



# AAEA Grad Student Section Update

The Official Newsletter of the Graduate Student Section

Volume 3, Issue 1

Covering News for January, February, March 2007

## **What's Inside?**

### **\*First Edition\***

Article "Consider the Value in Extension"

What is the GSS?

Meet the New Executive Committee

How do I Join?

**Graduate Student Section (GSS) of the American Agricultural Economics Association**

Not a member of AAEA?

Check the GSS box when applying at:  
<http://www.aaea.org>

Already a member of AAEA?

Renew or Join GSS by e-mailing:

[membership@aaea.org](mailto:membership@aaea.org)

### **Benefits to Membership:**

- Networking for Jobs
- Meeting New People
- Tons of Info & Tips to Help with School and the Job Search
- Opportunity to Become an Officer in the GSS
- Looks great on your CV

## Considered the Value in Extension? Maybe you Should...

It's that time of year: the time when students are penning study schedules for midterms, hurriedly trying to write those research abstracts, and for those with graduation on the horizon, probably thinking about a future position. For some soon-to-be graduates those positions probably include an aspect of extension work.

Extension has historically been at the forefront of Agricultural Economics, but as times have changed, so has that emphasis. For those in academia the recognized hierarchy is usually research, teaching, and then extension, but for those outside of academia, extension is the means by which research is adapted for direct application and circulated. Within academia more positions are including an extension component, although research is still the primary responsibility. Positions may directly include a percentage of time to be dedicated to extension, or include an "outreach component" couched with teaching responsibilities. At the 2006 AAEA Annual Meeting in Long Beach, almost 40% of available positions posted through the employment center involved some extension responsibilities. And, those postings included positions for both master's and doctoral level students.

Extension appointments can be both challenging and rewarding because, like teaching, you can see the direct influence you are having on individuals and the quality of their decision making. Extension responsibilities within Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness have also grown and diversified as agriculture has changed. Topic areas include the foundation farm management, risk management and commodity marketing emphasis, but can also include agribusiness development, ingredient and consumer product marketing, transportation and logistics and international trade. Extension activities can also aid in developing research topics and enhancing research programs.

To encourage more graduate students to consider the benefits and value of extension, the Graduate Student Section (GSS) and the Extension Section of the AAEA will be co-hosting a new graduate student Extension Competition. The competition will focus on graduate students disseminating their research and analytical results in a format appropriate for an extension audience, with the top three finalists awarded during the Extension Section Luncheon at the 2007 AAEA Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon. Initial applications will be due March 1st, 2007, and interested students should contact Ross Pruitt at [ross.pruitt@okstate.edu](mailto:ross.pruitt@okstate.edu).

As we continue the semester and progress in our endeavors, be they research, teaching or extension, we would do well to remember that agricultural research would not have the prominence it does today without extension and the application ability it has provided.

Michelle Mullins, University of Missouri  
Frayne Olson, Iowa State University

---

## What is GSS?

GSS stands for the Graduate Student Section, of the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA). The AAEA-GSS was developed to provide a medium for graduate students in the AAEA to come together to foster the professional development of graduate students through various activities. The specific objectives of the AAEA-GSS are:

- To promote the professional development of graduate students in agricultural economics and related graduate programs,
- To increase participation and involvement of students with both academic and non-academic career goals in the American Agricultural Economics Association, and
- To provide more opportunities for graduate student involvement at the Annual Meetings and any other related activities of the American Agricultural Economics Association.

---

## History of GSS

The GSS stemmed from the original graduate student breakfasts organized by Claudia Parliament and Vern Eidman and was expanded into a full section through the work of Blake Bennet, Lisa House, and Darren Hudson. The GSS was a product of an idea by Blake Bennett, who believed that graduate students were not receiving ample opportunities at the national level to network, develop skills, and participate in meetings. The concern was discussed with Ralph Christy, then AAEA President, who encouraged the students to write a proposal to the AAEA. Donna Dunn also encouraged the group to write a section proposal.

---

## Meet the New Executive Committee!

**Chair** – Michelle Mullins, University of Missouri

**Chair - Elect** – Ross Pruitt, Oklahoma State University

**Member at Large** – Chris Bouquot, West Virginia University

**Member at Large** – Pam Guling, Oklahoma State University

**Member at Large** – Alee Lynch, Purdue University

**Faculty Advisor** – Aslihan Spaulding, Illinois State University

**Faculty Advisor** – Mike Sykuta, University of Missouri

**Faculty Advisor** – Jayson Lusk, Oklahoma State University



**Want a chance to become involved?**

**Want to become a member of next year's Executive Committee?**

**Look for upcoming emails and information in the next newsletter!**



The GSS chair for the 2006-2007 year is **Michelle Mullins**, a doctoral student in Agricultural Economics from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Michelle originally received her Bachelors degree in Agribusiness Management from the University of Missouri in December 2003, but she loved the Tigers so much that she decided to stay for her Ph.D.! Michelle's research is focused on the political economy of alcohol (the drinking kind) and her dissertation is centered on the regulatory structure of the alcohol industry.

As GSS chair Michelle's duties include overseeing the GSS student officer board and acting as a liaison with the GSS advisors, other AAEA sections, and the AAEA board and business office. Michelle is always open to ideas and suggestions from all graduate students and offers these words "The GSS is an organization dedicated to the needs of graduate students in agricultural economics and agribusiness. The Graduate Student Section strives to provide a forum for educational advancement and networking through its many activities, but it can only be the most that each individual graduate makes. For this reason I highly encourage all graduate students to join the section and to get involved with any opportunity the GSS presents."



**Ross Pruitt** is the GSS chair-elect for 2006-07. He has been working on a Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University since January 2005 in the Department of Agricultural Economics after completing a M.S. degree in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University in 2004. Ross is originally from Kentucky and earned his B.S. in Agribusiness from Western Kentucky University in 2003. His dissertation research is focused on agribusiness location decisions in addition to the role that universities play in the fostering of business entrepreneurship and innovation.

As chair-elect this year, Ross' focus will be on developing the budget, helping to develop the program sessions for the annual meeting and ensuring the success of the new graduate extension competition that will be offered at the AAEA meetings in Portland next summer. According to Ross, "The GSS is constantly evolving to meet the needs of graduate students as demonstrated through the development of the extension competition which will allow the student's research to be showcased. This is in addition to the ability to network with fellow graduate students and faculty. Graduate students should not hesitate to contact the GSS executive committee with new ideas to enhance the experience of GSS members throughout the year."



**Jessica Grace Perdew** is the 2006-2007 elected Secretary and Treasurer of the Graduate Student Section of AAEA. Jessica is a second year master's student in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. Jessica's research frequently takes her to Indonesia where she works with a team dedicated to improving cocoa production and smallholder welfare in South Sulawesi. Through economic analysis of alternatives and outcomes, Jessica hopes to improve development work-plans through more precise recipient targeting. Prior to joining Purdue's agricultural economics department, Jessica worked in Africa and Asia through NGO's based in Washington DC. Jessica completed her undergraduate degree in International Agricultural Development from the University of California at Davis. As the incoming Secretary and Treasurer Jessica looks forward connecting with you through the Exchange Newsletter and at AAEA events such as the upcoming members meeting in Portland Oregon. She welcomes any suggestions and challenges you to get involved!



**Alec Lynch** is a GSS member-at-large. Alec has been at Purdue working on a M.S. in the Department of Agricultural Economics since August 2005. She earned her B.S. degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Tennessee in 2005. At Purdue she has been actively involved with Graduate Student Organization. Alec's thesis focused on the effects of climate change on corn yields in the Midwest. She hopes to continue this work on the Ph. D. level this coming fall.

A native of Tennessee, Alec enjoys hiking and following SEC sports. She showed quarter horses in junior high and high school and competed at the AQHA Youth World Show in 2003 and 2004. Alec has earned her Gold Award in Girl Scouting and helps her mom's troop when she is home.

Alec's work in GSS is primarily related to activities. She will be involved with planning the track sessions and other GSS activities at the conference in Portland. According to Alec, "Graduate students should get involved in GSS to give them a networking basis. The meetings are a large gathering and this is an excellent organization to help you meet people that are at a similar stage in professional development. Members of the board work year round to generate activities and contests that will enable our members to showcase their work and improve the skills needed to move on to the next level."



**Pam Guiling** is a GSS member-at-large for 2006 -07. She is originally from Southeast Missouri and received her BS in Agricultural Business from Arkansas State University in May 2003. She began the MS in Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University in August 2005 and should be finishing my thesis within the next month. She has taken a job as a Program Associate with the Northeast Research and Extension Center in Arkansas and will start soon.

As membership chair, she is responsible for emailing GSS member updates and the GSS quarterly newsletter from the aaeagss@yahoo.com account, contributing articles to the GSS newsletter, publicizing annual meeting activities and recruiting members at the annual meeting. Part of Pam's responsibilities will include hand-outs at the AAEA meeting, and putting up posters, flyers, printed out versions of the newsletter at the meetings.



**Chris Bouquot** is a GSS member-at-large for 2006-07. After earning his B.S. from James Madison University in 1998 and M. E. M. from Duke University in 2001, he has been working on a Ph.D. at West Virginia University since January 2004 in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. His dissertation research is focused on potential carbon sequestration and revenue from timber and carbon credits earning disturbed land.

As Communications Officer , Chris will be developing the newsletter and updating the GSS website (<http://www.geocities.com/aaeagss>). Chris hopes to improve the design and organization of the GSS webpage, produce some exciting newsletters, and meet many wonderful graduate students.

## **How do I Join GSS?**

*Myth: If I am a graduate student and sign up for membership of the AAEA, I become automatically a member of the GSS.*

***Truth: You need to sign up for the GSS membership in addition to your AAEA Membership!***

There is a list of sections with their associated membership fees on the AAEA Membership form, so be sure to check the box next to GSS when you join the AAEA or each time when renew your AAEA membership. GSS memberships must be renewed every year, just like the AAEA membership.

*Myth: Membership in the GSS is expensive.*

***Truth: Membership in the GSS Section is only \$5.00!***

In relative terms this is only about 7% of your AAEA Membership fees. In addition, the fees for 8 out of 12 AAEA sections are \$10 or more.

*Myth: There is no information available about the GSS, so I don't understand what they do.*

***Truth: There is more information available about the GSS than ever before!***

Our website can be viewed at <http://www.geocities.com/aaeagss>. This newsletter will be available 4 times a year! In addition, *The Exchange*, the AAEA Newsletter, publishes the "Students' Corner" section, which is written by the GSS Executive Committee. Our officers frequently send emails with important announcements and updates. If you are interested in receiving email updates about our events, activities, and opportunities please send an email to [aaeagss@yahoo.com](mailto:aaeagss@yahoo.com) with the subject being "Add me to the GSS List."

---

**Check out the NEW GSS WEBSITE at**

**<http://www.geocities.com/aaeagss>**

**Background Designed by Jamie Bouquot**

**E-mail us: [aaeagss@yahoo.com](mailto:aaeagss@yahoo.com)**