



# Office of International Programs *Monthly Newsletter*

June 2013

## Thirty-two Libyan Fulbright Scholars arrive on campus for intensive English training



*The scholars pose after their program orientation on June 4 with Dr. Mosbah Kushad, professor of crop sciences, who is serving as a cultural liaison.*

On June 3, 2013, more than three dozen Fulbright Scholars from Libya arrived on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for an intensive English language workshop to prepare them for subsequent Fulbright faculty development programs.

The 32 scholars, who are junior or mid-career Libyan faculty members, are hosted by the ACES Office of International Programs in partnership with the U of I's Intensive English Institute. Their classroom work focuses on academic reading and writing, advanced oral communication, pronunciation, academic listening and speaking, and academic culture. The goal of this intensive training is to allow scholars to develop oral and written English skills necessary for effective academic engagement during their subsequent 10-week visiting scholar programs.

In addition to the intensive language program, scholars have visited local attractions including Allerton Park, a local berry farm, and the Blue Waters supercomputer; they also enjoyed a weekend trip to Chicago. Their program will conclude on July 3 with a certificate ceremony and a reception. Seven of the scholars will remain on the U of I campus for an additional 10 weeks for research training in natural sciences; the others will continue on to various U.S. universities for training in their areas of specialty.

The Fulbright Visiting Scholar Programs for Libya are sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), as part of its flagship Fulbright Program (<http://www.fulbright.state.gov>) and designed by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, a division of the Institute of International Education in cooperation with ECA. The program's intent is to equip scholars with the knowledge and tools needed to build capacity of universities in Libya, and to advance education of future generations of Libyans. In addition, it lays the foundation for Libyan scholars and their U.S. hosts to develop long-term institutional relationships and to identify areas of cooperation that can be sustained beyond the grant period.

## ACES building relationships in Dominica



*Dr. Shillingford (center) with Ms. Marise Robbins-Forbes and Dr. Schuyler Korban.*

On May 30, 2013, Dr. Clayton Shillingford, President Emeritus of the Dominica Academy of Arts and Sciences (DAAS) visited the College of ACES to discuss opportunities for collaborations between ACES and DAAS for education and research in Dominica. Shillingford received his Ph.D. in plant pathology from ACES in 1977 under the direction of Dr. James Sinclair.

Shillingford is interested in facilitating international outreach study abroad programs, internships, scholarships, and collaborative research in agricultural and biological sciences, specifically bird migration, nutraceuticals, river and water management, and aquaculture that would partner ACES with the DAAS, the Dominica State College, agencies of the Dominican Government, and other pertinent Dominican institutions.

To this end, Shillingford enjoyed a comprehensive three-day itinerary that included meetings with three individuals from the ACES Office of Research: Associate Dean Dr. Neal Merchen; Interim Assistant Dean Elvira de Mejia, and Interim Assistant Dean Prasanta Kalita. Shillingford also met with Assistant Dean F. William Simmons, Assistant Dean Mr. Jesse Thompson, Jr.; Dr. Schuyler Korban, director of the Office of International Programs; Mr. Barry Dickerson, senior director of development; Ms. Marise Robbins-Forbes, director of development (Crop Sciences/NRES); Dr. German Bollero, head of the Department of Crop Sciences; Dr. Jeffrey Brawn, head of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES); Dr. Jack Juvik, graduate programs coordinator in crop sciences and director of the Illinois Plant Breeding Center; Dr. Michael Ward, assistant professor in NRES; Dr. Cory Suski, associate professor in NRES; Ms. Wendy White, student recruiter for crop sciences; and Ms. Louise Rogers, international development. Shillingford was also able to reconnect with his former advisor Dr. Sinclair and Dr. Glen Hartman.

Korban says, "We were very pleased to move forward in identifying areas of mutual interest that would become ACES' first foray into developing these educational and research programs in Dominica."

Not to be confused with the Dominican Republic, the Commonwealth of Dominica is an island nation in the Lesser Antilles region of the Caribbean Sea. It is renowned for its unspoiled natural beauty, tropical agriculture, indigenous population of Carib Indians, and as the home to a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## Delegation from Republic of Lithuania renews connections with ACES



(left to right) Dr. Antanas Maziliauskas, Dr. John Santas, and Dr. K.C. Ting

Two high-level Lithuanian administrators with historical ties to the University of Illinois visited ACES on June 11-12, 2013, with a goal of reestablishing connections. The delegation, hosted by the Office of International Programs, included Lithuanian Vice Minister of Agriculture Mindaugas Kuklierius, who first visited the University of Illinois as a student in 1996 as part of an exchange program, and Dr. Antanas Maziliauskas, Rector of Aleksandras Stulginskis University (ASU), previously known as the Lithuanian Academy of Agriculture which was a partner in the aforementioned student exchange

program with the U of I.

Dr. John Santas, assistant dean emeritus, enjoyed reconnecting with the visitors and provided a historical perspective: "This recent visit dates back to a 1995-96 student exchange that was funded by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) as part of an effort to thaw relations after the cold war and breakup of the Soviet Union. Bush and Gorbachev agreed to exchange 1,000 students each way. During this time, UIUC, along with our joint partner Southern Illinois University, sent nine students to Lithuania and 10 to St. Petersburg State Agrarian University in Pushkin, Russia. During the time of the exchange program, Dr. Maziliauskas, who is now rector of ASU, was head of the Academy's international office. He was a great help to our students. Additionally, we hosted several Russian and Lithuanian exchange students, including Dr. Kuklierius."

The visitors enjoyed meetings with Meredith Blumthal, director of ACES education abroad programs; Dr. K.C. Ting, professor and head of the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering; and Mr. Jeffrey Levensgood of the State Natural History Survey.

Noting that their visit rekindled their very strong emotional ties to Illinois, the delegation left with specific plans to reestablish linkages and develop new collaborations between the two universities. The two visitors were specifically interested in establishing new collaborative opportunities in agricultural machinery and biomass engineering transport engineering.

Aleksandras Stulginskis University is a public university deeply rooted in agricultural science and studies. It was founded in 1920 but renamed in 2011 to honor the first President of the Republic of Lithuania.

### Save the Date:

**August 26, 2013**

**International Agronomy Day, sponsored by the Department of Crop Sciences**

**(prior to Farm Progress Show in Decatur, August 27-29)**

## ACES to broaden collaborations with Denmark's Aarhus University

A delegation from Denmark's Aarhus University visited the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in early June to broaden the scope of its partnership with the College of ACES. Aarhus and ACES have a longstanding relationship, most notably a collaborative graduate course in carbohydrates led by Dr. Hans Stein, ACES professor of animal sciences and a native of Denmark. Looking to the future, the two universities are seeking avenues for collaboration in additional sectors, such as student and faculty exchange.

The Aarhus delegation, led by Marianne Aarø-Hansen, presented an informational session about opportunities for research and study abroad at Aarhus. They also met extensively with Meredith Blumthal, director of ACES education abroad programs, to discuss various possibilities for increasing student exchange between the universities.

Suzana Palaska-Nicholson, program coordinator for ACES Office of International Programs, notes, "There are also many possibilities for our graduate students and faculty to do work at Aarhus, and there are funds available through both Aarhus and the European Union. We are seeking opportunities for our students to do internships as well as for our faculty to engage with Aarhus."

## 2013 Global Academy to focus on energy, environment, and biodiversity in Taiwan

The Office of International Programs (OIP) is excited to announce the theme and regional focus of the 2013 ACES Academy for Global Engagement: The 2013 Academy scholars will be culminating a focus on energy, environment, and biodiversity with a capstone global immersion experience in Taiwan during spring semester 2014.

OIP strongly encourages early-to-mid-career ACES faculty and research staff, including those in disciplines that do not traditionally participate in international work, to consider applying for this year's program. For more information about the structure of the Academy, visit: <http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/academy/about/design>. Further questions should be addressed to Suzana Palaska-Nicholson at [spalaska@illinois.edu](mailto:spalaska@illinois.edu). Application deadlines will be announced at a later date.

The 2012 Global Academy traveled to Ghana for an immersion experience focused on food security and nutrition: [http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/ghana\\_2013](http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/ghana_2013).