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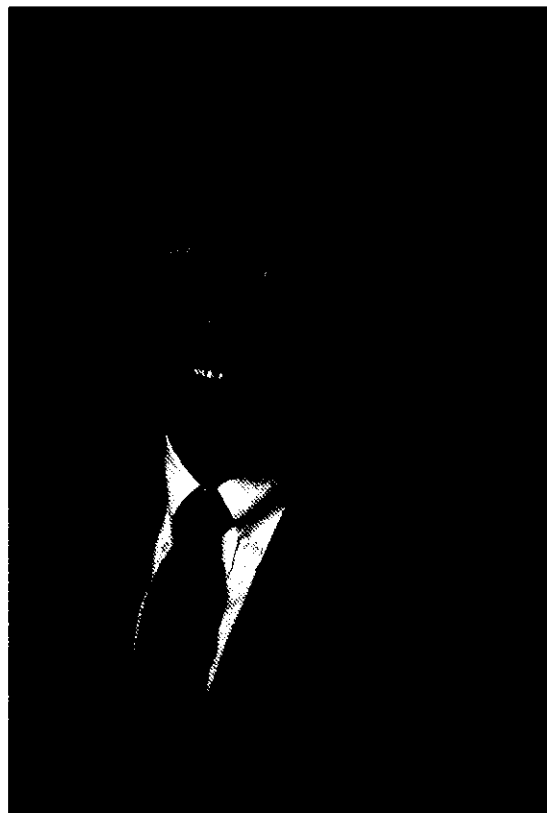
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# Fred C. White

## Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. White is D.W. Brooks Distinguished Professor and Head of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department at the University of Georgia. He was a charter member of the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) at its inception and has made tremendous contributions to southern agricultural economics throughout his 33-year career. He was recognized by the SAEA with the Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions in Research in 1988 and the Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions in Teaching in 1995. He has authored 25 articles published in the *Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics* and the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, which is an exceptional record.

Dr. White's research has emphasized the economic evaluation of agricultural policies. The problems addressed in this research are complex and require the application of advanced analytical techniques. His research output includes more than 100 journal articles and numerous other scientific publications. A highlight of these publications are 15 articles in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. The quality of this research is reflected by the recognition that Dr. White has received in awards, grants, and service on task forces addressing important agricultural policy issues. His research awards include the Creative Research Medal from the University of Georgia, the Award for Distinguished Professional Contribution in Research from the SAEA, and the Senior Faculty Award from Gamma Sigma Delta. The American Agricultural Economics Association has recognized the quality of his research and graduate stu-



dent research under his direction. His appointment as D.W. Brooks Distinguished Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics reflects a career of exceptional research accomplishments.

Dr. White's unique teaching record focuses on developing, implementing, and publishing results of teaching innovations, which reflects a strong commitment to teaching scholarship. His teaching innovations assist students in developing higher order learning skills and increase student understanding of agricultural

economics. He has been a pioneer in publishing articles on teaching in agricultural economics. The first teaching innovations developed by Dr. White were published as two articles in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* in the 1970s. These initial efforts became the foundation for later work and publications that integrated such teaching innovations as cooperative learning and economic simulation in policy education. These contributions are highlighted by a series of journal articles with the capstone article "An Interactive Learning System for the Economic Analysis of Public Policies" appearing in the *Journal of Economic Education*. A common thread through all of these articles has been the active involvement of students in the learning process to stimulate student interest and learning. Dr. White was presented the Distinguished

Undergraduate Teaching Award by the American Agricultural Economics Association and the Award for Distinguished Professional Contribution in Teaching from the SAEA. He has also won the three major teaching awards in his college and both the graduate and undergraduate teaching awards in his department. He is a Senior Teaching Fellow and member of the Teaching Academy at the University of Georgia and has been a leader in numerous university-wide instructional programs and activities.

Few in his profession have achieved the level of success and recognition that Dr. White has received for both teaching and research. Having been recognized numerous times for his exceptional accomplishments, he is indeed worthy of SAEA's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

# Enhancing Agricultural and Applied Economics Educational Programs

**Fred C. White**

Little information is available on how to effectively increase student enrollment and student credit hour production in Agricultural and Applied Economics. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss a case study of a comprehensive approach to enhance the educational program in Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Georgia.

In the last 3 years, the number of majors in the department has increased from 130 to 210, which is well over a 50% increase. The number of student credit hours increased over 30% in the last 3 years reported, but the latest figures are not yet available. The department generated over 15% of the college's student credit hours in 2003, compared with 12% 3 years earlier.

The department's strategic plan addressed the undergraduate program in detail. The relevant modeling issue was: How can the department enhance the quality of its undergraduate programs? Enhancing the quality of undergraduate programs involves focusing on providing students with economic knowledge, analytical skills, communication skills, and the ability to apply knowledge and skills to solve practical problems. Also important are integration of the department's research and public service programs with the teaching program, increasing student and faculty diversity, securing adequate teaching support, improved methods for evaluating teaching performance, and better integration of the department's teaching program with the University.

The specific objectives of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department to enhance the undergraduate program are:

- to increase the number and diversity of majors in our undergraduate program;
- to increase the quality and diversity of the department's faculty involved in teaching;
- to evaluate and revise the current curricula, teaching loads, targeted student body, class size, and scheduling with an objective of being better integrated with the University;
- to secure adequate funding to develop enrichment programs for the department's undergraduate majors;
- to increase the web capabilities of the department, whereby all pertinent information can be accessed through the web; and
- to reconfigure and renovate classrooms to enhance and expand the learning experience.

This presentation focuses on the methods used to enhance the educational programs that have resulted in recruiting a larger and more diverse student body and generating more student credit hours. In particular, the comprehensive approach to increase the total number of majors in Agricultural and Applied Economics to 200 students in 3 years will be described and assessed.

## **High-Quality Instruction and Educational Opportunities**

The Agricultural and Applied Economics Department has a long history of outstanding teachers. The department's faculty have won numerous teaching awards. New faculty with a strong commitment to teaching have been hired and placed in the classroom. Experienced faculty members have been reassigned to different courses to provide the best possi-

ble offering of courses. Outstanding teachers have been assigned to the introductory course to provide a strong foundation in microeconomics and to recruit students to our majors. In addition, faculty members serve effectively as advisors.

Students have great opportunities through study abroad and internship programs. Each summer several of our students have internships in Washington, D.C., and Brussels. In 2004, seven students from Agricultural and Applied Economics had paid internships in Washington, D.C. Students travel in the department's study abroad courses in Mexico and New Zealand. Other students work toward international agriculture certificates by studying and/or interning in foreign countries. These are just some of the examples of outstanding educational opportunities that help attract students to the Agricultural and Applied Economics programs.

### **Curricular Changes**

After several years of effort, the department's introductory course, Applied Microeconomic Principles, received approval by the Board of Regents for inclusion in the social science core curriculum. This is the only College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences course that can be counted in the core courses. This course is being promoted throughout the College to increase its enrollment. Outstanding teachers in the department teach this course for recruitment purposes.

The department has been able to change a College requirement in chemistry. After battling over the chemistry requirement for years, the department was finally able to convince others on campus that our calculus requirements were more relevant to this discipline than chemistry and that the calculus courses maintain rigor in our program. We continue to encourage students to take chemistry, but many prospective students have already taken other lab sciences, so this change in requirements has been valuable in recruitment.

Several new minors have been developed in the department.

- Environmental Economics and Management
- Environmental Law
- Food and Fiber Marketing
- Natural Resource Economics

These minors are attracting new students to the program and increasing student credit hour production.

The Environmental Economics and Management degree has been changed to a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences (BSES). This change, which enhances student perception of the major, is being advertised to increase student enrollment.

Participation in new University of Georgia interdisciplinary majors, some of which are at Tifton and Griffin, offer this department an opportunity to increase the number of student credit hours. The purpose of the off-campus majors are to use the unique College resources at Tifton and Griffin to attract additional students to the College. Several Agricultural and Applied Economics courses have been taught at Tifton and others will be taught in the new program in Griffin. These interdisciplinary programs provide an opportunity to involve extension and research faculty in the instructional program.

### **Student Recruitment**

The department has developed new recruitment materials, including exhibits, brochures, and posters. Attractive and unique illustrations for our three majors—Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness, and Environmental Economics and Management have been developed by an artist from the College. These illustrations are used in the various recruitment materials.

The Department sponsors exhibits and representatives (faculty, staff, and students) at numerous recruitment opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students. These activities include 4-H and FFA conventions, major fairs, etc. Departmental majors are advertised in student newspapers, on campus buses, and in other outlets. The advertisements are based on the theme of "Dynamic Majors for Business Careers." All relevant information on majors and minors are readily acces-

sible on the web. The departmental web page features current students and alumni to help recruit students.

The department is using internships to help recruit high school minority students. In the summer, students are involved in paid internships in the department. Departmental faculty and staff have worked with these students to expose them to our programs and hopefully recruit these students for the department and university.

Personal letters have been sent to new students who have gone through UGA orientation and expressed an interest related to the department's instructional program. The specific interests targeted include business, environment, and pre-law. Also, students who were undecided were contacted and informed about the department's majors. The recruitment letter called the students' attention to the department's web page, which has been updated for the recruitment effort. The students were also invited to contact faculty in the department for more information on our majors.

The department communicates with advisors in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Business School, and College of Arts and Sciences to present our majors and to describe changes in curriculum.

The department's undergraduate student organization—the Agricultural and Environmental Economics (AEE) Club—plays a key role in the comprehensive plan to enhance the undergraduate program. Members of the Club are involved informally in recruiting undergraduates who are already at the University of Georgia because the current club members are active in numerous organizations and informal activities. The department supports activities of the Club to strengthen it and to enhance its effectiveness. Interaction of AEE Club members with alumni (1) helps educate undergraduates about career alternatives, (2) provides an avenue for showcasing undergraduates to potential employers, and (3) strengthens alumni relations. The two major events each spring that connect alumni and students are the spring banquet and a departmental golf tournament. These activities improve the instructional program and help attract more and better students.

### **Strengthen Alumni Relations**

Alumni of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department are involved with recruiting undergraduates and enhancing our educational program.

Information on alumni careers is helpful in recruiting students because it shows where recent graduates from this program have found jobs. It is also a guide to seniors in the program as they begin searching for jobs. This information has been obtained from over 400 alumni. Web pages have been developed for alumni of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department. These web pages help keep alumni connected to our current students, recent graduates, and other alumni and to the department. This web page has been created to better serve our alumni. In addition to news and information about alumni and the department, this web page includes a listing of services offered by the department and opportunities for alumni to be involved with activities of the department. These opportunities include visiting lecturers, internships, employment opportunities for graduates, and financial support for scholarships and other activities of the department.

Initially, the department focused on alumni who had developed strong ties with the department, including officers and directors of the Agricultural Economics Association of Georgia, former officers of the Agricultural and Environmental Economics Club, and team members in National Agribusiness Marketing Association competition. Alumni are invited to campus to interact with current students on careers.

New and expanded endowments from alumni and others are used to strengthen the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department programs. Development opportunities relate to scholarships, leadership awards, student travel for competition and paper presentations, and endowed professorship(s).

Alumni are sent quarterly newsletters to be informed about the activities of the department. They are also sent development brochures, highlighting the accomplishments of the department's faculty, students, and alumni

and given an opportunity to contribute to these activities. The department is presently involved in a call-a-thon asking for donations from alumni.

### **Renovation of Facilities**

Renovation of classrooms and laboratories help improve the instructional environment. The main classrooms in the department have been renovated. The classrooms are fully equipped. The computer laboratories were renovated. Accessibility and security of the labs have been enhanced. The electrical system and the heating and cooling system were redone to improve the labs.

### **Concluding Comments**

The Agricultural and Applied Economics Department at the University of Georgia has a strategic goal of enhancing its undergraduate program. A comprehensive approach has been implemented by the department to achieve the goal. This presentation has identified and described the many components that have been used to enhance the educational program, resulting in a 50% increase in the number of majors in the department and a similar increase in the production of student credit hours. The quality of the department's instruction, educational opportunities, and facilities

are outstanding. These are necessary conditions for outstanding programs, but these are probably not the major reasons for the significant increases in student numbers.

Curriculum changes appear to be important factors in increasing student numbers. The faculty have identified niche markets and developed majors, minors, and degrees that appeal to prospective students. The faculty have worked hard to streamline the programs and provide career track information for the various majors. Courses in this department have become part of the requirements for several majors, including interdisciplinary programs on and off campus. The department has been effective in marketing the program through the web, at conventions and university activities, and through advertisements on campus. These marketing activities have informed and attracted prospective students.

Cultivating alumni relations would appear to be important in the long run for enhanced educational programs. Personal information from alumni is being used to describe career opportunities in Agricultural and Applied Economics as a tool to recruit prospective students and to expand employment opportunities for those graduating from this department. Development efforts with alumni are being pursued to enrich the educational programs through scholarships, leadership awards, and travel assistance.