

## Board of Director

### Jaclyn D. Kropp, University of Florida



Jaclyn D. Kropp is a Professor of Food and Resource Economics at the University of Florida (UF). She has a 60% teaching and 40% research appointment. Prior to joining UF, Jaclyn was faculty at Clemson University. In addition to teaching a variety of courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, she also served as undergraduate coordinator, which sparked her passion for holistic mentoring.

Her research focuses on issues related to agricultural policy and agricultural finance, including the impacts of agricultural support programs on farm-level production decisions and the links between food assistance program participation, food environments, and nutrition outcomes.

Jaclyn has won several awards for her teaching and research programs including North American Colleges and Teachers of Agricultural's Educator Award, Honorable Mention for AAEA's

Outstanding Master's Thesis Award, Honorable Mention for AAEA's Outstanding AJAE Article award, and Outstanding Article Award for Best Published Research Paper in Applied Risk Analysis.

#### **What is the biggest concern/challenge facing AAEA?**

The rapidly changing policy environment as well as innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI) have the potential to influence numerous aspects of our profession including funding opportunities, how we conduct research and teach, and how we communicate our impacts. Academics, government employees, and those in industry alike are facing changes. These changes come at a time when the value of research and higher education is being questioned by some. Thus, communicating the value of the work our members are doing while navigating these changes is AAEA's greatest challenge.

#### **What actions would you initiate to improve the situation described in your response to the previous question?**

While communicating the value of the working being done by our members during this period of change is AAEA's greatest challenge, it also poses great opportunity. AAEA already employs a variety of outreach avenues, including publications, conferences, and press releases, to share information with the public and other stakeholders. In addition to expanding these outreach efforts, engaging with industry will be essential to navigating the changes the profession is facing and communicating the value of the work we are doing as agricultural and applied economist. Many of us have extensive networks developed through our extension and outreach efforts that could be leveraged to expand the Associations reach. Serving on the membership committee and chairing the mentorship committee, I have seen first-hand that attracting individuals in industry to join the Association and mentoring young professionals interested in careers in industry are opportunities for the Association. Thus, if elected to the board, I would propose and volunteer to lead a task force aimed at understanding the evolving needs of AAEA's current members and barriers to memberships of non-members in industry. Developing deeper ties with industry will also help us mentor undergraduate and graduate students preparing for careers in industry, which is becoming increasingly important given the thinness of the academic job market in recent years.

#### **At the end of your three-year term, what changes/new initiatives would you have helped create?**

As discussed in my previous response, if elected to the board, I would initiate a task force aimed at understanding the needs of AAEA's current members and barriers to membership. By the end of my three-year term, the findings of the task force could be leveraged to increase industry engagement, develop more effective communication strategies targeted at reaching industry, policymakers, and other stakeholders, and used to develop programming targeted at industry professionals including mentorship programming. I will also advocate for the creation of an industry focused section.