What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for AAEA?
As a professional association, our challenge is to stay relevant and useful to our members. To do this effectively, the AAEA must maintain an efficient and nimble governance structure, be responsive to current members’ evolving professional needs, and attract new members. Network economics tells us that the size of membership matters: it determines the extent of networking opportunities an association can provide, and it affects the quantity and quality of ideas members can contribute. The pursuit of a broader identity in applied economics, however, should not neglect our core constituencies. We can do so without apology: the economic expertise and institutional knowledge of AAEA members on issues related to agriculture, food, development and the environment are extremely relevant to addressing some of society’s most salient problems. The AAEA has a crucial role to play in supporting the work of its members, help improve their productivity, and enhance the visibility and impact of their research, educational and outreach activities.

What actions would you initiate to improve the situation described in your response to the previous question?
I will foster an open environment that values and encourages engagement in the association. I will back programs to promote diversity, attract international members and young professionals. I will work to improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of the AAEA summer meeting—this annual event is a critically important element of what we do. I will promote increased communication and cooperation between our many sections. I will support AAEA efforts to enhance our members’ outreach activities by partnering with sister communities (such as C-FARE) and via our Trust-supported ventures. As we strive for excellence, relevance and growth, not all new ideas and initiatives will prove successful—we should not be afraid to recognize failure and abandon what does not work.

At the end of your three-year term what changes/new initiatives would you have helped create?
The value of the AAEA for current (and prospective!) members has two components. Most of us are cognizant of the benefits the AAEA can provide, but costs also matter. I will endeavor to preserve the financial stability of the association, and I will try to do so while supporting lower membership fees. Our journals—AJAE, AEPP and Choices—are key to showcase the depth of scholarship and excellence of our members’ contributions. I intend to be a vigilant steward for these extremely valuable assets, and ensure that they continue to have vigorous leadership. We will see renewed enthusiasm for participation in vibrant AAEA meetings, and member-led efforts to uphold the tradition of excellence of AAEA’s distinguished history.