The CETARS program provides students from agriculture and related disciplines, graduate research assistantships, undergraduate research stipends, outreach activities, training and hands-on research experiences from K-12 to PhD. The proposal is synergistic collaboration between UPRM, UTEP, UPRH, and IAUSG. CETARS education training activities are aimed at providing innovative, high impact research training and education to students and faculty from underrepresented groups. CETARS will establish and consolidate a pipeline attracting by retaining and graduating talented individuals while supporting their actual placement in Agriculture-related positions. The CETARS program during its second year benefited over 1,000 K-12, 50 B.S., 9 M.S. and 6 Ph.D. students and over 2,000 individuals through its research and outreach activities.

Projected Outcomes: Strengthen the Food Science, Applied Chemistry, and Crops and Agro-Environmental Sciences by creating new interdisciplinary courses in the latest food and agribusiness technologies, establish a suitable interagency network to facilitate the placement of program graduates in USDA-Mission Critical Occupations (MCO’s) and promote faculty development and competitiveness, retain, graduate and place at least 80% of program graduates in USDA positions. The project will follow the performance of students and faculty involved by monitoring of their retention, time for graduation and placement of program graduates in USDA-Mission Critical Occupations (MCO’s) and Agro-Environmental Sciences by creating new interdisciplinary courses in the latest food and agribusiness technologies, establish a suitable interagency network to facilitate the placement of program graduates in USDA-Mission Critical Occupations (MCO’s) and promote faculty development and competitiveness.

Current Project outcomes:

1. Strengthen collaborative research-education between Food Science, Applied Chemistry, Crops and Agro-Environmental Sciences and Engineering Science and Technologies
2. Develop outreach activities at participating institutions from K-12 to recruit talented students into agriculture or related sciences
3. Increase the participation of minority students in programs related to agricultural sciences and the protection of natural resources
4. Enhance the research skills of students by exposing them to experiential research-learning and community service
5. Foster student-centered research to solve real-life problems faced by communities, small developing agro-industries and government agencies
6. Develop a technical “critical mass” supporting multi-institution collaborations to solve technical problems in Puerto Rico
7. Promote faculty development and competitiveness in agriculture and related sciences.

Abstract

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