



Biography

Sonny Ramaswamy

President Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Sonny Ramaswamy is president of Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (<http://www.nwccu.org>) in Redmond, WA, which accredits institutions in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and British Columbia. The Commission's mission is to accredit institutions of higher education by applying evidence-informed standards and processes to support continuous improvements and promote student achievement and success.

Sonny served for six years as President Barack Obama's appointee as the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (<https://nifa.usda.gov>) in Washington, DC. NIFA catalyzes transformative discoveries, education, and engagement to solve societal and agricultural challenges. He provided leadership and strategic direction in the formulation of broad, national policies needed to develop and execute cutting edge science and its application to promote profitability of the food and agricultural systems while protecting the environment and creating economic opportunities.

Previously, Ramaswamy held a number of academic positions, including: dean of Oregon State's College of Agricultural Sciences; director of Purdue's Agricultural Research Programs; university distinguished professor and head of Kansas State's Entomology Department; and professor of entomology at Mississippi State. He has mentored numerous high school, undergraduate, and graduate students, along with postdoctorates and visiting professors and staff in non-governmental, governmental, and private sector organizations. He has had significant success in development and fund raising to create endowed professorships, students scholarships, and infrastructure, including envisioning, fund raising for, and creating the *Leadership Academy* at Oregon State University to inculcate non-cognitive and leadership skills in undergraduate students (<https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/leadership-academy/leadership-academy>). Sonny also envisioned, fund-raised for, and created the *KSU Insect Zoo* (<https://www.k-state.edu/butterfly/>).

As a faculty member, Sonny's research was funded with grants from federal agencies, including NIFA, NSF, NIH, EPA, and USAID, and from state agencies, commodity groups, and industry. He has published over 150 journal articles, book chapters, and a book, and has a patent. Sonny is the recipient of a number of awards and honors, including *Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*, *Fellow of the Entomological Society of America*, *Food Systems Leadership Award for Extraordinary Impacts on Food Systems*, *Agriculture Future of America's Leader in Agriculture Award*, and *Hutchinson Medal from the Chicago Botanic Garden*.

Ramaswamy received his Bachelor of Science in agriculture and Master of Science in entomology from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, India. His doctorate is in entomology from Rutgers University. Sonny has been active in community and university theaters, Habitat for Humanity, and enjoys riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle. He is married to Dr. Gita Ramaswamy, who previously served as professor and university administrator and senior advisor to USDA's chief scientist; they have a daughter Dr. Megha Ramaswamy, associate professor of preventive medicine at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC), who resides in Kansas City with her husband, Dr. Andrew Park, emergency room physician at KUMC, and their son Siddhartha.