

**Sauk Valley Community College  
January 26, 2026**

**Action Item 4.5**

**Topic:** Faculty Appointment – CEO and Agriculture

**College Health Metric:** Academics – The College provides quality, contemporary, and relevant educational opportunities to the community

**Presented By:** Drs. David Hellmich and Jon Mandrell

**Presentation:**

The administration has been in the process of hiring a full-time CEO and Agriculture faculty member. This position is in partnership with the CEO program of WACC. The search committee was composed of Amber Schmidt, Grace Johnson, Josh Johnson, and Josh Knie. Sasha Logan, Dean of Business, Career, and Technical Education served as Chairperson.

*Academic Background:* Emily Brooks has received her Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Consumer Economics with a minor in Leadership Studies. She is enrolled at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to receive her Master of Science in Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication with a focus on Educational Program Development. She is scheduled to earn her Master's degree in May 2026 and aspires to return to her roots in the Sauk Valley to apply her skills and experience in service to the community.

*Professional Background:* Emily has been employed by the University of Illinois in several progressive roles, including teaching assistant, department head student assistant, and new student registration intern. She has also served as a co-instructor and program coordinator for study abroad programs, overseeing both pre-departure coursework and in-country instruction.

**Recommendation:**

The administration recommends the Board approve the appointment of Emily Brooks as an Assistant Professor I of CEO and Agriculture beginning August 14, 2026 at an annual base salary of \$51,582.34.

## EMILY BROOKS

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### TEACHING STATEMENT

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My experiences as a student throughout my learning journey have shaped my perspective on education: meaningful learning transcends grades and should cultivate intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning inside and outside of classrooms. In my early academic years, I often tied my sense of academic achievement to the test scores I received. Graduate study has allowed me to reclaim a more authentic curiosity for learning – one that values exploration, creativity, and reflection as much as measurable outcomes. This shift has influenced how I view education, as students thrive when given opportunities to move beyond external evaluation and when they are encouraged to see themselves as capable of growth. In my recent teaching roles, I have seen that when students feel both challenged and supported, they are more likely to approach learning with curiosity, resilience, and a growth mindset that prepares them for lifelong learning.

My philosophy is grounded in constructivist theory, which emphasizes that students actively build knowledge through experience and reflection rather than passively receiving information. I believe that learning is most meaningful when students are invited to test ideas, wrestle with questions, and see the value of learning in their own lives. I believe that knowledge develops in relationship to context, community, and personal perspective. Constructivist learning environments should therefore foster collaboration and dialogue, where students not only absorb content but also practice articulating and refining their own understandings. For me, the most durable and transformative learning is experiential – when students are encouraged to apply learned information in real-world contexts, reflect on what worked and what did not, and integrate those lessons into a stronger sense of self and purpose.

These beliefs have shaped the way I approach my teaching roles, where I aim to balance content delivery with opportunities for reflection and application. In *LEAD 260: Foundations of Leadership*, I begin each discussion section with a brief overview of lecture material from our online modules before guiding students to connect those theories to their own experiences. These activities encourage students to move beyond memorization toward embracing leadership as a skill they can practice and refine. Beyond the classroom, I accompanied students on a study abroad program to Ireland focused on agricultural communications. By encouraging daily reflection and linking observations to coursework, I helped students see the program as an opportunity to expand their perspectives and build confidence as future professionals. These experiences have reinforced my beliefs that teaching requires both mentorship and intentional program design. Whether in a classroom, advising setting, or program, I strive to create learning environments where students can take ownership, practice problem solving, and see the relevance of their work to their own lives and communities.

# EMILY BROOKS

## EDUCATION

### University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Champaign, IL

M.S., Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications

Expected May 2026

Focus: Educational Program Development

Advisor: Dr. David Rosch

B.S., Agricultural and Consumer Economics

May 2024

Minor: Leadership Studies

Certificate: Management and Experiential Learning

*Summa Cum Laude*

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### University of Illinois

Champaign, IL

*LEAD 260 Foundations of Leadership, Teaching Assistant*

August 2024 – Present

- Facilitate up to three discussion sections per semester (17 to 34 students each), creating a student-driven environment that fosters engagement, critical thinking, and application of leadership theories.
- Collaborate with instructional team to refine lesson plans; evaluate assignments and provide constructive feedback to support student growth, earning recognition on the *List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students* for teaching effectiveness.

*LEAD 460 Critical Approaches to Leadership, Teaching Assistant*

January 2025 – May 2025

- Supported 45 juniors and seniors in analyzing leadership models, applying problem-solving skills, and engaging with complex issues in contemporary society.
- Partnered with the instructor to assess student progress and adapt curriculum, ensuring meaningful learning outcomes and connection to real-world contexts.

*ACE 341 Careers and Professionalism, Teaching Assistant*

August 2023 – October 2023

- Assisted in a professional development course for ~75 students, guiding exploration of career pathways in agricultural and consumer economics.
- Evaluated resumes and career plans, providing actionable feedback that connected student skill development to industry expectations.

*ACES 101 Contemporary Issues, Teaching Assistant*

August 2023 – October 2023

- Supported a first-year experience course for ~20 freshmen, focused on student transition and success in college.
- Developed supplemental course materials, graded weekly assignments, and reported student progress concerns to faculty for early support.

## PROGRAMMING AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

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### University of Illinois

Champaign, IL

*New Student Registration Intern, Office of Undergraduate Admissions*

May 2025 – Present

- Coordinated orientation logistics and managed administrative tasks (event setup, attendance rosters, conflict forms), ensuring smooth daily operations through cross-functional communication with campus partners.
- Currently documenting the full planning and implementation process for New Student Registration to support an upcoming organizational transition and ensure continuity of programming.

*Graduate Cohort Engagement Coordinator, ALEC Program*

August 2025 – Present

- Collaborate with peers to design Lunch & Learn sessions that connect graduate students with new ALEC faculty, highlighting research and professional journeys.
- Organize community-building opportunities that strengthen relationships and enhance morale within the graduate cohort.

*Ireland Study Abroad Program Coordinator, College of ACES*

February 2025 – June 2025

- Planned program logistics with faculty and host partners, including travel, schedules, and site visits, to provide students with applied, real-world learning opportunities.
- Supported 12 students in developing global awareness and professional skills by connecting agricultural communications to experiential learning abroad.

*The Morrow Magazine Column Editor, ALEC Program*

January 2024 – May 2024

- Coordinated and edited profile features for the program's magazine, ensuring consistent voice, style, and integration across the publication.
- Wrote original pieces highlighting student and alumni experiences to showcase the program.

*Department Head Student Assistant, Department of ACE*

October 2022 – May 2024

- Drafted correspondence, reports, and presentations for the Department Head
- Executed strategic planning tasks, project coordination, and event preparation by organizing materials and managing logistics for departmental initiatives.

*Department Ambassador, Department of ACE*

October 2022 – May 2024

- Guided prospective students and families in their college exploration process through individual meetings and informational events.
- Assisted first-year students in their transition to the University of Illinois by facilitating welcome events and connecting them to campus resources.

### University of Illinois Foundation

Champaign, IL

*Programming Intern, Strategic Innovation*

August 2024 – Present

- Conduct market research and contribute to program development by creating and implementing innovative initiatives aimed at revolutionizing philanthropy.
- Manage program data to ensure accurate tracking, evaluation, and informed decision-making.

*Andrew W. Hibel Intern, Gift Planning & Trust Services* June 2024 – August 2024

- Selected for internship based on academic achievement and agricultural economics background; researched planned giving strategies and analyzed market practices to improve outreach and donor engagement.
- Collaborated with advancement professionals in weekly meetings to discuss industry trends and identify opportunities for process improvement.

### **Whiteside County Farm Bureau**

Morrison, IL

*Membership Engagement Intern*

June 2023 – August 2023

- Reviewed Illinois Farm Bureau membership data to inform recruitment and retention strategies.
- Designed a member survey and collaborated with marketing staff to align programming and communications with identified community needs.

## **ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

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### **Global Education**

*Recreation, Sport and Tourism Economics in Croatia*

Summer 2024

- Examined tourism economics through site visits with government agencies, tourism leaders, and university faculty.

*Leadership Study Tour in Rome*

Summer 2023

- Examined leadership decisions and societal impact through historical frameworks, deepening understanding of leadership theory in a global context.

*Service Learning, Child, Family, Health and Agriculture in South Africa*

Winter 2022 –2023

- Supported literacy education for children ages two to 18 through a service-learning placement in Khayelitsha while examining South African history, politics, and post-Apartheid society, with a focus on youth, education, healthcare, and food security.

*Discovering Agricultural & Environmental Systems in Panama*

Summer 2022

- Gained cross-cultural understanding of farming and development practices through site visits, strengthening awareness of global agricultural challenges and traditions.

### **Honors and Awards**

*University of Illinois College of ACES, Jonathan Baldwin Turner Scholar*

2021 – 2024

- Competitive scholarship and leadership program recognizing academic excellence, service, and engagement.

*University of Illinois College of ACES, James Scholar*

2021 – 2024

- Honors program emphasizing undergraduate research, leadership, and enriched coursework opportunities.

*Grain and Feed Association of Illinois, Industry Immersion Scholar* 2023 – 2024

- Professional development scholarship program connecting students with agribusiness leaders through site visits, networking, and applied learning.

*University of Illinois, Ambassador Whitaker Scholar in African Studies* 2023

- Awarded in recognition of international learning and global engagement in African studies.

*Whiteside County Farm Bureau Scholar* 2021, 2022

- Awarded for academic achievement and leadership within agricultural communities.

### **Organization Leadership**

*4-H House Cooperative Sorority* 2021 – 2024

- Served in leadership roles including Interview Chair and Professional Development Chair, supporting member recruitment and development.
- Contributed to philanthropy initiatives, chapter programming, and the daily operation of a fully member-run cooperative house.

*Illinois Junior Angus Association* 2012 – 2024

- Held officer and board roles including Treasurer, Show Secretary, and Director.
- Supported financial oversight, show coordination, and youth leadership development.

*Whiteside Area Career Center CEO Program* 2020 – 2021

- Participated in a year-long entrepreneurship program focused on real-world business development, leadership, and professional skill-building.
- Collaborated with peers on financial planning, business concepts, and industry engagement through community-based learning.

*Prophetstown-Lyndon-Tampico FFA, TITLE* 2017 – 2021

- Served as Chapter Officer including President, Vice President, and Secretary.
- Led chapter operations and member engagement initiatives.

### **Farming Operation**

*Shore Acres Farms, Inc., Production Assistant* January 2014 – Present

- Contribute to herd management planning and operational decision-making within a grain and livestock farm through strategic input and operational support.

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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Council for Advancement and Support of Education June 2024 – Present

### **CERTIFICATIONS**

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Graduate Teaching Certificate	In Progress
Mental Health First Aid	2025
Management and Experiential Learning	2024

## REFERENCES

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Dr. Jennifer Smist  
*Supervisor for LEAD 260*  
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