

Notes from the Director

Alex Winter-Nelson, Edward Martey, and John Kuwornu after the successful defense of Martey's doctoral dissertation.

While in Accra Ghana last week, I had the pleasure of presiding over the final dissertation defense for an ACES doctoral candidate, Edward Martey. The event held special meaning for me because Edward's graduate studies at

Illinois were funded through a USAID Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) award secured by the ACES Office of International Programs.

The BHEARD program represents an important effort to build capacity in developing countries for research to address the challenges of ensuring sustainable food systems and greater food security. A central mission of the College of ACES is to build in students like Edward the capacity to use research to promote improved wellbeing around the world. To achieve that outcome, we must often do more than train our students. We must also work to build the capacity of the institutions to which our alumni return. ACES has a long history of partnering to build institutions of higher education in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Our new project under Prof. Paul McNamara in Sierra Leone demonstrates the continuation of that history. Working to strengthen our partners around the world may be one of the most impactful things we can do. When our partners like Njala University in Sierra Leone or the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) in Malawi or Haryana Agricultural University in India grow in strength, ACES sees its global platform for collaborative engagement to address critical issues expand. Ultimately, it is in partnership with well-trained scholars based in vibrant institutions around the world that the College of ACES makes the greatest contributions to addressing global grand challenges. The programs highlighted in this newsletter show we are having impact, and the partnerships described here show how we are positioning ourselves and our network to do even more in the future

Alex Winter-Nelson, Director, ACES Office of International Programs

ACES hosts Director General of CIAT to speak on a sustainable food future

Urging younger people "to join the agricultural field to save humanity," the Director General of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) Ruben G. Echeverría pre-

sented the 2018 ACES Distinguished International Lecture on December 4 to a large audience of Illinois students, faculty, and staff. Dr. Echeverría contextualized his lecture's title, "Magical Realism...How to Achieve a Sustainable Food Future," with a quote from Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez:

"The first condition of magical realism, as its name suggests, is that it is a fact that is rigorously true but nonetheless appears to be fantastic."

Echeverría asked, "Is a sustainable food future true or something we only dream of in PowerPoint?"

His lecture proposed that a sustainable food future is not an unachievable dream, and by speaking on the Illinois campus, he hoped to motivate a new generation to help achieve this.

Save the Date: 5th Annual International Food Security Symposium April 2-3, 2019

The theme of the Fifth International Food Security at Illinois (IFSI) Symposium is "Building Institutional Capacity for Food Security." The event is co-sponsored by AgReach.

This year's symposium will bring together researchers and practitioners to discuss 1) Theories of institutional change 2) Building capacity in research 3) Building extension capacity 4) Strengthening higher education institutions.

ACES formalizes partnership with Malawi's premier agricultural university - LUANAR



Alex Winter-Nelson with Vice Chancellor George Yobe Kanyama-Phiri and Registrar Phillip Dalitso Frank Kaonda.

In early November, the ACES Office of International Programs was honored to host two distinguished administrators from Malawi's Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR): Vice Chancellor George Yobe Kanyama-Phiri and Registrar Phillip Dalitso Frank Kaonda.

As part of the delegation's program – highlights of which included signing a memorandum of understanding with the university and meeting with several administrators and faculty – LUANAR's Vice Chancellor and Registrar provided an overview of LUANAR to an audience of ACES department heads and others to identify potential areas of partnership. Many areas of common interest were identified, and ACES International looks forward to facilitating faculty, staff, and student engagements towards common goals.

ACES undergraduates participate in World Food Prize events



Six undergraduate students from the College of ACES attended the annual World Food Prize in Des Moines, Iowa during October. This three-day event is known as “the premier conference in the world on global agriculture.”

The selected students, whose registration and travel were sponsored by the ACES Office of International Programs and the ACES Office of Academic Programs, were accompanied by Suzana Palaska, associate director of the ACES Office of International Programs.

These students, already interested in seeking creative solutions to the world's food security problem, left even more inspired by the opportunity. This is the third year a delegation of ACES undergraduates has attended this event.

ACES continues legacy of building educational capacity in Sierra Leone



A field extension worker, trained by AgReach, based at Illinois, works with youth on sweet potato cultivation.

A team based in the College of ACES will help Sierra Leone enhance its institutions of higher education by supporting outcome-based education and developing a framework for quality control as part of a project funded by the United Kingdom (UK)'s Department for International Development (DFID).

The overall objective of this new project, “Assuring Quality Higher Education in Sierra Leone (AQHed-SL),” is to bring together higher education institutions across Sierra Leone to work together to improve the management and implementation of outcome-based education and to establish a National Qualifications Framework. ACES will work within a consortium led by the University of Sierra Leone for the 3.5 year duration of the project. Dr. Paul McNamara, associate professor in The Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics is the Illinois team lead.

Bob Easter receives APLU Food Systems Leadership Award



Bob Easter (center) with Ian Maw (APLU Vice President for food, agriculture and natural resources) and Peter McPherson (APLU President).

Congratulations to President Emeritus Bob Easter on receiving the Food Systems Leadership Institute Leadership Award at the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) annual meeting in New Orleans. This annual award recognizes a senior leader who has made an extraordinary impact on the food system through leadership and service and who exemplifies the core principles established by the Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI), including personal leadership, organizational leadership and food systems leadership. The award also recognizes the leadership, innovation, engagement and service that APLU promotes through its programs.

For more news items on international activities in the College of ACES, visit <http://intlprograms.aces.edu>. To receive an electronic version of this newsletter, visit <http://illinois.edu/gm/subscribe/7045>