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ACTE Announces South Carolina Professor as National Award Finalist

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announces Thomas Dobbins, a professor and cooperative extension director at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, as the 2015 ACTE Region II Postsecondary Teacher of the Year. The ACTE Postsecondary Teacher of the Year award recognizes career and technical teachers and teacher educators who have demonstrated excellence and best practices in CTE at the postsecondary level.

Currently a professor and cooperative extension service director at Clemson University in South Carolina, Tom Dobbins has devoted his life to agriculture on the local, state and national levels. Dobbins began building the foundation for his faculty career at a young age by working on his family's dairy farm in Townville, South Carolina. Dobbins has nurtured and expanded Clemson's Agricultural Education program by navigating the challenges of reorganization, budget cuts and personnel shortages. K. Dale Layfield, associate professor at Clemson University, says, "I have been impressed by Dr. Dobbins' concern to learn and practice pedagogical innovations."

Under Dobbins' direction, program enrollment has increased and a higher ratio of graduates is being placed in the secondary agriculture classroom. The graduate program now includes a path for teacher certification, which has helped recruit students from other majors to earn a master's in agricultural education and become certified teachers.

Dobbins has served in a number of leadership capacities for professional organizations, and he has published 71 refereed articles, magazine articles and posters. He has made 38 poster presentations, has attended numerous conferences and workshops, and has secured \$1.75 million in grants and donations for his program. He served on the Anderson District school board from 2000–2008 and served as chair from 2002-2008. He was elected again to the board in 2012, and he currently serves as chair. During his tenure, the district had its first successful bond referendum passed by popular vote in South Carolina in 30 years, which led to a \$30 million building project to improve education for the area.

In 2014, Dobbins partnered with Anderson County School Districts 3, 4 and 5 to successfully advocate for a \$.01 sales tax to build a career and technology center.

Dobbins is one of five finalists for the 2016 national title. The national winner will be announced at the ACTE Awards Banquet, a dinner and award presentation recognizing the best CTE educators in the country. The event will take place on Thursday evening, November 19, during

ACTE's CareerTech VISION 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Awards Banquet is sponsored by Express Employment Professionals, Kuder, CareerSafe, Certiport, and Stratasy. For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, visit our webpage (www.acteonline.org/awards).

About ACTE

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, guidance counselors and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.

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