The Fall semester is in full swing at the Food and Resource Economics Department at the University of Florida. Each fall, we welcome back many undergraduate students from study abroad and work experiences over the summer, as well as a new group of graduate students. This year, we also welcomed two new assistant professors and two new post-doctoral associates.

Our undergraduate program continues to excel, with classes so full that we are hiring more teaching faculty to be able to continue our focus on offering quality classes. Academically strong students are being recognized beyond our department, like Wallace Martin, who received the 2017-18 CALS Alumni and Friends Leadership Award. Recent graduates from our Ph.D. program are finding success in the job market – Dr. Kelly Davidson started this fall as an assistant professor at the University of Delaware, and Dr. Yuan Jiang continued with Disney after interning with them as a decision science consultant.

In addition to our teaching programs, our research and extension faculty are staying busy with exciting projects. Dr. Alan Hodges and Dr. Christa Court are answering questions about the value of the agricultural industry and the impact of disasters on the industry. In this newsletter, you will see updates from other faculty who are researching exciting and important topics related to Florida’s agricultural and natural resource sectors.

Finally, we are excited to bring back our presence on social media and in this newsletter. Alumni, please take a few minutes to fill out our survey (either online or by mailing it to us) so we can celebrate everyone’s accomplishments. We like to let current students know what opportunities await them as proud FRE grads, and we like to hear what you have been up to since leaving the halls of McCarty.
New Coordinators Named

Dr. Jaclyn Kropp is the new Undergraduate Coordinator in the Food and Resource Economics (FRE) Department at the University of Florida, replacing Dr. Mike Sandberg. Kropp received her Ph.D. in Applied Economics and Management from Cornell University and is an associate professor in FRE. Prior to joining the University of Florida as an assistant professor, she was a tenure-track assistant professor at Clemson University. At UF, she currently teaches a wide variety of courses at the undergraduate and graduate level. Her research focuses on issues related to agricultural policy and agricultural finance.

As the new undergraduate coordinator, Kropp is excited to work with students and learn more about the FRE undergraduate program. Within the next year, she hopes to start an alumni database and departmental exit interviews. She also hopes to integrate courses taught in sequence by encouraging collaborations between instructors of these courses. If you are interested in meeting with Dr. Kropp, the best way to contact her is via email!

Dr. Kelly Grogan is the new Graduate Coordinator in the Food and Resource Economics (FRE) Department at the University of Florida. She replaces Lisa House in this role. Grogan received her M.S. and Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics from University of California – Davis and her B.A. in Economics and Environmental Studies from Dartmouth College. In addition to her new role as Graduate Coordinator, she is an associate professor in FRE. Her research focuses on bioeconomic modeling, economically optimal pest control across time and space, adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, and natural resource economics in general.

As the new graduate coordinator, Grogan is excited about not only working with current graduate students, but welcoming the new cohort in the upcoming semesters. Her favorite part of the position is being able to interact more with students and provide assistance and resources to ensure happiness and success for students. The best way to get in contact with Dr. Grogan is email or simply stopping by the office! If you ever want to show appreciation for Dr. Grogan, a “Thank you” goes a long way!

FRE SAYS GOODBYE TO DR. ROBERT “JEFF” BURKHARDT

Dr. Burkhardt retired on July 31, 2018, after 33 years of service to UF and FRE. Dr. Burkhardt joined UF in 1985, where he focused on Agriculture and Natural Resources Ethics and Policy. During his distinguished career, Dr. Burkhardt was the chair on the Council on Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) Ethics Task Force; Invited member of the USDA Advisory Committee on Agricultural Biotechnology; and Associate Editor of the Food Ethics Review, Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics, and Agriculture and Human Values. He authored or co-authored over 100 publications in refereed journals, books and book chapters, proceedings, reviews, and reports. In addition, he presented over 65 industry presentation, speeches, and workshops during his career.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

Edward (Gilly) Evans was named director of the UF/IFAS Tropical Research Center in Homestead, FL. Evans has worked for UF/IFAS for almost three decades. He was associate director of UF/IFAS Global, the arm of the institute that implements international programs, and is a professor in the UF/IFAS Food and Resource Economics Department.

Zhengfei Guan was named Term Professor for 2018-2021. These awards are given in recognition of his performance and contributions to UF and IFAS. Zhengfei is an Assistant Professor and has a joint appointment with FRE and the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center in Balm.

Christa Court, Assistant Scientist with the Florida Impact Research Group, was voted in as the Treasurer/Co-Executive Director of the Southern Regional Science Association.

Hayk Khachatryan was awarded a Center for Landscape Conservation & Ecology Enhancement grant for his project, “Investigating Economic Contributions of Sustainable Residential Landscapes”. Hayk is an Assistant Professor and Extension Economist with a joint appointment in the Food and Resource Economics Department and Mid-Florida Research and Education Center (MREC).

Luis Pena-Levano was co-advisor for the project, ‘Supporting Agricultural Planning at Colombia for the Peace Transition’ presented by student Carlos Fontanilla, Purdue University (Advisors: Dr. Paul Preckel, Dr. Kenneth Foster, and Dr. Luis Peña-Lévano) which won 3rd place at the 2018 AAEA Student Extension Competition at the AAEA Conference in Washington, DC. Pena-Levano is a Lecturer in FRE and stationed in Plant City.

Misti Sharp, FRE Lecturer, has been invited by the University Studies Abroad Consortium to teach a Summer Abroad Course, “Economics of Natural Resources” in the summer of 2019 at the Leuphana University in Luneburg, Germany. To find out more, visit: http://goo.gl/8aagLA.
Khushbu Mishra
Stetson University

October 5, 2018
“Gender and Dynamics of Technology Adoption: Empirical Evidence from Uganda”

Khushbu Mishra is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics, Stetson University. Her research broadly focuses on Gender and Development Economics, Agricultural Economics, and Impact Evaluation. Her work has been published in World Development and Agricultural Economics, and Impact Evaluation. Her work has been published in World Development and Agricultural Economics, and Economic Inquiry.

Orachos Napasintuwong
Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand

October 19, 2018
“Genetically Modified Maize Adoption in Southern Vietnam”

Dr. Napasintuwong received her Ph.D. from University of Florida, Food and Resource Economics Department. Prior to joining Kasetsart University, she was a Research Fellow with the Schumpeter Center at the University of Graz, Austria, and a Postdoc with the International Agricultural Trade and Policy Center at the University of Florida. She has published more than 49 articles, book chapters and working papers in journals, including Tropical Agriculture, Journal of International Society for Southeast Asian Agricultural Sciences, Asian Journal of Agricultural Research, and PSAKU International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research. She is an Executive Committee Member of the Agricultural Economic Society of Thailand under Royal Patronage, a member of the Board of Directors for the Asia Pacific Agricultural Policy Forum, and a member of the Asian Society of Agricultural Economists and the International Society of Southeast Asian Agricultural Sciences.

Economic Impact Report Released

The Economic Impact Analysis Program in the Food and Resource Economics Department has released the 2016 Economic Contributions of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in Florida Report. For more information and to see the full report visit: Florida Economics Contributions 2016. Contributing to the report were Dr. Christa Court, Dr. Alan Hodges, and Dr. Mohammad Rahmani.
NEW FACULTY JOIN FRE

BACHIR KASSAS

Bachir Kassas is focused on applying experimental methods to study individual and consumer preferences. His research interests include consumer preferences and willingness-to-pay for credence attributes and healthy food products, preference elicitation mechanisms, individual health-related decision making, and pro-social preferences. He also works on utilizing biometric tools, including eye-tracking, facial expression analysis technology to assess emotions, and brain activity, to develop more refined behavioral models that can better explain individual preferences and consumer choice.

Kassas earned an M.S. in Economics and Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Texas A&M University. He was involved in the establishment and served as the manager of the Human Behavior Laboratory (HBL), which is one of the largest biometrics labs in the nation. He mentored several Ph.D. students on conducting experimental research and supervised several experimental studies for collaborating faculty from Marketing, Psychology, Education, and Public Policy. His recent work addresses several aspects of individual and consumer behavior. He proposed a mechanism for enhancing the accuracy of willingness-to-pay estimates for market goods in second price auctions. He also developed a behavioral model to analyze income and relative return heterogeneity in voluntary contributions mechanisms, which he applied to provide useful insights on the behavior of different producers in voluntary generic advertising programs. In another project, he explained the way individuals interact with social norms in pro-social settings. He is currently working on constructing a behavioral model that can explain the main driving force behind consumer preferences for products that promote animal welfare. Bachir’s work is published in reputable field and general interest journals including the Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Applied Economics, the Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, and the Journal of Choice Modeling.

STEPHEN MORGAN

Stephen Morgan joined FRE in August as an Assistant Professor specializing in environmental, development, and experimental economics. Morgan’s research focuses on how individuals – both producers and consumers – change their behavior to respond to new institutions and policies. Current projects include measuring the effect of stakeholder comments on individual contributions to public goods, analyzing how farmer-led extension services influence farmer willingness-to-pay for new agricultural technologies, and investigating how the rate of technological innovation influences adoption decisions. Future work will consider the role of individual preference heterogeneity in public good contributions and market design for the provision of multiple ecosystem services. Morgan received a Ph.D. in Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics from Michigan State University and a B.S. from FRE from the University of Florida.

POST DOC

Caleb Stair joined FRE in August as the Postdoc with the Economic Impact Analysis Program working with Christa Court and Alan Hodges. His primary duties will be researching, compiling, analyzing, interpreting, and preparing data on the economic contributions of agriculture, natural resources, and the food industries in Florida. Dr. Stair received his Ph.D. at West Virginia University where his research interest were the socioeconomic and regional economic impacts of new public policies.

Lijun (Angelia) Chen joins as a Postdoc in the Food and Resource Economics Department at the University of Florida. Her primary research interests include experimental and behavioral economics, economics of trust, food marketing, and alternative food systems in developed and developing countries. Currently, she is working with Dr. Lisa House, focusing on citrus consumption, marketing, and economics. Chen received her Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics and Management in 2017 from Nanjing Agricultural University (China) after 2-year research training obtained from the University of Missouri.
 Jermaine Dunn
 Undergraduate Advisor

 Jermaine Dunn is the Undergraduate Advisor in the Food and Resource Economics Department at the University of Florida.

 Dunn received his M.A. in Education Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University and his B.A. in Business Administration from Fisk University in Nashville, TN. Through his experience in higher education, Jermaine obtained an irrevocable appreciation for advisement, recruitment, and in career resource management. Prior to starting his position early 2018 in FRE, he was the undergraduate and associate degree advisor for (B.S., A.S) Early Childhood Education for Education Programs at Santa Fe College. In his new role, he is most excited about providing students with an interactive partnership aimed at providing sound academic advisement and enhancing the students’ self-awareness and fulfillment. So far, his favorite activity in his position is advising and recruiting students!

 His top goal for the upcoming year is to increase department enrollment and study abroad participation. If you are interested in meeting with Mr. Dunn about the FRE major, the best way to contact him is via email or phone! You can also find him in his office between 7:30AM – 12:30PM and 1:30PM – 4:30PM.

 Danielle Shu
 Academic Assistant - Undergraduate Programs

 Danielle Shu is the Academic Assistant in the Food and Resource Economics Department at the University of Florida.

 Shu is a 2017 graduate from the Heavener School of Business (Business Administration – General Studies), where she worked with first year students as a peer leader in GEB2015, Introduction to Business – Warrington Welcome. After her first semester working as a peer leader, she immediately knew she’d want to pursue a career in Higher Education at the University of Florida. She started her career as an undergraduate advisor in PATH in late 2017 before transferring to FRE a year later.

 Shu’s favorite part about working in higher education is knowing she is helping students every day, even if it’s just providing a listening ear! She first became involved in higher education because of this and wanting to use her experience as a UF student to support others to succeed in their academic, career, and personal goals. If you want to make Shu’s day, she really appreciates a thank you note (bonus point if there is a cat on it) and LOVES the occasional furry visitor.

 GRADUATE STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

 FRE WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS FOR FALL 2018

 Huixin Bian MSAB China
 Julio Cruz PhD Brazil
 Ruhiyyih Durdahl-Young MSAB USA
 Taejer Dupre MAB USA
 Jessie Ellsworth MAB USA
 Brevyn Foreman MAB USA
 Delaney Fuhrmeister MSAB USA
 Chuck Grigsby PhD USA
 Nadezda Ivanova MSAB Russia
 Aviram Krell MAB Ecuador
 Emmett Lee MAB USA
 Edgar Marcillo Yepez PhD Colombia
 Eduardo Mondragon MSAB USA
 Jordan Moor MS-t USA
 Yefan Nian PhD China
 Qi Qiu MS-t China
 Moonwon Soh PhD Korea
 Joanna Van Asselt PhD USA
 Ruojin Zhao PhD China
 Yiwen Zhao MS-t China

 NEW STAFF APPOINTMENTS

 NEW STAFF APPOINTMENTS

 L. to R.: Delaney Fuhrmeister; Eduardo Mondragon; Huixin Bian
 L. to R.: Jordan Moor; Qi Qiu; Yiwen Zhao
 L. to R.: Julio Cruz, Edgar Marcillo Yepez; Joanna Van Asselt; Chuck Grigsby; Yefan Nian; Moonwon Soh
 L. to R.: Ruhiyyih Durdahl-Young; Taejer Dupre; Emmett Lee; Brevyn Foreman
Graduate Student Welcome Reception

On Friday, September 7, FRE hosted the annual Welcome Reception for new and returning Graduate Students at the Atrium in Ustler Hall. Over 40 students, faculty, and staff attended. Open to all Graduate Students, Faculty, and Staff, this event has become one of the highlights of the semester.

Faculty/Staff vs. Student Bowling Tournament - Friday, September 21; Reitz Union Bowling Alley. Congratulations to the Faculty/Staff team for a solid victory at the lanes beating the Student Team 51 to 14.

Croquet Tournament - Friday, October 19, Reitz Union Lawn. Winning Teams were as follows:
1st Place - Chuck Grisby and Julio Cruz; 2nd Place - Skyler Simnitt and Son; 3rd Place - Yingkai Fang and Kelly Grogan

Upcoming Events:
Game Night - Friday, November 16, 4:30 PM; Details to be announced

FRE Holiday Party - Wednesday, December 5, 6:00 PM, Florida Museum of Natural History

News - Continued from Page 2

Dr. Gülcan Önel was selected for the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), Interdisciplinary Research Leaders (IRL) award. Önel will focus on the unique social, economic, and political circumstances impeding health equity of rural farm communities in Florida. In addition, she has received the 2018 UF Research Opportunity Seed Funding Award for her project titled “Implications of Shifting Migration Trends: Comparative Assessment of Social Networks, Health Status, and Productivity of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Migrant Farm Workers.”

Dr. Gülcan Önel and Dr. Pilar Useche will be the co-PIs in a multi-state, multi-disciplinary team that was recently awarded a multi-million research grant by the USDA-NIFA. The project, titled “SmartPath: Grower-Directed Convergence of Nanotechnology and Smart Decision Analytics for Irrigation Water Quality Management Related to Pathogens” aims to develop solutions to reduce fresh water use in agricultural irrigation.


Ph.D. student Xuqi Chen, along with co-authors Zhifeng Gao, Mickie Swisher, Lisa House, and Xin Zhao, published a paper titled “Eco-labeling in the Fresh Produce Market: Not All Environmentally Friendly Labels Are Equally Valued” in Ecological Economics. The paper shows consumer willingness to pay for sustainable production methods due to perceived environmental benefits.

Ph.D. student Marup Hossain published a paper titled “Agriculture Microcredit for Tenant Farmers: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Bangladesh” in the American Journal of Agricultural Economics. The paper is based on a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) experiment that he, along with his colleagues from Bangladesh, conducted in Bangladesh on agricultural microcredit for tenant farmers. https://academic.oup.com/ajae/advance-article/doi/10.1093/ajae/aay070/5145325
Mike Joyner, FRE Alumni 1986, was named the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association President effective October 15, 2018. Prior to this appointment, he served as the assistant to the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture and as Chief of Staff for Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam for 8 years.

Chuck Allison, FRE Alumni 1981, was the recipient of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Ag-Environmental Leadership Award given at the Florida Farm Bureau annual meeting on October 26, 2018. The award is given to agriculture professionals proved to be stewards of the environment. Mr. Allison and his wife, Vesna, (above) are the owners and operators of Wild Goose Farms, a 905-acre family-run farm where they implemented a multifaceted approach to water conservation and nutrient management. Through this program the farm has seen a savings of 7.52 million gallons of water, and the removal of 859 pounds of nitrogen and 168 pounds of phosphorus annually. The operation includes citrus, blueberries, cattle, and hay. Wild Goose Farms emphasizes environmental stewardship through an outreach program of farm tours, workshops, local school programs, and student visits. The Allisons are also the donors of the Allison Family Family Endowment to FRE. Established in 2011, this endowment provides support for graduate assistantships in the department. FRE thanks the Allisons for their continued support of the program and our students.

Congratulations to two FRE Alumni honored at the October 5, 2018, IFAS Annual Dinner of Distinction for outstanding contribution to the agriculture industry and loyal support of the college.

Jeffery “J. J.” Grow, FRE Alumni 1992, was awarded the 2018 CALS Alumni and Friends Award of Distinction. Grow is the chairman of Verdesian Life Sciences, an agribusiness focused on sustainable farming practices that he co-founded in 2012. Prior to Verdesian, Grow co-founded Gro-Pro LLC. He credits his success to the incredible faculty that not only educated him, but also mentored him. Having a strong belief in giving back, he and his wife, Jennifer, have established or contributed to endowments in the names of former FRE faculty members Gary Fairchild, Burl Long, and Gene Trotter. 

Bernie LeFils, FRE Alumni 2011, was award the 2018 Horizon Award. LeFils combines his knowledge of finance and love for the agriculture industry by serving as the Volusia County Cattlemen’s Association President. In 2014, he was chosen to be a member of the inaugural class of the Florida Cattlemen’s Leadership Academy. He also serves as the treasurer for both the Alpha Gamma Rho House Association and Educational Foundation, which provide housing and scholarships for members.
FRE ALUMNI? TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

Name: _______________________________  Year Graduated _______________
Maiden Name: ___________________________  Degree Earned _________________
Email: __________________________________
Mailing Address: ___________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: _____________________________________________________________
Updates or news you would like to share? ______________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Email information to Danielle Shu at dshu@ufl.edu or Candace Kaswinkel at ckaswin@ufl.edu

Or visit: https://www.uff.ufl.edu/giving-opportunities/001073-food-and-resource-economics/

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