



Leadership Team Bios

Sam Cordes
Matt Fannin
Matt Fluharty
Mario Gutierrez
Tom Johnson
Keith Mueller
David Terrell
Bruce Weber



Sam Cordes

Dr. Sam Cordes joined Purdue University in 2003 and served in the following capacities: Associate Vice Provost for Engagement; Co-Director, Center for Regional Development; Assistant Director and Program Leader, Cooperative Extension; Professor of Agricultural Economics.

Dr. Cordes' programmatic focus at Purdue is on regional economic development and rural community and economic development. The programs he led received national awards and accolades and significant external funding from both Federal and state sources, e.g., a \$15 million Workforce Innovation and Regional Economic Development grant from the U. S. Department of Labor; and several million dollars in funding from the U. S. Economic Development Administration.

Dr. Cordes received his BS and PhD degrees in Agricultural Economics from South Dakota State University (SDSU) and Washington State University (WSU), respectively. While earning his graduate degree at WSU, he served as Executive Director of Governor Evans' Task Force on Rural Affairs. He then joined the faculty of Penn State University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. His professional work at Penn State was in the area of community and economic development, with particular emphasis on rural health care delivery.

In 1985, Dr. Cordes was named Professor of Agricultural Economics and Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Wyoming. In 1989, he assumed the same position at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), and at UNL he also founded and served as the initial Director of the Center for Rural Community Revitalization and the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center.

Other professional roles and responsibilities have included (a) Senior Associate with the International Programs Division within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UNL (b)

Shared Faculty Appointment with the Cooperative State Research, Extension, and Education Service, USDA (c) Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) Fellow and Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin; and (d) Visiting Scholar at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Dr. Cordes has written or co-authored more than 200 publications, including books/monographs, book chapters and refereed journal articles; and has held various professional leadership roles, for example, serving on the Executive Board of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association.

Dr. Cordes has played an active role in the creation and development of several major organizations and initiatives, including the Purdue Center for Regional Development; Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs; Indiana Cooperative Development Center; RUPRI; Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics; National Association of Agricultural Economics Administrators; American Rural Health Association; National Rural Health Association (NRHA); and the Journal of Rural Health.

Dr. Cordes received a number of prestigious awards and honors, including the Distinguished Researcher Award from NRHA; the RUPRI Founders Award; the first recipient of WSU's Graduate Alumni Achievement Award; and the Distinguished Alumni Award from SDSU.

Dr. Cordes was born in South Dakota. He attended a one-room school near the family ranch for grades 1-8 before graduating from Sturgis high school where he was an all-state wrestler. He was also heavily involved in rodeo competition (as a bull rider) until he began his academic career at Penn State.



Matt Fannin

Dr. James Matthew "Matt" Fannin is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness serving both the Louisiana State University A&M and LSU AgCenter campuses. He came to LSU in 2003 after receiving his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Missouri that same year.

Dr. Fannin has formal appointments in teaching in the College of Agriculture at LSU as well as research and extension appointments with the LSU AgCenter. He is responsible for teaching undergraduate and graduate level rural development courses in the department as well as assisting the department in teaching its freshman and sophomore level introductory courses in Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics. His research program has included evaluating strategies around rural physician recruitment and retention as well as analysis of rural hospital funding policies. His current research focuses on financial resiliency of rural county and parish governments to tropical natural disasters in a changing federal policy environment. This research extends into his extension activities where he has worked with individual parish and municipal governments to evaluate their financial vulnerability and capacity to future natural disasters and to identify best practices to mitigate financial gaps. His integrated teaching, research and extension program has been supported by almost \$4 million in external grants and contracts resulting in published scholarship in all three legs of the land grant mission.

Dr. Fannin also serves Associate Director of Analytic and Academic Programs with the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI). RUPRI is a nation-wide network of scholars focused on federal and state rural policy analysis and decision support around such topics as health, human services, arts and culture, and community and economic development. Dr. Fannin participates in regular RUPRI briefings in Washington DC to major rural constituencies such as the USDA Office of the Chief Economist, USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development, National Association of Counties, and National Association of Development Organizations.



Matt Fluharty

Matthew Fluharty is the Executive Director of Art of the Rural. He is the son of a fifth-generation Ohio Valley farming family and has resided across the midwest, northeast, and Ireland. Matthew holds a PhD in English and American Literature from Washington University in Saint Louis, where he wrote on the concept of “rural modernity” across transatlantic art and literature. He is currently researching, writing, and engaging in course design around the topics of land use, the vernacular, and the rural-urban diaspora.

Matthew’s poetry and essays have been widely published in the US and abroad. He has been grateful to share his work, and the practice of Art of the Rural, at gatherings across the country. Matthew is a member of the [M12](#) art collective and a Research Fellow in [American Culture Studies](#) at Washington University in Saint Louis, where he has also collaborated with the [Skandalaris Center for Entrepreneurial Studies](#) and the [Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Art](#). Matthew is proud to serve on the Board of Directors of [The Wormfarm Institute](#).



Mario Gutierrez

Mario Gutierrez serves as the executive director of the Center for Connected Health Policy, a nonprofit organization working to advance the use of telehealth technologies to improve health outcomes, care delivery, and reduce health care costs through improvements in public policy. In 2012, the Center was selected by the federal Office for the Advancement of Telehealth (HRSA) to serve as the National Telehealth Policy Resource Center. In this role CCHP monitors federal and state legislation and advances telehealth policy solutions to improve health and health care systems. Mr. Gutierrez is widely recognized as one of the nation's foremost experts in telehealth health policy. Prior to joining CCHP, Mr. Gutierrez was a Senior Program Director for The California Endowment, one of the largest private health foundations in the country. Mr. Gutierrez led the foundation's \$20 million investment in telehealth deployment throughout California, and served as their lead person for Rural Health Programs and Policy. In addition to being the Chairperson of the RUPRI Rural Human Services Panel, Mr. Gutierrez serves as Vice-Chairman of Farmworker Justice, Inc., a D.C.-based non-profit that defends the health and human rights of farmworkers throughout the country, and is a board member of OCHIN, Inc., a national non-profit providing technical assistance and support to community-based health centers to incorporate electronic medical records and health information systems.



Tom Johnson

Dr. Thomas G. Johnson has a joint appointment as the Frank Miller Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics, and professor in the Harry S Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri. He previously served on the faculty of the University of Saskatchewan, Virginia Tech, and the University of Illinois. Tom has been affiliated with RUPRI since 1990. He is director of RUPRI's Analytic and Academic programs and the Community Policy Analysis Center, which is affiliated with RUPRI. He is a founding member RUPRI's Community Policy Analysis Network (CPAN) and of the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Consortium.

Tom's recent research areas include fiscal and economic impact analysis, local government finance, renewable energy, rural entrepreneurship, broadband, land use, rural transportation and rural wealth and resilience. He has studied rural policy issues in Canada, Ukraine, Korea, and in several European countries. He recently served on an OECD team reviewing English Rural Policy. Tom received the 2001 RUPRI Community Policy Analysis Network Outstanding Leadership Award. He is the 2002 Fellow of the Southern Regional Science Association, 2006 recipient of the Outstanding Contribution through Economics Award from the Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association, 2007 recipient of the USDA Undersecretary's Group Honor Award for Excellence. In 2012 Tom received the University of Missouri Provost's Award for Leadership in International Education and the University of Missouri President's Award for Economic Development. Tom has authored over 250 articles, papers, and book chapters and has co-authored or co-edited 5 books.



Keith Mueller

Keith J. Mueller, Ph.D., is Gerhard Hartman Professor and Head, Department of Health Management and Policy, College of Public Health, University of Iowa. He is also the Director of the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis and Chair of its Rural Health Panel. He has served as President of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) and as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services. He also served on the Advisory Panel on Medicare Education for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Advisory Committee to the Agency for Health Research and Quality. He has published more than 200 scholarly articles and policy papers, and received awards recognizing his research contributions from NRHA, RUPRI, and the University of Nebraska. His PhD is in Political Science from The University of Arizona, and he completed a faculty fellowship with The Johns Hopkins University.



David Terrell

David Terrell is the Director of Economic Development Policy at Ball State University. He consults with state and local government regarding comprehensive strategies and policy development for state and local economic and community development. As part of his duties Mr. Terrell is the Chair of the State Policy Panel for the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), a multi-institution consortium with global reach, broadly regarded as one of the world's more influential public policy research institutions. RUPRI's mission is to provide independent, nonpartisan analysis, and to facilitate public dialogue regarding the impacts of public policy on rural people and places

Mr. Terrell previously served as Senior Advisor to Indiana Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann, where he developed policies and budgets for the Lt. Governor's state agencies. He also developed strategies for interagency and intergovernmental collaborations for economic development initiatives from the Lt. Governor's Office.

Mr. Terrell also served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Indiana Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and as the Executive Director of the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). Under Mr. Terrell's leadership, OCRA gained national recognition for state-level economic community development policy.

Before joining OCRA, Mr. Terrell led Terrell Associates, a consulting firm that specialized in community level partnerships, in addition to providing economic development and workforce development services. He has experience in strategic planning, leadership development, encouraging collaborative partnerships, and expanding economic and community development capacity.

Mr. Terrell has served in many capacities that have contributed to his extensive background in economic and community development. He was a member of the Indiana Human Resources Investment Council, Executive Committee of the Indiana Jobs Council, and Vice-President of the Indiana Economic Development Association's Board of Directors.

He served as the chair of the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority's Board of Directors and was a member of the Indiana Courthouse Preservation Advisory Committee. He is a past member of the Advisory Council of the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank. He has been a recipient of the Indiana Economic Development Association's "Excellence in Leadership" award, and the

Governor's Distinguished Service Medal.

Mr. Terrell spent nine years in manufacturing, spending most of that time as the plant manager for a steel wire manufacturer in Southern Indiana. He began his career in the Indiana Department of Commerce, in the Business Expansion Division.

A graduate of Indiana State University who earned his MBA from the University of South Florida, Mr. Terrell and his wife, Elizabeth, have three children and four grandchildren. They live in Madison, Indiana, with their small flock of chickens.



Bruce Weber

Bruce Weber is professor of applied economics at Oregon State University and director of the OSU Rural Studies Program. He was co-director of the RUPRI Rural Poverty Research Center during the early 2000s and is currently a member of the RUPRI Rural Human Services Panel. He does applied research and outreach and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on rural community economics and policy and on rural poverty. His current research projects focus on rural-urban economic interdependence, impacts of changes in social safety net programs, impacts of Federal forest and rural development policies on rural communities, and the economic resilience of rural communities in the face of natural disasters. He is co-editor of *Rural Dimensions of Welfare Reform* (W.E. Upjohn Institute, 2002), *Frontiers in Resource and Rural Economics: Human-Nature, Rural-Urban Interdependencies* (RFF Press, 2008), and *Rural Wealth Creation* (Routledge, in press).