



2026 NAADA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE-KNOXVILLE
Crowne Plaza Knoxville Downtown University
JUNE 15-18

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MISSION STATEMENT

NAADA provides education, support, and recognition for professionals and volunteers dedicated to expanding resources for advancing agriculture and related disciplines through land-grant and other colleges of agricultural sciences and partner programs.



VISION STATEMENT

NAADA will be the premier organization providing enhancement opportunities for professionals and volunteers in institutions of higher education and organizations associated with agricultural and related sciences.

WELCOME to ROCKY TOP!

We're so excited to welcome you all to beautiful East Tennessee. This year's conference is the culmination of the hard work and dedication of a team of people from around the country, and we want to say thank you to everyone who had a part in the planning process.

We hope that throughout the conference we'll be able to showcase what makes the University of Tennessee and Knoxville such a special place.

Our conference hotel has you situated in the heart of downtown Knoxville. You are within a short walk of shops, restaurants, live music venues, and so much more!

The Crowne Plaza overlooks historic Market Square, a pedestrian friendly hot spot with patio restaurants, rooftop bars and local shopping.

On Gay Street, you'll find additional shopping, dining, galleries, museums, and the iconic Tennessee Theatre, perfect for a photo!

Some of our favorite downtown restaurants include:

- **Chivo:** Creative tacos and award-winning margaritas on Gay Street.
- **Stock & Barrel:** Gourmet burgers and 300+ bourbons on Market Square.
- **The Kennedy:** Chef-driven American food and craft cocktails in a historic Gay Street building.

Save room for a delicious sweet treat at Cruze Farm, an ice cream shop owned and operated by a UT Herbert College of Agriculture alumnus.

Just steps from Market Square, the Old City features more great food and fun! It boasts several live music venues and the new Smokies Stadium, home to the Double-A affiliate of the Chicago Cubs.

While you're visiting campus, there are several spots that we think are must-sees including:

- **The Torchbearer:** A bronze statue symbolizing UT's motto of enlightenment, serving as the university's most iconic emblem.
- **Ayers Hall:** With a distinctive tower that has anchored the heart of campus since 1921.
- **Morgan Hall:** The landmark building of the side of UT affectionately known as the "Ag Campus."
- **UT Gardens:** The Tennessee State Botanical Garden, featuring beautiful plants, flowers, and spaces.

Try to find all 11 Smokey statues on campus! Each statue pays homage to a Smokey, current and past. Spirit night will take you to the home of the Vols, Neyland Stadium, the 6th largest college football stadium in the country!

We hope you feel the southern hospitality while you're spending the week with us. Tennessee is rich in history and tradition, and the Volunteer spirit is truly contagious.

Enjoy the 2026 Conference and your time in Knoxville. Please let us know how we can help make your experience unforgettable.

Go Vols!



Cassie Johnson

2026 Conference Co-Chair



Kyle Hensley

2026 Conference Co-Chair

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE GOALS

PROVIDE ENGAGING AND RELEVANT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES that offer attendees practical ideas, fresh perspectives, and strategies they can take back and adapt to their own campuses and organizations.

SHOWCASE THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

by highlighting the beauty of the city and campus, the traditions of the Volunteer community, and the unique culture and hospitality of East Tennessee.

ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND SHARED INSPIRATION through conversations and experiences that support leadership development, collaboration, innovation, and the continued success of NAADA Members.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY by bringing colleagues together to reconnect, exchange ideas, build new relationships, and strengthen the sense of community that makes NAADA special.

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

MONDAY, JUNE 15 | PRE-CONFERENCE TOUR DAY

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Bush's Beans & Dollywood Theme Park

TUESDAY, JUNE 16

7:30 - 9:00 am NAADA Past President's Breakfast (NAADA Past President's Only) | Boardroom 1
 9:00 am - 12:00 pm NAADA Board Meeting | The Tech Room
 12:00 - 6:00 pm Registration Opens | Mezzanine Lobby
 1:00 - 1:30 pm First Timers Meeting | Salon B
 1:30 - 1:45 pm ✦ Break | Mezzanine Lobby
 1:45 - 3:00 pm Conference Kickoff and NAADA Town Hall | Summit 1
 3:00 - 3:15 pm ✦ Break | Mezzanine Lobby
 3:15 - 4:15 pm Track Networking Sessions

Salon A Alumni
 Salon C Communications
 Summit 2 Development
 Salon B Student Professionals
 Board Room 1 Volunteers

4:15 - 5:15 pm ✦ Break | Mezzanine Lobby
 5:45 - 6:30 pm Opening Reception Cocktail Hour | Summit 1
 6:30 - 8:00 pm Opening Dinner and P&P Awards (Print Media and Mixed Media) | Summit 1

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

7:00 am - 5:00 pm Registration | Mezzanine Lobby
 8:00 - 9:00 am Breakfast | Bickford Lecture | P&P Awards (Events and Campaigns) | Summit 1
 9:00 - 9:15 am ✦ Break | Mezzanine Lobby
 9:15 - 10:15 am **Education Track Session 1** | *See Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios (pg 8-19) for more details*

Summit 2 Session 1.1 | Planned Giving & Why You Should Use It – A Panel Discussion
 Salon A Session 1.2 | Please Promote: Why That's Not Enough and What to Say Instead
 Salon B Session 1.3 | Does One Size Truly Fit All? Career Fair Models in Colleges of Agriculture
 Salon C Session 1.4 | From Fields to Facilities: Fundraising for a 261-Acre Living Laboratory

10:15 - 10:30 am ✦ Break | Mezzanine Lobby
 10:30 - 11:30 am **Education Track Session 2** | *See Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios (pg 8-19) for more details*

Summit 2 Session 2.1 | CCC: A Celebration of Cross-College Collaboration
 Salon A Session 2.2 | Creating a Pipeline Workflow That Works For You
 Salon B Session 2.3 | Successful P&P Project: Learning How to Stand Out
 Salon C Session 2.4 | UT's Big Orange Path: Not If, But When You'll Come to the University of Tennessee

11:45 am - 1:00 pm The Big Reveal LUNCH: 2027 NAADA Annual Conference | Summit 1
 1:45 - 4:45 pm **Educational Tours**

- ✦ Zoo Knoxville
- ✦ FIFA World Cup 2026 Research Center & Neyland Stadium Tour
- ✦ UT Little River Dairy Tour & UT Creamery Visit
- ✦ UT Hopyard Research & Yee-Haw Brewing
- ✦ Outdoor Recreation & Tennessee RiverLine Tour

5:00 - 8:30 pm NAADA Annual Spirit Night | *at Neyland Stadium, Tennessee Terrace*
 5:00 pm Transportation to Spirit Night will leave from the Crowne Plaza beginning at 5:00 pm



2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

BICKFORD LECTURE | COLLEEN CRUZE | Wednesday, June 17, 8:00-9:00 am | Summit 1



Bickford Lecture Speaker, Colleen Cruze | Cruze Farm

Colleen is the driving force behind Cruze Farm in Knoxville, TN. She grew up on her family's 5th generation dairy farm in east Knox County and learned all about milking cows and bottling milk from her parents, Earl and Cheri. After graduating from UT with a Bachelor's in Agricultural Science in 2011, she applied her college education to her family's business, expanding their farm bottling operation into a larger scale milk distribution service and adding a pizza shop and four brick and mortar ice cream shops and dairies. Cruze Farm now distributes fresh pasteurized milk to Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, and the Tri-Cities, makes premium soft serve, which it sells from its storefronts. Colleen and her husband, Manjit, are raising their four children on the family dairy farm in hopes that they will carry on the family business another generation.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

7:30 am - 7:00 pm	Registration Mezzanine Lobby
8:00 - 9:30 am	NAADA Annual Business Breakfast Meeting
9:30 - 10:30 am	Education Track Session 3 <i>See Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios (pg 8-19) for more details</i>
Summit 2 Salon B	Session 3.1 Fundraising Fridays
	Session 3.2 Your Job Is To Make Connections & Network Whether You Like It Or Not! Stop Ignoring Your Potential!
Salon C	Session 3.3 It's An "Awarding" Process: Designing an Intentional Awards Program
10:30 - 10:45 am	✦ Break Mezzanine Lobby
10:45 - 11:45 am	Education Track Session 4 <i>See Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios (pg 8-19) for more details</i>
Summit 2 Salon A	Session 4.1 Leveraging AI to Streamline Advancement: Practical Tools for Every Track
Salon B	Session 4.2 Incentivizing Leadership: Cultivating Student Leaders Through Collaboration
Salon C	Session 4.3 Cause-Based Philanthropy: Social Media and Special Initiatives
	Session 4.4 Ethical Decision-Making Tools for our Changing World!
12:00 - 1:30 pm	Table Topic Discussion Lunch Summit 1
1:30 - 1:45 pm	✦ Break Mezzanine Lobby
1:45 - 2:45 pm	Education Track Session 5 <i>See Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios (pg 8-19) for more details</i>
Summit 2 Salon A	Session 5.1 Remove Headache from the Work You Hate: Using Automation for Simple Tasks
	Session 5.2 Reinvigorating the Alumni & Friends Board: Tools and Tactics for Building Stronger Engagement
Salon B	Session 5.3 Recruitment as Storytelling - How to Gain More Students through Meaningful Engagement
Salon C	Session 5.4 Building Power Partnerships for Philanthropic Success
2:45 - 3:00 pm	✦ Break Mezzanine Lobby
3:00 - 4:30 pm	Beg, Borrow & Steal Session
Summit 2 Salon A	Alumni
Salon B	Communications
Salon C	Development
The Tech Room	Student Professionals
	Volunteers
4:30 - 5:30 pm	✦ Break
5:30 - 6:30 pm	Awards Reception Summit 1
6:30 - 9:00 pm	Individual Awards Dinner & Program Summit 2

CONFERENCE TIPS

Welcome to the 2026 NAADA Conference

hosted by **University of Tennessee-Knoxville**

With over 170 colleagues to network with more than 44 institutions and organizations, now is the time to immerse yourself into the networking and learning opportunities.

We are looking forward to a wonderful conference and as the old saying goes, *'The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it.'*

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE MEMORABLE

TRACK INVOLVEMENT

During the conference get to know the attendees in your tracks. NAADA's membership includes professional tracks for:

- Alumni Relations
- Communications
- Development
- Student Professionals
- Volunteers

EDUCATION SESSIONS

The Education Committee has worked diligently to select sessions that cross-tracks to encourage the advancement community to work together and build partnerships across our institutions. *If a topic interests you, we encourage you to attend!*

Don't forget to provide feedback on each of the sessions with the new electronic evaluation system we will be implementing for the Annual Conference. (QR Codes will be available on-site at each for you to complete right after the session concludes).

Your ideas matter to us for future programming with NAADA.

NAADA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Learn what your association is about and how you can become more involved with NAADA. There are many opportunities to engage with NAADA throughout the year on committees, track listservs, Virtual Learning Sessions and much more! Board officers will be elected at this meeting as well as proposed changes to the NAADA Bylaws will be discussed and voted on, and the 2025-2026 Annual and Stewardship Reports will be presented as well.

WE NEED YOUR INPUT

Volunteer to serve on a committee today.

NAADA Committees include: Awards, Education, Outreach Education, Publications & Projects, Marketing & Communications, Membership, and Sponsorship. A call for volunteers will follow after the conference.

PUBLICATIONS & PROJECTS COMPETITION

Join us throughout the conference in celebrating the 2026 NAADA Projects & Publications Finalists. Announcements of the finalists and winners will be made throughout the conference during mealtimes. This is a great time to see examples of unique websites, exciting printed brochures, intriguing newsletters, and high caliber work from our NAADA members.

FIND YOUR FRIENDS



Find Your Friends

NAADA is all about networking!
We encourage you to stay in touch with your new colleagues.

- ◀ **SCAN NOW** for a private listing of 2026 Annual Conference Attendees and their contact information.

CONFERENCE TOURS

PRE-CONFERENCE TOUR

Monday, June 15 | 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Bush's Beans and Dollywood

See where the Beautiful Bean Company was born! The Bush's Visitor Center nestled in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains in Chestnut Hill, Tennessee, is where you can learn all about the history of the Bush's Bean Company, beans, and the growth of a family-owned food company over 110 years in a museum with incredibly tasteful exhibits.

Calling all Dolly lovers! The next stop will take us to Dollywood, the #1 theme park in the United States. Come for the rides, stay for the education and craftsmanship on display, plus learn about Dolly's life growing up in the "foothills of the Smokies."

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE TOURS

Please refer to your name badge to see what tour you selected at registration.

Wednesday, June 18 | 1:45 PM - 4:45 PM

Zoo Knoxville

Step away from the conference rooms and into the wild with a group outing to Zoo Knoxville! Mingle with fellow attendees as you explore world-class exhibits and enjoy a lighthearted afternoon of discovery.

FIFA World Cup 2026 Research Center and Neyland Stadium Tour

Join us for an in-depth, behind-the-scenes discussion and tour of the multi-billion-dollar FIFA research partnership at the University of Tennessee! You will have the opportunity to see our facilities, hear from our experts, and visit a world class research facility. From our FIFA research site, we will be touring UT's own Neyland Stadium, home of the Tennessee Volunteers football team. One of the largest capacity stadiums in the country, you will have behind the scenes access to locker rooms, press rooms, and more!!

UT Little River Dairy Tour and UT Creamery Visit

Go behind the scenes to see how Food Science Department at UT creates the delicious UT Creamery ice cream. You'll get to tour the production facility to learn how students transform milk into ice cream then you'll get to tour the sensory lab where the science behind taste and flavor come alive.

UT Hopyard Research and Yee-Haw Brewing

Enjoy a laid back and fun-filled afternoon as you dive into the craft of beer making from start to finish! You'll first visit the UT Hopyards at the East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center (ETREC) and discover how hops are grown here in East Tennessee, while also getting hands-on experience.

After, we'll travel to Yee-haw Brewing company, where those very hops are made into delicious craft beer! You'll then get a behind the scenes tour of Yee-Haw and taste some of their signature beers. This is a great tour for anyone interested in seeing UT's connection with local businesses, and for anyone that is a brewing enthusiast!

Outdoor Recreation and Tennessee RiverLine Tour

Experience Knoxville's great outdoors through a tree climbing exposition led by the School of Natural Resource's Outdoor Recreation and Park Management team. Then, join the Tennessee RiverLine for a kayaking trip where you will paddle the urban waterfront of Downtown Knoxville.

**Please note:* Closed toed shoes and outdoor activity comfortable clothing are required for the tree climbing and paddling. Time will also be allotted to allow for clothing change to arrive at Spirit Night promptly.



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

SESSION 1 | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 | 9:15-10:15 AM

Session 1.1 | Planned Giving & Why You Should Use It – A Panel Discussion | Summit 2

Presenter(s): Austin O'Neill, Montana State University Alumni Foundation; Kevin Brown, Montana State University Alumni Foundation; Kim Hill, The Foundation for Western Washington University & Alumni; Kelly Delp, Purdue for Life Foundation

Planned giving is one of the most powerful and often underutilized tools available to development professionals. In this session, the panel will explore how planned giving not only increases gift outcomes but also deepens long term donor relationships through thoughtful collaboration, intentional stewardship, and donor centered approaches that make conversations both natural and effective. The discussion will also highlight real world examples of planned giving efforts that led to meaningful, closed gifts, as well as how planned gifts can provide sustainable unrestricted and restricted funding—particularly valuable in uncertain times.

Your donor base is already full of individuals with planned giving potential. With the right framework, systems, and partnerships, these discussions can emerge naturally, strengthen engagement, and create lasting impact. This session will equip you with a deeper understanding of why planned giving matters, how to integrate it into your work, and how to collaborate effectively, no matter your role, to advance your institution's mission.

Join us for a Panel discussion and Q&A to explore:

- Proven strategies for integrating planned giving into individual and team-based development efforts that feel natural and effective
- How collaboration and stewardship strengthen donor relationships, resulting in larger commitments and increased giving over time
- Practical, donor-centered approaches that make planned gift conversations easier, more successful, and more likely to be realized and documented
- Real-world examples of intentional planned giving efforts that have led to meaningful, closed gifts and long-term impact
- How planned giving can secure unrestricted and restricted, sustainable funding for universities—particularly in uncertain times—benefiting both current and future administrations

Austin O'Neill serves as Senior Director of Development at the Montana State University Alumni Foundation, where he focuses on connecting donors with opportunities that create lasting impact. With six years of experience in higher education development and a background in sales and marketing for an ag-tech startup, Austin brings a strategic approach to donor engagement and organizational growth. He currently serves on the NAADA Board as Awards Chair and previously chaired the Sponsorship committee. Austin has facilitated leadership programs for Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity and was a featured presenter for the national webinar Beginner's Guide to Using AI in Planned and Major Giving. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his fiancé Carol, and their two dogs on the family ranch in Southwestern Oregon.

Kevin Brown is the Associate Vice President of Estate, Trust and Gift Planning for the Montana State University Alumni Foundation. He's been with the MSU Alumni Foundation since 2012 and previously served as unit lead for the College of Agriculture and College of Engineering. Kevin brings over 30 years of non-profit experience to MSU, including more than 25 years of fundraising experience.

Science Driving A Sustainable Future



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EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Kevin's experience includes event, major and planned gift fundraising. Kevin has extensive experience with real estate transactions, trusts, annuities, grant administration, major gift fundraising campaigns, and personnel and non-profit management. Kevin is a Certified Specialist in Planned Giving. He enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing and most everything outdoors. Kevin and his wife Ami have two boys, Declan and Garrett.

Kim Hill is in her fifth year as Vice President for University Advancement and President & CEO of The Foundation for Western Washington University & Alumni in Bellingham, Washington, serving a university community of nearly 15,000 students and 150,000 alumni. She leads a team of approximately 60 staff across advancement, communications and marketing, career services, and the Small Business Development Center. During her tenure, annual fundraising has increased by 50%, the university is engaged in two nine-figure donor conversations, and WWU's Give Day consistently raises more than \$1 million annually from over 3,000 donors. In 2023, Kim led the successful merger of the WWU Alumni Association and the Western Foundation, creating a unified board overseeing a \$163 million endowment. Prior to Western, she held advancement leadership roles at the University of Idaho and Texas Tech University, following an earlier career as an agriculture teacher. Kim earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from Washington State University and is a former member of the NAADA, where she received the Ray Miller Professional Achievement Award in 2016.

Kelly Delp is the Senior Director of Development for the College of Agriculture at the Purdue for Life Foundation, where she leads the College of Agriculture development team. She previously served Purdue Agriculture as a Senior Development Officer, Development Officer, and Stewardship Coordinator, building and strengthening meaningful donor relationships that advance the college's mission and long-term impact. Kelly holds a B.S. in Agricultural Communication from Purdue University and a graduate degree in Public Relations from Indiana University. Outside of work, she enjoys golfing, reading, and traveling with her twin sister, Kristy, and is passionate about lifelong learning and community engagement.

Session 1.2 | Please Promote: Why That's Not Enough and What to Say Instead | Salon A

*Presenter(s): Jarred Shellhouse, University of Florida, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences;
Malissa Redden, University of Florida, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences*

"Please promote" is one of the most common, and least helpful, communications requests. This session explores how non-communicators can translate their requests for their communications team to lead to marketing and communications products everyone can love. Participants will leave with practical tools and templates to reduce stress and headaches, back-and-forth emails, and miscommunications, and instead lead to fruitful collaborations to support institutional goals.

Jarred Shellhouse is the Assistant Director of Communications for the University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. In his role, he leads the communication efforts for the academic arm of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. A self-proclaimed "data wonk," Jarred also tries to evaluate processes and procedures and implement systems that improve the workflow for his team. Outside of work, you can find him searching for tickets to the next Broadway show, sniffing out a good espresso, or hiding from people with his dog on his lap and nose in a book.

Malissa Redden has been working at the University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Dean's Office for the past 17 years, and she has served as the event planner for the past three. In her roles, she has observed multiple layers of the student experience, like how administrative support, events, logistics, relationship-building, and the power of Google are all imperative in advancing the land-grant mission of our universities. Malissa can also be found cheering on her Dallas Cowboys, rooting through her glovebox for plasticware, or finding the answers to your questions in one of her several lists carefully organized in her Rolodex.

Session 1.3 | Does One Size Truly Fit All? Career Fair Models in Colleges of Agriculture | Salon B

Presenter(s): Timmy Carter, Herbert College of Agriculture, University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Does one size fit all when it comes to career fairs in colleges with diverse majors? Career fairs at the Herbert College of Agriculture operate differently than traditional campus-wide events. This session explores decentralized, centralized, and hybrid career fair models within a college of agriculture context, highlighting how each approach affects student success, employer engagement, and department collaboration.



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Timmy Carter serves in employer engagement and career development for the Herbert College of Agriculture at the University of Tennessee, where he focuses on connecting agriculture students with meaningful internship and full-time opportunities. He builds strategic employer partnerships, supports experiential learning initiatives, and collaborates with campus partners to enhance career programming and student access to industry opportunities.

Session 1.4 | From Fields to Facilities: Fundraising for a 261-Acre Living Laboratory | Salon C

Presenter(s): Emily Kruse, The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; Hannah Snively, The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Join us for a behind-the-scenes look at the fundraising and engagement journey for Waterman Agricultural and Natural Resources Laboratory, a 261-acre living laboratory in the heart of urban Columbus, Ohio. From early planning through ribbon cutting, we'll highlight how intentional, inclusive donor and supporter engagement shaped the project at every stage—and how these strategies can be applied to complex, place-based initiatives.

Emily Kruse serves as the Chief Advancement Officer for the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University. Emily joined CFAES in June 2014 as Director of Development. Prior to her time at Ohio State, she held advancement positions at Arizona State University, Ohio Wesleyan University, and Ohio University – where she discovered her passion for higher education fundraising and alumni engagement. Emily graduated from Ohio University's Scripps College of Communication and has personal ties to 4-H as a former member. Her career reflects both a professional commitment to building meaningful philanthropic partnerships and a personal dedication to supporting the next generation of leaders.

Hannah Snively, as part of the CFAES Advancement team, Hannah leads annual giving strategies for the college, including philanthropic support for Ohio 4-H. She joined CFAES in 2022 after serving in advancement roles at the University of Pittsburgh, West Virginia University, and the Oregon State University Foundation.

SESSION 2 | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 | 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Session 2.1 | CCC: A Celebration of Cross-College Collaboration | Summit 2

Presenter(s): Eric Billings, Deep Springs College; Danica Kirkpatrick, Purdue University Agricultural Alumni Association; Chrissy Shelton, University of Idaho; Melinda Jean Stafford, University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences; Anna Worch, Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Successful alumni engagement and fundraising rarely happen in isolation. This session explores how cross-college and cross-campus collaboration can create stronger programs, more meaningful alumni connections, and new opportunities for philanthropic support. Through real-world examples, presenters will share how teams from different colleges and campus units partnered to co-create events, share donor and alumni networks, and leverage complementary strengths. Participants will learn practical strategies for identifying collaboration opportunities, aligning priorities, and building the trust needed to make partnerships successful. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas to expand their reach, enhance programming, and create more impactful alumni and donor engagement—together.

Eric Billings serves as the Vice President of Development at Deep Springs College, near Bishop, CA. He joined NAADA in 2015 and has served as Membership Chair, Treasurer, and most recently, Director-At-Large. Throughout his 17-year career in higher education advancement and community fundraising, Eric has focused on building sustainable partnerships and expanding donor engagement. He credits his eleven years with NAADA for providing vital professional development, lifelong colleagues, and invaluable strategic insights that continue to shape his work.

Danica Kirkpatrick serves as the executive director of the Purdue Ag Alumni Association and is the current vice president of NAADA. She has 26 years of event and volunteer management experience, including 22 with Purdue Agriculture. She enjoys reading, traveling, and supporting her three kids' interests with her husband Josh.

Chrissy Shelton is the Senior Director of Development for the College of Business and Economics and a Division Lead at the University of Idaho, bringing 18 years of Northwest advancement experience to her strategic fundraising and leadership roles.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Throughout her career, which includes advancing major gifts and campaign priorities for Boise State University's College of Engineering and multiple colleges at Washington State University, she has consistently expanded philanthropic pipelines, enhanced alumni partnerships, and secured transformational gifts. Additionally, she actively fosters regional professional development and collaboration by serving as the Chair-Elect for CASE District 8.

Melinda Jean Stafford currently serves as the Interim Senior Director for Development at the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, her alma mater and home college. She has worked in higher education for 15 years, having previously served in student activities. In her free time, Melinda enjoys alpine skiing with her family, beekeeping, and cheering on the Vandals!

Anna Worch joined the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech in August 2024, where she manages stewardship, high-touch engagement opportunities, and recognition events. With a background in fundraising, volunteer engagement, and nonprofit leadership, she is passionate about building meaningful connections that strengthen the VTCALS community. In her free time, Anna enjoys volunteering for causes close to her and spending time with family.

Session 2.2 | Creating a Pipeline Workflow That Works For You | Salon A

Presenter(s): Laura Zimbrick, University of Tennessee Foundation, Inc.

Feel like your CRM capabilities are lacking? Constantly on the hunt for a system that will help you keep track of your pipeline? This session is for you! Laura will share her own homemade and ready-made platforms that keep her 75+ concurrent gift conversations straight and ask the audience to share what works for them. Come ready to share your own tips and tricks (or woes and shortfalls) and take away ideas for a more structured system that works for you.

Laura Zimbrick has been with the University of Tennessee for four years, first starting as the Assistant Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving for the UT College of Veterinary Medicine in 2022, where she now serves as the Senior Director of Development. She comes from the hospitality world, with over 20 years of experience in food and beverage, live events, and premium services. Though she has had some seriously fun jobs at Jack Daniels, the Fox Theatre Atlanta, and a myriad of other roles along the way, she has found a true fit with her current role. Laura lives in Knoxville with her husband, cat, Grace Knucklehead, and dog Molly. She is the 2023 recipient of the NAADA Torchbearer Award.

Session 2.3 | Successful P&P Project: Learning How to Stand Out | Salon B

Presenter(s): Caitlin Conrad, The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Learn about the projects and publications that were selected to be finalists for 2026. We'll discuss projects from start to finish, what worked well, what hiccups occurred, and share any details that can be helpful to our colleagues.

Caitlin Conrad is a Career Development Coordinator in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. She has held this position for 6 years and in those 6 years she focused on anything under the Career umbrella. From career exploration all the way to salary negotiation. Prior to her current role she worked at Ohio State in the College of Arts and Sciences as a Career Coach for 15 years. Her educational background started at Ohio State. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in agriculture, majoring in Community Leadership and minoring in communications. She also acquired a master's degree in counselor education from Ohio University, which ultimately brought her back to her alma mater where she has the privilege to guide CFAES students through their career journeys.



**Alumni
Association**



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Session 2.4 | UT's Big Orange Path: Not If, But When You'll Come to the University of Tennessee | Salon C

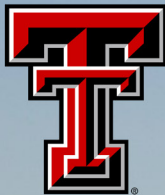
Presenter(s): John Stier, PhD, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Herbert College of Agriculture;
Cassie Johnson, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Herbert College of Agriculture

The creation of a Guaranteed Admissions program for select students and explosive application growth to over 60,000 applications for less than 7,000 freshman seats resulted in hundreds of well-qualified students not getting accepted into the Herbert College of Agriculture. Confusion and angst resulted in our traditional stakeholders raising questions about the land grant mission of educational access. Learn how the Herbert College of Agriculture developed a program to provide a clear path to a four-year degree through students' local community colleges, earning the students an Associate's degree along the way. Tactics include advising, recruiting, MOUs, and financial support to ensure the idea of "It's not if, but when, you'll go to UT!"

John Stier, PhD is currently the Associate Dean, Academic Affairs & Professor, Plant Sciences at University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Herbert College of Agriculture. Prior to his appointment at UT, he was a Department Chair and Professor, Horticulture at University of Wisconsin-Madison. His areas of specialty include Research and Extension on sports turf, water and carbon dynamics, weed management, and invasive species. He also has participated in "Teach How to Feed the World." Dr. Steir is a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy, a Fellow of the Crop Science Society of America, and Fred V. Grau Turfgrass Professor for greatest national impact.

Cassie Johnson is currently the Director of Enrollment Services for the Herbert College of Agriculture, leading recruitment efforts and coordinating scholarship disbursements. She also served as an Admissions Counselor for Univ TN undergraduate admissions (2018-2020), and Admissions counselor for TN Tech University (2016-2018). Cassie is currently serving as Co-Chair of the 2026 NAADA Annual Conference. She also served as President of TN Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) from 2021-24.

GLOBAL SORGHUM CONFERENCE 2026



DAVIS COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
& NATURAL RESOURCES

RESEARCH
& INNOVATION

TEXAS TECH



LUBBOCK, TEXAS
SEPTEMBER 14-18



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EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

SESSION 3 | THURSDAY, JUNE 18 | 9:30-10:30 AM

Session 3.1 | Fundraising Fridays | Summit 2

Presenter(s): Kelly Delp, Purdue for Life Foundation

Fundraising Friday is an interactive learning series implemented in 2025 at Purdue University. Come learn how Purdue Agriculture successfully on-boarded and supported two new Development Officers through intentional, practical training. Held biweekly on Fridays via Microsoft Teams, these one-hour sessions offered an inside look at the strategies, tools, and conversations that helped new team members quickly build confidence and momentum in their roles. This Fundraising Friday session invites attendees to learn from real onboarding experiences, gain immediately applicable insights, and explore a scalable model for supporting new Development Officers across advancement teams.

Kelly Delp is the Senior Director of Development for the College of Agriculture at the Purdue for Life Foundation, where she leads the College of Agriculture development team. She previously served Purdue Agriculture as a Senior Development Officer, Development Officer, and Stewardship Coordinator, building and strengthening meaningful donor relationships that advance the college's mission and long-term impact. Kelly holds a B.S. in Agricultural Communication from Purdue University and a graduate degree in Public Relations from Indiana University. Outside of work, she enjoys golfing, reading, and traveling with her twin sister, Kristy, and is passionate about lifelong learning and community engagement.

Session 3.2 | Your Job Is To Make Connections & Network Whether You Like It Or Not! Stop Ignoring Your Potential! | Salon B

Presenter(s): Adam Cahill The Ohio State University, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

NAADA is known for producing professionals who connect and network. Tennessee is known for producing whiskey. Why not put these two great things together. Time to make some "NAADA Professional's Tennessee Whiskey"!

So, grab your ingredients, mix everything together, put it in a barrel, age it a bit, and toast to enhancing our connecting and networking skills. No matter what job you have, you have to make connections and network. What connection and networking tool is almost never part of your job description though? It's Free...It's Robust...It's Making a Comeback...It's LinkedIn!!

Join this interactive working session (with a Tennessee Whiskey twist) to explore and share all you have to offer as a professional through your LinkedIn presence. We will explore methods and ways to create, build, keep, and grow your connections and networking through LinkedIn. You won't want to miss this great opportunity to learn about yourself and ways to connect and network online by making some "NAADA Professional's Tennessee Whiskey" together. (Disclaimer...no actual Whiskey will be produced or consumed during this session...sorry.) Make sure to bring your laptop or iPad.

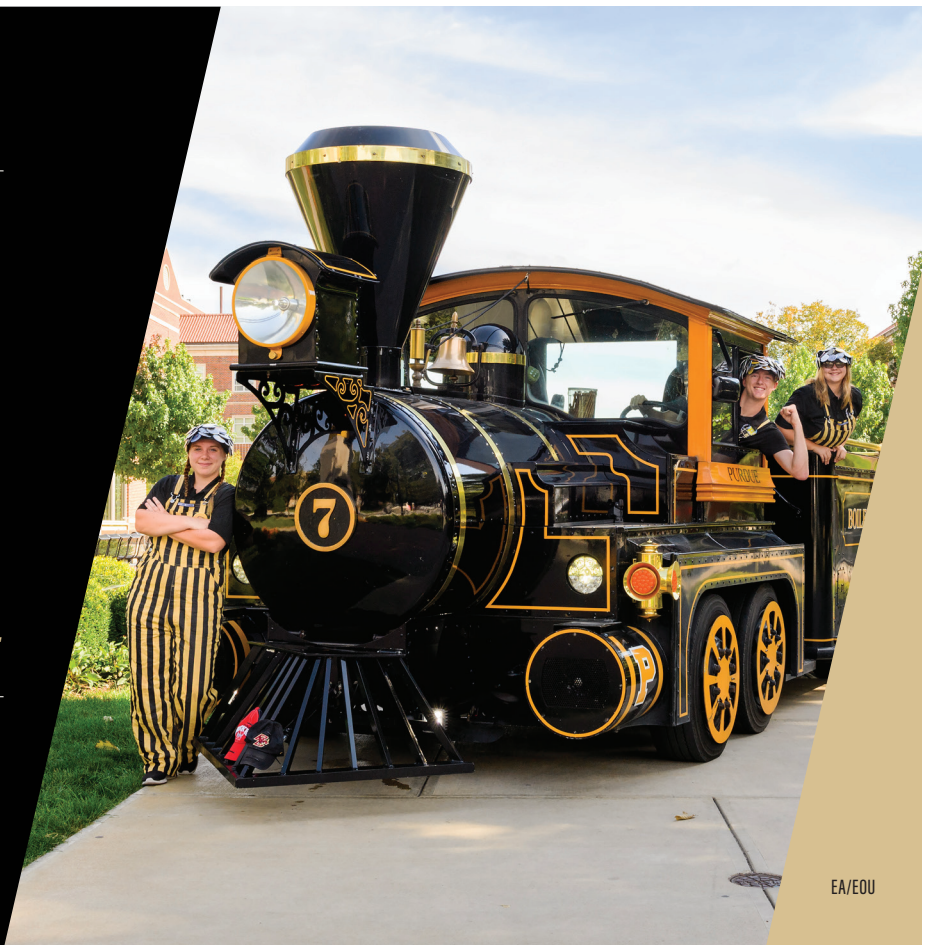
Adam Cahill has served for the past 18 years as the Director of Career Development for the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University. In this role, Adam is responsible for managing all career development activities for students as well as assisting employers with recruiting needs. This includes co-developing career plans with students, campus recruitment plans for employers, collecting and synthesizing career outcome data for recruitment and donor relations, hosting career fairs, and much more. He works with a variety of stakeholder groups connected to the entire career progression process from students and employers to donors and government officials. Adam is a two-time graduate from The Ohio State University with a MA in Educational Studies, specializing in Higher Education Student Affairs and a BS in Agriculture where he studied agricultural communication. His NAADA involvement includes serving as the current secretary, Education Chair from 2017-19 and 2025, Communication Track Chair from 2016-18, 2017 Ohio State conference planning committee, and Publication and Projects committee member/judge for the last 15 years.



PROUD TO SUPPORT OUR

NAADA NETWORK

Looking forward to 50 more years of connections.



MISSION AREAS



TEACHING

Preparing future leaders through hands-on learning



RESEARCH

Driving innovation that solves real-world challenges



EXTENSION

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2,513
undergraduate
students



3
campuses
across Ohio



Statewide
impact through
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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Session 3.3 | It's An Awarding Process: Designing an Intentional Awards Program | Salon C

Presenter(s): Jonathon Thomas, Louisiana State University, College of Agriculture;
Aimée Lemann, Louisiana State University, College of Agriculture

Awards do more than honor excellence, they serve as meaningful tools for stewardship, storytelling, and relationship building. This session explores how one institution reimaged its awards program through intentional design and cross-unit collaboration. Attendees will gain insights into planning an awards process that fosters engagement across alumni, development, student success, and academic units, while participating in a candid dialogue about lessons learned and opportunities for growth.

Jonathan Thomas is the Student Services Coordinator for the LSU College of Agriculture Dean's Office. He leads academic support initiatives that advance student retention and success, including support for academic advising, courses & curricula coordination, undergraduate research grant programming, and college-wide academic processes. He also supports strategic communications for the college and plans events that enhance engagement among students, faculty, and staff.

Aimée Lemann is Director of Alumni & Donor Relations and Event Manager for the LSU AgCenter. She oversees alumni engagement, donor relations, and signature events that strengthen connections between graduates and the LSU College of Agriculture and LSU AgCenter. Aimee brings extensive experience in development and outreach, with a background in event management and programming at LSU.

SESSION 4 | THURSDAY, JUNE 18 | 10:45-11:45 AM

Session 4.1 | Leveraging AI to Streamline Advancement: Practical Tools for Every Track | Summit 2

Presenter(s): Austin O'Neill, Montana State University Alumni Foundation

Advancement professionals are balancing increasing responsibilities with limited resources. Artificial Intelligence offers practical, easy-to-use solutions to help you work smarter. This session will show how AI can support all advancement tracks—Alumni, Communications, Development, Student Professionals, and Volunteer—by simplifying tasks such as annual planning, trip coordination, direct report management and constituent engagement. Learn how to use AI to turn days of menial tasks to hours, create contact reports without typing, prepare and practice for constituent (donor, student, volunteer, etc.) interactions and so much more. You'll leave with actionable strategies to integrate AI into your daily workflow and improve efficiency.

Session Takeaways

- Understand how AI can streamline common advancement tasks (across multiple tracks).
- Learn practical techniques for using AI to improve communications and refresh outdated content.
- Explore AI applications for annual planning, trip coordination, and constituent engagement.
- Leave with ready-to-use AI prompts to help you start using AI today!

*Austin O'Neill serves as Senior Director of Development at the Montana State University Alumni Foundation, where he focuses on connecting donors with opportunities that create lasting impact. With six years of experience in higher education development and a background in sales and marketing for an ag-tech startup, Austin brings a strategic approach to donor engagement and organizational growth. He currently serves on the NAADA Board as Awards Chair and previously chaired the Sponsorship committee. Austin has facilitated leadership programs for Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity and was a featured presenter for the national webinar *Beginner's Guide to Using AI in Planned and Major Giving*. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his fiancé Carol, and their two dogs on the family ranch in Southwestern Oregon.*



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Session 4.2 | Incentivizing Leadership: Cultivating Student Leaders Through Collaboration | Salon A

Presenter(s): Cory Bailey, PhD, MS, BA, AA, Mississippi State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Henry Hebert, MS, LSU College of Agriculture; Cassie Johnson, University of Tennessee, Herbert College of Agriculture

Corporate philanthropy is an ever-changing sector in development that requires a specific and modern approach. The UTIA Office of Advancement recently restructured and created a corporate specific role to better serve our industry partners and maximize our efficiency in that space. While the position is new, we've already found success in large part due to collaboration with colleagues across campus and the system. Join Kyle Hensley, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations for UTIA and Stephanie Eastman Vozar, Director of Corporate Philanthropy for the UT Knoxville campus, for a discussion on our approach to corporate relations. We'll talk specifics about our roles, how our positions fit within a major giving team, address challenges related to cross campus collaboration working with colleges, units, departments, and faculty, and how we've been able to maximize our impact by collaborating together and system wide.

Cory Bailey, PhD, MS, BA, AA is a native of Calhoun City, Mississippi, has called Starkville home for the past sixteen years. He holds an Associate of Arts degree from Itawamba Community College, a Bachelor of Arts in Communication, a Master of Science in Counselor Education, and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, all from Mississippi State University. Cory serves as Director of Enrollment, Retention, and Outreach in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at MSU. Cory serves on the Board of Directors for the Southern Association of College Admissions Counseling, where he is currently the Conference Chair, and is a member of the Mississippi Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the National Association of College Admissions Counseling, the National Agricultural Alumni Development Association, and the National Academic Advising Association. On the state level, he has contributed to numerous committees and task forces, furthering opportunities for students across the region. Cory dedicates his career to guiding students as they transition from high school to college to pursue their goals.

Henry Hebert serves as Director of Recruitment and Outreach for the LSU College of Agriculture, where he combines his passion for agriculture and higher education. Raised in a family with deep roots in Louisiana agriculture and strong LSU traditions, Henry developed an early interest in the industry through beef cattle production, livestock exhibitions, and involvement in 4-H and FFA. Prior to joining LSU, he worked throughout the South in admissions and student recruitment. Today, he is dedicated to connecting prospective students with opportunities in agriculture while advancing the mission of the LSU College of Agriculture.

Cassie Johnson is currently the Director of Enrollment Services for the Herbert College of Agriculture, leading recruitment efforts and coordinating scholarship disbursements. She also served as an Admissions Counselor for Univ TN undergraduate admissions (2018-2020), and Admissions counselor for TN Tech University (2016-2018). Cassie is currently serving as Co-Chair of the 2026 NAADA Annual Conference. She also served as President of TN Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) from 2021-24.

Session 4.3 | Cause-Based Philanthropy: Social Media and Special Initiatives | Salon B

Presenter(s): Echo Payne, University of Minnesota-CFANS
Adam Fischer, University of Minnesota-CFANS

The work that happens at institutions like ours is special because it touches everyone—meaning that research projects can find support from people well beyond a university's alumni base. Through focusing on cause-based fundraising with researchers, CFANS at the University of Minnesota has grown into one of the top colleges at the U of M in annual giving. Using two CFANS research projects as case studies—the Bee Lab and the Voyageurs Wolf Project—we'll look at how researchers can build a cause-based annual giving program that turns into major gift prospects, how to utilize social media to fundraise, and how to maintain donor interest and retention over time.

Echo Payne is the Annual Giving and Advancement Services Manager at the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) at the University of Minnesota. In this position, she plays a key role in college crowdfunding campaigns, the CFANS Dean's Circle, and other communications initiatives that help connect alumni and friends with opportunities to invest in student success and innovative research. Outside of work, Echo is an avid trivia go-er (with varying success), proud fantasy/sci-fi nerd, and multifaceted crafter—though knitting seems to be the most consistent.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Adam Fischer is the Chief Development Officer for the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources at the University of Minnesota. Adam has spent the past 19 years at the University of Minnesota in multiple roles, including Senior Director of Corporate Foundation Relations, Chief Development Officer for the School of Public Health and Executive Director of Corporate Foundation Relations for the Carlson School of Management. When he is not raising money on behalf of the U of MN, Adam can be found on a mountain bike, road bike, cross-country & downhill skis or on a trail run.

Session 4.4 | Ethical Decision-Making Tools for our Changing World! | Salon C

Presenter(s): Kirby Player, PhD, Clemson University, College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences

NAADA professionals are invited to step back, reflect, and reason together about the complex ethical challenges shaping our work today. In an era defined by rapid communication, social media visibility, personal branding, polarized viewpoints, and increasing pressure to perform and promote, professionals serving agriculture and natural resources are often confronted with ethical considerations that are nuanced, public-facing, and consequential. This session introduces the STAR Ethical Decision-Making Model, developed and promoted by Clemson University's Rutland Institute for Ethics, as a practical and values-centered framework for navigating these challenges with clarity, consistency, and integrity.

Grounded in real scenarios, participants will explore how the STAR Model—Stop, Test, Act, Reflect—can be applied to ethical tensions involving transparency, influence, equity, self-promotion, donor relationships, and public trust. Through guided discussion and reflection, attendees will be encouraged to examine decisions using multiple ethical lenses, consider stakeholder impact, and learn from outcomes. This session is designed not to prescribe answers, but to foster thoughtful dialogue and shared wisdom—affirming NAADA's commitment to ethical leadership, professional responsibility, and the enduring values that guide our work in agriculture and natural resources.

Kirby Player, PhD serves as Director of the Palmetto LEAF (Leadership for the Environment, Agriculture & Forestry) Initiative and as a Lecturer at Clemson University. A Clemson alumnus, Dr. Player holds a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education, a master's degree in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management with an emphasis in Human Resource Development, and a PhD in Therapeutic Recreation with research focused on obesity, recreation, and lifestyle change. His academic and professional work reflects a multidisciplinary approach to leadership development, workforce preparation, and human well-being within agriculture and natural resource systems. Dr. Player instructs the Global Challenges course for Clemson students, Ethics and Issues in Agriculture and the Food and Fiber System and has been selected as Clemson University's Alumni Master Teacher - a teaching award nominated and selected by the Clemson University student body.

In his administrative and leadership roles, Dr. Player directs Palmetto LEAF, a two-year leadership development program serving early- and mid-career professionals across agriculture, forestry, environmental, and natural resource sectors. He also serves as Co-Director of the South Carolina Extension Advancement Council, supporting advancement, engagement, and partnership efforts that strengthen Extension and land-grant impact. Through his teaching, scholarship, and service, Dr. Player has worked extensively at the intersection of agricultural leadership, alumni engagement, professional development, and institutional advancement—areas closely aligned with the mission and work of NAADA and land-grant universities nationwide.

SESSION 5 | THURSDAY, JUNE 18 | 1:45-2:45 PM

Session 5.1 | Remove Headache from the Work You Hate: Using Automation for Simple Tasks | Summit 2

Presenter(s): Jarred Shellhouse, University of Florida, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Tired of tedious, repetitive tasks that keep getting pushed to the bottom of your to-do list? You don't need to be an IT professional to use automation and reduce the work that slows you down. This session is designed for all tracks and introduces simple Power Automate workflows using tools you likely already have. We will build a flow together based on a form submission to keep the personalization of human interaction without the human error of lost tasks. Bring a laptop and a Microsoft 365 license if you want to participate, otherwise come and join the discussion!

Jarred Shellhouse is the assistant director of communications for the University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. In his role, he leads the communication efforts for the academic arm of the Institute of Food and



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Agricultural Sciences. A self-proclaimed 'data wonk,' Jarred also tries to evaluate processes and procedures and implement systems that improve the workflow for his team. Outside of work, you can find him searching for tickets to the next Broadway show, sniffing out a good espresso, or hiding from people with his dog on his lap and nose in a book.

Session 5.2 | Reinenergizing the Alumni & Friends Board: Tools and Tactics for Building Stronger Engagement | Salon A

Presenter(s): Amy Juliana, North Carolina State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Meeting fatigue, and declining participation? In this session, we will share our story of the NC State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni & Friends Board, a group of passionate individuals that, for many years, lacked a clear purpose and a sense of direction. Meetings often struggled to reach quorum, relied on one-way presentations, and offered limited opportunities for discussion. Additionally, turnover in the staff liaison role led to a lack of trust, communication, and continuity.

Over a two-year effort, the board has transformed by placing volunteers and their time and talents at the center of its goals. Through intentional volunteer management, updated governance documents, clearer outlined expectations, and a renewed focus on collaboration, the board culture shifted dramatically. These changes have led to increased committee work, stronger meeting attendance, an increase in event volunteer sign-ups, and higher board participation in our annual Day of Giving.

This session will highlight the tactics, lessons learned, and resources developed during this transformation, while providing opportunities for discussion on strategies to grow engagement and build high-impact advisory boards.

Amy Juliana is the Director of Alumni and Engagement for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University, where she cultivates relationships among students, alumni, and industry partners. She holds a Master of Natural Resources from NC State and a B.S. in Animal and Veterinary Sciences from Clemson University. She oversees programming that connects alumni and friends, inspires philanthropic support, showcases alumni achievements, and creates volunteer experiences across generations.

Session 5.3 | Recruitment as Storytelling: How to Gain More Students through Meaningful Engagement | Salon B

Presenter(s): Jeff Keason, Michigan State University, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Each year, students and their families undertake one of the most overwhelming experiences of their lives - deciding where to go to school and what to study. Nationally, competition to recruit students is increasing as the graduating class shrinks. How can land-grant schools and agriculture-based programs cut through the noise? In this session, you'll explore the process by which the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at MSU revamped its recruitment strategy through print, email and website redesign. We'll also explore how family members and supporters have been included and engaged through this process, preparing them to support their students in the years ahead. Participants will walk away with a toolkit to revisit their own recruitment process at their institution.

Jeff Keason is a seasoned higher educational professional that has worked at Michigan State University in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) since 2019. He currently serves as the Director of Recruitment within the CANR and has worked previously both as an academic success coach and within TRiO Student Support Services. As the Director for Recruitment in the CANR, he has led the efforts to expand enrollment in undergraduate recruitment and has successfully record breaking new student classes year after year. When not on campus helping potential students and their families explore their options, he enjoys spending time outdoors in the Great Lakes state with his family and friends.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Session 5.4 | Building Power Partnerships for Philanthropic Success | Salon C

Presenter(s): Gabrielle Peterson, Rutgers University, Laura Lawson, Rutgers University

Successful fundraising doesn't happen in silos, it thrives on strong, strategic partnerships with academic leadership. This session explores how development professionals can collaborate effectively with Deans and senior leaders to drive philanthropic success. Participants will hear practical, experience-based strategies for building trust, aligning priorities, and engaging Deans as authentic partners in donor relationships, leaving better equipped to strengthen leadership partnerships and achieve shared fundraising goals.

Gabrielle Peterson is the Senior Director of Development for Rutgers University's School of Biological and Environmental Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. She leads a six-member Office of Development and Alumni Engagement team and oversees all fundraising efforts, including major gifts, corporate and foundation relations, planned giving, and annual giving.

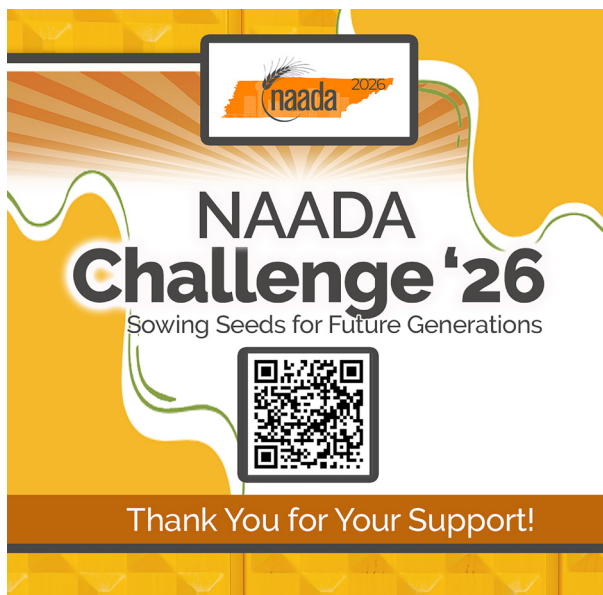
*Laura Lawson serves as Executive Dean of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and Executive Director of the New Jersey Experiment Station. She joined Rutgers in 2010 as chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture and has served as the Faculty Director of Rutgers Gardens, Dean of Agriculture and Urban Programs, and Dean of Academic Programs at SEBS. Dr. Lawson is an established author and is known for her scholarship on urban agriculture, community gardens, open space, and participatory design. She is author of *City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America* (2005) and co-author of *Greening Cities, Growing Communities: Urban Community Gardens in Seattle* (2009) and *Design as Democracy: Techniques for Collective Creativity* (2017). She has numerous publications in academic journals, edited books, and popular media.*

NAADA AWARDS

We are proud to offer a comprehensive awards and recognition program that celebrates both the individuals who serve their institutions and contribute to NAADA, as well as the outstanding work of our colleagues through our Publications and Projects (P&P) competition.

To learn more about award categories, nomination requirements and deadlines, please visit the awards section of NAADA.org

SUPPORTING NAADA | NAADA CHALLENGE '26



The graphic features a yellow background with a sunburst pattern at the top. A small NAADA 2025 logo is in the upper left. The main text reads "NAADA Challenge '26" in large, bold letters, with "Sowing Seeds for Future Generations" underneath. A QR code is positioned below the text. At the bottom, a dark orange banner says "Thank You for Your Support!".

NAADA CHALLENGE '26

Our Challenge '26 is to outgive the attendees of the NAADA 2025 Annual Conference, who raised \$3235.00 during the Celebrate 50 | Give \$50 campaign.

In the spirit of cultivating for the future of NAADA, please consider helping us to surpass last year's results!

◀ SCAN NOW to SUPPORT NAADA.

Thank you for your continued support!



2025 NAADA ANNUAL REPORT

As I reflect on this past year, I am incredibly proud of the momentum and collaboration across NAADA.

This year was marked by thoughtful planning by your board of directors, strong member engagement, and a shared commitment to strengthening our organization for the future. From a successful 50th annual conference at Purdue University to virtual learning and networking opportunities, strategic discussions about membership growth, conference accessibility, and professional development, our board remained focused on creating meaningful value for our members.

One of the highlights of the year was the continued growth of member-driven programming, listserv engagement and networking opportunities. NAADA members consistently demonstrated a willingness to share ideas, mentor peers, and collaborate across institutions — reinforcing what makes this organization so special. Our annual conference generated overwhelmingly positive feedback and produced a strong financial outcome that will help support future initiatives and investments.

This year also challenged us to think strategically about where NAADA is headed next. Together, we explored ways to expand virtual engagement, strengthen professional development offerings, refine our track structure, and increase opportunities for members to connect year-round. Those conversations reflected our commitment to ensuring NAADA remains relevant, responsive, and impactful for both current and future members.

I am especially grateful to our volunteer leaders, committee members, conference hosts, sponsors, and CAM partners for the countless hours invested in supporting this organization. Their leadership and dedication continue to move NAADA forward.

Thank you for your commitment to this community and to the important work happening across our institutions every day. I look forward to continuing this work together in the year ahead.



With gratitude,

Paula Beecher,
NAADA President 2024-26

2024-2025 SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH & STRATEGY

- Conducted extensive long-term planning discussions focused on the future of NAADA, member engagement, and evolving professional needs.
- Explored new membership structures and expanded virtual engagement opportunities to increase accessibility and participation.
- Refinement of board work plans, SOPs, and committee structures to improve organizational effectiveness.
- Developed new member outreach and institutional engagement strategies to strengthen participation across land-grant institutions.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

- Successfully transitioned organizational investments and reserve strategies to improve long-term financial stability and interest earnings.
- Improved financial oversight processes and transitioned to online QuickBooks for stronger reporting and transparency.
- Received 100% participation from NAADA past presidents at our 2025 "50 for 50" give day initiative.
- \$10,535 was raised during our 2025 "\$50 for 50" Give Day

CONFERENCES & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Hosted a highly successful 2025 Annual Conference at Purdue University with strong member feedback and engagement.
- Expanded discussion around future-focused conference programming, including specialized networking, stewardship, and professional development content.

- Planned upcoming conferences in Knoxville (2026) and location TBA (2027), creating exciting opportunities for continued growth and collaboration.
- Education Committee reviewed 28 session proposals and curated a robust educational program for members.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

- Grew social media audiences and increased focus on member communications and engagement strategies.
- Maintained strong newsletter engagement with nearly 40% average open rates.
- Continuing networking initiatives across professional tracks.

MEMBERSHIP & INCLUSION

- Maintained participation from 33 member institutions while launching renewed outreach efforts to previously inactive institutions. 100% of 2024 member institutions renewed their membership for 2025.
- Created new membership materials and automated onboarding processes to improve the new member experience.
- Expanded conversations around accessibility, volunteer engagement, and inclusive programming models that meet the needs of our member institutions in acknowledgement of the challenging budget climate we are all experiencing.

RECOGNITION

- Nine Individual Awards awarded at the 2025 Annual Conference
- Our Publications & Projects competition recognized 17 recipients in 2025.

2025 NAADA ANNUAL REPORT

INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
McSwain	35,994	38,067	39,511	40,468	42,080	46,190	40,034		48,988	54,651
Legacy	35,075	37,095	38,502	39,435	41,005	45,011	39,012		44,118	42,515
JLC	14,865	15,721	16,318	16,713	17,378	19,076	16,534		23,324	24,289
Total	85,934	90,883	94,331	96,616	100,465	110,277	95,580	108,894	116,430	121,456

FINANCIAL STATUS

Balance Sheet	2025	2024	2023
Assets			
Checking	\$80,417.00	\$70,109.34	\$25,711.67
Operating Reserve	\$14,000	\$40,000.00	\$28,732.46
Investments	\$121,456.00	\$116,430.00	\$101,733.79
Accounts Receivable	\$2,080	\$0	\$6,745.00
Prepaid Assets	\$1,391	\$0	\$0
Total Assets	\$219,345.00	\$226,539.34	\$162,922.92

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$39,972.00	\$91,734.87	\$27.72
Deferred Dues	-	\$8,800	\$26,485.00
Total Liabilities	\$39,972.00	\$91,734.87	\$26,512.72

Equity

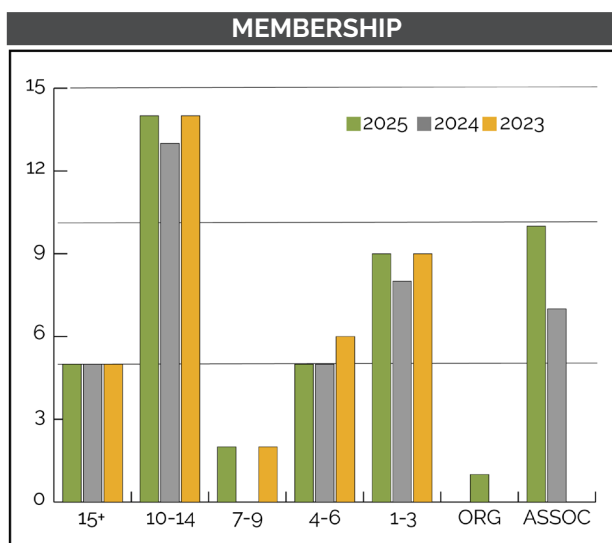
Retained Earnings	\$134,799.00	\$136,410.00	\$153,511.39
Net Income	\$46,833.00	(\$1,611.00)	(\$17,101.19)
Total Equity	\$181,632.00	\$134,799.00	\$136,410.20
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$221,604.00	\$235,334.00	\$162,922.92

Previous Year Profit/Loss	2025	2024	2023
Comparison			
Membership	\$42,231.00	\$50,013.00	\$45,325
Sponsorship	\$36,000	\$35,800	\$28,750
Annual Conference	\$103,225	\$84,964	\$99,005
Contributions	\$10,240	\$1,695	\$1,860
Interest Income	\$760	\$2,393	\$3,584
Other	\$320	\$11,208	\$2,505
Total Income	\$192,776.00	\$186,073.00	\$181,029.00

Management	\$64,800	\$73,381	\$64,333.00
Conference	\$40,701	\$116,755	\$102,124.00
Other	\$27,659	\$9,987	\$34,925
Total Expense	\$133,159	\$200,523	\$201,382.00

Investment (Gain/Loss)	(-12784)	\$12,838.00	(\$3,251.00)
Net Income	\$59,617	(\$14,450)	(\$17,102.00)

MEMBERSHIP	2025	2024	2023
15+	5	5	5
10 - 14	14	13	14
7 - 9	2	0	2
4 - 6	5	5	6
1 - 3	9	8	9
ORGANIZATIONAL	0	1	0
ASSOCIATE	10	7	0



2025 NAADA STEWARDSHIP REPORT

NAADA maintains three funds: the NAADA Legacy Fund, the Ruby C. McSwain Enhancement Endowment and the Jane Longley-Cook Awards Endowment. For a number of years NAADA program and education activities were supported through the operating fund in order to allow the three funds to recover following the recession in the late 2000's. With each of the funds now in strong financial position, the Board of Directors has overseen the use of these resources on appropriate activities in accordance with the use policies.

NAADA LEGACY FUND

The Legacy Fund was established to support the association's educational programs.

- Promote and sustain excellence in educational programming at NAADA's Annual Conference, especially the Bob Bickford Lecture Series
- Assist NAADA in achieving geographic and institutional diversity for future conference locations
- Provide resources for outreach programs

In June of 2004 Bob Bickford made a leadership gift of \$5,000 and later pledged an additional \$5,000 for a total of \$10,000. As an organization, since 2004 we have raised over \$20,000 to support this programming.

These funds have been continuously utilized to support keynote and speaker fees for the annual conference and educational events.

RUBY C. McSWAIN OUTSTANDING PHILANTHROPIST AWARD

The NAADA Annual Conference Enhancement Endowment and Ruby C. McSwain Outstanding NAADA Philanthropist Award was established in 2001 by a gift of \$15,000 from the North Carolina Agricultural Foundation, Inc. made in honor of Mrs. Ruby McSwain, an influential and dedicated North Carolina philanthropist. Mrs. McSwain personally provided an additional \$15,000 to the endowment after being so impressed by the NAADA organization, its members and mission.

Earnings from the endowment are to be used to provide flexible support for the NAADA Annual Conference, especially the achievement awards program.

This endowment has most recently be used to fund a portion of keynote speaker fees and educational expenses.

JANE LONGLEY-COOK AWARDS ENDOWMENT

On March 11, 2001 we lost a dear member of our NAADA family, Jane B. Longley-Cook, after a brief struggle with cancer. Jane gave many hours of dedicated, cheerful service to NAADA, serving on the Board of Directors and playing a lead role in establishing the NAADA awards program. With matching support from Bob Bickford, the NAADA Awards Program Endowment was established by the members of the organization.

In honor of Jane's important role with NAADA and her years of service, the NAADA Board of Directors established the Jane Longley-Cook NAADA Volunteer Service Award, given to individuals who have provided outstanding volunteer service to both their home institution and NAADA, as Jane did. In 2015 the Board of Directors established the Jane Longley-Cook Fellowship Award to provide an opportunity for alumni volunteers to attend and participate at the NAADA conference. This award is wholly funded by the Jane Longley-Cook Endowment. Recipients include:

2015

Kevin Huesman, University of Florida
Lindsey Huesman, Kansas State University
Peter Pamkowski, Cornell University
Bruce Christmas, University of Florida

2016

Larry Thomas, University of Minnesota
Aaron Wood, Clemson University
Normand Adams, Virginia Tech

2017

Betty Crocker, Clemson University

2018

Luke Laborde, Louisiana State University
Dixie Dalton, Virginia Tech

2019

Rylee Ahnen, University of Minnesota
Alexis Horton, Michigan State University

2022

Dave Pascoe, University of Minnesota
Sennah Honea, Clemson University

2023

Seth Harden, Purdue University
Elizabeth Galbreath, Virginia Tech

2025 NAADA GIVE DAY

\$50 for 50/NAADA Past Presidents Challenge/NAADA raised **\$3235.00** from our membership during the 2025 Give Day held during the NAADA 2025 Annual Conference. NAADA also raised **\$7,300** from a NAADA Past President's Challenge held leading up to the 2025 NAADA Annual Conference.

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COMMUNICATIONS Tom Soladay Virginia Tech		VOLUNTEER Elizabeth Galbreath Associate Member



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