FROM THE DIRECTOR

Filling the Hort Gap

Whether it involves growing backyard tomatoes for summer BLTs or nurturing bushels of berries for agritourists, horticulture has a wide footprint in Arkansas. Between retirements, aging publications and the growing numbers of commercial growers and Master Gardeners, expanding Extension’s reach in horticulture has been one of our most urgent needs. This spring, we’ve been able to fill the gap with the hiring of Amanda McWhirt, specialist - horticulture - crops, and Jackie Lee, specialist - horticulture - integrated pest management.

McWhirt comes to Extension with a background in both horticulture and soil science and has worked with small-scale vegetable producers in Honduras with the Peace Corps. (Her profile, in case you missed it, can be found here: http://www.uaex.edu/about-extension/docs/BL_may2016.pdf.)

Lee is an Arkansas native from Yell County and comes to Arkansas after three years working for Oklahoma State’s extension service as a horticulture specialist. Before joining OSU, she spent five years as a field scientist for Dow AgroSciences. She earned both her master’s degree and Ph.D. from the University of Arkansas.

Please join me in welcoming both to our ranks. McWhirt can be reached at amcwhir@uaex.edu or 501-671-2229, and Lee can be reached at jalee@uaex.edu or 501-671-2191.

2016 Soybean Science Challenge award

The 2016 Soybean Science Challenge student research winner was announced at the 62nd annual Southwest Energy Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair April 2 at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board member Joe Thrash presented the $1,000 award on behalf of the board to Evan Buckner, a junior at Pine Bluff High School. Evan was also presented a $300 award for winning the regional round of the contest at the Southwest Arkansas Regional Science Fair in March.

Evan is the son of Drs. Edmund and Anissa Buckner. Evan’s father is the interim dean of the School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences at UAPB and his mother is Biology Department chair and project director for the Arkansas Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in the STEM Scholars Academy.

(Continued, page 3)
Chi Epsilon Sigma names 2016-2017 officers and award winners

The Beta Chapter of Chi Epsilon Sigma, Extension's classified support staff professional association, held its annual meeting at the 2016 Support Staff Conference at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center May 12-13.

Ursula Crow, warehouse specialist at the Little Rock State Office, presented a program on the importance of participating in leadership roles in the organization and led the group in an activity to improve the members' listening skills.

New Chi Epsilon Sigma officers elected for the 2016-17 year are Sandra McGinnis, Lawrence County, president; Johnny Woodley, facilities management, vice president; Glenda Sutherlin, Union County, secretary; Cecilia Harberson, Howard County, treasurer/membership chair; Beverly Brown, Dallas County, administrative adviser; Diane Cunningham, Monroe County, annalist; and district directors Burnita Hearne, Crittenden County, Delta District; Dana Stringfellow, Sevier County, Ouachita District; Debra Schneider, Crawford County, Ozark District; Author Smith, Family and Consumer Sciences, LRSSO District; and Rose Dearin, Greene County, past president.

Two member awards were given at the meeting. Support Staff Member of the Year 2016 was Glenda Sutherlin, Union County, and Rookie of the Year 2016 went to Ginger Ellison, Montgomery County.

Scholarship awards were presented to Elizabeth Ann Fish, daughter of JoAnn Fish; Patricia Johnson, human resource specialist; Alta Lockley, administrative specialist, Arkansas County; and Gabriel Rooney, son of Laura Rooney and also an intern with Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences.

Congratulations to our new officers and award winners. We look forward to the 2017 Support Staff Conference on May 11 and 12 at the 4-H Center.

Glenda Sutherlin and Ginger Ellison receive awards at Support Staff Conference

Glenda Sutherlin, administrative specialist for Union County, and Ginger Ellison, administrative specialist for Montgomery County, received awards from Chi Epsilon Sigma at the annual Support Staff Conference at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center May 12-13.

Sutherlin received the Support Staff Member of the Year award. Each year a deserving employee from one of Arkansas’ 75 counties is chosen by his or her peers to receive this award.

Glenda was nominated by her staff chair, Robin Bridges, who said: “Her dedication to serving the staff and clientele of Union County is unequaled. I have served as a county Extension agent for nearly 30 years and have never seen an administrative staff member with the passion for doing a job well like Glenda. She is well respected by both staff and clientele. Clientele who visit the county office are greeted warmly by a lady who is professional, both in dress and manner. Glenda’s work ethic and attention to detail have been used as a model for state Extension and Research new hires in the Peer to Peer session in ‘Jump Start for New Hires.’ Glenda is a dedicated professional who believes in the mission of the Division of Agriculture. She is always on time, always personable and professionally attired. Union County Extension and Arkansas are well served by Mrs. Glenda Sutherlin.”

Ellison received the Rookie of the Year award. This award is presented to a new member who has been with Extension from one to three years. The recipient is chosen by his or her peers to receive this award.

Ginger was nominated by her staff chair, Amy Monk, who said: “From day one Ginger has jumped right in. She is undaunted by large tasks and in spite of numerous computer, internet, software, phone and technology issues, she continues to have a positive, ‘can-do’ attitude. Through her efforts on our website and Facebook pages, Ginger has increased our fellowship exponentially. The various Extension groups have taken an immediate and strong affection for Ginger because she conveys a friendly, congenial personality. Even state office personnel have commented on Ginger’s competence and congeniality. She seeks out information and makes every attempt to not just learn her job but understand how every system operates. She has innovative ideas on how to maximize our efficiency. Her knowledge of Extension is extensive for a new employee. Ginger actively seeks out ways to help the agents and 4-H program assistant and genuinely desires excellence in what comes out of our office. Her attention to detail is excellent.”
Arkansas 4-H Grassland Evaluation teams mowed a wide swath through the competition, taking top honors at the 2016 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest on June 8 in Springfield, Missouri. Arkansas students took first, second, third, fourth and fifth high 4-H individual, tied for overall high individual and took first-, third-, and fifth-place 4-H team and overall high point team. The contest included a field of 19 teams from five states including Arkansas, West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio and Missouri.

The Cleburne County 4-H team, coached by Cleburne County Staff Chair Michelle Mobley, took first-place 4-H team and first-place team overall, scoring 1,075 points out of a possible 1,200 points to edge out a close West Virginia FFA team for top honors.

Team member Stephen Wilson was high 4-H individual and tied for overall high individual. Rachel Wilson was second high individual, followed by Luke Wilson as third high 4-H individual.

Kathryn Bechdoldt competed as an individual from Cleburne County in the contest and placed fourth high individual. Blaine Huddleston from Randolph County 4-H took fifth high 4-H individual and rounded out the Arkansas sweep of 4-H high individual awards.

Randolph County 4-H, coached by Randolph County Staff Chair Mike Andrews, took third-place team. Madison County 4-H took fifth-place 4-H team and was coached by Madison County 4-H Agent Jerry Jo Hamm.

Van Buren County 4-H, coached by Van Buren County Staff Chair Danny Griffin, and White County 4-H, coached by Amy Heck and Brett Gordon, also competed. Heck said “This was our first experience and it was a great one. We look forward to returning next year.”

Arkansas 4-H’ers mow down competition at Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest

Soybean Science Challenge winner (cont.)

Evan’s project, “Fighting Pythium aphanidermatum in Soybeans: Part II,” tested three chemical fungicides to see which one would show the most resistance to the plant pathogen.

Five regional awards were presented across the state in addition to the state competition.

Other regional science fair winners were Victoria Reid, Central High School; Darrin McFall, Buffalo Island Central High School; Landon Medlock, Alma High School; and Makenna Madden and Breanan Cromeans, Emerson High School.
Program and Staff Development hosts stress management series

Starting in July, the Program and Staff Development department will host a four-part webinar series on Stress Management. The Arkansas Employee Assistance Program will present the Brilliant Life Webinar Series.

Brilliant Life Webinars are designed to not just help us cope with the everyday issues of life but to fill our lives with BRILLIANCE! Staff from EAP will talk about how to make our relationships, our jobs and ourselves better.

Sessions
- **July 13**: Mindfulness at Work
- **July 27**: Anxiety and the Negativity Bias
- **August 10**: Managing Time and Energy for a Better Life
- **August 31**: Ho! Ho! Help!: Stress Management and the Holidays

For more information contact Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uaex.edu.

*All sessions take place at 11:00 a.m. – noon | via Zoom | Enroll in Learn*

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**BENEFITS CORNER**

**Changes to the University of Arkansas System Health Plan and Retirement Plan Effective July, 2016**

**Health Plan changes:**
- University of Arkansas employees covered under the health plan will see a premium increase. The overall increase to the health plan will result in a 2% increase in the employer contribution and a 2% increase in the employee premium.
- There are no changes in copayment, coinsurance or deductible; however, Applied Behavior Analysis therapy services associated with autism spectrum disorder treatment will be expanded.

**Retirement Plan changes:**

University of Arkansas System employees enrolled in the UARP retirement plan (TIAA-CREF and Fidelity Investments) who contribute at less than 1% will have a pretax mandatory employee contribution of 1% deducted each pay period. The University's base contribution of 5% to your retirement account is not changing.

Each July the mandatory employee contribution will increase by 1% until it reaches 5% in July 2020. For benefits-eligible employees hired on and after July 1, 2016, the vesting schedule will change from one year to two years. Vesting applies only to the contributions made by the University; your contributions are always immediately 100% vested.

This information was emailed, mailed to your home address and in July will be available on the Benefits Website.

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What’s new in publications? Find out at: [http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx](http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx)


Meet the new employees!

Jane Ahrends  
4-H Program Assistant  
Washington County

- **What’s your background?**  
  I am from Northwest Arkansas. I have an M.S. degree in recreation resource management with a thesis in environmental education.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**  
  I’m bringing to Extension my years of planning and delivering park-based programs, tours, school days, day camps and so forth. I also have experience in managing volunteer programs, working with local media and building community relationships.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**  
  Most people call me Z, and I’m a sucker for adopting strays (which can get me into a lot of trouble).

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**  
  My first-year goals (or at least the three biggest goals), in no order of importance, would be to grow 4-H club membership, to help develop a strong multidisciplinary school program with coworkers and to develop strong community relationships throughout the county.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**  
  The opportunity to work with youth in 4-H. I love the feeling of helping youth accomplish a goal and seeing their personal growth, knowing that I helped facilitate part of that growth. I value Extension’s ability to reach all aspects of a community with the ultimate goal of helping others improve.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**  
  Reading – whenever I find the time, home schooling a preteen, my mischievous cat Bu Tao, trying NOT to adopt every stray in the neighborhood, and gardening – especially native flowers and vegetables.

Elizabeth Easley  
County Extension Agent - 4-H  
Mississippi County

- **What’s your background?**  
  I graduated from Arkansas State University in 2005 with a degree in wildlife ecology and management. I’ve worked with the Arkansas State Parks system for about five years as a Park Interpreter before working with a small town newspaper for three years. In 2014, I began as a 4-H program aide with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff stationed in Lee County.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**  
  I came to Extension after working for over 20 years at our local newspaper.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**  
  Reading – whenever I find the time, home schooling a preteen, my mischievous cat Bu Tao, trying NOT to adopt every stray in the neighborhood, and gardening – especially native flowers and vegetables.

Shelly Garth  
Administrative Specialist  
Independence County

- **What’s your background?**  
  I came to Extension after working for over 20 years at our local newspaper.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**  
  I’ve had a long history of working with all different types of people.
• What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?
  I really love to work with people and to deal with the public.

• What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?
  This first year I just hope to continue to learn more and be helpful to our staff as well as the public.

• What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?
  The welcome I’ve received from Extension has been amazing. It’s so nice to know that there is a whole network of people ready to help.

• What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?
  Outside of work, my time is spent with my family. My husband and I have 7- and 12-year-old boys whose activities keep us very busy.

Vickie Perkins
County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences
Columbia County

• What’s your background?
  Former Head Start director with 16 years of experience working with children, families and community leaders.

• What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?
  I assisted the director in managing broad program operations and managed identifiable units of the program (service area manager, division director, division manager, associate director, unit manager).

• What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?
  I will complete the job/assignment given with excellence. I’m easy to correct and instruct . . . I’m teachable.

• What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?
  I would like to increase the knowledge base for individual and community decisions and develop the skills necessary to achieve individual and community goals.

What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?
  Longevity of the employees and the retirement benefits. Teamwork within offices, with clientele and with the educational partners.

What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?
  I enjoy reading, love shopping and driving and sightseeing different places (city, state-to-state, country road, paved/unpaved).

Bob Powell
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
Yell County - Danville

• What’s your background?
  I was raised on a beef/dairy cattle farm in eastern Oklahoma. I received my B.S. degree from Oklahoma State University in 1983 and spent the next 32 years teaching vocational agriculture.

• What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?
  My knowledge of agriculture along with 32 years of working with students and their parents has taught me a lot about working with people and what it takes to have a successful program.

• What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?
  I am very excited about this job and look forward to getting to know and to work with everyone.

• What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?
  I would like to establish a good relationship with my clientele in the county and let them know how working with Extension can benefit them in their farming operations and everyday life.

• What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?
  As a teacher, I often worked with Extension and have always been impressed with their eagerness and ability to assist the citizens of our county.

• What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?
  I enjoy hunting, fishing, kayaking and spending time with my friends and family.
Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

**JaNan Abernathy**  
Budget and Position Control Manager, Financial Services, effective May 2, 2016.

**Tyler Brown**  
Region Program Associate - Obesity Reduction, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective May 2, 2016.

**Kaycee Davis**  
County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Howard County, effective April 18, 2016.

**Matt Fryer**  
County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Crawford County, effective April 18, 2016.

**John Grissom**  
Administrative Specialist, 4-H and Youth Development, effective May 9, 2016.

**Andy Hendricks**  
Accounts Receivable and Funds Manager, Financial Services, effective May 2, 2016.

**Samantha Kroll**  
County Extension Agent - 4-H and Youth Development, Miller County, effective May 2, 2016.

**Jackie Lee**  
Extension Specialist - Horticulture IPM, Horticulture, effective May 9, 2016.

**Brittany Riley**  
4-H Program Assistant, Union County, effective April 18, 2016.

**Whitney Rook**  
4-H Program Assistant, Hempstead County, effective May 2, 2016.

**Jenny Ross**  
County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Lonoke County, effective April 18, 2016.

**Shana Williams**  
Administrative Specialist, 4-H and Youth Development, effective May 9, 2016.

Extension says goodbye to:

**Ocsie Barnes**  
Program Assistant - EFNEP, Chicot County, Lake Village, effective May 31, 2016.

**Kristen Gilley**  
County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Franklin County - Ozark, effective May 13, 2016.

**Morgan Lassiter**  
Program Assistant - 4-H, White County, effective May 13, 2016.

**John McFarland**  
County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Jackson County, effective May 31, 2016.

**Kara Newcomb**  
Program Associate - Child Care, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective May 31, 2016.

**Felicha Thompson**  
EFNEP Program Assistant, Desha County, effective May 3, 2016.

**Andy Vangilder**  
County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Clay County, effective May 2, 2016.

**Denise White**  
### Grants and contracts
for Month Ending May 31, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Award Amount</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Granting Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016 NRA Foundation Montgomery County 4-H Shooting Sports Cash Awards</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>Anne Sortor</td>
<td>National Rifle Association Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice Enterprise Budgets and Production Economic Analysis</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Archie Flanders</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Survey of Foliar Diseases of Cotton and Their Relationship to Potassium Nutrition Status</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Bill Robertson</td>
<td>Cotton Incorporated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provisia Rice Field Tests</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>Bob Scott</td>
<td>BASF Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Development Soybean Protocol</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>Bob Scott</td>
<td>Monsanto Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed Management in Rice</td>
<td>103,004</td>
<td>Bob Scott</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPPD x RR2 Xtend Soybeans: Evaluation of Mesotrione-Based Weed Management Programs by Universities in Medium Soils – Regulated</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>Bob Scott</td>
<td>Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insect Management in Mid-South Pest Management: AR II</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Glenn Studebaker</td>
<td>Cotton Incorporated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Experimental Fungicides in Insect Management Systems BASF</td>
<td>4,850</td>
<td>Gus Lorenz</td>
<td>BASF Corporation</td>
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<td>Rice Insect Control</td>
<td>42,614</td>
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<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
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<td>Eco-System</td>
<td>42,516</td>
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<td>Potential Exposure of Honey Bees to Insecticides in Rice</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Gus Lorenz</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice Verification</td>
<td>184,906</td>
<td>Jarrod Hardke</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arkansas Rice Performance Trials</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>Jarrod Hardke</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuation of the DD50 Program to Include Seeding Date Affect on Grain Yield and Development of New Cultivars</td>
<td>72,731</td>
<td>Jarrod Hardke</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agronomic Production Practices for Rice</td>
<td>128,338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting the Use of Multiple Inlet and Evaluating Intermittent Flood Potential in Arkansas</td>
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<td>Jarrod Hardke</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Autumn Decline – H2S Pathology</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Jarrod Hardke</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics of Fungicide Application for Sheath Blight Disease of Rice</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Jarrod Hardke</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Irrigation Tools for Furrow-Irrigated Rice</td>
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<td>Jarrod Hardke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage Crape Myrtle Bark Scale, an Exotic Pest</td>
<td>3,505</td>
<td>Jim Robbins</td>
<td>Texas A &amp; M University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention of Mycotoxin Development and Quality Degradation in Rice During On-Farm, In-Bin Drying and Storage</td>
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<td>Sammy Sadaka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation and Implementation of New Herbicide Technology Systems in Arkansas Cotton</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>Tom Barber</td>
<td>Cotton Incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of Glyto Liberty Link, Enlist and Xtend Cultivars to Glufosinate and Glufosinate Tank-Mixes</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>Tom Barber</td>
<td>Cotton Incorporated</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Team Approach to Improved Weed Management in Rice</td>
<td>91,294</td>
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<td>Rice Breeding Program Pathology Tech Support</td>
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<td>Development of Practical Diagnostic Methods for Monitoring Rice Bacterial Panicle Blight Diseases and Evaluate Rice Germplasm for Resistance</td>
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<td>Development of Short-Term Control for Bacterial Panicle</td>
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<td>Understanding Autumn Decline – H2S Pathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics of Fungicide Application for Sheath Blight Disease of Rice</td>
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<td>Yeshi Wamishe</td>
<td>Rice Research Promotion Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Awards for May 2016**: $1,020,449

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.