

# Signals

Sept/Oct 2006

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## Iowa ACE members bring Scotland home

Three Iowa ACE chapter members who traveled to Scotland as part of a National ACT Scotland Agricultural Communications Study Tour in May 2006 gave a presentation about their trip in late July. Jessica Bowser, Jennifer Hoyer and Sherry Hoyer described the activities, speakers, travel, culture and personalities they encountered in "Agricultural Communication Across the Atlantic: Observations and Recommendations from a Scotland Study Tour." The audience included Iowa ACE members, as well as faculty, staff and students from ISU departments of animal science and agricultural education.

A quiz provided an interesting introduction and a chance to get the audience involved. Do you know the name of the only agricultural newspaper in Scotland? (Answer: The Scottish Farmer.) What can you buy for a pound: a bus trip to the city center, a pint of your favorite tasty beverage, or a CD of bagpipe music? (Answer: A bus trip to the city center. During the trip, one British pound was equivalent to approximately \$2 in U.S. currency.)

Although designed originally for undergraduate students majoring or interested in agricultural communications, the tour ultimately was comprised of 19 undergraduates, two graduate students and six faculty/staff members from nine states. Throughout the 10-day trip, participants met with a variety of professionals – colleagues in every sense of the word – who helped the Americans understand that agricultural journalists and communicators in both countries are more similar than anyone had imagined. Here are just a few examples.

James Withers, deputy chief executive of the National Farmers Union, said his responsibilities include serving as a reliable and trustworthy contact for the media. He emphasized that it's important to develop and implement a

proactive approach in preparing the media, especially for "disaster stories." When foot-and-mouth disease broke and became rampant in 2001, officials from agriculture and government had little warning, and the media looked for information wherever they could get it. As it became apparent that avian influenza would eventually reach the United Kingdom, those same officials and media professionals effectively communicated with each other beforehand and were ready for the first case. Withers said the preparation was so detailed that broadcast stations had already determined the music that would be played during special news break-ins to report avian influenza's presence. He said that telling agriculture's story to city people takes work. "We've got to turn what farming does into what people understand," he said.

At the Scottish Plant Hunters Garden in Pitlochry (created to recognize and honor Scottish people who discovered an amazing variety of plant life around the world), the garden supervisor is the only permanent employee. Along with an unpaid summer intern, the garden utilizes occasional prison labor for its outdoor work. Adjacent to the garden is the Pitlochry Festival Theatre. While his is not truly an agriculture-based position, everyone



From left, Iowa ACE members Sherry Hoyer, Jennifer Hoyer and Jessica Bowser get up close with the piper at a traditional Scottish dinner during the group's final night in Scotland.

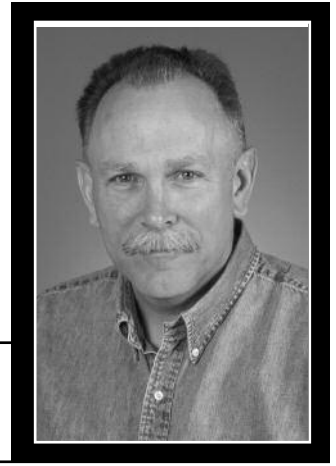
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ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE

**A&E**

IN AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND LIFE AND HUMAN SCIENCES

## *From the President*



As I sit down to write this, I am relieved that we are not faced with a challenge as formidable as the immediate aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. However, as I learned from our colleagues from the Southeastern region, the challenges of a year later, while different, can be even tougher. Day by day, Tom Merrill, Frankie Gould and other ACE members have learned the long and the short of disaster recovery. They've learned lessons that we pray won't have to be shared. Somewhere, sometime, they will be needed, and I know where I can turn to get advice I can trust. I hope they have permanent roofs over their heads by the time you read this.

The rest of us have all been touched directly or indirectly by both the heartwarming and the heartbreaking stories we see, read or hear from our family, friends and communities. Hearing those experiences firsthand, I am strongly reminded that there is, without doubt, a future. It is also clear to me that the most powerful force in human endeavor is a group of people who share similar goals working together. Sound familiar?

The members of the ACE board spent three days working together at their fall meeting in California, and while I trust we won't make tomorrow's headlines, we did some good work that will serve the

organization and our mission. The minutes from that meeting will be posted on the Web site soon, and I encourage you to read them and comment. In the meantime, the board took some action that you should know about.

Because of a job change, our incoming international director-elect is unable to serve her term. Hugh Maynard has agreed to serve as the interim international director-elect until the annual election in February. At that point, we'll elect a new international director-elect to the board. Hugh has agreed to serve as a candidate for that position. We'll also be electing a new vice president and a set of regional directors.

We also decided, after much feedback, to remove the password protection from the ACE directory, which is available as a PDF file on the Web site. Our goal is to replace that file with a database-driven directory; preliminary work on that task is underway.

I also wanted to remind you about the Critique and Awards program for next year. It is not too early to be thinking about your entry. Coordinator Amanda Aubuchon will send entry instructions and rules in December; the entry deadline is January 26, 2007.

The gold award winners from 2006 are posted on the Web site so you can get a good idea of the quality and types of entries.

There are also individual ACE awards I hope you will be thinking about. Along with the Awards of Excellence, we have the Professional, Service and Pioneer awards for ACE members and the Reuben Brigham Award to honor a professional from outside our organization. Take a look at the Web site for award descriptions and nomination forms. Please consider nominating someone deserving of recognition. A few minutes of your time can add significantly to what we value most in ACE.

Finally, plans for the joint 2007 ACE/NETC meeting in New Mexico are well underway, and you'll find more details from Program Chair Robert Casler in this newsletter. Look for the call for proposals soon! You won't have to be abducted by aliens to attend the Double Creature Feature, but you might want to be ready!

Bob Sams

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Sams".

ACE President  
rwsams@ucdavis.edu

# In Brief

## ACE Professional Development Committee seeks your ideas

Do you have a great idea for a professional development workshop? Have you given a presentation lately that might lay the foundation for an online learning module? Is your SIG holding discussions or making plans for its next big event? The ACE Professional Development Committee is available to help facilitate these kinds of opportunities and invites you to

explore the possibilities. To learn more, e-mail Steve Dodrill, chair of the Professional Development Committee, at [steve.dodrill@oregonstate.edu](mailto:steve.dodrill@oregonstate.edu).

Steve Dodrill  
Professional Development  
Committee Chair  
[steve.dodrill@oregonstate.edu](mailto:steve.dodrill@oregonstate.edu)

## Oklahoma State University faculty receive U.S. Department of State grant

A project by Drs. Dwayne Cartmell, Craig Edwards, Shelly Sitton and Cindy Blackwell of the Oklahoma State University Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and 4-H Youth Development has been awarded more than \$227,000 from the U.S. Department of State.

The project, titled "Nurturing the Fourth Estate: Professional Development for Media Specialists in

the Republic of Mali, West Africa," involves training media specialists in Mali on the basic tenets of a democratic press system. An American team of eight media professionals will travel to Mali in March 2007 and again in December 2007. A selected group of 16 Malian media specialists will spend the month of July 2007 in Oklahoma.

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## Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska gather to share ideas

More than 60 people took part in a picnic Sept. 12, 2006, to welcome guests from Kansas State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to Ames, Iowa, and Iowa State University (ISU). The Iowa chapter of ACE made sure that plenty of barbeque was available as well as musical entertainment. A park on the north edge of Ames provided a perfect setting for such an event.

The purpose of the visit was to bring communications and information

technology staffs from the three universities together to share ideas and identify areas of possible collaboration. As a result of the exchange and two days of discussions and tours, everyone got a chance to visit with others and make connections. As a follow-up to the tri-state workshop, a blog was created where notes and contact information could be shared among participants.

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Our e-mail address is:

[ACE@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:ACE@ifas.ufl.edu)

ACE is a non-profit association representing professional communicators and information officers generally within the land-grant university system, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, state agricultural agencies, similar institutions in other countries and those with professional interests in agricultural communication.

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*Amanda Aubuchon*

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*Michele Linette*

ACE develops professional skills of education, government, and research communicators and information technologists to extend knowledge about agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences to people worldwide.

Stop by the ACE Web site  
[www.aceweb.org](http://www.aceweb.org)

ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE



IN AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND LIFE AND HUMAN SCIENCES

# Our History

## Changes of a lifetime

How have things changed during my career?

I stumbled into my life's work in agricultural journalism in 1970. I graduated from the University of Nebraska with a degree in advertising. After waiting impatiently for a whole month for nonexistent offers to come pouring in, I called the university's personnel office and demanded, "You gave me this degree. Now what am I supposed to do with it?" They sent me to the department of communications in the College of Agriculture to begin work as a lowly editorial assistant for a whopping \$3,700 a year.

Five years later at an ACE meeting in Iowa, I caught a line from the University of Wisconsin's Department of Agricultural Journalism fishing for graduate students. I was hooked. In 1977, with my UW master's degree in hand, I headed to the University of Georgia as a news editor. I retired in 2001 but continue working part time with the department.

So what kind of changes did I witness from 1970 to today? Obviously, the technology of 2006 is light years ahead of the '70s. Yes, I wrote my thesis on a typewriter, and I nearly had it memorized as I retyped it seemingly hundreds of times. The computer and the Web changed things so profoundly that it must be hard for today's communicators to imagine life without them.

My Nebraska co-workers covered the state fair every year, setting up a pressroom to report all the 4-H winners in every project. We had reams of winners, with a lead attached to each ream. I wrote many of those leads. Once or twice a day, someone would pick up the stack of winners, rendezvous with someone at a nearby fairgrounds fence and hand them over.

The runner would fight the state fair traffic to get the results back to the office, where the split staff would type up all the results, mimeograph them and mail them to the papers.

One of my responsibilities in Georgia was writing three columns a week. My deadline was midweek because I was located in Statesboro, 150 miles from the main office in Athens. I typed up my columns and mailed them to the editor. One year we got a Qwip machine – an early fax machine. It took six minutes to send each page, but it moved my deadline to Thursday.

What about more subtle changes? In the '70s and '80s, sexist jokes and attitudes were often tolerated. Our news staff in Nebraska conducted a media day each year prior to a field day. One year, the editor asked me to handle it – invite the media, set up the program, arrange for refreshments, etc. The day of the event, the editor stood and welcomed "my" guests and introduced me as a decoration! It was a valuable lesson in subtle put-downs, male ego and stealing credit – all in the form of a supposed compliment.

In Georgia, I was the first woman to be hired as an agricultural news writer and editor. Basically, that meant my department head believed in me, but I had to prove my abilities to everybody else – or at least that's how it often felt.

The Extension Service had not based a news editor in Statesboro before me, so most agents and specialists were happy to see me. But some were obviously worried I would embarrass them, and I was worried I would embarrass myself. After all, what was a Nebraska girl doing trying to tell lifelong Georgia farmers how to grow cotton or peanuts?

I quickly learned the value of curiosity and a willingness to listen. Once farmers

found out I was a farm girl with lots of questions, they warmed to their subject.

But some of the agents were a little harder to win over. My first year, I was sent to the county agents' annual meeting to take award pictures. The agent in charge walked me through the program and the long list of awards. Then he turned to me and said, "Now don't screw up. We've never had a woman take pictures before." I laughed. He didn't.

I had a new camera with a complicated flash and a dead battery, but I shot roll after roll. When the proofs came back, I printed up the shots and sent them to the agent with a little note: "I don't think they turned out too bad, considering a woman shot them."

Later in my career, I worked more closely with researchers and discovered a whole new world of prove-yourself attitude. If you didn't have a doctorate in their field, you could expect a short, terse interview. Some even tried to dictate a story.

So have things changed? Technology will move unfailingly forward. The more blatant sexist attitudes fade as generations pass. But respect for the field of communications in an academic setting still doesn't come without administrative support, training for internal sources to appreciate the role of communicators, and, most important, professional integrity among communicators that earns respect. Some things never change.

Janet Rodekohr  
Life Member  
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understood when marketing director Giles Conisbee said, "At the end of the day, we are looking to make money."

Any report about ag communications work from Scotland would be incomplete without mention of Glen. Glen is the attractive male star of commercials touting Scottish beef. Provided through marketing efforts of Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), the red meat promotional group, these ads are directed toward the primary purchasers of beef: women. Stuart Ashworth, senior manager of industry information at QMS, told the group that early on, marketing folks didn't know if the ads would be well received. However, once people started asking where they could buy T-shirts with Glen's likeness, QMS knew it had a winner. Ashworth's advice: Don't get frustrated by deadlines, and stay informed about what you need to know in order to tell consumers what they need to know.

All three Iowa ACE members heartily enjoyed their time in this unique country and are ready to return. The Scottish people are welcoming and cordial, the countryside is minutes away from the center of Edinburgh, and one can travel from the North Sea on the east coast to the Atlantic Ocean on the west coast in a matter of hours. The Iowa ACE members understand the city bus system in Edinburgh (to return to the hotel, get on any bus with a number 3, but make sure you're on the correct side of the road), really like the variety of hard ciders and ales, and appreciate the cuisine (just don't ask how many want to eat real haggis again).

Web addresses for some of the locations the group toured and spoke with professionals:

**Scottish Plant Hunters Garden in Pitlochry**  
<http://www.pitlochry.org.uk/garden.php>

**Quality Meat Scotland**  
<http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/>

**The Scottish Farmer**  
<http://www.thescottishfarmer.co.uk/>

**Scottish Parliament**  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/home.htm>

**Scottish Agricultural College**  
<http://www.sac.ac.uk/>

**Scotsman (newspaper)**  
<http://members.scotsman.com/>

**Church of Scotland**  
<http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

See three different 20-second Glen commercials at  
<http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/marketing/tvpop.php>

Sherilyn D. Hoyer  
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## Ever wanted to host an ACE meeting, but were afraid to ask?

Calling all interested parties to host the ACE 2009 meeting! The ACE board of directors is seeking proposals from institutions, organizations or groups of individuals.

Are you interested, but don't think there are enough people in your state to host the event? Consider forming a regional team to host it.

As the meeting host, your group will not be responsible for the program; that's the work of the Program Planning Committee. You will, however, be represented on that committee.

The Host Committee's responsibilities focus on logistics. That job includes establishing conference dates, negotiating for the conference site and facilities, negotiating a block of hotel rooms, assuring availability of audio-video equipment and connectivity, identifying revenue sources, providing or arranging for transportation during the meeting if needed, handling registrations, and identifying vendors and exhibitors.

Although it sounds like a lot of work, please don't be intimidated. Getting organized and dividing the workload makes the job manageable. You'll be able to draw from the experience of previous years' host organizations, and you'll have access to support and guidance from ACE's Professional Development Committee, the ACE board and ACE Headquarters.

Hosting an ACE international meeting can be a great experience, and it provides the opportunity to showcase your area and organization.

You'll also have the satisfaction of providing a valuable service to your fellow ACE members.

If you're interested in hosting the 2009 meeting, e-mail the following information to the ACE coordinator at [ace@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:ace@ifas.ufl.edu) by December 1, 2006:

- Nominated site (city/state or city/province/country)
- Proposed month

- Site host (institution, organization, group of individuals, regional team)
- Brief explanation of why you think this site is a good one. Comment on possible lodging and meeting facilities, local program opportunities, connectivity, and attractions for spouses and families
- Brief explanation of your organizational commitment (include unit, department, organizational or university support)
- Travel accessibility (airports, airlines, airport shuttles, trains and interstates)
- Person to contact for more information

After all proposals have been received, a forum will be posted on the ACE Web site to allow the membership to submit comments. ACE Headquarters will notify all members by e-mail when the forum has been posted. The ACE board will make the site selection during the winter board meeting December 14, 2006.

## Alaska Sea Grant communications program earns top marks

Alaska Sea Grant Communications, led by Kurt Byers, was singled out as a Best Management Practice during the five-year assessment of the entire program in September 2006.

“Publications, video production, radio, and the Lowell Wakefield Annual symposia . . . provide a rich array of vehicles for connecting with diverse users,” the assessment team wrote in their report to the National Sea Grant Office. “The ASG communications program is one of the top programs in

the Sea Grant Network. Their extremely qualified staff with diverse expertise produces outstanding products and services. All products produced by ASG are of highest quality and several including *Ocean Treasure: Commercial Fishing in Alaska* and *The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands: Region of Wonders* are beautiful and content rich. . . . ASG has a well designed and maintained Web site which is accurate, up-to-date, and easily navigated.”

The Alaska Sea Grant Communications staff includes Kurt Byers, Adie Callahan, Carol Kaynor, Sue Keller, Jen Gunderson, Kathy Kurtenbach, Deborah Mercy, Dave Partee, Sherri Pristash and Doug Schneider.

Sue Keller  
University of Alaska Sea Grant  
fnsk@uaf.edu

## Plans underway for Leadership and Management Institute

Plans for the new Leadership and Management Institute are moving full speed ahead. The inaugural Communications & Information Technology Leadership and Management Institute will begin next June, in conjunction with the 2007 ACE/NETC meeting in Albuquerque, N.M. This yearlong program will include a total of three site-based trainings, ongoing interactivity and collaboration via the Web,

and learning opportunities to be arranged at each participant's workplace.

The institute is sponsored by ACE, in partnership with the American Distance Education Consortium (ADEC) and the National Extension Technology Conference (NETC). It is intended to help communicators and information technologists build the vision, leadership and management competencies that are

critical to today's leaders and managers. Planning team members have issued two requests for proposals – one for the institute's management and the other for content development and delivery. A call for potential participants will be issued in the near future.

If you have questions about the institute, please visit:  
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/leadme>.

## Kansas State University honors Communicator of the Year

Linda K. Walter, K-State Research and Extension family and consumer sciences agent in Western Kansas' Finney County, has been selected as Communicator of the Year.

The award is co-sponsored by the K-State Research and Extension Department of Communications and the Kansas chapter of the Association for Communication Excellence (ACE).

Walter was selected from a competitive field of nominees, said Mark Stadtlander, publications editor, speaking for the selection committee.

As an extension agent for 27 years, Walter was praised for innovative

communications efforts to reach traditional audiences while also reaching out to new and diverse populations. For example, she recently offered food safety certification training through an interactive television system to 135 food service workers in English and Spanish.

Walter also has been praised for building successful community coalitions and generating impact reports that are enjoyable to read. When writing an impact report about Finney County's Walk Kansas participation, Walter compared the 54 teams' miles logged – 36,908 miles – to circling the globe one and a half times.

To complete the report and tie research to the program/outcome, Walter searched the Web to find North Carolina State University research pinpointing the cost of inactivity – \$1,412 in direct and indirect health costs per inactive person per year – and then estimated the local savings if 362 participants increased their physical activity: \$460,312.

Nancy Peterson  
Kansas State University  
nancyp@oznet.ksu.edu

## Why the “Double Creature Feature”?

“It Came From Planet ACE” and “Creature From Under the NETC” are coming to the ACE/NETC 2007 international conference in Albuquerque June 15-19!

This is all in fun and inspired by our location in the state of the Roswell incident. But there is a serious side to this theme as well. Our goal this year is to have an event that explores the dual allegiance members of ACE and participants in NETC share.

We have been very pleased by the response that we received to our recent survey. We are using these suggestions to construct a program that focuses on the integration of our split personalities. We expect the schedule will offer a variety of session formats, an emphasis on common interests, an expanded role for the SIG meetings, and intensive workshops.

The session types that we are considering include: extended post-conference sessions, brief product/strategy showcases, panel discussions (no PowerPoint

allowed), in-depth professional development sessions, special requests, open sessions, poster sessions and lightning sessions (10 minutes max.).

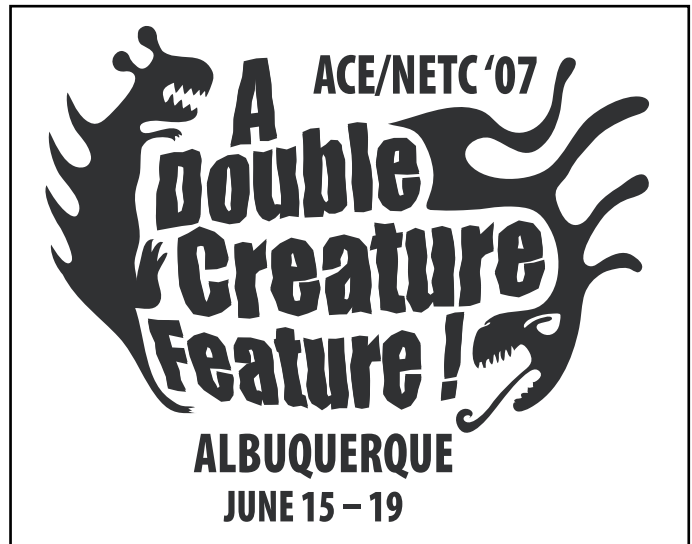
In order to make this work we will need your help! Responding to our survey was a significant first step. Coming soon is step two: the call for proposals. In order for us to match the group’s interests with the session topics, members will need to step up and volunteer to take on an extended workshop, be a co-presenter with others who have common interests, or pitch your expertise to an audience that may be “from another world.”

So when the call for proposals arrives in your mailbox, take a moment to consider contributing

something new, something that puts you in our Creature Feature.

For more information about the conference, visit the conference Web site at <http://acenetc2007.nmsu.edu/>.

Robert Casler, Program Chair  
University of Arizona  
[rcasler@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:rcasler@ag.arizona.edu)



## How you can help the staff of eXtension’s virtual newsroom

eXtension is an educational partnership of more than 70 universities providing online access to objective, research-based information and educational opportunities. Iowa State University Extension staff are providing news services and managing the virtual newsroom for eXtension.

“eXtension is setting up several ‘communities of practice’ or special interest groups of extension faculty and staff from throughout the country,” said Elaine Edwards, manager of ISU Extension Communications and Marketing. “Our communications specialists will work with the community of practice groups to gather information and write news articles. We’ll also glean related news and information from other land grant university news operations. We are pleased to be part of eXtension, helping to provide

relevant knowledge for extension staff and clients throughout the United States.”

Be sure your news syndication feeds are listed at [http://about.extension.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_State\\_XML\\_News\\_Feeds](http://about.extension.org/wiki/List_of_State_XML_News_Feeds). If you don’t have a news feed, what is the URL for news releases, radio interviews, videos and other communications from your extension division? (Is there more than one URL, depending on the topic?) If you are using Atom syndication to disseminate news, what is the URL for the Atom feed?

### Communities of Practice

The HorseQuest community of practice Web site went live Sept. 8. Seven other communities of practice will go live in the next few months: building local

economies of the future, consumer horticulture, extension disaster education network (EDEN), financial security for all, fire ants, just-in-time parenting, and wildlife damage management. An additional 12 communities of practice are assembling content.

Send answers to the questions, comments and any questions you have to Lynette Spicer, national news coordinator for eXtension, [lspicer@iastate.edu](mailto:lspicer@iastate.edu).

To learn more about eXtension, see the About eXtension blog at <http://about.extension.org/> and the HorseQuest site at <http://www.extension.org/horses>.

Lynette Spicer  
Iowa State University  
[lspicer@iastate.edu](mailto:lspicer@iastate.edu)



# Association for Communication Excellence

## Membership Application

If you are joining ACE for the first time, please complete this form and return it to:  
 ACE Headquarters, University of Florida, P.O. Box 110811, Gainesville, FL 32611; Fax: 352/392-8583

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

University/Agency/Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Select your membership type. For help in determining which membership is right for you, please visit [www.aceweb.org](http://www.aceweb.org). With the exception of student/recent graduate memberships, all first-year memberships are \$50.

- Active (Any person whose duties relate to communicating about agriculture, natural resources, life sciences, or human sciences or who has a professional interest in communications related to those areas)
- Institutional (For active memberships paid by an institution)
- Student/Recent Graduate (For full-time undergraduate or graduate students and those who have graduated within the last two years. Dues for full-time students and persons in their first year after graduation are \$25. Dues in the second year after graduation are \$50. In the third year after graduation, members are considered active members and pay full dues.) Year in which you graduated or will graduate \_\_\_\_\_
- Charter (For the designated representative of a charter country; all persons in that country who qualify for membership receive affiliate member status.) Name of country applying for charter status: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest Group (SIG) Choices

- |  |  |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Programs                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technologies  | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distance Education and Instructional Design | <input type="checkbox"/> International             | <input type="checkbox"/> Publishing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership and Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Research    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Media                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Media Relations           |                                      |

Publications

- To receive Signals, ACE's bimonthly newsletter, in printed form, check here. Please note that current and past issues of Signals are available online at <http://www.aceweb.org/pubs/signals.html>.
- To receive the Journal of Applied Communications (JAC) in printed form, check here. Please note that the JAC is currently not available in electronic format.

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