

Board of Director

Terrance Hurley, University of Minnesota



Terrance “Terry” Hurley is the Austin Dowell Professor and Head of Applied Economics at UMN. He received his PhD from ISU and BS from CSUS. Prior to joining UMN faculty, he was at URI, CARD-ISU, and UWY. He is currently Chair of the AAEA Finance Committee. He served as a Co-editor for the *AJAE* and *AEPP*; guest editor for *AgBioForum*; and on the editorial boards of *AJAE*, *JARE*, *Agronomy Journal*, and *Environmental Biosafety Research*. His research on productivity, profitability, risk, and regulation of emerging technologies has been published in journals including *AJAE*, *AEPP*, *Choices*, *Science*, and *Nature Plants*. This work earned him invitations to serve on EPA FIFRA SAPs, and a National Academies Steering Committee. It earned Outstanding Article Awards from *JARE* and *AJARE*; and the Quality of Research and Discovery Award from AARES. It also contributed three chapters to the 2007 AAEA Quality of Communication Award winner.

What is the biggest concern/challenge facing AAEA?

A trend that has caught my attention over the past six years serving as a director of graduate studies and department head in a college of food, agriculture, and natural resources is the interest in the types of problems my faculty have been wrestling with for decades from business, liberal arts, public policy, and science and engineering programs. While the graduates of our programs used to claim a clear comparative advantage with their superior quantitative training and skills, this comparative advantage has withered, if not completely disappeared when compared to the quantitative training and skills science and engineering program graduates now receive. While this again raises the question of what an agricultural and applied economist does, finding the answer to this question is not what concerns me. Several of our distinguished colleagues have again offered thoughtful answers to this question recently. What is more concerning to me is making sure our programs’ graduates have a core set of training and skills that is valued so they remain competitive in the job market. This concern was made more salient when the CHAIRS Section hosted two days in DC two years ago. When the NASS administrator we visited with was asked their plans for the future, he got quite excited about data science before reading the room and also calling out agricultural and applied economics.

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

When I began my second term as a director of graduate studies six years ago (my first term was 2006-9), I surveyed the graduate curriculum and requirements for many land grant university programs and a smaller set of programs from liberal arts and business schools. What stood out to me from this exercise was that many programs have recognized a need to change, but where that change should ultimately take us wasn’t clear. The AAEA plays an important and direct role in setting research standards through its portfolio research journals and awards. It plays an important and direct role in inspiring teaching excellence through the *AETR* and its teaching awards. It plays an important and direct role in guiding exceptional outreach through *Choices* and its extension awards. It plays a more indirect role in setting standards for curriculum and program requirements with individual association members commonly invited to serve on program review or other occasional ad hoc committees. The action I would like to initiate as a board member is the development of a mechanism for the AAEA to play a more direct and

continuing role in defining standards for the core training and skills our undergraduate and graduate students need to be successful on the job market and advance in their chosen careers.

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

If elected to the board of directors, after three years, I hope to have played a role in facilitating the establishment of a Section like CHAIRS (or other committee or professional group) for directors of graduate and undergraduate studies. This group would regularly survey program curricula and other requirements; share survey results with AAEEA members; organize symposia with government agency, non-governmental organization, and private industry leaders to discuss their needs as employers; and develop and regularly update recommendations for agricultural and applied economics programs. To further foster the success of such an initiative, I would also like to work with the board to strengthen the Association's engagement with non-governmental organizations and private industry.