

Illini Ag Comm on the Move

Ag Communications Newsletter

Special Announcement

New agricultural communications program leader at Illinois

Professor Lulu Rodriguez, recognized as a gifted communicator and leader, is new head of the Agricultural Communications Program at the University of Illinois. She joined the faculty on September 16 to lead an innovative dual academic program offered by the College of Media and College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES).

"We are delighted that Professor Rodriguez will be joining us at Illinois and leading our educational and scholarship programs in Agricultural Communications," said Robert J. Hauser, Dean of the College of ACES. Professor Rodriguez brings to this position a strong background in agricultural and rural communications, within the U. S. and internationally. A graduate of the pioneering development communication program at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, she gained initial experience in communicating with rural families about agricultural research while working seven years in the applied communications unit of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development. It is the Philippines national research planning and monitoring body. Her experience there included four years as division head.



She has worked in the U.S. since 1985, when she began graduate studies in communication at Cornell University. After completing her master's degree, she earned the doctor of philosophy degree in agricultural journalism/mass communications at the University of Wisconsin. In 1993 she joined the faculty of what is now the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University, from which she comes to Illinois. In the School, she served for eight years as director of graduate education and 10 years as head of the visual communication emphasis of the journalism and mass communication major. She was also instrumental in developing

the proposal for the School's first doctoral program.

An exceptional teacher, Professor Rodriguez has been recognized as one of five Master Teachers in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State. This award honors her continuing use of unique methods to enhance student learning in courses that range across multi-media production, visual communication, strategic communication, risk perception and communication, and communication research methods. Her dedication and skill in advising students resulted in her being named 2013 Outstanding Mentor for graduate students in the College.

Her research agenda parallels her teaching endeavors. It illuminates how scientific discovery is communicated and how citizens can be informed to make effective decisions about complex issues that involve science and risk. It has included grant-based research projects totaling more than \$5 million. Professor Rodriguez will also have a faculty appointment in the College of ACES Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences.

"Professor Rodriguez also brings exceptional skills in collaborating across disciplines and cultures," said Prof. Jan Slater, Dean of the College of Media. She enjoys partnering across diverse disciplines and has provided communications expertise through training activities, consultancies and other activities involving countries in nearly every region of the world.

At the University of Illinois, she will lead the Agricultural Communications Program in a mission that spans teaching, research, professional service, outreach and international contributions. Alumni and friends recently observed the 50th anniversary of the program.
