

**Internationalizing the Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Programs at  
Alabama A&M University  
Zachary Senwo**

**Issue:** We as a nation have a stake in what happens globally. In order for our students to succeed and prosper in a global economy and interconnected world, they need to be sensitized and educated about other cultures, geographic regions and global issues in their educational pursuits and training to enable them play any substantive and significant role on the global stage. It is becoming more essential and beneficial for schools to integrate global education into their academic curriculum and throughout students' school life to prepare them for 21st century new challenges and opportunities. Building and enhancing the international capacities and capabilities of Alabama A&M University (AAMU) is no longer a choice but a necessity if faculty and students are to remain competitive and relevant in a changing global environment.

**What has been done:** In 2009, we obtained funding from the USDA – International Science and Education Program to develop scientific and education partnership with China's Nanjing Forestry University (NFU) specifically in agriculture, forestry, and environmental science. This partnership also aims to enhance courses with international contexts to prepare and mentor students for international opportunities in agricultural and environmental sciences; as well as to add new dimensions to scientific research and teaching capabilities of AAMU faculty via exposures to international resources and technologies. Also, in 2010, AAMU partnered with Tuskegee University and obtained funding from the USDA – Capacity Building Program to develop scientific collaborations with EARTH University in Costa Rica to enhance student and faculty global competence in agriculture and natural resource management and conservation. The Alabama Agricultural Land-Grant Alliance (Alabama A&M, Auburn and Tuskegee Universities) has provided seed grant to develop collaborative partnerships with Brazilian institutions and get familiar with Brazilian technology in bioenergy and to explore its adaptation in rural communities in Alabama.

**Impacts/New Partnerships:** In summer of 2010, three students and six faculty members from the School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences spent four weeks working with faculty and staff of Nanjing Forestry University (NFU). This visit was reciprocated by visits of NFU officials to AAMU campus last year. In summer 2011, six students and four faculty spent four weeks in China visiting several universities including doing research with scientists at NFU while another group of four students and two faculty spent four weeks at EARTH University for language and cultural training, visits to research facilities, and studying tropical and sustainable agriculture, bioenergy, and entrepreneurship.

**Outcome of Project (societal impact/ measure of increased quality of life)**

The program is attracting students and enhancing recruitment in agricultural and environmental majors. Program has also provided opportunities for AAMU faculty to internationalize their courses and research techniques in order to enhance their teaching and research skills. We envision that the project will increase the capacity of our students to become more competitive in acquiring and applying cutting-edge knowledge in agriculture and related sciences. The anticipated longer term impact of this project on the quality of our programs are:

(1) international agricultural science programs at 1890 institutions will be grounded in science-based knowledge to be more efficient in attracting and producing more students with current and relevant competencies in global agriculture. Thus, more minority students will be available to meet USDA personnel needs to serve at home or overseas in international collaborative interdisciplinary research and scientific exchange, technical assistance, and technology transfer. Minority professionals will be available to assist communities and agribusinesses meet the challenges of a global agricultural system; and (2) the collaborative partnerships in scientific and teaching developed with these institutions will foster the formation of new links to include other 1890 institutions and strengthen existing ones, while providing the platform for greater sharing of ideas, resources and information.

**Contact information:**

**Zachary Senwo**, Professor and Director of Agricultural and Environmental Research Programs, School of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, Alabama A&M University, Normal, AL 35762; Tel: 256-372-4216. [zachary.senwo@aamu.edu](mailto:zachary.senwo@aamu.edu)