



NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL  
AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY  
[NC has breakthrough in truffle cultivation](#)

# ARD Updates

ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

June 2021, Vol. 12, Issue 6



DR. CHANDRA REDDY

## *Message from the Chair* Dr. Chandra Reddy

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As summer approaches, the 1890 research directors will be “all-in” relative to post-COVID adjustments to our strategic agenda, capacity projects, the 2022 and 2023 federal budgets, equity funding, the agricultural research infrastructure initiative, the 2023 farm bill, the 1890 Centers of Excellence, the 1890 scholarship program, the 2022 joint AEA-ARD meeting, the 2022 southern mini land-grant conference and effectively leading the impactful research programs.

As such, we will continue to reimagine ARD’s path forward to advance ARD’s compelling mission and vision that incorporates the diverse expertise, innovative approaches and technological advances being used at our member institutions. ARD’s programs and initiatives must continue to provide practical solutions to improve the quality of life of citizens in the 1890 region and beyond. ARD will continue to invest its intellectual and monetary resources in alignment with USDA: containing the pandemic; ensuring racial justice and equity; ensuring food and nutrition security; rebuilding the rural economy; and developing crop varieties and animal breeds to adapt to changing climate and other mitigation techniques to deal with climate changes.

ARD must always keep the voices and needs of our stakeholders at the vanguard of our planning as we develop and implement programs and initiatives. I am excited about the future of the nation’s food and agricultural systems and ARD’s role in leading the transformational research and education to a more sustainable world.

In addition, plans are underway for the research symposium, ARD’s signature event. The ARD Research Symposium will be held on April 3-5, 2022, at the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta. The ARD sponsors this major symposium to provide a venue for our outstanding faculty and students to share their research outcomes with colleagues and stakeholders.

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## Bronaugh confirmed as USDA deputy secretary

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack issued the following statement on the confirmation of **DR. JEWEL BRONAUGH** as deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

“I am grateful for today’s confirmation of Jewel Bronaugh as deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dr. Bronaugh’s confirmation is historic, as she will serve as the first Black woman and woman of color to serve as deputy secretary.

“Dr. Bronaugh has a long, distinguished career as an educator and champion for farmers and rural communities. Most recently as the 16th Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services she worked to expand opportunities for small and midsized farmers and ranchers to obtain infrastructure and processing capabilities, and developed strategies to meet environmental and water quality goals for the Chesapeake Bay. As dean of the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University, Dr. Bronaugh



Secretary Vilsack greets Dr. Bronaugh after her confirmation.

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## NIFA welcomes new staff Dixon and Koo

NIFA is welcoming new staff every month to the agency, and many of them are coming with experience working with and for 1890 institutions.

**LELAN DIXON** serves NIFA as a program specialist-National Science Liaison in the Food Production and Sustainability division.

Lelan has always had a love for the land, animals and environment. Her family came to the U.S. as chattel slaves in southern Louisiana and worked the land growing tender and hardy vegetables. Eventually, her maternal grandparents were sharecroppers and purchased their own farm. Along with her parents and numerous family members, she is an 1890 alum and attended a laboratory school at an 1890 land-grant institution for a large portion of her primary and secondary education.

The Baton Rouge native attended Southern University A&M College and Florida A&M University earning

bachelors and masters degrees in agricultural and plant sciences respectively. Throughout her career, she has maintained a passion for agriculturally based outreach, sustainability and global food security. Previously, she has worked at the University of Florida Extension Service, serving as a commercial horticulture Extension agent.

During her career she gained additional experience working for the USDA-Natural

Resources Conservation Service as a soil conservationist, training specialist for the University of Hawaii, and as a nutrient management specialist with the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Lelan is committed to serving the agriculture community in the areas of sustainability, farm safety and opportunities for current, beginning and veteran farmers.

Lelan spends her free time with family, writing and



LELAN DIXON



JAHEON KOO

bird watching. She also has played classical piano for 13 years.

**JAHEON KOO** is a national program specialist for the Food Safety and Nutrition division. His connection to 1890s is through his previous work with the University of Arkansas – Pine Bluff as an assistant and associate professor for 13 years.

Throughout Koo's career, he has worked with diverse stakeholders involving food and agricultural science areas. His prior career in food safety sparked his interest in further support NIFA's positive impact on agricultural priorities.

Koo was born and raised in Seoul, Korea. He earned his masters and Ph.D. in food science and technology with an emphasis in food safety from Mississippi State University. Koo previously worked for Virginia Tech as a research associate, the Grocery Manufacturers Association as a visiting scientist, the Institute of Food Technologists as director of food safety, and with Registrar Corporation as senior regulatory specialist.

Outside of work, Koo enjoys spending time outdoors with his family, reading, and is teaching himself Spanish.



# NIFA

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ers.

Students, particularly graduate students, are a big part of these symposia with the explicit intent of enhancing student scholarly experience, including but not limited to, promoting excellence in student learning, experiences and outcomes. Early-career scientists are also a big part of these symposia. Similar to past symposia, this symposium will focus on students' experiential learning, and cultivating their potential to assume roles as both scientists and leaders of an evolving knowledge-based, global economy. Ben Franklin said it best: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

With summer approaching, I want to encourage you to take time to spend with your families. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of us had to make some major adjustments... including canceling summer vacations. Time is a gift that is beyond value and is something you can give that is uniquely from you. Personally, I am going to focus a little harder on spending quality time with my family. It does not necessarily have to be *more* time, but I do need to be present *all* the time I am with them. That's something we all probably need to ponder from time to time.

With very best wishes for a productive summer.

# Update: ARIA initiative progress continues; support needed

Colleagues,

The Agricultural Research Infrastructure Advocacy (ARIA) is a bold initiative by the Experiment Station Section, endorsed by APLU, to request that Congress support an agricultural research infrastructure investment of \$11.5 billion at U.S. colleges of agriculture in any future federal infrastructure initiatives. Specifically, ESS is urging funding over a five-year period for the [Research Facilities Act](#) (Act), administered by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The Act authorizes an agriculture and food-focused research infrastructure program for facility construction, alteration, acquisition, modernization, renovation, or remodeling. ESS seeks to ensure that the Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to waive matching requirements, as well as consider geographic and equity in program administration.

Below is a synopsis of our current progress.

- On June 3, the Rebuild Rural Coalition hosted a webinar to provide an update on their infrastructure proposal/priorities, including ARIA.
- On June 8, the Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) submitted a letter to President Biden and Congress requesting \$40 billion for agricultural infrastructure and agricultural research and innovation
- With release of the President's Budget on May 23, we have intensified our efforts to identify Congressional champions. Any assistance that you can provide will be appreciated greatly, including but not limited to, inviting them to your campus.

- We are developing a “Dear Colleague” letter to be submitted to the House leadership that also includes a reference to and inclusion of Cooperative Extension.

I ask that you continue to engage your congressional delegation on the importance of this request in the next infrastructure bill. This will enable your

delegation to act when appropriate in support of the request and your needs. For more information **about the** request, please view the [leave behind document](#). For additional information on the request please review these



**ADVOCACY RESOURCES:**  
[Click on these links:](#)  
[Leave behind](#)  
[Request talking points](#)  
[Gordian report](#)  
[Communications Toolbox](#)  
[Rebuild Rural Coalition presentation](#)

delegation to act when appropriate in support of the request and your needs. For more information **about the** request, please view the [leave behind document](#). For additional information on the request please review these

[talking points.](#)

- Using the materials in our Communications Toolbox, we encourage you to write ‘op-eds.’ Finally, I encourage you to continue to use ARIA’s Advocacy Resources.
- Leave behind
- Request talking points
- Gordian Report
- Communications Toolbox
- Click on the box in this story to access the above documents.

Contact me ([mkairo@umes.edu](mailto:mkairo@umes.edu) or 410-651-6072.) should you have any suggestions or questions.



DR. MOSES KAIRO

## NCAT student selected as Farm Foundation Cultivar

**JANEVA WILLIAMS**, a student in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Sciences in the College of Agriculture and Environment Sciences at North Carolina A&T State University, was selected as one of six Farm Foundation Cultivars from a competitive pool of applicants from accredited North American Colleges or universities to attend a Round Table Discussion on the year’s Farm Foundation’ theme ‘Envisioning the Future of Climate Smart Agriculture.’

She is a student in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Sciences and is focusing her research on soil health and climate smart agriculture. Her presentation topic for the Round Table (June 16-18) will be the “Impact of cover cropping and manure application on soil health and greenhouse gas emissions” which is also the topic for her ongoing master’s research.

The [Farm Foundation Cultivator Program](#) is a highly competitive program. The Round Table is an invitational discussion forum comprised of leaders from across the food and agriculture supply chain and across North America. The

Farm Foundation® Round Table meets twice annually to provide a forum for discussion and interaction among participants and invited government, academic, agribusiness and other interest group leaders. Attendance at Round Table events is limited to participants and invited guests only.

Programs are designed to explore ideas, analyses and insights that participants may use in their own work. The exchange of ideas fosters understanding of different approaches to issues and challenges facing agriculture, the food system and rural regions. Topics for Round Table meetings are determined by the Farm Foundation Program Committee. Programs often build on other Farm Foundation projects and the discussions at Round Table meetings can help foster new ideas for Farm Foundation project work.



JANEVA WILLIAMS

## NIFA launches LGU2U Initiative to strengthen land-grant university ties

NIFA's relocation to Kansas City, MO created a significant need to strengthen long-term relationships, rebuild shared culture, impart knowledge and renew essential partnerships between land-grant universities and NIFA. NIFA has rapidly restaffed and rebuilt with a workforce that reflects a wide range of prior experience and varying familiarity with LGU's mission, functions and administrative procedures.

The LGUs are key NIFA stakeholders and partners in the capacity grant and other unique programs. Good working relationships between LGUs and NIFA are extremely valuable to both.

Together, the LGUs and NIFA believe an investment to reinvigorate and reimagine this historic partnership will benefit both parties and all stakeholders by synergistically enhancing our missions and catalyzing our capacity to build a better future. Hence, the creation and implementation of the LGU2U Initiative with NIFA.

The LGU2U Initiative will reinforce and enhance the unique relationship between LGUs and NIFA through active learning and engagement resulting in a strengthened and vibrant partnership.

As NIFA rebuilds its staff, processes, and systems, this presents an important opportunity for both partners. As USDA's premier stakeholder-driven extramural science funding agency, how well NIFA functions and partners with the LGUs is a timely and critically important metric. Initially, the North Central (NC) LGUs, through the LGU2U Initiative, are offering to have their experienced workforce accelerate this rebuilding to improve our partnership with unique opportunities to jointly grow, continuously improve our processes and achieve shared success.

This pilot program is being initiated by the North Central Cooperative Extension Association (NCCEA) and North Central Regional Association (NCRA). It offers virtual sessions led by North Central LGU staff and leaders strategically matching LGU expertise with NIFA's Office of Grants and Financial Management (OGFM).

The goal of LGU2U is to accelerate the onboarding process and help to restore the agency's institutional knowledge and

capacity to engage with LGUs and other partner institutions. North Central LGUs and NIFA will jointly commit to long-term partnership improvements. As this pilot program is successfully refined, other program and people contacts will occur nationally and would be engaged in future versions of the LGU2U program.

[Pre-session Survey Link:](#)

**Upcoming Sessions (contact [christina.hamilton@wisc.edu](mailto:christina.hamilton@wisc.edu) for registration information. All sessions will be recorded and posted here for future viewing):**

**Session A, NIFA OGFM 2U**

May 25, 9-10 a.m. CT

NIFA provided orientation on OGFM to LGUs ([Click here for slides](#))

[Recorded Session:](#)

**Session I, Partnerships Across LGUs and NIFA**

June 16, 9:30-11 a.m. CT

**Session II, Funding Connections and Programming**

July 14, 9:30-11 a.m. CT

Two additional sessions will be held in October and November (TBD). These sessions will be developed with participant input as capstone experiences for this initiative. These sessions are envisioned to include several virtual visits to a variety of Land-grant Universities throughout the country.

**Supporting Materials:**

- [National Executive Directors and Administrators from the Regional Associations](#)
- [NC Land-grant Institution \(LGU\) Key Research and Extension Contact Personnel Contact Sheets](#)
- [1994 Land-grant Directory](#)
- [Conceptual Organization Charts for 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land-grant Institutions](#)

**Initiative Leadership:**

Jeff Jacobsen ([jjacobsn@msu.edu](mailto:jjacobsn@msu.edu); NCRA) and Robin Shepard ([robin.shepard@wisc.edu](mailto:robin.shepard@wisc.edu); NCCEA); Matt Faulkner, Mike Fitzner, Rob Hedberg, Calvin Mitchell (NIFA)

## Bronaugh . . . from page 1

inspired many first-generation college students from rural communities to become outstanding leaders in their fields. That is understandable considering her positive, uplifting nature. She speaks respectfully of producers and rural Americans, and believes that as a public servant, her job is to find a way to help those who need it. I look forward to working with Dr. Bronaugh to ensure USDA lives up to its calling as the People's Department, to be a Department that serves all people equally and fairly."

### ABOUT DR. JEWEL BRONAUGH

Bronaugh was appointed the 16th Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in 2018 by Governor Ralph Northam. She previously served as the Virginia State Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), appointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe and then-U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, in July 2015. Prior to her FSA appointment, she served as dean of the College of Agriculture at Virginia State Univer-

sity (VSU) with oversight of Extension, research and academic Programs. Previously she was the associate administrator for Extension Programs and a 4-H Extension Specialist.

In spring 2019, Bronaugh launched the Virginia Farmer Stress Task Force to raise awareness and coordinate resources to address farmer stress and mental health challenges in Virginia. In the fall of 2020, she helped establish the Virginia Food Access Investment Fund and Program, the first statewide program of its kind to address food access within historically marginalized communities.

Bronaugh received her Ph.D. in Career and Technical Education from Virginia Tech. She is passionate about the advancement of youth leadership in agriculture. Bronaugh is from Petersburg, VA and is married to Cleavon, a retired



DR. JEWEL BRONAUGH

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### 1890 Land Grant Universities

[Alabama A&M University](#)  
[Alcorn State University](#)  
[Central State University](#)  
[Delaware State University](#)  
[Florida A&M University](#)  
[Fort Valley State University](#)  
[Kentucky State University](#)  
[Langston University](#)  
[Lincoln University](#)  
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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](mailto:athompson1@ncat.edu)

# 1890 Universities Foundation applauds IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act

The 1890 Universities Foundation, representing the 19 Historically Black Land Grant Universities (HBCUs), applauds the introduction of the Institutional Grants for New Infrastructure, Technology, and Education at HBCUs Act (IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act). This new legislation would create transformative infrastructure investments to better position HBCUs to continue their mission of serving their communities and the nation.

“The IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act is a momentous and needed effort to help HBCUs compete in the 21st Century,” said Dr. Mortimer Neufville, president and CEO of the 1890 Foundation. “The tremendous backlog of deferred maintenance and the need to upgrade buildings and research facilities on our campuses has been well-documented. I hope Congress will include the IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act in any infrastructure bill they pass.”

Added Dr. Makola Abdullah, chair of the 1890 Foundation Board and president of Virginia State University, “I want to thank U.S. Representatives Alma Adams (D-NC), French Hill (D-AK) and Senators Tim Scott (R-SC) and Chris Coons (D-DE) for their diligence and hard work in putting this HBCU Infrastructure bill together. Our universities have tremendous infrastructure needs that must be addressed so that our faculty, students, the communities we serve and the nation can benefit as we rebound from the pandemic.

Repairing and enhancing the physical infrastructure at HBCUs will be a priority during the upcoming infrastructure debate, said Dr. Paul Jones, 1890 Foundation Board member and president of Fort Valley State University. “We will work with our fellow HBCU leaders and our congressional delegations to make this a reality. Failure is really not an option.”

*(Reprinted from HBCU Updates, June 8, 2021)*  
[To read more on IGNITE, click here.](#)



DR. MORTIMER NEUFVILLE



DR. MAKOLA ABDULLAH

## NEW APPOINTMENT

**DR. BRUCE MCGOWAN**, interim dean/director of the School of Agriculture, Fisheries & Human Sciences at the University of Arkansas at Pine, effective June 4.

## CALENDAR

**2021 JOINT COPS**, July 19-23, 2021 | Virtual

AHS Executive Committee, July 19 @ 3-4 p.m. | ESCOP Meeting, July 20 @ 12:30-3:45 p.m.  
BAA/PBD Meeting, July 21 @ 11-12:30 p.m. | ARD Meeting, July 22 @ 10 a.m. to Noon  
BAA Policy Board of Directors, July 22 @ 3-5 p.m.

