

# GROWING TOMORROW'S TEACHERS AND LEADERS THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

Simply put, the life of the agriculture industry depends on agricultural educators, who are an integral component of the most important industries: agriculture, food, and natural resources. Throughout the state and region, demand for graduates far exceeds the number of available students.

- The need in Illinois is so critical that in August 2017 the Illinois Legislature passed Senate Bill 1991, which created the Agriculture Education Shortage Task Force, which will make recommendations on recruiting and retaining agriculture education teachers, as well as possible reforms to licensure and testing requirements.
- Moreover, the worldwide need for skilled leaders is critical. More than 80% of employers surveyed by the National Association for Colleges and Employers (2016) state that leadership is the top attribute they look for in new graduates.



The University of Illinois Agricultural Education Program has a longstanding commitment to prepare agricultural teachers and industry leaders, and a future is envisioned in which additional scholarship support enables even more prospective educators and leaders to select the Agricultural Education Program as their college home.

## **OPPORTUNITY:**

The Agricultural Education Program is nationally competitive, and graduates enjoy extraordinary placement rates in schools, corporations, and communities, often emerging into organizational leadership roles soon after they leave campus. Why is it important to produce graduates who become high school agriculture teachers and industry leaders?

- Agriculture teachers teach and mentor middle and high school students during a time of critical career interest development, and thus play a crucial role in the agriculture workforce pipeline.
- Agriculture teachers have a direct impact on recruitment of future students, by encouraging their students to pursue an education at the University of Illinois.
- Graduates who become industry leaders are influential in agriculture policy, and because of the quality of their own education are proponents of providing internship and career opportunities to University of Illinois students.

To address the critical shortage of graduates the Agricultural Education Program is striving to expand the number of enrolled students, but prospective students are presented with financial realities that can lead them to select other universities or other career paths.

- Other state and regional institutions effectively market greater affordability to future agricultural education students.
- Students who choose to become high school agriculture teachers encounter significant financial burdens associated with testing requirements, unpaid course requirements associated with classroom observations and student teaching, and travel and housing costs.

College of Agricultural, Consumer  
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The number of people influenced by a teacher (or the students of that teacher) is potentially enormous and long-lasting. Additional scholarship support will allow more high-potential students to learn with us and become the inspiration for the next generation. Our world is counting on it.

## RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Availability of scholarships significantly influences a student's decision of where to attend college, and additional scholarship support will allow the Agricultural Education Program to more effectively recruit outstanding high school students who have an interest in the field.

We are seeking additional scholarship resources of \$80,000 per year, which, when combined with college-level scholarships and financial support offered by entities outside the university, would allow us to offer competitive scholarship packages (ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per student) that will make the University of Illinois the best destination for students interested in the agricultural education program.



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