



AAEA Grad Student Section Update

The Official Newsletter of the Graduate Student Section

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Covering News for July to December 2007

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**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

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

Reflections on Portland

The City of Roses, Portland, Oregon, welcomed the Graduate Student Section (GSS) as part of the 2007 AAEA Annual Meeting. While the conference had over 4,000 participants, the GSS educated and entertained 142 members with the following activities:

The Graduate Student Extension Competition: The Extension and Graduate Student Sections sponsored this competition where all 7 finalists delivered excellent presentations, according to Larry Sanders, chair of the competition and a Professor at Oklahoma State University. The winners who divided \$850 in prize money were the following:
1st Place: Nicole Olynk, Michigan State University
2nd Place: Lindsey Ellingson, Colorado State University
3rd Place: Joleen Hadrick, Michigan State University

As the competition moves into its second year, all grad students and their advisors are urged to consider competing in 2008.

Graduate Case Study Competition: This year's case study was the Stahlbush Island Farms, a family-oriented, sustainable fruit and vegetable producer. Of all the exciting presentations, the winners this year were the following:

- 1st Place: Alberta University
- 2nd Place: Arkansas University
- 3rd Place: Florida University (Team 1)

The GSS Business Meeting: Started with an introduction of the outgoing and incoming officers and advisors and included a presentation by the Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics (C-FARE), by Dr. Stephen Jackson of Mississippi St and Tamara Wagester. The reception following the meeting was co-hosted with the Committee on Women in Agricultural Economics (CWAE) and provided a great opportunity for students to meet their peers from various schools and network with professionals.

What is GSS?

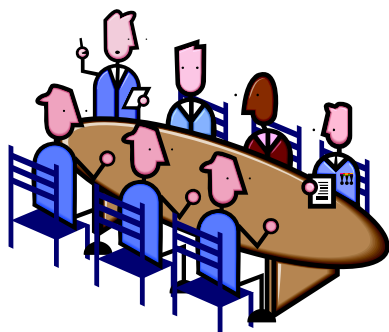
GSS stands for the Graduate Student Section, of the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA). The AAEA-GSS was developed to provide a medium for graduate students in the AAEA to come together to foster the professional development of graduate students through various activities. The specific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



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

**Look for info in an upcoming
newsletter!**

Chair – Ross Pruitt,

Oklahoma State University

Chair - Elect – Mesbah Motamed,
Purdue University

Secretary/ Treasurer – David Ortega,
Purdue University

Member at Large, Activities – Erika Knight,
University of Florida

Member at Large, Membership – Sarah Low,
University of Illinois

Member at Large, Comm. – Chris Bouquot,
West Virginia University

Faculty Advisor – Aslihan Spaulding,
Illinois State University

Faculty Advisor – Mike Sykuta,
University of Missouri

Faculty Advisor – Daniel Tilley,
Oklahoma State University

Faculty Advisor – Andrew Seidl,
Colorado State University



Ross Pruitt is the GSS chair for 2007-08. He is a Ph.D. candidate in the Agricultural Economics Department at Oklahoma State University and completed his M.S. in agricultural economics at 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 and economic development.

As GSS chair, his 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. According to Ross, "Graduate students should not hesitate to contact the GSS executive committee with new ideas to enhance the experience of GSS members throughout the year. This is an organization for the graduate students and the direction the section takes is reflective of the needs of the graduate students we, the executive committee, serve." Ross encourages that graduate students contact him at any time with thoughts or ideas on how to improve the GSS.



Mesbah Motamed is the GSS chair-elect for 2007-08. He is a Ph.D. candidate at Purdue University in the Department of Agricultural Economics, where he also completed his M.S. degree in 2006. Mesbah is originally from Texas and earned his B.A. in Humanities and Economics in 2000 from the University of Texas at Austin. His dissertation research focuses on geographic determinants of income, land use, and population density outcomes.



David Ortega is the 2007-2008 Secretary/Treasurer of the Graduate Student Section of AAEA. David is a first year master's student in the Dept. of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. David's research interests are focused on Agricultural Development, Trade and Policy. Prior to joining the Agricultural Economics department at Purdue, David worked for Bayer CropScience doing pesticide related work in the Florida Citrus Industry. David completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Florida in the Department of Food and Resource Economics specializing in International Economics and Agricultural Law. As the GSS Secretary/Treasurer David looks forward to connecting with you through the Exchange Newsletter and at the AAEA summer meetings in Orlando. He welcomes any new suggestions and ideas for the coming year and encourages you to network with fellow graduate students and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the GSS.



Erika Knight is a GSS member-at-large. She is a native of Georgia and earned a B.S. in Agricultural Economics from Fort Valley State University in 2003. Erika received a M.S. in Food and Resource Economics from the University of Florida in 2005; but after graduating, she decided to stay and pursue her Ph.D. Erika's dissertation evaluates the impact of promotional strategies on consumers' demand for fruit juice beverages. Erika plans to complete her doctoral degree in May 2008. Erika'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 Orlando.



Sarah Low is a GSS member-at-large whose GSS responsibilities focus on membership. She has been working on a doctorate in Agricultural and Consumer Economics at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign since August 2006. Before pursuing her Ph.D., Sarah worked at the Center for the Study of Rural America, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. She holds a M.S. in Agricultural Economics from Purdue and a B.S. from Iowa State University. At Illinois Sarah is active with Illini TaeKwonDo and Illini Powerlifting. Her research interests are spatial analysis, entrepreneurship, regional assets, and the community economic impact of ethanol plants.

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. Sarah is also responsible for hand-outs, posters, flyers and newsletters at the annual meetings in Orlando.



Chris Bouquot is a GSS member-at-large. 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 on 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 \$10.00!

In relative terms this is only about 12% of your AAEA Membership.

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 throughout the 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 with the subject being "Add me to the GSS List."

Check out the GSS WEBSITE at

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

E-mail us: aaeagss@yahoo.com