



College of Agricultural Sciences

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Spring 2013 E-Newsletter

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1. First Degrees Conferred from New International Ag Graduate Program

Reprinted courtesy of [Penn State Live](#)

A new dual-title graduate degree program in International Agriculture and Development offered by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences has graduated its first two students. The students' diplomas recognize both their primary degree and the International Agriculture and Development dual-title. Students can earn a master's or a doctoral degree through the dual-title program, also known as INTAD.

"The program is unique -- Penn State was among the first to offer anything like it," said Deanna Behring, the college's director of international programs.

"Upon graduation from the program, students will be better competitors for career opportunities working with international organizations, universities and research institutes, and international corporations."

Increasing numbers of employers are looking for graduates with international experiences and credentials, Behring noted.

"This new dual-title degree program was developed in response to that demand," she said. "The program provides graduate students with international perspectives and expertise to strengthen their primary graduate degrees. Graduates from the dual-title program will be better equipped to work on complex problems such as food security."

Graduating from the INTAD program last December was Anna Testen, of St. Paul, Minn., and Brad Olson, of Telford. Testen received her primary master's degree in Plant Pathology. Olson received a primary master's degree in Agricultural and Extension Education.

Testen earned an undergraduate degree in microbiology and horticulture from the University of Minnesota. In her master's research at Penn State, she studied the possibilities of using bacteria to promote growth and reduce disease in quinoa, an Andean seed crop. She also developed methods to detect a key pathogen in quinoa seeds that causes a disease called quinoa downy mildew.

"These detection methods can be used to screen seeds for the pathogen and are the first step to creating pathogen-free seed, which can reduce disease and improve yield," she said. "My research gave me the chance to travel to Ecuador and Bolivia to meet with collaborators and conduct studies."



Olson also had opportunities to conduct research abroad during his involvement in the INTAD program. In 2011, he spent three weeks in South Africa looking at the relationships between emerging farmers and South African extension programs, and he lived for seven weeks in central Kenya, studying community-based natural-resource management. In 2012, he traveled to Moscow to investigate Russia's rural agricultural development.

"The faculty, staff and key partners of the INTAD program afforded me opportunities that

I would not have had in my primary program alone," Olson said. "The program is attracting students to graduate programs within the College of Agricultural Sciences, so that they, too, may earn a dual-title degree in a field of ever-growing importance."

Students already enrolled in the participating graduate programs in the College of Agricultural Sciences can apply to enroll in the dual-title degree program, Behring noted, adding that students will learn and develop skills through additional interdisciplinary core coursework and a broad range of supplemental elective courses.

They will get regular opportunities to interact with internationally accomplished faculty and peers in relevant fields, she pointed out. Other advantages include potential funding for international research and more chances to compete for national awards and fellowships.

"Currently there are very few dual-title degree programs that aim to enrich the international education of graduate students," Behring said. "We are very pleased to give our students the opportunity to gain unique international perspectives and experiences through the International Agriculture and Development dual-title degree program."

Another big plus for the program is that it is a great bargain for students. Behring cited a recent online report by U.S. News and World Report that recommended maximizing graduate school with a dual degree.

"You can get a dual or joint degree without breaking the bank, and in less time than it takes to get two separate degrees," the article advised. "It's possible to get two full graduate degrees in two graduate areas without doubling the cost of graduate school."

The story specifically addressed the value of a dual degree in international studies, saying it has a range of benefits to students, "giving them a global perspective and experience, providing a credential that may be recognized in more than one country, and, in some cases, giving them exposure to faculty expertise or resources they would not otherwise encounter." ([Return to Index](#))

2. Penn State Collaborates to Improve Ag Education in Developing World

Reprinted courtesy of [Penn State Live](#)

Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences is part of a \$6.2 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) aimed at improving food security in the developing world. Virginia Tech will lead the project, which also includes Tuskegee University and the University of Florida. The goal is to strengthen the capacity of institutions responsible for educating the next generation of agricultural professionals.

Called innovATE -- Innovation in Agricultural Training and Education -- the project is part of the federal government's Feed the Future initiative to tackle global food insecurity. Feed the Future is a presidential initiative that draws upon the resources and expertise of U.S. government agencies, universities, the private sector and nongovernmental community organizations to assist countries in sustainably growing enough food to feed their people.

"In many developing countries, a lack of knowledge and technical expertise is a major obstacle to growing a skilled workforce that can feed the population," said Thomas Gill, assistant director of international programs in the College of Agricultural Sciences, who will coordinate Penn State's role in the project.



"Improved education and training will be essential to these countries' ability to meet the expected challenges they'll face over the next several decades," he said.

Teams from the partnering universities will work together to address critical issues related to agricultural education in the 21st century, including climate change, drought, resource scarcity and malnutrition. Because women are

major food producers and marketers in many regions of the world, the program will incorporate gender equity considerations and concepts.

The four U.S. universities will work throughout the developing world with educational institutions -- such as universities, technical schools and primary/secondary schools -- to enhance agricultural curricula, teaching methods, finance and administration.

"Penn State will take the lead on modernizing agricultural education and training systems in Asia," Gill said. "To accomplish this, we bring to the table significant expertise in Asia through USAID-funded Collaborative Research Support Programs and other activities over the past 20 years."

The innovATE consortium will identify key areas for improvement and growth in developing countries' agricultural sectors. "We'll address shortfalls in these areas by combining the college's strengths in several scientific disciplines with our expertise in enhancing agricultural education in developing countries," Gill explained.

He noted that the program could receive up to \$66 million in additional funds through associated awards by USAID missions and bureaus around the world.

Other College of Agricultural Sciences faculty and staff involved in the project -- chosen for their mix of agricultural education expertise and Asia experience -- include Rick Bates, associate professor of ornamental horticulture; Melanie Foster, program coordinator in the Office of International Programs; Rama Radhakrishna, professor of agricultural and extension education; and Ed Rajotte, professor of entomology. [\(Return to Index\)](#)

3. Research Team from AFRISA & PSU Wins 2013 Africa Collaboration Challenge Prize

Courtney O'Brien, Global Knowledge Initiative

The Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI) and Penn State University (PSU) are thrilled to announce the winners of the 2013 Africa Collaboration Challenge Prize. A research team composed of Michael Kansime and John Kabasa from AFRISA (African Institute for Strategic Animal Resource Services and Development), a center at Uganda's Makerere University, and Sjoerd Duiker and Ephraim Govere from PSU won \$20,000 for their proposal "Youth Employment and Income Enhancement Project (YEIEP): Haymaking as a Business Opportunity." An international Technical Committee selected YEIEP as the best in a field of proposals from teams that emerged from the Africa Collaboration Colloquium hosted by PSU and GKI in August 2012.

With seed funding of \$20,000, YEIEP will bring together AFRISA's expertise in providing hands-on skills building in value addition and entrepreneurship with a hay-baling business incubator PSU initialized with the Zawadi Youth Enterprise, a community organization in Nyeri, Kenya. This partnership seeks to tackle the high rate of unemployment among youth in Uganda and Kenya. YEIEP will organize workshops to train Ugandan and Kenyan students in skills needed to start their own haymaking businesses. With this prize, YEIEP plans to establish



10 new haymaking businesses across both countries. Project leaders hope that their work will serve as a model for future youth employment projects and will showcase how a partnership that began in Pennsylvania at the Africa Collaboration Colloquium might contribute to spreading economic and social benefits to young people throughout East Africa.

The Africa Collaboration Colloquium brought together researchers from East Africa and the US committed to forging smart, focused partnerships aimed at addressing critical challenges pertinent to food security in Africa. Over two days, participants engaged in knowledge sharing, relationship building, and skill deepening. Made possible by support from PepsiCo, the PSU Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, and the PSU Eberly College of Sciences, the Africa Collaboration Challenge Prize builds on Colloquium's momentum by incentivizing collaboration between Colloquium participants. The Technical Committee prioritized innovations with the greatest potential to create measurable change within a year. GKI and PSU will work with the YEIEP team over the next year to monitor progress and identify opportunities to leverage additional resources and partnerships. Organizers are planning a follow-on Africa Collaboration Colloquium, to be held in early 2014 at Makerere University in Uganda.

The Global Knowledge Initiative is an international non-profit committed to forging, optimizing, and sustaining knowledge partnerships to address development challenges pertinent to science, technology, and innovation. GKI helps researchers and other problem solvers locate critical resources needed to address complex challenges; enables partners to collaborate through tailored trainings and competitions; and connects resource seekers from around the globe to create purpose-driven networks capable of tackling complex challenges.

For more information, please contact Courtney O'Brien, Program Officer at the Global Knowledge Initiative at Courtney@gkinitiative.org or (+1)-202-898-9004. ([Return to Index](#))

4. Students of College of Agricultural Sciences Win W. LaMarr Kopp International Achievement Awards

Compiled from Penn State Live articles

<http://news.psu.edu/story/271282/2013/04/01/academics/jones-lalibert%C3%A9-honored-kopp-international-achievement-award> and <http://news.psu.edu/story/271280/2013/04/01/academics/hoover-honored-kopp-award-undergraduate-students>



This year's winners of the W. LaMarr Kopp International Achievement Awards are graduate student Kristal Jones and undergraduate student Allison Hoover of the College of Agricultural Sciences. The W. LaMarr Kopp International Achievement Awards rewards students, faculty and staff who dedicate themselves in achieving Penn State's international mission. Kristal Jones is currently a Ph.D. candidate in agricultural economics, sociology, and education. Before attending Penn State, Jones participated

in the Peace Corps in Senegal in which this experience confirmed her future aspirations. “Having spent two years trying to learn [about] a new place...continuing to work in West Africa was a way to use this unique set of skills and to contribute to international research,” she says. In addition to her contributions in Senegal, Jones participated in designing a dual-degree graduate program in international agriculture and development at Penn State. She also obtained a fellowship at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines. “Recognizing the similarities between Senegal and State College, as well as the differences, continually reinforces to me just how interconnected people and places are,” she says. “This awareness makes me...account for not only the immediate effects of my daily actions and decisions, but also about [their] unintended consequences.”



Allison Hoover, a student of the Schreyer Honors College, intends to graduate in May 2014 with a major in agricultural and extension education and minors in international agriculture and sustainability leadership. She was involved in various international programs such as HESE (Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship) and Spanish in the Agricultural Sciences program, which consisted of cultural immersion in Costa Rica. Hoover also became one of two Agricultural Education majors in the country to be chosen to partake in the World Food Prize. Hoover expresses her viewpoint on global citizenship and internationalization: “In the business of humanity, profit is not measured in dollar amounts but in lives saved from famine, injustice, and poverty. As human beings, we should all invest in this business.” ([Return to Index](#))

5. Ag Sciences Faculty Members Honored for International Efforts

Reprinted courtesy of [Penn State Live](#)

Two faculty members in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences are among five people honored by the University's Office of Global Programs with 2013 Spirit of Internationalization Awards. These annual awards honor women from Penn State and the local community who embody the "spirit of internationalization" through academic achievements, artistic excellence and volunteerism in international organizations or dedication to advancing the status of women.

The college's honorees were Kathleen Kelley, associate professor of horticultural marketing and business management, and Audrey Maretzki, professor emeritus of food science and nutrition. They received the awards at a March 12 breakfast commemorating International Women's Day, which was observed worldwide March 8 to bring attention to global women's issues. Kelley has been instrumental in developing international/multicultural learning opportunities for students, according to Deanna Behring, director of international programs in the College of Agricultural Sciences, who nominated Kelley for the award.

"Since 2006, she has co-lead international embedded courses to Holland, France and Ireland to introduce students to a variety of landscapes, horticultural businesses and cultural sites," Behring said.



She noted that in 2007, Kelley was recognized by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation for more than 500 hours of volunteer work with the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs.

"Dr. Kelley worked with farmers in Ukraine to help determine potential markets for their fruits and vegetables, with agribusiness dealers to help develop business plans and marketing strategies, and with groups of farmers to help develop cooperatives for business growth."

Behring said in addition to leading the charge to develop a strategy for the internationalization of the college's Department of Plant Science, Kelley is pursuing international research opportunities in the wine industry to help Pennsylvania wine growers understand global market opportunities.

"She spent a sabbatical in New Zealand in 2011 to learn new wine-marketing strategies and also is working with colleagues in Australia. In addition, she has visited wineries in Argentina, Chile, Germany, Greece, Italy, South Africa and Turkey."

Maretzki is a pioneer in the study of the social, political, environmental, family and community influences on how populations secure the foods they eat, according to Robert Lumley-Sapanski, facilities coordinator in the Department of Food Science, who has worked with Maretzki on the board of directors of the United Nations Association of Centre County.

"In many cultures of the world, food acquisition is a responsibility of women, and thus her research involved empowering women to understand and take a greater role in the process," he said. "She



became involved in research projects on nutribusinesses, the goals of which are to enable rural women to elevate their own economic status while improving the health of infants, children and other nutritionally vulnerable individuals."

Lumley-Sapanski also cited Maretzki's work as co-director of the Penn State-based Interinstitutional Consortium for Indigenous Knowledge, the only active global indigenous knowledge resource center in the United States. She helped organize the first International Indigenous Knowledge Conference at Penn State, which was attended by more than 100 guests from 17 countries.

"She also has been very involved in the Norman E. Borlaug African Women in Science program at Penn State," he said, noting that the program she led brought women scientists from Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya and Mali to conduct research at the University. ([Return to Index](#))

6. Nuffield Scholars from Australia and New Zealand Visit Penn State

Ketja Lingenfelter

On Tuesday, October 23, 2012 Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences hosted farmers from Australia and New Zealand who were part of the 2012 class of Nuffield International Farming Scholars (<http://www.nuffieldinternational.org/>). This program, which traces its roots back to post WWII England, annually selects farmers from eight member nations to travel to build individual capacity and learn about best practices and innovations in agriculture around the world. Earlier in 2012, more than 60 scholars gathered in Amsterdam and the United Kingdom for their annual conference. For the Australian and New Zealand scholars, another six weeks of travel, called the Global Focus Program (GFP), gives them a chance to work on a personal, required independent study project and experience agriculture in developed and developing parts of the world. This group visited India, Qatar, Turkey, Ukraine, France and Washington DC before arriving in Pennsylvania.



Pennsylvania was asked to host a GFP group for the first time in fall of 2012. Eight scholars arrived on October 20 and departed on October 27. The charge given to those planning their tour was to give a feel for the state's overall agriculture industry, but include when possible, stops that tie to the study topics of the scholars.

In addition to other meetings and tours at Penn State, the scholars met with the college's Office of International Programs and were given a tour by Ag Advocates, one of who had studied for a semester at Lincoln University in New Zealand where some of the scholars were from. They received a general overview of our college and programs, and were able to build some connections with Penn State.

Megan Davis, a Wildlife & Fisheries Science major and Ag Advocate stated after giving the group a campus tour, "Having the opportunity to provide the Nuffield's visitors with a tour of Ag Hill, and listen to their individual stories and backgrounds was absolutely amazing. Finding a common interest with someone across the world and being able to talk about them gives new perspectives. It was a great experience, and I learned so much about international agriculture".

Jean Lonie, on the Beef Segment of the Marketing Communications Team for Pfizer Animal Health, who coordinated the scholars visit, shared this after their time at Penn State, "Thank you so much for connecting the Nuffield scholars with PSU. The scholars LOVED their tour of PSU and absolutely raved about the Ag Advocates. The group was extremely impressed with PSU and the College of Agricultural

Sciences, and in fact one of the scholars posted in her blog that she hoped her son would do a semester abroad at PSU... but she was worried he wouldn't want to come back”!

Jean’s hope is that Pennsylvania hosts many more Global Focus Program groups and that we are able to strengthen our connection with Nuffield to ensure that our farmers – and the next generation of agriculturalists – are able to broaden their horizons and international connections. [\(Return to Index\)](#)

7. Ag Speaker Series Fall 2012

In Fall 2012, the Office of International Programs in the College of Agricultural Sciences launched an International Ag Speaker Series. This series highlighted both upcoming embedded study class opportunities for undergraduate students and also recent or ongoing international research and outreach programs conducted by faculty, staff, extension and students. Presentations were held in 122 Agriculture Administration on Wednesday afternoons, 3:30-4:30pm. There were more than 150 attendees at the International Ag Speaker Series throughout the semester.

The International Ag Speaker Series provided information and study abroad opportunities in the College of Agricultural Sciences. The purpose of encouraging students to study abroad is to immerse students in international cultures, to broaden their horizon in specific fields, as well as to enrich their college experiences. There are many embedded study abroad courses in different countries for students to choose from, including four different continents—Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. The locations and topics of embedded courses for Spring/Summer 2013 are listed in Table 1. These courses may be offered on campus during the Spring semester and generally involve one-three weeks of international travel at the end of Spring semester or during Spring break. Many students came to the Speaker Series interested to learn about the study abroad programs because they want to open themselves up to different possibilities and opportunities for their future careers.

Besides giving students the opportunities to learn about different embedded courses, the Ag Speaker Series program also invited faculty, staff, extension and students to talk about their current international agriculture experiences. The topics covered included global food security, opportunities in the USAID CRSPs, smallholder agriculture in Southeast Asia, seed systems in West Africa, and potato and quinoa research in Andean agriculture among others. Time for questions and answers were also included which allowed attendees to explore and understand more about various topics.

Table 1: Embedded Courses in Spring/ Summer 2013

International Embedded Courses	Country
Sustainable Ag & Development	Brazil
Environmental Resource Management	Costa Rica
Spanish Language & Culture Immersion	Costa Rica
Agricultural & Food Policy and Current Issues	Paris, France
Food, Fuel & Fiber	Germany
Food Science	Italy
Agricultural Systems & Eco-village	Kenya
Ecological Research	Spain
Community, Leadership & Reconciliation	Vietnam & Cambodia

Overall, the International Ag Speaker Series has successfully provided an insight into current opportunities and experiences in international agriculture at Penn State and expanded the awareness and interest in global thinking on agriculture throughout the Penn State community. This coincides with Penn State goals to produce global students and be at the cutting edge of global research and experience. The Speaker Series will begin again in Fall 2013. ([Return to Index](#))

8. Student Stories

- **Mike Henry: Penn State Students Address Water Needs in Developing Countries**

Reprinted courtesy of [Penn State Live](#)

According to Mike Henry, when visiting a developing country, the fastest way to cross cultural barriers and make friends is to wield a pickaxe. And that's exactly what he plans to do later this month when he arrives in Ghana.

That doesn't sound like a very friendly gesture until you realize that the Schreyer Scholar will be working alongside other students and local community members to give the village access to clean water. While the Penn State students typically dig trenches for water pipes on these service trips, in Ghana they'll be constructing a community building especially designed to collect rainwater.

"You're terrible at the work because they're used to manual labor and you're not," said Mike, a senior majoring in immunology and infectious disease in the College of Agricultural Sciences. "But it's a cool bonding and cultural experience with people from such a different background, all sweating and getting dirty. Working for the same goal makes you become friends fast."

Digging wells and giving communities in developing countries access to clean water is the heart of Global Water Brigades, one of seven Penn State chapters of the national, student-run Global Brigades organization. The student brigades work in concert with an international non-governmental organization and local communities to create sustainable solutions in everything from architecture and microfinance to public health and water.



Last year, 50 members of the Penn State Global Water Brigades took service trips to remote communities in Honduras and Ghana. The club is visiting different communities in those countries this academic year, and Mike hopes to again have at least 25 students sign up for each trip. He'll be flying to Ghana with the other students on the day after Christmas, spending 10 days building a rainwater harvesting system and educating the community members on how to use and maintain it along with how to practice good

hygiene. While the transportation, lodging and supplies for the service trips are expensive – the Ghana trip costs around \$2,600 per person – the students fundraise all semester to help lower the cost.

Mike says the best part of the trip will be seeing the other students catch his vision for providing clean water.

“I’ll be talking to people, ‘Do you see why we’re here and what we’re trying to do?’” he said. “This is different than donating to food aid because when that money dries up, the food dries up and that’s the end of it. We’re actually working with these communities to make change in the long run.”

Mike’s passion for the water crisis was born on a spring break trip during his freshman year to Honduras with the Penn State chapter of Global Medical Brigades.

“I was a translator, so I worked in triage and saw that almost everyone coming in was reporting stomach illnesses,” he said. “Then you get to talking and realize that the cause of that is the fact that people don’t have clean water.”

That summer, Mike and his friend Anthony Ricco founded the Penn State chapter of Global Water Brigades, which at the time was the third brigades program established at Penn State. They spent that first year raising awareness of Global Water Brigades and the worldwide water issues, and organizing and hosting fundraising events and documentary screenings. It paid off when 15 students signed up for their first service trip to Honduras over spring break 2011.

And over the course of that week, Mike and Anthony discovered that service trips are not just about damming streams and creating the infrastructure for a water purification system, or even teaching children and community members how to use and maintain it.

“One of the beautiful things about Brigades is that in a week you can start to question all your previous thoughts of what you would be doing,” said Anthony, a 2012 graduate of Penn State’s Eberly College of Science, who is now a student at Jefferson Medical College. “That’s what Mike and I did – we questioned. We both wanted to go to med school before, and we’re both going to go, but now we’re going to be trying to work on global and urban health issues. And it’s awesome because that effect has happened to maybe 25 percent of our club – they’ve changed their majors or said they were interested in doing this as a full-time career.”

Mike agreed. “Ultimately, it’s cool if we can make a difference in the community, but if you can persuade someone to follow this path in their life to work for communities, it’s a much bigger difference than what you can do in one week in Honduras.”

He says his decision to earn the brand-new global health minor in the College of Health and Human Development was “definitely a Brigades-inspired thing,” and he now hopes to work for an international health agency in the future.

“I get bored easily, so that’s the only thing I came to the conclusion that I couldn’t get too bored with,” he said with a laugh.

Since Global Water Brigades was started at Penn State, four other brigades chapters have been founded. The campus now offers Global Architecture, Business, Environmental, Human Rights, Medical, Public Health and Water Brigades, which are open to students in all majors. Some 500 students are involved across the various chapters, giving Penn State the honor of having the largest brigades out of more than 200 universities.

And this year, Mike is focusing his efforts on uniting the different chapters together. He's handed off the position of president of Global Water Brigades to a new leader, and is now the overall campus chairman of all the Penn State brigades. While the clubs still meet individually, they now team up for things like documentary screenings and guest speakers.

"At the end of the day, the problems we're trying to confront are not problems water can solve by itself – we need everyone, so we need to foster that kind of environment," Anthony explained.

Although Anthony has graduated and is no longer involved, he's happy with the way he left the club. "We're 500 percent happy at how it turned out," he said. "We're pretty proud of it."

For Mike, there's a bit more in store: With the Global Water Brigades heading to Ghana over winter break, he's planning on a few more days of manual labor, making friends and changing lives before he graduates. ([Return to Index](#))

- **Jeanette Blank: Trip Down Under Becomes Reality**

Reprinted courtesy of [Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences](#)

When she finally arrived, she was determined to learn as much as she could and take any opportunity presented to her. "Before I left on the trip, someone told me that if I came home and said I wished I had done something there, they'd kick my butt," Blank said. "So I was on a mission!"

Blank, a senior majoring in Agricultural and Extension Education, traveled to Australia with small group of students. Their goal was to learn more about the differences in natural resources and tourism between Australia and the United States.



"I was amazed by the diversity of plants in Australia," the Middleburg, Pa., native said. "One time, we walked about 100 feet, and our guide stopped to tell us we just passed more plant species than are found in all of North America."

The group journeyed to different parts of the country, including Blank's favorite, the Great Barrier Reef, where they went snorkeling. Numerous times, the students were told to be careful because so many of the animals are poisonous.

"One of our reef guides told us to just play it safe and not touch anything," Blank said. "'You touch something, you die,' he told us. But no one on the trip was harmed by the array of creatures Down Under."

Blank spent her 24 days in Australia with an open mind and an eagerness to learn. She advised any other student considering making a trip abroad to do the same.

"I never have been one to be adventurous," she said. "I'm a picky eater but tried any new food I could. I'm afraid of heights but zip lined and jumped out of a plane from 14,000 feet. I can't swim, yet I snorkeled in the ocean. I held a koala, hand-fed a kangaroo, went spear-fishing and saw rare animals most Australians never even see. I did everything I possibly could." ([Return to Index](#))

- **Students Recognized for Critical Language Scholarships Experiences**

Reprinted courtesy of [Penn State Live](#)

Two students in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences will be recognized by the college this spring for their experiences in the Critical Language Scholarship Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. Abraham DeHart, an undergraduate from Glenside majoring in agricultural systems management, learned Urdu; Leslie Pillen, a master's degree candidate in rural sociology from Lincoln, Neb., learned Hindi. Thanks to the federal funding, both studied in India last summer.

The Critical Language Scholarship Program provides fully-funded, group-based intensive language instruction and structured cultural enrichment experiences for U.S. students. The program is part of a U.S. government effort to dramatically expand the number of Americans studying and mastering critical-need foreign languages.



"Participants are expected to continue their language study beyond the scholarship period and apply their critical language skills in their future professional careers," said Deanna Behring, director of international programs for the College of Agricultural Sciences.

The languages DeHart and Pillen studied, Urdu and Hindi, are spoken by millions of practicing farmers, and yet Hindi is taught only sporadically at United States institutions and Urdu hardly at all, noted Ruth Mendum, director of Penn State's Fellowships Office.

"The United States exports agricultural experts of all kinds, but unlike most, DeHart and Pillen will be able to speak to local people in their native tongues," she said. "From the University perspective, I'm particularly proud that two of our three winners last summer were from the College of Agricultural Sciences, which is one of the Critical Language Scholarships priority areas."

"International agriculture reaches far into communities where English tends to be rarely spoken, and yet graduates with agricultural training tend not to have the opportunity to study the languages the CLS offers."

DeHart revealed that he has been fascinated his whole life by the language he studied in India. "I grew up just outside of Philadelphia, and my dad was born and raised in Pakistan," he explained. "I often heard Urdu being spoken by my uncles, but I never understood it." [\(Return to Index\)](#)

9. New Agreements Signed by College

The College has recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Agreements with the following institutions:

- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden (4/2013)
- University of Turin, Italy (4/2013)
- EARTH University, Costa Rica (2/2013)

- School for Field Studies (SFS), United States (1/2013)
- NutrAfrica Agro-Industry and Food Processing, Ethiopia (9/2012)

These MOUs facilitate joint research as well as faculty and student exchanges between our institutions. For a full list of agreements between the College of Agriculture Sciences and international institutions, please visit our website at <http://agsci.psu.edu/international/programs/IntlAgreementsApril2013.pdf>.

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