Three College of Ag & Related Science Faculty Awarded Grants

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Three faculty members in DSU?s College of Agriculture and Related Sciences recently received funding through the USDA Capacity Building Grant Program.

Dr. Sathya Elavarthi, assistant professor in the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, received a grant titled, *?Integrating Agricultural and Cultural Experiences in Student Training: A Study Abroad Program to Ghana,?* in the amount of $299,975.

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Dr. Sathya Elavarthi

?This is an excellent opportunity for DSU students to gain international experience and the best part is the grant will pay for travel expenses for all selected students,? Dr. Elavarthi said.

This grant will expand the limited study-abroad choices usually available to minority students by providing participants with opportunities for direct interaction with individuals and institutions involved in Ghanaian agriculture. Through this program, undergraduate students will learn about and appreciate the culture, agriculture and economy of Ghana, while gaining workforce preparedness in global agriculture.

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Dr. Rose Ogutu, a horticulture specialist for the DSU Cooperative Extension and a grant recipient, works in a high tunnel at DSU's Outreach and Research Center, which is used to extend the growing season of crops.

Delaware horticulture crop growers are facing growing demand from consumers for locally produced foods and increased concern about the environmental impacts of agriculture. In response, **Dr. Rose Ogutu**, State Horticulture specialist for Delaware State University Cooperative Extension, received funding for her grant, *?Increasing Horticulture Based Outreach and Extension Program Activities by Delaware Cooperative Extension,?* in the amount of $247,230. This project will help local growers improve their production techniques and yields by providing them with greater access to agriculture demonstrations, including organic production, and season extension models at the DSU Outreach and Research Center in Smyrna. Growers will also learn the value of networking, using direct marketing, and developing an electronic and social media presence to help promote their products.

?Six acres of land at the Outreach and Research center will be converted to organic production for this purpose,? says Dr. Ogutu. ?DSU Cooperative Extension will supply our clientele a diverse set of resources to help them sustain profitable and environmentally friendly enterprises.?

Dr. Kalpalatha Melmaiee, research scientist in the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, received $149,000 to fund her grant titled, *?On-farm Training Program for Students from Non-farm Backgrounds.?* This program targets students majoring in agriculture fields who come from non-farm backgrounds,providing them with field-based experiences that will enrich their knowledge.

?Hands-on field experiences will provide students with the skills and experiences that are hard to acquire through classroom education,? says Dr. Melmaiee. ?Students selected for this summer program will work closely with local farmers and also take part in field trips and workshops.?

Dr. Kalpalatha Melmaiee

This on-farm training program will support 24 summer internships to CARS students over the next three years. This program will help strengthen the partnerships among farmers, K-12 institutions and land grant colleges. Additionally, the grant will also establish a first generation club and a student resource center in the College of Agriculture and Related Sciences at DSU, providing students with the guidance and resources needed to succeed in their studies and prepare them for their careers.

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