

November Newsletter



From the Department Head:

The fall semester has brought another outstanding group of freshmen and transfer students in ACE. I continue to be impressed with the caliber of students at the University of Illinois. We are proud of our spring 2014 graduates, and in particular Angela Hamann, who received a second place award in the prestigious undergraduate research competition at our national professional meeting, AAFA. In addition, our farmdocDaily team was recognized as the outstanding group at this meeting, recognizing hard work of many of our professors and staff in the department.

Go Illini!

Paul Ellinger, Head

Department of ACE

Farm Bill Toolbox launched by FarmDoc Team

On July 1, 2014, the University of Illinois as the lead university for the National Coalition for Producer Education (NCPE) entered into a cooperative agreement with the Farm Service Agency to develop web-based decision tools to producers and farm owners with the decisions and programs in the Farm Bill. The creators of the renowned farmdoc and farmdocDaily websites now offer an one-stop online resource for farm program decisions and analysis entitled the [Farm Bill Toolbox](http://farmbilltoolbox.farmdoc.illinois.edu) (<http://farmbilltoolbox.farmdoc.illinois.edu>).

The Toolbox provides a one-stop and user-friendly resource to assist producers in making decisions regarding program selection, and updating yields. In addition, the toolbox provides tools to evaluate the Margin Protection Program for dairy producers.

In addition, training sessions will begin this month that build on a popular webinar series launched by farmdoc. Since January the team has hosted one-hour webinars covering topics ranging from the Farm

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[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/)

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[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/)

Bill to the 2014 crop economics outlook to crop insurance. Professors in the ACE department teach the webinars. All webinars are archived at <http://www.farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/> (<http://www.farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/>).

ACE Students Take on the Nation's Capital

A group of ACE students spent their spring break in the nation's capital, completing an experiential course on policy and leadership.

Now in its 11th year, the Agricultural Policy and Leadership course begins with eight weeks in the

classroom, then applies the classroom knowledge to Washington



D.C. Illinois alum Jon Scholl, former CEO of the American Farmland Trust, returned to campus to teach the class.

Students begin by learning about the entire policy process, including steps taken to influence and direct policy. All students are required to prepare testimony on a specific and timely issue. Lessons are often taught by guest lecturers with experience in the field. Students are encouraged to ask questions and interact with the guest experts in preparation for the Washington, D.C. trip.

In Washington D.C., students meet with representatives of agencies, organizations, companies, and legislators, including the American Farm Bureau, Crop Life America, Monsanto, Mondelez, USDA, EPA, USAID, Renewable Fuels Association, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and many Illinois legislative offices.

This year's group was also able to visit the meeting room where the Farm Bill was negotiated, and to ask questions of policy directors and economists on the Bill's four-year development process.

"The class was fortunate to learn a vast amount of information in such a short period of time, and we are so thankful to these organizations for talking with us about issues in agriculture," said participant Joseph Melisi.

Jonathan Coppess, ACE clinical assistant professor of law and policy, helped set up meetings for this year's trip using his Washington D.C. contacts and experience working for the U.S. Senate and USDA.

[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/>)

[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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Coppess believes students benefit from this trip in many ways. The experience provides a real-world view of policy and leadership through interacting with working professionals. He believes that the students involved this year were especially impressive.

"I really enjoyed the questions the students asked and was impressed with their knowledge and interest. They went through a lot of meetings but stayed sharp and asked detailed, smart questions."

To learn more about the trip and read student's daily blog posts, visit [http://ace.illinois.edu/blog-topic/class-activities/\(blog-topic/class-activities\)](http://ace.illinois.edu/blog-topic/class-activities/(blog-topic/class-activities)).

Students Mix Food and Finance in Chicago Immersion

Building on the historical relationship of Chicago



to agribusiness, ACE developed a course designed to deepen the understanding and importance of Chicago as a hub of agribusiness, finance and food business. The Chicago Agribusiness and Financial Markets class involves an eight-week class experience, and culminates in an immersion trip to Chicago to visit with firms and network with industry professionals. Students apply their knowledge of food, agribusiness, finance, commodity market, and processing industries to problems and policy issues facing Chicago-based companies working in these areas.

Students in the new course worked in groups around issues such as food processing, environmental sustainability, commodity trading and local food development. Guest lecturers discussed these issues and introduced many of the firms students would visit. The groups completed issue papers after the Chicago immersion experience. Course instructor Jon Scholl, who came to the university with 35 years of public policy experience, provided leadership to the class and is a strong advocate of experiential learning. He particularly wanted to

expose students to job opportunities and to network in the area so close to their college home.

The group connected with ACE alumni working in the class's field of study. They visited Kraft Foods, McDonalds, and OSI Group, and visited and spoke with employees of the CME Group.

Student Matt Dollinger said that the class trip revealed career opportunities he had never considered. "It opened my eyes to the career possibilities that my degree from the College of ACES could afford me in the city of Chicago. Agriculture plays such an important role in Chicago yet many people do not seem to know that. Students never think that an ACES degree could have them end up working in Chicago, that is something I wish I knew early in my college career."

Scholl believes the style of the class is key to launching students into their future careers. "Students come away excited and see people running these companies who could be them one day. It is a class that teaches learning to do by doing to learn."

Meet New ACE Faculty

John Newton

Dr. John Newton has joined the department as a clinical assistant professor in agricultural commodity markets.

His research interests lie in drawing upon various data sources and quantitative techniques to evaluate the success of public and private market risk



management strategies and tools in the agricultural sector. Other interests include agricultural policy and the dairy and livestock industries.

From 2004 to 2014 Dr. Newton was an agricultural economist for the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service working on issues of risk management and federal farm income support programs. While serving in this role, Dr. Newton had the prestigious opportunity to work as a 2013 fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. From there,

he served a detail with the USDA Office of the Chief Economist, providing public policy insight for the Agricultural Act of 2014.

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Dr. Newton received a Ph.D. in agricultural economics, an M.A. in macroeconomics, and an M.S. in agricultural economics all from The Ohio State University.

Hope Michelson

[Dr. Hope Michelson](#)
[\(/directory/hopecm\)](#)

joined the ACE faculty as an assistant professor in 2014.

After earning a bachelor's degree in history and English literature from Georgetown



University in 2001, she came to the University of Illinois to pursue an M.S. in agricultural economics. She did her doctoral work in applied economics at Cornell University and a postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University.

Dr. Michelson has written several publications on food and international markets. She was the recipient of multiple research grants, including one from the Walmart Foundation to "Measure the Impact of Walmart's China Direct Farm Program on Income and Agricultural Practices". She was awarded several fellowships from the University of Illinois including the Jonathon Baldwin Turner Fellowship and the Department of Agricultural Economics Fellowship.

Where Are They Now: Harold Guither

Professor emeritus Harold D. Guither has had a renowned career as an agricultural economist, educator and author. After beginning his university career with the Cooperative Extension Service, he joined the Department of ACE to research university involvement overseas. He concluded his career in teaching, research and extension in agricultural economics and public policy. Professor Guither retired from the university in December 1995 and has continued to write on agricultural issues and historical events. Together he and his wife have three adult children – all U of I graduates -- four adult children from her earlier marriage, 14 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Dr. Guither enjoys collecting stamp collecting, photography and leading weekly discussions about current events with other residents of his retirement community.

Dr. Guither grew up in Walnut, Illinois; after 14 months in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II he enrolled at the University of Illinois, earning a degree in general agriculture with a specialization in journalism. He went on to receive an M.S. (1950) and a Ph.D. (1962) from the U of I, both in agricultural economics.

Dr. Guither worked first as an ag economist on the editorial staff of the Doane Agricultural Digest, then joined the U of I extension editorial staff, writing news releases and advising county extension staff on agricultural communications. He was secretary-treasurer of the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers for ten years during this period.

After completing his doctoral work, from 1964 to 1966 he worked in Jordan under a University of Illinois/ USAID contract as chief of party and adviser in agricultural communications. Dr. Guither was a professor in ACE from 1966 until his retirement, teaching classes such as the economic history of agriculture and agricultural policy and programs.

Across his career, Dr. Guither has written seven books and many journal articles. He has received numerous rewards for his work in public policy education, and he has researched the animal rights movement and organizations lobbying to influence agricultural policies.

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