Moving COSBAE Forward - A Few Thoughts from the Chair

By Ron Rainey

COSBAE had a wonderful year engaging new audiences and laying a foundation to strengthen our capacity to enhance diversity and magnify our organization’s footprint on the Association and the academic profession. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Chair for the past year. I want to express my sincere thanks to the entire COSBAE membership for entrusting me to lead the organization. I also express gratitude to the executive committee for your assistance and leadership throughout the year. I am hopeful that COSBAE can continue to mentor and serve others as we move forward.

I write this while at the 2014 Agricultural and Applied Economics Association Annual meeting in Minneapolis, MN. The cool weather is beautiful but more important is the endless opportunities to network with colleagues both formally and informally. If were not able to attend if were not able to attend the annual meeting, I invite you to come participate in the future. COSBAE’s presence at the meeting is very visible with our four organized symposia, business meeting, reception and luncheon which we partner with the Committee on Women in Agricultural Economics to host. The organization is vibrant and active but we could easily have a stronger presence. For the coming year, I invite you to get active by reaching out to the executive committee and getting involved in some of our upcoming events and activities.

About Our Organization...

COSBAE’s mission is to encourage and promote the interests of black agricultural economics professionals within the AAEA structure and the broader agricultural community. Recognizing the importance of shared knowledge among all colleagues, COSBAE membership is open to all interested parties. Membership is $10 per year. To join, please contact the AAEA office at www.aaea.org.
Moving COSBAE Forward from page 1

As I reflect on our accomplishments from the past year, it is exciting to think about the potential of pursuing future organized symposium, conferences and/or workshops. It is with great pride to announce that COSBAE efforts led to the development of a new outreach format that the AAEA board calls an “AAEA Sponsored Workshop”. This resulted from our pursuit of a pre-conference session to “Emerging Local Food Systems in the Caribbean and Southern USA”. Presenters discussed both research and outreach opportunities in the local food systems with a focus on the role that agricultural economist can play in examining this market. The session was presented in partnership with Caribbean Agro-Economic Society, the University of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Southern Risk Management Education Center. The Executive Committee participated as presenters and discussants for the half-day session. The event was such a success that participants requested that a resolution be developed indicating our continued willingness to continue this type of collaboration going forward. Additionally, a request was made that a similar session be held at the upcoming 2014 Professional Agricultural Workers Conference to be held in December at Tuskegee University.

At our business meeting, we voted to form two committees—status of blacks in the profession and membership/engagement with a charge to re-visit our mission and explore ways to enhance COSBAE service to our members, students and support of our profession. I invite you to share your thoughts to the committees and executive leadership as we seek to enhance the value of the section to your professional development and the recruitment of diverse young professionals to our ranks. Our business meeting concluded with the election of our Chair-Elect. I take great pride in announcing that Blondel Brinkman (Purdue University) was elected to this position. The organization is in wonderful hands with our incoming Chair, Norbert Wilson of Auburn University and the election of Blondel. Please join me in welcoming our new leadership to the helm. I must say that I am excited about their ideas and cannot wait to see what awaits COSBAE.

COSBAE is delighted to continue our partnership with the Committee on Women in Agricultural Economics (CWAE) for our annual luncheon. This year’s speaker is Kellee James, CEO and Founder of Mercaris. Mercaris is a market data service and online trading platform for organic, non-GMO and certified agricultural commodities. She will be speaking on “Economists, Externalities & Entrepreneurship: A Call to Find New Ways to Address Big Challenges in Agriculture, Energy, Water and Waste”. Even at a young age, Ms. James possesses an accomplished background that includes launching her own venture firm, serving as a White House Fellow, and being names both a Black Enterprise Magazine and Crain’s Chicago Business Magazine “40 under 40 Rising Leader. On behalf of the entire organization, I express my sincere appreciation to our section’s supporters, National Crop Insurance Services and the Southern Risk Management Education Center, from this past year. Dr. Crain and Dr. Thomas Zacharias, NCIS President, not only support our section financially but also attend our reception and luncheon. Their support is genuinely appreciated and goes well beyond financial. Dr. Crain is one of the presenters for one of our organized symposia. It is exciting to see a true partnership that expands the mission of both NCIS and COSBAE. If you get the opportunity, please express our gratitude for NCIS’ continued support of our section’s efforts over the past few years.

As the conference sessions get underway, COSBAE will be well represented having worked to partner and/or develop four sessions. I am hopeful that you were able to support our sessions and your colleagues with your attendance during the meeting. If not, please start making plans now to participate in the 2015 conference and the COSBAE professional enrichment offerings. Our 2014 listed sessions were: Effective Approached to Working with Hard-to-Contact Limited Resource Agricultural Producers, A Reflection on the Agricultural/Applied Economics Profession through the Lens of Our Veterans, Raising Productivity in African Call for Proposals

The 2015 AAEA Meetings will be in San Francisco. It may seem as if we have a lot of time but time flies when you are having fun. Therefore, we will like to extend an invitation to all members to submit proposals for the COSBAE track by Saturday, November 22, 2014. Please forward your proposals to Blondel Brinkman, blondel.brinkman@aphis.usda.gov.
Hot Topics
COSBAE was established in 1980 for the purpose of promoting the welfare of Black agricultural economists by representing their interests and by engaging in activities that encourage their professional advancement. Recently, the issue of our name has resurfaced. We would like to hear from you. Do you think COSBAE needs a name change? Please share your thoughts with one of the executive committee members listed on the back. All responses will be kept confidential.

Meet the Members

Dr. Norbert Wilson is a professor of agricultural economics at Auburn University, where he has been on faculty since 1999. From 2014-2015, he is on leave as a visiting professor at Cornell University. Norbert received a bachelor of science in agriculture in agricultural economics from the University of Georgia. He went on to earn a master’s of science in agricultural economics from the University of London, Wye College. Norbert attended the University of California, Davis, where he completed his doctorate in agricultural and resource economics.

Since being at Auburn University, Norbert has worked at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris, France. While at OECD, he analyzed international trade and food safety and structural adjustment. His research portfolio consists of analysis on international trade, food safety and food security with an emphasis on food banking in the United States.

Ron Rainey, 2014 COSBAE Chair, and Kellee James, Founder and CEO of Mercaris and 2014 AAEA-COSBAE/CWAE Speaker

Remember to submit your article for inclusion in COSBAE VOICES 2015 Summer issue by May 31, 2015. Contact the editor for more information

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**Job Vacancy**  
University of California, Davis

Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics Position: Assistant Professor (Tenure Track)

JEL Classification: C1 - Econometric and Statistical Methods and Methodology: General

We seek an economist to join our department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ARE) as an assistant professor. The successful candidate will be expected to pursue a research program in applied econometrics defined broadly and publish important research regularly in high-quality refereed journals. We encourage applications from candidates with expertise and interests in any area of research within the broad area covered by applied econometrics, provided there is congruence with teaching undergraduate courses in finance or marketing and with ARE’s emphases in agricultural economics, natural resources, environmental economics, and development economics.

Teaching responsibilities include 2-3 quarter-length courses per year spread across our graduate and undergraduate programs. At the undergraduate level the successful candidate may teach core courses related to finance or marketing. At the graduate level, the successful candidate may teach core and elective courses in the M.S. and in the Ph.D. programs related to their fields of interest.

This is an academic-year (9-month) position, which will carry a term appointment in the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) requiring the appointee to conduct research of relevance to the mission of the California Agricultural Experiment Station.

**Editor’s Note**  
*By Blondel Brinkman*

It has been an exciting year for COSBAE and I am looking forward to the 2014-2015 year as a member of COSBAE, the editor of COSBAE Voices, and most importantly the Chair-elect of COSBAE. The AAEA Meeting in Minneapolis was exciting. COSBAE contributed to many relevant and informative sessions. As we move forward with the organization we have to find ways to reinvent ourselves and propel our organization to the top. AAEA is a very diverse organization and as such, we should embrace this diversity and use it as an advantage to appeal to potential members of our organization. This can certainly contribute to increase COSBAE’s prominence in the AAEA.

Thanks the many members that contributed to such a successful meeting. Special thanks to Dr. Erika Styles for providing Carmen Nicholson, to assist in editing the COSBAE Voices. I must also thank my employer the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service who has diligently supported the publication of COSBAE Voices over the past three years.

It’s a pleasure to serve you!  
Dr. Blondel Brinkman