

Ejeta projects Africa's potential at ACES Distinguished International Lecture



President Easter, Dr. Ejeta, and Dr. Winter-Nelson after the lecture.

Dr. Gebisa Ejeta was the featured speaker at the Spring 2015 College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) Distinguished International Lecture.

Ejeta is known worldwide as a Distinguished Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics and International Agriculture, the Executive Director of the Center for Global Food Security at Purdue University, and The 2009 World Food Prize Laureate.

Dr. Ejeta spoke on “Building Functional Institutions for Global Development” on Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at the Knight Auditorium in the Spurlock Museum. A reception followed the lecture.

University of Illinois President Robert Easter introduced Dr. Ejeta as a friend for whom he has enormous respect. “It is a rare privilege to be able to introduce someone I’ve known for a while... a person who has absolute commitment to the today’s theme of food security for the planet, and an individual who has an incredible vision to realize what needs to be done... he is a force,” Easter said.

Ejeta said, “We are in this together. The things we do in one part of the world affect the other side of the planet.” To solve the problems, “We need to have faith in science and technology,” he said. Handouts are not likely to solve the problem, he noted. “Nations need to build their own capacities and higher institutions of education have lots to contribute,” he said.

Ejeta led up to two main questions: 1) Can Africa feed itself? and 2) Can Africa feed the world? The first question, he said, reflects the poor state of agriculture and development, including that the continent has 60% of the population in subsistence farming. The second question, he said, is a positive perspective about Africa.

“I have grown more confident about the continent in the last 10 years,” he said.

Ejeta believes Africa is waiting to unleash its full potential. Democracy and conflict resolution are improving, he noted, and that although terrorism and corruption curtail its advancement, some of the fastest growing economies are in Africa. There has been a boom in infrastructure and expansion of education and telecommunication, he noted.

“I see a palpable commitment and resolve in Africa,” he said.

Global Academy visits Washington, D. C.



The Academy for Global Engagement (Global Academy), a unique ACES training program in its ninth year, recently completed one of its most successful visits to Washington D.C. yet.

The 2014-15 Global Academy cohort spent the week of April 13-17, 2015, networking and engaging with agencies and organizations that promote and support international agriculture programs.

Those traveling as part of the cohort were: **Mr. N. Dennis Bowman**, ACES Extension; **Dr. Patrick Brown**, Department of Crop Sciences; **Dr. Benjamin Crost**, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics; **Dr. Paul Davidson**, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering; **Dr. Erik Sacks**, Department of Crop Sciences; **Dr. Nathaniel Schroeder**, Department of Crop Sciences; **Dr. Pawan Takhar**, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition; **Dr. Alex Winter-Nelson**, Director, ACES Office of International Programs; and **Ms. Suzana Palaska-Nicholson**, Associate Director, ACES Office of International Programs.

Organizations included in this year’s itinerary were selected to support the 2014-15 Global Academy theme: “Climate Change and Food Systems Resilience.” Therefore, the program included meetings with the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU), the United States Department of Agriculture (Foreign Agriculture Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The robust Washington D.C. program culminated with a strong ACES participation at the fifth annual Global Food Security Symposium, organized by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (Council) and titled “Healthy Food for a Healthy World: Leveraging Agriculture and Food to Improve Nutrition.” An ACES delegation participated in this event for the first time under a special invitation by the Council itself. In addition to the Global Academy, the team included Dean Robert Hauser, Assistant Dean for Research Prasanta Kalita, Department Heads German Bollero and Paul Ellinger, and Ms. Elise Ellinger, a student-member of the Council’s prestigious, Next Generation Delegation program.

OIP announces winners of Spring 2015 Seed Grants

The Office of International Programs (OIP) congratulates its International Seed Grant winners for Spring 2015. The goal of the Seed Grant program is to support awardees in establishing a strong international relationship that will continue to expand and flourish into a larger and substantial international collaborative effort that will ultimately benefit departments, programs, the College of ACES, and the University of Illinois.

The funding of the International Seed Grants program is made possible through support provided by the Arlys Conrad Endowment Fund, and the applications are reviewed by the College of ACES International Programs and Policy Committee. OIP issues requests for seed grant proposals once a semester.

This semester's winners are:

Dr. Juan Andrade, Food Science & Human Nutrition: "Fortification of dairy products to ameliorate micronutrient deficiencies in India"

Dr. Matthew Hudson, Crop Sciences: "High performance computing for soybean agriculture"

Dr. Cameron Pittelkow, Crop Sciences: "Improving the sustainability of intensive rice cropping systems in the Taihu Lake region of China"

Dr. Yuanhui Zhang, Agriculture & Biological Engineering: "UIUC-CAU research and education collaboration in environment-enhancing energy"

Dr. Gustavo Caetano-Anolles, Crop Sciences: "Unleashing the power of molecular dynamics for genomics of crop improvement"

Dr. Gail Ferguson, Human & Community Development (HCD): "Feel American, eat American, weigh American? Remote acculturation and obesity risk in Mexico"

ACES to host International Summer Immersion Program (ISIP)

OIP is excited to announce the participation of at least 30 students as part of the 2015 International Summer Immersion Program (ISIP).

The newly named ISIP has evolved from the annual summer program formerly known as the Zhejiang University Research Apprenticeship Program. The program, going into its sixth year, will still include students from China's Zhejiang University but has been expanded to include students from as many as three other partner institution, including Autonomous University of San Luis Potosi, Mexico; Chungnam National University, South Korea; and University for Development Studies, Ghana.

"ISIP grew out of the desire to diversify the annual Zhejiang program, mainly because the program students experience will be enhanced by their exposure and interaction with fellows from other countries. This will create more opportunities for them to further their English language skills. Besides offering an outstanding experience to these students, the program serves as a vehicle for deepening our existing strategic partnerships with these other universities," said Suzana Palaska-Nicholson, associate director of OIP.

Other enhancements to the 2015 program include new topical seminars and language classes that focus on English for graduate students. The program will run from July 13 - August 15.

Bullock brothers unite science and economics to help farmers and environment

Two brothers representing different disciplines in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) are collaborating to reduce environmental damage and raise farm profits around the world by providing better recommendations for using nitrogen fertilizers.

Dr. Donald Bullock is a professor of crop production in the Department of Crop Sciences.

Dr. David Bullock is a professor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics.

The brothers are using precision agricultural technology (PAT) in South America, specifically Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Columbia, to conduct inexpensive, large-scale experiments that will yield the information needed to estimate site-specific application rates for nitrogen fertilizer.

Don designs the experiments, and David analyzes the data to develop management strategies.

"Our overall goal is to change how advice about nitrogen use is given. We want to make it very data intensive. By collecting the data on how yields and water quality respond to nitrogen, we can increase farmers' production and reduce environmental damage from over-fertilization," David explained.

"Our project is about generating the data you need to use precision technology. We are trying to figure out what information we need to collect to make good decisions. Technology and information are complimentary. The technology is worth so much more with the information. And the information is only valuable with the technology," said Don.

The brothers' large body work over the past 20 years has made great headway towards crop sciences and agricultural economists better understanding each other. And their new project goes beyond their own disciplines to be truly multi-disciplinary; they are also working with agricultural engineers and environmental sciences.

"People from different disciplines see things in different ways. But what we're doing takes economists, crop scientists, and others. We don't speak the same 'language' but eventually we get around to understanding what the other person is saying. When you get around to understanding, it makes sense; it's just from a different viewpoint," said David.

"Interdisciplinary collaboration allows you to see some of your own ignorance because when you work on big projects, it is easy to quickly get out of your area of expertise. When you bring groups and expertise to the table you can all do a better job," added Don.

When asked if it was harder or easier to collaborate with a brother, they said "both."

"It's harder," said Don, "because you say things you wouldn't say to anyone else."

"So, yes, it's harder to keep the relationship," joked David.

The positive: "It's pretty hard to offend your brother," they agreed.