

January Newsletter

ACE Department of
Agricultural and
Consumer Economics

NEWSLETTER



From the Department Head:

The fall semester is over and we are preparing for spring in Urbana. We are actively recruiting for faculty positions in energy economics and agribusiness environmental economics. It is refreshing to observe the passion of our future scholars and to facilitate a path to academic excellence.

In April 2013, Chancellor Phyllis Wise and Provost Ilesanmi Adesida shared the campus vision and outlined a set of strategic actions for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus. One strategic action identified by Provost Adesida is a system of regular academic program reviews across campus to provide functional and useful methods for units to gauge effectiveness and to identify areas of improvement. ACE was one of three campus units piloting these reviews in fall 2013. The review confirmed the areas of excellence in the department as well as some opportunities for change. We plan to use the review as guidance as we develop a strategic plan for the next few years.

We have launched a new course exploring food, agribusiness and finance in the Chicago area, and concluded the class with a 4-day immersion program to the city this month. These types of activities expose students to interactions with professionals and alumni that reinforce our classroom efforts. We are thankful for the many donors that provide resources for these experiences.

Our enrollment this year has nearly 700 students in our department – a high not seen before by our department. Students see the benefit of our applied programs in agribusiness, food, consumer and environmental economics, business and policy. The job opportunities for our students continue to expand.

Paul Ellinger, Head

Department of Agricultural and Consumer
Economics

In This Issue

[From the Department Head: \(/content/january-newsletter-0#headline0\)](#)

[Fall Enrollment \(/content/january-newsletter-0#headline1\)](#)

[Meet New ACE Staff \(/content/january-newsletter-0#headline2\)](#)

[U of I to provide volunteers to train farmers in Africa \(/content/january-newsletter-0#headline3\)](#)

[Students Explore California with ACE \(/content/january-newsletter-0#headline4\)](#)

[Where are they now?: David L. Chicoine \(/content/january-newsletter-0#headline5\)](#)

[\(/content/january-newsletter-0#headline6\)](#)

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/)

Fall Enrollment

The Department of ACE has 688 students enrolled in its nine concentrations. This is compared to 586 students in the department during the fall semester of 2008.

The fastest growing concentration during the past five years has been in the department's newly developed Financial Planning program. Since beginning the program in 2008, 97 students now are enrolled in that concentration.

Meet New ACE Staff

Jonathan Coppess recently joined the faculty at the University of Illinois as a clinical assistant professor of law and policy in the ACE department. Previously, he served as chief counsel of the Senate Committee on



Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry for Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow. Prior to joining the Ag Committee, he was Administrator of the Farm Service Agency at USDA. Before being appointed at USDA, Jonathan was a legislative assistant for Senator Ben Nelson. Jonathan grew up on his family's corn and soybean farm in Western Ohio and practiced law in Chicago before moving to Washington, D.C. to work on agriculture policy. He earned his Bachelor's from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and his juris doctor degree from The George Washington University Law School in Washington, DC.

Jon Scholl teaches agricultural policy at U of I as part of an experiential learning program focused upon a hands-on, real world approach to learning. He served five years as president of American Farmland Trust



(AFT) where he refocused the organization on a mission of protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices and helping keep farmers on the land. He successfully led the organization through the most severe economic recession since the Great Depression. Under his leadership, AFT increased its credibility as a national advocate on land conservation issues and a convener of divergent interest groups consisting of farmers, consumers and environmentalists. Prior to leading AFT, Jon served as counselor to the administrator for

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

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

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

[\(http://ibip.illinois.edu/\)](http://ibip.illinois.edu/)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Programs

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

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

Contact Us

Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics
Dr. Paul N. Ellinger
Head of Department

326 Mumford Hall
1301 W. Gregory Drive
Urbana, IL 61801-3605
Phone: (217)333-1810
Fax: (217)333-5538

Email: ace-aces@illinois.edu (<mailto:ace-aces@illinois.edu>)

agricultural policy at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) in the George W. Bush administration. At the U.S. EPA, Scholl led the development of the first national agricultural strategy, first agricultural advisory committee and the first agency-wide cross-media agriculture team. He also helped direct agency regulations on animal feeding operations, spill prevention, clean air rules and emission reporting requirements. In 2007, Scholl provided counsel to the USDA farm bill team on conservation provisions. Prior to his work at the U.S. EPA, Scholl was executive assistant to the president of the Illinois Farm Bureau. He also served as the director of public policy, director of national legislation, and director of natural resources. Over his 25 years with Illinois Farm Bureau, he worked with the Illinois Congressional delegation and coordinated several legislative initiatives at state and local levels. Jon is a partner in a family farming operation in McLean County, Illinois that grows corn, soybeans and generates wind power. He graduated from the U of I in 1978 with a B.S. in agricultural science. He was the recipient in 2008 of the U of I College of ACES Award of Merit. He is currently a member of the U of I College of ACES Dean's Advisory Committee. He is the former chairman of the Illinois FFA Foundation.

Todd Kuethe joined the ACE staff this year as a clinical assistant professor in the TIAA-CREF Center for Farmland Research. Before beginning his work at U of I, he was an economist for the United States Department of



Agriculture's Economic Research Service in Washington, DC. He received a B.S. in economics from Saint Louis University, an M.S. in agribusiness economics from Southern Illinois University, and a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Purdue University. He has published more than 20 scholarly articles and contributed to numerous reports for the USDA. He is also a contributor to farmdocDaily at U of I. In 2009, he was awarded the Outstanding Choices Article Award from the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association. He serves multiple leadership roles in the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association and the regional research group on Agricultural and Rural Finance Markets in Transition.

U of I to provide volunteers to train farmers in Africa

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is partnering with the U of I College of ACES



and four other institutions on a program to conduct a USAID Farmer-to-Farmer program that connects farmers in the United States with other farmers in the East African nations of Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda for training and technical assistance.

“Our role will be to help locate knowledgeable volunteers who will travel to Africa and provide training,” said Rolin Oliver Ferguson, international program coordinator in ACES.

Ferguson said that the volunteers may be individuals, growers, and producers with specific expertise, Master Gardeners, and U of I Extension personnel.

The CRS Farmer-to-Farmer program proposes to place over 300 volunteers to conduct volunteer assignments over a five-year period. The volunteers would travel to East Africa for two to three weeks

“The program will use the expertise of U.S. Catholics and non-Catholics to help the impoverished communities we serve in this part of Africa,” said Bruce White, director for the CRS program. White said that this is the first time CRS has been involved in the 28-year-old Farmer-to-Farmer program funded by the U.S. government.

Students Explore California with ACE



Twenty three students traveled to Northern California to explore food, farm and environmental policy through ACE 199. The course, which has traditionally explored policy development in Washington, D.C., and

culminated in an immersion there, went west to look at California as a microcosm of policy development in these areas of policy. Through the class, students were challenged to step outside of existing beliefs on food policy and obtain a deeper understanding of the food system by engaging with the people in it. The group studied the issues in policy development in California during an 8-week course on campus, then spent their spring break week comparing Midwestern and West Coast differences in food policy and marketing between the two regions.

Students were challenged to put together a video on a topic of their choice by studying the issue while in Urbana and interviewing professionals on their trip. Students were introduced to basic skills in video production at the beginning of the semester, conducted interviews with people knowledgeable on each student's topic, and created a 3-minute video at the conclusion of the immersion. Students visited local farms and farmers markets, corporations invested in food production in California, talked with policy makers, and attended a farm rally at the state capitol building. During the course, personal interviews, meetings and discussion panels were held to help students fully grasp their topics. ACE senior Grace Simpson felt that this trip gave her an all-round view on issues in the food system. "The classes were very interactive with the professor as well as professionals and it was nice to take a trip to learn how people elsewhere market differently than we do in Illinois."

In addition to connecting with employers, students also interacted with Illinois alumni that live in the area. Program Coordinator Jessa Barnard felt that the experience of this class cannot be replicated. "Change happens when students are exposed to real experiences. This program enables students to be more interested in classroom topics and be more knowledgeable." The California experience is expected to be rotated with the traditional Washington D.C. policy course, and continue on a semi-annual basis. To learn more about this program and to watch the student videos, visit <http://publish.illinois.edu/experiential-ace/> (<http://publish.illinois.edu/experiential-ace/>).

Where are they now?: David L. Chicoine

David Chicoine's career has taken him from his home state of South Dakota to more than 30 years in Illinois and back to South Dakota as professor of economics and South Dakota State University's 19th President.



Chicoine was a mainstay in the ACE department, moving through the faculty ranks to serve from 1988 to 1995, as the last head of the Department of Agricultural Economics, just prior to the reorganization of ACE. Chicoine served as the first dean of the newly organized College of ACES from 1995 to 2001, and served as the first University of Illinois Vice President of Technology and Economic Development and university officer from 2001 to 2007. In January 2007 he was appointed President of South Dakota State University (SDSU).

His time spent as department head and dean was one of the most impactful times in Chicoine's career. "I enjoyed helping others succeed. If faculty and students were successful, the department would be successful and visa-versa; if the department and college were successful, it enabled the faculty and students to succeed."

As U of I's Vice President Chicoine: 1) led the revitalization of the university's Offices of Technology Management (OTM) at the Urbana-Champaign and at the Chicago campuses; 2) created IllinoisVENTURES, LLC, the university's business development and early stage capital company supporting start-ups commercializing research-derived faculty innovations and new technologies; and 3) led the development of the incubator, EnterpriseWorks, and the Research Park at the University of Illinois, which has been named best university research park in 2010 by the Association of University Research Parks (AURP).

In South Dakota Chicoine sits on the board of managers of South Dakota Innovation Partners, LLC, a company that provides the pre-seed/seed capital and business development services to launch research-serviced technology-based start-ups and on the board of Growth

Partnership, LTD., the developer of the incubator, Innovation Center, and of the Research Park at SDSU.

Chicoine began his career with Illinois Extension after receiving his M.S. as a regional economist for Western Illinois in Macomb. After he completed his Ph.D. in agricultural economics at Illinois, he was appointed assistant professor and extension economist in state and local public finance and regional economic development. He also held an appointment in the university's Institute of Government and Public Affairs and periodically taught public finance in the College of Business. A native of Elk Point, South Dakota, Chicoine completed B.S., M.S., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural economics from SDSU, the University of Delaware, Western Illinois University, and the U of I Urbana-Champaign, respectively.

Chicoine currently serves on the board of Monsanto Company, the Avera McKennan Hospital and University Center in Sioux Falls, and of First Bank and Trust in Brookings, South Dakota.

His recognitions include Chevalier of the French National Order of Merit from the government of France, the USDA Superior Service Award and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the SDSU Department of Economics. He also has contributed as a co-author or co-editor on four books and has published more than 100 academic journal articles, book chapters, and professional papers.

In his free time, President Chicoine enjoys bike riding, reading and his family. His wife Marcia is also a graduate of SDSU and the U of I. Their son Josh lives in Chicago with his wife Laura and children Sylvie and Watson.

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