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## THE SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION AND RESIDENT INSTRUCTION

Josef M. Broder

Resident instruction is considered an important activity by many agricultural economists at academic institutions. Despite this importance, resident instruction has not enjoyed the institutional status and professional visibility of other professional activities (Broder; Schuh). This lack of status and visibility derives, in part, from the personalized nature of resident instruction, difficulties in documenting and communicating teaching ideas, and the structure of incentives and rewards to resident instruction.

This paper will critically examine the role of the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) in resident instruction. More specifically, the objectives of this paper are to:

1. discuss the unique position of resident instruction in our profession,
2. examine what other professional associations in the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS) are doing in resident instruction,
3. examine what other regional agricultural economics associations are doing in resident instruction,
4. discuss trends and issues in resident instruction which could have far-reaching impacts on our profession, and
5. offer recommendations for more effective involvement by the Southern Agricultural Economics Association in resident instruction.

Resident instruction, as used here, refers to teaching and teaching related activities in departments of agricultural, food and/or resource economics. Resident instruction focuses on the education of students who attend classes in residence as distinguished from

extension education or adult education. Activities common to resident instruction include: classroom teaching, curriculum development, academic advising, student recruitment, career counseling, and student organization activities. While common to most schools, resident instruction programs differ in structure and locus of responsibility. For example, some departments may take an active role in student recruitment and career placement while others may delegate these responsibilities to college- or university-wide agencies which specialize in these activities.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENT INSTRUCTION Professional Resources

A large portion of our academic profession is devoted to resident instruction. A comparison of agricultural economics faculty appointments at land-grant universities in the Southern region emphasizes this responsibility. A recent survey (Broder and Ziemer, 1984) found that assistant, associate, and full professors in the Southern region had average teaching appointments of 27.7, 20.2, and 34.5 percent, respectively, Table 1.<sup>1</sup> Among all faculty ranks, the average teaching appointment was 29.2 percent, suggesting that almost one-third of our academic responsibilities are devoted to resident instruction.

Shown in Table 2 are the percentages of faculty by region of employment who have teaching appointments. Data indicate that in the Southern region, 77 percent of the assistant professors, 57 percent of the associate professors, and 89 percent of the full professors reported some teaching responsibil-

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<sup>1</sup> The survey did not include 1890 Land-Grant Colleges and other colleges with agricultural economics or agribusiness programs which generally assign heavy teaching loads. Exclusion of these colleges may understate the average teaching appointments of agricultural economics faculty.

TABLE 1. APPOINTMENTS OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS FACULTY AT LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES IN THE SOUTHERN REGION, 1982

Appointment	Faculty rank			All ranks
	Assistant Professors	Associate Professors	Professors	
	percent			
Teaching .....	27.7	20.2	34.5	29.0
Research .....	52.5	59.8	46.6	52.0
Extension .....	19.1	20.0	12.5	16.0
Other .....	0.7	0.0	6.4	3.0
Total .....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Observations ....	23	13	28	64

Source: Broder and Ziemer, 1984.

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS FACULTY AT LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES WITH TEACHING APPOINTMENTS BY REGION AND OVERALL, 1981

Location	Faculty rank			All ranks
	Assistant Professors	Associate Professors	Professors	
	percent			
Region:				
Northeast .....	85.7	91.7	100.0	93.9
Southern .....	77.3	57.1	89.3	78.1
North Central .....	75.0	77.8	79.5	78.3
Mountain, Plains and Southwest .....	100.0	82.4	90.0	89.8
Pacific .....	75.0	100.0	84.6	86.2
All regions .....	82.5	81.0	87.2	84.1

Source: Broder and Ziemer, 1981.

ities. These data were consistent with those from other regions and suggest that, while not the dominant activity, resident instruction involves the majority of the faculty at land-grant institutions.

In light of this resource commitment, evidence suggests that resident instruction does not receive the level of institutional support and professional visibility of research (Broder and Ziemer, 1982). Reasons for teaching's "second class" status are subject to considerable speculation. The following reasons are presented to establish a framework in which to evaluate the SAEA's role in resident instruction.

### Personalized Nature

Unlike research, teaching tends to be a highly personalized activity. Often, a large component of teaching effectiveness is embodied in the concept of teacher personality (Broder et al.; University of Georgia, Office of Instructional Development). While research activities are generally approached using the scientific method, teaching activities are more artistic and instructor specific in nature. Knowledge of economic concepts is

necessary but not sufficient for quality teaching.

For many young professionals, the personalized and artistic nature of teaching creates problems for documenting teaching quality and for conducting teaching related research. Many of the performance indicators of teaching quality (student, alumni, peer, and administrative evaluations) tend to be highly qualitative and thus more difficult to assess as evidence for professional advancement.

Similarly, teaching related research is also hampered by the personalized nature of teaching. A frequent criticism of teaching experiments and innovative teaching techniques is that they tend to be instructor or school specific. In our "publish or perish" profession, this limitation of teaching related research has discouraged the experimentation, diffusion, documentation, and publication of innovative teaching techniques. This does not suggest that teaching and teaching related research not be subject to review and evaluation but that criteria for reviewing and evaluating researchers and traditional research manuscripts may not be suitable for teachers and teaching related research.

### Incentives and Rewards

From the individual teacher's standpoint, teaching has both monetary and non-monetary rewards. The non-monetary rewards to teaching play a key role in attracting many students to Ph.D. programs and ultimately to academic institutions. Despite an initial enthusiasm and optimism for teaching, many young professionals soon learn that the monetary rewards to teaching are limited and may not keep pace with the monetary rewards to research (Broder and Ziemer, 1982; Schuh). The long-term consequences of this reward system should be a major concern of our Association.

From the institution's standpoint, the rewards to teaching and research are also likely to differ. Research budgets tend to dwarf instructional budgets. Teaching related grants are few in number and low in amount. Hence, fewer resources are available to support teachers and teaching related research. To the extent that research productivity begets research grants, there may be built-in institutional incentives to allocate current monies to those activities which can maintain and/

or attract future monies. Since resident instruction has a limited capacity to attract or generate funding, teachers, as key figures in this process, will continue to receive resources and rewards which are less than their research counterparts.

Professional rewards, or those which may accrue to the Association, have been outlined by Johnson. A viable and enduring professional association must continue to grow and reproduce. Professional growth is maintained through developing and applying new research techniques to agriculture, food, and resource problems. Longrun survival of our Association also requires the intergenerational transfer of knowledge through resident instruction. Since the problems of agriculture, food, and resources transcend any one generation, a profession must be concerned with recruiting, educating, and motivating future teachers of the profession. Hence, rewards to resident instruction, or lack thereof, in this generation may have serious implications for future generations of agricultural economists.

### **Teacher Education**

A disturbing feature of resident instruction in agricultural economics is the lack of resources devoted to teacher education at the graduate level. Formal attempts to enhance the teaching skills of graduate students have been few (White).<sup>2</sup> Many teachers tend to be self-taught individuals who have had little exposure to teaching philosophies, concepts or techniques. Many teachers tend to be well versed in content and poorly trained in methods of delivery. Thus, professional dialogue on teaching techniques is also limited by this absence of training in agricultural economics education.

### **Enrollment Trends**

Until recently, many undergraduate agricultural economics departments have experienced expanding enrollments. Many programs operated under the assumption that agricultural economics courses and degrees will continue to be in strong demand. Under such conditions, there are few incentives to critically evaluate existing recruiting pro-

grams, teaching techniques, curricula or career placements.

More recent evidence of enrollment trends suggests that enrollments in colleges of agriculture and in some departments of agricultural economics are declining (Roberts; Schuh, 1982). Resident instruction programs which were adequate during periods of expanding enrollments may fail to attract students during periods of declining enrollments. Declining enrollments may necessitate professional dialogue on maintaining the viability of undergraduate programs.

Given these characteristics and trends in agricultural economics resident instruction, let us examine the role of other professional associations in resident instruction.

### **SAAS MEMBERS**

In November of 1984, a survey was conducted to determine the involvement of other professional associations in resident instruction. Questionnaires were mailed to current or past presidents of the 14 associations comprising the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS) and three regional agricultural economics associations. Respondents were asked to indicate their association's involvement with resident instruction in the following areas:

1. recognition of outstanding teaching,
2. professional meetings on resident instruction,
3. professional publications on teaching related activities,
4. association sponsored student activities, and
5. association committees on resident instruction.

Eleven of the fourteen member associations of SAAS responded to the survey. Data from associations located off-campus (Experiment Station Superintendent's Section) or those that did not have an academic base (Soil Conservation Society of America) were excluded from the survey results.

Involvement of SAAS Associations in resident instruction is shown in tables 3 and 4. Based on individual memberships, the SAEA ranks third in size with 950 members. Of these members, approximately 50 percent were thought to have teaching appointments.

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<sup>2</sup> Graduate teaching programs which offer in-house teaching practicums, seminars or workshops may prove to be more effective than those which encourage their students to take general education courses.

TABLE 3. RESIDENT INSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES BY MEMBERS OF SAAS, 1984<sup>a</sup>

SAAS member	Individual membership (no.)	Members with teaching appointments (pct.)	Recognize outstanding teaching <sup>b</sup> (yes/no)	Meetings devoted to teaching			
				Papers	Seminars	Symposia	Workshops
				percent			
Agricultural Communications .....	65	5	No	—	—	—	—
Agricultural Economics .....	950	50	No	10	0	5	0
Agricultural Engineering .....	1,100	40	No	20	0	0	0
Agronomy .....	250	80	No	0	0	0	0
Animal Science .....	1,800	30	No	5	5	5	5
Dairy Science .....	—	50	No	13	0	0	0
Food and Human Nutrition .....	100	90	No	2	0	0	0
Horticulture .....	450	75	Yes	13	0	0	13
Rural Sociology .....	90	85	No	1	0	0	0

<sup>a</sup>Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists.<sup>b</sup>Excludes awards presented by national association of which regional association is affiliated.TABLE 4. RESIDENT INSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES BY MEMBERS OF SAAS, 1984<sup>a</sup>

SAAS member	Published articles on teaching <sup>b</sup>	Student activities				Teaching related committees		
		Scholarships	Competition	Careers	Regional clubs	Number	Membership	Status
Agricultural Communications ..	—	No	No	No	Yes	—	—	—
Agricultural Economics .....	Yes	No	No	No	No	1	3	Ad hoc
Agricultural Engineering .....	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	0	0	—
Agronomy .....	No	No	Yes	No	No	0	0	—
Animal Science .....	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	2	10	Standing
Dairy Science .....	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	1	6	Standing
Food and Human Nutrition .....	No	No	Yes	No	No	0	0	—
Horticulture .....	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	4	Standing
Rural Sociology .....	No	No	No	No	No	0	0	—

<sup>a</sup>Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists.<sup>b</sup>Excludes publications by regional association members in national journals.

Of the associations responding, only one indicated that they formally recognize outstanding teaching or teachers. The SAEA was among the associations that does not recognize outstanding teachers. With respect to professional meetings on resident instruction, a majority of the associations scheduled some meetings on teaching in the form of papers, seminars, symposia or workshops. However, the percentage of meetings devoted to teaching was small across all associations and considerably less than the percentage of members with teaching appointments. The SAEA reported that 10 percent of their papers presented and 5 percent of their symposia were devoted to teaching related activities.

Association sponsored publications, student activities and teaching related committees are shown in Table 4. Only two of the responding associations published teaching related articles. The SAEA reported that ap-

proximately 5 percent of their journal consisted of teaching related articles. Data on association involvement with student activities were mixed. Specific activities mentioned in the survey were: scholarships, student competitions, career activities, and regional clubs or chapters. The SAEA reported no involvement in any of these student activities. The SAEA also reported having only one ad hoc committee on teaching related activities.

## REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS ASSOCIATIONS

Survey questionnaires were also mailed to three of the four regional agricultural economics associations. The structure and activities of the North Central Committee were

not deemed applicable to the survey.<sup>3</sup> Data on resident instruction activities of regional agricultural economics associations are shown in tables 5 and 6. Among the regional agri-

TABLE 5. RESIDENT INSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS ASSOCIATIONS, 1984

Item	Regional agricultural economics associations <sup>a</sup>		
	NAEC	SAEA	WAEA
Individual membership .....	380	950	1,000
Members with teaching appointments (pct.) ...	b	50	80
Recognize outstanding teaching .....	No	No	Yes
Meetings on teaching			
Pct. Papers .....	2	10	5
Pct. Seminars .....	0	0	0
Pct. Symposia .....	0	5	0
Pct. Workshops .....	0	0	0

<sup>a</sup>NAEC = Northeast Agricultural Economics Council.  
SAEA = Southern Association of Agricultural Economists.  
WAEA = Western Association of Agricultural Economists.

<sup>b</sup>Data were not available.

TABLE 6. RESIDENT INSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS ASSOCIATIONS, 1984

Activity	Regional agricultural economics associations <sup>a</sup>		
	NAEC	SAEA	WAEA
Publish articles on teaching .....	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student activities:			
Scholarships .....	No	No	No
Competitions .....	Yes	No	Yes
Careers .....	No	No	No
Regional clubs .....	No	No	No
Teaching related committees:			
Number .....	2	1	1
Membership .....	20	3	3-5
Status .....	Standing	Ad hoc	Standing

<sup>a</sup>NAEC = Northeast Agricultural Economics Council.  
SAEA = Southern Association of Agricultural Economists.  
WAEA = Western Association of Agricultural Economists.

cultural economics associations with formal memberships, the Western Agricultural Economics Association (WAEA) reported the largest membership of 1,000, followed by the SAEA with 950 and the Northeast Agricultural Economics Council (NAEC) with 380.

Of these associations, only the WAEA sponsored an annual teaching award which was initiated in 1983. To date, the NAEC and the SAEA do not formally recognize outstanding teaching. All of these associations devoted some time in professional meetings to teaching related activities. The SAEA has devoted more of its professional meetings to teaching.

However, the percentage of meetings devoted to teaching is minimal.

The three regional agricultural economics associations surveyed indicated that they published teaching related articles in their respective journals. With respect to association sponsored student activities, none of the associations offered scholarships. Student competitions were sponsored by the NAEC and WAEA, but none of the associations were involved in career activities or regional student organizations.

With respect to association committees on teaching related activities, the NAEC had two standing committees with a total membership of twenty, the WAEA had one standing committee of three to five members while the SAEA reported only one ad hoc committee of three members. The SAEA's ad hoc committee surveyed the agricultural economics departments in the southern region concerning the feasibility of establishing a regional undergraduate student section at its annual meeting. This committee found that members of the SAEA were not supportive of organizing and sponsoring a regional undergraduate student section.

## PUBLICATIONS

The documentation of teaching quality and teaching innovations is crucial to emulation and adoption by others in the profession. The importance of publishing for career advancement necessitates a closer examination of association sponsored publications. In doing so, the four regional agricultural economics journals were examined to determine how effectively these associations have used their respective journals as forums for teaching related activities. More specifically, the number of teaching related articles and their authors were contrasted to the total number of articles and authors appearing in the journals over the past 4 years.

The results of this comparison are shown in Table 7. Journals examined included nine issues of the *North Central Journal of Agricultural Economics* (NCJAE), nine issues of the *Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics* (SJAE), nine issues of the *Western Journal of Agricultural Economics* (WJAE) and seven issues of the *Journal of the Northeast Agricultural Economics Council*

<sup>3</sup> The North Central Committee consists of department heads from agricultural economics departments at land-grant universities in the North Central Region. The North Central Committee's activities are limited to publishing the *North Central Journal of Agricultural Economics*.

TABLE 7. TEACHING RELATED ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS JOURNALS, JULY 1980-JULY 1984

Item	North Central Journal of Agr. Economics	Journal of the Northeast Agr. Econ. Council	Southern Journal of Agr. Economics	Western Journal of Agr. Economics
Number of issues .....	9	7 <sup>a</sup>	9	9
Beginning volume-number .....	2-1	10-1	12-1	5-1
Ending volume-number .....	6-1	13-1	16-1	9-1
Total numbers of:				
Articles .....	111	112	204	132
Authors .....	228	204	422	254
Pages .....	925	790	1,498	1,444
Teaching related:				
Articles .....	0.0	2.6	1.9	3.7
Authors .....	0.0	3.4	1.8	3.1
Pages .....	0.0	2.6	1.3	2.3

<sup>a</sup>From January 1981-July 1984

(JNAEC). These data indicated that from July 1980 through July 1984 the *SJAE* published 204 articles, representing 422 authors and 1,498 pages. Of these, four articles or 1.9 percent were devoted to teaching related subjects. These articles represented eight authors or 1.8 percent of total authors and twenty pages or 1.3 percent of the total pages published during this period.

When compared to teaching related publications in other journals, the *SJAE* ranked third behind the *WJAE* and *JNAEC*. Despite these differences, the total allocations of these journals to teaching related articles is minimal. These data indicate that regional agricultural economics journals are being used very little as a forum for teaching related materials.

Several interpretations and implications can be offered for this phenomenon. Foremost is the fact that few teaching related articles are submitted to the regional agricultural economics journals. Hence, the constraining factors may be the funding and reward systems at many universities and not the editorial policies of these journals. Another interpretation suggests that teaching techniques have changed little over the years, few efforts have been made to evaluate existing techniques and genuine innovative teaching techniques are slow to emerge. This interpretation suggests that "necessity is the mother of invention" and greater professional dialogue and, perhaps, new teaching techniques may emerge in response to declining enrollments.

A final interpretation suggests the regional agricultural economics journals are not the only outlets for teaching related publications, and a more comprehensive evaluation should examine other publication outlets. These alternative publications include the *American Journal of Agricultural Econom-*

*ics (AJAE)*, the *National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Journal (NACTA)*, and the *Journal of Economic Education*. Teaching related articles which have implications across regions or across disciplines may be more suitable to these journals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the resident instruction activities of other professional associations, this author recommends that the SAEA's role in resident instruction be evaluated. Critical to this evaluation are the questions of (1) whether the SAEA has been of service to resident instruction, and (2) how might the SAEA lend greater support to resident instruction.

Data on current activities of the SAEA suggest that the Association has not taken and/or has not been asked to take an active role in resident instruction. A more active role in resident instruction by the SAEA could result in both personal and professional benefits. Teaching faculty may more readily participate in Association related activities. An expanded commitment to teaching related activities may encourage greater participation from teaching faculty in the 1890 Land-Grant Colleges and other state colleges with agricultural economics or agribusiness programs. The SAEA could better serve the needs of a large portion of its current teaching faculty. Association supported activities on resident instruction could also serve to better attract, motivate and perhaps reward young teachers in our profession.

## Teaching Awards

The recognition of superior teaching would require only a small investment by the SAEA and could give increased professional visi-

bility to resident instruction. Precedent for a regional teaching award has been established by the WAEA and such an award would complement rather than compete with the AAEA teaching awards. Such an award would be open to all teaching faculty in the SAEA, be presented on an annual basis and be accompanied by a certificate. The impacts of such an award could be enhanced by showcasing the recipient or his/her credentials at the annual meetings.

### Professional Meetings

Ample opportunities for structured dialogue are available at the SAEA annual meetings. Yet data on previous meetings indicate minimal use of these meetings for dialogue on resident instruction activities. Any additional activities at these meetings must compete for limited conference and membership resources. Additional meeting activities at the regional level must also take into account resident instruction activities of the AAEA.<sup>4</sup> One meeting activity which may not duplicate existing resident instruction activities and one which would require only small investments would be poster sessions. Poster sessions could be used to accommodate and/or encourage papers on teaching which may not be suited for a larger audience.

Any increase in teaching related activities at professional meetings must also be sensitive to the teaching commitments of SAEA members. Faculty with heavy teaching loads may be reluctant to participate in professional meetings which conflict with their teaching commitments. Hence, teaching related meetings scheduled early during the SAEA meetings may generate greater participation from faculty with heavy teaching loads.

### Professional Publications

The SAEA should continue to maintain high standards of quality in the *SJAE*. No compromises should be made for submitted manuscripts, regardless of their subject matter.

The *SJAE* has published quality articles on teaching related activities and should explicitly encourage the submission of quality teaching related articles as part of its editorial policy.

### Student Activities

The SAEA involvement with student activities has received little encouragement from Association members. The benefits to such activities are difficult to identify and document. The benefits to these activities may be more in recruiting students into our profession as opposed to benefiting teaching faculty as a group. If student activities at the national level continue to grow, greater involvement may be sought from the regional associations. A regional thesis award at the masters and/or Ph.D. level would be an activity which could currently be implemented with minimal resources.

### Committees

Serious consideration should be given to establishing a standing committee on resident instruction within the SAEA. This committee would initially be charged with evaluating the SAEA's role in resident instruction and with implementing, promoting and monitoring resident instruction activities on behalf of the SAEA.

### CONCLUSIONS

The role of the SAEA in resident instruction has heretofore been undefined and almost non-existent. The Association must ask to what extent has the Association served or been asked to serve resident instruction in agricultural economics. The Association has the size and influence to give greater support and visibility to resident instruction. The importance of teaching in our profession and the dynamic nature of the teaching environment suggest that the SAEA take a more active role in resident instruction.

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<sup>4</sup> The AAEA sponsors a teaching workshop in conjunction with their annual meetings every 3 or 4 years. Workshop attendance by faculty from the Southern Region has been good.



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