



ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

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Bolden-Tiller receives Fulbright International Ed award

Dr. Olga Bolden-Tiller, dean of the College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences (CAENS) at Tuskegee University, received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program award in International Education and will represent the university as part of the inaugural Fulbright HBCU International Education Administrators seminar.

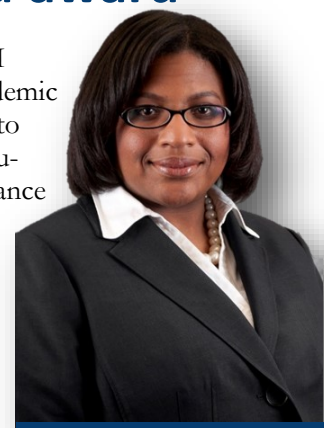
The inaugural Fulbright HBCU International Education Administrators (IEA) seminar, which will be held in Paris, France, and Senegal, helps participants increase international education, gain cross-cultural perspectives, and collaborate with colleagues and students worldwide.

"Tuskegee University solves the world's most complex problem and has been doing so for quite some time," said Dr. Mark A. Brown, president and CEO. "We do this through superb academic leaders, research opportunities, and

expanding academic pursuits such as this. I commend Dr. Bolden-Tiller, a superb academic leader, for this recognition. She continues to provide an outstanding example for our students and other faculty in her work to advance Tuskegee University and our mission."

The HBCU IEA Seminar is the latest addition to a series of Fulbright exchanges that give U.S. international education professionals and senior higher education officials the chance to learn about different education systems and expand professional networks.

"It is my continued privilege to represent Tuskegee globally



DR. BOLDEN-TILLER

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Message from the Chair / DR. WESLEY WHITTAKER

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

"**Keep Calm and Carry On**" was created by the British government in 1939 as part of a series of motivational posters designed to boost morale and encourage resilience during World War II. Though it was never widely distributed then, the phrase resurfaced in the early 2000s and has since become a powerful reminder of perseverance in the face of adversity.

In times of uncertainty—such as the recent Presidential Executive Order, [Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing](#), and similar legislative actions at the state level that restrict DEI and other related programmatic efforts with-

in publicly funded institutions - this message remains especially relevant. It underscores the importance of staying composed under pressure, refusing to let fear or panic take control and continuing forward despite challenges and obstacles.

More than just a slogan, "**Keep Calm and Carry On**" reflects a mindset of patience, determination, resilience and inner stability. It encourages those with-

in the land-grant system to meet challenges with a steady, measured response rather than anxiety or despair. Whether facing personal struggles, professional setbacks or shifts in societal norms, the phrase serves as a steadfast reminder that resilience, composure and persistence will guide us forward. As many of us are intensely aware, even in unprecedented times, the Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) and our colleagues remain committed to advancing with creativity, confidence and purpose as we align our programs and projects with the new policies while preserving the land-grant mission's

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Welcome Sec. Rollins

Congratulations to Brooke Rollins on her confirmation as Secretary of Agriculture. With a deep understanding of the challenges facing farmers, ranchers, and rural communities, she brings proven leadership to the USDA at a pivotal time. Her experience and dedication to agriculture will be instrumental in strengthening the agricultural economy. ARD looks forward to collaborating with Secretary Rollins to deliver meaningful results for rural America and the hardworking individuals who sustain our agricultural industry in the 1890 region and beyond.



DR. W. WHITTAKER



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Congress approved the Evans-Allen Act of 1977 to provide capacity funding for food and agricultural research at the 1890 land-grant universities and Tuskegee University (the 1890 Institutions) similar to that provided to the 1862 universities under the Hatch Act of 1887. Research conducted under the Evans-Allen Program has led to hundreds of scientific breakthroughs of benefit to both the unique stakeholders of the 1890 institutions and the nation as a whole. The Evans-Allen Program has been extremely important in allowing the 1890 institutions to attract top-notch scientists to their campuses, conduct high-quality and innovative research and become more fully integrated within the land-grant system.

This edition, includes impacts from the 1890 research program submitted by scientists at Southern University.

SU builds grape production capacity to aid wine growers

Grapes are the highest-value fruit crop in the United States, with an estimated value of over \$ 5.9 billion. The U.S. has nearly 904,000 acres of grape-bearing land (wine, table grapes and raisins).

Louisiana has a growing wine industry and there are nine operational vineyards and wineries in the state that produce a variety of wines. Louisiana vineyards primarily grow Pierce's disease-(PD) tolerant American, French American hybrid bunch grapes and Muscadine grapes.

Evaluating new and existing grape cultivars that are well-suited to the local climate are limited. While many consumers are not aware of Louisiana's wine industry, Southern University's Agricultural Research and Extension Center has sustained a modest viticulture research program for the last decade. Through support provided by the Evans Allen and USDA-NIFA 1890 Capacity Building grant funding, the Center has increased its research efforts (since 2019) to determine the production efficiency of newly released and existing grape

pertise for growing and management of suitable grape cultivars.

Southern University's Agricultural Research and Extension Center has a team of scientists with expertise in plant physiology, plant pathology and soil science. The AG center is currently assessing the performance of different Pierce's disease-tolerant bunch and muscadine grapes.

The newly released PD tolerant bunch grapes Crimson Cabernet, Cabernet Franc, grapevines released from the UC Davis research program and popular bunch grapes Blanc Du Bois, Stover, Lenoir, and table grapes Victoria red and Sensation Seedless are planted in the Ag Center's experimental vineyard. The muscadine varieties planted for wine production include Noble and Carlos.

Twenty-one table muscadine grapes, including new releases and popular table grapes, are planted in a randomized complete block design with three replications. Although fungal diseases and humid climates challenge grape production,

preliminary results suggest that existing and newly released hybrid bunch and muscadines can be adapted to the different Louisiana soil types. Developing and evaluating these new PD-tolerant bunch and muscadine grapes, which can perform well in the state, will provide greater economic opportunities for farmers and wine industries.

The viticulture project has provided resources and built capacity for collaborative research opportunities with different land-grant universities to strengthen research capacity that can benefit students and faculty, and increase the level of grapevine research at SU.

The program has enabled research faculty to demonstrate grape management and production practices in the plant sciences courses, which enhance student participation

in our research programs. The project and establishment of viticulture research have helped four undergraduates with their honor thesis and sparked interest in students for horticulture research and small fruit production.



Southern student harvesting grapes for further study in university research lab.

cultivars for the region, research on fungal diseases and crop management.

Southern University is also partnering with industry and other land-grant universities in the Southern region to gain access to resources including funding, research and ex-

Southern examines impact of calf pre- and post-birth nutrition

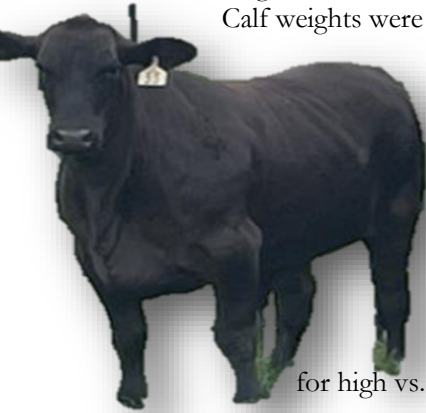
An experiment was initiated just over two years ago on the Southern University campus regarding the impacts of pre- and post- birth nutrition on subsequent calf performance.

Mature Angus crossbred cows were allotted to treatment of moderate or high nutrition before calving or post-calving. Higher nutrition levels post-calving would cause cows to produce more milk, which increase the calves' weight. Studies with dairy heifers showed that an increase of eight gains from birth to about 60 days of age resulted in increased milk production during lactation cycles starting two years later.

To determine the impact of early calf nutrition, half the cows received five pounds of feed supplement from calving until about day 75, and the other half were fed two pounds of supplement. Cow weights were not impacted, indicating that the additional feed was turned into milk.

Calf weights were increased from birth to about day 75.

After calves were weaned, heifers were managed to be bred as 2-year-olds, and steers were placed on pastures for grazing, followed by a 140-day feeding period. Steers harvested at an average age of 21 months and a weight of 1,340 lb. The weight differences seen at 75 days of age for high vs. moderate supplement levels



were still present. Carcass quality grades were not different and were 15% Prime, 75% Choice and 10% Select.

Steers were bred, born, raised and fed at the university. Several steers were harvested at the University Meat Processing facility and were used in the SUN Beef program. This beef was primarily sold to the university's food service provider, Aramark, and fed to students in the cafeteria. Most of the steaks and roasts were used for official university functions or sold to university employees.

The second generation of SUN Beef steers is ready for harvest and was sponsored by the NFL and highlighted at the recent Super Bowl. The steer was served at the "Taste of the NFL" reception at the World War II Museum. Approximately 20 Southern University student volunteers under the leadership of Dr. Janana Snowden, MANNRS sponsor, served as hostesses. A least 50 current NFL players attended and another 50 retired NFL players and media attended the tasting.

In the long term, Southern MANRRS students are asked to develop a "marketing strategy" that will include the direct sell of SUN Beef to the general public through a selected grocery store. Also, the first in-the-nation "Nutrition Hub," headquartered at Southern University, will use SUN Beef to develop wholesome, nutritious recipes that are lower in calories but high in nutritional value as part of a well-rounded diet.

For more information, contact Dr. C. P. (Pat) Bagley, associate vice chancellor (interim) and director, Beef Research Institute, 225.771.4835; clayde_bagley@suaqcenter.com

Grapes . . . From page 2

Research faculty also partner with two wine companies, McBride Sisters and Darjean Wine Company. They offer scholarships and internship opportunities for undergraduate students in plant science. McBride Sisters Collection also provided \$50,000 through the "YES SHE CAN" fund for student and faculty development in viticulture and enology.

The funds and the scholarships offered to the students are strategically invested to increase the workforce (especially minority women) entering the wine-producing industry.

Expanding Louisiana grape production will enhance and expand the exist-

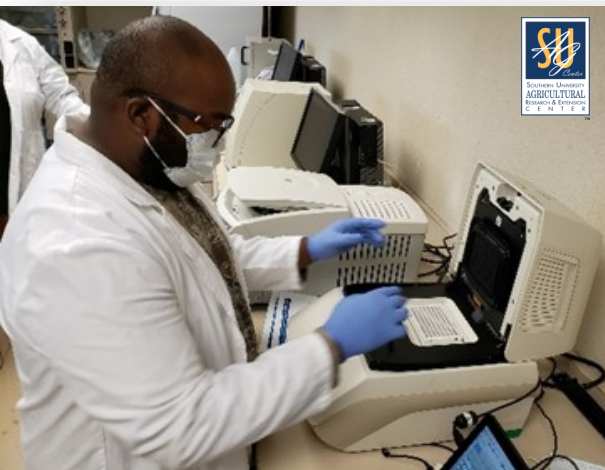
ing wine industry. This expansion directly translates into positive economic and educational impacts at the local, state and national levels.

As has been the case of neighboring and other Southern states (e.g. Texas and Florida), the industry expansion increases business activities including vineyard and winery operations and leads to sizable tax revenues at the local and state levels.

The grape and wine industry also provides long-term economic growth for rural parishes and creates lucrative jobs in farming, winemaking and distribution, leading to increased economic stability and opportunities in rural areas.

Southern University will continue partnering with well-established enology and viticulture programs to educate students, grape growers and vintners in modern practices and techniques that can improve the quality of Louisiana wine, making it more competitive in the regional and national markets. Finally, a thriving Louisiana wine industry will boost wine-related tourism and diversify the local agricultural landscape.

For more information, please contact Dr. Devaiah Kambrinda, professor, Plant and Soil Sciences, devaiah_kambrinda@suaqcenter.com, 225.771.3206



Evaluating grape varieties to see which perform best in Louisiana soils and weather.

Can hemp/mushrooms fight COVID on surfaces?

Professor Leonard Williams took full advantage of the pandemic-induced pause in 2020, assembling a team of researchers to study whether hemp or mushrooms might help combat the spread of COVID-19.

While the pandemic pushed most people to pause in 2020, it had the opposite effect on Leonard Williams, Ph.D., director, professor and researcher at the Center for Excellence in Post-Harvest Technologies in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES) at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

The university declared Williams an “essential worker,” which allowed him to continue to work during the campus lockdown brought on by the pandemic. While in his lab, he wondered how to use his skills as a food microbiologist, and his extensive research experience, to fight the virus.

“I wanted to capitalize on our infrastructure here at the center,” said Williams. “We have some high-end equipment, and I wanted to do what I could to help. This is what forward-thinking researchers do.”

COVID-19 perplexed everyone in mid-2020. Daily newscasts showed its rapid spread as the worldwide death count rose, and more and more schools, businesses and facilities closed. Scientists focused on curing the disease, but Williams felt the need to explore other options as well.

He and a team of other CAES researchers wondered if there might be synthetic and natural sources to combat the replication, transcription and transmission of COVID-19.

Knowing that hemp and mushrooms have antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties, they wondered if both, or either, might effectively kill the SARS-Corona Virus 2 and stop the spread of COVID-19. And if hemp or mushrooms were usable, what would the end-product look like? Would it be easy to use and readily available, and how effective could it be?

Additionally, they wanted to know if hemp and mushroom extracts could serve as an alternative to conventional disinfectants that could be used on contact surfaces, like polyvinyl chloride (PVC), stainless steel, cardboard and copper. These were the surfaces most often touched by food handlers and other essential workers, and if the virus was active, it could easily be spread from person to person on these surfaces. Both are also natural products that are safe around food, humans and animals and are environmentally friendly.

With funding through NIFA’s Evans-Allen program, they developed a project to:

- Establish the most efficient extraction method from the hemp and mushroom crude extract with maximum phenolic and flavonoid contents and antioxidant activities

using different solvents;

- Determine the antiviral activities of hemp and mushroom extract against novel SARS-CoV-2 in an in vitro cell culture assay;
- Measure the transfer rates of SARS-CoV-2 on different contact surfaces treated with hemp or mushroom extracts and compare its efficacy to conventional commercial disinfectants (hydrogen peroxide and sodium hypochlorite).

Williams pulled together a multidisciplinary team from across campus: Janak Khatiwada, Ph.D., a food nutritional biochemist; Omoanghe Isikhuemhen, Ph.D., a mycologist with extensive experience in the cultivation of medicinal mushrooms; Guochen Yang, Ph.D., a horticulture specialist



Dr. Leonard Williams in his lab at A&T’s Center for Post-Harvest Technology.

with expertise in hemp, plant propagation, tissue culture and micropropagation; and Salam Ibrahim, Ph.D., a food safety specialist and microbiologist with experience in the use of probiotics for controlling foodborne pathogens.

Since the mushrooms needed time to grow, the group started with hemp, which is known as a superfood because of its multiple uses in food, fiber, medicine, paints and varnishes, soaps and edible oils. Hemp has been shown to be effective in reducing other immunomodulatory conditions, like airway hyper-responsiveness, airway inflammation and coughs, other anti-inflammatory and anti-tussive responses. Because of COVID-19’s effects on the respiratory system, the group considered hemp an excellent candidate for further study.

The group selected three varieties of hemp to test with COVID-19 isolates, provided by the National Institute of Health Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Research Resources Repository. Most of the work was done at the Center for Excellence Post-Harvest Technologies, which is a U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Certified Select

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Williams . . . From page 4

Agent Biosafety Level 3 (Bsl-3) lab. All other safety precautions were used, Williams said, since this work was done in 2020 at the height of the pandemic when little was known about how it was spread.

The group's first objective was to establish the most efficient extraction method. The hemp plants were washed, shade-dried, and cut into a fine powder using an elective stainless-steel grain grinder mill. The crude plant powder was decanted, freeze-dried, and tested for alkaloids, flavonoids, glycosides, saponins, protein, and carbohydrates. The material was further treated, filtered, rinsed, put in a centrifuge, freeze-dried, and stored.

Then, the plant extracts were tested for phytochemicals, or key plant-derived chemicals, that have potential antiviral properties, using specialized equipment to determine which could be isolated from the plant extracts.

The second process was to determine the antiviral activities of hemp against novel SARS-CoV-2 in an in-vitro cell culture assay. For this study, the team measured the transfer rates of SARS-CoV-2 to different contact surfaces treated with hemp and compared the results to conventional disinfectants. Different surfaces were tested in separate experiments. The hard surfaces were washed with warm water and liquid soap, rinsed with tap water, and soaked in bleach and

ethanol. They were then wrapped in aluminum foil and autoclaved. Once the surfaces were dry, they were swabbed, exposed to SARS-CoV-2, and then decontaminated with hemp.

What they discovered, Williams said, was that some of the crude extracts from the different hemp varieties were able to help reduce the proliferation of SARS-CoV-2 cells.

"These are preliminary results, but we were pleased with our positive findings," he said. "We are looking at what's next." That question will be answered using the mushroom extracts to see if they get the same or similar response. Additionally, they will determine if variants of SARS-CoV-2 will produce the same results.

Williams and the team are also working on manuscripts that will appear in peer-reviewed journals, and they are preparing to file a patent application. A patent will pave the way for them to work with an entity interested in using the knowledge to develop products the public can buy. This could be a disinfectant spray akin to other mass-produced disinfectants, or maybe even clothing with the product included in the material.

"In addition to helping to solve a problem and being safe to use, this research could be profitable for hemp farmers," Williams said. "This is just the beginning. There are so many other markets where this research could be used."

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long-standing partnership with the USDA and its extramural funding arm, the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

During the week of February 23, ARD actively participated in the 2025 Joint Annual AHS/CARET Meeting in Washington, D.C. Centered on the theme "**Securing Our Future**," 1890 research directors and associate research directors, along with 1890 Extension administrators and deans of agriculture, showcased their institutions' outstanding programs across teaching,

research and Extension. We also advocated for FY 2025 appropriations, farm bill priorities, and research infrastructure needs. Throughout the week, 1890 administrators, CARET representatives and other advocates worked closely with their universities' government affairs liaisons to engage Congressional members, address key challenges, highlight institutional impacts and present budget requests.

Bolden-Tiller . . . From page 1

in this way," said Bolden-Tiller. "I am honored to be acknowledged by the Fulbright team in such a distinguished way. I have traveled the world to bring these kinds of relationships and programs at Tuskegee, and it gives me great pleasure to be able to represent our university through this collaboration."

Fulbright U.S. scholars are faculty, researchers, administrators and established professionals teaching or conducting research affiliated with institutes abroad. The scholars engage in cutting-edge research and expand their professional networks, often continuing research collaborations started abroad and laying the groundwork for future partnerships between institutions. They share their stories upon returning to their home countries, institutions, labs and classrooms. They often become active supporters of international exchange, inviting foreign scholars to campus and encouraging colleagues and students to go abroad.

Annually, more than 800 individuals teach or con-

duct research abroad through the [Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program](#). In addition, over 2,000 Fulbright U.S. Student Program participants—recent college graduates, graduate students and early career professionals—participate in study/research exchanges or as English teaching assistants.

"Dean Bolden-Tiller's participation as part of the first Fulbright International Education Cohort dedicated to HBCUs creates additional exposure for our students while highlighting our global brand," said Dr. Rhonda Collier, Fulbright program liaison at Tuskegee University and director of Tuskegee's University Global Office. "This is a very prestigious honor and will move us toward our institutional goals as we enhance academic excellence and recruit more international students for TU."

The Institute of International Education implements the Fulbright U.S. Student and U.S. Scholar Programs on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. [Click for more information about the Fulbright Program](#).

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1890 Land Grant Universities

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ARD Updates is published monthly by the Association of Research Directors. To suggest articles, contact Dr. Alton Thompson at athompson1@ncat.edu

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY, School Of Agriculture, Environmental and Human Sciences, [Associate Director for Cooperative Research](#)

NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY, College Of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, [Assistant Professor, Dietetics](#); [Program Director, Dietetics Graduate Program](#); [Assistant Professor, Nutritional Services](#); [Assistant/Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences](#)

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, Department of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, [Assistant/Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics](#).

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY, School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, [Assistant/Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness](#)

TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY, College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences, [Climate-Smart Project Associate](#) and [Agroforestry Project Coordinator](#)

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, Cooperative Agricultural Research Center, [Veterinarian](#)

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, Cooperative Agricultural Research Center, [Research Associate/Professor and the Director of the International Goat Research Center \(IGRC\)](#)

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY, WVSU Research & Development Corporation, [Associate Dean/Associate Director for Research](#)

LANGSTON UNIVERSITY SHERMAN LEWIS SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE & APPLIED SCIENCES, [Associate Professor of Biosystems Engineering/Precision Agriculture](#), [Associate Extension Administrator](#) : [Associate Research Director](#)

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, [Director of Agricultural Communications](#). Contact the Search Committee Chair, [Dr. Douglas LaVergne](#) with questions.

KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH & NATURAL RESOURCES [Assistant Professor position for Integrate Pest Management](#); [Assistant Professor of Organic Agriculture](#); [Assistant Professor of Forestry](#); [Assistant Professor of Livestock Nutrition](#)

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES, [Associate Professor or Professor & Associate Dean](#)

FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FAMILY SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY, [Assistant Professor of Animal Nutrition](#)

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE, [Associate Dean of 1890 Programs and Associate Director](#) of UMES Agricultural Experiment Station

KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH & NATURAL RESOURCES, [Assistant professor position for Integrate Pest Management](#); [Assistant Professor of Organic Agriculture](#); [Assistant Professor of Forestry](#); [Assistant Professor of Livestock Nutrition](#)

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EXTENSION CENTER, [Vice Chancellor for Research](#).

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, [Director, Center for Sustainable Farms and Urban Agriculture](#).

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE, School of Veterinary Medicine, [Associate Dean for Research](#), School of Veterinary Medicine, [Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs](#).

LANGSTON UNIVERSITY, Sherman Lewis School of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, [Associate Research Director](#).

NEW APPOINTMENT

DR. C.P. (PAT) BAGLEY, associate vice chancellor for Research, Southern University Research and Extension Center, March 1.

CALENDAR

2025 AI IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES CONFERENCE, Theme: "The Role of AI in Autonomous Agricultural Systems and Socioeconomic Effects," hosted by Mississippi State University, March 31 – April 2. The Early Bird Registration deadline has been extended to Feb. 14. The Poster Abstract Deadline has also been extended to Feb. 14. [Register now](#) to lock in the savings. For more information, contact Amber Lynn Moore at amoores@aai.msstate.edu or 662.325.7971.

NERAOC 2025 registration is now open. Click the link below for information on the registration, draft agenda, hotel booking link and travel information. [2025 NERAOC – agInnovation-West](#). March 31-April 3 in Reno, Nevada.

Southern Mini Land-Grant Meeting | June 9 - 12, The Graduate Hotel, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Association of Communications Excellence (ACE) | June 16 - 18, Hyatt Regency Milwaukee, Wisconsin

JOB

