Nine students competed in the Alpha Tau Alpha (ATA) Conclave during the national convention.

**Quiz Bowl - 1st place**
Shelby Cooper, Trent Hawker, Clayton Carley, and Claire Geiger won this year’s Quiz Bowl competition. Topics ranged from the history of agricultural education to knowledge of agricultural mechanics.

**Parliamentary Procedure**
Clayton Carley, Betsy Kueker, Shelby Cooper, Kaity Spangler, and Claire Geiger competed in a simulated meeting in the parliamentary procedure competition. Betsy Kueker received first place secretary.

**Debate Team - 2nd place**
Clayton Carley, Shelby Cooper, Claire Geiger, and Maggi Maxstadt participated in the Debate competition. They debated against other universities on the question, “Is there room for Ag Education in the Common Core?”

**Program of Excellence**
Trent Hawker and Claire Geiger prepared and conducted the Program of Excellence presentation, which summarized activities from the previous year.

Many of the students were involved in working at the College of ACES and Agricultural Education booths at the FFA Career Show. Students encouraged FFA members to answer the question, “What is agriculture to you?”, and make a creation out of Legos. They also helped FFA members gather resources for their futures after high school.
White House Meeting, Washington D.C.

Dr. Erica Thieman participated in a discussion on women leaders in agriculture as part of a White House Rural Council meeting in Washington, D.C. in October. The discussion was followed by a dinner for networking and continuing discussion hosted by the AGree: Transforming Food and Ag Policy group. Approximately 30 leaders in agriculture from across the country gathered in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, including representatives from two other universities, Tanimura & Antle Produce, Monsanto, Land O’Lakes, National Pork Producers, National Corn Growers Association, and Dow AgroSciences, among others. Dr. Thieman shared her experience and research relating to agriculture teacher development and preparing today’s students for classrooms and the agricultural industry. Highlights included sharing a dinner table with Ramona Ramirez, General Council for the USDA and Senator Blanche Lincoln.

North Central Region AAEE Conference

Dr. Erica Thieman and Dr. Richard Clark represented the University of Illinois at the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) Conference held in Morgantown, WV, in October, 2014. Dr. Thieman judged the outstanding research papers and was elected Vice-Chair of the Research Committee. Steve Still, Ph.D. Student in science education at UIUC who is conducting research on STEM integration in agriculture classrooms in Illinois, presented initial findings from his research in the research poster session.

CONGRATULATIONS DECEMBER GRADUATES!

Four Ag Ed students will graduate in December. Congratulations to graduate students Samantha Kowalczyk, Sara Marten, Alicia Schneider, and undergraduate student Trent Hawker on earning their degree!

AGED 480: Real-world Leadership for Change

Collaborative Leadership is a senior-level course for students concentrating in Agricultural Leadership Education as well as the capstone course for the campus-wide Minor in Leadership Studies. The course requires students to synthesize prior learning in personal leadership, team development, and organizational needs assessment to propose their own Blueprint for Change in a community they care about. Student teams were asked to bring three collaborative partners to the table to help address a social, environmental, or educational change issue.

Students in Collaborative Leadership created “Blueprints for Change”. This project group partnered with the YMCA to deliver a pilot program called “Keep Calm & Be You,” for middle school girls. Dr. Keating uses a learner-centered instructional design wherein students created the experience they wanted and led the way. Students pictured are (left to right): Nicole Whorley, Ashley Davis, Sam Brumleve, Heidi Cordes (YMCA Membership and Marketing Director), Asia Borjas, and Trevy Augustin.

The goal was to communicate an inspiring vision to bring organizations together who hadn’t necessarily collaborated in the past.

Seven teams produced Blueprints impacting more than 20 organizations across the community. Proposed projects included campus recycling, bike sharing, middle school girls’ empowerment programming, and a campus-wide blood drive.

The Fall 2014 course was taught by Dr. Kari Keating, Ag Ed Teaching Associate.
Congratulations to 36 ag education undergraduate students who earned more than $130,000 of scholarship money for the 2014-2015 academic year!

Ag Ed Research in Journal of Agricultural Education

Dr. Erica Thieman had a research article published in the November edition of the Journal of Agricultural Education titled, “You’ve Always Got Challenges: Resilience and the Preservice Teacher.” This study was conducted with Dr. Adam Marx at North Dakota State University and Dr. Tracy Kitchel from the University of Missouri. The concept of resilience in pre-service teachers during their final year of university coursework was the subject of the study. This study is part of Dr. Thieman’s continued focus on improving the preparation of agriculture teachers to increase retention of qualified teachers in the profession and address the current nation-wide agriculture teacher shortage. The themes exposed include: youth experiences are a key component toward reflection on resilience, the uncertainty of the reality of the job could counter resilience, and belief that “doing a good job” is key to resilience in teaching. Recommendations for practice and theoretical questions for teacher educators to discuss are provided. The importance of diverse field experiences for building pre-service teacher resilience was also highlighted.

The article can be found at: http://www.jae-online.org/attachments/article/1845/2013-0835_thieman.pdf.

Students Participate in Professional Development

Thanks to funding from the Growing Agricultural Science Teachers (GAST) grant from the Illinois State Board of Education, preservice teachers were able to participate in hands-on professional development workshops this semester.

Mr. Doug Anderson, ag teacher at Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School in Paxton, Illinois, conducted a small engines workshop for nine students. Mr. Anderson shared insights on classroom and shop instruction.

In December, Debra Korte facilitated an electricity workshop for eight preservice teachers. Students learned how to organize instruction, diagram electrical wiring exercises, and created their own electrical tester to grade their future students’ projects.

Josh Evans, Jennifer Boberg (below), and Sarah Moore (right) attended workshops.

Need Money?

Congratulations to 36 ag education undergraduate students who earned more than $130,000 of scholarship money for the 2014-2015 academic year!
The Agricultural Education program was privileged to host the United States Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden on November 3, 2014. Harden toured the U of I campus, visited the newly renovated agricultural education classroom, and talked to students about the importance of “sharing their story” with future generations.

“You are the ones the next generation will be watching,” Harden said. “They will listen to you tell the story. When you are in the classroom, you’ll have their attention. You can waste that opportunity or use it. It’s our job to connect the dots and be thoughtful listeners,” she said. “You have the power to make a difference.”

**Carley Wins IFB Discussion Meet**
Clayton Carley of the University of Illinois received first place in the Illinois Farm Bureau Discussion Meet held in conjunction with the Illinois Post-Secondary Agriculture Students (PAS) fall conference on Friday, October 24th. Clayton is a senior, majoring in both Agricultural Science Education and Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois. The first place ranking Clayton received in the meet qualifies him for the national competition that takes place at the Farm Bureau Young Leaders and Ranchers conference in Nashville, Tennessee in February.

**Elite Conference**
Betsy Kueker and Jacob Meisner attended the Elite Conference in November. Betsy and Jacob visited with high school students about the career opportunities in agricultural education.

**Students Compete at PAS Conference**
The Post-secondary Agriculture Student (PAS) Fall Conference was held in October. Ag Ed students -- Clayton Carley, Morgan Doggett, and Hannah Raver -- and ACES students Brent Mansfield and August Schetter, competed during the conference. The Crops Specialist Team, comprised of Clayton Carley and Brent Mansfield, received second place as a team; Carley earned first place individual in the event. August Schetter was named the top impromptu contest winner.

Sara Marten, Ag Ed graduate student and Collegiate FFA/PAS Advisor, and Gary Ochs, Teaching Associate, served as judges for the conference.

**Lauritsen Competes at National FFA Convention**
Freshman Ag Ed student, Rachel Lauritsen from the Pontiac FFA chapter, competed at the National FFA Convention in the Agricultural Communications Career Development Event. She earned a Silver Emblem rating as an individual; the team earned a Bronze rating.

**Ag Education Student Honors and Activities**
Students in the Agricultural Education program participated in a variety of on-campus and professional development opportunities.

**AMERICAN FFA DEGREE**
Congratulations to Morgan Doggett on earning her American FFA Degree at the 2014 National FFA Convention!

**Krysta Harden, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, visited with Agricultural Education students.**