

Linking Curriculum and Student Internships with USDA Mission Critical Occupations

California State University Monterey Bay

Award Amount: 2009-38422-19920
Amount: \$300,000

Relevant Priority or Mission Area:

- Enhance Competitiveness and Sustainability of Rural and Farm Economies
- Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply
- Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment

USDA Collaborators



Objectives:

1. Increase the diversity of students in natural resource sciences.
2. Prepare students for USDA Mission Critical Occupations.

Activities:

1. This project will develop two upper division courses, applied soil science and plant taxonomy, to address gaps in and prepare students for careers in natural resources and related agricultural careers.
2. Increase visibilities of student research and career training opportunities by developing marketing resources.
3. An Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from partnering agricultural, natural resource organizations, and program faculty, will be meet once a year to review the curricula and student skill training.
4. Twenty four paid internships with USDA and other resource agencies, as well as other professional development experiences.
5. Offer one \$50,000 graduate degree scholarship.



Stefanie Gutierrez-Kortman measures greenhouse gases



Students work in a professional laboratory to gain experience



Expected Impact:

- Increased student knowledge of soil and plant sciences
- Increased student awareness and knowledge of Environmental Science and Technology program and of opportunities in agricultural fields, including research, internship, and employment opportunities
- Increased knowledge of skills needed for those jobs.

Evaluation:

1. Increase the Quality of Instruction.

- Student survey, focus groups, interviews
- Student learning rubrics
- Advisory committee

2. Increase Recruitment of Students into Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

- Student survey, focus groups, interviews
- Job Placement Records
- Advisory committee

3. Increase Retention and Graduation

- Retention and graduation records

Beneficiaries:

Students: Training in careers in natural resources and related fields

USDA Agencies: interns and student training prepared for USDA careers

Agriculture: Science-based work force able to address natural resources issues in agriculture