



# AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP ALUMNI & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## PROGRAM UPDATE

Discover the latest developments in our Agricultural Leadership Program including our current offerings and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

## ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Learn more about how to stay connected and future opportunities to get involved with alumni relations.

## FACULTY FLASHBACK

Get an update from program founders, Drs. Bill and Penny Weeks to learn about what they have been up to since retiring.



WELCOME HOME, WHAT'S NEW AT OSU



FACULTY FLASHBACK



ONLINE DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM



STUDENT SUCCESS

# A WARM ALUMNI WELCOME

SO HAPPY TO RECONNECT WITH YOU

Dear OSU Agricultural Leadership Program Family,

It is with immense joy and gratitude that we share our new Ag Leadership Alumni and Friends newsletter with you!

In these pages, you will find not just a newsletter, but a bridge connecting the past and present, and a variety of stories, successes, and shared experiences that have shaped our program over the years. More importantly, this newsletter symbolizes our unwavering commitment to foster a thriving community of passionate individuals who have contributed significantly to the world of agriculture and leadership.

**Alumni engagement is the heartbeat of our program**, and through this newsletter we hope to foster and strengthen these ties. We understand that your journey with us didn't end with graduation; instead, it marked the beginning of a lifelong connection to a network of like-minded individuals driven by a common purpose - to make a difference in the agricultural industry and beyond. Through this newsletter, **we aim to provide you with a window into the ongoing developments within our program, the achievements of our alumni, and the opportunities to engage and collaborate.** It serves as a reminder that you are an integral part of the OSU Agricultural Leadership family, and your contributions, whether big or small, continue to shape our shared legacy.

We invite you to join us in this exciting journey of rekindling old friendships, forging new ones, and giving back to a program that has given us so much. Your insights, experiences, and passion are invaluable assets that can inspire and empower the next generation of agricultural leaders.

As we embark on this renewed effort to strengthen our alumni engagement, **we encourage you to reach out, reconnect, and get involved.** Together, we can ensure that the OSU Agricultural Leadership Program continues to flourish, producing leaders who will drive positive change in the agriculture industry and beyond.

**Thank you for being an essential part of our story**, and we look forward to the many chapters we will write together in the years to come. Stay connected, stay inspired, and let's keep the spirit of agricultural leadership alive.

*Go Pokes!*

Dr. Lauren Lewis Cline, Dr. Courtney P. Brown, & Dr. Bradley Coleman

Oklahoma State Agricultural Leadership Program



← SCAN TO  
VIEW A WELCOME VIDEO

link: <https://tinyurl.com/drllcline>







## CARSON SHINES AT OSU'S RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Hunter Carson, a sophomore majoring in Agricultural Leadership, consistently demonstrates leadership by going above and beyond! Hunter recently presented a flash talk titled “**State FFA Officers’ Autophotography of Leadership Competency Development during a Short-Term Domestic Study Tour**” at OSU’s Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. In collaboration with research partners, Dr. Lauren Cline, Dr. Bradley Coleman, and Newlin Humphrey, this study aimed to better understand the perceived leadership competencies developed by students through autophotography following their participation in the National FFA Organization’s 2022 Leadership Seminar for State Officers, a short-term domestic study tour. During the presentation, Hunter shared the study’s findings which serve as a valuable contribution to the field of leadership development.

**Congratulations, Hunter!** Thank you for your unwavering commitment and dedication to our program and the agricultural industry!

*Pictured Left to Right: Dr. Lauren L. Cline, Dr. Bradley Coleman, Hunter Carson, & Newlin Humphrey*



## SHELBY'S INSPIRING LEADERSHIP: REVIVING THE OSU AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP CLUB

Shelby is a Senior from Pawhuska, Oklahoma majoring in Agricultural Leadership and minoring in Law and Legal studies with aspirations to attend Law School. Shelby Bute's inspiring leadership and commitment to our program has not gone unnoticed. Recognizing the need to provide students with an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities where community service meets fellowship, **she took the initiative to create the OSU Agricultural Leadership Club.**

Shelby's vision for the club is simple yet impactful: *offer members a space to relate to one another, participate in community service projects that channel personal passions, and network with each other in a casual manner.* With an impressive first year interest from students, excitement fills the air as they prepare to participate in Homecoming events! We look forward to watching the OSU Agricultural Leadership club members make a **positive impact in Stillwater and beyond!** The future is bright!

## RETIREMENT ADVENTURES OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PIONEERS: DRS. BILL AND PENNY WEEKS

A few years ago, the creators of Agricultural Leadership at Oklahoma State University retired from their faculty roles. In 2001 the department hired Dr. Penny Pennington Weeks (just Pennington at the time, Bill and Penny married in 2007) to create a major in Agricultural Leadership. With the help of Dr. Bill Weeks (who was teaching the sole leadership course), **the two teamed up to create the Agricultural Leadership major, minor and graduate program options along with the coursework needed to support each.**

As an alum, if you've taken a course in Agricultural Leadership there is a good chance that you took a class with one of the Weeks. Bill was at OSU from 1989 to 2020 and Penny served from 2001 to 2021. Bill retired in 2020 just as the campus was sending students and faculty home due to COVID-19 concerns. Penny retired the following year to enjoy retired life at home with Bill.

Today Bill spends his days gardening and taking care of a mixed flock of about 15 chickens. During Covid, he mastered making sourdough bread and bakes a few times a week. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays you can find Bill at the Stillwater food pantry, Our Daily Bread. He likes shopping with clients and "retail recovery" from Wal-Mart and Aldi. What does Bill miss about working at OSU? **He says he really misses advising students, learning about how they got to OSU and helping them graduate.** He doesn't miss grading papers nor entering grades and prefers to drink his hot tea at home instead of the office.

With more time on her hands, Penny is attempting to master the art of flower gardening. Between the Oklahoma winds and abundance of deer and grasshoppers, there are plenty of variables that keep her returning to the books looking for new ways to beat the environment. She is also smitten with her new dog, Midge. Midge showed up at the farm this summer and enjoys playing chase with Penny in the woods on her Kubota UTV. Penny is also busy documenting retired life. **You can catch up with her on Instagram @pennypenningtonweeks.**

When not spending time at home or around Stillwater, you're most likely to find the two at niche grocery stores, out antiquing, searching for good eats or picking up more plants at a garden center. **Both Penny and Bill enjoy running into their former students (and their children), so be sure to say hello if you see them out and about.**



SCAN TO   
VIEW A VIDEO OF THE WEEKS  
 INSTAGRAM: PENNYPENNINGTONWEEKS





*Professionalism***BRAYDON SANDERS***Diversity***NEWLIN HUMPHREY***Commitment to Agriculture***BRETT CHAPMAN****DARLA WATTS**  
*Authentic Leadership***CLAYTON HOWZE**  
*Critical Thinking*

## CORE VALUE SENIORS

This year marked the inception of a new tradition in our department – **recognizing outstanding graduating seniors who epitomize the five core values of the Agricultural Leadership program at OSU**. Our faculty identified exceptional students, who excelled not only academically but also in embodying our discipline's principles and ideals. Darla Watts, a spring 2023 graduate, was honored as the Authentic Leadership senior. She leads with intention and unwavering integrity, consistently demonstrating passion and high moral standards. Brett Chapman, also a spring 2023 graduate, was named the Commitment to Agriculture senior, showcasing dedication to the dairy industry, critical thinking, and a holistic approach to agricultural challenges.

Clayton Howze, a fall 2022 graduate, was designated as the Critical Thinking senior, valuing empathy and the ability to see multiple perspectives. Newlin Humphrey, another fall 2022 graduate, received the Diversity senior award for creating inclusive environments and embracing differences. Lastly, Braydon Sanders, a spring 2023 graduate, was recognized as the Professionalism senior for his hardworking and humble nature. ***We eagerly anticipate their exceptional contributions to the wider world.*** We are excited to continue this tradition, upholding the **core values of OSU Agricultural Leadership: Authentic Leadership, Commitment to Agriculture, Critical Thinking, Diversity, and Professionalism.**





## GROWING STRONG: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP AT OSU

We're thrilled to share the latest programmatic updates that are shaping the future of our department. Our family of Ag Lead enthusiasts continues to flourish, with 77 dedicated undergraduate majors and 45 graduate students pursuing either a Master's of Agriculture with a specialization in agricultural leadership or a Master's of Science in Agricultural Education and Leadership. The surge in our program's popularity is a testament to the timeless appeal of equipping our students with the knowledge and skills they need to make a lasting impact in the agriculture industry.

As we look forward to the future, we're excited to unveil the reinvigorated Agricultural Leadership club, a labor of love spearheaded by our undergraduate students. After several years of dormancy, this student-led initiative promises to breathe new life into the heart of our department, fostering a sense of community, mentorship, and leadership development for our members. Furthermore, we proudly introduce the fresh faces of our department's faculty – Drs. Lauren Cline, Courtney Brown, and Bradley Coleman. They have all taken on the role of tenure-track faculty over the past year and a half, poised to guide our program through a transformative journey as we prepare to relocate to the newly constructed New Frontiers Ag Hall.

These dedicated educators bring with them a wealth of expertise and a fervent commitment to shaping the next generation of agricultural leaders. We can't wait to witness the remarkable strides our program will take as we embark on this exciting new chapter.



**DR. LAUREN L. CLINE**



**DR. COURTNEY P. BROWN**



**DR. BRADLEY COLEMAN**



← **SCAN TO**  
**VIEW A PROGRAM**  
**UPDATE VIDEO**  
 link: <https://tinyurl.com/drbc Coleman>



# THE SUCCESS STORY OF OSU'S ONLINE DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM

The Agricultural Leadership online degree completion program at Oklahoma State University is a **flexible opportunity designed for working professionals and aspiring leaders in the agricultural industry who wish to continue their education.** The online program *began with a cohort of 12 students in 2017 and was the result of a USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant.* Since then, enrollment in the online degree completion program has grown exponentially, **nearly doubling the overall enrollment** of the agricultural leadership major.

Graduates of the online degree completion program have gone on to secure management and leadership positions within their companies, pursued new career opportunities across a wide-range of career paths in the agricultural sectors, and continue to invest in their local communities.

More information about the agricultural leadership online degree completion program can be found at <https://osonline.okstate.edu/programs/undergraduate/agricultural-leadership.html>

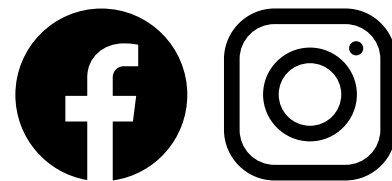


# ALUMNI, STAY CONNECTED WITH THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP!



We're thrilled to keep you informed about the latest developments in our vibrant Agricultural Leadership community. We have exciting plans in store to enhance alumni engagement and support, including opportunities for advisory board participation and gathering your valuable feedback to shape the future of our program. Keep an eye out for upcoming newsletter issues and communications to stay connected and be part of our journey ahead!

STAY IN THE LOOP



OKSTATEAECL



SCAN TO  
VIEW A VIDEO ON  
STAYING CONNECTED  
link: <https://tinyurl.com/drcpbrown>

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS...

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



We're on the lookout for alumni highlights to feature in our newsletter, and we'd love to hear from you. Share your exciting news since graduating from our program – whether it's a career update, a new addition to your family, or any other significant life journey.

Please take a moment to visit the link below and tell us all about it. We're eager to catch up and share your successes with our community!

WANT TO BE HIGHLIGHTED? GO TO THIS LINK:  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/AGLEALUM](https://tinyurl.com/aglealum)

OR SCAN HERE:

