

Notes from the Director

The month of May at the University of Illinois is always a time for celebration and new beginnings. The Office of International Programs sends best wishes and congratulations to all the students who are graduating this month and moving on to new adventures. I also want to send best wishes to ten College of ACES faculty members who are about to embark on their ACES Global Academy sponsored travel. Over the course of the academic year participants in the Global Academy have been attending seminars on topics related to international engagement and will now be traveling in pairs to pursue professional activities abroad. Best wishes to Nicolas Martin and David Bullock for research in Colombia and Argentina; to Erik Sacks and Alex Lipka for their work in Japan; to Margarita Teran Garcia and Jan Brooks for their program in South Africa; to Hong Chen and Anna Arthur for work in China; and to Mike Miller and Matt Stasiewicz for their research in Mexico. We look forward to hearing from these faculty and from returning students in August. Faculty and staff interested in future Global Academy activities should refer to the announcement below. Whether you will be traveling far or staying close to home in the coming months, please look out for opportunities to engage with the ACES Office of International Programs. *Alex Winter-Nelson*

IBRL hosts Cochran Fellows to advance biofuels in Ecuador



As part of the United States Department of Agriculture's Cochran Fellowship Program, the Integrated Bioprocessing Research Laboratory (IBRL) hosted eight agricultural professionals from Ecuador for two weeks of training focused on the U.S. biofuel industry.

"The progress and innovations in the U.S. biofuel industry can be applied to the sugarcane-based biofuel industry that is prevalent in

South America and Ecuador," explained Vijay Singh, director of IBRL and distinguished professor of bioprocessing in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering.

ACES international 'seed grants' grow into significant impacts around the world

A longstanding internal grant program coordinated by the Office of International Programs is realizing its goal of facilitating international efforts and collaborations that ultimately benefit ACES while making impacts around the world.

The international seed grants program was initiated in 2009. Each project is funded through the Arlys Conrad Endowment Fund.

Over the past nine years, 18 rounds of recipients have received up to \$4,000 for their proposed projects to build an international dimension into their existing work.

"Sometimes faculty just need a source of funds to get a project started, for example to collect data, and then they can use the data to go after a larger proposal. Time and time again these initial funds have led to additional funding in the future," said Alex Winter-Nelson, director of the ACES Office of International Programs.

Seed grant recipients announced for Spring 2018

This semester's recipients are:

Kevin McSweeney, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, "Towards a mechanistic understanding of the relationship between soil and pododermatitis – a neglected tropical disease" (Guatemala)

Yong-Su Jin, Food Science and Human Nutrition, "Modulation of gut microbiota using oligosaccharides derived from marine biomass" (South Korea)

Karen Kramer, Human Development and Family Studies, "A Social Capital Perspective on the Fertility Crisis in South Korea"

Peter Christensen, Agricultural and Consumer Economics, "Expanding Access to Mobility-on-Demand Services in Cairo" (Egypt)

Alfred "Al" Roca, Animal Sciences, "Conservation genetics of Indonesian rhinoceros species"

2018-19 Global Academy aims to build academic partnerships in South Africa

The ACES Office of International Programs is pleased to announce the theme and strategic institutional partners for the 2018-19 ACES Academy for Global Engagement (Global Academy): The 2018-19 Academy program will focus on exploring the selected South African research universities and institutes focused on food, agriculture, and natural resources in an effort to identify future partners and strengthen existing ties. A full cohort visit to South Africa is projected for January or March 2019, depending on schedules of participants and partners. Potential partners include University of Pretoria, University of KwaZulu Natal, University of Stellenbosch, and the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) of the Eastern Cape.

ACES International Graduate Grants recipients announced – Spring 2018

Martin Overholt, Animal Sciences, “Determination of sources of variability in pork quality in the Dutch swine production system” --The Netherlands (advisor Anna Dilger)

Lakisha David, Human Development and Family Studies, “Northern Ghana Family Reunification Project” (advisor Christy Lleras)

Pablo Ordoñez, Agricultural and Consumer Economics, “Short-Term Crops and Adoption of Coffee Agroforestry Systems: Evidence from a Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) Program in Nicaragua” (advisor Kathy Baylis)

Yushu Xia, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, “Improving Agricultural Nitrogen Models for Nitrogen Management Assessment at a Field Spatial Scale” – France (advisor Michelle Wander)

Shah-Al Emran, Crop Sciences, “Optimization of the environmental footprint of rice based cropping system to obtain food security in Bangladesh” (advisor Cameron Pittelkow)

Hania Taha, Food Science and Human Nutrition, “Feasibility of a neoadjuvant modified-ketogenic diet clinical trial to improve cancer outcomes in gastrointestinal and head and neck cancers” – Palestine (advisor Anna Arthur)

Anna Waller, Food Science and Human Nutrition, “Dietary and nutritional assessment of rural Maasai families in Tanzania” (advisor Juan Andrade)

Luis Ibarra Sanchez, Food Science and Human Nutrition, “The effect of adding antimicrobials to Queso Fresco on Latino consumers’ acceptance” – Mexico (advisor Michael Miller)

Xi Chen, Human Development and Family Studies, “Real-time effects of maternal behavior on preschoolers’ functioning in a challenging problem-solving task: A cross-cultural study in the US and China” (advisor Nancy McElwain)

Fourth Annual International Food Security Symposium focuses on research and development strategy to avoid a world food crisis



Invited speakers for the food security symposium visit the cherry blossoms on the U of I campus.

A distinguished and dynamic line-up of speakers and nearly 100 attendees interested in new technologies for meeting increased agricultural demand gathered for the Fourth Annual International Food Security Symposium on the University of Illinois campus April 30 – May 1, 2018.

This year’s event encouraged presenters and attendees to share their visions for avoiding a world food crisis with a

focus on research and development strategies within germplasm, abiotic and biotic stresses, and photosynthesis, and how to best recruit and train the next generation of plant breeders.

The symposium also celebrated the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) longstanding partnership with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) based in The Philippines; several IRRI representatives were in attendance.

Dr. Robert Zeigler, Director General Emeritus, IRRI, gave an inspiring and reflective lunchtime keynote address on how accessing germplasm can address the challenges posed by global climate change.

Hannah Dougherty receives Fulbright Award

Hannah Dougherty, a M.S. student in the Department of Crop Sciences, has received a Fulbright U.S. Student Program award to New Zealand in agriculture from the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. Dougherty will conduct research at the University of Waikato as part of a collaborative project to improve New Zealand water quality affected by dairy farm nutrient runoff (specifically nitrate-nitrogen) through the implementation of a new design of denitrifying woodchip bioreactors which will help reduce nitrate from entering the local waterways. Dougherty is advised by Dr. Laura Christianson.

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>