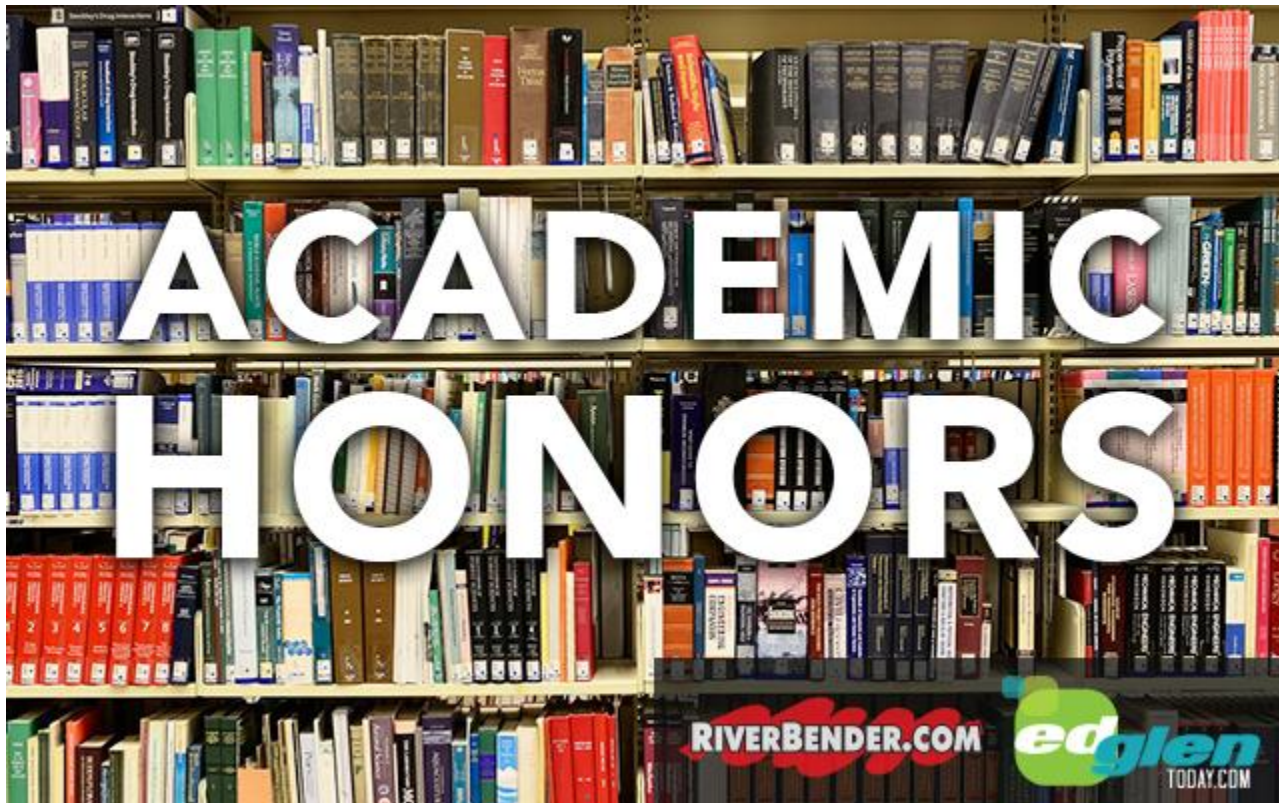




University of Arkansas Student Earns ARC/C.O.nxt Scholarship

by Ty Bechel
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NEW PRAGUE, MINN. – Jessica Wesson, a University of Arkansas agricultural communications graduate student, received the [Agricultural Relations Council](#) 2021 ARC/C.O.nxt Scholarship. In May 2020, Wesson earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural education, communication and technology (AECT) from the University of Arkansas.

In addition to her graduate school studies, Wesson works as a graduate assistant in the AECT department. She assists with teaching ag communications and leadership courses, grades assignments and manages the department's communications, including social media accounts, monthly newsletter and website.

Wesson's academic adviser, Casandra Cox, described Wesson as a strong student who strives daily to achieve academic and professional excellence. "She seeks opportunities beyond assigned classwork to grow and strengthen her skills. Jessica's competencies in media relations, journalism, visual communications, marketing communications, electronic media and public relations in the agriculture industry support her fit for this scholarship," said Cox.

Last summer, Wesson served as the AAEA (American Agricultural Editors' Association) The Ag Communicators Network editorial intern. This internship involved working for three major agricultural publications – *Farm Progress*, *DTN Progressive Farmer* and *Successful Farming*. Her duties included interviewing individuals and writing stories for websites and print publications and taking photos.

During her junior and senior years of college, Wesson worked as coordinator of the University of Arkansas AECT Department Experiential Learning Lab. In this role, she supervised student employees, designed department signage and promotional materials, produced a weekly bulletin, prepared a monthly newsletter and managed the county fairgrounds reservation system.

As an ag communicator, Wesson strives to educate consumers and those working within agriculture. Concerned about the divisions within agriculture, she wants agriculturists to address internal conflicts and provide a united front – to better the whole industry. "There is an issue with producers not accepting other types of agriculture," Wesson wrote. "If agriculture is divided internally, then consumers won't know who to trust. My goal is to help producers realize that all kinds of agriculture have a place at the table."

Lyle E. Orwig, founder of Charleston|Orwig, now rebranded as C.O.nxt, generously funds this annual \$1,500 scholarship through the endowment he set up with the ARC Foundation.

The Agricultural Relations Council is the only association dedicated to serving the unique needs of public relations professionals working in agriculture, food, fiber and other related industries. ARC is a conduit for problem solving, idea sharing and collaboration among members, who share a passion for excellence in public relations. For more information visit agrelationscouncil.org.