ARE Snaps Up Nearly $2 Million in Grants

Spring 2016 brought a crop of new grant funding to the Agricultural and Resource Economics Department. In all, ARE researchers were awarded six separate grants amounting to just under $1.9 million, with four of those grants and almost $1.5 million coming from the USDA alone.

“This is probably a department record for new funding in a single semester,” said Dr. Rigoberto Lopez, head of the ARE Department. “These grants recognize the exceptional work our researchers have already done, and ensure that they will have the resources to continue making significant contributions to the field.”

Department Reaches #18 Worldwide

UConn’s ARE is now in the Top 20 of agricultural and resource economics departments across the globe, according to IDEAS, the citations-based bibliographic database run by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. ARE reached the Top 10% last year, and has ticked up into the Top 20 in 2016, thanks to the addition of new faculty and a wealth of ongoing externally-funded projects that keep ARE researchers producing new works at a rapid pace.

China Connection

In May, Department Head Rigoberto Lopez and Assistant Research Professor Adam Rabinowitz headed to Shandong University in Jinan, China, to deliver two invited papers and also to finalize (continues p. 2>>>)

Award winners
Faculty news
Student profiles
...and more >>>
CHINA (cont’d from p. 1)

a deal to create a joint Master of Science program between Shandong University and the University of Connecticut.

This latest trip marks another chapter in the continuing relationship between UConn’s ARE Department and its partners at Chinese universities, helping fulfill ARE’s mission of internationalizing the program and working with the finest minds in applied and resource economics from around the globe.

Zwick Center Welcomes New Board Member

The Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy, housed within the ARE Department, has a new member of its Advisory Board: Benjamin J. Freund. Ben Freund owns and operates a farm and market in East Canaan, CT, and has been active in agricultural economics for decades, including as a former director and current board member of Farm Credit East, ACA.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

New Grants

Stephen Swallow was awarded two grants: a $500,000 grant from USDA-NIFA-AFRI for the project “Advancing Ecosystem Services, Valuation, Decision-Support, and Agricultural Revenue: EPRI’s Ohio River Water Quality Trading Auctions,” and a Connecticut Sea Grant/UConn-CIRCA grant of roughly $225,000 to measure CT residents’ attitudes towards coastal preservation in the face of sea level rise.

Richard Dunn received a $499,872 grant from USDA-NIFA-AFRI for his project “Measuring the Food and Agriculture Economy.”


Adam Rabinowitz will serve as co-PI on a $24,000 project from the American Cheese Council, entitled “U.S. Artisan and Specialty Cheese Industry Census.”

Spring Seminar Speakers

The Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy sponsored a Seminar Series in spring, organized by Prof. Tatiana Andreyeva, which brought scholars from a number of universities to speak and lead discussions at UConn’s ARE Department. The speakers were:

- Pia Raffler, Dept. of Political Science, Yale University
- Katherine Zipp, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Penn State University
- Nathan Fiala, ARE, UConn
- Jean-Paul Chavas, Dept. of Agricultural & Applied Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Ana Vaz, Dept. of International Development, Oxford University
- Kathleen Segerson, Dept. of Economics, UConn
- Brent Hueth, Dept. of Agricultural & Applied Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison

OTHER HAPPENINGS

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

Nataliya Plesha

PhD candidate Nataliya Plesha (pictured below with her family) was awarded the University of Connecticut Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award, which is given to only one graduate student at UConn per year.

Nataliya had previously been recognized with the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) Leadership Award, recognizing her excellence in teaching, and Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Graduate Student Teaching Award.

Stephen Swallow and Pengfei Liu

Professor Stephen Swallow and PhD candidate Pengfei Liu were recognized for their outstanding work by the UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, during an awards ceremony held in April. Professor Swallow is this year's faculty recipient for the Excellence in Research category, while Pengfei Liu received the Graduate Student Research and Creativity Award.
**ARE Faculty in the News**

The Department has gotten attention from both local and national news outlets this Spring. Connecticut Magazine referenced a landmark study done by the Department on Connecticut’s agricultural output, and two faculty members were extensively quoted in prominent stories.

- Nathan Fiala contributed insights from his research to a Christian Science Monitor piece on entitled “Radical idea to help freed slaves.”
- Adam Rabinowitz was featured in the Danbury News-Times article “In Stamford, downtown dweller targets department store for its food,” speaking on the relative availability of fresh produce in urban stores.

**Relaxing in a Far-Off Land**

While in China, where Department Head Rigoberto Lopez and Assistant Research Professor Adam Rabinowitz took the opportunity to sample local cuisine with students and colleagues.

**PhD Visiting Scholars from Renmin University**

Lifang Hu (l) and Luan Wang (r)

**FACULTY MILESTONES**

**Richard Dunn Promoted With Tenure**

Among the newest tenured faculty members at UConn is ARE’s own Richard Dunn, after the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees voted to promote him from Assistant to Associate Professor and grant him tenure.

Richard Dunn has been with UConn’s ARE department since 2014, having previously been on the faculty of the Agricultural Economics Department at Texas A&M University. Dunn was actually up for tenure at Texas A&M, but has decided to make UConn the place to take the next steps in his career.

**Syma Ebbin Receives NEH Fellowship**

ARE faculty member Syma Ebbin will be spending the summer at Mystic Seaport in her capacity as a fellow with the Frank C. Munson Institute of American Maritime Studies during its program “The American Maritime Commons.” The program, which is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, serves to give educators “the opportunity to enhance course offerings by studying the influence of maritime activities on U.S. history and culture.” Prof. Ebbin will be in residence at the Mystic Seaport museum from June 27-July 29.

**Farhed Shah Delivers Keynote**

Prof. Farhed Shah was one of the keynote speakers at the International Conference on Agriculture and Environment: Food, Water, Soil, Air, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from May 25-27. Organized by the New Zealand House of Science, Shah was asked to speak on the topic of Freshwater Management and Climate Change, and delivered the address “Development and Management of Dams Under Conditions of Climate Change.” Shah also sat on the academic committee of the conference.

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

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Grad Students Present at International Conference

Nataliya Plesha and Wenquiang Bao, two PhD students in the ARE Department, spoke at the 14th International Conference on Data Development in Wuhan, China, May 23-26. Their talk, “Production Efficiency in Chinese Agriculture: An Assessment of the Post Economic Reforms Years,” was part of a program that also included a collaboration between Plesha and Economics Department professor Subhash Ray for the presentation “Estimation of the Opportunity Cost of Pollution Abatement: Interstate Analysis of US Agriculture.”

Alicia Barriga Presents Findings

In 2015, PhD student Alicia Barriga received a seed grant from Connecticut Sea Grant to study environmental preferences in Bridgeport in the face of sea level rise - a study which has continued, and grown in scope (see “New Grants,” p. 2). Barriga worked with Prof. Stephen Swallow and five ARE undergraduate students to complete the study in April, and she presented their findings at the Social Coastal Forum in South Carolina in February (pictured left). She also presented at the CAHNR Research Forum in March, and plans to publish within a year.

Omer Hoke

Spring 2016 was a landmark time in the life of Omer Hoke, who delivered his dissertation presentation and landed a job at professional services powerhouse PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) within a two-month span. Originally from Ankara, Turkey, Hoke will be heading to San Jose, California, to begin his new job this summer.

“UConn helped me to improve my research skills in economics,” said Hoke. “In particular, an opportunity to teach different classes in economics and to be able to work with active researchers have helped me to improve my theoretical and empirical skills.”

Double Master’s Degree Program Expands

Building on its successful partnership with Renmin University, ARE has signed deals with two other Chinese institutions to bring graduate students to UConn for a double-M.S. degree program.

Shandong University and Capital University of Economics and Business will begin offering the double master’s degree with UConn in Fall 2016. Students who complete the program will receive an M.S. in Applied & Resource Economics from UConn, and an M.S. in another discipline from their university in China.

Takeru Saitoh

When Takeru Saitoh interned with Louis Dreyfus Commodities last winter, he clearly did an impressive job: Almost immediately thereafter, he had an offer for full-time employment. Saitoh presented his thesis “Export and Import Flows in Japan: Gravity Model Analysis using Panel Data” in April, and went off to join the storied commodities firm right after May commencement.

Madiha Zaffou

ARE PhD student Madhia Zaffou (pictured right) was selected as one of only 10 students to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Outlook Forum Student Diversity Program. The Forum was held February 25-26, 2016, in Arlington, Virginia.

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Undergrads to Compete for Academic Bowl Championship at AAEA Meeting

Four ARE undergraduate students will travel to Boston this summer to vie for the national championship at the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association Annual Meeting, which will take place July 31-August 2. The UConn students will face off against teams from around the country and “test their basic knowledge of agricultural economics.” The top teams will compete for glory and a cash prize right before the AAEA Awards banquet, with the first place team receiving $500. Adam Rabinowitz is the team’s faculty sponsor.

PROFILE:

ROSE CROOG

Graduating Senior Victoria Rose Croog made a big impact during her time with the ARE Department, serving as Vice President of Marketing for the Resource Economics Club and racking up more internships and extracurriculars than we have space to mention. Croog plans to pursue a master’s degree, with the ultimate goal of building her own sustainable business.

Educating Future Leaders

On April 19, ARE undergraduates gathered in the South Reading Room of the Wilbur Cross Building for the event “Educating Future Leaders: Food and Environmental Policy,” the culmination of a semester’s-long effort by the students. Organized by Prof. Adam Rabinowitz and PhD student Nataliya Plesha, the event involved students from two different ARE courses: Environmental Policy and Food Policy. In all, the South Reading Room housed 31 different stations, each representing the work of a team of students, and each of which related to a specific topic in food and environmental policy. Presentations ranged in subject from the management of nuclear waste to food insecurity by location throughout Connecticut.

Congratulations Graduates!

Commencement for the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources was held on Saturday, May 7.

In all, over 60 ARE students received a B.S., M.S. or Ph.D. from the program this Spring. See Page 6 for a full list of graduates.

Resource Economics Club

New officers for the ARE Resource Economics Club were elected in Spring, and will serve a one-year term.

President: Scott Caggainello
Vice President: John Ciesla
CFO: Samuel Savage
VP of Marketing: Kevin Harris
Secretary: Audrey Folta
SPRING 2016 GRADUATES

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Joseph Batinelli • Edward Bockowski, Jr. • Christopher Bruno • Melisa Cardona • Mikayla Colantonio • Christopher Corum-Giles • Victoria Rose Croog • Mitchell Curry • Joseph Danielson • Shlomi Davidi • Claudio Duboy, Jr. • Aileene Duyan • Matthew Dziubina • Gunnar Eubanks • David Floyd • Casey Foley • Paul Gallo, Jr. • Nicholas Giorgio • Ryan Gizowski • Haylee Gobert • Kyle Guzy • Mary Harrell • Kyle Horvath • Alexandra Jannello • Sabrina Jin-Corcoran • Magdalena Cruzel • Taylor Lapnow • Kyle Lauzon • Chad Magoulas • Andrew Maladore • Danielle Malone • Michael McKeon • Antonio Minichino • Colin Ng • Rangel Polonia • Michael Roberts • Alexander Schwarz-Grzesiak • Tyler Seidel • Joanna Slepmp • Matt Stanton • Xunye Su • Rowan Sullivan • Zachary Syme • Atisha Vaghji • Ryan Vogel • Amanze Williams, Jr. • Justin Wolfe

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Han Bo • Jiaoyuan Huang • Jingyu Li • Luanfeng Liu • Minghao Liu • Yin Ma • Salimata Massaly • Qiushi Meng • Neha Paliwal • Mohamed Tall • Zhe Wang • Chenxi Zhu • Fan Zou

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Wenqiang Bao • Omer Hoke