

# COWBOY ECONOMIST



Oklahoma State University • Department of Agricultural Economics • Spring 2019

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS BANQUET

Summary of recognitions, awards, and scholarships presented

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: JOE SCHATZER

Regents Distinguished Teaching Award recipient

## ALUMNI IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Several alumni recognized for dedication to public service

## THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

Welcome! We hope you will enjoy the latest issue of *Cowboy Economist* published by the Department of Agricultural Economics. Our intent is to highlight key events in the life of the department over the past several months including news about students, faculty members, and staff. We also highlight accomplishments of distinguished alums and share information about research and Extension programming efforts.

We highlight awards and recognition received at our annual scholarship banquet in this issue. We have many outstanding students, and we know you will enjoy reading a bit about them. We are so appreciative of all our donors. We share the history of the Henry L. Njoo Scholarship in this issue. One of our excellent students, Camryn Lucas, is also featured.

The department continues to attract excellent new faculty. We are so pleased to introduce Dr. Amy Hagerman, Dr. Dayton Lambert, and Dr. Lixia Lambert. All three will add to our scholarly efforts within the department!

We spotlight distinguished graduates, AJ and Susan Jacques, who are engaged and supportive of all things OSU. Their story is inspiring, and the support they provide to our department is greatly appreciated.

Read about activities over the past year for our undergraduate club, Aggie-X, as well as our Graduate Student Association. These groups of students are hardworking and will be points of pride for OSU and our department for many years to come.

We spotlight Dr. Joe Schatzer as a faculty member. He has had a tremendous impact on our teaching program over the years. He is the recipient of the 2019 Regents Distinguished Teaching Award. We also share stories of our alums who are currently public servants in Oklahoma. The depth and breadth of service by our departmental alums is truly inspiring.

We are thankful for all the wonderful students in our program. This issue highlights several students who received special recognition at the departmental, college, and university level. I continue to marvel at the abilities and dedication demonstrated by our students!

Best regards. We hope you enjoy this issue!



### about the cover

Joe Schatzer, OSU agricultural economics professor, is recognized for his strong dedication to enhancing the classroom learning experience for students. Schatzer received the Regents Distinguished Teaching Award from Oklahoma State University this spring.

Photo courtesy: Todd Johnson

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# Scholarships & Awards Banquet

The OSU Agricultural Economics Department hosted another successful banquet to wrap up the spring semester.

The 2019 Department of Agricultural Economics and Aggie-X Scholarships and Awards Banquet was a great success.

On April 13, 2019, at the Wes Watkins Center, the department was able to honor 89 students with 107 scholarships totaling \$130,843.

Dr. Mike Woods, the Agricultural Economics Department Head, welcomed everyone to the banquet. He said, “Students in the Department of Agricultural Economics are the foundation for our programs. We are so pleased to hold these students up and celebrate them tonight. We have outstanding and successful students, thanks in large part to our friends and supporters.”

Three faculty members of the department served as readers – introducing donors, scholarships, and student recipients:

Dr. Lixia He Lambert, who is an assistant professor in natural resource and environmental economics.

Dr. Amy Hagerman, who joined the department as an assistant professor with a joint extension and research appointment.

Dr. John Michael Riley, an assistant professor in agricultural economics.

There were three new scholarships awarded at the banquet:

The Steve and Susan Campbell Scholarship in Agricultural Economics

(Endowed) was established by Steve and Susan Campbell.

The Henry L. Njoo Scholarship (Endowed) was established by Mita and Christopher Butschek.

The Brian and Sarah Beth Leedy Sales Scholarship was established by Brian and Sarah Beth Leedy.

“The department prides itself in producing career-ready, successful individuals. They not only serve as great leaders to our industry, but also as impressive role models to current and future students in our program. The department would like to once again thank all of the individuals who give their time and donate resources to support our students,” Dr. Woods said.

# SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Oklahoma Chapter of American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers Awards  
Outstanding Appraiser, L.A. Parcher Award

TY SMITH

Outstanding Farm Manager, E.E. Huff Award

BRAYDEN TRIGUEIRO

Outstanding Senior, Scholastic Achievement Citation

KATELYN MILLER, BLAYKE ROGERS, BRAYDEN TRIGUEIRO

Outstanding Senior Award of the Western Agricultural Economics Association

MARY KURZWEIL



All-Around Senior,  
Campus Wide Activities  
and Academic  
Achievement, James S.  
Plaxico Award

AMANDA HIGGINS



With a full banquet hall at the Wes Watkins Center, the 2019 Scholarships and Awards Banquet attendees enjoy a meal provided by Klein's Catering before recognizing many students and faculty for their academic achievements and dedication to the department.



For the first time ever, Aggie-X Club officers and members organized a silent auction to raise funds for the club.

# And the **Winners** Are...

## Scholarship Donor Feature



### HENRY L. NJOO SCHOLARSHIP (ENDOWED)

Recipient: Hetian Gao

Presented by:  
Drs. Henry Njoo and  
Endang Nina Sugiarti

Dr. Njoo worked very hard over the course of his life and career. He moved his family (wife and three children) around the world to continue his graduate career at OSU. Dr. Njoo earned his Ph.D. with able advising and mentoring from Dr. Dan Tilley. The scholarship is created in honor of Dr. Njoo and documents his dedication to higher education. Principal donors are Mita and Christopher Butschek. Mita is Dr. Njoo's daughter. We were honored this spring to have Dr. Henry Njoo and his wife Endang Nina Sugiarti attend our banquet and present the scholarship.

## KEN AND KATHY STARKS (ENDOWED) SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient:  
Camryn Lucas

Presented by:  
Pat Zimmerman

Camryn is a junior from Duncan, Oklahoma who is pursuing a dual degree in Agribusiness and Economics with a finance minor.

When asked what her future plans are she said, “I am wanting to enter the financial industry as a financial analyst and return to school to obtain my MBA. My ultimate goal is to become a financial manager and potentially a CFO for a company I am passionate about.”

She added, “I am so incredibly thankful to receive this scholarship. I have really enjoyed my time as a student at Oklahoma State, however, I could not continue without the generosity of those who are willing to believe and invest in me. I hope to one day be able to provide a student with the same opportunity so they can focus on



becoming a young professional, and less on financial stress that comes with obtaining a degree.”

The Ken and Kathy Starks Endowed Scholarship was established to assist students majoring in Agricultural Economics who are interested in a banking/finance career. Ken Starks says, “We were interested in helping deserving students reach their academic goals, while being active participants

in campus organizations and activities without the burden of financial stress. As a graduate of the Agricultural Economics Department, many of my former professors played a significant role in my academic and personal development. They were not only respected mentors, but friends for life. In a small way, this was our opportunity to honor them for their care, compassion, and leadership.”

# Joining the Cowboy Family

Three new faculty members are welcomed to the OSU Agricultural Economics Department to join the Cowboy family.

The agricultural economics department welcomed three new faculty members last year: Amy Hagerman, Dayton Lambert, and Lixia He Lambert.

“The department is very fortunate to have these three faculty members join us. They bring a wealth of experience and abilities that will serve students and Oklahoma citizens for years to come. Our department welcomes all three to our family!” said Dr. Mike Woods, department head.

## **Amy Hagerman**

Amy Hagerman joined the department in July 2018 as an assistant professor with a joint extension and research appointment. She is working in the general area of farm bill policy and agricultural/public policy. She is currently researching distribution methods to provide information regarding changes to the farm bill to interested parties in Oklahoma. In addition to closely watching the progress of the 2018 Farm Bill, Hagerman continues to measure economic consequences of animal diseases and other extreme events on agriculture.

Dr. Hagerman is returning to OSU, where she received

her bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics in 2004. She received her master’s and doctoral degrees in agricultural economics from Texas A&M University.

She most recently worked for the United States Department of Agriculture in Fort Collins, Colorado, where she was a Supervisory Agricultural Economist for the Epidemiologic and Economic Modeling Team in the Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health, a part of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s Veterinary Services.

When asked what drew her to study agricultural economics, she replied, “Agricultural economics touches everyone, whether they realize it or not. This field is full of interesting and important questions. I get the opportunity to serve farmers and ranchers in Oklahoma by providing information that can help them better understand policies and manage risks in their businesses.”

On returning to Stillwater, Hagerman related that, “My husband Colby and I are happy to be back in Stillwater with our three children. We feel like we have come home.”

## **Dayton Lambert**

Dayton Lambert is a professor and holds the Willard Sparks Chair in Agribusiness. He came to OSU in July 2018 from the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Tennessee, where he was a professor. Dr. Lambert’s research interests are production economics, regional economics, decision theory, and econometrics. He holds a joint research and teaching appointment.

His education includes a B.A. in Anthropology from Miami University of Ohio, a M.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Rutgers University, a M.S. in Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture from Auburn University, and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University. He served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Burundi and Gabon, Central Africa.

Lambert recently received two awards in April 2019. The first was Purdue University’s Department of Agricultural Economics Apex Award. The Apex Award is in recognition of individuals with a strong connection to the department who have made outstanding contributions in their fields.



## DR. AMY HAGERMAN



Lambert was also recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service's (ERS) Helios Product of Enduring Quality Award. The Helios Awards recognize excellent achievements in research and policy contribution, communication excellence, and program effectiveness in ERS's research program.

Lambert's current research at OSU includes analyzing the drivers behind farm and agribusiness entry-exit, the Food-Water-Energy Nexus, agribusiness mergers and acquisitions, land use change, and beef cattle-forage production systems and risk.

### Lixia He Lambert

In March 2019, Lixia He Lambert began a new role in the agricultural economics department when she became an assistant professor in natural resource and environmental economics.

Lambert came to the department as a research

## DR. DAYTON LAMBERT



associate with a joint research and teaching appointment in July 2018. Her research focus areas include environmental and resource economics, operation research, and sustainable development. She teaches two undergraduate agricultural economics courses, Quantitative Methods in Agricultural Economics (AGEC 3213) and Environmental Economics and Resource Development (AGEC 4503).

Currently, Lambert is working on a NIFA project, titled "Increasing the Resilience of Agricultural Production in the Tennessee and Cumberland River Basins Through More Efficient Water Resource Use." "This is a collaborative project with researchers from the University of Tennessee," she says. "My role in the project is to develop an agricultural sector model for Tennessee to evaluate how climate change affects crop selection, operational practices, and irrigation decisions."

Lambert was previously a Research Scientist in the

## DR. LIXIA HE LAMBERT



Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee.

At OSU, Lambert says, she plans to collaborate with other researchers in three main areas: evaluation of water resource allocation and public water policies and its impact on agriculture and other economic sectors; the development and advancement of biomass materials for energy and other bioproduct markets; and operations research on production of value added agricultural products.

Lambert's education includes a Diploma in Fermentation Engineering from HuaZhong Agricultural University in Wuhan, China, a M.S. in Agricultural Economics and Management from HuaZhong Agricultural University, a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and a M.S. in Industrial Engineering from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee.

# Alumni Spotlight: AJ & Susan Jacques

OSU Alumni AJ and Susan Jacques were inducted into the OSU Hall of Fame by the OSU Alumni Association.



Photo courtesy: Phil Shockley

Agricultural Economics alum AJ Jacques (BS 1975) and his wife Susan (BS Recreation, 1975) were inducted into the OSU Hall of Fame in February by the OSU Alumni Association. Induction into the OSU Hall of Fame is the highest honor bestowed by Oklahoma State University. It recognizes alumni and former students with outstanding lifetime achievements in society and professional life.

AJ Jacques was an oil and gas producer and contractor for more than 35 years, including serving as the president of Atlas Drilling, LLC in Woodward, Oklahoma. In addition to starting Atlas Drilling, LLC, he also started Cheyenne Drilling Company and built it into a multi-state drilling operation with 17 rigs. Susan worked as a middle school teacher and received her middle school science degree from St. Mary of the Plains in 1987.

Both of them have volunteered their time on various boards and councils. They are members of the OSU Board of Governors. AJ serves on the Alumni Board for Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum and the Board of Trustees for the OSU Foundation. Susan is an active member of the Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Club and the Friends of Music Board. She is also on the Events Committee for Women for OSU.

In 2008, the Jacques gave a \$1 million gift to establish The AJ and Susan Jacques Chair in Agricultural Economics. With a dollar-for-dollar match by T. Boone Pickens' \$1 million chair

match commitment, plus the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education match, the gift has an impact of \$4 million in endowed funds. The chair is currently held by agricultural economics professor Wade Brorsen. Susan also gave a \$1 million gift to the College of Education at OSU.

At a reception held to honor the Jacques for their endowment, Agricultural Economics Department Head Mike Woods stated, "This endowed chair will impact our teaching and scholarly efforts within the department for years to come. This support allows us to be competitive nationally in attracting and retaining outstanding students and faculty."

Brorsen says he "is grateful for AJ and Susan's generous gift. Not only have these funds allowed me to do more research, they have given the students an opportunity to learn from traveling and presenting their papers at conferences, plus receive a stipend that has allowed them to pursue their career goals through graduate school."

Will Maples, a graduate student in agricultural economics, is thankful for the benefits the chair funds have provided in his studies. He says, "Funding from the AJ and Susan Jacques Chair has not only funded my assistantship for half of my time at Oklahoma State, it has enabled me to travel to various academic conferences across the country and provided the financial support to purchase the data for one of my research projects." Maples is from Alabama and has accepted a

position at Mississippi State University after completing his graduate degree.

Over the years, AJ and Susan have been honored multiple times. The OSU Foundation recognized them as Proud & Immortal Society Inductees. They are also members of the OSU Heritage Society. AJ was honored as the Alpha Gamma Rho Outstanding Alumnus, and Susan was inducted into the OSU College of Education Hall of Fame in 2014. The couple has continued to contribute to OSU throughout the years, including the agricultural economics chair, the McKnight Center, OSU Athletics, and the College of Education, Health, and Aviation.

AJ and Susan currently reside in Stillwater. Susan said, "When AJ was ready for retirement, he asked me where I would like to live. Without hesitation, I said Stillwater. The rest is history." They have two daughters and three grandchildren. They are both life members of the OSU Alumni Association.

"I spent the most wonderful years of my life in Stillwater, and that's where my heart is," said Jacques. "I directed my gift to agriculture because that's where my roots are and where I grew up. I'm happy OSU is getting more competitive both academically and athletically."

# Aggie-X Update

As the 2018-2019 year winds down to an end, we reminisce on the past year full of successes and memories alike. This year was another very successful year for Aggie-X. Meetings and member involvement have been exceptional this year. To reward the hard work of the officers and members, we took a club sponsored trip across the state of Kansas. To start the trip, we stopped in Wichita to tour Cargill's new protein headquarters and their food development and innovation center. Next, we made our way to Manhattan to visit Kansas State University. We met with faculty and students from the Agricultural Economics department who showed us the campus and informed us about graduate school opportunities. For the last leg of our trip, we visited Kansas City, where we toured Boulevard Brewing and went to a Royals baseball game.

Aggie-X members made this year a tremendous success. To start the year off, our club held the annual Back to School Bash where we welcomed students and faculty from across the country and world back to school. Our next event was the Aggie-X Alumni Tailgate where we hosted food, games, and music for alumni, members, and faculty of the Agricultural Economics Department. In the fall we also participated in homecoming, competing in the chili cook-off, harvest carnival, sign competition, and window painting. For the first time, we raffled off a hand tooled leather portfolio to raise money for the club's expenses.

At our March meeting, the Aggie-X Club elected officers for the 2019-2020 year. By nomination and popular vote, our new officers for the upcoming year are as follows: Sara Yates, President;

Bret Barnard, Educational Vice President; Russell Spurlock, Administrative Vice President; Konlee Dulaney, Treasurer; and Emma Hayhurst, Secretary/ Reporter. I am confident in all of the new officers and am excited to see what they have in store for the club.

At our banquet held April 13, 2019, the agricultural economics department and Aggie-X Club recognized students, faculty, and staff who have exceptionally represented the department through both academics and leadership positions. The new officers were officially placed in their respective positions, and scholarships were awarded to many of our very deserving students. The date for the next Aggie-X Tailgate was also announced to be September 28, 2019, prior to the Kansas State game.

I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity I have had to serve Aggie-X and the agricultural economics department as the 2018-2019 Aggie-X President. All of our accomplishments this year can be attributed to the support of the club by Dr. Mike Woods and Dr. John Michael Riley; without our two advisors we would have not achieved all that we did.

Sincerely and Go Pokes,

Amanda Higgins  
2018-2019 Aggie-X President



The 2018-19 Aggie-X officers are (L - R) Dr. John Michael Riley, advisor; Amanda Higgins, president; Rio Mohrmann, treasurer; Kalee Horn, educational vice president; Amanda Upton, secretary and reporter; Kelsey McSperitt, administrative vice president; and Dr. Mike Woods, department head.

# GSA News

## Graduate Student Association

The start of 2019 has been productive for graduate students in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University. In early February, several graduate students participated in the 2019 Southern Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting held in Birmingham, Alabama. Seven graduate students presented research papers at the conference.

This semester, the Graduate Student Association increased the amount of social activities we hosted. We participated in Iron Monk's Trivia Night once a month, placing as high as second. As well, GSA hosted its 32nd Annual International Dinner. We had about 40 participants at the dinner, representing 15 states and countries.

Prospective student visits have increased significantly over the academic year. Eleven students visited Stillwater to meet with faculty and staff about our graduate programs. We expect around half of those

students to join us in the fall.

Several students had abstracts accepted to upcoming professional meetings, such as the 2019 annual meetings of the Western Agricultural Economics Association and the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association, that will occur in the summer. These are excellent opportunities for our graduate students to not only disseminate their research findings but network with others in the profession.

We have nine master's and 14 Ph.D. students graduating from our programs this spring and summer. While we are sad they are leaving the department as we've enjoyed getting to know them over the last few years, we are also excited to see them succeed in their future endeavors.

Go Pokes!

Logan Britton  
2018-2019 GSA President





# CAU-OSU

## SPRING GRADUATES 2019

Yikuan (Jack) Chen  
Bangping (Ian) Fu  
Yingran (Sunny) Guo  
Zhiyan (Steven) Guo  
Congshan (River) He  
Kun (Billy) Huang  
Chenyue (Cherry) Jin  
Zhiyu (Daley) Lai  
Siqiao (Judy) Li  
Yancheng (Eric) Li  
Geng (David) Liu

Jiayi (Jeff) Liu  
Zhedong (Kevin) Liu  
Chenyuan (Cheryl) Ma  
Jiasheng (Fred) Qi  
Bo (Mark) Su  
Yuxuan (Caroline) Su  
Yilin (Iris) Tian  
Pengjin (Jerome) Wang  
Shujie (Elena) Wang  
Chutao (Kaiser) Wu  
Guanghan (Savannah) Xie

Jiahui (Ken) Xu  
Xiaohan (Henry) Yu  
Luofeng (Leo) Yuan  
Yiming (Nora) Zhan  
Shenzhe (Chonsie) Zhang  
Yexuan (Elena) Zhao  
Yibo (Eason) Zhao  
Wenqi (Vicky) Zhou  
Xinyao (Linda) Zhu

# A “Great” Proposal

Alejandra Mendoza, an OSU agricultural economics graduate student, said “yes!” on the Great Wall of China.

Wedding bells will be ringing in the future for OSU Department of Agricultural Economics doctoral student, Claudia Alejandra Mendoza Ruiz, who had a surprise proposal during her teaching practicum experience in China.

Alejandra spent the fall semester of 2018 jointly teaching agricultural economics at China Agricultural University with her advisor, Dr. David Henneberry.

“I had never been in Asia before,” she said. “So, it was a very interesting experience and I learned a lot. It was a big challenge and different from everything I knew.”

Alejandra is from Chihuahua, Mexico and graduated from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios

Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM) in 2015. After earning a degree in International Relations from ITESM, she moved to Oklahoma State University to earn a Master of Science Degree in International Studies and is currently a doctoral student in the agricultural economics program.

While teaching in China, her boyfriend and soon to be fiancé, Eli Rhoades, visited Alejandra to spend the holidays with her. On one particular adventure, the couple visited the Great Wall of China with a group of students, Alejandra said.

“In Beijing, every time you go to the Metro, you have to go through security as if you were going to take a flight someplace,” she explained.

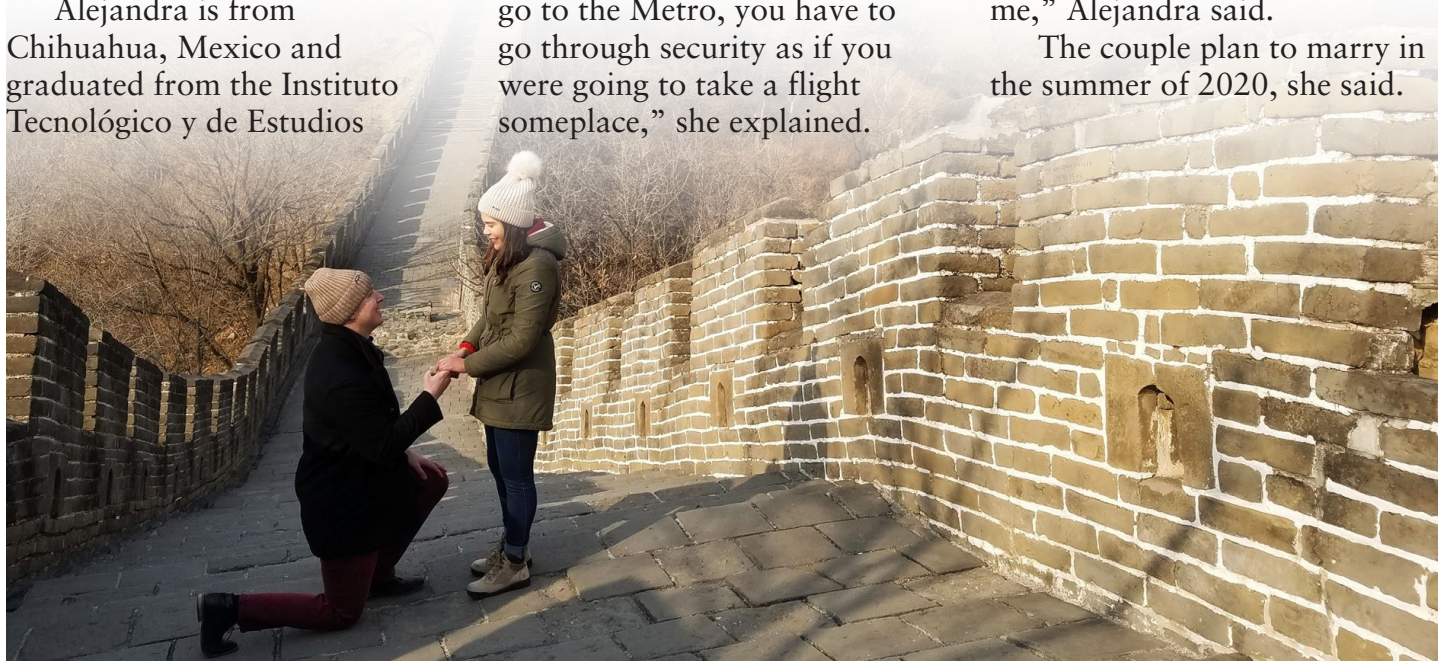
Not knowing when he was going to propose, her boyfriend had to carry the engagement ring in his pocket while they were sightseeing, which set off the metal detectors at security checkpoints, Alejandra said.

But despite setting off several security alarms with the engagement ring, Alejandra said, “No, I didn’t really see it coming.”

Alejandra and her fiancé met during a Salsa dancing ball at a University of Oklahoma Salsa ball, or dancing social, she said.

“I liked the song that was playing and I wanted to dance so I asked him to dance with me,” Alejandra said.

The couple plan to marry in the summer of 2020, she said.



Alejandra Mendoza’s fiancé, Eli Rhoades, got down on one knee at the Great Wall of China to ask for her hand in marriage during one of their many sightseeing adventures while she was teaching in China. Photo courtesy: Alejandra Mendoza

# SAEA Conference

The Southern Agricultural Economics Association's conference and annual meeting was held February 3 in Birmingham, Alabama. OSU Agricultural Economics department faculty and students had a successful conference representing the university in various activities and contests. Faculty and students returned with many awards and honors. At the conference, there were 14 selected papers presented, two selected paper session chairs, and one poster presentation. Seven graduate students presented research papers at the conference. Congratulations to all on a successful conference!

Wuit Yi (left) and Reza Radmehr (right) presented papers at the conference. Dr. Shida Henneberry (center) is their research advisor. Radmehr is a visiting scholar and Wuit Yi is an agricultural economics master's student and Fulbright scholar from Myanmar.



The undergraduate quiz bowl members were (left to right): Amanda Higgins, Laura Ruiz and Miles Cunningham.



Out of 32 teams, Amanda Higgins was on the team that placed third.



# Faculty Awards and Recognition

Faculty members in the department are constantly achieving excellence, as demonstrated by the awards and honors they receive. Below is a list of awards and recognition faculty have earned on the university, local, regional and national levels.

## Brian Adam

2019 WAEA Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award,  
More Than 10 Years' Experience

## Rodney Jones

2019 CASNR Student Success Leaders' Outstanding Advisor Award

## Dayton Lambert

2019 Purdue University Apex Award  
USDA Economic Research Service's Helios Product of Enduring Quality Award

## John Michael Riley

2019 CASNR Early Career Award for Excellence in Teaching  
2019 Aggie-X Outstanding Advisor

## Brian Whitacre

2019 Aggie-X Outstanding Teacher

## Joe Schatzer

2019 Regents Distinguished Teaching Award

# Faculty Spotlight: Joe Schatzer

OSU Department of Agricultural Economics professor honored with the 2019 Regents Distinguished Teaching Award.

Much of the information for this article came from a Press Release by Mandy Taylor, OSU Ag Communications.

Joe Schatzer, agricultural economics professor, recently received the Regents Distinguished Teaching Award from Oklahoma State University.

The annual university award recognizes a full-time faculty member who has demonstrated a strong dedication to enhancing the classroom learning experience for students. Nominees must be recommended by both professors and students.

Mike Woods, professor and head of the department of agricultural economics, nominated Schatzer for the prestigious award and praised his dedication to students. “I have observed no one who works harder or cares more about students,” he said, “I doubt there are many people on campus who know more about student instruction and teaching issues than Dr. Schatzer. He has truly devoted his career to enhancing the quality of student instruction at Oklahoma State University.”

Woods added that Schatzer’s impact extends far beyond the classroom. “Joe Schatzer is not only an exceptional teacher – he also excels as an advisor and mentor. On top of all of his duties in the classroom, Dr. Schatzer serves as our undergraduate coordinator. He provides leadership for curriculum and the direction of our programs. He also advises more than 90 undergraduate students annually who are majoring in agricultural economics or agribusiness. It is accurate to say that Dr. Schatzer has shaped the form and content of our undergraduate program for more than two decades.”

One of those students who have benefitted from Schatzer’s direction is Mary Kurzweil, a senior in agricultural economics and mathematics from Harrisonville, MO. “I’ve had Dr. Schatzer as my advisor the past two and a half years,” she says. “Dr. Schatzer is a great advisor and even better as a person. If you’re ever looking for a good

story or conversation to brighten your day, Dr. Schatzer is a great person to go to. He also works extremely hard. During the time approaching enrollment, he is almost constantly meeting with a wide variety of students. But he still takes the time with each of them to help them determine their academic goals, and find the best way to accomplish them.

Growing up on his family farm in rural Missouri, Schatzer knew as a senior in high school that he wanted to receive a doctorate in agricultural economics. He did not realize it at the time, but that decision would allow him to significantly and positively affect the lives of many students along the way. An OSU faculty member since 1983, Schatzer said that while he is pleased and humbled to receive the honor, awards are not something he usually needs to feel successful.

“My goal has always been to move students from where they were to some better point of



knowledge,” he said.

Kate Miller, a senior majoring in agricultural economics and agricultural communications, is another one of the many students to whom Schatzer has provided guidance throughout his career.

“He creates an environment for students that invites questions and conversation,” she said.

On her very first day of classes at OSU, Schatzer sparked her interest in agricultural economics, and he has been a driving force in her education throughout her undergraduate experience. As she transitions from college to a career, she believes his advice will always stay with her.

“From introductory courses

for first-semester students to small, rigorous classes for graduating seniors, Dr. Schatzer ensures students are prepared for their next step,” Miller said.

The family-like culture of OSU is something for which Schatzer has always been thankful. His 36 year career at OSU has taught him that students sometimes have a tough time navigating their college career. He considers himself not just a faculty member to students; he wants students to think of him as extended family.

“As an advisor, they can come to me with anything and I will do everything I can to help them figure it out,” he said. “Life is about more than just getting a good grade. Seeing students grow [through

their academic and personal challenges] has always been important to me.”

As Schatzer looks toward retirement sometime within the next five years, it is no surprise that he says the one thing he will miss the most are the students. One option he is exploring is to stay involved in education through local community colleges near his hometown in Missouri, possibly serving as an adjunct professor.

“I don’t think I’ll ever give up with helping people learn in some fashion, even if it’s through teaching Sunday school or adult education,” Schatzer said. “There are lots of ways I can stay involved with people.”



Photo courtesy: Todd Johnson

# Alumni in Public Service

School experiences influence alumni career choices.

In addition to high level academic achievements, many agricultural economics students at Oklahoma State University (OSU) also dedicate themselves to various public service activities. They may participate

in the Aggie-X club, the Graduate Student Association, or other groups; serve on the CASNR Student Council or with OSU organizations; give time to charitable organizations; or take part in fund-raising campaigns

for various organizations. In fact, many of these students use these activities as a training ground and a springboard to future careers in public service.

## Oklahoma Governor's Cabinet

Recently three alums of the agricultural economics department were appointed to serve in leading state positions under Oklahoma's new administration. Governor Stitt named Blayne Arthur (BS 2004) as Secretary of Agriculture, Steve Buck (BS 1993) as Secretary of Human Services and Early Childhood Initiatives, and Sean Kouplen (BS 1995) as Secretary of Commerce and Workforce Development.

**Blayne Arthur** was previously the executive director of the Oklahoma 4-H Foundation. From 2011-16 she was the Deputy Commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. Arthur received the Distinguished Service Award from the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association in 2016, and she was named among the Significant Women in Oklahoma Agriculture in 2017. She has also become a go-to convention speaker for agriculture groups.

Arthur says that all of her experiences during her time at Oklahoma State University allowed her to see "the importance of being a contributing member to the community I was a part of and to society as a whole. I was fortunate to participate in a variety of campus activities that strengthened my interest in public service.

I was a member of the President's Leadership Council and president of my social sorority. Through my social sorority, I was exposed to CASA and the work done by CASA in Payne County

and statewide. I was part of the Freshman Representative Council and helped plan several community events and activities. I participated each year and served as a committee member for 'The Big Event' and 'Into The Streets.' I was also part of Mortar Board and SGA, which allowed me to interact with those in leadership roles both on campus and off campus.

I saw this public service attitude during my college career, which encouraged me to pursue a career path that allowed me to serve the people and industry that I care about deeply."

**Steve Buck** has spent most of his professional career working with mental health agencies and organizations. He has served as the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) Executive Director since 2006. Prior to joining OJA, he served nine years as deputy commissioner for Communications and Prevention at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Before that, Buck was with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for ten years.

Buck credits his experiences and involvement at OSU with preparing him for his career in public service. "I am very proud of my agricultural economics degree from Oklahoma State University and my experiences on the Stillwater campus. The academic coursework provided a solid foundation for my career. Beyond the classroom though, the interactions with fellow students and the College of Agriculture's faculty and staff taught me the importance

of relationship building and collaborative problem solving. That exposure ignited a drive and compassion within me to explore ways I could help others, which led to my working with mental health agencies and organizations as well as leading efforts to improve the trajectory of our youth in the juvenile justice system.

As secretary of human services and early childhood initiatives, I enjoy the opportunity to assist the human services agencies in their efforts to serve Oklahoma with innovation, compassion, and fiscal responsibility. Governor Stitt's decision to designate a secretary to focus specifically on the agencies providing services to young children and juveniles provides better oversight and improved efficiencies in delivering services. By creating a cabinet post specifically focused on early childhood initiatives, Governor Stitt wants agile collaboration between state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other partners to improve the social, emotional, and physical well-being of our young children.

In addition to my being familiar with the functions of various human services agencies, I have personal knowledge as a foster, now adoptive parent. My family has experienced first-hand the positive impact they can provide, but I am also aware of areas where ease of access can be improved and implemented."

**Sean Kouplen** is chairman and CEO of Regent Bank in Tulsa and will continue to serve in that role. Kouplen began his banking path with

MidFirst Bank in Oklahoma City. His first experience in the banking industry led him to move towards community banking in search of developing relationships with clients. He has worked for different community banks in El Reno, Bixby, and Tulsa as a bank executive since he was 23 years old. He serves on the board of directors for MetaFund, Hillcrest South Hospital, Oklahoma State University Foundation, SouthPoint Church and is a member of the Oklahoma Bankers Association.

Kouplén states, “My OSU Ag-Econ experience had a huge impact on my desire to serve my community. I came to OSU from a small class of 42 people in Beggs, Oklahoma. I held leadership positions in high school, but it was nothing like college.

While at OSU, I had to learn to work together with people I had never met. This was unsettling and scary at first, but over time, it became much more natural, and I really enjoyed meeting new people. During my college career, I was honored to serve in leadership roles with many organizations including President of the Ag Council, Interfraternity Council, and Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. We participated in countless community service projects and I really enjoyed giving back.

After graduation, I became a community banker and continued my involvement in the cities of El Reno, Bixby, and Tulsa. Organizations such as Rotary, Main Street, the Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, and others allowed me to support my community

and develop strong, lasting relationships. Community service has always been an important function of the hometown community bank and it was the favorite part of my job.

My service has now grown to a much larger scale as Secretary of Commerce and Workforce Development. For years, I have felt that Oklahoma was better than many of our low national rankings, and I believed we could transcend politics to make life better for our citizens. So, when Governor Stitt asked me to serve on his cabinet, I knew I needed to step forward and help.

I am serving in a volunteer capacity and also maintaining my position as Chairman and CEO of Regent Bank. Therefore, time management can certainly be challenging. Fortunately, I have an amazing Department of Commerce Executive Director in (fellow OSU Ag-Econ graduate) Brent Kisling and a tremendous executive team at Regent Bank, including Chief Credit Officer (and fellow Ag-Econ graduate) Greg Boudreau.

I am extremely excited about Oklahoma’s future and humbled to play a small part in changing the trajectory of our state.

### **Oklahoma Department of Commerce**

**Brent Kisling** (BS 1994), mentioned above, is serving as Executive Director of the Department of Commerce for the State of Oklahoma. He will oversee the operations of the Department of Commerce and will report to the Secretary of Commerce Sean Kouplén.

At the time of his appointment by Governor Stitt,

Kisling was Executive director of the Enid Regional Development Alliance. Kisling previously worked in U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe’s office and was State Director for USDA Rural Development.

### **Oklahoma Legislature**

In the Oklahoma Legislature, State Senator Brent Howard (BS 2004) serves in District 38, and he is a member of the Senate Agriculture and Wildlife Committee. He is an attorney living in Altus, Oklahoma.

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Five alums currently have top positions in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in key leadership roles for Oklahoma:

**Jim Bellmon** (BS 1988) is the director of the Oklahoma City Regional Office for USDA’s Risk Management Agency.

**Scott Biggs** (BS 2001) is State Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). Previously, he was State House Representative for District 51. He resigned this position citing his desire to focus on agriculture. As FSA state director, Biggs helps implement USDA policies in planning, organizing, and administering FSA programs in Oklahoma.

**Lee Denney** (BS 1976) is State Director of USDA Rural Development. Previously, she was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 2004 and served for 12 years. There, she served as the speaker pro tempore and chairman of the Appropriations and Budget Committee for Education. Prior to that, she spent nine years on the Cushing City Commission,

serving as vice-mayor and mayor. She practiced veterinary medicine for 35 years in a mixed animal practice. She taught in the veterinary technology program at OSU-OKC and was honored by the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association as 2017 Veterinarian of the Year.

Denney says, “The years spent as a student at Oklahoma State University contain some of the fondest memories of my life. It was during those years my passion for animal welfare deepened, eventually leading to my profession as a veterinarian. Community service has always been important to me and my family, so it was only natural that I sought membership in Alpha Chi Omega and the Aggie-X Club. Both organizations gave me the chance to develop my leadership capacity, eventually leading me to a life of public service. My membership in Alpha Zeta helped to develop my critical thinking skills and provided a forum to encounter and challenge new ideas.

Public service is about getting things done for those you serve. Thankfully, my time at OSU grounded me so that my eyes were always focused on the possible and the achievable, not the perfect yet illusive solution.”

**Gary O’Neill** (BS 1982) is the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist.

**Troy Marshall** (BS 2002) is State Statistician for the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. He says that “connections” developed at OSU are mostly responsible for his career in public service.

“Coming from a family

that has been heavily weighted in federal government service, I knew at an early age I was interested in pursuing that same path. However, while attending Oklahoma State University, I was presented with so many other opportunities outside of public service. I interviewed with and considered many private industry companies for a career.

However, staying at OSU to attend graduate school allowed me to “survey” various connections that I made about their career choices. These connections, I think, are one of the most underrated benefits of OSU and most specifically, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. These connections can be found anywhere, but you have to take advantage of them. They can be found in the numerous university organizations, at career development events, in the various classrooms and labs, with the dedicated staff, and yes, possibly even at events outside campus.

I knew three OSU graduates that recently hired on to work for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) before I applied to work for them. I was able to visit with them to get an understanding of what I would be doing and more importantly, if they enjoyed it. I was also able to do this with the numerous other companies and agencies through various other connections. These interactions helped me find my fit for my career and in May 2019, I will celebrate 15 years of working with USDA NASS. Coming back to Oklahoma in 2016 to become the Oklahoma State Statistician

has allowed me to reconnect many of those connections around the state. It has certainly allowed me to appreciate, even more, what lifelong benefits OSU has bestowed on me.”

### **US House of Representatives**

And of course, on the federal level, alum Congressman **Frank Lucas** (BS 1982) has served in the U.S. House of Representatives for Oklahoma’s third congressional district since 2003. He previously represented the sixth district, from 1994 to 2003. In Congress, he previously chaired the House Committee on Agriculture. He currently serves on the House Committee on Financial Services and is a Ranking Member of the House Committee on Science and Technology.

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