. In addition, he continues consulting relationships in the agribusiness industry. And in his true fashion, he is now providing part-time leadership to a new UI program, the ADM Institute for the Prevention of Postharvest Loss. The program was established with a \$10 million gift from Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) to address postharvest loss issues in developing nations around the world.

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