

March Newsletter



From the Department Head

The campus was very quiet last week for spring break. While some students visited warmer climates, Jon Scholl, Jonathon Coppess, and Jessa Barnard led a group of University of Illinois students through Washington D.C. These students have been immersed in policy issues for the past eight weeks, and last week made many visits including American Farm Bureau, Crop Life America, Monsanto, Mondelez, USDA, EPA, USAID, Renewable Fuels Association, Senate Ag Committee, and many Illinois legislative offices. This is an outstanding leadership and policy experience for our students.

ACE is proud and privileged to have two students holding leadership positions on the University of Illinois campus. Damani Bolden, an ACE senior in public policy and law, is finishing the final few weeks as UI student body president. He is the first African-American to lead the student body in the university's history. Lucas Frye, an ACE junior in agribusiness markets and management, was recently elected as the Student Trustee to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. This is a highly coveted and very important position. We are very proud of Damani and Lucas and thank them for their outstanding leadership.

In this issue we highlight our professional development classes and opportunities, summarize ongoing research in Brazil and look back on the career of Dr. Robert Thompson. Enjoy the spring.

Paul

Career Classes Give Students First Glimpse into Future

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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/)

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



ACE now offers four classes that teach students about finding careers in their chosen concentrations. The classes offer students an opportunity to interact with professionals and to learn about careers in Agribusiness Markets and

Accounting, and Financial Planning.

ACE 341, Contemporary Issues in Agricultural Accounting and Finance, has a 13 year history in the department. The other three courses, formatted similarly but with emphasis in agribusiness management, policy, and financial planning, have only been offered in recent years and were added due to the success of ACE 341. The courses are meant to challenge students to think about their career goals and the steps required to achieve them. Speakers representing a variety of companies and career paths (many of whom are ACE alums) are invited into the classroom. The students are encouraged to ask questions, such as what the professionals wish they had done themselves in college, what steps they should be taking now to be successful, or what companies to look for when they conduct interviews. Students learn how to prepare for a career fair, update their resume, and learn networking skills.

Using a seminar format, students are expected to communicate in a professional manner.

Students serve as hosts for the speakers, welcoming them and introducing them to the class. Ann Finnegan, one of the instructors in these courses, believes that students should be exposed to this type of learning to engage a different set of skills. "You don't get what's in these classes in any other class. We really encourage the development of soft skills and professional development."

Jenna Josephs, a senior in Contemporary Issues in Financial Planning, said she chose to take her class because she wanted to meet and network with other students and professionals. She credits the course with giving her the opportunity to consider different career positions and help decide what she personally is most interested in pursuing.

[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

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

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Brazil's Dilemma: Abundant Grain, Inadequate Storage

A tropical climate that allows for year-round farming would seem to be a tremendous economic advantage, but for corn and soybean farmers in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, it also poses a problem: an abundance of grain followed by a 10 percent postharvest loss, due in part to lack of storage.



“There is a 34 percent under capacity of soybean storage, and the situation

is aggravated by the rapidly increasing production of second-crop maize,” said agricultural economist Peter Goldsmith.

The research project was the first to employ GIS software to map the coordinates of commercial, cooperative, and private grain storage facilities in Mato Grosso.

“To find the areas with the most and least congestion,” Goldsmith said, “we created GIS coordinates for every facility, mapped them, and then overlaid the current production with how much production there would be if farmers were to produce and store a second corn crop on 100 percent of the bean crop.

One region in the northern part of the state is about 6.9 million metric tons under capacity,” Goldsmith said. “That’s 270 million bushels. If a typical grain bin holds about 50,000 bushels, that’s equivalent to 5,420 50,000-bushel grain bins.”

The information will help determine the best, most convenient locations for additional storage. The research was funded by the ADM Institute for the Prevention of Postharvest Loss at the U of I.

Goldsmith said that tropical regions of the globe will be producing more and more of the world’s food, so helping farmers in developing countries such as Brazil create more efficient harvesting, transporting and storage is a step toward ensuring that there will be enough grain to feed and fuel the world.

Students attend FPA
Experience in Orlando

The University of Illinois was well represented at the *FPA (R) Experience* in Orlando, Florida last October. *FPA Experience* is the professional annual meeting of the Financial Planning Association (FPA). Five interns from the ACE's financial planning concentration were selected to attend the conference to represent the program and network with other students and professionals.

The interns spent time helping at conference sessions and



events throughout the week. They assisted conference planners by scanning nametags at events, gathering surveys and checking in participants.

Jimmy Webber, a senior in Financial Planning, believes the experience will help with his future career without a doubt. "This opportunity taught me how to step out of the box and do something that I usually would not be comfortable with. The trip also felt like a business trip for me, which was a taste of my future career."

Where are they now?: Robert Thompson



Robert Thompson has had a busy professional and personal life since leaving the University of Illinois in 2010. After teaching at the university for six years, he and his wife moved back to Washington, DC.

Although retired,

Thompson doesn't consider himself to be finished with his career. Currently he serves on the Land O'Lakes board of directors and the advisory board to Nestle. His role with Nestle requires him to give about 40 presentations a year.

The focus of his post-retirement speaking career is on the world's long term supply and demand for food, international trade negotiations, agricultural policy, and the importance of getting agriculture back onto forefront of the international development agenda. He is a visiting scholar at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, a professional Masters program in international relations in Washington, DC. In this position, he studies issues of increasing geopolitical importance in the 21st century.

Since retiring, Thompson has enjoyed traveling both for work and pleasure. He has visited Antarctica, Tahiti, Galapagos, the Dalmatian Coast and France with his wife and travels internationally to speak about once a month. His wife has traveled throughout the United States teaching short courses on bobbin lace making and works several days per week in the textiles department of the Smithsonian Institution's American History Museum.

While at the University of Illinois, Thompson taught three courses: The World Food Economy, Agriculture in Economic Development and Agricultural and Food Policies. He also worked heavily for Extension on a public policy outreach agenda on the position of the United States in world agriculture and what it meant for farm policy, trade negotiations, foreign aid policy, and the long-term global food supply-demand balance. He considers his work on this effort to be his proudest achievement. In his time at Illinois Thompson was awarded the Illinois Farm Bureau's Charles B. Shuman Distinguished Service Award and the ACES Faculty Award for Global Impact.

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