



# AGRIBUSINESS STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The Southern Agricultural Economic Association (SAEA) holds its annual meeting from Saturday to Tuesday during the first week of February.

The primary objective of the conference is to network and disseminate the latest scientific information related to the economics and agribusiness aspects of the production, distribution, and marketing of food or fiber.

Selected students, faculty, and researchers participate in an undergraduate Quiz Bowl, research poster presentations, and research paper presentations.

In the SAEA Quiz Bowl, undergraduate students are placed in teams of 4 composed by students from all participating universities. Students learn from their peers about themselves and their universities, and compete in a jeopardy-like game where they answer questions related to their discipline (Micro-economics, Macro-economics, Agribusiness & Finance, Resource & Policy, Quantitative, Marketing, Management, and Potpourri). While at the conference, students also attend research poster and paper presentations.

## HOW THE QUIZ BOWL WORKS

In the SAEA Quiz Bowl, students are randomly placed into teams of usually 4 students who are subsequently randomly assigned to compete in Round 1 at different time slots and rooms (such as rooms D, E, or F in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

In 2015, there were 28 teams which started playing Round 1 at 9:00 am, 9:20 am, 9:40 am, or 10:00 am (Fig. 2). Teams that win remain in the winner bracket (Fig. 2) while teams that lose move to the loser bracket (Fig. 3). Any team that loses two times is eliminated.

There are usually around 15 rounds. Each round lasts 15 minutes. The flip of a coin decides which team picks first. The team to last answer a question correctly gets to pick a question. When a team answers incorrectly, the other teams take the board.

In each round, there are two teams competing, one moderator who reads the question aloud, one computer operator who is also the time keeper, and usually two judges who decide whether the teams answered right or wrong.

After the moderator finishes reading a question, the teams have 10 seconds to answer the question. A team may buzz in before the moderator finishes reading the question. If a team buzzes in to answer a question, the 10 second rule pauses. If a team answers wrong, the other team has a chance to answer as long as the 10 seconds are not up.

## BENEFITS

Professional conference participation provides experiential learning activities for agribusiness and agricultural economics students.

Such activities reinforce the student learning in several subjects, including Micro- and Macro-economics, Agribusiness and Finance, Resource and Policy Economics, Quantitative Methods, Marketing, and Management (Fig. 1).

Students also get to appreciate and see what their discipline is all about outside their classroom.

## FIGURES



Round 1								14:50
Micro-economics	Macro-economics	Agribusiness & Finance	Resource & Policy	Quantitative	Marketing	Management	Potpourri	
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	

Figure 1. Question Subjects and Points per Round.

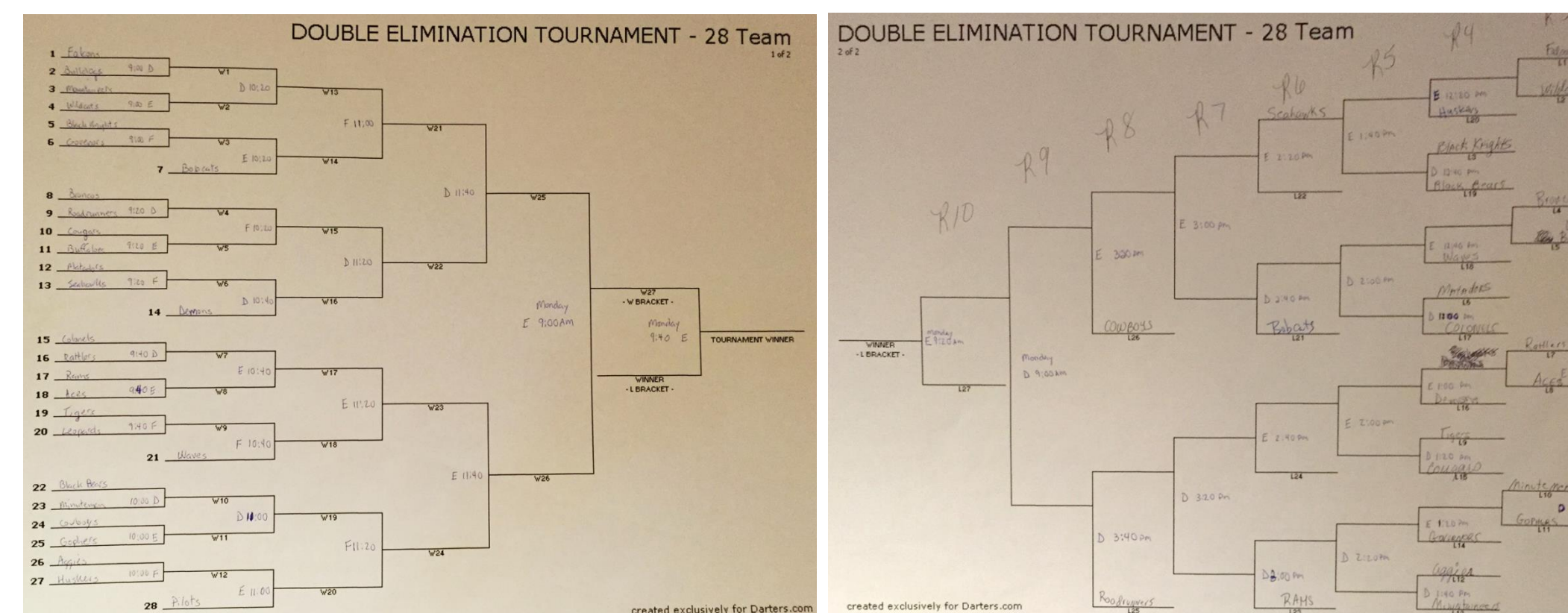


Figure 2. Sample Winner Bracket, 2015.

Figure 3. Sample Loser Bracket, 2015.



Figure 4. A&M-Commerce Students at SAEA Annual Meeting, 2014-2017.

## QUOTES FROM STUDENTS

"I thought the experience was well worth my time." – Zach Thrift

"This trip has been a great experience. This quiz bowl was a great way to network with other universities, as well as help grasp my knowledge of economics in comparison with other universities. I feel that this trip has better prepared me as I continue in my degree as well as prepare me for competing for jobs with other degrees as me." – Tad Kissling

"Not only did I have a great time competing in the quiz bowl, I met and networked with many young agricultural professionals from all over the country who were also participating." – Troy McDonald

"[It] was a great experience as well as an amazing networking opportunity. I also enjoyed attending the research presentations. Watching these presentations has made me interested in completing my thesis and presenting my research at a conference." – Tyler Raine

"National conferences like these are what helps us to remember that agriculture is wider than just our University, or even just our state." – Audra Griseta

"I was able to speak with several graduate recruiters from other colleges and universities. In doing so, I feel more confident in my opportunities to attend graduate school." – Lauren Joie

"I was in FFA all throughout my high school career and traveled all over the state, but I had never experienced being able to leave the state with a group of kids and a teacher outside of the state. Not only did we have fun, but we also got to network with other kids from across the nation. I am so happy and appreciative that I got invited to attend this conference and represent TAMUC. This trip was/will definitely be the highlight of my senior year of college at TAMUC." – Tyler LaFavers.

## POST-CONFERENCE POLL

Table 1. Answers to Post-Conference Poll.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average
This conference increased your interest in graduate studies at A&M-Commerce.	0	0	0	4	3	4.43
This conference increased your interest in graduate studies at other universities.	0	0	3	2	2	3.86
Overall, you liked the conference.	0	0	0	2	5	4.71

Note: Poll was conducted in 2017 only. Sample size equals 7, which includes 6 undergraduate students and 1 graduate student. Response rate = 77.78%.

Overall, the post-conference poll indicates A&M-Commerce students who participated at the 2017 SAEA Annual Meeting in Mobile, Alabama, February 4-7, 2017 liked the conference and that the experience increased their interest in graduate studies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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