ASSISTANT DEAN’S FORWARD
DR. LISA GUION JONES
ASSISTANT DEAN FOR DIVERSITY, OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

I hope you enjoy this issue of Inclusivity from the CALS Office of Diversity Affairs. You will learn about some of the initiatives the College is implementing to work towards Goal 2 outlined in Our Envisioned Future: The Strategic Plan for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University. Goal 2 of the strategic plan relates to exhibiting an inclusive and diverse environment where faculty, staff, and students can reach their full potential. In this issue, we highlight two new programs that work towards the objective of enhancing inclusiveness in the College. We also highlight the new Dean’s Postdoctoral Fellowship recipient and two new Dean’s Graduate Research Assistantship recipients. Both of the aforementioned initiatives aim to increase diversity in the college. In the Faculty Spotlight and Student Spotlight sections of the newsletter, you will learn about a faculty member and a student in the college who are serving as allies and advocates for diversity.

OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER 2014
DIVERSITY EVENTS

October 17-19
Dr. Jones and Bone Scholars attend the Latinos in Agriculture Conference in Grapevine, TX

October 21, 2014:
Lunch and Learn 2\textsuperscript{nd} Series Food for Thought Session – “Add Gender and Stir” 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. – 216 Scott Hall

October 22, 2014:
“5 Steps to Graduate School” – Dean’s Graduate Assistant Facilitated Seminar for undergraduate students - 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. -210 Park Shops

November 11, 2014:
“Keys to Success in Graduate School” – Dean’s Graduate Research Assistantship Recipient Facilitated Workshop for graduate students – 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Daniels Hall Room 353

November 17, 2014:
“Visit NC State Day” – A progressive, two-day event recruitment strategy committed to extending educational opportunities for talented students interested in pursuing a graduate degree

November 18, 2014:
Lunch and Learn 3\textsuperscript{rd} Series Food for Thought Session – Non-traditional students - 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. – 216 Scott Hall

December 2, 2014:
Lunch and Learn 4\textsuperscript{th} Series Food for Thought Session – Inclusive Holiday Celebrations12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. – 216 Scott Hall

THIS ISSUE’S HIGHLIGHTS

~ Launch of Diversity Lunch and Learn Series
~ Launch of Diversity Student Club Mini Grants
~ Introduction of the 2014 Dean’s Graduate Research Assistantship Recipients
~ Introduction of the 2014 Dean’s Post-Doctoral Fellowship Recipient

IN EVERY ISSUE

~ Faculty Spotlight – Dr. Terrence Gardner
~ Student Spotlight Ms. Sakshi Handa
~ Club Spotlight – CALS Global Club
~ CALS Diversity Council Members
Food for Thought Lunch and Learn Series, Inaugural Session held in September 2014

The Food for Thought Lunch and Learn sessions were created as one additional initiative to work towards achieving Goal 2 of the CALS Strategic Plan that focuses on creating an inclusive and diverse climate. The sessions are a series of monthly conversations designed to cultivate an environment of learning that enhances diversity awareness and builds cultural competencies for faculty and staff in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Diversity comprises the differences among people including gender, age, class, ability, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion or spiritual practices, and many other human characteristics.

The sessions provide a safe space for the CALS community to come together to explore different dimensions of diversity and gain skills they can use in the workplace and classroom to foster a more inclusive environment within the College. All sessions are held from 12:00 p.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Each of these interactive sessions highlights a different area of diversity using informative speakers, dynamic panelists, video clips, and/or other methods. This will be followed by an engaging discussion whereby participants will be encouraged to ask questions, share examples, and provide insights related to the topic. Participants will also be provided with supplemental information for further examination of the topic on their own.

Lunch will be provided free of charge to all registered participants during each session.

There is also an opportunity to be recognized as a “Diversity Champion.” A participant who: 1) attends over 50% of the sessions during an academic year, and 2) makes a presentation to the College’s Diversity Council sharing tangible ways he/she has used what they learned to make their work, classroom, and/or lab environments more inclusive will be recognized as a “Diversity Champion.”

To date we have held four sessions serving a total of 47 different faculty and staff members from various departments.
The NCSU CALS Student Club Diversity Mini-Grant was created as one additional initiative to work towards achieving Goal 2 of the CALS Strategic Plan that focuses on creating an inclusive and diverse climate. More specifically, the purpose of the mini-grant is to encourage student clubs and organizations within CALS to design and implement programs or activities that promote diversity and/or integrates diversity within their organizations. Any aspect of diversity may be promoted - race/ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.

Applications for the award are due each year by Oct. 31st, and comprise a program design that will promote diversity. The award will be given in the spring semester, in the amount of $250 to fund the specific program/event.

The applying Club should:
- Demonstrate an awareness of diversity (or lack thereof) within the group of participating students to identify potential resources and areas for improvement.
- Develop and describe, in detail, the event, activity, or program, along with an itemized budget for the program.
- Share how their proposed activity will enhance diversity and inclusion.

The event, activity, or program should actively promote the inclusion and cohesion of diversity in the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences (CALS) at NC State by doing at least one of the following:

- Promoting Diversity: promoting awareness of particular cultures under-represented within CALS. These activities can be designed to cultivate a new level of awareness and respect in group participants for various cultures. For example: discussion panels, guest speakers, seminar presentations, etc.

- Discussing Issues: examining leading issues related to diversity in agriculture and implement a public forum to share what was learned. For example: the issue of migrant worker health and safety, international agricultural issues, accessibility for students with special needs, or the landmark Pigford v. Glickman case.

- Making Clubs More Inclusive: making a sustained effort to draw in the participation of under-represented groups within CALS into your club and have them be an integrated part of the CALS student community and the student club/organization.

- Mentoring: developing and implementing a peer-mentoring program that supports the personal, social, and educational growth of students from underrepresented groups within CALS.

These are just examples; clubs have flexibility as long as the objective is achieved.

In essence, it will take everyone in the college to make it a more inclusive environment. Thus, students play a role and are integral in creating and fostering increased diversity and inclusion.
We are pleased to announce that Dr. Warren Sconiers has joined us in CALS as the second Dean’s Postdoctoral Fellow. Dr. Sconiers received his B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from University of California, Irvine and his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in Entomology specializing in Insect Ecology in natural and agro-ecosystems. As a graduate student at A&M he was a teaching assistant for General Entomology, Veterinary Entomology, and Disease Ecology and the instructor of record for their Spring 2014 General Entomology course for Entomology majors and non-majors, with over 90 students. In addition, he is a senior fellow with Texas A&M’s Graduate Teaching Academy for graduate students and postdocs which advances professional development and university level teaching skills.

Prior to his Ph.D., Dr. Sconiers was a Lab Technician, and a Conservation Ecology Intern, at the Irvine University of California, Irvine Ranch Conservancy, working on projects for the US Department of Energy. He has presented award-winning research at over two dozen regional, national, and international conferences and organized symposiums for scientists and the general public. For instance, he organized a symposium at the 2013 61st Annual Entomological Society of America meeting in Austin, TX. In addition, Dr. Sconiers has been engaged in many outreach activities earning him the President’s Volunteer Service Award from Texas A&M for over 150 volunteer hours in 2012-2013. He has also mentored underrepresented students through the Ecological Society of America and SEEDS programs.

**Dean’s Postdoctoral Fellow Research Project:**
Dr. Sconiers is working under the mentorship of Dr. Steven Frank in the Department of Entomology. He will conduct independent research with the city of Raleigh studying the invasion and recruitment of pest insects on urban trees while determining the influence of abiotic factors such as temperature and drought and biotic factors such as predators and nutrients in the trees. In addition, he will determine the influence of soil microbial activity and the role microbes play in providing nutrients to trees in drought stressed conditions. He may also collaborate with soil microbiologists, geneticists, and urban ecologists to further illustrate the complexities of these interactions.

**Office of Diversity Project:**
Dr. Sconier’s project with the CALS Office of Diversity is to launch and spearhead the first SEEDS student club chapter at NC State.
SAKSHI HANDA

Sakshi Handa is a junior biological engineering student with an environmental concentration. Sakshi is actively involved in leadership positions on campus. She serves as the secretary of MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences) and as the student representative of SEEDS (Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability). Through MANRRS, she attended the Novartis Animal Health's EMBRACE Veterinary Symposium and received a $500 scholarship. She is also involved in the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program, which included an internship this past summer engaging in field research in Puerto Rico. In the future, she hopes to use her skills to improve the environment.

CALS G.L.O.B.A.L. STUDENT CLUB:

CALS Global Club challenges students to think, What Can I Do? Many students are not aware of emerging issues outside of the U.S. or they think it does not apply to them. We show members how they can utilize their various backgrounds to solve these global issues. CALS Global strives to promote scholarship, leadership, friendship, and community spirit among members and the people of the world. Membership in the Club also provides opportunity to learn about career and educational opportunities abroad, local and global community service and to participate in national and global meetings promoting leadership in international agriculture.

Representation & Participation in Events by NCSU students include:
• National Summit by Washington State University – Seattle, WA (Spring 2014)
• World Congress at Universidad Mayor – Santiago, Chile (Summer of 2013)

For more information visit calsglobalclub.org
DGRA recipients are required to:

- Maintain a 3.0 grade point average.
- Perform and complete original research.
- Submit an abstract each year to an annual meeting or conference in their discipline.
- Assist the CALS Office of Diversity Affairs with a student recruitment or retention project.

MEET THE CURRENT RECIPIENTS

Ms. Alexa Wright  
**BA in Biology, pursuing an MS in Horticultural Science**

“I am excited about this next phase of my academic career and to be at NCSU studying in the Horticultural Science Department. My research interests include developing disease resistant interspecific hybrids of cut flowers. This incorporates my interests in breeding for desired plant characteristics and general propagation and production techniques. My specific research will also include looking into interspecific incompatibility using pollen tube kinetics. I am pleased to be able to utilize the tremendous faculty and departmental resources to construct a thesis that encompasses all of my research interests. This award is a great honor and I hope that I will contribute back to the program and the industry with my research.”

Ms. Rika Judd  
**BS in Biological Sciences pursuing a PhD in Plant Biology**

“My current research interests entail screening plant natural products for bioactive compounds that could be useful in benefiting human health. I also have an interest in plant pathology as well as increasing the nutrition of major crops for food consumption. The PhD plant biology program at NC State is a perfect fit for me, as there are many professors within the department with labs that suit my interest. As a PhD student at NC State, I hope to acquire as many skills necessary to become a strong independent researcher.

Receiving the DGRA (has) allowed me to pursue my passion for helping others succeed while being able to pursue research”

Now in its fifth year, the goal of the Deans Graduate Research Assistantship (DGRA) is to increase the number of students from underrepresented groups completing graduate degrees in the agricultural and life sciences at NC State. The DGRA is aimed at recruiting highly competitive graduate students from groups that are underrepresented in CALS graduate degree programs. The selection criteria is based on a candidate’s academic record, educational background, and evidence of exceptional personal talents, unique service experiences, and sustained engagement in student and community organizations that serve underrepresented populations. By collaborating with the department, the DGRA provides a maximum total stipend of up to $20,000 a year for two consecutive years for M.S. students and up to $25,000 a year for four consecutive years for Ph.D. students. Tuition and health insurance are also provided through the graduate student support plan. Some annual meeting/conference travel support may be provided as well. Fees must be paid by the student or department.
Soil Microbial Ecology is the study of the relationships between microbes in their environmental niches. Various processes of soil microbes affect soil fertility. Dr. Gardner’s research aims to improve crop production, and environmental quality. Determined changes in the composition of microbial communities following natural perturbations or implementation of management practices is crucial for providing a more complete evaluation of ecosystem functions and health. In his research, the professor uses multiple exploratory techniques to identify species assemblages and characterize microbial composition, diversity, and relative abundance. His inquiries also employ modern microscopy, spectroscopy, Metagenomic, and bioinformatics approaches. The goal is to understand the ecology of microorganisms in the environment and how they regulate ecosystem services during natural and anthropogenic stressors. Studies of complex ecosystems provide the opportunity to characterize the linkages between microbes and microbially mediated processes. The Soil and Environmental Microbial Ecology Lab (SEMEL), has initiated efforts to comprehend the impact of agroecosystem management and climatic conditions, as microbes control biogeochemical cycling and soil organic matter dynamics. Study findings will further assist in the development and selection of management practices that better protect the soils, its vast biodiversity and functional traits from losses.

**Outreach:** Dr. Gardner is highlighted due to his unwavering support of important outreach and diversity efforts of the College. Since his arrival as CALS first Dean’s Post-Doctoral fellow in 2012, he has provided one-week summer research experiences to 2-4 students each summer. The CAALS 3D Program, is an example of his multiyear involvement providing hands-on research experiences to NC School of Science and Math (NCSSM) students from under-represented groups. He has also co-developed an instructional workshop facilitating the development of learning modules for 6-12 grade science classes based on biogeochemical research. At the 2014 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA international convention he represented the university as a mentor to underrepresented high school students (Gateway scholars) who live in the conference host city. Involvement in these endeavors provides opportunities for community exposure to the world of Soil Microbial Ecology.
2015 CALS Diversity Council Members
(in alphabetical order)

Consuelo Arellano, PhD
Research Associate Professor
Statistics

Sylvia Blankenship, PhD
Associate Dean for Administration and Professor
CALS Deans Office

Jackie Bruce, PhD
Assistant Professor
Agricultural and Extension Education

Jose Bruno- Barcena, PhD
Assistant Professor of Microbiology
Microbiology

John Classen, PhD
Associate Professor
Biological and Agricultural Engineering

Harry Daniels, PhD
Professor and Head
Applied Ecology

Eric L. Davis, PhD
Interim Department Head
William Neal Reynolds Professor
Plant Pathology

John Dole, PhD
Professor and Department Head
Horticultural Science

Colleen Jennifer Doherty, PhD
Assistant Professor
Biochemistry

Alex Graves, PhD
Associate Professor
Soil Science

Nichole Langley Huff, PhD
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
Youth, Family, and Community Sciences

Lisa Guion Jones, EdD
Assistant Dean for Diversity, Outreach and Engagement
Professor- Agricultural and Extension Education

Edward L. Kick, PhD
Professor
Agricultural and Resource Economics

Kimberly Ann Livingston PhD
Assistant Professor
Poultry Science

Ilenys M. Perez-Diaz, PhD
Microbiologist USDA-ARS
Food, Bioprocessing & Nutrition Sciences

Marcela Pierce, PhD
Assistant Professor
Plant and Microbial Biology

M. Todd See, PhD
Department Head and Professor
Animal Science

Wes Watson, PhD
Professor and Interim Head
Entomology

Randy Wells, PhD
Professor
Crop Science

Ms. Chris Wessel
CALS Director, Donor Relations and Academic Programs/Departmental Fundraising Foundation

Ms. Rebecca Zuvich
Director, College Personnel
CALS Personnel Services