Biographical Sketch
Dr. Andrew J. Baker
Professor of Agricultural Education
Western Illinois University

Dr. Andrew J. Baker earned his A.S. in Agriculture Technology from Missouri Western State University in December of 1984. He went on to earn his B.S. from the University of Missouri-Columbia in Agricultural Education in May of 1988. He took his first teaching position at North Platte High School in Dearborn, Missouri in August of 1988. His high school agriculture program was very successful and earned several accolades during his tenure. He taught at North Platte for three years and then pursued other career options in agriculture by taking a research technician position within the USDA at the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1991. He worked as a field technician for a USDA scientist working on corn rootworm resistance as well as began working on his coursework in pursuit of his MEd in Agricultural Education. He received his MEd in May of 1994, at which time he applied for the doctoral program in Agricultural Education. He was accepted into the program in January of 1994 and graduated in December of 1996.

He accepted his first teacher education position at Murray State University in August of 1997 as an Assistant Professor. He then accepted an Assistant Professor position at Western Illinois University beginning in August of 1999. It was also a teacher education position, where he was the sole instructor for teacher preparation and certification for Agricultural Education majors. He received tenure at Western Illinois University in May of 2003 and was also selected was Interim Chair of the Department of Agriculture beginning July 1, 2003. He held this position until June 30, 2005 when a permanent chair was hired. He was also promoted to Associate Professor in May of 2003 and awarded Full Professor status in 2008. He was selected as "Interim Director" of the School of Agriculture on July 1st, 2013 and became permanent Director on July 1st, 2014.

Dr. Baker has been awarded over $480,000+ in external and/or internal funding for various educational projects. Awarded proposals ranged in size from $99,000 to $581. Most of these projects were single author, one-year proposals that were awarded primarily from state funds. Dr. Baker has also presented at 20+ conferences at or above the state level. He also has 18 refereed publications and/or abstracts, plus 7 refereed poster presentations during his career. Pre-service and in-service needs and learning styles/preferences are areas of research interest. He has held several leadership positions within professional organizations at state, regional, and national levels. These positions ranged from one-year to multiple year terms. Dr. Baker has also taught 20+ different undergraduate and/or graduate level courses serving various populations during his teaching career. Dr. Baker still believes that teacher preparation provides the most intrinsic motivation. He has prepared over 80+ graduates that were fully certified to teach agriculture within their residing state. He has served and/or chaired several university committees and served on some key search committees. He also has been a faculty advisor for Collegiate FFA, Ag Council, PAS, and Ag Ed Club, which are considered collegiate student organizations.

Dr. Baker was given an award for "Service" within the College of Business and Technology (CBT) in 2003 as well as in 2010. He was also awarded the CBT's "Teaching with Technology" award in 2011. In 2009, Dr. Baker received "Student Supervisor of the Year" at Western Illinois University for his efforts in mentoring student workers during his tenure. Dr. Baker was also the recipient of the regional award for "Distinguished Teaching" within the American Association for Agricultural Education and was able to be selected as the national recipient in 2012. He also was the recipient of the campus "HOPE" award for teaching excellence in 2010and in 2012. He was given the "Education Excellence" award from the Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education group in 2004 at the Illinois State Fair. He was also awarded "Most Influential Teacher" from a Missouri Bright Flight recipient in 1992. These recognitions have been very rewarding, but he still takes great pride in volunteering within his local community as well.

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