

# Jere L. Gilles

## Bio Sketch and Vision Statement

**Background:** Jere Gilles was born in Billings, Montana and raised on a cattle and wheat ranch south of Laurel, Montana. He graduated from Laurel High School and attended the University of Montana and the University of Bordeaux where he received degrees in Political Science and French, and a Certificat d'études françaises. He worked as a fire fighter for the National Park Service. After finishing his undergraduate studies, he joined the Peace Corps in the Republic of Chad where he managed an experimental farm and supported the incorporation of farmers into a modern irrigation system. He received a Master's degree in Rural Sociology from Cornell University and a PhD in Development Sociology from the same institution. His master's thesis was on phosphate runoff issues in the Finger Lakes Region. His dissertation was a comparative study of the impact of Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs policies regarding farmer involvement in irrigation management affected irrigation system efficiency. Before coming to Missouri, Dr. Gilles was a doctoral fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii where he worked on issues related to irrigation design and maintenance. He has worked in CAFNR for 40 years, and has received two campus awards for international service and engagement. He has been department chair and has served more than 20 years as Director of Graduate Studies in Rural Sociology. He was a faculty fellow in the office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs in 2015-2016 and a Fulbright Fellow in Bolivia. Dr. Gilles is currently a visiting faculty member at the Universidad Mayor de San Andres in La Paz Bolivia.

**Research:** All of Gilles' research takes place in multi-disciplinary settings. It focuses on linkages between farmer knowledge systems and technical knowledge systems. The goal of this research is to improve research and extension systems by better identifying farmer needs and constraints and creating feedback mechanisms that improve the design of research and extension systems. These mechanisms link farmers, industry, extension workers and researchers, and accelerate the development and transmission of useful knowledge. Dr. Gilles is currently conducting research in Bolivia on adaptation to climate related risks. He has received over \$5.5 million in grants to support international research from USAID, USDA, NOAA, the Templeton Foundation and the McKnight Foundation. These funds have supported research, range management and desertification, sheep, goat and camelid research, genetically modified maize, weather forecasting and adaptation to climate change.

**Teaching:** At the University of Missouri, Dr. Gilles has taught undergraduate courses in Introductory Rural Sociology, intercultural communication and the sociology of agriculture and natural resources. He has taught graduate courses in social change and development, statistics, research methods and the integration of theory and methods. He received an award for excellence in mentoring from the Rural Sociological Society in 2016 and from MU graduate students in 2013 Elsewhere: His teaching also includes graduate research methods in Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, and agricultural development

and innovation in Bolivia. From 1998-2008 he organized and conducted a six week CAFNR course in Costa Rica entitled Conservation, Culture and Sustainable Development.

**Vision Statement:** Outstanding universities have strong international programs that enhance the goals of student success, research and innovation, diversity, and inclusion. CAFNR International Programs directly support all of CAFNR's strategic goals. During the next five years, International Programs will secure more resources to support them. Resources are not limited to cash, but more importantly, include human resources, social networks and organizational support. International Programs can provide social networks and organizational support to facilitate faculty, students and staff's responses to international opportunities. CAFNR International Programs must develop an integrated strategy for developing and strengthening strategic relationships—in Missouri, the U.S. and in priority regions overseas. Potential partners must become aware of CAFNR's unique strengths and capacities and contact us when they locate opportunities. International programs must also provide expertise and staff support needed to reduce the costs of international engagement for CAFNR personnel and students. International work is usually conducted under different sets of rules, regulations, and constraints than domestic activities. CAFNR International Programs can greatly reduce the learning curve and cost of involvement.

By identifying CAFNR's strengths, making them known and providing a platform to support international engagement at all levels, International Programs can greatly enhance CAFNR's journey to greater distinction.