We are pleased to have you as a member of this department, both as a graduate student and either as a recipient of an assistantship/fellowship or employment as a technician. Whether you are new to the department or an “old timer,” hopefully the information given in this handbook will help lessen the “fear of the unknown” as you begin or continue your assistantship, fellowship, or technician position. We are committed to the philosophy that graduate assistant positions serve as developmental opportunities for individuals who seek to join a community of scholars in their respective fields within academe or professional practice. Graduate assistantships should be mutually beneficial to student and faculty supervisor, as negotiated between them at the beginning of each semester. As noted by the Office of the Vice President for Research, the nature of the duties of a graduate assistant are such that they require knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning, are predominantly intellectual and varied in character, and require consistent exercise of discretion and judgment.

Graduate assistants are master’s or doctoral students who receive a small salary and if applicable, a tuition waiver in exchange for apprenticing with faculty members for twenty hours each week during the academic year. In some cases, assistantships may be extended through the summer. Graduate assistants are required to maintain a 3.0 grade point average while enrolling in at least 9 credit hours each fall and spring, and if applicable, 6 credit hours each summer. Specific assignments are made based upon the needs of the Department and the experience of the students.

If questions arise that have not been addressed about your roles, responsibilities, or the everyday “mechanics” of working in the department, please check with the faculty member(s) with whom you will work, your major advisor, Clarice Fulton (Program Coordinator), Dr. Tim Murphy (Associate Head for Graduate programs, or Dr. Jack Elliot (Department Head).

Graduate Faculty

The Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications at Texas A&M University is widely recognized as among the top three departments in the nation. Faculty members in the Department provide leadership to national and international organizations within the discipline and cluster in learning communities (programs) based primarily on their contexts, or settings where they work.

Agricultural Communications-Agricultural Journalism Faculty

**Deb Dunsford,** Senior Lecturer
- B.S., Kansas State; M.A., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Agricultural Communication; Writing Instruction; Issues Management
- rutherford@tamu.edu, 979-458-3389

**Billy McKim,** Assistant Professor
- B.S., University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY; M.Ed., University of Missouri-Columbia; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Research / Evaluation Design and Methods; Curriculum / Program Impact Assessment
- brmckim@tamu.edu, (979) 845-0794

**Tracy Rutherford,** Associate Professor and Associate Head for Undergraduate Programs
- B.S., Cornell University; M.A., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Agricultural Communication; Technology Adoption; Visual Communication
- rutherford@tamu.edu, 979-458-2744
eLearning and Professional Development Faculty

Kim Dooley, Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Operations
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.Ed., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Distance Education; Qualitative Research Methods; International Agricultural Development
- k-dooley@tamu.edu, 979-845-6923

James R. Lindner, Professor
- B.S., Auburn University; M.B.A., Auburn University; Ph.D., The Ohio State University
- Professional interests: Planning and Needs Assessment; Research Measurement and Analysis; Distance Education; Extension Education; Organizational Leadership; International Agricultural Development and Education
- j-lindner@tamu.edu, 979-458-2701

Theresa Pesl Murphrey, Assistant Professor
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.S. Texas A&M University; Ph.D. Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Learner-Centered Instructional Design; Online Learning; Technology-Enhanced Education; International Agricultural Development and Education
- t-murphrey@tamu.edu, 979-458-2749

Tim Murphy, Professor
- B.S., University of Missouri-Columbia; M.Ed., University of Missouri-Columbia; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Technology-Assisted Teaching Methodology; Research, Measurement and Analysis; Educational Administration
- tmurphy@tamu.edu, 979-862-3419

Extension Education Faculty

Chris Boleman, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.S., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Extension Education; Extension Advisory Councils/Leadership; Program Development; Evaluation/Accountability
- cboleman@tamu.edu, 979-845-7280

Scott R. Cummings, Associate Professor, Extension Specialist, and Associate Department Head for Extension
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.P.H., The University of Texas School of Public Health; Ph.D., The University of Texas School of Public Health
- Professional interests: Evaluation and Accountability; Program Development; Methods of Behavioral Change; Extension Education
- scummings@tamu.edu, 979-847-9388

Jeffrey Ripley, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
- B.S., Tarleton State University; M.Ed., Texas State University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional Interests: Extension Education; Evaluation; Program Development; Strategic Planning
- j-ripley@tamu.edu, 979-845-7280

T. Andy Vestal, Professor and Extension Specialist
- B.S., Tarleton State University; M.S., Texas Tech University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Delivery Strategies; Planning and Needs Assessment; Extension Education; Agricultural Communication; Agricultural Literacy
- t-vestal@tamu.edu, 979-862-3013

International Agricultural Development

John "Jack" F. Elliot, Department Head and Professor
- B.S., Washington State University, M.A., Washington State University, Ph.D., Ohio State University
- Professional Interests: International Agricultural Development
- jelliot@tamu.edu, 979-862-3003
**Glen C. Shinn,** Emeritus Professor
- B.S., Oklahoma State University; M.Ed., University of Missouri-Columbia; Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia
- Professional interests: Planning and Needs Assessment; Learning-Teaching Theory; Adult Education; Distance Education; International Agricultural Development and Education
- g-shinn@tamu.edu, 979-862-3012

**Gary Wingenbach,** Professor
- B.S., Oregon State University; M.Ag., Oregon State University; M.A.T., Oregon State University; Ph.D., Iowa State University
- Professional interests: Agricultural Communication; Research Methods; International Agricultural Development
- g-wingenbach@tamu.edu, 979-862-1507

**Organizational and Community Leadership Faculty**

**Barry L. Boyd,** Associate Professor
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.S., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Leadership Education; Learner-Centered Instructional Design; Planning and Needs Assessment
- b-boyd@tamu.edu, 979-862-3693

**Chanda Elbert,** Associate Professor
- B.S., Southern University AMC; M.S., University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University
- Professional interests: Leadership and Multicultural Environments; Women in Leadership; Evaluation and Accountability; Distance Education
- celbert@tamu.edu, 979-458-2699

**Landry L. Lockett,** Senior Lecturer
- B.S., Texas Tech University; M.S., Texas Tech University; Ed.D.,Texas A&M University & Texas Tech University
- Professional Interests: Leadership Education; Volunteerism; Onboarding of New Employees; Teaching Effectiveness
- l-lockett@tamu.edu, 979-458-7991

**Lori Moore,** Associate Professor
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.S., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., University of Florida
- Professional interests: Collegiate Leadership Programs; Delivery Strategies; Leadership Education
- llmoore@tamu.edu, 979-845-1295

**Summer Odom,** Assistant Professor
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.S., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Organizational and Community Leadership;
- summerodom@tamu.edu, 979-862-7650

**Jennifer Williams,** Assistant Professor
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.S., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Oklahoma State University
- Professional Interests: Leadership Development, Pedagogical Practices of Leadership Education, Ethics and Organizational Culture
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**Teacher Education Faculty**

**Gary E. Briers,** Professor
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.Ed., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Iowa State University
- Professional interests: Research, Measurement and Analysis; Research Design/Methodology; Teaching Methodology; Human-Animal Interactions
- g-briers@tamu.edu, 979-862-3000
Julie Harlin, Associate Professor
- B.S., Texas A&M University; M.S., Texas A&M University; Ph.D., Oklahoma State University
- Professional interests: Teacher Education; Delivery Strategies; Learner-Centered Instructional Design
- j-harlin@tamu.edu, 979-862-3014

Alvin Larke, Jr., Professor
- B.S., South Carolina State College; M.Ed., South Carolina State College; Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia
- Professional interests: Teacher Education; Cultural Sensitivity/Diversity; Adult Education; Minority Recruitment and Retention in Agriculture
- a-larke@tamu.edu, 979-862-3008

Tim Murphy, Professor and Associate Head for Graduate Programs
- B.S., University of Missouri-Columbia; M.Ed., University of Missouri-Columbia; Ph.D., Texas A&M University
- Professional interests: Teacher Education; STEM Integration
- tmurphy@tamu.edu, 979-862-3419

John Rayfield, Assistant Professor
- B.S., Auburn University; M.Ed., University of Georgia; Ed.D., Texas Tech University
- Professional interests: Teacher Education, Extension Education
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Administrative Contacts

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Department Head and Professor  
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Debbie King  
Assistant to the Department Head  
(979) 862-3003  
dj-king@tamu.edu

Tim Murphy  
Associate Head for Graduate Programs & Research  
(979) 862-3419  
murphy@tamu.edu

Clarice Fulton  
Graduate Program Coordinator  
(979) 862-7180  
cfulton@tamu.edu

Kenneth Stroud  
Business Coordinator  
(979) 862-3007  
stroud@tamu.edu

Aggie Honor Code
Texas A&M University aspires to excellence in all its endeavors. Our code of conduct, traditionally called the Aggie Honor Code, exemplifies excellence through a simple, straightforward statement. The Aggie Honor Code embraces honesty, exhorts responsibility, and expects integrity.

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

The Aggie Honor Code affirms ethical values that are applicable to students, faculty, and staff alike. The word “ETHICS”, as used below, reflects the spirit of the Aggie Honor Code and the values by which Texas A&M University strives to interact with constituents and the communities it serves.

EXCELLENCE Leading with integrity in pursuit of the vision
TRUST Building relationships through equity and respect
HONOR Acting with individual responsibility and accountability
INTEGRITY Upholding honesty and uprightness in purpose and practice
COMMITMENT Demonstrating diligence to ethical conduct and compliance requirements
STANDARDS Setting boundaries and parameters to define and guide responsible conduct
Ethics Policy and Related Policies
Policies provide direction and clarify responsibilities and expectations. The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents set forth standards in System Policy 07.01 Ethics Policy, TAMUS Employees for the following areas: principles of ethical conduct; conflicts of interest; system property and services; benefits, gifts, and honoraria; dual office holding; public officials and political activities; travel; and employment. System Policy 07.01 also specifies that employees are to promptly report waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption in accordance with System Policy 21.04, Control of Fraud and Fraudulent Actions. All new employees are to receive ethics training within 30 days of hire, and all current employees are to retake the ethics training every two years in accordance with System Policy 33.05 Employee Training. A student conduct code is included in the Student Rules.

Center for Teaching Excellence
This Center offers the university sanctioned Teaching Assistant Training Evaluation Program (TATEP). This program is mandatory for any graduate assistant which will hold teaching responsibilities. By accepting the assistantship offer, you agree to the responsibilities and the Department will enroll you in the specific date indicated for a given semester the training is offered.

Disability Services
Students with disabilities have the right to equal access to courses, programs, activities, services, and facilities offered at Texas A&M University. Students are also entitled to reasonable accommodations. All information about the student’s disability is to be kept confidential. More information may be obtained from, http://disability.tamu.edu. If students deem it necessary to receive accommodations for a particular class, it is the students’ responsibility to inform the instructor or graduate assistant teaching the course.

University Statement on Harassment and Discrimination
Texas A&M is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, Texas A&M encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit.

Texas A&M University, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Students should contact the Office of the Dean of Student Life at 979-845-3113, faculty members should contact the Office of the Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost at 979-845-4274, and staff members should contact the Human Resources Department Employee Relations Office at 979-862-4027.

Length of Service

Master’s Graduate Assistants
Master’s level positions may be held for up to two years, dependent upon performance and position availability.

Doctoral Graduate Assistants
Doctoral level GA positions may be held for up to three years, dependent upon performance and position availability.

Graduate Assistant Orientation
The Graduate Assistantship Orientation which is in conjunction with the New Graduate Student Orientation serves as a means of orienting graduate assistants to the department, their roles, and their responsibilities. Additionally, the orientation will inform you in the areas of writing and research in order for you to demonstrate a form of scholarship each semester. During the first year of implementation, all graduate assistants will be required to attend the Orientation in its entirety. In conclusion of the orientation, each graduate assistant will meet with the Business Coordinator for department logistics such as, payroll, keys, computer accounts, etc.
After you have been a graduate assistant for at least one semester, there may be instances in which your assistance is requested in presenting at the New Graduate Student Orientation and the Prospective Graduate Student Day. The New Graduate Student Orientation is generally held every fall semester and the Prospective Graduate Student Day is held every fall and spring.

**General Guidelines/Policies/Procedures**

**Office Space**
Graduate assistants, graduate fellows, and international graduate students on scholarships or contracts will be assigned offices by the Associate Head for Graduate Programs in conjunction with the Program Coordinator to the extent that they are available.

a. Get a key to your office from Mr. Debbie King. This key is University Property. It may not be duplicated.

b. Never leave an empty office unlocked. If you’re the last one out, lock the door.

c. Please be considerate of others working in a shared office as you visit with friends, use the telephone, play the radio, etc. Offices are really a place for work, not for socializing.

d. Please keep your office clean and tidy.

e. Please do not smoke, use tobacco of any kind, or cook in offices.

**Work Schedule and Electronic Calendar**
Graduate assistants normally spend at least 40 hours per week in the office. Not all “work” occurs while “in” the office, and not all time in the office is spent accomplishing “work.” You are expected to spend approximately 20 hours per week accomplishing Assistantship objectives (Teaching, Research, Service) leaving the other 20 hours to work on your own academic or personal pursuits. Clearly, “half-time” does not necessarily mean exactly 20 hours each week. Some weeks may be fewer than 20 hours of work; others more than that.

Use the electronic calendar in Microsoft Outlook so that other people will know when you are available and they may schedule meetings with you. For assistance in using Outlook ask other “experienced” graduate students. We recommend that during the “conventional” 40-hour work week (M-F 8-5), you schedule yourself as “busy” during classes you are taking, classes you are teaching, and during all other times when you are NOT available in your office—including lunch, study time, etc. Time when you will be in your office working on Assistantship activities should be left “open” so that meetings or appointments may be scheduled. If you have “open office hours” for your students, DO NOT schedule that time as “busy.” When a student does “schedule” a meeting with you, list that appointment as “busy” on your Outlook calendar.

Make and deliver a simplified, printed copy of your class/work schedule for the semester (Student Information Form) to Clarice Fulton, your Supervisor, and any other faculty members with whom you work. Post a copy of this schedule (with phone number and e-mail address) in your office as information for drop-in visitors and students.

**Holiday/Vacation Schedule 2012-2013**
Graduate assistants follow the same holiday and vacation schedule as staff (http://employees.tamu.edu/employees/benefits/leave/holidays.aspx). All other days are working days.

- **Thanksgiving** Nov. 28-29, 2013
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** Jan. 20, 2014
- **Spring Break** Mar. 13-14, 2014
- **Memorial Day** May 26, 2014
- **Independence Day** July 4, 2014
Work Assignments

Graduate Assistants on Departmental funds normally have four “assignments.” Ordinarily, three of these are “teaching assignments,” and one is a “scholarly assignment.”

Teaching assignments for Graduate Assistants on Departmental funds are made by Dr. Murphy after course enrollment information becomes available each semester. If you have a preference for a particular assignment, communicate that to Dr. Murphy (email is preferred). Your preference will certainly be one of the factors considered.

You may be asked to teach a class at the same time you would like to take a class. If this happens, please contact Dr. Murphy. He will try to accommodate your teaching assignment requests. If the scheduling conflict cannot be resolved, you may choose to relinquish your assistantship if you’re unable to change your course schedule.

After your Assistantship work and class schedules are established, your classes come first. Work duties assigned AFTER your Assistantship work and class schedules have been “fit,” ordinarily should not interfere with attending your scheduled classes.

To enhance the graduate assistantship experience, and support scholarship among graduate assistants, you are required to demonstrate some form of scholarship each semester. Scholarly assignments are made with your Major Professor or Committee Chair. There is a form available to report your scholarly assignment to Dr. Murphy. Some suggestions for the types of scholarship, and scholarly products, are listed on the back of the form. The form must be completed by you, approved by your major professor or chair, and submitted to Dr. Murphy for final approval.

Tuition Support

Beginning in 2010 Texas A&M University ended a policy of paying “in-state” tuition for Master’s-Level Graduate Assistants on State Funds, and discussed phasing out tuition support for Doctoral students on State Funds. The College has since created programs, semester-to-semester, offering tuition support for Master’s-Level Graduate Teaching Assistants (GAT) on State Funds. These programs are last-minute, and tenuous. We have been very fortunate so far.

Graduate Assistant Stipends

Beginning in 2012 the Department ended a policy of maintaining equal and automatically-increasing stipends for all Graduate Assistants on State Funds based on semesters of service. Graduate stipends will be established to be nationally competitive for highly-qualified applicants. Any increases in stipends will be based on performance.

Annual Plan of Work and Evaluation

The duties, roles, and responsibilities of graduate assistants vary widely; we ask that you develop a Plan of Work addressing your roles in Teaching, Research, and Service in coordination with the faculty member(s) with whom you work specific to your assistantship. This document helps both you and the faculty members to minimize misunderstandings about your role. Evaluation forms addressing all three areas of your work as a Graduate Assistant will be completed each semester by the faculty members with whom you work, and the Plan of Work should be used to inform these evaluations. Dr. Elliot may schedule a time to discuss your Plan of Work with you. Provide a digital copy of your completed Plan of Work to Dr. Murphy.

Additional Opportunities /Other Duties As Assigned

From time to time, we do not have any—or enough—student workers to do things they would normally do, such as run errands, prepare mailings, load or unload supplies, set up tents, move tables, etc. We may call on you for help. We try to keep such activities to a minimum. Faculty members are occasionally caught up in these, urgent if not important, activities.

There are also some work activities outside the traditional 8-5 work day, including some weekend “opportunities” for experience! We encourage all graduate assistants to “pitch in and lend a hand” on evenings and weekends that we host departmental activities. We view your Assistantship as an opportunity to gain “applied learning” experiences. The experience you gain during these activities, and the networking you accomplish, may be more valuable than formal coursework down the line!
**Policy for Outside Employment**

Your Assistantship duties and academic responsibilities constitute a full work load. The TAMU Graduate Student Handbook requires OGS approval for TAMU employment exceeding 50%. No rule absolutely forbids additional employment outside the university. Because outside employment often interferes with both professional and academic performance, you must notify Dr. Murphy of any outside employment. Failure to do so can lead to the loss of your assistantship. While some outside employment opportunities contribute substantially to the academic and professional growth of graduate assistants and should be pursued; in general outside employment distracts from academic and professional development and is contra recommended. Please discuss outside employment opportunities with your major professor and Dr. Murphy.

**Financial Records and Reports**

Mr. Stroud is the person to see if you have human resource questions about such items as paydays, deductions taken, errors in checks, automatic deposits, etc.

**Academic Course Load**

It is the policy of the Office of Graduate Studies that students on assistantship or fellowships must maintain full-time student status during any semester or summer term. A graduate student is considered full-time if he or she is registered for any of the following:

a. A minimum of at least 9 credit hours of approved graduate coursework each regular fall or spring semester

b. A minimum of at least 6 credit hours of approved graduate coursework during a 10-week summer session. Variable-credit (Research, Direct Study) should be scheduled over the 10-week period.

The minimum is an absolute requirement for graduate assistants. The maximum recommended number of hours would be 12 per long semester and 9 in the summer. The exact number of hours, and the courses selected, will be determined through consultation with your Graduate Committee.

**Telephones**

You will have a phone and phone directory in your office. Departmental telephones are for your use in conducting business of the department. You may occasionally use the phones in your work area for local personal calls. However, in no case may university telephones be used to make long distance calls of a personal nature. The university logs and bills long distance calls made from university phones. The business coordinator may reviews these logs.

**Computer and E-mail**

Each graduate assistant will have a departmental computer and a network connection at his/her work-station. The College manages virus prevention, logs and monitors usage on all machines on our network using Sophos Endpoint Security. **Your expectation of privacy is severely limited on any TAMU computing resource.**

You may install software, directly related to your work and for which you hold valid licenses, on Departmental Computers assigned to you. TAMU has a licensing agreement with Microsoft that allows students to get software at greatly reduced prices. This agreement is so advantageous that the Department no longer supports software on computers used by graduate assistants. The last time software prices were checked it was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows 7 Ultimate Upgrade</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows Vista Upgrade</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office 2010 for Windows (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, &amp; Access)</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office 2011 for Macintosh (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Studio. NET 2010</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression Web</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To obtain this software, visit [http://sellsoftware.tamu.edu](http://sellsoftware.tamu.edu).
If you do not have an account and email address on the departmental server, please see Bill Cochran so that he can create an account and add it to the address list in Microsoft Outlook. The ALEC email account will be supported as long as you remain on the patrol, and can be extended for 90 days "post employment" by request.

You will be able to access a printer from your computer. Please use this printer judiciously. Printing costs are paid for with Graduate Enhancement funds. Dollars spent printing are unavailable for other expenses – like travel.

Only people associated with the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications (ALEC) are authorized to use departmental computers. Outsiders, undergraduate students, and your friends or spouses are not authorized to use departmental computers. State Law prohibits the unauthorized use of equipment and provides penalties for sharing your password. While you may, technically, log on to any workstation connected to our network, you should ask before using a machine assigned to someone else. Do not use the computers and printers assigned to secretaries!

Mailboxes
You will have a mailbox assigned to you in the 2nd Floor Break Room. Mailboxes are arranged alphabetically. Check for mail and messages, preferably twice a day. From time to time, it may be necessary to share a mailbox with a fellow graduate assistant.

Parking and Bicycles
Most importantly, realize that this University is very aggressive in enforcing parking violations. Be careful to park legally; it’s expensive if you don’t. Debbie King is the Parking Coordinator for the Department. She can explain your options. Parking across the University is undergoing fairly dramatic change. Best of luck obtaining a permit!

Professional Conduct and Dress
Graduate assistants are expected to adhere/adapt to the "culture" of professional conduct, grooming, dress, and personal hygiene “followed” by all faculty and staff in the department.

Profanity, crude jokes, sexist remarks, sarcasm and many other 'isms’ have no place in your teaching, research, outreach, development, or other professional activities.

In staff meetings, we will often discuss matters that are somewhat confidential. Please respect this professional confidentiality.

Secretaries/Support Staff/Student Workers
No secretarial support is available for Graduate Assistants. If you have questions about how to accomplish your work, feel free to seek advice (but not service) from these professionals.

Student workers may assist you in accomplishing your Assistantship duties. They are especially proficient at the production (copying, collating) of materials that you need for the classes you’re assigned to teach. Student workers may not be involved in grading or recording grades. Student workers should not be used to accomplish your personal or academic work including your own research. Finally, student workers are student workers. You are responsible for the quality of the final product. Remember the old adage, if you want something done right, do it yourself.

Official Travel / Travel with Reimbursement
In order to be reimbursed, Graduate Assistants performing official business for the department must have their expenses for travel and per diem approved in advance by the Department Head. To be reimbursed, you must submit a "Travel and Leave Request" form (available from Kenny Stroud) at least 10 days in advance of the beginning date of travel if by ground transportation, 30 days in advance if by air, and 60 days in advance if for international travel. Each person traveling overnight must have his/her own motel receipt. Out-of-state travel must be submitted at least one month in advance of the beginning date of travel.
Fellowship holders may not be reimbursed for travel and per diem, unless they meet the conditions outlined in the paragraph below. If the opportunity arises for them to participate in professional events involving travel in situations other than that outlined below, the Department Head will attempt to cover part of their expenses through carpooling and room-sharing arrangements.

**Graduate Assistant Travel Grant and Excellence Scholarship**
Graduate Assistants may receive departmental assistance to **attend one research or professional conference** per fiscal year (Sept. 1 – Aug. 31). The awards are subject to the availability of funds. The awards are prorated as follows.

- $500 Scholarship submitted to the conference (attach copy of submitted document)
- $750 Scholarship was Accepted for Presentation (attach copy of accepted document)

Applications for the ALEC Graduate Assistant Travel Grant and Excellence Scholarship may be found on the website or copies may be secured from Clarice Fulton.

**Building Security**
Help maintain building, office, and equipment security, particularly during weekends, at night, and during holidays. If you observe suspicious activities or persons, do not hesitate to report them to the faculty; or, if after hours and during holidays, call the campus police. Security is a responsibility all of us in the department share.

**Use of Department Equipment**
The Department maintains an inventory of AV and multimedia equipment for use in accomplishing your work. Equipment is available (and in some cases installed) in the Departmental Classrooms and Conference Rooms. Prior to using any Departmental equipment you need to do two things. **You need to be trained to use the equipment, and you need to schedule the use of the equipment.**

For typical or routine classroom use in other rooms, AV equipment (laptops/projectors/VCRs/etc.) should be scheduled through the **Campus Media Centers**. Some University classrooms are equipped with built-in media and display technology. You need to schedule the use of this equipment through Blocker Media as well. [http://ims.tamu.edu/Reservations/Make_a_Reservation.php](http://ims.tamu.edu/Reservations/Make_a_Reservation.php)

a. **Copier/Printer.** The copier is located in the 2nd Floor Break Room. See Debbie to secure an identification number for the copier. Personal printing and copying can be purchased at the rate of $.05 per copy (B&W) and $.50 (Color).

b. **Photographic Equipment (Digital).** See Drs. Dunsford, Rutherford, or McKim in the Agricultural Communications and Journalism program if you need the departmental digital cameras.

c. The COW (computers on wheels) is available through the Agricultural Science program.

d. **Video Projectors.** The department has LCD projectors to use with computers for projecting computer images. Configuring these devices to work with a laptop can be a bit complex. Training is required! These may be reserved through Jamie Norgarrd.

**Student and Professional Organizations**
In addition to the AGSS, there are numerous student organizations you may want to consider. Gamma Sigma Delta (GSD), the Honor Society of Agriculture, meets three times annually. Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), an honorary educational society, meets monthly and holds its initiation and awards banquet in April. Phi Beta Delta, the organization for professionals engaged in international activities, meets twice a year.

Members of the faculty can tell you about professional organizations that you may consider joining. The American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE), the Association for Leadership Educators (ALE), and the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) focus on people, activities, issues, and events related to agricultural education. All these organizations encourage the participation of graduate students at their regional and national meetings.
Location/Availability of Office Supplies
Most of the supplies you will need are available from the main office. Debbie King is “in charge.” Supplies should be available for all work-related activities. Let Debbie know if you need materials that are not available. Also, if you get materials and notice that the supply is low or exhausted, PLEASE let Debbie know.

Logistics of Your Graduate Degree

1) File a Degree Plan:

The Degree Plan contains two important pieces of information, the courses to be taken and the members of the graduate committee.

Students must access the OGAPS website (http://ogsdpss.tamu.edu) to submit a Degree Plan online. You can alter/edit and save the form as you select courses and committee members. Once completed, you submit the web form for the approval of your committee members.

The first order of business is the selection of a Chair for your Graduate Committee. In the admissions process, a graduate faculty member reviewed your records and your interests and volunteered to serve as your initial advisor and to Chair your Graduate Committee if necessary. If you do not know who this person is, Clarice Fulton can tell you. This person expects to assist you in selecting courses for your first semester and outlining your degree plan until you select a Chair for your Graduate Committee. You certainly CAN elect to choose this person as your Chair. Should you decide to select another person as Chair, complete the Departmental Petition to Change Major Professor form and submit to Clarice Fulton.

Once you’ve selected a Chair, you should work closely with that faculty member to identify the other members of your committee and select courses that will be included on your Degree Plan.

Once completed the student should schedule a meeting with their Committee Chair for approval of the Degree Plan. A final, error-free Degree Plan web form should be submitted for approval. Approvals are accomplished online in this order, the Chair, the committee members, the Department Head.

You will be blocked from registration by the OGAPS for failing to complete a Degree Plan in the allotted time. Students in Master’s degree programs will be blocked from registering for their third term, excluding summer terms, if they have not submitted degree plans. Students in Doctoral degree programs will be blocked from registering for their fifth term, excluding summer terms, if they have not submitted degree plans.

2) Petitions:

Once it’s approved by the OGAPS, any change to the Degree Plan – either in the courses to be taken, or the members of your committee, requires an official Petition to the OGAPS. It is not at all uncommon to file a Petition, or even more than one, as courses become unavailable or your needs change. Your Committee Chair will probably be your best resource on Course Change Petitions. For all other Petitions, arrange an appointment with Dr. Murphy.

The following Petitions available to submit online on the OGAPS website (http://ogsdpss.tamu.edu): Petition for Change of Committee, Petition for Change of Major, Degree, or Department, Petition for Course Change, Petition for Waivers or Exceptions to University Requirements, and Petition for Extension of Time Limits.

All these Petitions require online approvals, and then sent online to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies for approval. These forms are not exactly intuitive. Dr. Murphy will assist you with completing your Petitions.
3) Scheduling Variable Credit Courses

To schedule variable credit courses (ALEC 684, 685, 691, and 692) you should secure and complete the Departmental form and submit it to Clarice Fulton. She will arrange for the section to be created and force you into these classes. The Departmental Form for Variable Credit Courses requires the signature of the faculty "director" (of the ALEC 684 Internship, ALEC 685 Directed Studies) or your Committee Chair (for Research ALEC 691 and ALEC 692) and the number of credit hours requested. These forms can be found on the ALEC web site, http://alec.tamu.edu.

4) Scheduling Oral Exam / Defense

All graduate degree programs in ALEC require an Oral Exam. Master’s degree programs require this as a final exam while in Doctoral degree programs this is the Preliminary Exam that leads to Candidacy.

In all cases, the procedure is to work closely with your Committee Chair to secure commitments from all your committee members as to a date and time for the exam. Contact Clarice Fulton at least 3 weeks prior to the secured date and she will facilitate the scheduling of room and prepare required paperwork to OGAPS.

Students in Master’s degree programs must schedule their final exam with their Chair. A completed Request for Final Examination will need to be submitted at least 10 days prior to the date of the exam.

Students in Doctoral degree programs must schedule their prelims with their Chair. Upon successfully completing the exam, they will submit a Preliminary Exam Checklist to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) along with the Report of the Preliminary Examination.

Candidates for the Doctoral Degree, upon completing their Dissertation, will schedule a Final Defense/Exam with their Chair. A completed a Request for Final Examination will need to be submitted at least 10 days prior to the date of the exam. They must pass the final defense, and secure approval of their Dissertation.