Keia Jones

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

As a PhD. Candidate in Rural Sociology and International Agriculture and Development, I bring 10 years of experience in economic, social, environmental, and biological research methodologies. My research interests lie in sustainability systems, including apparel and textile industries. My research takes an innovative approach in applied research methodologies, sourcing outcomes from stakeholder priorities and demand.

EDUCATION

PhD	The Pennsylvania State University, International Agriculture and Development (Sustainability)	August 2026
PhD	The Pennsylvania State University, Rural Sociology	August 2026
MS	Gent University (Belgium), International Masters in Rural Development (IMRD)	July 2021
MS	University of Arkansas, Agricultural Economics	July 2021
BS	Virginia State University, Agriculture Business & Economics	May 2019
BS	Virginia State University, Economics	May 2019

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Environmental and Socioeconomic Sustainability, Water Availability and Quality, Transparent Supply Chains, Consumer Economics

WORK IN PROGRESS

(1) Glenna, L. Broad, G., Jones, K. Assessing Drivers of Willingness to Try Cell-Cultured Meat: A Multivariable Index Approach
(2) Jones, K. Democratizing Industrial Leather Waste Water Policies in Bogotá, Colombia

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Researcher – Sustainability & Textile Supply Chains **2023–Present**
Penn State University

- Conducted dissertation research focused on sustainability risks in global textile supply chains with an emphasis on water policy, ethical sourcing, and circular economy models.
- Led fieldwork in Bogotá, Colombia to evaluate the environmental and social impacts of leather production. Integrated stakeholder interviews, policy analysis, and SDG alignment into an interdisciplinary methodology. Built case studies around water quality management, waste minimization, and underreported sustainability risks.
- To critically assess how micro- and meso-level supply chain practices contribute to global sustainability goals and identify actionable leverage points for reform and reporting.

Graduate Research Assistant 2024-Present
College of Agriculture, The Pennsylvania State University

- Developed R-based quantitative models and conducted statistical analysis to evaluate consumer adoption of cellular meat, uncovering demographic and behavioral trends.
- Synthesized findings into reports and visualizations, contributing to publications and identifying gaps in consumer behavior research for future exploration.

Graduate Researcher – Water Policy and Sustainability Reporting 2021-2024
LandscapeU & Penn State University

- Contributed to regional water management systems and environmental action plans.
- Modified county-level sustainability metrics; delivered stakeholder-friendly reports with water quality indicators.
- Improve long-term monitoring and compliance with regional and national water stewardship goals.

Graduate Research Assistant 2022-2023
College of Agriculture, The Pennsylvania State University

- Managed and analyzed large-scale datasets using the WEIA to assess gender disparities in agricultural decision-making, focusing on improving equitable resource access and participation.
- Quantified the impacts of time poverty on agricultural productivity and household well-being, highlighting the socio-economic benefits of empowering women in agriculture as a pathway to social sustainability.

Graduate and Research Assistant
Bumpers College, University of Arkansas 2019-2021

- Conducted advanced analytical research, including economic modeling and market analysis, to support course objectives and enhance student understanding.
- Assisted in curriculum planning, test development, and grading, ensuring alignment with course learning outcomes.
- Provided one-on-one support to students, clarifying complex economic concepts and fostering academic success.

Student Researcher 2016-2019
Virginia State University

- Analyzed GmST1 gene markers in plant samples to investigate genetic mechanisms contributing to salt tolerance.
- Presented novel insights on genetic traits for salinity resistance at academic conferences, emphasizing applications for sustainable agriculture.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Legislative Affairs and Sustainability Consultant 2021-Present
Prologis Policy Tech, Washington DC

- Managed a team of 13 interns over 2 years, leading the creation of a public database containing 6 years of U.S. Federal Appropriations data, including President's Budget Request, Senate proposed, House proposed, and enacted figures.
- Automated and managed data collection processes for U.S. Federal Appropriations, integrating insights into CRM systems using HubSpot.
- Developed policy briefings for the Department of Energy and conducted targeted research on congressional priorities, aligning with member district needs.

Founder and Sustainability Strategist 2022–Present
BluOrb.co

- Launched a sustainability tech platform aggregating ethically sourced apparel and lifestyle items.
- Designed ESG-driven taxonomy using water use, emissions, cruelty-free production, and labor inputs. Built stakeholder-facing filters and backend categorization using Airtable and Tableau.
- Empower consumers and businesses to make transparent, values-based purchasing decisions while scaling sustainable product access.

Communications Consultant 2020-2021
Walton College, University of Arkansas

- Created and implemented semester marketing campaigns using analytics tools to design content tailored to target audiences.
- Coordinated media communications, addressing inquiries and ensuring consistent messaging to foster inclusive engagement within the university.

Legislative Affairs, NAREEE Advisory Board, and Stakeholder Intern 2017-2019
United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service

- Analyzed federal regulations, including the 2018 Farm Bill, and developed responses to congressional research inquiries to inform legislative briefings.
- Assisted in the federal NAREEE advisory board nomination process by managing applications, advising top candidates, and supporting final reviews by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Supplemental Instruction Leader 2018-2019
College of Math and Economics, Virginia State University

- Led two weekly sessions on trigonometric and calculus functions, enhancing student comprehension through targeted instruction.
- Planned lessons and employed instructional technology to support diverse learning styles and improve engagement.

Substitute Teacher 2017-2018
Petersburg City Schools

- Instructed elementary-aged students in math, reading, and writing.
- Organized service activities for undergraduate students to facilitate after school programming

HONORS AND AWARDS

PSU-FOBA Fannie Lou Hamer-W.E.B. DuBois Service Scholarship	2025
Guide State Forward Graduate Awardee, Penn State University	2024
Draper University Accelerator (BluOrb.co)	2024
INTAD Competitive Grant: Water Quality in Bogotá Colombia	2023
Innovations in Graduate Education (NSF-IGE)	2022
Live Más Scholarship: Taco Bell Foundation	2022
AAEA COSBAE Graduate Student Research Award	2021
Legacy Lab Foundation Rising Star Scholarship	2021
LandscapeU Fellowship (NSF)	2021
Paliwal Club of 100 Scholarship Fund:1,000 Dreams Fund	2020
USDA Outlook Forum Diversity Scholar	2018
Highest GPA: Agriculture Business Major, Virginia State University	2016-2018
Tronfeld West and Durret Law Scholarship	2017

USDA 1890's National Scholarship 2016
MANRRS & Farm Credit Scholarship 2016
National Society of Honors Scholars Representative, Virginia State University 2016

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park PA 2021 to Present
Graduate Researcher, Supervised By: Leland Glenna

Innovations in Graduate Education (NSF-IGE) (2022-2024)

- Selected as a participant in this National Science Foundation-funded program aimed at fostering innovative graduate education practices.
- Engaged in interdisciplinary projects that integrated research and practice, focusing on the application of sustainability principles to graduate education.
- Collaborated with diverse stakeholders to address complex challenges in education and sustainability through applied research and systems thinking.

Peanut Project: WEIA and Time Poverty in Ghana (2023)

- Conducted research using the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEIA) to analyze how access to peanut production could reduce time poverty among women farmers in Ghana.
- Evaluated the socio-economic impacts of peanut farming on household labor distribution, productivity, and gender equity.
- Synthesized findings into actionable recommendations to support policies and programs aimed at empowering women in agriculture and improving time management efficiency.

LandscapeU: Transdisciplinary Research and Stakeholder Engagement(2021-Present)

- Participated as a fellow in the NSF-funded LandscapeU program, emphasizing transdisciplinary research and stakeholder collaboration to address sustainability challenges.
- Conducted a 3-month study on water quality management in a small municipality in Pennsylvania, developing tools for continuous monitoring of water quality indicators.
- Proposed and implemented revised training schedules for water quality management teams, improving operational efficiency and resource allocation.

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville AR 2019 to 2021
Graduate Researcher, Supervised By: Michael Thomson

- Masters Thesis
  "Evaluating the Economics of Gluten-Free Households"
  First Place, Graduate 3-Minute Thesis Competition, 35th Regional Cluster, Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (October 2020)
  First Place, Division I Graduate Oral Research, 35th National Conference, Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (April 2021)
  First Place, Graduate 3-Minute Thesis Competition, 35th Regional Cluster, Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (April 2021)

Virginia State University, Petersburg VA 2016 to 2019
Student Researcher, Supervised By: Shuxin Ren & Guo-Lang Jiang

- RT-PCR Analysis and Genetic Editing
  "The Characterization of the Genomic Region of Soybean GmST1 and Comparing Alternative Putative Promoter Gene Arrangement"
  Second Place, Plant Health and Production and Plant Products Category, 18th Research Symposium of the Association of 1890 Research Directors Conference (April 2017)
- Market and Production Analysis
  "Production Possibility and Marketability of New Edamame Breeding Lines" Comparing Market Demand for New Soybean Strains and the Production Potential
  Presentation, Family, Youth, Community, and Economic Development Category, 19th Research Symposium of the Association of 1890 Research Directors Conference (March 2019)

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, AFFILIATIONS, AND SERVICE

International Agriculture and Development Graduate Student Association, The Pennsylvania State University
Vice President 2024-2025
I supported the planning and organization of a graduate student research conference, scheduled for February 14, 2025. I am leading a panel discussion on multidisciplinary approaches to sustainability and facilitating an intentional networking session to foster meaningful connections among participants. My efforts focus on promoting collaboration and creating opportunities for academic and professional growth.

Applied and Extension Research Interest Group (RIG), Rural Sociological Society(RSS)
Co-Chair 2022-2024
As Co-Chair, I led initiatives bridging academic research with community needs and facilitated workshops to promote collaboration among researchers and practitioners. I organized discussions to address key challenges and advance applied sociology practices. Additionally, I supported early-career researchers through mentorship and professional development opportunities.

Graduate and Professional Student Congress, University of Arkansas
Departmental Representative 2019-2021
Member of the Congress, Finance Committee, and Graduate Life Committee. Head of Outreach subcommittee. Duties include advocating for the needs of graduate students in the Department of Agricultural Business and Economics. Issues include advising relations, advising on diversity issues, supporting, shaping future curriculum, undergraduate relations, fair payment, counseling, mental health support, and program facilitation.

United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service
Legislative Intern Summer 2017 & 2018
Collated documents for congressional review. Communicated groundbreaking agricultural research to congressional staff in brief. Assisted on the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) to the Secretary of Agriculture. Involved in soliciting and vetting applications for approval.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Board for International Food and Agricultural Development
[Panelist], [Pennsylvania State University], June 28, 2023

BIFAD Public Meeting: Public Consultation on BIFAD's Plans to Propose a Subcommittee on Minority Serving Institution Engagement and Leadership in USAID's Agricultural, Food Security, and Nutrition Programming

Search Committee for Director of Multicultural Programs.
[Member], [Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture], 2023

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.
[Vice President/Target Chairman], [Virginia State University], 2018-2019
[Member], General Member, 2017-Present

Judicial Affairs
[Panelist/Student Representative], [Virginia State University], 2016-2017

SYNERGISTIC ACTIVITIES

Selected Talks:

Presentation, "Comparing Gluten Free v. Conventional Diets for SNAP Consumers" Southern Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting (Virtual), (February 2021)

Presentation, "Production Possibility and Marketability of New Edamame Breeding Lines :Comparing Market Demand for New Soybean Strains and the Production Potential" Family, Youth, Community and Economic Development Category, 19th Research Symposium of the Association of 1890 Research Directors Conference (March 2019)

Presentation, "The Characterization of the Genomic Region of Soybean GmST1 and Comparing Alternative Putative Promoter Gene Arrangement" Plant Health and Production and Plant Products Category, 18th Research Symposium of the Association of 1890 Research Directors Conference (April 2017)

Stakeholder Engagement Activities:

Co-facilitated 30+ person virtual research project in stakeholder priorities in water quality monitoring practices and policy (2022)

Teaching Experience:

Teaching Assistant, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Arkansas, (2019)

Supplemental Instructor, Department of Math and Economics, Virginia State University, (2018, 2019)