**ALUMNI NEWS**

**Alumni Speakers**

**FCA chair speaks to econ classes**

Glen R. Smith (’79 ag business), Farm Credit Administration, shared his experiences with two econ classes learning about cooperatives and agricultural finance on October 3. Smith was designated chairman and CEO of the Farm Credit Administration (FCA) by President Trump on July 17. He’s served as a member of the FCA board since December 2017. Smith will serve a term that expires May 21, 2022. He also serves as a member of the board of directors of the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, which is an independent U.S. government corporation responsible for ensuring the timely payment of principal and interest on insured notes, bonds, debentures, and other obligations issued on behalf of Farm Credit System banks.

**Department alumni speak to Economics Club**

Department alumnus and Group Vice President and Deputy Director of Research of the Federal Reserve Bank, St. Louis, David C. Wheelock (’82 economics), spoke to the Economics Club at a meeting on November 13.

After Wheelock received his bachelor’s degree in economics from Iowa State in 1982, he received a master’s and PhD in economics from the University of Illinois in 1984 and 1987.

“My first job was as an assistant professor at the University of Texas, teaching at the economics department there. I was there for four years, before going to St. Louis. I was hired as a visiting scholar at the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank in 1991. Eventually (in 1993), they made me an offer that was too good to refuse, and I’ve been there ever since.” [Read more.](#)

Thomas Schenk (’07 MS economics), former chief data officer and director of analytics and performance management for the city of Chicago, spoke on the subject October 22 in the Pioneer Room of the Memorial Union. Schenk said during his role in Chicago he used data to improve the quality of life for people in Chicago and worked to improve how efficiently the city operates.

Schenk co-founded the Civic Analytics Network at Harvard University’s Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Schenk graduated from Drake University and then attended graduate school at Iowa State, receiving a master’s degree in economics. [Read more.](#)

**Student News**

**Ag bus seniors honored at convocation**

Abrah Meyer was the convocation speaker at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences convocation on Friday, May 10, in Hilton Coliseum. The CALS Student Council presented awards to Brandon Hanson for outstanding senior and Alex Brand for leadership excellence.

**Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society initiates 4 department students**

The four inductees from the economics department are John Joseph Green (ag business, econ), Ryan Michael Fisher (PHP, ag business), Jackson Ray Scholten (hist, econ) and Jacob Thomas Dahm (econ, hist).

**Leist appointed to Board of Regents**

Zack Leist, ag business junior from Clarion, Iowa, was appointed by Gov. Kim Reynolds to the Iowa Board of Regents. He began his service June 3 at the board meeting in Ames.

**Basha receives NACTA award**

Recent graduate student, Albulena Basha, has received the prestigious national NACTA graduate student teaching award. Basha graduated in May.

**New members for EGSA board**

Five graduate students were elected as board members for the Economics Graduate Student Association (EGSA) 2019-20. Behzad Jeddî Balabagloo, president, Samer Salameh, vice president and ag senator; Seunghyun Han, treasurer, Tugba Somuncu, press secretary, and Sher Afghan Asad, GPSS senator.

**Ag Bus Club wins Outstanding Chapter award**

The Iowa State University Agricultural Business Club won the Outstanding Chapter award at the Undergraduate Student Section Awards of the 2019 AAEA Annual Meeting, July 21-23, in Atlanta.

This is the fourth year in a row the club has won this award, winning an impressive 13 out of the last 15 years. Congratulations, club members and advisers Ron Deiter and Amy Brandau!
(78 ag business), president and chief executive officer of Northwest Financial Corp (NFC), was appointed by Governor Kim Reynolds to serve as superintendent of the Iowa Division of Banking. Plagge began his new role when Ron Hansen stepped down on September 16. “Jeff is a proven leader with deep insights into the banking industry, especially when it comes to balancing consumer protection with regulatory oversight,” said Gov. Reynolds. “He believes in building trust, exchanging ideas, and staying on the forefront of industry changes. Jeff will do an outstanding job in his new position.”

**Alum named program director at EMU**

Andrew Miller (’03 MS ag economics) was appointed director of the MBA and MA in organizational leadership programs at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He will also be EMU’s representative in the Collaborative MBA program, an innovative online degree program offered jointly by EMU, Bluffton University, Canadian Mennonite University and Goshen College.

**Balagtas named to Council of Economic Advisors**

Joseph Balagtas (’98 MS ag economics), associate professor of agricultural economics at Purdue University, was selected to serve as a senior economist, with a focus on agricultural and food policy, to the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) in Washington, D.C.

The CEA provides the president economic advice on economic policy and evaluates economic literature and data to determine the consequences of alternative policies. While in Washington, Balagtas, has a partial appointment working with the USDA’s Office of the Chief Economist. Read more.

![Image of alumni with awards](image1)

**Alumni Awards**

**Troy Schulte**

Professor and Department Chair Joshua Rosenbloom presented alumnus Troy Schulte (’94 economics) the 2019 Department of Economics and History Distinguished Alumni Award at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences dinner and awards ceremony at the Iowa State Alumni Center October 24.

Schulte, the city manager of Kansas City, Missouri, for more than a decade, earned degrees in both history and economics from Iowa State University. The award recognizes him as a “distinguished alumnus who demonstrated outstanding professional achievement.”

**Department alumni honored at awards ceremony**

Three economics department alumni, Dhamu Thamodaran (’83 PhD ag economics), Steve Berger (’86 ag business), and Ben Zelle (’14 ag business, management information systems), were honored at the Alumni Association Awards ceremony October 25 at Scheman. Thamodaran won the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Henry A. Wallace Award; Berger received the CALS Floyd Andre Award; and Zelle was awarded the ISU Alumni Association James A. Hopson Volunteer Service Award. Read more.

**Undergrad helps restart BioBus program**

Chemical engineering and economics student Sam Kramer is one of two new co-chairs selected to lead the Next Generation Scientists for Biodiesel, according to an August 27 story in Biodiesel Magazine. “The world needs more capable and caring engineers,” Kramer said. “Programs like NGSB and our ISU BioBus Club spark interest in renewable energy and give young engineering students hands-on experience.”

**Ag bus senior wins spot on The Voice**

EllieMae Millenkamp, agricultural business senior, auditioned and won a spot singing on the NBC program The Voice.

**Two ag bus students selected as Global Food Challenge Emerging Leaders**

Two ag business juniors are among six students selected as the 2020 Global Food Challenge Emerging Leaders. Emerging Leaders were selected from an incredibly competitive pool from all 11 partner universities in the sixth year of the program. Brooke Beinhart and Rachel Grober were selected from the 16 sophomore finalists from six universities.

**Agricultural Business Club wins 2019 impact award**

On Friday, October 25, agricultural business senior and club president Riley Arthur accepted the ISU Alumni Association Impact Award at the Alumni Association Awards ceremony in Scheman on behalf of the Iowa State University Agricultural Business Club.

**Staff News**

Amy Brandau, academic adviser, was one of the CALS faculty and staff who were honored at the 21st annual Learning Communities Institute May 13. She was recognized for her five years of service to the Learning Communities Institute.

**Swenson helps with Marshalltown recovery**

David Swenson, associate scientist, was part of the effort to aid the community’s recovery from an EF-3 tornado in Marshalltown July, 2018. Swenson received a grant from the Fieldstead & Company Endowment for Community Enhancement Fund to support this year’s work in Marshalltown.

**Staff Comings and Goings**

New student services specialist Lydia Richards is the new student services specialist in the undergrad office. She will meet with prospective students, be part of the OneApp Scholarship process, and send out the weekly undergrad student newsletter.
FACULTY NEWS

Harl honored by a national estate planners organization

Neil Harl, emeritus professor, was elected to the National Association of Estate Planners and Councils Estate Planning (NAEPC) Hall of Fame® and recognized as a Distinguished Accredited Estate Planner®. The award is given in recognition of distinguished service to the field of estate planning and was presented November 7 at a ceremony during the organization’s annual NAEPC Advanced Estate Planning Strategies Conference.

He is the author of 29 books related to agricultural law, and is known for writing Farm Estate and Business Planning, which was originally published in 1982 and is in its 20th edition. He has presented more than 3,400 seminars in 43 states and 17 foreign countries.

“In my 40-plus years as a faculty member, I enjoyed lecturing around the world and on campus, but my most significant contributions were in helping the countries freed from the Soviet Union’s control to master their new approach to operating farms and other businesses,” Harl said. Read more.

Lence, Edelman win awards

Professors Sergio Lence and Mark Edelman received the university’s most distinguished awards and were honored Monday, September 23, at the ISU Faculty and Staff Awards Ceremony in the Memorial Union Great Hall. These awards are a reflection of their commitment to Iowa State, their professional reputation, and their esteem among their peers. Read more.

Lence, Moschini paper named best article

A paper coauthored by Professors Sergio Lence and GianCarlo Moschini, “Threshold cointegration and spatial price transmission when expectations matter,” was selected the 2018 Best Article in Agricultural Economics. The paper is coauthored by Fabio Gaetano Santeramo, assistant professor at the University of Foggia, Italy.

Agricultural Economics is the journal of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE), which presents the Best Article Award annually.

Jacobs, Li, and Hayes paper wins award

At the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA) meetings this year, Keri Jacobs, associate professor, Ziran Li (’17 PhD economics), and Dermot Hayes, professor, won the Applied Risk Analysis section’s Best Paper Award in Applied Risk Analysis for their paper, “Reference-Dependent Hedging: Theory and Evidence from Iowa Corn Producers,” published in the American Journal of Agricultural Economics.

Orazem presentation at Department of State

Peter Orazem, professor, presented “The Status of Slovenia’s Economic Transition” at the Executive Analytic Exchange on the Republic of Slovenia for Ambassador Blanchard on July 31 in Washington, DC.

Welcome Rafael Pluta

Rafael joined the department as administrative specialist in September. He will assume a variety of responsibilities, as well as some new tasks that have been created by Workday.

Johnson retires from department

Becky Johnson, secretary, retired from the department after more than 46 years of service. Her last day of work was July 1.

McKay retires from Iowa State

Deb McKay, cost center manager for econ, soc, and CARD, retired from Iowa State on August 2. She had been an ISD cost center manager since July 1, and prior to that worked as an administrative specialist for sociology in East Hall for a total of 40 years.

Department celebrates Olson’s work

Members of the department celebrated with Becky Olson, CARD graphic designer, on her retirement October 31. Becky spent 29 years with the department, most of them with the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD).

Class Notes

Abrah Meyer (’19 ag business) has accepted a position as a supply management specialist with John Deere.

Trey Forsyth (’17 public service and administration in ag, ag business) has accepted a position as special assistant in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Drew Mogler (’16 ag business), public policy director for the Iowa Pork Producers Association, was featured by Fox and Friends on Fox News.

Scott Henry (’12 ag business, international ag), partner at LongView Farms in Nevada, Iowa, was featured on Iowa Public Radio.

Carly Cummings (’11 ag business) is the founder and owner of MADE for this.

Lisa Buckentine (’11 ag business) has accepted a position as senior merchandiser at Dairy Products, Inc.

Marla Meyers (’10 ag business) has been promoted to assistant vice president, state and national relations with the National Pork Producers Council.

Mindy Mallory (’09 PhD economics) joined the Department of Agricultural Economics as an associate professor and Clearing Corporation Charitable Foundation Endowed Chair of Food and Agricultural Marketing at Purdue University.

Cody McKinley (’07 ag business) has been promoted to assistant vice president, state and national relations with the National Pork Producers Council.

Read more.

Lence, Edelman
Zhang nominated as journal associate editor

The editors of the American Journal of Agricultural Economics nominated Wendong Zhang, assistant professor, to the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association Board as an associate editor of the journal for a four-year term from January 2020 to December 2023.

Zhang was selected from a list of highly regarded economists with expertise in one or more areas covered by the journal. Associate editors constitute an essential pool of experts on whom the editors call frequently to evaluate four to six manuscripts per year plus any resubmissions of the revised manuscripts and to serve as a member of the AAEA committee that selects the winner of the annual Best AJAE Article of the Year.

Doak passes

Paul Doak, emeritus associate professor, passed away on Sunday, May 12, at the age of 90. Doak taught in the economics department from 1962 to 1992. The emphasis of his professional career was on teaching and advising students majoring in agricultural business, as well as serving as adviser of the Agricultural Business Club. For Iowa State's sesquicentennial, he wrote an essay on his experiences in the economics department. A graveside service was held Thursday, May 16, in Columbia, Missouri.

New faculty join department

Four new faculty members joined the Department of Economics beginning 2019 fall semester. The following started as assistant professors August 16.

Katherine (Katie) Harris-Lagoudakis came to Iowa State from Michigan State University, where she just completed her PhD in economics. She received her BS from the University of Missouri, and her MA from Michigan State.

Donghyuk Kim graduated from Yale University in May, 2019. In addition to his PhD, he earned his BA (magna cum laude), an MA, and MPhil from that institution. His main research areas are industrial organization, urban economics and labor economics.

Jian Li came to Iowa State University from McGill University, where she was an assistant professor of economics. She received both her PhD in economics and her MA in mathematics from the University of California, Berkeley, and her BA in economics from Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Bertan Turhan, assistant professor of economics at ITAM, Centro de Investigacion Economica (Center for Economic Research), and visiting assistant professor, Carnegie Mellon University, holds a PhD from Boston College, 2015. He received an MA from Boston College in 2011, an MA from Sabanci University in 2009, and a BSc in industrial engineering from Sabanci University in 2005.