



In the MARGINS

Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics

A newsletter for alumni and friends of the UW Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

First-grains Advances Business Model

By Tom Foulke

The Wyoming First-grains Project hit a milestone in July making its first sale of Neolithic Brand spelt when The Bread Doctor in Torrington bought 200 pounds. Since then, we have also had larger sales of spelt and emmer wheat to the Alibi in Laramie, which is expanding its business with sales on the Front Range in Colorado.

In addition, the project has secured storage space in Laramie to serve as a logistics and distribution hub for Southeast Wyoming and the Front Range.

“It’s been a long road, but we are finally able to deliver the high-quality product we have been working toward,” said Tom Foulke, the project director.

The owner of the Bread Doctor, in Torrington, Wyoming, Ezdan Fluckiger said his customers like the rustic, nutty flavor of spelt loaves, and he sells out every time he makes them. When asked about what he likes about the Neolithic Brand grain, he said, “I like that it is local. And my customers appreciate it, too.”

The goal of the project is to create a profitable business and niche industry around first-grains, sometimes called ancient grains, and in the process create jobs and enhance incomes in Wyoming’s agricultural sector. Neolithic Brands will eventually be spun off as a standalone business.

What do ag students think of remote learning?

The COVID-19 pandemic sparked the rapid transition of 1.9 million university students from in-person to remote learning during Spring 2020. The popular press and new research reports have highlighted the serious challenges many students faced. Yet, some students had good or even very good experiences with remote learning according to research led by AgEcon’s Mariah Ehmke.

Ehmke’s project assessed student perspectives on their remote learning during the early phase of the pandemic. The team of six surveyed students across colleges of agriculture

On the malting side, the project had to pivot from its relationship with Wyoming Malting company (Pine Bluffs) due to technical factors in the malting process.

Work is currently taking place on an agreement with a malter in Colorado that can more easily handle the peculiarities of these grains.

The project delivered our first samples of malted spelt and emmer wheat to the One-Eyed Buffalo in Thermopolis and the Millstone in Cody (and Powell) in October. The brewmasters there are excited to work with our malted grains.

The rest of the year will be devoted to de-hulling and sacking operations, as well as sales of grains and malts. Then it is on to planting arrangements for 2021. ■



Tom Foulke, left, receives a check from Ezdan Fluckiger, owner of The Bread Doctor in Torrington, for Neolithic Brand spelt.

at six Land Grant universities, generating a sample of 2,690 responses.

“The pandemic changed the opportunity cost of going to school for many students. For some, it was higher if they had weak internet or had to work in the family operation because labor was limited because of COVID,” said Ehmke. “Our goal was to measure the opportunity costs for students across institutions with different COVID management strategies and class delivery methods. Then we asked how this affected their decision to re-enroll in the fall of 2020.

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Department Head: Ben Rashford
Editor: Cole Ehmke

Profile: Leticia Varelas Henderson

Our profile this issue is of Leticia Varelas Henderson whose appointment emphasizes undergraduate teaching. ~The Editor.

What projects are you involved in at the moment?

My current position is unique in the department because my main appointment is teaching. It has taken me the better part



of a year to finally hit my stride as an instructor, learn how to effectively communicate my lectures and engage students in an active learning environment (even more difficult in the COVID era). I am working with other colleagues and faculty members to develop a mentoring network for students and also establish a student organization in our department. As any graduate can tell you, learning occurs both in and out of the classroom. The more opportunities we have to shape our students' experiences, the better we can prepare them for careers beyond college.

Have you always wanted to be a professional teacher?

No, but through college I slowly, and unknowingly, built up the desire to work in education. I went to graduate school specifically to work in extension. While I will always value time I spent as a county extension agent, I genuinely enjoy

working with students in a formal setting.

How did you get into economics?

I originally started out as an agricultural business major. I knew I wanted to either minor in meat science or range management. At the urging of my meat science professor, who didn't think meat science was the right discipline for me, I chose range management. It was in my range management courses that I learned to appreciate the role that economics plays in range management and policy. Once I found that niche in something I was passionate about, there was no turning back.

What is the best part of being an economist?

I view agricultural economics as a great supporting actor in science. No research proposal is complete without a strong economic evaluation. As an economist, both in research and teaching, you can cover a broad range of projects because it is relevant to almost any other discipline.

What have been some of your favorite projects?

This semester, I am piloting a brand new course in our department, *Excel Applications in Agribusiness Management*. Knowing how to effectively use spreadsheets is a skill that will benefit students immensely in their future careers.

What has been the most satisfying part of your work?

As an instructor, I get to challenge students to think further than just the answer in the back of the book. I enjoy pushing students out of their comfort zone and getting them to think critically about the examples and homework problems I assign. When I get to work with students during office hours, that moment when an individual understands the question or task is fulfilling.

What do you love to do other than economics?

I enjoy gardening, hunting, and hiking. They afford me valuable family time, and we can enjoy some of the greatest benefits Wyoming has to offer.

What advice would you give to new graduates?

It's OK to make mistakes, but you should take full responsibility of the mistakes you make. Most employees recognize you won't do your job perfectly, especially starting out. Maintaining your integrity and honesty when you make a mistake will get you much further than covering up any errors. ■



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Graduate Report: Laing begins work at USDA

Editor's Note: Ms. Laing graduated a year and a half ago and has been busy building a career in Washington — she was kind enough to provide this report.

Maggie Laing

I was offered a full time job in Senator Enzi's office in August of 2019 and through a friend I had made in the office, was recommended to Secretary Perdue's Office at the USDA in December 2019. I've been working in the Office of Food Safety for Under Secretary Mindy Brashears, a subcabinet branch of the Office of the Secretary, ever since.

It has been such a unique experience coming from the West without any expectation of staying in Washington D.C. longer than three months.

I have gotten to see the Senate working firsthand, and now I am working on logistical work for US Brashears and her staff as they work with food processing plants/



food safety standards across the nation. I have more than a handful of amazing stories that wouldn't have been possible without the independent study course I took in Sen. Enzi's office and the encouragement of my advisor Mariah Ehmke. It turned out to be a tremendously influential experience. ■



County Economic Development Publications Available

Three new Extension publications on economic diversity and employment are now available to help county economic development leaders as they strive to understand their local economy.

The first bulletin in the series puts numbers to the vague "economic diversity" concepts the state has been discussing over the last few years. *Measuring Wyoming's Economic Diversity: The Hachman Index* applies a commonly used measure of economic diversity—the Hachman Index—to Wyoming and its individual counties.

The second is *Evaluating Key Components of Employment Change 2001–2017 for the Rocky Mountain Region, Wyoming, and its Counties*. Creating and retaining jobs is often a primary aspiration of local economic development efforts. So analyzing employment change over time provides insights to economic health. This report looks at employment change over 17 years to provide meaningful information for local community development efforts in Wyoming counties.

The third study, *Assessing Employment by Proportion,*

Earnings, Concentration and Diversity 2001–2017 for the Rocky Mountain Region, Wyoming and its Counties, provides insights on the types of jobs available in Wyoming's counties.

"Our third report can help development leaders understand a great deal about the nature of their county's economy," said study coauthor Duane Williams.

It shows the top job and earning sectors, and it identifies which of the 23 major industry sectors are the county's economic base. "It also shows whether your county's economy is becoming more or less diverse and how job growth or decline effect this diversity," Williams said.

The studies can be found at www.wyoextension.org/publications. Questions about the implications can be directed to Williams at WilliaDD@uwyo.edu. ■



Department Head's Column

Friends,

I hope you are all happy and healthy in these unique times. The last two semesters have certainly been interesting. While the pandemic turned campus upside down, our faculty, staff and students pulled together with a dedication and commitment that continues to inspire.

Our faculty have largely shifted to online course delivery for this academic year to keep everyone as safe as possible. While both students and faculty would prefer to see each other in person, students are hanging in there.

If you know any current students, please applaud them for their patience, positive attitude, and hard work, and encourage them to stick with it. And if you bump into any faculty, please thank them for their tremendous dedication and all their efforts on behalf of our students.

It is also my pleasure to officially welcome our newest faculty member, Anders Van Sandt. Anders joins us after completing his PhD at Colorado State and, more recently, a post-doc with Texas A&M. He brings valuable knowledge in regional economics, with expertise in

rural-urban linkages, economic diversification, and entrepreneurship. Anders will focus on Extension and applied research to support economic development across Wyoming. Welcome Dr. Van Sandt!

Lastly, despite pandemic challenges, we are still hoping to create opportunities for our students to interact with alumni and industry representatives. *It will be an invaluable experience for students to learn about career paths and get practical advice ... and it will be fun for all. If you are interested in helping us with this effort, please let me know.*



Be well and thanks for all your support,
Ben Rashford, Head
Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics
(brashfor@uwyo.edu)

Recent Department Work

Refereed publications

- Asay, Jacob, Brian Lee & John Ritten. (2020) *Irrigated Alfalfa, Barley, Corn and Sugar Beet Budgets for the Big Horn Basin*, Wyoming. B-1363, UW Extension, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Wyoming, Laramie.
- Fernandez-Gimenez, Maria & John Ritten. (2020) "An Economic Analysis of Transhumance in the Central Spanish Pyrenees." *Pastoralism* 10(10).
- Hovhannisyanyan, V., M. Kondaridze, C. Bastian & A. Shanoyan. (2020) "Empirical Evidence of Changing Food Demand and Consumer Preferences in Russia," *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*. 52,3:480-501. doi: 10.1017/aae.2020.13
- Ibragimov, T., C. Bastian, K. Hansen, S. Paisley & N. Ballenger. (2020) "Potential for Genomics to Improve Feed Efficiency and Ranch Profitability," *Journal of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers*. 83: 88-98.
- Jones Ritten, C., C. Bastian, S. Gerace, O. Phillips & A. Nagler. (2020) "An Experimental Inquiry of Gender Differences in Negotiation Strategy and Outcomes: Agricultural Market Implications," *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*. 45,2: 335-351. doi: 10.22004/ag.econ.302458
- Klemm, T., D. Brisk, M. Reeves, J. Ritten, A. Campbell & A. King. (2020) *Ranching in a Warming World: Is U.S. rangeland cattle production ready for climate change?* Available at: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/U1akuopgckHHh/>
- Raynor, Edward, Justin Derner, Tevyn Baldwin, John Ritten & David Augustine. (2020) "Multi-decadal Directional Shift in Shortgrass Stocking Rates." *Rangeland Ecology Management*. (In press)
- Whaley, Jaelyn, Warrie Means, John Ritten, Hannah Cunningham-Hollinger, Chad Page, Heather McKibben & Whitney Stewart. (2019) "A survey of lamb carcass characteristics in the Intermountain West during periods of seasonally constrained supply." *Translational Animal Science*, 3(S1):1807-1811.
- Windh, Jessica, John Ritten, Justin Derner, Steve Paisley & Brian Lee. (2020) "Effects of long-term cattle market conditions on continuous season-long and rotational grazing system revenues." *The Rangeland Journal*. (In press)

Presentations and Resources Created

- Ehmke, Cole. *Managing your Money*. Talks to First Year Experience classes at UW. (Zoom) Various in October 2020.
- Ehmke, Mariah. *What do our students think? Student*

- Perceptions and Values of Remote Learning* with Jason Bergtold, Kathryn Boys, Bhagyashree Katare, Kristin Kiesel & Jerrod Penn. WERA-72 workshop. October, 2020.
- Hewlett, J. & C. Carter. Co-coordinators for the online module *Why is Trust Important in an Ag Legacy?* Jointly sponsored by the University of Wyoming Agriculture and Horticulture team and RightRisk as part of the ongoing series of AG LEGACY modules. Posted online at: <http://AgLegacy.org>. October 2020.
- Hewlett, J.P. *Evaluating Risk Alternatives: RightRisk Analytics*. RightRisk recorded presentations. Posted online at: RightRisk.org. September 2020.
- Hewlett, J.P. Co-coordinator for the webinar *Farmers to Families Food Box Program*. Jointly sponsored by the Western Extension Committee and the Western Center for Risk Management Education as part of the ongoing series of Ag In Uncertain Times webinars and recordings. Posted online at: AgInUncertainTimes.FarmManagement.org. October 21, 2020.
- Hewlett, J., & J. Tranel. *Evaluating Risk Alternatives via RightRisk Analytics*. Presentation made at the 2020 UH/CTAHR Livestock Extension Virtual Field Day. University of Hawaii Livestock Extension. September 28, 2020.
- Bastian, C. *Provided the Wyoming Business Council's Agribusiness Division projections in the potential change in revenue from 2019 to 2020* for the ag sector in Wyoming to address potential economic damages to agriculture in Wyoming from changing economic conditions given the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Ritten, John. "An Economic Assessment of Beef Cattle Vulnerability to Future Climates." Presented at the *Society of Range Management* Annual meeting, February 19, 2020. Part of the *Vulnerability of Beef Cattle Production to Ecological and Socio-Economic Challenges of Future Climates* Symposium.
- Overlin, Annie, Kevin Jablonski, Justin Derner, David Augustine, Dannele Peck & John Ritten. (2020) *2020 Colorado Drought and Beef Marketing Discussion*. Zoom Presentation, July 17, 2020. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjq0PHpXRA&t=3049s>
- Peel, D., D. Anderson, J. Anderson, C. Bastian, S. Brown, S. Koontz & J. Maples. (2020) *Fed Cattle Price Discovery Issues and Considerations*. Report Commissioned by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association – Marketing and Policy Committee. Pgs. 1-35.
- Hewlett, J. & C. Carter. "Communicating with the Next Generation." Ag Legacy HOW*TO Guide housed at <http://AGLEGACY.org>, #ALHT-20201030.101. October 2020.



Student Profile: Jessa Jochems

Do you have a personal motto/philosophy?

To seize every moment. Making the most out of every moment can change your day and life. I strive to take every moment captive and enjoy it to the fullest.

What are your future goals/career aspirations?

In my future, I hope to work with international agriculture in some way. Whether that is working here in the United States with international agriculture or if it is traveling around the world to learn from others' practices and teaching other what I have learned.

What have you achieved academically?

Academic achievements that I have received have been in regard to my course grades and being a member of the Honor's College and striving to excel in my work.

What is a fun fact about yourself?

I have an identical twin sister who is also an agriculture major! We have greatly enjoyed pursuing degree in agriculture side by side.

Best college memory?

My favorite college memory is the "Border War" of 2019, the football game between UW and CSU. It was one of the coldest nights, and we were all freezing, but it was one of the most fun nights have I have had at UW. Also, just the daily walk around Prexy's Pasture. Smelling the freshly cut grass and seeing the tall trees always makes a tough exam or early morning better. ■

Major: AgBusiness – Agribusiness Mgmt

Minor: International Studies, Honors

Status: Junior

Hometown: Ranchester, Wyoming

Hobbies: Camping, hiking, and traveling



Former Fellow wins Research Contest

Alex Marchal, a former INBRE fellow under the supervision of Dr. Mariah Ehmke, and now a PhD student at Purdue University, won the Krannert Doctoral Student Research Symposium's research presentation contest. Alex's presentation, *Free Riding to Herd Immunity: Relating Parental Cooperative Behavior to Vaccine Hesitancy*, is based on a series of experiments Ehmke and he did in Wyoming to better understand low vaccination rates. The work is especially topical now given a reluctance in the US to vaccinate, though vaccination is the best way to reduce infectious disease spread, including COVID-19. The work was done as part of his INBRE (IDeA Networks for Biomedical Research Excellence) fellowship and funded by the Mountain West CTRIN of NIH. <https://ctrin.unlv.edu>. The authors are Alex Marchal, Aaron Enriquez, Mariah Ehmke & Carlos Camargo. ■



Regional Economics Faculty Hired

We are pleased to welcome Anders Van Sandt to the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. He works in regional economics with a focus on community economic development.

Van Sandt received his Ph.D. in agricultural and natural resource economics from Colorado State University in 2018 and was a postdoctoral extension associate in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University.

His recent research has centered around rural economic development. His previous Extension research revolved around exploring rural-urban linkages, diversification of local industries, entrepreneurship, and community and industry interdependencies to support local economic development.

Industry diversification has been a notable part of his efforts, and he has worked with manufacturing, retail, banking, transportation and warehousing, tourism, and agriculture to name a few.

While his future research agenda is dependent on Wyoming's needs, he will use his affiliation with the U.S. Census to explore health care accessibility issues and how we can better support local businesses across industries. Other topics include agricultural- and ecosystem-based tourism, internet and financial access, and the resiliency and growth of local economies.

Van Sandt fills a position vacated by UW Extension community development specialist Tex Taylor, who retired in 2019. Anders joins the department as an assistant professor and UW Extension specialist (60 percent). He can be reached at avansand@uwyo.edu ■



Book Review: The Box

By Tom Foulke

The equivalent of 300 million 20-foot containers cross the ocean every year. Think about it. How could something so mundane as a steel box have such a huge impact on the world? The story of the shipping container is not just about invention. It is about innovation, entrepreneurship, experimentation, labor relations, policy and trade...and more. Because Malcom Maclean, the entrepreneur behind the rise of the shipping container was an outsized personality, an entrepreneur who invented nothing, but changed the world. And therein lies a real lesson for the modern age: people matter, leadership matters. Inventions and ideas matter, but it takes a creative someone to put them together in a way that makes sense for society to use, to build that “killer app” so to speak, to create real change and unlock incredible value.

The shipping container changed our world and continues to do so. It has opened up global trade in ways that were inconceivable only a few decades ago. It has made vast fortunes and ruined more than a few. It has wiped out whole sections of our economy, and created new ones. And it was basically the vision of one man, Malcom Maclean, that did it. Maclean’s business acumen was to see how to do transportation efficiently. He was not highly educated, but he knew enough math to know when he was making a profit, and exactly how much. And he knew people, how to find the right person to get the job done, how to treat his people right to get most out of them, and how to earn their loyalty.

The story of the containerization of shipping is, at its core, the story of how innovation really works. There were false starts and unintended consequences. There were innovators and those that opposed them. There were mountains of pre-conceived notions that needed to be swept away against ferocious odds. And maybe most importantly, there were those who took on those odds. These were the fascinating

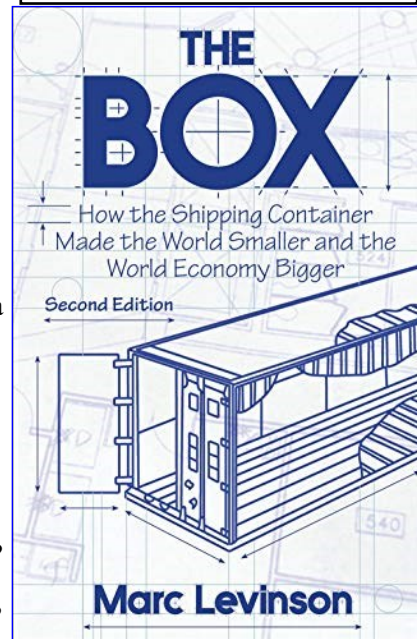
bits to me. As an academic, I obviously see the value of education and teaching theory and practice.

However, in *The Box*, we see the limits of all this. How unintended consequences takeover and drive innovation down completely different paths. It is a lesson in hubris that proves that people like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates are the exceptions and not the rule; or rather, that maybe the exceptions are the rule? Are innovators born or can they be made? The book does not answer that question, but it will get you thinking about it.

The author is very thorough, almost too much so in some places. I understand the need to set the stage, but I felt that the discussions on labor relations took up a little too much space and at times became a bit tedious. In general, though it is a marvelous read that will get you taking a second look at all those boxes. I know I am. It’s made me think about buying a shipping container, much to the chagrin of my neighbors.

Recommended for your library by Tom Foulke. ■

Book: *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (2nd ed)
Author: Marc Levinson
Publisher: Princeton University Press (2016)



Recent Master’s Candidate Thesis Presentations

Lewi Crow

Ranch-Level Economic Impacts of Prairie Dog Conservation in the Thunder Basin National Grassland of Wyoming

Resham Thapa

An Economic Framework for Analyzing Potential Use of Pyrolyzed Coal as a Soil Amendment for Low Quality Range Soil.

Victoria Omojoso

Economics of Switchgrass in the Great Plains: Adding Economic Feasibility to Biophysical Evaluations

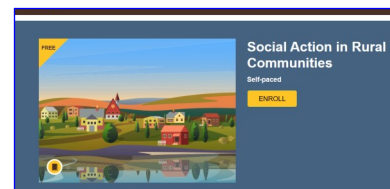
Alicia Grahmann

A Farm-Level Economic Analysis on Implementing Water Use Efficiency Technologies in Southeastern Wyoming

Online course for successful community improvement available

By Steve Miller

A free online, self-paced and interactive course designed to help people increase their odds of building a successful community improvement effort is available from the University of Wyoming Extension. *Social Action in Rural Communities* is at <http://bit.ly/UWESocialAction>.



This course examines why some community improvement efforts succeed and why some fail and looks at social interactions and group processes related to community projects.

“Successful community improvement ventures follow similar paths of organizing, public relations, engagement and planning,” said Duane Williams, extension community development specialist. “Skipping a key step can generate obstacles, delays and weak community support.” ■



Alan Schroeder (1949—2020)

Dr. Alan Schroeder, 71, agricultural economist and lawyer (retired), died peacefully October 21 in Denver, Colorado with his wife Samantha by his side.

Alan was born in Fargo, North Dakota on October 6, 1949, the middle child of Robert and Sylvia Schroeder. He grew up on the family farm eight miles east of Fargo in the very northern reaches of Minnesota. He attended North Dakota State University ('71), University of Wisconsin (MS '74, JD '77, and PhD in natural resource economics ('82), studying under AAEA Fellow Dan Bromley.

He joined the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Wyoming in 1986 (the middle of a financial crisis in agriculture) where he spent his 27 year career teaching classes in natural resource economics, negotiation, and ag law, and served the state through his Cooperative Extension work, especially in conflict resolution. With his economics and law degrees, Alan was an important driver and creator of the state's agricultural mediation program, and he trained hundreds of mediators. His material still serves as the foundation for the program's curriculum.

Alan thought of education as teachers and students who are travel companions, who briefly come together on a venture before going their separate ways. Campus students remember that each of Alan's classroom journeys were based on real life stories – be they cases, articles or role plays – so that they entered into the world, and acted as professionals to analyze the problems and to make sound recommendations, just as they would do upon graduation. In his role as a teacher, he aspired, as he once wrote, "to share rather than preach, enriching rather than simplifying, and being *in* the world rather than above or outside it." Serious students considered his courses in law and negotiation among the best and most useful in their college experience.

Colleagues remember an intrepid reader, a theatre-enthusiast, an unsurpassed listener, a careful editor, a deep thinker with a philosophical bend, and someone with a superb commitment to asking questions. His questions forced faculty and students to think beyond the decision at hand, to ponder the broader issues that were at work when actions needed to be taken. In one-on-one interactions with Alan, there was rarely small talk. Conversations centered on issues facing the department, the state, or agriculture. He generally interpreted what he heard, and then recast it in a larger follow-up question that stimulated more conversa-

tion. His notable authenticity caused him to be quickly accepted and revered by audiences. Colleagues also remember a man of notable faith, deeply engaged in understanding his relationship with God.

In accepting a teaching award in

2009, Alan wrote, "Our journey goes quickly—we feed each other through the substance of our stories and theoretic insights and find answers and ways to a 'yes' from an initial 'no'. In the end, the students' flames burn brightly, lit and enriched by our shared efforts and resources, long after the class concludes."

He is survived by his wife Samantha, step-daughters Shelby and Shannon, his sister Linda (Rick) and children Erica, Connor, and Taylor, and his brother Steven (Lucia), and children Mark and Ann. Alan was "grandpy" to Shannon's son Fitzgerald and daughter Estella and Shelby's children Zoe and Elio. Alan's grand-nieces and nephews are Vivian West, Gabe West, Morgan West, Matthew Schroeder, Corinne Schroeder, Henry Taylor, Harmony Taylor, and Hope Taylor.

A celebration of his life will be announced at a later date.

Gifts in Alan's name can be made to support either of Alan's own bequests: a scholarship at the University of Wyoming to support undergraduates interested in pursuing agricultural law, or Covenant House, an organization in New York City that provides for homeless children. ■



Fall Graduates

Congratulations to all those who have persevered and are anticipated to graduate this fall. Go Pokes!

Madison Anderson, Ten Sleep, WY
Austin Burkett, Hillsdale, WY
Crawford Cooley, Penn Grove, CA
Tanner Dill, Ault, CO

Daniel Fager, Lyons, CO
Benjamin Fase, Lafayette, CO
Jake Fulton, Valentine, NE
Wyatt Geis, Gillette, WY
Anna Kemner, Fleming Island, FL
Peyton Klobberdanz, Sterling, CO
Taylor Munson, Sprague River, OR
Jordan Pierson, Cheyenne, WY

Wesley Taylor, Wheatland, WY
Katia Voloshin, Craig, CO
Jacob Wintermote, Walden, CO



In the Margins

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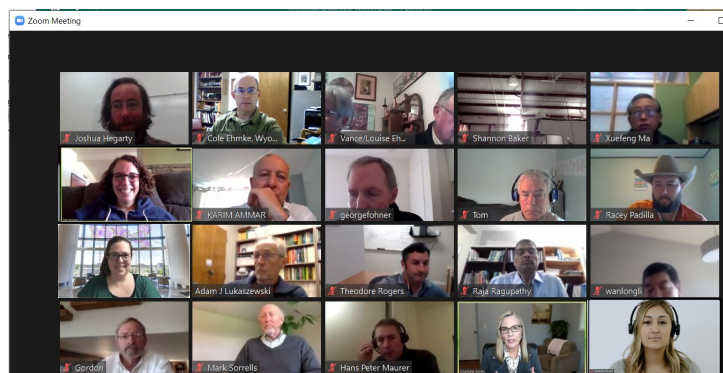
Online Learning, continued on page 1

Using both parametric and non-parametric analytical approaches, their work evaluated whether differences in their prior experiences, student status, GPA, class characteristics, instructor efforts, and student perceptions could explain the observed variations.

Most ag students had had good experiences with online learning prior to the pandemic shift. “But after the shift, across the board, at all institutions, students reported lower satisfaction with remote learning,” Ehmke said. “However, despite the downward trend in satisfaction, the average student did not want to return to ‘normal’ in Fall 2020. Most students preferred having some kind of hybrid or flex class format to a fully on-line or in-person class.”

“In addition to asking students about their overall enrollment decision, we also asked them about their Spring 2020 experience in an individual class of their choosing. As educators, we were pleasantly surprised to learn that students valued classes in which they learned substantial knowledge, and that knowledge acquisition was a more important determinant of satisfaction than, say, having an open book exam,” Professor Ehmke said.

The results provide important insights to instructors, and have the potential to inform instructional design and university policy.



What has become a ubiquity for students — a Zoom meeting.

“Ag colleges and departments need to be prepared to operate in a more agile and flexible manner. It would be valuable if all faculty had a teaching tool box full of both in-person and on-line teaching techniques. Students at UW did rate both their pre-pandemic on-line learning experiences and value of in-person learning higher than students at most of the other schools, on average,” Ehmke said.

For specific insights from the research, contact Mariah Ehmke at mehmke@uwyo.edu.

Did you know?

IN THE MARGINS IS AVAILABLE IN
COLOR AT THE AGECON WEBSITE:
WWW.UWYO.EDU/AGECON