Office of Diversity Relations

Young Scholars Internship Program

Record number of Young Scholars Program Participants entering UGA

Not only does the Young Scholars Program expose pre-collegiate students to research and a professional work environment, but it has proven to be a successful form of recruitment for the University of Georgia (UGA), more specifically for the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES). A total of 27 participants across the Athens, Griffin, and Tifton campuses entered UGA in the Fall of 2015, with 15 pursuing majors in CAES.

Young Scholars is Georgia’s premiere high school internship program that pairs students with agriculture, food or environmental sciences faculty at UGA to conduct hands-on research projects in CAES. Program participants attend workshops aimed to foster personal and professional development while exploring agriculture related careers and research opportunities.

The Young Scholars Program hosted its second pre-collegiate research conference during the 2015 program on the Athens campus July 8 through July 10. The top three poster and oral winners across the Athens, Griffin and Tifton campuses were selected as speakers for the 2015 pre-collegiate research conference; sharing their research with CAES faculty, staff, students and administrators. While in Athens, students toured CAES departments, the Special Collections Library, Sanford Stadium and experienced living in a college freshman residence hall.

Coordinator’s Corner

The fall semester in the Office of Diversity Relations (ODR) began with exciting news: 27 former Young Scholars entering UGA & 15 of those Young Scholars with majors in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES).

The ODR welcomes our YSP alums to campus and works to provide resources to support students as they navigate their first semester on campus. The ODR offers a peer mentoring program - Mentoring among Peers Program (MAPP) for any freshman or transfer student in the CAES interested in having an upperclassman guide them through their first year. This and other programs are off to a great start. We look forward to continuing a great year recruiting and supporting students in the CAES.

Dr. Victoria D. David

by the numbers

Average of 70 interns each year

Up to 30 hours of paid research  10 day immersion trip to Costa Rica

6 week internship

3 campuses across Georgia
Phyllicia Thomas

Former Young Scholars Program participant, Phyllicia Thomas, is now a first year University of Georgia student. Thomas is majoring in Environmental Economics and Management and says that she chose to attend UGA because of the major it offered, the many resources it provides, and the Zell Miller scholarship that covers her tuition. “In five years, I see myself attending a law school and studying to become an environmental science lawyer,” says Thomas.

She made many memories during her time as a Young Scholar. She remembers her recent trip to Costa Rica vividly. Thomas recalls ziplining through the beautiful mountains and forest of Costa Rica as well as digging worms out of animal waste compost.

Though she is enjoying the college life, she says she would love to share an afternoon with old friends from high school. When Thomas is not in class, she enjoys attending the pre-calculus study hall in the Boyd graduate Research Center and napping during her free time.

“In five years, I see myself attending a law school studying to become an environmental science lawyer.”

Phyllicia Thomas

Dr. Anand Mohan is Assistant Professor in the department of Food Science whose research consists of meat and poultry processing, quality and safety. He received his Bachelors of Science degree at Vinoba Bhave University, India and his PhD at Kansas State University.

Mohan has been a great help to the Young Scholars Program, having served as a mentor for many years. Mohan says that he chose to be a mentor because “they [the students] are so much fun to work with. Their love and passion for scientific research is contagious.” Mohan feels that it is very important for students to have mentors because they serve as a “GPS” on their journey.

Mohan enjoys working because he gets to serve Georgians and mom and pop food businesses everyday across the country. When Mohan is not helping advance Georgia agriculture, he can be found playing with his 9 year old son and walking his two dogs.

“Always strive for number one,” said Mohan, “dream big and work hard every day.”

Anand Mohan

YSP Alumns Entering CAES 2015-2016

Alyssa Beckstead
Kallie Craft
Meghan Lewis
Faith Roberts

Justin Sharma
Virgille Sonon
Phyllicia Thomas
Briah Thompson–Carter

Ruqayah Bhuiyan
Jesse Fulcher
Jarron Gravesande
Sabrena Rutledge

“Always strive for number one,” said Mohan, “dream big and work hard every day.”
Star Student Austin Ogletree

Like many YSP alumni, Austin Ogletree is leaping into his future and doing BIG THINGS. Austin, a Young Scholar on the Griffin campus in 2010 and 2011, worked alongside Dr. James Buck in Plant Pathology and Dr. Quinggo “Jack” Huang in Crop and Soil Sciences. After graduation from Lamar County High School, Austin went on to North Carolina A&T to study Industrial and Systems Engineering. He was recently elected Student Government Association President for 2015-2016.

In April, Austin was selected from nearly 3,000 applicants to participate in Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT), a nationally acclaimed career advancement program. Also, he recently traveled to China as a member of the Emerging Leaders, a U.S.-China Delegation Program sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

In an email addressed to his “YSP Family,” Austin expressed his appreciation: “I know that this would not be possible without your support, challenges, and encouragement along the way—and for that I say Thank you.” He went on to say, "The Young Scholars Program showed me that education is the key to making a dynamic impact in the world, and that the youth continuously shape the world in which we grow.”

Mentor Highlight

Dr. Alfredo Martinez-Espinoza is a professor in the department of Plant Pathology in CAES. He holds a B.S. in Agronomy & Plant Pathology and a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology. He has served as a YSP mentor for nine years.

Martinez believes the Young Scholars Program is a prime example of the UGA motto “to teach, to serve and to inquire into the nature of things.” He believes YSP provides an excellent platform for bright, motivated high school students to awaken their scientific curiosity; to help find their academic fit, and to solidify their career choice. “These students work hand-in-hand with scientists and educators gaining experience and participating in real-life, hands-on research. YSP also provides these young minds with life-long skills of work ethic and responsibility.”

Meet the Griffin YSP “Class of 2015”

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sakeeta Armstrong</td>
<td>Griffin High</td>
<td>Dr. Ming Li Wang</td>
<td>USDA-PGRCU</td>
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<td>Jatoria Beckham</td>
<td>Griffin High</td>
<td>Dr. Kirk Kealey</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
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<td>Ian Binék</td>
<td>Northgate High</td>
<td>Dr. Alfredo Martinez</td>
<td>Plant Pathology</td>
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<td>Courtney Britt</td>
<td>Griffin High</td>
<td>Dr. James Buck</td>
<td>Plant Pathology</td>
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<td>Moriah Byrd</td>
<td>Griffin High</td>
<td>Dr. Jack Huang</td>
<td>Crop and Soil Sciences</td>
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<td>Victor Camá</td>
<td>Whitewater High</td>
<td>Dr. Monique Leclerc</td>
<td>Crop and Soil Sciences</td>
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<td>McKenzie Dallas</td>
<td>McIntosh High</td>
<td>Dr. Ynes Ortega</td>
<td>Center for Food Safety</td>
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<td>Brooks Davis</td>
<td>Spalding High</td>
<td>Dr. Viktor Tishchenko</td>
<td>Crop and Soil Sciences</td>
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<td>Zabeena Dharani</td>
<td>Spalding High</td>
<td>Dr. Koushik Adhikari</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
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<td>Akiel Etienne</td>
<td>McIntosh High</td>
<td>Dr. Mussie Habteselassie</td>
<td>Crop and Soil Sciences</td>
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<td>Cierrah Guerreo</td>
<td>Union Grove High</td>
<td>Dr. Rachel Itle</td>
<td>Horticulture</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Hanson</td>
<td>Pike County High</td>
<td>Ms. Sheri Dorn</td>
<td>Horticulture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betty Jackson</td>
<td>Pike County High</td>
<td>Dr. James Buck</td>
<td>Plant Pathology</td>
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<td>Xavier Jones</td>
<td>Eagles Landing High</td>
<td>Dr. Ian Fitcroft</td>
<td>Crop and Soil Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julianna Kendall</td>
<td>Luella High</td>
<td>Mr. Art Cain</td>
<td>Center for Food Safety</td>
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<td>Alexia Maxis</td>
<td>Griffin High</td>
<td>Dr. Dan Suter</td>
<td>Crop and Soil Sciences</td>
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<td>Joshua Mixon</td>
<td>Woodland High</td>
<td>Dr. Jerry Johnson</td>
<td>Horticulture</td>
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<td>Shelby Morton</td>
<td>Crosspointe Christian Academy</td>
<td>Ms. Sheri Dorn</td>
<td>Plant Pathology</td>
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<td>James Ogletree</td>
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<td>Brandon Reavis</td>
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<td>Dr. Clint Waltz</td>
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<td>Sara Reeves</td>
<td>Union Grove High</td>
<td>Dr. Kris Braman</td>
<td>Ag. &amp; Applied Economics</td>
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<td>Kayla Rice</td>
<td>Skipstone Academy</td>
<td>Dr. Paul Raymer</td>
<td>Crop and Soil Sciences</td>
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<td>Megan Scheulin</td>
<td>Union Grove High</td>
<td>Dr. Patrick McCullough</td>
<td>Entomology</td>
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<td>Cole Stansell</td>
<td>McIntosh High</td>
<td>Dr. Jerry Johnson</td>
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<td>Taylor Thomas</td>
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<td>Sydney Wagner</td>
<td>Pike County High</td>
<td>Dr. Dario Chavez</td>
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<td>Kaylin Wells</td>
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<td>Dr. Patrick McCullough</td>
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Two Tift County High School seniors had memorable Young Scholars experiences on the University of Georgia campus in Tifton, Georgia, and are now recommending the six-week internship program to other high school students. Megha Patel and Alisa Amin participated in the 2015 YSP Summer Program, working with University of Georgia entomologist Dr. Rajagopalbabu "Babu" Srinivasan. What the two appreciated most was the opportunity to start and complete their own project in the six-week timeframe. "I really enjoyed it because not only did I get a hands-on perspective, I got to see how it takes everybody to finish a project," Patel said. Patel and Amin had no agricultural experience prior to arriving on the UGA Tifton Campus. However, Amin still wanted to try Young Scholars because of the scientific principles she and Patel had the opportunity to learn. "It was a science program and that's what we want to study in our fields. UGA is one of the colleges that we're looking to go to," Amin said. "It was conducting experiments and working with scientists."

While last summer served as Amin and Patel's one and only time with the Young Scholars summer internship program, it was enough to make both ambassadors for the program, who are recommending it to other students when given the opportunity. "I would love to recruit others and get them to join Young Scholars. It's a really good experience," Patel said. Working alongside a world-renowned scientist like Dr. Babu is what makes Amin recommend the program to other students. "I felt honored that I got the chance to work with him," Amin said. "Yes, definitely students should consider this program."

University of Georgia entomologist Dr. Rajagopalbab "Babu" Srinivasan views working with high school students in the Young Scholars Program as a way of preparing the next generation of scientists.

Having been a mentor for six years, Srinivasan has seen the program’s value to students in Tifton and surrounding areas. "I've sat on the interview panel that selects Young Scholars," he said. "To start with, these are some of the brightest kids we have. It's only fair to encourage them to do more. Us being able to help them with that, I think it's great."

When students arrive in June for their internship, Srinivasan shows them around his lab and instructs them on the latest entomology research being conducted. Students talk with the graduate students and technicians to grasp a better understanding of what to expect during the six-week program. Srinivasan develops small projects that are tweaked to coincide with the students’ interests. "I think when the kids come here, they don't really have any hands-on experience. They're eager to learn and understand what's happening here," he said. "We try to encourage them and involve them in whatever we're doing, so we can give them a flavor of what's happening in our lab."

Some of Srinivasan’s mentees have already benefitted from their time at UGA Tifton. One is currently interviewing to pursue medical school and another is studying in the UGA pharmacy school in Athens. Srinivasan is thankful to have the opportunity to leave a lasting impact. "It's always about getting the next generation ready. Many helped us get where we are today. I enjoy the fact that this is an opportunity to give back," he said.

(Clint Thompson is a news editor with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences based in Tifton.)
Young scholars completing a second internship placement visited Costa Rica for a ten day, faculty led, global agriculture and cultural immersion trip. The trip aimed to expose students to real world issues regarding the increasing complexities of global food production and security. Sixteen students and four UGA faculty and staff traveled to Costa Rica - visiting Earth University, UGA Costa Rica and Rancho Margot. The learning objectives of the trip were to: strengthen students’ cultural values and perspectives, apply research outcomes to real world issues and connect agriculture related STEM disciplines to global challenges. Students participated in home-stays with local residents, visited coffee and banana plantations and observed sustainable agriculture practices through a global lens.
MANRRS is on the Move

A cohort of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences members attended the annual MANRRS Cluster in Atlanta, Georgia September 26, 2015.

Students arrived Saturday morning and were immediately engaged in the Career Fair. During this time, members were given the opportunity to meet professionals in the agricultural industry, from companies such as the USDA, John Deere and Pork Checkout.

Later in the afternoon, students attended various professional development workshops. Each workshop presented useful information, from social media presence to resume building. Our President and Vice President attended a business meeting sharing regional organization progress and discussion of future projects for MANRRS - UGA.

New members were inducted into the nationally renowned organization and were given pins indicating official membership in MANRRS.

Though this was a professional event, members also had fun. Students were able to network with their peers at lunch. It was here that members were able to really interact with our MANRRS members from different colleges.

MANRRS advisor, Dr. Paul Thomas comments, “Once again we are on time, professionally prepared, and already networking!”

MAPP Leads the Way

Fall 2014 marked the beginning of the MAPP peer mentoring program sponsored by the Office of Diversity Relations. Since that time, MAPP has been an integral part in the lives of students.

MAPP pairs experienced third and fourth year CAES students with freshmen and transfers in the CAES to provide guidance and support during their first year at UGA. The program is mutually beneficial to both the mentors and mentees. Mentors learn valuable leadership skills while mentees learn about life at the university and how to navigate the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

MAPP mentees meet with their mentors once per month. All participating mentors and mentees meet in the Office of Diversity Relations one evening per month to reflect on the program and hear speakers scheduled to discuss: the transition from high school to college, how to survive midterms, undergraduate research and other important topics essential to promote inclusion and foster a successful first year in the CAES.

Pictured: MAPP mentors at leadership workshop.
EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS

- To enhance understanding of the breadth of science and policy that impacts food production from field to fork and the role of CAES in Georgia’s leading industry—agriculture.
- K-12 outreach: Working with department and college based programs to enhance the awareness of youth of vocational opportunities in the agricultural and environmental sciences and the opportunities to pursue these opportunities in CAES at UGA.
- The Young Scholars Program (YSP): A six-week pre-collegiate summer internship program that places high school students in laboratories of leading researchers across the disciplines related to the science of food and agriculture.

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT

- Opportunities to participate in CAES and UGA recruiting activities (e.g., “Georgia Daze” and “Movimiento Latino”) to inform potential UGA students, including those from underrepresented groups, about departmental programs.
- The Emerging Scholars Program: An eight-week summer internship that provides support for rising college juniors and seniors from institutions historically serving underrepresented students that may be interested seeking an advanced degree in CAES.
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT

- **MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences):** Support for a robust UGA chapter of this national organization, which promotes academic and professional development for all undergraduate and graduate students and provides opportunities for internships, jobs and the pursuit of advanced degrees.

- **Peer Mentoring: MAPP (Mentoring Among Peers Program)** in which first year and transfer students have the opportunity to be paired with a fourth year student to help navigate their first year in CAES at UGA. GMAPP (Graduate Mentoring Among Peers Program) provides the opportunity for new graduate students to be paired with experienced peers to help navigate their first year at UGA.

SUPPORTING FACULTY PROGRAMS

- Graduate student stipend support to facilitate recruiting and initial support for students from underrepresented groups.

- Work in collaboration with and/or provide letters of support for faculty seeking extramural funding that will enhance attracting, retaining and the development of undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences

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