The National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) recently announced its 2012 Award Winners. Several University of Illinois students and alumni were announced as award recipients and will be recognized during the NAAE National Convention on November 27 - December 1 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Amanda Corban and Jacob Ralph, University of Illinois Agricultural Education seniors, earned two of the 15 NAAE Upper Division Agricultural Education Scholarships. The NAAE Scholarship is awarded to students who are majoring in agricultural education and will be completing their student teaching in Fall 2012 or Spring 2013. The program is sponsored by Delmar Cengage Learning.

Amanda Corban, a senior from Princeton, Illinois, and she will be student teaching at Shelbyville High School this spring with Mrs. Mandy Totten. Amanda says she chose to major in Agricultural Education because of her “loving nature of wanting to help and teach others, and then be able to see them succeed in life.” She also feels an ideal agricultural education program “offers many opportunities to any student that wants to be a part of it, no matter what their background or level of ability. Amanda is currently serving as the Ag Ed Club President, and is also very involved in Alpha Tau Alpha, Alpha Zeta, and the Illini Pullers.

Jacob Ralph also earned an NAAE Scholarship for his upcoming student teaching experience at Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School. His cooperating teachers are Mr. Doug Anderson and Mr. Mike White. Jacob is originally from Pontiac, Illinois and was very active in his high school FFA chapter. Jacob credits the influence of his high school agricultural instructors as a major reason why he chose to pursue this career path. “After watching [Mr. Parker Bane and Mr. Jesse Faber] mold students into upstanding human beings, I thought there would not be a more rewarding career than teaching high school agriculture.” Jacob serves as an officer for the Ag Ed Club and Collegiate FFA.

Two UIUC Alumni will also be recognized during the NAAE National Convention. Those award recipients include:

- **Jesse Faber**, Pontiac Agriculture Educator, Region IV National Agriscience Teacher of the Year
- **Jay Runner**, Retired FCAE Coordinator, Outstanding Service Citation.
Carly Wesner completed her Agricultural Leadership Education internship with the University of Illinois Extension service in DeWitt/Macon/Piatt Counties. Her internship focused on evaluating and improving the local food and small farm sector in Macon, Piatt, and DeWitt counties. A large portion of Carly's internship requirement was to create a needs assessment survey to distribute to all vendors at farmers markets and local producers during farm visits. She also had face-to-face interviews with key individuals involved in the local food and small farm sector.

"My responsibility was to gather information about the sustainability of the local food system and small farms within the three counties. Based on the surveys and interviews, I was able to determine the type of educational resources that were most needed in the community."

Carly says the most valuable thing she gained from her internship was perseverance. "I really grew as an individual from the experience and feel much more ready for the real job world now." After graduation in May, she hopes to continue her involvement with the livestock industry by working in show animal feed sales, advertising, or journalism with a livestock magazine.

Ag Ed Students Participate in Study Abroad

This past May, Dr. David Rosch, Assistant Professor in Agricultural Education, led a group of 15 students to Italy to study “Leaders in Roman History.” During the 10 day trip, the students studied the history of the Roman Empire with a specific focus on transitional leadership moments and the roles that historical leaders played in building the Roman Empire and even affecting today’s world. They also made trips to the Salvatore Ferragamo fashion shoe museum in Florence, Ducati motorcycle factory in Bologna, and the Castello del Trebbio winery and vineyard in rural Tuscany to meet with staff at each to learn about their business practices.

The trip represented a partnership between the Agricultural Education Program at the University of Illinois and the Swiss School of Management at the European University of Rome. For many students, the trip represented the first time they left the Western Hemisphere, so the opportunity represented a cultural immersion experience as much as an opportunity for leadership and professional development.

While the trip was open to all Illinois students, preference was given to students in the Agricultural Education Program and students enrolled in the campus’s new Minor in Leadership Studies – both programs were heavily represented within the study abroad program. Dr. Rosch is working with staff at the European University of Rome on the potential of offering a semester-long study abroad program there for Agricultural Education and Leadership Minor students.

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: Carly Wesner

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Brandon Smith, a sophomore in the University of Illinois Agricultural Education Program, has been selected as a National Collegiate Agriculture Ambassador for the 2012-13 academic year. Brandon was selected for this position by the National FFA Organization and was one of only 20 students from across the country to receive this honor. For his efforts as an ambassador of the program, Brandon will also receive a $1,000 scholarship for working 30 hours in his surrounding community to enhance the public’s awareness of the food, fuel, and fiber industry.

During his year of service, Brandon will seek out opportunities to teach others about how science is used to meet world-wide challenges in the production of quality food, feed, and fiber. He will also promote awareness of a wide variety of scientific, economic and mechanical resources needed to produce safe, quality food.

As part of his training, Brandon will attend two training sessions in North Carolina and Florida. During the training sessions, he will gain insight into effective teaching methods to utilize in workshops, learn how to deal with potential issues and questions that may arise, and gain experience on how to talk to professionals in the field about their agriculture experience. He will also have the opportunity to visit and tour several agricultural companies, including Syngenta and BASF.

Sponsors for the National Collegiate Agriculture Ambassador program include: BASF, Syngenta, CSX, Elanco, Animal Health, National Pork Board, Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, and the National FFA Organization.

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**INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT:**

Jake Ekstrand, a junior in Agricultural Education, completed his summer internship with Beck's Hybrids in Downs, Illinois. His territory included most of western Illinois.

“My main responsibility was to work with crop health imaging. This application gives farmers a way to look at an aerial view of their fields to identify the best areas and potential problem areas that may produce low yields. The crop health imaging helps the farmer have an idea of what they can expect for a crop yield at harvest and determine if there is a way to resolve any issues spotted in the field.”

Jake had the opportunity to work with farmers, salespeople, and managers across the state as he visited with customers in his Beck’s Hybrid sales territory. Jake said, “Customer service was a key component to my internship.”

“It was an experience I have never had before, but I gained a great deal of knowledge from the internship. I enjoyed the chance to meet and work with several great people.”

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**ILLINOIS IAVAT STUDENT BRANCH**

October 5-6th

Bevier Hall

Hosted by the University of Illinois
**Students Present Research**

Three undergraduate students conducting research under the direction of Dr. David Rosch presented the preliminary results of their research at the University of Illinois Undergraduate Research Symposium this past April. The three students – Joe Gasienica, Alex Romine, and Cori Sloan – have been working with Dr. Rosch to explore the effects that a student’s title and position within hierarchical student organization has on other students’ appraisal of his or her effectiveness as a leader. The three students have been recruiting a diverse cross-section of student organizations to participate in this research, as well as organizing and analyzing their data. They regard their research as preliminary to date and plan to continue collecting data throughout the following academic year.

A video gallery of the presentations can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

**Internship Spotlight:**

**Caitlin Chrzanowski**

Caitlin Chrzanowski completed her internship with the University of Illinois Extension unit in LaSalle, Bureau, Marshall, and Putnam counties. The main focus of her internship was to implement two agricultural youth development activities for 4-H members. She organized and implemented hands-on activities for participants during the workshops. Her second major project was to plan and implement flip-camera lessons for the LaSalle County Detention Center. Using money obtained from a grant, she worked with her supervisor, Ancilla Parducci, and other LaSalle County Extension staff to teach and create videos with a flip camera. The participants used flip cameras to create a video about the skills and knowledge they gained from their gardening projects. Caitlin’s lessons helped individuals in the detention center gain valuable experience using media resources.

Caitlin says one of the most important things she learned during her internship was the importance of working hard to plan for a presentation. She also said she learned the importance of being able to quickly adapt. “This internship has given me the opportunity to take the skills I learned in my Agricultural Education classes and apply them in real-life situations.”

**Lesson Plans Needed!**

The University of Illinois Agricultural Education Program is updating their current website. Part of the revision process will include the addition of a lesson plan sharing and resource area for teachers. This feature will allow agriculture educators from all over Illinois and the nation to share their most effective lessons, PowerPoint presentations, activities, CDE resources, and laboratory assignments.

For this enhancement to serve as a valuable resource for current and future teachers, we need your favorite lessons, activities and valuable website links! Please email teaching resources to dskorte@illinois.edu. Your materials will be posted on the new University of Illinois Agricultural Education Program website.