

Office of International Programs announces the 2015-16 Academy for Global Engagement



2015-16 Global Academy with OIP staff.

Eight faculty from the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) have been selected to form the newest cohort of the ACES Academy for Global Engagement (Global Academy).

The 2015-16 Global Academy, which marks the ten-year anniversary of the program, will focus on “public research institutions and the global food system” and include an immersion trip to Mexico, the Academy’s inaugural destination 10 years ago, to deepen ties with ACES strategic partners.

The Global Academy training program encourages greater internationalization of the College by providing a platform and assistance to ACES faculty who wish to further their global research, teaching, and service engagements. The scholars selected for the 2015-16 ACES Academy for Global Engagement are:

Dr. Rabin Bhattarai, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering

Dr. Gail Ferguson, Department of Human Development and Family Studies

Dr. Juan Loor, Department of Animal Sciences

Dr. Hope Michelson, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics

Dr. Michael Miller, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition

Dr. Jennifer McCaffrey, Extension and Outreach

Dr. Maria B. Villamil, Department of Crop Sciences

Dr. Michael Ward, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

Participating in the Global Academy requires an academic year commitment to the program, which focuses on global activities at the college, campus, and national levels, and culminates with an international immersion experience.

For more information about the ACES Global Academy, visit: <http://intlprograms.aces.illinois.edu/staff-resources/global-academy>

Office of International Programs announces seed grant recipients for Fall 2015

The Office of International Programs (OIP) congratulates its International Seed Grant recipients for Fall 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 recipients are:

Dr. Cory Suski, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences: “Field tests of fisheries induced evolution.” Partner: Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Dr. Hong Chen, Food Science and Human Nutrition: “Molecular mechanisms of anti-inflammation and apoptosis-induction by herbal extracts from *Toona sinensis* (Chinese Toon leaf).” Partner: Xi’An Jiaotong University, China

Dr. Zeynep Madak-Erdogan, Food Science and Human Nutrition: “Reengineering of a metamaterial-based biosensor for early cancer detection.” Partner: Bogazici University, Turkey

Dr. Alfred Roca, Animal Sciences: “Conservation genetics of the elephants of Kenya.” Partner: Kenya Wildlife Service

Save the Dates: April 7-8, 2016

**Second Annual
Food Systems for Food Security Symposium**

“Using Big Data to Improve International Food Security”

Program and registration information will be available in early 2016.

Sponsored by International Food Security at Illinois (IFSI).

Winter-Nelson joins agricultural delegation to Cuba



A street scene in Cuba.

Alex Winter-Nelson, Director of the ACES Office of International Programs, joined a delegation of Illinois agriculture sector leaders and congressional representatives on a visit to Cuba during mid-October. The Illinois-Cuba Working Group organized this “learning journey” as a step towards expanding agribusiness ties between Illinois and Cuba.

Participants travelling with Winter-Nelson included Congressman Rodney Davis (R) and Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (D), both of whom serve on the House Agriculture Committee. The Illinois Soybean Association sent a group that included both the President of the Board, Daryl Cates, and the CEO, Craig Rataczyk as well as other ISA officials. Other participants included Adam Nielsen of the Illinois Farm Bureau, Todd Maisch, President of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and Don Duvall from the Illinois Corn Marketing Board.

“In the context of more relaxed and normalized relations between the U.S. and Cuba, the visit exposed us to signs of economic change and persistence in that country,” Winter-Nelson said.

The trip included a tour of the new port facilities in the Mariel Special Development Zone, where Cuba is hoping to attract foreign private investments and visits to privately owned businesses, a new phenomenon in Cuba where government control has been the norm since the communist revolution of 1959. A visit to an agricultural cooperative gave the group an understanding of the production and marketing challenges faced by farmers in the country. Finally, a series of meetings with officials in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Foreign Trade and Investment gave the delegation a governmental perspective on those challenges.

“In all the activities we were warmly welcomed and impressed by the hospitality we received,” said Winter-Nelson.

Interest in Cuba by Americans has grown considerably since President Obama announced the start of a process to normalize relations between the countries in December of 2014. Formal diplomatic relations were restored in July of 2015 after being severed since 1961. The thawing of relations is opening of the possibility of greater economic and academic interactions between the countries. The Cuban economy has developed in patterns that reflect both the effects of the U.S. trade blockade and the communist ideology of the ruling government.

“The country has become self-reliant in many ways, but that self-reliance is achieved at very high costs. Looking forward it seems likely that Cuba will want to import from the U.S. goods that it now either does without, produces at high cost, or imports from other sources at higher cost than the U.S. would supply. That growth in imports could create opportunities for Illinois agriculture,” said Winter-Nelson.

He can easily see potential benefits of greater trade between Illinois and Cuba.

“They experience shortages in access to production technology including farm equipment, seeds and fertilizers and also shortages in access to ingredients for animal feeds and specific foods for human consumption. Imports from Illinois could make great contributions to increasing the productivity of Cuba’s agricultural sector. Despite that potential for more economic exchange, the persistence of Cuban the government’s control over market activities and the U.S. government’s restrictions on trade and finance continue to make doing business in Cuba difficult,” Winter-Nelson said.

Specifically, Winter-Nelson participated in the trip to better understand the importance of Cuba for economic interests in Illinois and to begin to explore the potential for academic exchanges.

“Greater openness may provide opportunities for academic exchange that can be mutually beneficial for scholars in Cuba and in Illinois. While greater economic exchange remains constrained by policies in both countries, the path for academic exchange is more open. The Office of International Programs will be exploring the potential for such exchanges in the near future,” he said.

For more news items on international activities in the College of ACES, visit <http://intlprograms.aces.edu>.

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