

MEDLEY

- a potpourri of diverse talent

January 2020

Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)

Submitted by: Jessica Lang & Scott Anderson

Vision Statement

To create a diverse workforce and promote a positive work environment where all employees are respected and valued for their contributions.

USDA-ARS-Midwest Area Diversity and Equal Opportunity Council (DEOC) members:

Kelli Adkins, Chair, Lexington & Bowling Green, KY

John Baker, St. Paul, MN

Vicky Brooks, Peoria, IL

Karen Cichy, East Lansing, MI

Steven Clough, Urbana, IL

Sherry Egbert, West Lafayette, IN

Dennis Halterman, Madison, WI

Bruce Hibbard, Columbia, MO

Leona Horst, Wooster, OH

Christina Olshawsky, AFM, Peoria, IL

John Prueger, Ames, IA

Chris Wente, Morris, MN

Paul Scott, Employee Engagement Council

Sherri Buxton, Peoria, IL, Employee Engagement Council and MWA Office Advisor

The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) is a recruitment and referral program comprised of eligible candidates with disabilities who apply and are interviewed each fall. Employers can view candidate applications and resumes in the WRP database and contact candidates directly about temporary and permanent job opportunities throughout the year. Jessica Lang, who is deaf, is a Human Resource Specialist with the Midwest Area and was recruited through the WRP. Technology has made a significant impact in improving the lives of people with disabilities as Jessica highlights below:

Thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments that made a significant change for persons with disabilities in equal employment opportunities and reasonable accommodations in the workplace. Most of my reasonable accommodations are advanced technologies that are necessary to provide me with the ability to communicate with others and access to audio information. Without reasonable accommodation, I would not be able to attain the same level of performance as other co-workers in the same position and enjoy the benefits. Also, to have the same opportunity to participate in employer-sponsored events and participate in professional advancements.

My position as a Human Resources Specialist allows me the opportunity to participate in many things with the help of advanced technologies and sign language accessibility. Advanced technology means to me, as a deaf person, that it eliminates communication barriers. I can participate in conference calls and communicate with my co-workers. I can name three advanced technologies that I am currently using at work. Just one thing to remember, the degree of limitation will vary among deaf individuals and not all advanced technologies will be a solution. Personally, I chose certain advanced technologies to be my reasonable accommodations because I know they will help me succeed in my position.

Video Remote Interpreting: When on-site American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters are not immediately available, this technology provides for a communication solution through a videophone with video and audio connectivity for deaf and hearing people to facilitate a conversation through live interpreting. This has helped me to communicate with my co-workers in a one-on-one informal and formal training.

Speech-to-Text: the app is pretty much one of the easily accessible apps that can convert speech into text on a smartphone or tablet. This is a valuable app to have but each speech-to-text apps have different levels of ability and complexity. I use this for a quick converse with my co-workers. I don't use this often because of the constant need to correct errors.

Closed Captions and Subtitle: I love this technology. It is a visual text that follows a person's voice on the TV screen. It pretty much is hardwired in movies, TV channels, and live news, and alert notifications, thanks to Federal Communications Commission (FCC). When there is a webinar presentation, there is a subtitle or a transcript available that I can watch or read.

I am excited to share that mainstream technologies are starting to lean toward the advancement of accessibility and inclusivity. As many of us are smartphone users, some of us are always on the lookout for the next release. I am one of those people who is on the lookout for the next best thing in mainstream technology with built-in accessibility, such as Apple Watch, Microsoft software programs, and Google products.

Creating an accessible and welcoming workplace with advanced technologies will create a place of inclusivity for all.

Meet the Wallace Carver Fellows and MWA Summer Interns 2019

Fellow: Brianna Cheek

SY: Matthew Rouse

Q. How did you learn about the Wallace Carver Fellows program?

Brianna: I learned about the Wallace-Carver Fellowship through the Global Youth Institute my senior year of High School.

Q. How are you benefiting from this experience?

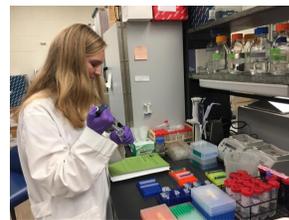
Brianna: I benefitted from this experience because it gave me an authentic experience in a lab. I got to work in a field that I am passionate about, and I was able to network with many amazing people.

Q. Based on your experience so far, are you more likely to consider a career in agricultural research?

Brianna: Yes, I am definitely going to pursue a career in agricultural research. I enjoyed working in a lab and discovering the numerous opportunities available in plant genetics.

Q. Would you recommend the program to others? Why?

Brianna: Yes, I would highly recommend the program to others. It is a great way to get experience in research, and I had wonderful mentors who took the time to teach me and give me advice.



Fellow: Mikayla Graham

SY: Michael Flythe

Q. How did you learn about the Wallace Carver Fellows program?

Mikayla: I learned about the summer internship program through my Goodnight Scholars Mentor at North Carolina State University. She was going over internship opportunities for the USDA and the Summer Internship Program through the Wallace-Carver Fellows come up.

Q. How are you benefiting from this experience?

Mikayla: This experience provided me with hands on experience where I went through the entire scientific process: gathering samples, processing them, then analyzing the data. I learned very applicable skills that will benefit me in a future career.

Q. What advice can you share with others interested in this Summer Internship program?

Mikayla: Do it! If you have any interest in agriculture or agricultural research, this program will provide you with background and quality experience that will help you in your future. Make sure when you are in your internship, interact with your mentors and ask all of your questions to make sure you get everything you can out of the experience.

Q. Would you recommend the program to others? Why?

Mikayla: Yes, I would recommend this program to others. I have participated in multiple internships, and this experience has been the highest quality. I was not just washing dishes or doing repetitive lab work. I had responsibilities and actually had a large part in the experiments that occurred this summer.



Fellow: Chase Krug
SY: Guohong Cai

Q. How did you learn about the Wallace Carver Fellows program?

Chase: I learned about the USDA Wallace-Carver Fellowship through the World Food Prize organization and was encouraged to apply for the program by former USDA Wallace-Carver Fellows.

Q. Why did you select ARS for your summer program?

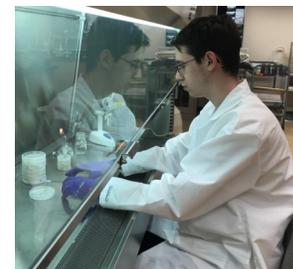
Chase: I selected USDA-ARS for my summer program because of the innovative research being conducted in the crop and plant science field.

Q. How are you benefiting from this experience?

Chase: I am benefiting from this experience by learning how a government agency conducts credible research and discovering the diverse career opportunities in the public sector.

Q. Would you recommend the program to others? Why?

Chase: I would recommend the program to others because it is a great opportunity to increase your lab skills, and understand the important role public servants play in technological and scientific advancements.



Fellow: Emma Hanisko
SY: Wayne Zeller

Q. How did you learn about the Wallace Carver Fellows program?

Emma: I learned about the Wallace Carver Fellowship through my prior experience with the World Food Prize, and was notified about my placement with the ARS from a World Food Prize coordinator.

Q. Why did you select ARS for your summer program?

Emma: I selected ARS for my internship because I had the ability to work in a lab for the first time, which is the type of experience I really wanted to have before graduating from college.

Q. Based on your experience so far, are you more likely to consider a career in agricultural research?

Emma: Based on my experience this summer, I am more interested now in agricultural research than I was before. From my internship to my trip to D.C., I have been exposed to so many career options that I had never heard about or considered, which has made agricultural research more appealing to me.

Q. Would you recommend the program to others? Why?

Emma: I would definitely recommend the Wallace-Carver Fellowship, or any other ARS internship opportunity, to others! Working with the ARS has been such a rewarding opportunity, and I feel more prepared for college and my future career.



Summer Intern: Michaela Taddeinni
SY: Dennis Halterman

Q. How are you benefiting from this experience?

Michaela : My summer internship was beneficial because it gave me many opportunities to develop real world skills and to better understand the science underlying different research techniques. Throughout the Summer, I gained valuable work experience specific to agricultural research and also learned so much about biology, plant pathology, and ecology in general.

Q. What do you like best?

Michaela : My favorite part about my internship was how much responsibility and independence I was given. I felt much more involved in the planning and execution of the experiments than I have in other research positions. Not only did this make me feel like an important member of my lab and make my work feel more meaningful, it also prepared me to hold research positions with more responsibility in the future.

Q. Based on your experience so far, are you more likely to consider a career in agricultural research?

Michaela : I was already very interested in a career in agricultural research prior to my internship, so this experience didn't necessarily make me more likely to choose that career path, but it did expose me to different types of research that I might not have considered before. I always saw myself as somebody more suited to field research than technical lab work, but after this internship I feel more confident in a lab setting. I feel this internship increased my options for future work in agricultural research.

Q. Would you recommend the program to others? Why?

Michaela : I would definitely recommend this program to others. I think this internship is an excellent learning opportunity in an up and coming field and would be a beneficial experience for others interested in agriculture or research in general.



Summer Intern: Danielle Hutchinson
SY: Peter (Rocky) Smiley

Q. How did you learn about the Summer Internship program?

Danielle : I learned about this internship opportunity through a flyer circulated by a faculty member of the School of Environment & Natural Resources at Ohio State.

Q. Why did you select ARS for your summer program?

Danielle : The school year prior to my internship, I was working as a lab assistant for the same Research Unit within the ARS. I enjoyed my working environment and the scientists I was with, and was eager to experience more hands-on field work. It was a natural transition and an opportunity that I am extremely grateful for.

Q. How are you benefiting from this experience?

Danielle : I have spent these past months gaining invaluable experience and learning about my strengths and challenges as a scientist. I was able to experience vigorous field work for the first time, and gain skills pertaining to sampling, surveying, and data collection. I have grown in both my practical skills as well as my conviction in this professional trajectory.

Q. What do you like best

Danielle : Through this internship, I learned that I truly enjoy field work. More specifically, I loved sampling snakes from agricultural riparian zones. It was always exciting to lift a cover board and find a snake (or several), especially when it was a species we did not see often. I have always loved reptiles, and getting to work with them so closely never got old. It felt like something I would watch on Animal Planet when I was little.



Summer Intern: Mariah Jill Filla
SY: Shelley Jansky

Q. How did you learn about the Summer Internship program?

Mariah: I already had a background working for the Krysan Lab in the UW Department of Horticulture studying Arabidopsis and was looking to expand my knowledge in other areas of plant research. I then learned about the Summer Internship Program through a professor of mine that knew the Jansky Lab was looking for help and thought their area of research would interest me.

Q. Why did you select ARS for your summer program?

Mariah: I chose to do the Summer Internship Program because it promised the opportunity to work on new and understudied subjects that interested me. Due to the nature of the subjects I would research it and would allow for me to exercise research creativity and freedom as I had not been able to do before.

Q. How are you benefiting from this experience?

Mariah: This experience has allowed me to learn much more about the research process and the structure of sound studies. Along side of running my own research project, I got the opportunity to assist and work along side other researchers and learn more about my subject of study, the research process, and field work from them. So far, it has been an enriching experience and I have been able to take so much away from my time working here.

Q. Has your vision of agriculture production or research changed since starting this experience? Why?

Mariah: Before starting the Summer Internship Program, I embarrassingly only ever recognized the more “macro” research agricultural labs turned out. It completely fascinated me to be working with pollen viability along with being surrounded by other researchers that were studying and testing concepts and theories at a level smaller than the whole potato. It was exciting and fantastic to be studying something through potatoes that had the potential to apply to many other plants as well. Now when people ask why something like potato research is so important, I have so many examples to show them and much to talk about.



Summer Intern: Keegan McConnel
SY: Martha Vaughan

Q. How did you learn about the Summer Internship program?

Keegan: I learned about the program by getting involved and volunteering in the lab; then the position was advertised to me.

Q. What do you like best?

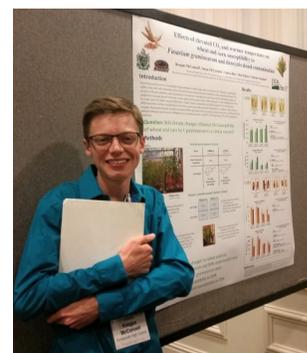
Keegan: I like the hands on experience and learning the best. Also working alongside researchers who really care about their work and enjoy helping new scientists and interns is an extremely valuable experience.

Q. Has your vision of agriculture production or research changed since starting this experience? Why?

Keegan: My perception of production and research has definitely changed while working for the USDA. I had no idea how many people or steps it takes to conduct thorough research or the variety of projects that relate to agriculture. I see now that there are so many different things that need to be studied and there are tons of options for research available.

Q. Based on your experience so far, are you more likely to consider a career in agricultural research?

Keegan: I am definitely more likely to consider a career in agricultural research because this experience has showed me what kinds of things I enjoy doing and has helped me explore my options as a future scientist.



Summer Intern: Alayna Rosales
SY: Jose Luis Ramirez

Q. How did you learn about the Summer Internship program?

Alayna: I learned about the Summer Internship Program through a graduate student who had given a presentation to my biology class about her experience working for ARS.

Q. How are you benefiting from this experience?

Alayna: I am learning useful, transferable skills not only in a laboratory setting, but in a professional one as well. I have been able to make connections with many successful people in my field of interest due to the connections that my mentors already have.

Q. What do you like best?

Alayna: I appreciate the people I have met the most, my mentors are two of the best people that I could have had the opportunity of working with. Their expertise and guidance has been monumental in the shaping of my future. I feel as though they really care about me, my education, and my career goals.

Q. Based on your experience so far, are you more likely to consider a career in agricultural research?

Alayna: This experience has shown me what research really has to offer. Now that I have gained some of the technical skills, I feel much more comfortable in a laboratory setting and can see myself pursuing this career further.

USDA-ARS FY 2020 Diversity/Special Emphasis Observances Calendar

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (January 20, 2020)
National African American History Month (February)
Women's History Month (March)
Days of Remembrance & Holocaust Remembrance Day (April)
Take our Daughters/Sons to Work Day (April 23, 2020)
Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (May)
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Month (June)
Women's Equality Day (August 26, 2020)
Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th to October 15th)
National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October)
Veterans Day (November 11, 2020)
Native American Indian Heritage Month (November)

We'd love to highlight your Outreach event or share your story.

**Contributions can be sent to your location ODEO representative
listed on the front page below the vision statement.**

January is National Mentoring Month and whether you are hosting a summer research intern for the first time, or have mentored students and postdocs for decades, it is a good idea to think about the role of mentors in training the next generation of scientists. Mentors play an important role in the success of students, postdocs, and other laboratory personnel, and both the mentor and the mentee share a responsibility to make their relationship productive and rewarding. Each connection between a mentor and a student is unique and will evolve over time, resulting in a need for some adjustments to the relationship periodically. Today's workforce is comprised of people with increasingly diverse backgrounds, which may add a layer of complexity. One goal of effective mentorship should be to allow this to enrich, rather than confound, the relationship. The importance of a healthy mentoring relationship may be common knowledge for many of us, but here are some highlights of the benefits to both the mentor and mentee (adapted from <https://rackham.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Fmentoring.pdf>):

Mentoring benefits students/postdocs because:

- It supports their advancement in research activity, conference presentations, publication, pedagogical skill, and grant-writing.
- They are less likely to feel ambushed by potential bumps in the road, having been alerted to them, and provided resources for dealing with stressful or difficult periods in their graduate careers.
- Mentors can provide experiences and networks to help them improve their prospects of securing professional placement.
- It provides knowledge that someone is committed to their progress, someone who can give them solid advice and be their advocate, and can help to lower stress and build confidence.
- Constructive interaction with a mentor and participation in collective activities he or she arranges promote engagement in the field.

And it rewards mentors in an abundance of ways:

- Your mentee will keep you abreast of new knowledge and techniques, and apprise you of promising avenues for research.
- Your reputation rests in part on the work of your former students; sending successful new scholars into the field increases your professional stature.
- Your networks are enriched. Helping mentees make the professional and personal connections they need to succeed will greatly extend your own circle of colleagues.
- Good students will be attracted to you. Word gets around about who the best mentors are, so they are usually the most likely to recruit—and retain—outstanding people.
- It is personally satisfying. Seeing your mentees succeed can be as rewarding as a major publication or significant grant.

There is not sufficient space in the MEDLEY to summarize all the goals, expectations, challenges, and suggestions for improving your mentoring abilities. If you're interested in resources to help you enhance your mentoring capabilities the list below may help you:

Online resources:

<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2019/03/three-research-based-lessons-improve-your-mentoring> Summary of a panel discussion of science-based studies to improve mentoring relationships.

<https://nrmnet.net/> National Research Mentoring Network. A website that provides some resources for mentor training and networking opportunities for both mentors and students/postdocs.

https://www.hhmi.org/sites/default/files/Educational%20Materials/Lab%20Management/entering_mentoring.pdf This resource was developed by Jo Handelsman (University of Wisconsin-Madison) and provides an outline for leading an 8-session long seminar on the process of learning to be a mentor.

<https://www.hhmi.org/science-education/programs/making-right-moves> (Chapter 5) An overview of mentoring, including responsibilities and strategies to strengthen your mentoring relationship.

<https://www.nature.com/collections/lhgrjpyzdm> A collection of articles from Nature Careers, profiles of Nature's annual Mentoring in Science award winners, and relevant blog posts from Naturejobs.

There are also a few mentoring-related courses through AgLearn, including 'Fostering Mentoring Relationships', 'USDA Mentoring Program Training', and 'Mentoring Others' (a LinkedIn Learning course).

Books:

Dean, D. 2009. *Getting the Most Out of Your Mentoring Relationships: A Handbook for Women in STEM*. Springer-Verlag New York. ISBN 978-0-387-92409-0

Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, and National Academy of Engineering. 1997. *Adviser, Teacher, Role Model, Friend: On Being a Mentor to Students in Science and Engineering*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/5789>.

Barker, K. 2010. *At the Helm: Leading Your Laboratory*, 2nd Ed. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. ISBN 978-0879698669

Visibility and Voice: LGBT+ Professionals in Agriculture & STEM

Submitted by: Jason Gillman

On September 17, 2019, the Columbia, Missouri USDA-ARS location facilitated a speaker panel of openly LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer or Questioning)-identified individuals (and allies) working in the fields of Agriculture and/or STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The LGBTQ panel was led by USDA-ARS Research Geneticist Dr. Jason Gillman and composed of members of the University of Missouri community (an instructor, two current graduate students, two former graduate students now working in industry), representatives from two USDA agencies (NRCS and ARS), a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a Columbia area farmer. Panelists conveyed their experiences and provided advice on being openly LGBTQ in a field where they have been traditionally underrepresented and historically faced discrimination. The trend of lower retention of LGBTQ individuals in STEM and post-graduate education was discussed. Current legal protections under Title VII and Title IX were also highlighted, as well as the challenges imposed by the lack of broad legal protection for LGBTQ individuals in private employment, housing and access to credit. Federal agencies were recognized as early pioneers in equal opportunity employment for LGBTQ individuals in the public sector.

This event was part of a larger effort to establish a new University of Missouri student chapter of the Cultivating Change foundation (<https://www.cultivatingchange.org/>) whose mission is “Valuing and elevating LGBT agriculturists through advocacy, education, and community.” Dr. Gillman and panelist Lauren Cartwright (a USDA-NRCS Agricultural Economist and Special Emphasis Program Manager for LGBTQ issues for the state of Missouri) also represented their respective agencies at the June 2019 Cultivating Change annual summit held in Des Moines, Iowa. The summit is an annual event intended to “...bring together agriculture LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) employees, human resources and diversity and inclusion professionals, employee resources group leaders, executives and organizational leaders, allies and others who are working toward an equitable industry environment for LGBT agriculturist everywhere.” Summit attendees included academics, federal employees, agriculturalists and representatives from prominent agricultural companies. The event was sponsored by a number of leaders in American agriculture including BASF, Bayer, Syngenta, Tyson, Corteva, USDA-ARS, USDA-NRCS and numerous others.



Visibility and Voice: LGBT+ Professionals in Agriculture & STEM

Sept. 17th, 2019 at 5-7PM

133 Mumford Hall, University of Missouri

This event focuses on the voices of LGBT+ professionals working in the areas of Agriculture and related STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields.

A moderated discussion of panelists will highlight the challenges, opportunities, and successes of individuals working in a field where LGBT+ people have historically been underrepresented. Panelists include production agriculturalists, industry professionals, graduate students and faculty members, and federal government employees in pertinent agencies.



@SFCCMizzou



<https://www.facebook.com/events/469712600530838/>

Science Rocks

Submitted by: NCAUR'S Outreach Committee and Science Rocks Volunteers

NCAUR-USDA-ARS provided six activity booths containing demos and hands-on activities relating to our diverse research projects at the Peoria Riverfront Museum's Science Rocks event in Peoria, IL, on Saturday, September 7, 2019. The Peoria Riverfront Museum estimates over 600 people came through the museum during Science Rocks.



At the Crop Bioprotection Research Unit booth, visitors learned about the different parts of an insect using Madagascar Hissing Cockroach as an insect



Successful transferring of delicate, newly hatched cabbage looper larvae to leaf disks is a skill needed by researchers in the Crop Bioprotection Research Unit. In this photo, a scientist showed a student how to carefully move a larva using a paintbrush.

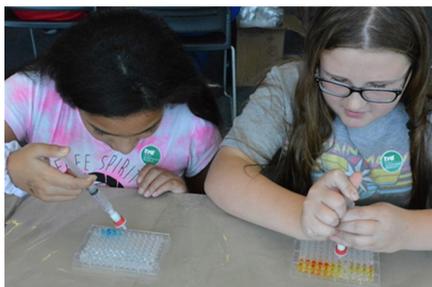
Visitors learned about naturally derived polymers and had the opportunity to make slime at the Plant Polymer Research Unit booth.



Children attentively observe mosquito larvae on display as part of the Crop Bioprotection Research Unit's booth.



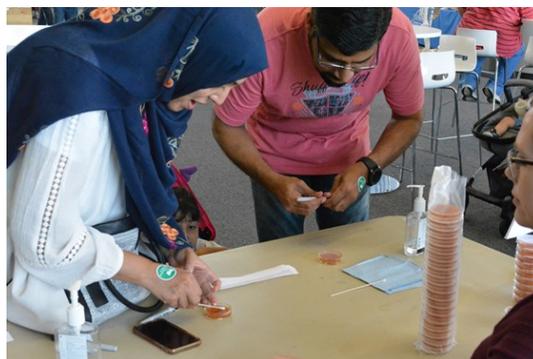
Sitting on the left side of the table (from left to right), were Dr. Imane Laraba, Ms. Ellie Tiley and Dr. Hye-Seon Kim, from the Mycotoxin Prevention and Applied Microbiology Research Unit. They displayed examples of beneficial fungi (e.g., morel mushrooms and blue cheese) and harmful fungi, including moldy strawberries; and *Fusarium*-infested corn ear rot and wheat head blight. The latter two plant diseases threaten agricultural biosecurity here in the US and worldwide due to reduction in crop yields and because the phytopathogenic fusaria contaminate food and feed with mycotoxins.



Two young visitors separated different colored dyes in Kool-Aid using column chromatography, a technique to separate, isolate, and purify components of mixtures at the Bioenergy Research Unit's booth.



Ms. Amber Durham, from the Bio-oils Research Unit, discussed how oils from plants could be used to make new products. The participants each got to learn some basic chemistry principles by making their own lava lamp tubes using oils.



ARS Culture Collection technician, Ms. April Stanley (far right), helped Science Rocks participants inoculate plates with samples from their hands and cellular phones to show the public just how many types of microbes we harbor on our skin and with which we come into contact during our daily lives.

NCAUR Participates in Career Spark 2019

Submitted by: Greg Kennedy

On October 8-9, 2019, NCAUR's Outreach Committee at USDA-ARS in Peoria, Illinois, attended the 3rd Annual Greater Peoria Career Spark. Eleven NCAUR scientific staff presented information and demonstrations of work done in laboratories focused on agriculture. Greater Peoria Economic Development Council and Junior Achievement of Central Illinois pulled together local organizations that represent careers in eight categories: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Advanced Manufacturing; Architecture, Engineering & Construction; Business & Finance; Government, Law & Public Service; Health Sciences; Hospitality; and Arts, Technology & Communications. 4,780 8th grade students from 73 schools (nine nearby counties) attended this showcase over two days at the Peoria Civic Center.

The goal of the career fair was to provide students an opportunity to explore, experience and be inspired by the many careers available in the Central Illinois area. NCAUR was a natural fit into the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Career Field, since it offers a unique tilt to science careers that many other organizations might lack. The USDA NCAUR booth covered the many disciplines of science used to conduct research at the USDA Lab in Peoria: Biology - Plant Biology, Entomology, Microbiology; Chemistry - Oils, Polymers, and Food.

USDA research stretches from field work (new crops, plant pathogen/herbivore studies, soil amendments) to laboratory studies (chemically define properties of new products, production of petroleum substitutes, microbial toxins and new antibiotics). Research in these areas yields ideas and products that are designed to make US agriculture safe, stable, and affordable.



Visual displays: Wheat plants, chemical modeling software, insect herbivore pest control, bioplastic substitutes, biomass conversion to low calorie sweeteners, extruder.

Hands on: Super Slurper, micro pipette, vortex, centrifuge, magnetic stir plate.



Amber Durham explains research conducted at NCAUR that involves entomology, plant biology and the control of pests using biological rather than chemical means.



Eighth grade student mixing Super Slurper powder with water as a demonstration of how common corn starch can be chemically altered to produce a highly desirable material for water retention. Developed at NCAUR in the 1970s it has become the key ingredient in many water absorbent materials (i.e. diapers, moisture control soils).



Volunteers Maureen Shea Andersh and Erica Goett gave students basic information on what a career in agriculture-based sciences is like.



Volunteers Sarah Frazer and Amber Durham gave students basic information on what a career in agriculture-based sciences is like.

James Xu demonstrates the extreme water absorbing abilities of the modified starch material Super Slurper.



Volunteers Sarah Frazer and Amber Durham gave students basic information on what a career in agriculture-based sciences is like.



Amber Durham explains research conducted at NCAUR that involves entomology, plant biology and the control of pests using biological rather than chemical means.

Booth Participants:

Gordon Selling, Jeff Mertens, Ellie Tiley, Christine Hodges, Greg Kennedy, Sarah Frazer, Girma Biresaw, James Xu, Maureen SheaAndersh, Amber Durham, Erica Goett

Ideas and Materials for display provided by:

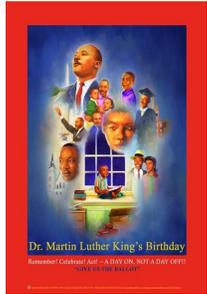
Martha Vaughn, Jennifer Teresi, Erica Goett, Kathy Hornback, Greg Kennedy, Sarah Frazer, Jeff Mertens and Mike Appell

Special Emphasis Programs/Observances/Resources and Information

Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs) are an integral part of the overall civil rights, human resources and program delivery functions. The purpose of the SEPs is to provide oversight, guidance, direction, enforcement and assistance to enhance opportunities for women, minorities, and people with disabilities in all employment and program delivery activities.

Employment activities: Recruitment, hiring, promotions, separations, awards, training, or any other employment action which impacts on the inclusion of and equal opportunity for women, minorities, and people with disabilities.

Program delivery activities: These activities include outreach, training, public notification, program accessibility or any system, practice or procedure or other activity which increases the knowledge of and participation by women, minorities, and people with disabilities.



Monday, January 20th Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK, Jr.) Day

National Theme: "Remember! Celebrate! - Act! A Day On, Not A Day Off" "GIVE US THE BALLOT"

How you can participate?

- Sponsor and organize a single service project.
- Sponsor and organize a variety of service projects.
- Form teams to volunteer.
- Encourage friends, colleagues and families to seek out service projects in their hometowns.

Resources & Information:

MLK Day Communication Resources from the Corporation for National & Community Service <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve-your-community/mlk-day-service>

Videos:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve-your-community/mlkdaygov/communication-resources#MLKvideos>

Freedom's Ring – King's "I Have a Dream" Speech: <http://freedomring.stanford.edu/?view=Speech>

Stanford University: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute Encyclopedia: <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia>

Related Reading:

[We Shall Overcome: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Freedom Struggle.](#)

[An Easy Burden: The Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America.](#)

[A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

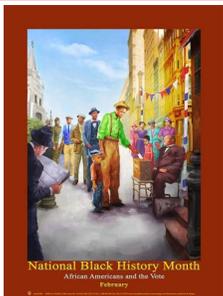
[Growing Up King: An Intimate Memoir.](#)

[Why We Can't Wait.](#)

[Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?](#)

[Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story.](#)

[My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)



Black History Month, Month of February

National Theme: "African Americans and the Vote"

Resources & Information: Library of Congress– The African American Mosaic <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/>

African American History & Heritage Site <http://www.creativefolk.com/blackhistory/blackhistory.html>



Women's History Month, Month of March

National Theme: "Valiant Women of the Vote"

Resources & Information: USDA Women in Agriculture Employee Group

Program Information: Carrie Moore, WIA Vice Chair, carrie.moore@dm.usda.gov

National Women's History Project (707) 636-2888 www.nwhp.org

4,000 Years of Women in Science <http://www.astr.ua.edu/4000WS/>



Additional resources for diversity awareness material and ideas for special observances (catalog, pins, videos, etc.) are available from the following resources:

ARS EEO Video Library: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/files/ARS%20Video%20Library%20Catalog1.pdf>

Diversity Store: www.diversitystore.com; Phone: 800-200-5964; Email – hmsdc@aol.com

Smithsonian: <http://www.si.edu/>; Phone: 202-633-1000; Email: info@si.edu

USDA Department-wide Monthly Observances – Links for Websites: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/observances.html>

Observance events/activities should be conducted in a most cost-efficient manner.



You can earn credit for diversity training when you participate in a Special Emphasis Observance event (i.e., Women’s Equality Day, Veterans Day, etc.)?

- ◆ How? There are two options, as applicable:
 1. Record your own learning in AgLearn if the learning item allows users to do so upon completion of the learning item. Access AgLearn and go to Record Learning.
 2. Contact your Designated Location AgLearn Administrator or Christopher Sacchetti, MWA Outreach, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Program, at christopher.sacchetti@usda.gov or 309-681-6604.

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REE Mission Area EEO Counseling: 202-720-6161, 800-340-4289, TDD: 202-720-3303

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/AboutUs/docs.htm?docid=23089>; Axon: <https://axon.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/Pages/Home.aspx>

Cooperative Resolution Program: Jeff Schmitt; 301-504-1352, jeff.schmitt@ars.usda.gov or coopres@ars.usda.gov

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/odeo/coopres>; Axon: <https://axon.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/Pages/Home.aspx>

Reasonable Accommodation Program: Tonya B. Morris, 301-504-4339, tonya.b.morris@ars.usda.gov

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/AboutUs/docs.htm?docid=23085>; Axon: <https://axon.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/Pages/Home.aspx>

Outreach and Recruitment Branch Area Contact: Christopher Sacchetti, 309-681-6604, christopher.sacchetti@usda.gov.

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/AboutUs/docs.htm?docid=23072>; Axon: <https://axon.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/Pages/Home.aspx>

Office of Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) Home Page:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/ODEO> Axon: <https://axon.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/Pages/Home.aspx>