



ARD Updates



ASSOCIATION OF 1890 RESEARCH DIRECTORS

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Bronaugh and Parveen nab agInnovation awards

Drs. Jewel Bronaugh and Salina Parveen received ARD agInnovation awards during the group's annual meeting in Raleigh in September 2024.

Bronaugh currently serves as the second president and CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation, offering insightful and visionary leadership that aligns with the organization's mission, as defined by the board of directors. She also develops strategic priorities to drive impactful outcomes for the Foundation.

In January 2021, President Joe Biden nominated Bronaugh as the 14th United States Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. She was unanimously confirmed by the Senate and sworn in on May 17, 2021. As deputy secretary and chief operating officer, Bronaugh was responsible for managing the department's day-to-day operations. Her key responsibilities included:



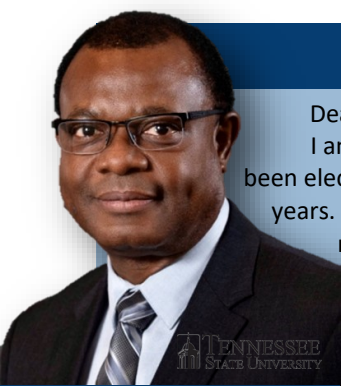
DR. JEWEL BRONAUGH



DR. SALINA PARVEEN

- supporting the Secretary of Agriculture in carrying out the mission and requirements of USDA while leading

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DR. WESLEY WHITTAKER

Message from the Chair / DR. WESLEY WHITTAKER

Dear Friends and Colleagues,
I am deeply honored and thrilled to have been elected as the ARD Chair for the next two years. Thank you for your trust and confidence in me. My commitment to serving with vision, dedication and passion is unequivocal.

It is a privilege to accept this role, and I look forward to working closely with each of you to advance ARD's vision, mission and goals. I recognize the professionalism and unique expertise each of you brings, and I will be forthright in maintaining our collaborative and thoughtful engagements to address the challenges we face.

Over many years, we have dedicated ourselves to building a top-tier research association, and our efforts will continue to move forward. Along with other team members, I am committed to further enhancing ARD, striving to make it the leading regional research association in the na-

tion. As chair, my focus will include a 'refresh' of our strategic agenda, "Bold Transformation 2025: Strategic Agenda for 1890 Research and Innovation in the Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences," and by listening actively to your aspirations for our institutions and ARD's future.

Among our challenge and priority areas, we will continue to:

- Persistently advocate for our FY 2025 and FY 2026 appropriations;
- advocate consistently for the 1890 priorities and programs in the next Farm Bill, including research and Extension capacity programs; capacity building grants, facilities grant programs; centers of excellence, scholarships for students at 1890 institutions and authorization to cover tuition for graduate research assistants in our Evans-Allen Program);
- support the Research Facilities Act to address critical infrastructure needs for colleges of agriculture at land-grant universities;

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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 an impact from the 1890 research program submitted by a scientist at Delaware State University.

Del State researcher investigates blueberry heat stress

RELEVANCE

Blueberry (*Vaccinium* Sp.) is an economically important small-fruit crop native to North America. Its production was earlier restricted to temperate regions of Canada and northern parts of the United States. However, more than 38 states, including many of the country's southern states, and several countries worldwide are cultivating blueberry as a commercial crop.

Blueberry commercial relevance has been steadily growing for the past two decades owing to an increased awareness of its benefits for human health. However, climate change poses significant threats to blueberry production and quality. A new breeding approach can accelerate the harnessing of single nucleotide polymorphism (SNPs)-base markers for high-temperature stress tolerance and maintain high yields and quality.

RESPONSE

The small fruits research team from Dr. Kalpalatha Melmaiee's group focused on developing marker-assisted breeding resources to enable rapid varietal development with enhanced tolerance to heat stress. They previously identified several SNPs related to heat tolerance traits using a genome-wide association study (GWAS) in an interspecific cross of *V. corymbosum* and *V. darrowii*. This project focused on the development and validation of SNP-based markers (Kompetitive allele-specific PCR (KASP) and cleaved amplified polymorphic sequences (CAPS) markers for heat tolerance. These breeder-friendly KASP and CAPs markers will enable the selection of plants early to avoid a two to three-year waiting

period for perineal plants like blueberries.

RESULTS

For developing KASP markers, Melmaiee's lab selected 100 SNPs significantly associated with 10 heat-tolerance traits. These SNPs had the highest phenotypic variation for the measured traits in our GWAS study. These

SNPs were screened on 384 blueberry plants (comprising popular cultivars and cross-progenies) to reveal allele patterns. For CAPS marker development, 20 SNPs related to heat stress tolerance were selected and used in assay development. These markers were first developed on parental lines, and ~200 blueberry genotypes are being screened. Simultaneously, the cultivars and cross-progenies are phenotyped and selected for validation. If these developed markers are robust, their use can be extended to other small fruits like grapes, blackberries, and cranberries.



Dr. Kalpalatha Melmaiee in her blueberry research garden.

This project is also training two postdoctoral, five graduate and seven undergraduate students, who are receiving training in molecular breeding techniques. The group is reaching out to farmers/ growers and middle school, high school, and college-level students. They will become the next cohort of potential plant breeding scientists.

For more information, please contact Dr. Kalpalatha Melmaiee at kemelmaiee@desu.edu or 302-359-1512, College of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Delaware State University.

Central State & Lincoln join climate-smart ag coalition

USDA is investing \$10 million in land-grant universities in Ohio and Missouri to accelerate the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. Central State University is partnering with Ohio State University, Lincoln University and the University of Missouri.



The five-year project funded by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture will work with farmers 'From the Ground Up.' A transdisciplinary team of researchers, educators and Extension experts at partner institutions will advance and co-

create solutions for climate resilience of Midwest farmers.

Gains have been made in efficiency and productivity with specialized crop and livestock production in the U.S., but with these gains have come declines in soil health and organic matter, water quality challenges, loss of biodiversity, and increased vulnerability to extreme weather events.

Emerging climate-smart agricultural practices (CSAPs) show the potential to reduce GHG emissions, increase carbon sequestration, climate resilience and farm viability. However, traditional top-down approaches to boost adoption have been slow. This project focuses on working

with farmers 'From the Ground Up' to overcome barriers and find innovative approaches to accelerate their use on their Midwest farms.

The project is funded through [USDA's flagship Sustainable Agricultural Systems program](#), and **Sakthi Kumaran**, research associate professor of soil science and agronomy in the Agricultural Research and Development Program, serves as the institutional lead at Central State University.

"This is an unprecedented investment by the USDA in a farmer-led response to address water quality and carbon sequestration challenges in agriculture," said Dr. Jackson-Smith at Ohio State University, who serves as the project lead.

The project, she added, will engage farmers in Ohio and Missouri, major farm states with diverse biophysical contexts where the impacts of climate variability on CSAP performance can be compared across time and space. With this investment, the team will spur innovation clusters where farmers themselves identify and overcome logistical, agronomic and economic barriers that make it difficult for them to use conservation practices.

Additionally, farmer leadership through collaborative on-farm research and peer-to-peer learning networks is key to finding realistic solutions that really work on the farm.

"Beyond co-filling knowledge gaps in Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices in partnership with the farmers, this project will foster strategic partnerships between 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions in the midwestern states," she added. "We will work together to jointly achieve the land-grant mission of these universities, including education of underrepresented students in STEM fields, preparing them to enter the agricultural workforce as trained next-generation leaders. We will advance the educational mission of our states by investing early in students' educational years."

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- champion the 1890 multi-state, multi-disciplinary Climate Resiliency Initiative;
- bolster the 1890 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Working Group; and
- support the six agInnovation priorities (enhance funding for agricultural research, address critical infrastructure needs, promote DEI, lead in environmental and sustainability solutions, strengthen collaborative partnerships and increase organizational visibility and impact) and the three agInnovation Chair's Initiatives (finalize and implement the agInnovation Roadmap, create a formal framework to facilitate research collaborations among 1862, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions and massively accelerate the development of important food crop.

Our agenda is undoubtedly ambitious, but our students and stakeholders deserve no less. I look forward to seeing you and discussing and prioritizing these areas at our joint AEA-ARD

meeting at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, VA, this coming Jan. 28-30, 2025.

Finally, under our thoughtful and forward-thinking past ARD Chair, Dr. Louis Whitesides, vice president for Public Service and Agriculture Executive Director of 1890 Research & Extension at South Carolina State University, ARD made considerable progress over the past two years. In addition to being a thoughtful leader, Whitesides is an adaptive leader, one who is characterized by his flexibility, open-mindedness and responsiveness to new challenges, which fostered innovation and resilience within ARD. He understands that effective leadership is not about having all the answers but about asking the right questions, facilitating growth and guiding ARD with agility and foresight. His adaptive leadership, including his ability to run efficient and concise meetings, has greatly benefited ARD, demonstrating the strength of his values-based approach.

Thank you, Dr. Whitesides!

FSLI & LEAD21 accepting applications for upcoming programs

FOOD SYSTEM LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Are you ready to join the next Cohort of Fellows, advance your leadership skills and become purpose-driven catalysts for the food system? Then FSLI may be what you need.

The Food System Leadership Institute is designed for those currently serving as department heads or chairs (or equivalent titles) or higher and looking to advance their leadership skills and future career goals.

FSLI provides fellows with strategies to handle leadership challenges and opportunities in the future. The FSLI experience develops or reinforces a series of core leadership competencies identified by a team of top-level leaders, including university presidents and chancellors and leaders from industry and the non-profit sector who understand the requirements of food systems leadership. These professionals offer a wealth of understanding about leadership and the food system to help the fellows better understand their leadership potential.

The two-year FSLI experience includes three week-long residential sessions, personal leadership coaching, mentoring, individual leadership projects, a personal development plan and distance learning activities.

The two-year program costs \$24,000. The deadline to apply is March 20, 2025. This covers all instruments used, books, speaker fees, hotel lodging and food during the three residential sessions.

Limited funds to offset the program costs are available for need-based units. If you are interested in a scholarship, please include that request on the nomination form.

[Click for more information and to apply online.](#)

LEAD21

LEAD21 program is intended to meet the future needs for leadership development of faculty, specialists, district and regional directors, program and team leaders, research station and center directors, department heads and chairs and others in the universities' colleges of agricultural, environmental, natural resources, veterinary sciences and human sciences and USDA/NIFA. Individuals from land-grant, NARRU institutions and USDA are encouraged to participate.

LEAD21's primary purpose is to develop leaders in land-grant institutions and their strategic partners who link research, academics and Extension to lead more effectively in an increasingly complex environment, either in their current position or as they aspire to other positions.

Participants goals include:

- Enhance the application of skills and knowledge learned in four core leadership development areas (change, conflict, communication and collaboration).
- Develop a peer leadership network to enhance personal leadership practice, collaboration and diversity of perspective.
- Develop and implement an individual leadership development process.

The three on-site sessions are Session I: June 8-13, 2025, Chicago, IL; Session II: Oct. 6-9, 2025, Denver, CO; and Session III: Feb. 23-27, 2026, TBD.

The program costs \$12,000 and includes lodging, meals, and educational materials for all three sessions. Limited scholarships are available.

[For full consideration, the application deadline is Nov. 15.](#)



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- 100,000 employees;
- providing direct oversight of Departmental Administration, Offices of the Chief Information Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, the Assistance Secretary for Civil Rights, Procurement, Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the USDA Permitting Council;
- serving as co-chair of the USDA Equity Commission, an independent Commission established by Congress to make recommendations for how USDA will reduce barriers to access and address longstanding inequities and historical discrimination at USDA;
- providing oversight of the establishment of USDA's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Office and implementation of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategic Plan;
- leading the U.S. Delegation at the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, to help increase international agricultural productivity, reduce barriers to international trade, advance climate change mitigation and focus on technological advancements for women and youth in agriculture;
- leading agribusiness trade missions to East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar) and the UK that resulted in trade commitments of U.S. food and agriculture products while focusing on reducing trade barriers, advancing agricultural biotechnology and biosafety and promoting USDA School Feeding Programs;
- leading the U.S. delegation for the National Food Systems Dialogue at the United Nations Food Systems Summit in Rome, Italy, to advance food systems innovation, climate change mitigation and efforts to sustainably

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- feed a growing world population;
- overseeing the implementation of critical provisions of the American Rescue Plan and Inflation Reduction Act to provide technical assistance services for underserved farmers and long overdue financial assistance for producers in economic distress;
- leading strategic efforts to bring in the next generation of youth leaders in food and agriculture to USDA through engagement with land-grant institutions and
- playing an instrumental role in signing MOUs with the 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions and Tribal Colleges.

In 2018, Bronaugh was appointed the 16th Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services 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.

Before her FSA appointment, she served as dean of the College of Agriculture at VSU, overseeing 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 to address food access within historically marginalized communities.

From 2015 to 2019, Bronaugh served as the state Executive director for the USDA Farm Service Agency, Richmond, VA. Before that, from 2011 to 2015, she was the dean of the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA.

Bronaugh received her bachelor's in education from James Madison University, her master's and her Ph.D. in career and technical education from Virginia Tech.

Parveen received the inaugural agInnovation's Agricultural Research Innovation Award of Excellence for the ARD Region.

Praveen is a tenured full professor in the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) food science and technology program. She has made, and continues to make, significant contributions to food safety and microbiology and water quality. In addition, she fosters research training for diverse groups of students and colleagues worldwide while helping to develop the next generation of scientists.

She has secured over \$20 million in competitive funding as a PI/Co-PI, enabling her to establish a nationally and internationally recognized multidisciplinary research program at UMES. Through collaboration with national and international scientists in academia, government, industry and regulatory agencies, her innovation research addresses key regional, na-

tional and global issues in food safety, microbiology and water quality.

Additionally, her efforts have led to the recruitment, graduation and training of more than 200 graduate, undergraduate and high school students, over 50 educators and scientists (national and international), and 15 technicians, postdoctoral associates, research associates and visiting scholars.

Parveen has transferred technologies to seafood processors, the poultry industry and public regulatory agencies for tracking sources of contamination, rapid detection of pathogens and controlling growth and survival of food- and water-borne pathogens in seafood and poultry.

In addition, her research findings have been shared with the United Nations, World Health Organization (WHO), Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for the assessment of the risk of *Vibrio* bacteria in oysters and develop control strategies.

Parveen's research has resulted in 79 manuscripts in nationally and internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals, with impact factors ranging from 2.75 to 9.0. She has contributed several book chapters, authored over 30 technical reports and popular press articles and delivered 90 invited presentations. Her work has also been featured in 250 abstracts (oral and poster presentations) at regional, national and international scientific conferences. In 2010, one of her articles was recognized as one of the most widely read and top ten downloaded journal articles.

Parveen received several awards for her outstanding performance in establishing research and education programs involving underrepresented minority students. She received the UMES Distinguished Scientist Award and the Outstanding Mentorship and Research and Outstanding Academic Accomplishment Award; the Excellence in Research and Scholarship from the University System of Maryland Board of Regents and the ARD Morrison-Evans Outstanding Scientist Award.

Parveen is an active member of several national and international professional organizations and serves on multiple committees within these organizations. She was appointed by the USDA Secretary to serve on the USDA FSIS National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods and currently serves on the editorial boards of *Food and Nutrition Sciences*, *Food Microbiology*, *Journal of Food Protection*, *Helvion* and *Bangladesh Journal of Microbiology*, and previously served as an associate editor of *Frontiers in Environmental Health*, an editor in *Microbiology Spectrum* and *Frontiers in Microbiology* and as ad hoc reviewer of many journals including *International Journal of Food Microbiology*, *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*.

She received her bachelor's in botany and in microbiology from the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh and her Ph.D. in food science and human nutrition from the University of Florida.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

ARD OFFICERS

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(Chair)

Langston University

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Gregory Goins
(Chair-Elect)

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Ami M. Smith
(Secretary)

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Jose Ulises Toledo (Treasurer)

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(Member-at-Large)

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Louis Whitesides
(Immediate Past Chair)

South Carolina State University

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Chandra Reddy
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Non-Elected

Alton Thompson (Exec. Director)

Email: athompson1@ncat.edu

Lisa Williamson (Exec. Asst.)

Email: lmwilliamson1@ncat.edu

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](#)

[North Carolina A&T State University](#)

[Prairie View A&M University](#)

[South Carolina State University](#)

[Southern University and A&M College](#)

[Tennessee State University](#)

[Tuskegee University](#)

[University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff](#)

[University of Maryland Eastern Shore](#)

[Virginia State University](#)

[West Virginia State University](#)

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](#).

PROGRAM SPECIALISTS, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, Department of Agriculture, Multiple Locations (Alabama A&M University; Alcorn State University and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff).

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](#)

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

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY, [School of Environmental Sustainability, Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture, Post Doc.](#)

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](#)

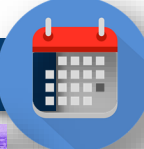
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES, [Associate Professor or Professor & Associate Dean](#)

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](#)

CALENDAR



2024 agInnovation Fall Meeting | Theme: "Reimagining the Land-grant University and Industry Relationship"
Registration is live and can be accessed on the [conference webpage](#). If you have any questions regarding registration, please contact the Office of Professional Development at ContinuingEducation@ncsu.edu or 919-515-2261. For all other questions contact Cindy Morley cmorley@uark.edu.

SAVE THE DATE

2025 CARET/BAA Washington Conference | Feb. 23-26, 2025, The Watergate Hotel, 2650 Virginia Ave. Washington, D.C. | The meeting will feature food and ag thought leaders, advocacy presentations, networking with BAA stakeholders, and opportunities to connect with champions on the Hill.

Association of Extension Administrators (AEA) and Association of Research Directors (ARD), Joint Winter Business Meeting, Jan. 27 – 30, 2025, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, VA

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

