

**Bio**

Dr. Liang is W.K. Kellogg Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Agriculture at the North Carolina A&T State University, and Co-Director of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, a partnership between NC A&T, NC State University, and NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. She received a PhD and MS in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University and a BS in Agricultural Economics from the National Taiwan University. She was a faculty at the University of Vermont (1998-2016) and a Research Analyst at the University of Nebraska Panhandle Research and Extension Center (1996-1998). She joined AAEA in 1990 and has actively engaged in various programs, including serving leadership roles for the Committee on Women in Agricultural Economics, Mentoring and Early Career Development, and Award Committees. Dr. Liang has received numerous awards, including the AAEA Special Service Award, for her innovative/integrated entrepreneurship

initiatives and significant leadership in serving socially disadvantaged populations in limited-resource communities.

What is the biggest concern/problem facing AAEA?

Agriculture, like other industries, has become an intertwined platform connecting with technology, engineering, health, nutrition, history, ecology, and many more. Scientists keep exploring and expanding new boundaries of knowledge from theoretical and practical aspects. The biggest challenge facing AAEA is to weave a dynamic web of connectivity across knowledge domains while creating/sustaining a distinguishable leadership position in supporting agricultural and applied economists to become creative and innovative scholars, educators, and game changers. Recent calls for proposals from funding agencies encourage interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches through multi-institutional collaborations to solve complex issues, often involving human decisions, changes in natural settings, and consequences imposed on the environment and ecosystems. AAEA members, particularly emerging scholars in the initial phase of their careers, often struggle to create a brand name for what we do versus who we are or what our degrees are. Traditional Agricultural Economics Departments have slowly incorporated new subjects to accommodate the fast-changing societal issues, such as Artificial Intelligence, climate change, and equitable food systems. AAEA leaders must envision the trait of our profession among other scientific fields because Agricultural and Applied Economics is an integral component of natural and social sciences.

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

It is our joint responsibility to work with the section leaders and AAEA leadership team to enhance our services and inform our membership of new challenges in various fields associated

with agriculture and applied economics. While it is vital to create new initiatives that would be exciting for our membership, we also need to evaluate our costs versus outcomes to ensure effectiveness, longevity, and lasting impacts. Here are a few ideas we could work on together by building on ongoing effort, for example:

1. Offer mini-workshops on communicating sciences to non-scientific audiences.
2. Recruit and invite diverse scholars, teachers, and industry representatives across interdisciplinary fields to share their experiences and the nature of works that could build on the strengths of agricultural and applied economics.
3. Organize facilitated discussions from successful teams to demonstrate strategies to incorporate agricultural and applied economists in proposal development, not as a tag-along component.
4. Create joint mentoring opportunities with other professional associations via year-round activities such as research forums, extension showcases, pedagogy innovation, publication preparation, proposal writing, understanding diversity and inclusion, and work-life balance issues. Special attention must be given to assisting undergraduate students, graduate students, and junior faculty/specialists who are building their career pathways.

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

AAEA has tremendous opportunities to assist and support our members in becoming more adaptive to the future. Our unique and best asset covers research, teaching, industry, government, and extension/outreach programs that often do not co-exist in other fields. In three years, we hope to see more cross-pollination and meaningful engagement within our profession and across other networks via new activities (e.g., collaborative training in proposal writing and mentoring activities, highlighting successful AAEA teaching and extension models in non-AAEA professions and vice versa). The positive impacts would deepen our story as a professional organization that honors our legacy, nurtures the present, and prepares for the future.